

**NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE**  
**2009-10 Major Changes**

**1-4-3-a Jersey Colors (Rule Change) (FR-30)**

ARTICLE 3. a. Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colors. Players on the same team shall wear jerseys of the same color and design.

1. The visiting team shall wear white jerseys; however, the home team may wear white jerseys if the teams have agreed in writing before the season.

**2. If the home team wears colored jerseys, the visiting team may also wear colored jerseys, if and only if the following conditions have been satisfied:**

**a. The home team has agreed in writing prior to the game; and**

**b. The conference of the home team certifies that the jersey of the visiting team is of a contrasting color.**

**3. If on the kickoff at the start of each half, the visiting team wears a colored jersey in violation of the conditions specified in Rule 1-4-3-a-2 (above), it is a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct.**

**PENALTY: Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards at the succeeding spot following the kickoff. If the kickoff is returned for a touchdown, the penalty is assessed either on the try or on the succeeding kickoff, at the option of the home team. [S27]**

RATIONALE: Creates a process to allow the visiting team to wear colored jerseys when the home team also wears colored jerseys.

---

**1-4-3-d Glove Colors (FR-31)**

d. If worn, gloves or hand pads must be gray in color **on the back, including the backs of the fingers. It is strongly recommended that the palms also be gray; however, black on the palms is acceptable.** The recommended shades of gray are Pantone Cool Gray 8C, Cool Gray 9C, 423C and 430C.

RATIONALE: Allows non-gray palms but confirms that the portion of the glove visible against the opponent's jersey must be gray.

---

**2-3-6 (NEW) Definition of Blocking Zone**

**Proposed Language:**

**Blocking Zone**

**ARTICLE 6. a. The blocking zone is a rectangle centered on the middle lineman of the offensive formation and extending five yards laterally and three yards longitudinally in each direction.**

**b. The blocking zone disintegrates when the ball leaves the zone.**

RATIONALE: Defines the area where players are allowed to clip (9-1-2-d) and block in the back (9-3-3-c). No change from the current rule.

---

**2-24-1 Eliminate the definition of Spearing**

**2-24-1 (NEW) Definition of Series and Possession Series**

**SECTION 24. Series and Possession Series**

**Series**

**ARTICLE 1. A series comprises four consecutive downs that each begins with a snap (Rule 5-1-1).**

**Possession Series**

**ARTICLE 2. A possession series is a team's continuous possession of the ball in an extra period (Rule 3-1-3). It may consist of one or more series.**

RATIONALE: "Spearing" is a term no longer used in the rules. "Possession series" is introduced to eliminate the double use of the word "series" in the rules for extra periods.

2-25-9, 10, and 11 Spot Where Kick Ends; Basic Spot; Postscrimmage Kick Spot (FR-54)

### **Spot Where Kick Ends**

**ARTICLE 9.** A scrimmage kick that crosses the neutral zone ends at the spot where it is caught or recovered or where the ball is declared dead. (Rule 2-15-1-c)

### **Basic Spot**

**ARTICLE 10.** The basic spot is a benchmark for locating the enforcement spot for penalties governed by the Three-and-One Principle (Rule 2-33). Basic spots for the various categories of plays are stated in Rule 10-2-2-d.

### **Postscrimmage Kick Spot**

**ARTICLE 11.** The postscrimmage kick spot serves as the basic spot when postscrimmage kick enforcement applies (Rule 10-2-3).

- a. When the kick ends in the field of play, other than in the special cases given below, the postscrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends.
- b. When the kick ends in Team B's end zone, the postscrimmage kick spot is Team B's 20-yard line.

#### *Special cases:*

1. On an unsuccessful field goal attempt, if the ball is untouched by Team B after crossing the neutral zone and is declared dead beyond the neutral zone, the postscrimmage kick spot is:

- (a) the previous spot, if the previous spot is on or outside Team B's 20-yard line;
- (b) Team B's 20-yard line, if the previous spot is between Team B's 20-yard line and its goal line. (A.R. 10-2-2-XXV).

2. When Rule 6-3-11 is in effect, the postscrimmage kick spot is Team B's 20-yard line.

RATIONALE: Effort to limit Rule 2 to definitions. This change is accompanied by moving the content of Article 10 that relates to penalty enforcement to its proper location in Rule 10.

---

### **2-33 (NEW) Definition of Three-and-One Principle**

#### **Proposed Language:**

#### **SECTION 33. Three-and-One Principle**

The Three-and-One Principle of penalty enforcement applies when the penalty statement for a foul does not specify the enforcement spot. Application of this principle is described in Rule 10-2-2-c.

RATIONALE: Returns this important principle of penalty enforcement to the rule book

---

## 2-34 (NEW) Definition of Tackle Box

### Proposed Language:

### SECTION 34. Tackle Box

**The tackle box is the rectangular area enclosed by the neutral zone, the two lines parallel to the sidelines five yards from the middle lineman of the offensive formation, and Team A's end line.**

RATIONALE: Defines the area used for limitations on the rules for intentional grounding and roughing the kicker.

---

## 3-2-3 (Rule Change) Extension of Periods

### Extension of Periods

ARTICLE 3. a. A period shall be extended for an untimed down (other than a try) if during a down in which time expires one or more of the following occurs (A.R. 3-2-3-I-VIII)

1. a penalty is accepted for a live-ball foul(s) not treated as a dead-ball foul.(Exception: Rule 10-2-2-g-1). **The period is *not* extended if the statement of penalty includes loss of down.**
2. there are offsetting fouls.
3. an official sounds his whistle inadvertently or otherwise incorrectly signals the ball dead.

**b. Additional untimed downs (other than a try) will be played until a down is free of the circumstances in statements 1, 2, and 3 of Rule 3-2-3-a (above).**

RATIONALE: Prevents the offense from gaining the unfair advantage of an additional play if they complete an illegal forward pass for a touchdown as time in a half expires. (See below at the change for Rule 8-2.)

---

## 3-2-4-c, 3-3-5-f (NEW) (Rule Change) Play clock set to 40 seconds for a Team B injury.

### 3-2-4-c-4 (FR-68)

#### c. 25-Second Clock

If the officials signal the game clock to be stopped for any of the following reasons, the referee shall signal [one open palm in an over-the-head pumping motion] that the clock should be set at 25 seconds:

4. Injury Timeout **for a Team A player only. The play clock is set to 40 seconds for an injury to a player of Team B.**

**3-3-5-f (FR-73)**

**f. Following a timeout for an injured Team B player, the play clock shall be set at 40 seconds.**

RATIONALE: This codifies a change made via interpretation during the 2008 season. Team B could potentially “game” the clock rules if the play clock is set to 25 seconds for an injury to a Team B player with fewer than 40 seconds left in a half.

---

**3-2-5, 3-2-6, 3-3-1, 3-3-2 Starting and Stopping the Clock  
(Eliminate 3-2-5 and 3-2-6, and blends their content with 3-3-1 and 3-3-2) (FR-70)**

**SECTION 3. Timeouts: Starting and Stopping the Clock**

**Timeout**

**ARTICLE 1. a. An official shall signal timeout when the rules provide for stopping the clock or when a timeout is charged to a team or to the referee. Other officials should repeat timeout signals (A.R. 3-2-6-I). The referee may declare and charge himself with a discretionary timeout for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules (A.R. 3-3-3-I and II).**

**b. When a team’s charged timeouts are exhausted and it requests a timeout, the official shall not acknowledge the request. (Rule 3-3-4)**

**c. Once the game begins, players shall not practice with a ball on the field of play or the end zones except during the half-time intermission.**

**Starting and Stopping the Clock**

**ARTICLE 2. a. When the ball is free-kicked, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, or crosses the goal line after being touched legally by Team B in its end zone, and is subsequently stopped when the ball is dead by rule.**

**b. When a period begins with a scrimmage down, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally snapped. On all other scrimmage downs, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally snapped (Rule 3-3-2-d) or on a prior signal by the referee (Rule 3-3-2-e). The game clock shall not run during a try, during an extension of a period or during an extra period (A.R. 3-2-5-I-IV).**

**c. The game clock shall stop after a touchdown, field goal or safety. It shall be started again as in (a) above unless the down is replayed, in which case it shall be**

started when the ball is legally snapped.

**d. *Starts on the Snap***

For each of the following, the game clock is stopped. If the next play begins with a snap, the game clock will start on the snap:

1. Touchback.
2. With fewer than two minutes remaining in a half a ball carrier, fumble, or backward pass is ruled out of bounds. (Exception: Following a Team A forward fumble, the clock starts on the referee's signal.)
3. Team B is awarded a first down and will next snap the ball.
4. A forward pass is ruled incomplete.
5. A team is granted a charged timeout (A.R. 3-3-4-I-IV).
6. The ball becomes illegal.
7. Violation of a rule for mandatory equipment (Rule 1-4-4) or illegal equipment (Rule 1-4-5).
8. A legal kick down ends.
9. A return kick is made.
10. A scrimmage kick is made beyond the neutral zone.
11. Team A commits a delay-of-game foul while in a scrimmage-kick formation.
12. A period ends.

**e. *Starts on the Referee's Signal***

For each of the following reasons, the game clock is stopped. If the next play begins with a snap, the game clock will start on the referee's signal:

1. Team A is awarded a first down, either through play or by penalty.
2. A Team A forward fumble goes out of bounds.
3. Other than with fewer than two minutes remaining in a half, a Team A ball carrier, fumble, or backward pass is ruled out of bounds.
4. To complete a penalty.
5. An injury timeout is allowed for one or more players or an official (A.R. 3-3-2-I and A.R. 3-3-5-I-V).
6. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.
7. A possible first-down measurement.
8. A delay in making the ball ready for play is caused by both teams (A.R. 3-3-2-II and IV).
9. A live ball comes into possession of an official.
10. The ball carrier's helmet comes completely off.
11. A head coach's conference or instant-replay challenge is requested.
12. The referee grants a media timeout.
13. The referee declares a discretionary timeout.
14. The referee declares a timeout for unfair noise (Rule 9-2-1-b-6).
15. An illegal pass is thrown to conserve time (A.R. 7-3-2-II-VIII)

**16. The referee interrupts the 40/25-second count.**

- f. Whenever one or more incidents that cause the game clock to be started on the referee's signal (Rule 3-3-2-e) occur in conjunction with any that cause it to be started on the snap (Rules 3-3-2-c and 3-3-2-d), it shall be started on the snap.**

RATIONALE: Simplifies the various clock rules by economy of language and the removal of apparent exceptions.

---

**7-1-3-b-1 Offensive Team Formation (FR-96)**

b. When the snap starts: The offensive team must be in a formation that meets these requirements:

1. **All players must be either on their scrimmage line or legally positioned as a back. At least five players wearing jerseys numbered 50 through 79 must be legally on their scrimmage line, and no more than four players may be in the backfield.**

RATIONALE: Ease of officiating in counting players. Also eliminates penalizing Team A for only 10 players: six on the line and four in the backfield.

---

**7-3-10 Ineligible Receiver Downfield (FR-106)**

**Ineligible Receiver Downfield**

ARTICLE 10. No originally ineligible receiver shall be or have been **more than three yards** beyond the neutral zone until a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone has been thrown (A.R. 7-3-10-I and II).

**PENALTY—Five yards from the previous spot [S37].**

RATIONALE: Simplifies the current three-yard expansion of the neutral zone.

---

**8-2 Definition of Touchdown (FR-107)**

**(8-2-1-b):**

**How Scored**

ARTICLE 1. A touchdown shall be scored when:

- b. A **player catches a forward pass** in the opponent's end zone (A.R. 5-1-3-I and II).

RATIONALE: Under the current rule, there is by definition no result of the play when an ineligible receiver catches a forward pass, or a player catches an illegal forward pass, in the opponent's end zone. This change removes the "gap" in the rule.

---

**Rule 9-1-2-q Face Mask foul (FR-118)**

**Chin Strap included**

q. No player shall twist, turn or pull the face mask, **chin strap** or any helmet opening of an opponent. It is not a foul if the face mask, **chin strap** or helmet opening is not twisted, turned or pulled. When in question, it is a foul.

RATIONALE: Chin strap added as a safety measure.

---

**9-1-4 Roughing the Kicker (Rule Change) (FR-119)**

**a-5**

5. Protection of the kicker ends **(a)** when he has had a reasonable time to regain his balance(A.R. 9-1-4-IV); or **(b) when he carries the ball outside the tackle box (Rule 2-34) before kicking.**

RATIONALE: Addresses the issue of the rugby-style kicker who runs for many steps before kicking the ball. Under this change, he would not receive roughing-the-kicker protection if he is outside the tackle box when he kicks.

---

**Rule 9-6 Flagrant Personal Fouls (NEW) (FR-131)**

**SECTION 6. Flagrant Personal Fouls**

**Player Ejection**

**ARTICLE 1. When a player is disqualified from the game due to a flagrant personal foul, that team's conference shall automatically initiate a video review for possible additional sanctions prior to the next scheduled game.**

**Targeting/Initiating Contact**

**ARTICLE 2. When there is a foul called for targeting/initiating contact (Rule 9-1-3) that does not result in a player ejection, there shall automatically be a video review by the conference for possible additional sanctions prior to the next scheduled game.**

**Foul Not Called**

**ARTICLE 3. If subsequent review of a game by a conference reveals plays involving flagrant personal fouls that game officials did not call, the conference may impose sanctions prior to the next scheduled game.**

---

## 10-2 Penalty Enforcement (FR-133)

### SECTION 2. Enforcement Procedures

#### Enforcement Spots

**ARTICLE 1. a.** For many fouls, the enforcement spot is specified in the statement of the penalty. When the enforcement spot is *not* specified in the statement of the penalty, the enforcement spot is determined by the Three-and-One Principle (Rules 2-33 and 10-2-2-c)

**b.** Possible enforcement spots are: the previous spot, the spot of the foul, the succeeding spot, the spot where the run ends, and – for scrimmage kicks only—the postscrimmage kick spot.

#### Determining The Enforcement Spot

##### ARTICLE 2.

###### a. *Dead-ball Fouls*

The enforcement spot for a foul committed when the ball is dead is the succeeding spot (A.R. 10-2-2-XI, XV, XVII and XXVI).

###### b. *Fouls by offensive team behind the neutral zone*

For the following fouls committed by the offensive team behind the neutral zone, the penalty is enforced at the previous spot: illegal use of hands, holding, illegal block and personal fouls. (Exception: If the foul occurs in Team A's end zone the penalty is a safety.)

###### c. The Three-and-One Principle (Rule 2-33) is as follows:

1. When the team in possession commits a foul *behind* the basic spot, the penalty is enforced at the spot of the foul.

2. When the team in possession commits a foul *beyond* the basic spot, the penalty is enforced at the basic spot.

3. When the team not in possession commits a foul *either behind or beyond* the basic spot, the penalty is enforced at the basic spot.

###### d. The following are basic spots for the various categories of plays:

###### 1. *Running plays*

a. *previous spot*, when the related run ends behind the neutral zone.

b. *end of the related run*, when the related run ends beyond the neutral zone.

c. *end of the related run*, on running plays that have no neutral zone.

###### 2. *Running plays when the run ends in the end zone following change of team possession (not on a try)*

a. *20-yard line*, when a foul occurs after a change of team possession in the end zone and the result of the play is a touchback.

b. *goal line*, when a foul occurs after a change of team possession in the field of play and the related run ends in the end zone. (Exception: Rule 8-5-1-Exceptions.)

c. *goal line*, when a foul occurs after a change of team possession in the end zone, the related run ends in the end zone, and the result of the play is not a touchback.

**3. Pass plays**

*previous spot*, on legal forward pass plays.

**4. Kick plays**

a. *previous spot*, on legal kick plays unless the foul is governed by postscrimmage kick rules.

b. *postscrimmage kick spot*, if the foul is governed by postscrimmage kick rules.

**Postscrimmage Kick Enforcement**

**ARTICLE 3.** During a scrimmage kick play, postscrimmage kick enforcement applies *only* to fouls by Team B and *only* under the following conditions:

- a. the kick is not during a try, a successful field goal, or in an extra period.
- b. the ball crosses the neutral zone.
- c. the foul occurs three or more yards beyond the neutral zone.
- d. the foul occurs before the end of the kick (A.R. 10-2-2-IX, XXII and XXV).
- e. Team A is not in legal possession of the ball when it is declared dead.

If these conditions are all met, the penalty is enforced according to the Three-And-One Principle with the postscrimmage kick spot as the basic spot.

**Fouls By Team A During Kicks**

**ARTICLE 4.** Penalties for all fouls by the kicking team other than kick-catch interference (Rule 6-4) during a free kick play or a scrimmage kick play (except field goal attempts) are enforced either at the previous spot or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B, at the option of Team B. (Rules 6-1-8 and 6-3-13)

**Fouls During Or After A Touchdown, Field Goal Or Try:**

**ARTICLE 5.** a. Fouls by the nonscoring team during a down that ends in a touchdown.

1. Penalties for personal fouls are enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff, at the option of the scoring team. If there is no kickoff the accepted penalty is enforced on the try.

2. Penalties for all other fouls are not enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff. Such penalties are declined by rule unless enforcement is made possible by illegal touching of a kick during the down. (A.R. 6-3-2-V and VII)

b. Penalties for defensive pass interference fouls on a try from the three-yard

**line are enforced one-half the distance to the goal line. If the try is successful, the penalty is declined by rule.**

- c. When a foul(s) occurs after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play on the try or there was a live-ball foul treated as a dead-ball foul on the touchdown play, enforcement is on the try or the succeeding kickoff, at the option of the offended team (A.R. 3-2-3-VI).**
- d. Penalties for live-ball fouls during field goal plays are administered by rule. To accept points on a successful field goal, Team A must decline penalties for Team B live-ball fouls. By accepting the penalty for a Team B live-ball foul, Team A elects to cancel the score and have the penalty enforced at the previous spot. Penalties for live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls and those for dead-ball fouls after a field goal down are enforced at the succeeding spot (A.R. 10-2-2-XXIV).**
- e. Penalties for fouls during and after a try down are administered under Rules 8-3-3, 8-3-4, 8-3-5 and 10-2-5-b (A.R. 3-2-3-VII-VIII).**
- f. Distance penalties for fouls by either team may not extend a team's free kick restraining line behind its five-yard line. Penalties that would otherwise place the restraining line behind a team's five-yard line are enforced from the next succeeding spot.**

**RATIONALE:** Simplifies the application of the Three-and-One Principle to penalty enforcement. This change also moves key elements of penalty enforcement from Rule 2 (Definitions) into Rule 10.

## 12-1 and 12-3 Instant Replay (FR-144)

### SECTION 1. Purpose and Philosophy

#### Purpose

**ARTICLE 1.** Instant replay is a process whereby video review is used to confirm, reverse or let stand certain on-field decisions (Rule 12-3) made by game officials.

#### Philosophy

**ARTICLE 2.** The instant replay process operates under the fundamental assumption that the ruling on the field is correct. The replay official may reverse a ruling if and only if the video evidence convinces him beyond all doubt that the ruling was incorrect. Without such indisputable video evidence, the replay official must allow the ruling to stand.

### SECTION 3. Reviewable Plays

#### Scoring Plays

**ARTICLE 1.** Reviewable plays involving a potential score include:

- a. Live ball breaking the plane of a goal line while in a ball carrier's possession.
- b. Live ball ruled dead in possession of a runner when in the immediate continuing action the ball breaks the plane of the opponent's goal line.
- c. Field goal attempts if and only if the ball is ruled (a) below or above the crossbar or (b) inside or outside the uprights when it is lower than the top of the uprights. If the ball is higher than the top of the uprights as it crosses the end line, the play may not be reviewed.

#### Passes

**ARTICLE 2.** Reviewable plays involving passes include:

- a. Pass ruled complete, incomplete or intercepted anywhere in the field of play or an end zone.
- b. Forward pass touched by a player or an official.
- c. Forward pass or forward handing when a ball carrier is or has been beyond the neutral zone.
- d. A forward pass or forward handing after a change of team possession.
- e. Pass ruled forward or backward when thrown from behind the neutral zone.  
*(Note: If the pass is ruled forward and is incomplete, the play is not reviewable.)*

#### Dead Ball and Loose Ball

**ARTICLE 3.** Reviewable plays involving potential dead balls and loose balls include:

- a. Loose ball by a potential passer ruled a fumble *(Note: If the ruling is forward pass and the pass is incomplete, the play is not reviewable.)*
- b. Live ball not ruled dead in possession of a runner.

- c. Live ball ruled dead in possession of a runner when the clear recovery of a loose ball occurs in the immediate continuing action following the loose ball.
  - 1. If the ball is ruled dead and the replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers, the dead-ball ruling stands.
  - 2. If the replay official rules that the ball was not dead, it belongs to the recovering team at the spot of the recovery and any advance is nullified.
- d. Ball carrier's forward progress with respect to a first down.
- e. Catch or recovery of a fumble by a Team A player other than the fumbler before any change of possession during fourth down or a try.
- f. Ball carrier in or out of bounds. If a ball carrier is ruled out of bounds, the play is not reviewable, except as in Rules 12-3-1-b and 12-3-3-c.
- g. Catch or recovery of a loose ball by a player potentially touching a sideline or end line.
- h. A loose ball touching on or beyond a sideline, goal line, or end line, touching a pylon, or breaking the plane of a goal line.

### **Kicks**

**ARTICLE 4. Reviewable plays involving kicks include:**

- a. Touching of a kick.
- b. Player beyond the neutral zone when kicking the ball.
- c. Kicking team player advancing a ball after a potential muffed kick/fumble by the receiving team.
- d. Scrimmage kick crossing the neutral zone.

### **Miscellaneous**

**ARTICLE 5.**

- a. The number of players participating by either team during a live ball.
- b. Clock adjustment when a ruling is reviewed.
- c. Correcting the number of a down.
  - 1. This includes the result of a penalty enforcement that includes an automatic first down or loss of down.
  - 2. The correction may be made at any time within that series of downs or before the ball is legally put in play following that series.
- d. Any person who is not a player interfering with live-ball action occurring in the field of play (Rules 9-1-5 and 9-2-3-c).

### **Limitations on Reviewable Plays**

**ARTICLE 6. No other plays or officiating decisions are reviewable. However, the replay official may correct egregious errors, including those involving the game clock, whether or not a play is reviewable. This excludes fouls that are not specifically reviewable (Reviewable fouls: Rules 12-3-2-c and d and 12-3-5-a and 12-3-4-b).**

RATIONALE: Rule 12 is reorganized to classify reviewable plays according to the type of play in question.