

## **NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE ACTION FOR 2010**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The NCAA Football Rules Committee met for the first time under the NCAA rules process which calls for rules changes to be made only in alternate years. Thus the committee did not make any rules changes for the 2010 season. The annual meeting this year gave members an opportunity to look at the game of college football holistically, consider trends in the game, and discuss and alert the membership to possible future action. The committee approved some changes to take effect in 2011 and made a small number of editorial clarifications that will go into effect in 2010 by editorial bulletin.

### **PLAYER SAFETY**

#### **Injured Player Procedures**

When a player incurs an injury, including showing signs of a concussion, the officials will declare a timeout and the player must leave the game. He may not return until he receives approval of an appropriate medical professional designated by his institution. Relevant editorial modifications will be made to Rule 3-3-5, "Injury Timeout." When available from the NCAA's health and safety staff, an appendix will be distributed and added to the next addition of the rules book to assist with recognition of a concussion.

#### **Strengthening Of Existing Rules Regarding Targeting and Initiating Contact**

Editorial clarification for 2010: Current Rule 9-1-3 replaced by 9-1-3- and 9-1-4, as follows:

#### **Targeting/Initiating Contact with Crown of the Helmet**

### **ARTICLE 3.**

No player shall target and initiate contact against an opponent with the crown (top) of his helmet. When in question, it is a foul.

**PENALTY**—Personal foul. 15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Also, automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules. (Exception: Penalties for Team A personal fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) [S7, S24, S34, S38, S39, S40, S41, S45 or S46]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].

For Team A fouls during free or scrimmage kick plays: Enforcement may be at the previous spot or the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (field-goal plays exempted) (Rules 6-1-8 and 6-3-13).

#### **Defenseless Player: Contact to Head or Neck Area**

### **ARTICLE 4**

No player shall target and initiate contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless opponent with

the helmet, forearm, elbow or shoulder. When in question, it is a foul. (See Points of Emphasis for a description of “Defenseless Player.”)

**PENALTY**—(Same as above)

#### Wedge Blocking on Free Kicks

The committee discussed the possibility of prohibiting an intentional wedge of three or more receiving team players on free kicks. Members will obtain more information by assessing the experience of the National Football League, which introduced such a rule in 2009. This topic will be closely examined by the committee at its 2011 meeting.

#### Blocking Below the Waist

The committee had an extensive discussion about blocking below the waist. There is general agreement that the current rule is overly cumbersome and complicated. Committee members will make suggestions for modification of the rule to the secretary-rules editor who will frame possible new language. This will be considered at the next committee meeting in 2011.

### **SPORTSMANSHIP**

#### Pregame Warm-ups

The committee encourages conferences that do not have a pregame warm-up policy to direct that there be a 10-yard no-player zone between the 45-yard lines beginning 60 minutes before kickoff. This reinforces the Statement on Sportsmanship which was adopted by the committee for inclusion in the 2009-2010 NCAA Football Rule Book.

#### Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

##### Approved for 2011

Following up on the Statement on Sportsmanship adopted last year, the committee approved by unanimous vote the following rule change which will take effect in 2011:

A live-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct will be treated as any other live-ball foul, rather than being administered as a dead-ball foul. When in question it is a dead-ball foul. Currently and for 2010 such fouls are treated as dead-ball fouls.

**Example 1:** A ball carrier is in the open field racing for the goal line. At the opponent’s 10-yard line he turns, makes a taunting gesture to his opponents pursuing him and then scores an apparent touchdown.

**RULING IN 2011:** Live-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. Fifteen-yard penalty from the spot of the foul and the score is negated. First and 10 at the 25-yard line. (Under current rules the touchdown counts and the penalty is enforced on the try or the kickoff.)

**Example 2:** Third and seven at the defensive team’s 35-yard line. A defensive player is lined up in the neutral zone at the snap. The quarterback completes a pass to the tight end who races

toward the end zone. At the 10-yard line he turns and taunts the players pursuing him and then crosses the goal line.

**RULING IN 2011.** Offside against the defense and unsportsmanlike conduct by the offense. The fouls offset and the down is repeated. No score. Third and seven at the 35-yard line. (Under current rules the offside penalty is declined by rule, the touchdown counts, and the penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct is enforced on the try or the kickoff.)

**Example 3:** After scoring a touchdown the ball carrier punts the ball into the stands. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. The touchdown counts. The 15-yard penalty is enforced on either the try or on the succeeding kickoff, at the option of the defensive team. (No change from the current rule)

## **EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS**

### Television Monitors in Coaches Booths

Effective in 2011, television monitors will be allowed in the press box coaches' booths. The home team has responsibility for insuring that coaches' booths for both teams have identical television capability.

### Uniforms and Player Adornment

1. Officials are admonished to be more careful about enforcing the equipment rules (chin straps buckled, mouth pieces in, etc.)

2. Editorial Clarification. **EFFECTIVE IN 2010:** (a) Players must wear soft knee pads at least ½" thick. Beginning in 2010 there is no reference to the pants covering the knees. (b) Socks must be of the same color and design. Beginning in 2010 there is no reference to length of the socks.

3. Editorial Clarification. **EFFECTIVE IN 2010:** If eye shade is worn it must be solid black with no words, numbers, logos or other symbols