



**NCAA**<sup>®</sup>

# FOOTBALL

## 2009-10 RULES AND INTERPRETATIONS



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2009-10 NCAA<sup>®</sup>  
FOOTBALL  
RULES AND  
INTERPRETATIONS

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# Major Rules Changes for 2009-10

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The numbers and letters in the left column refer to rule, section and article, respectively. Changed or altered items are identified in the rules by a shaded background, unless the change results in the deletion of the entire segment containing the change.

## MAJOR RULES CHANGES

1-4-3-a .....	Visiting team may wear colored jerseys.....	FR-31
2-3-6.....	Blocking zone defined .....	FR-45
2-24-1 (deleted) .....	Spearing definition eliminated.....	FR-55
2-33 .....	Three-and-One Principle of penalty enforcement defined .....	FR-62
2-34.....	Tackle box defined .....	FR-62
3-2-3.....	No extension of period on loss-of-down penalty .....	FR-67
3-2-4 and 3-3-5.....	40-second play clock for Team B injury .....	FR-68, 71
9-1-2-q .....	Chin strap included in face mask foul .....	FR-119
9-1-4.....	Roughing the kicker restricted to tackle box.....	FR-120
9-6.....	Mandatory conference review of flagrant fouls .....	FR-132

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# Index to Editorial Changes

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For 2009-10, there are a large number of editorial changes, far too many to be listed in detail. Significant organizational changes in Rules 2, 3 and 10 are intended to clarify and simplify the rules for starting and stopping the clock and for enforcing penalties. Other editorial changes are less comprehensive but are also intended to achieve clarity and simplification. Below is a list of the sections within each rule that contain editorial changes of particular note.

## **EDITORIAL CHANGES**

### **Rule 1**

Sections 1 and 4.

### **Rule 2**

Sections 2, 3, 7, 11, 14, 18, 24, 25 and 31.

### **Rule 3**

Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4.

### **Rule 4**

Section 1.

### **Rule 5**

Sections 1 and 2.

### **Rule 6**

Sections 1, 3 and 5.

### **Rule 7**

Sections 1, 2 and 3.

### **Rule 8**

Sections 2 and 4.

### **Rule 9**

Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

### **Rule 10**

Sections 1 and 2.

### **Rule 11**

### **Rule 12**

Sections 1, 2, 3 and 6.

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# Points of Emphasis

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The NCAA Football Rules Committee has extraordinary pride in the Football Code, which was introduced in 1916 and has been updated several times. These guidelines form a harmony of agreement among coaches, players, game officials and administrators that places each contest in an environment of fairness and sportsmanship. It is noted that the Code emphasizes the following unethical practices: “Using the helmet as a weapon. The helmet is for protection of the player...” and “players and coaches should emphasize the elimination of targeting and initiating contact against a defenseless opponent and/or with the crown of the helmet.” Every participant in the collegiate football scene shares a responsibility for ethical conduct that enhances the future of this American tradition.

**PROTECTION OF DEFENSELESS PLAYERS**—In 2008, the committee introduced a separate rule prohibiting initiating contact with and targeting a defenseless opponent (Rule 9-1-3).

The following are situations in which defenseless players are susceptible to serious injury:

- The quarterback moving down the line of scrimmage who has handed or pitched the ball to a teammate, and then makes no attempt to participate further in the play;
- The kicker who is in the act of kicking the ball, or who has not had a reasonable length of time to regain his balance after the kick;
- The passer who is in the act of throwing the ball, or who has not had a reasonable length of time to participate in the play again after releasing the ball;
- The pass receiver whose concentration is on the ball;
- The pass receiver who has clearly relaxed when the pass is no longer catchable;
- The kick receiver whose attention is on the downward flight of the ball;
- The kick receiver who has just touched the ball;
- The player who has relaxed once the ball has become dead; and
- The player who is obviously out of the play.

These players are protected by rules that have been in place for many years. It is of the utmost importance that participants, coaches and game officials carefully and diligently observe safety rules.

Intentional helmet-to-helmet contact is never legal, nor is any other blow directed toward an opponent's head. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified.

**SIDELINE CONTROL**—NCAA member institutions and conferences should develop plans to enforce the rules regarding the team area and coaching box (Rule 1-2-4-a, back of the limit lines between the 25-yard lines), and the space between the limit lines (Rules 1-2-3-a and b, 12 feet outside the sidelines and the end line) and the sidelines. These plans should focus on keeping these field-level positions clear of persons who have no game responsibilities.

The field level is for those who are performing a service associated with action on the field of play and for administration of the game; it is not for spectators. **Simply put, no job means no sideline pass.**

Each team is limited to 60 persons in its team area, not including squad members in full uniform, who shall be wearing a team credential. (Full uniform is defined as equipped in accord with NCAA rules and ready to play.) These persons should only be those who are directly involved in the game. The credentials should be numbered 1 through 60. No other credential should be valid for the team area.

Persons who are directly involved in the game include (Rules 1-1-6 and 1-2-4-b): coaches, team managers, medical and athletic training staff members, athletics communications staff members, and game operations staff members (e.g., chain crew, ball persons, official media liaisons, technicians responsible for coach-to-press box communications).

The area from the limit lines outward to the stadium seating, outside the team area, should be restricted, while the game is in progress, to credentialed media camera operators and on-air personnel, cheer team members in uniform, and stadium security personnel in uniform.

**SAFETY AND MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS**—In consultation with the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), the Football Rules Committee strongly encourages coaches and officials to be diligent in insuring that players wear mandatory equipment. It is especially important that equipment and pads cover body parts for which they were designed.

Particular attention is drawn to wearing uniform pants that cover the knees, which are easily abraded when exposed.

Football players are especially susceptible to methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), which is resistant to commonly used antibiotics. MRSA not only results in lost playing time, it has caused the deaths of several football players in recent years.

MRSA is typically transmitted through body-to-body contact from an infected wound or via an object (e.g., towel) that has come in contact with the infected area. It is not transmitted through the air, is not found on mud or grass, and cannot live on artificial turf.

The committee recommends the following precautions to reduce the incidence of MRSA infections:

- Proper wearing of all required padding and uniform equipment.
- Keeping hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water, or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer routinely.
- Immediate showering after all physical activity.
- Avoiding whirlpools or common tubs when having an open wound.
- Proper washing of athletics gear and towels after each use.
- Referring all active skin lesions to the athletic trainer.
- Covering all skin lesions appropriately before participation.

Other key areas cited by the NATA:

**CONCUSSIONS:** Coaches and medical personnel should exercise prudence in making return-to-play decisions when a student-athlete suffers a concussion.

**HYDRATION:** Coaches and medical personnel should encourage hydration without restriction to student-athletes during all physical activity.

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# Statement on Sportsmanship

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## **NCAA Football Rules Committee**

*Adopted February 2009*

- After reviewing a number of plays involving unsportsmanlike conduct, the committee is firm in its support of the unsportsmanlike conduct rules as they currently are written and officiated. Many of these fouls deal with players who inappropriately draw attention to themselves in a premeditated, excessive or prolonged manner. Players should be taught the discipline that reinforces football as a team game.
- The rules committee reminds head coaches of their responsibility for the behavior of their players before and after, as well as during, the game. Players must be cautioned against pre-game unsportsmanlike conduct on the field that can lead to confrontation between the teams. Such action can lead to penalties enforced on the opening kickoff, possibly including disqualification of players. Repeated occurrence of such unsportsmanlike behavior by a team may result in punitive action by the conference against the head coach and his institution.
- Currently the penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct fouls are administered by treating these as dead-ball fouls, even though the fouls often take place while the ball is in play. The committee is considering the possibility that if such a foul is committed while the ball is in play, the penalty would be enforced according to the rules for other live-ball fouls. This would mean, for example, that if a ball carrier about to score a touchdown taunted his opponents while still in the field of play, the score would be voided and the penalty enforced from the spot of the foul. Although the committee has not taken any action in this regard, it is a viable option for possible rules changes in the future.

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# The Football Code

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Football is an aggressive, rugged contact sport. Only the highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. There is no place for unfair tactics, unsportsmanlike conduct or maneuvers deliberately designed to inflict injury.

The American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Code of Ethics states:

- a. The Football Code shall be an integral part of this code of ethics and should be carefully read and observed.
- b. To gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules brands a coach or player as unfit to be associated with football.

Through the years, the rules committee has endeavored by rule and appropriate penalty to prohibit all forms of unnecessary roughness, unfair tactics and unsportsmanlike conduct. But rules alone cannot accomplish this end. Only the continued best efforts of coaches, players, officials and all friends of the game can preserve the high ethical standards that the public has a right to expect in America's foremost collegiate sport. Therefore, as a guide to players, coaches, officials and others responsible for the welfare of the game, the committee publishes the following code:

## Coaching Ethics

Deliberately teaching players to violate the rules is indefensible. The coaching of intentional holding, beating the ball, illegal shifting, feigning injury, interference, illegal forward passing or intentional roughing will break down rather than aid in the building of the character of players. Such instruction is not only unfair to one's opponent but is demoralizing to the players entrusted to a coach's care and has no place in a game that is an integral part of an educational program.

The following are unethical practices:

- a. Changing numbers during the game to deceive the opponent.
- b. Using the football helmet as a weapon. The helmet is for the protection of the player.
- c. Using a self-propelled mechanical apparatus in the teaching of blocking and tackling.

- d. Targeting and initiating contact. Players, coaches and officials should emphasize the elimination of targeting and initiating contact against a defenseless opponent and/or with the crown of the helmet.
- e. Using nontherapeutic drugs in the game of football. This is not in keeping with the aims and purposes of amateur athletics and is prohibited.
- f. “Beating the ball” by an unfair use of a starting signal. This is nothing less than deliberately stealing an advantage from the opponent. An honest starting signal is needed, but a signal that has for its purpose starting the team a fraction of a second before the ball is put in play, in the hope that it will not be detected by the officials, is illegal. It is the same as if a sprinter in a 100-meter dash had a secret arrangement with the starter to give him a tenth-of-a-second warning before firing the pistol.
- g. Shifting in a way that simulates the start of a play or employing any other unfair tactic for the purpose of drawing one’s opponent offside. This can be construed only as a deliberate attempt to gain an unmerited advantage.
- h. Feigning an injury for the purpose of gaining additional, undeserved time for one’s team. An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules. Such tactics cannot be tolerated among sportsmen of integrity.

## Talking to an Opponent

Talking to an opponent in any manner that is demeaning, vulgar, abusive or “trashy” or intended to incite a physical response or verbally put an opponent down is illegal. Coaches are urged to discuss this conduct frequently and support all officials’ actions to control it.

## Talking to Officials

When an official imposes a penalty or makes a decision, he simply is doing his duty as he sees it. He is on the field to uphold the integrity of the game of football, and his decisions are final and conclusive and should be accepted by players and coaches.

The AFCA Code of Ethics states:

- a. On- and off-the-record criticism of officials to players or to the public shall be considered unethical.
- b. For a coach to address, or permit anyone on his bench to address, uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the progress of a game, or to indulge in conduct that might incite players or spectators against the officials, is a violation of the rules of the game and must likewise be considered conduct unworthy of a member of the coaching profession.

## Holding

Illegal use of the hand or arm is unfair play, eliminates skill and does not belong in the game. The object of the game is to advance the ball by strategy, skill and speed without illegally holding your opponent. All coaches and players should thoroughly understand the rules for proper offensive and defensive use of the hands. Holding is a frequently called penalty; it is important to emphasize the severity of the penalty.

## Sportsmanship

The football player or coach who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct; and whether or not he escapes being penalized, he brings discredit to the good name of the game, which is his duty as a player or coach to uphold.

NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE

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Those who find it necessary to contact the editor for interpretations of rules or play situations may send an e-mail to the address below. The editor will respond as time allows. Requests should be sent to:

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# Part I:

## The Rules

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NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations have been designated as either administrative rules or conduct rules. Typically, administrative rules are those dealing with preparation for the contest. Conduct rules are those that have to do directly with the playing of the contest. Some administrative rules (as indicated) may be altered by the mutual consent of the competing institutions. Others (as indicated) are unalterable. No conduct rule may be changed by mutual consent. All NCAA member institutions are required to conduct their intercollegiate contests according to these rules.

**In 2009-10 NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations, administrative rules that may be altered by mutual consent of the institutions include:**

1-1-4-a	3-2-2-a
1-2-7-a	3-3-3-c and d
3-2-1-b	11-2

**Administrative rules that may not be altered include:**

1-1-1-a	1-2-7-a, b, e and f
1-1-2	1-2-8
1-1-3-a and b	1-2-9-a and b
1-1-4-b	1-3-1
1-1-5-a-c	1-3-1-a-k
1-1-6	1-3-2-b, c, e and f
1-1-7-a and b	1-3-2-d Exception
1-2-1	1-4-3-a and d
1-2-1-a-d, h, k and l	1-4-7
1-2-2	1-4-7-a-d
1-2-3-a and b	1-4-9-a-f
1-2-4-a-f	3-2-4-b
1-2-5-a-f	3-3-3-e
1-2-6	11-1-1
1-2-7	

**Administrative rules that may be altered by game management without mutual consent include:**

1-2-1-a Exception

1-2-7-c and d

1-2-1-e-g, i and j

1-3-2-d

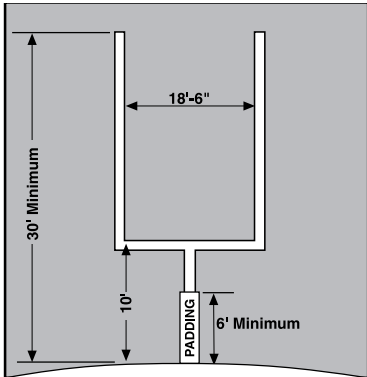
1-2-4-g

3-2-4

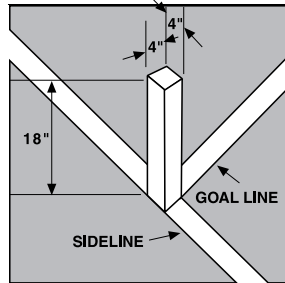
1-2-5-c Exception

**All other rules are conduct rules and may not be altered.**

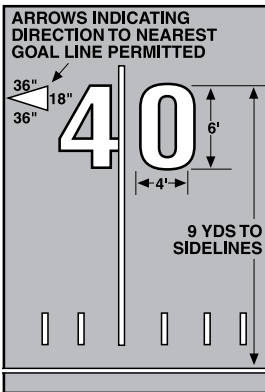
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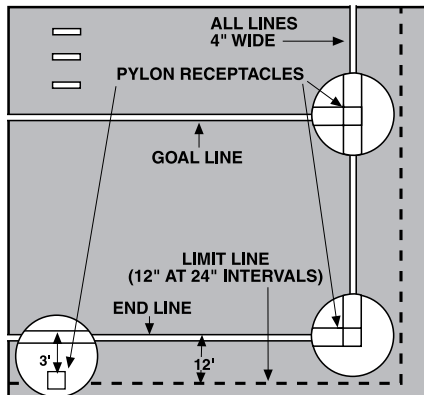
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**PYLON DETAIL**

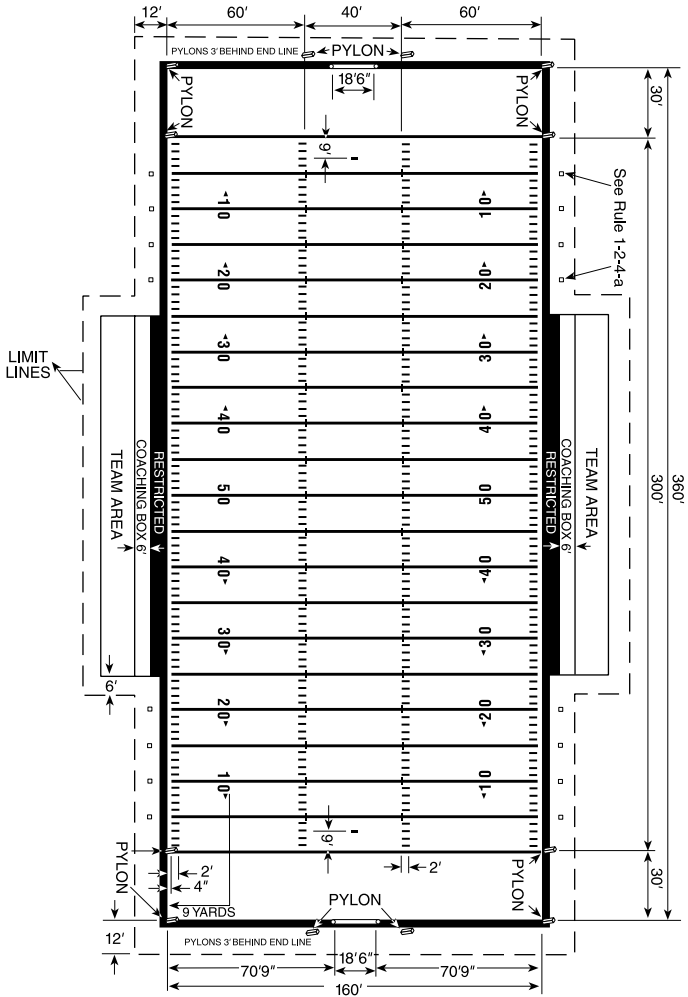


**RECOMMENDED YARD-LINE  
NUMBERING**

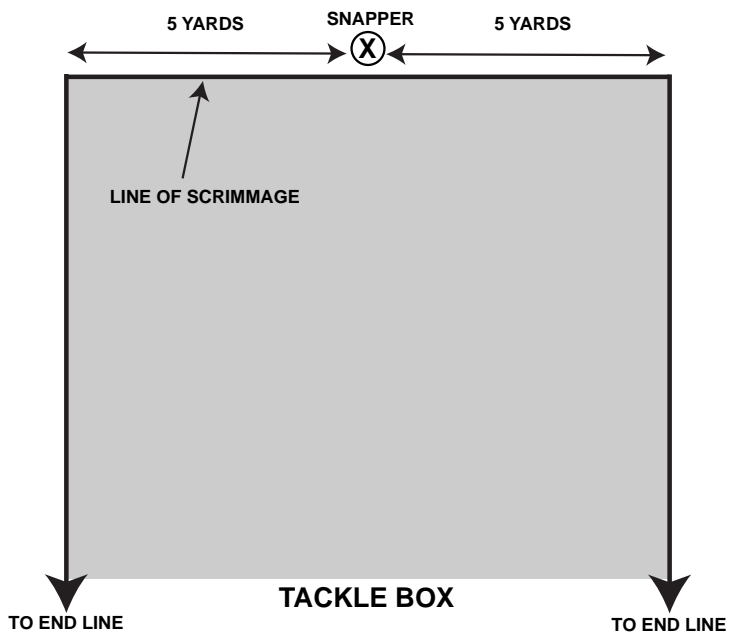
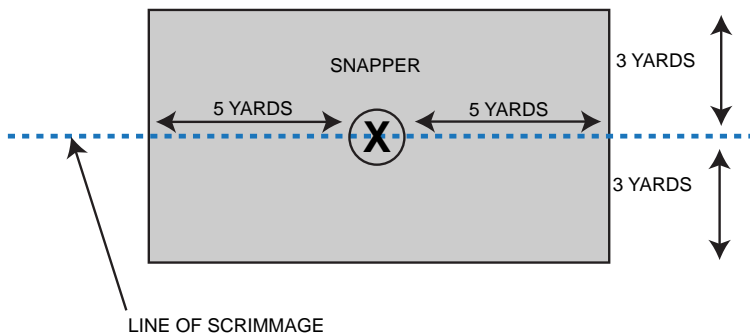


**END ZONE DETAIL**

# DIAGRAM OF FIELD



# BLOCKING ZONE



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# RULE 1

## The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

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### SECTION 1. General Provisions

#### The Game

ARTICLE 1. a. The game shall be played between two teams of not more than 11 players each, on a rectangular field and with an inflated ball having the shape of a prolate spheroid.

b. A team legally may play with fewer than 11 players, but a foul for an illegal formation occurs if the following requirements are not met:

1. When the ball is free-kicked, at least four Team A players are on each side of the kicker (Rule 6-1-2-c).
2. At the snap, at least five players wearing jerseys numbered 50 through 79 are on the offensive scrimmage line and no more than four players are in the backfield (Rules 2-21-2, 2-27-4 and 7-1-3-b-1) (Exception: Rule 1-4-2-b) (A.R. 1-4-2-I-V).

#### Goal Lines

ARTICLE 2. Goal lines, one for each team, shall be established at opposite ends of the field of play, and each team shall be allowed opportunities to advance the ball across the other team's goal line by running, passing or kicking it.

#### Winning Team and Final Score

ARTICLE 3. a. The teams shall be awarded points for scoring according to rule and, unless the game is forfeited, the team having the larger score at the end of the game, including extra periods, shall be the winning team.

b. The game is ended and the score is final when the referee so declares.

## Supervision

ARTICLE 4. a. The game shall be played under the supervision of either four, five, six or seven officials: a referee, an umpire, a linesman, a line judge, a back judge, a field judge and a side judge. The use of a back judge, field judge and side judge is optional.

b. Officiating crews will be assigned from the same officiating organization.

## Team Captains

ARTICLE 5. a. Each team shall designate to the referee not more than four players as its field captain(s), and one player at a time shall speak for his team in all dealings with the officials. There shall be not more than four captains from each team at the coin toss.

b. A field captain's first announced choice of any options offered his team shall be irrevocable.

c. Any player may request a team charged timeout.

## Persons Subject to the Rules

ARTICLE 6. a. All persons in the team area are subject to the rules and are governed by the decisions of the officials.

b. All players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, cheerleaders in uniform, band members in uniform, mascots in uniform, commercial mascots, public-address announcers, audio and video system operators, and other persons affiliated with the teams or institutions are subject to the rules and are governed by the decisions of the officials.

## Member Institutions Subject to the Rules

ARTICLE 7. a. NCAA member institutions and affiliated officiating organizations shall conduct all contests under the official football-playing rules of the Association.

b. NCAA-affiliated officiating organizations shall use the current Football Officials Manual published under the jurisdiction of the Collegiate Commissioners Association.

c. NCAA member institutions and affiliated officiating organizations not complying with NCAA football-playing rules that do not have a designated penalty are subject to NCAA sanctions.

## SECTION 2. The Field

### Dimensions

ARTICLE 1. The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and pylons as indicated and titled in the diagrams on pages FR-18-19.

- a. All field-dimension lines shown must be marked 4 inches in width with a white, nontoxic material that is not injurious to the eyes or skin (Exceptions: Sidelines and end lines may exceed 4 inches in width, goal lines may be 4 or 8 inches in width, and Rule 1-2-1-g).
- b. Twenty-four-inch short yard-line extensions, four inches inside the sidelines and at the inbounds lines, are mandatory; and all yard lines shall be four inches from the sidelines (Rule 2-11-7).
- c. A solid white area between the sideline and the coaching line is mandatory.
- d. White field markings or contrasting decorative markings (e.g., logos, team names, emblems, event, etc.) are permissible in the end zones but shall not be closer than four feet to any line.
- e. Contrasting coloring in the end zones may abut any line.
- f. Contrasting decorative markings are permissible within the sidelines and between the goal lines but shall not obliterate yard lines, goal lines or sidelines.
- g. Goal lines may be of one contrasting color from the white lines.
- h. Advertising is prohibited on the field [Exceptions: (1) Permitted for any game not played in-season when the sponsor is associated with the name of that game, (2) NCAA Football logo, and (3) If a commercial entity has purchased naming rights to the facility, that name is allowed to be painted on the field; however, the commercial logo is not allowed to be in the field of play].
- i. White field yard-line numbers not larger than 6 feet in height and 4 feet in width, with the tops of the numbers nine yards from the sidelines, are recommended.
- j. White directional arrows next to the field numbers (except the 50) indicating the direction toward the nearest goal line are recommended.

The arrow is a triangle with an 18-inch base and two sides that are 36 inches each.

- k. The two inbounds lines (hash marks) are 60 feet from the sidelines. Inbounds lines and short yard-line extensions shall measure 24 inches in length.
- l. Nine-yard marks 12 inches in length, every 10 yards, shall be located nine yards from the sidelines. They are not required if the field is numbered according to Rule 1-2-1-i.

### Marking Boundary Areas

ARTICLE 2. Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the boundary markings. The entire width of each goal line shall be in the end zone.

### Limit Lines

ARTICLE 3. a. Limit lines shall be marked with 12-inch lines and at 24-inch intervals 12 feet outside the sidelines and the end lines, except in stadiums where total field surface does not permit. In these stadiums, the limit lines shall not be less than six feet from the sidelines and end lines. Limit lines shall be 4 inches in width and may be yellow. Limit lines designating team areas shall be solid lines. No person outside the team area shall be within the limit lines.

- b. Limit lines shall also be marked six feet from the team area around the side and back of the team area, if the stadium permits.

### Team Area and Coaching Box

ARTICLE 4. a. On each side of the field, a team area in back of the limit line and between the 25-yard lines shall be marked for the exclusive use of substitutes, trainers and other persons affiliated with the team. The front of the coaching box shall be marked with a solid line six feet outside the sideline between the 25-yard lines. The area between the coaching line and the limit line between the 25-yard lines shall contain white diagonal lines or be marked distinctly for use of coaches (Rule 9-1-6-a). A 4-inch-by-4-inch mark is mandatory at each five-yard line extended between the goal lines as an extension of the coaching line for line-to-gain and down indicator six-foot reference points.

- b. The team area shall be limited to squad members in full uniform and a maximum of 60 other individuals directly involved in the game. All

persons in the team area are subject to the rules and are governed by decisions of the officials (Rule 1-1-6). "Full uniform" is defined as being equipped in accord with NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations, and ready to play. The 60 individuals not in full uniform shall wear special team area credentials numbered 1 through 60. No other credential is valid for the team area.

- c. Coaches are permitted in the area between the limit line and coaching line between the 25-yard lines. This area is the coaching box.
- d. Marking the team areas from the 25-yard lines is a game management requirement.
- e. No media personnel, including journalists, radio and television personnel, or their equipment, shall be in the team area or coaching box, and no media personnel shall communicate in any way with persons in the team area or coaching box. In stadiums where the team area extends to the spectator seating area, a pass-through area should be made available for media to move from one end of the field to the other on both sides of the field.
- f. Game management shall remove all persons not authorized by rule.
- g. Practice kicking nets are not permitted outside the team area (Exception: In stadiums where playing enclosures are limited in size, nets, holders and kickers are permitted outside the team area and outside the limit line) (Rule 9-2-1-b-1).

## Goals

ARTICLE 5. a. Each goal shall consist of two white or yellow uprights extending at least 30 feet above the ground with a connecting white or yellow horizontal crossbar, the top of which is 10 feet above the ground. The inside of the uprights and crossbar shall be in the same vertical plane as the inside edge of the end line.

- b. Above the crossbar, the uprights shall be white or yellow and 18 feet, six inches apart inside to inside.
- c. The designated uprights and crossbar shall be free of decorative material (Exception: 4-inch-by-42-inch orange or red wind directional streamers at the top of the uprights are permitted).

- d. The height of the crossbar shall be measured from the top of each end of the crossbar to the ground directly below.
- e. Goal posts shall be padded with resilient material from the ground to a height of at least six feet. "Offset uprights" may be used.

Advertising is prohibited on the goals. One manufacturer's logo or trademark is permitted on each goal post pad.

- f. The following procedure is recommended when one or both goals have been taken down and the original goals are not available for a try or field goal attempt:

A team is entitled to a kicking try and is not required to attempt a two-point play if the goals are not in position or complying with the dimensions required by Rule 1-2-5. A team also is entitled to a field goal attempt under the same conditions.

Kicking tries and field goal attempts must be made in the direction of the goal the team was attacking when it elected to make the kick.

The home team is responsible for the availability of a portable goal if original goals are removed during the game for any reason. The portable goal shall be erected or held in place for the kicks.

## Pylons

ARTICLE 6. Soft, flexible four-sided pylons 4 inches by 4 inches with an overall height of 18 inches, which may include a 2-inch space between the bottom of the pylon and the ground, are required. They shall be red or orange in color and placed at the inside corners of the eight intersections of the sidelines with the goal lines and end lines. The pylons marking the intersections of the end lines and inbounds lines extended shall be placed three feet off the end lines.

## Line-to-Gain and Down Indicators

ARTICLE 7. The official line-to-gain and down indicators shall be operated approximately six feet outside the sideline opposite the press box, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit.

- a. If a yardage chain is used, it shall join two rods not less than 5 feet high, the rods' inside edges being exactly 10 yards apart when the chain is fully extended.

Any other line-to-gain indicator that accurately measures the line to gain is permitted outside the sideline opposite the press box when teams mutually agree. Before the game, the linesman shall test and approve all line-to-gain indicators for accuracy and security.

- b. The down indicator shall be mounted on a rod not less than 5 feet high operating approximately six feet outside the sideline opposite the press box.
- c. An unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain indicator and an unofficial down indicator six feet outside the other sideline are recommended.
- d. Unofficial red or orange nonslip line-to-gain ground markers positioned off the sidelines on both sides of the field are recommended. Markers are rectangular, weighted material 10 inches by 32 inches. A triangle with an altitude of 5 inches is attached to the rectangle at the end toward the sideline.
- e. All line-to-gain and down-indicator rods shall have flat ends.
- f. Advertising is prohibited on the down and line-to-gain indicators. One manufacturer's logo or trademark is permitted on each indicator.

### Markers or Obstructions

ARTICLE 8. a. All markers and obstructions within the playing enclosure shall be placed or constructed in such a manner as to avoid any possible hazard to players. This includes anything dangerous to anyone at the limit lines. The referee shall order removed any hazardous obstructions or markers located inside the limit lines.

- b. Any markers or obstructions within the playing enclosure but outside the limit lines constituting a hazard shall be reported to game management by the referee. Final determination of corrective action shall be the responsibility of game management.

### Field Areas

ARTICLE 9. a. No material or device shall be used to improve or degrade the playing surface or other conditions and give one player or team an advantage (Exceptions: Rules 2-15-4-b and c).

### **PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S27].**

- b. The referee may require any improvement in the field necessary for proper and safe game administration.

## SECTION 3. The Ball

### Specifications

ARTICLE 1. The ball shall meet the following specifications:

- New or nearly new. (A nearly new ball is a ball that has not been altered and retains the properties and qualities of a new ball.)
- Cover consisting of four panels of pebble-grained leather without corrugations other than seams.

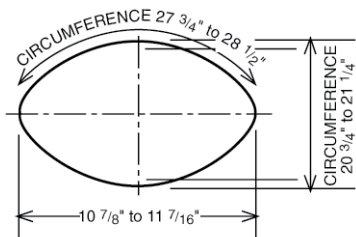


Diagram showing the longitudinal cross section of the standard ball. Maximum and minimum dimensions are used. This diagram is printed in order to secure uniformity in manufacture.

- One set of eight equally spaced lacings.
- Natural tan color.
- Two 1-inch white stripes that are three to three and one-quarter inches from the end of the ball and located only on the two panels adjacent to the laces.
- Conforms to maximum and minimum dimensions and shape indicated in the accompanying diagram.
- Inflated to the pressure of 12-1/2 to 13-1/2 pounds per square inch (psi).
- Weight of 14 to 15 ounces.

- i. The ball may not be altered. This includes the use of any ball-drying substance. Mechanical ball-drying devices are not permitted near the sidelines or in the team area.
- j. Professional football league logos are prohibited.
- k. Advertising is prohibited on the ball [Exceptions: (1) Ball manufacturer's name or logo, and (2) AFCA].

#### Administration and Enforcement

ARTICLE 2. a. The game officials shall test and be sole judge of not more than six balls offered for play by each team before and during the game. The game officials may approve additional balls if warranted by conditions (A.R. 1-3-2-I).

- b. Home management shall provide a pressure pump and measuring device.
- c. The home team is responsible for providing legal balls and should notify the opponent of the ball to be used.
- d. During the entire game, either team may use a new or nearly new ball of its choice when it is in possession, providing the ball meets the required specifications and has been measured and tested according to rule (Exception: The official NCAA football shall be used for the Division I Football Championship Subdivision, II and III championships).
- e. The visiting team is responsible for providing the legal balls it wishes to use while it is in possession if the balls provided by the home team are not acceptable.
- f. All balls to be used must be presented to the referee for testing 60 minutes before the start of the game.
- g. When the ball becomes dead nearer a sideline than the inbounds line (hash mark), is unfit for play, is subject to measurement in a side zone or is inaccessible, a replacement ball shall be obtained from a ball person (A.R. 1-3-2-I).
- h. The referee or umpire shall determine the legality of each ball before it is put in play.
- i. The following procedures shall be used when measuring a ball:
  - 1. All measurements shall be made after the ball is legally inflated.

2. The long circumference shall be measured around the ends of the ball but not over the laces.
3. The long diameter shall be measured with calipers from end to end but not in the nose indentation.
4. The short circumference shall be measured around the ball, over the valve and over the lace but not over the cross lace.

### Marking Balls

ARTICLE 3. Marking a ball indicating a preference for any player or any situation is prohibited.

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. 15 yards from the previous spot [S27].**

## SECTION 4. Players and Playing Equipment

### Recommended Numbering

ARTICLE 1. It is strongly recommended that offensive players be numbered according to the following diagram that shows one of many offensive formations (Rule 1-4-2-b):



### Players' Numbering

ARTICLE 2. a. All players shall be numbered 1 through 99. Any number preceded by zero ("0") is illegal [S23].

- b. On a scrimmage down, at least five offensive players on the scrimmage line shall be numbered 50 through 79.

[Exception: In a scrimmage kick formation (Rule 2-15-10) Team A may have fewer than five players so numbered on the line of scrimmage, subject to the following conditions:

1. Any and all players on the line not numbered 50-79 who are ineligible receiver(s) by position are established as exceptions to the numbering rule when the snapper touches or simulates touching the ball (i.e., hands at or below his knees).
2. At the snap any and all such numbering-exception players must be on the line and may not be on the end of the line. Otherwise, Team A commits a foul for an illegal formation.
3. Any and all such players are exceptions to the numbering rule throughout the down and remain ineligible receivers unless they become eligible under Rule 7-3-5.

These conditions are no longer in effect if prior to the snap a period ends or there is a timeout charged to the referee or one of the teams.)] (A.R. 1-4-2-I, IV and V) [S19].

- c. No two players of the same team shall participate in the same down wearing identical numbers (A.R. 1-4-2-II) [S23].
- d. Markings in the vicinity of the numbers are not permitted (A.R. 1-4-2-III) [S23].

**PENALTY [a-d]—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S19 or S23].**

- e. Numbers shall not be changed during the game to deceive opponents [S27].

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. 15 yards from the previous spot [S27].  
Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

### Contrasting Colors

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 after 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].**

- b. A white jersey is one with only contrasting playing numbers, player's name, school name, NCAA Football logo, school insignia, conference insignia, mascot insignia, game insignia, memorial insignia or the American flag attached. An insignia must not exceed 16 square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram), including any additional material (e.g., patch). Stripes may be placed on the sleeves. A border not more than 1 inch wide around the collar and cuffs is permissible, as is a maximum 4-inch stripe along the side seam (insert from the underarm to pants top).
- c. If a colored jersey contains white, it may appear only as a number, border of a number, player's name, school name, stripes on the sleeves, a border not more than 1 inch wide around the collar and cuffs, a maximum 4-inch stripe along the side seam (insert from the underarm to pants top), or as part of a legal insignia (Rule 1-4-3-b).
- 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.

**PENALTY [b-d]—One charged team timeout per half.**

Mandatory Equipment

ARTICLE 4. All players shall wear the following mandatory equipment, which shall be professionally manufactured and not altered to decrease protection:

- a. *Knee pads.* Soft knee pads at least 1/2-inch thick that must cover the knees and be covered by pants. No pads or protective equipment may be worn outside the pants. Players of a team shall wear pants of the same color and design.
- b. *Helmet.* A helmet with a face mask and a secured four- or six-point chin strap. If a chin strap is not secured, it is a violation. Officials should inform players when all snaps are not secured without charging a timeout unless the player ignores the warning. Players of a team shall wear helmets of the same color and design, and face masks of the same color.
- c. *Other pads.* Shoulder pads, hip pads with tailbone protector and thigh guards.
- d. *Mouthpiece.* An intra-oral mouthpiece of any readily visible color (not white or transparent) with FDA-approved base materials (FDCS) that covers all upper teeth. It is recommended that the mouthpiece be properly fitted.
- e. *Jersey.* One jersey, with sleeves that completely cover the shoulder pads, that is not altered or designed to tear and conforms with Rules 1-4-3 and 1-4-4-f. The jersey must be full-length and tucked into the pants. Vests and/or a second jersey worn concurrently during the game are prohibited.
- f. *Numerals.* Clearly visible, permanent Arabic numerals on one jersey at least 8 and 10 inches in height front and back, respectively, of a color(s) in distinct contrast with the jersey. All players of a team shall have the same color and style numbers front and back. The individual bars must be approximately 1-1/2 inches wide. Numbers on any part of the uniform shall correspond with the mandatory front and back jersey numbers.
- g. *Memorial insignias.* In the case of death or catastrophic injury or illness, a person may be memorialized by an insignia not greater than 1-1/2 inches in diameter that displays the number, name or initials of the individual on the uniform or helmet.
- h. *Socks.* All squad members must wear visible socks or leg coverings that are identical in color, design and length (Exceptions: Unaltered knee braces, tape or a bandage to protect or prevent an injury, and barefoot kickers) (A.R. 1-4-4-I).

*Note: If a player is not wearing mandatory equipment in compliance in all respects with Rule 1-4-4, the team shall be charged a timeout and the player shall not be permitted to play until he complies. VIOLATION—Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b-2 [S23, S3 or S21].*

*National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE): All players shall wear helmets that carry a warning label regarding the risk of injury and a manufacturer's or reconditioner's certification indicating satisfaction of NOCSAE test standards. All such reconditioned helmets shall show recertification to indicate satisfaction with the NOCSAE test standard.*

### Illegal Equipment

ARTICLE 5. No player wearing illegal equipment shall be permitted to play. Any question as to the legality of a player's equipment shall be decided by the umpire. Illegal equipment includes the following (A.R. 1-4-5-I):

- a. Equipment worn by a player, including artificial limbs, that would endanger other players. An artificial limb must not give the wearer any advantage in competition. If necessary, the artificial limb should be padded to rebound as a natural limb.
- b. Hard, abrasive or unyielding substances on the hand, wrist, forearm or elbow of any player, unless covered on all exterior sides and edges with closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding not less than 1/2-inch thick or an alternate material of the same minimum thickness and similar physical properties. Hard or unyielding substances are permitted, if covered, only to protect an injury. Hand and arm protectors (covered casts or splints) are permitted only to protect a fracture or dislocation.
- c. Thigh guards of any hard substances, unless all surfaces are covered with material such as closed-cell vinyl foam that is at least 1/4-inch thick on the outside surface and at least 3/8-inch thick on the inside surface and the overlaps of the edges; shin guards not covered on both sides and all edges with closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding at least 1/2-inch thick, or an alternate material of the same minimum thickness having similar physical properties; and therapeutic or preventive knee braces, unless worn under the pants and entirely covered from direct external exposure.

- d. Projection of metal or other hard substance from a player's person or clothing.
- e. Shoe cleats (Rule 9-2-2-d)—detachable:
  - 1. More than 1/2-inch in length (measured from tip of cleat to the shoe) (Exception: If attached to a 5/32-inch or less raised platform wider than the base of the cleat and extended across the width of the shoe to within 1/4-inch or less of the outer edges of the sole. A single toe cleat does not require a raised platform that extends across the width of the sole. The raised platform of the toe cleat is limited to 5/32-inch or less. The 5/32-inch or less is measured from the lowest point of the platform to the sole of the shoe).
  - 2. Made of any material that chips or fractures.
  - 3. Without an effective locking device.
  - 4. With concave sides.
  - 5. Conical cleats with flat free ends not parallel to their bases or less than 3/8-inch in diameter or with rounded free ends having arcs greater than 7/16-inch.
  - 6. Oblong cleats with free ends not parallel with bases or that measure less than 1/4-inch by 3/4-inch.
  - 7. Circular or ring cleats without rounded edges and a wall less than 3/16-inch thick.
  - 8. Steel-tipped cleats without steel tipped with low carbon steel of 1006 material, case hardened to .005-.008 depth and drawn to Rockwell hardness of approximately C55.
- f. Shoe cleats (Rule 9-2-2-d)—nondetachable:
  - 1. More than 1/2-inch in length (measured from tip of cleat to sole of shoe).
  - 2. Made of any material that burrs, chips or fractures.
  - 3. With abrasive surfaces or cutting edges.
  - 4. Made of any metallic material.
- g. Tape or any bandage on a hand, wrist, forearm or elbow, unless used to protect an injury and specifically sanctioned by the umpire.

- h. Helmets, jerseys or attachments that tend to conceal the ball by closely resembling it in color.
- i. Adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or on a player's person, clothing or attachment that affects the ball or an opponent (Exception: Eye shade).

Jerseys, undershirts and the exterior of arm covers/pads that enhance contact with a football or an opponent.

- j. Any face mask except those constructed of nonbreakable material with rounded edges covered with resilient material designed to prevent chipping, burrs or an abrasiveness that would endanger players.
- k. Shoulder pads with the leading edge of the epaulet rounded with a radius more than one-half the thickness of the material used.
- l. Anything on the uniform other than a player's numbers; a player's name; NCAA Football logo; memorial recognition; the American flag; or institution, conference or game identification. No other words, numbers or symbols are permitted on a player's person or tape (Exception: Game information on a player's wrist or arm).

Uniforms and all other items of apparel (e.g., warm-ups, socks, headbands, T-shirts, wristbands, visors, hats or gloves) may bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark) not to exceed 2-1/4 square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. No sizing, garment-care or other non-logo labels shall be on the outside of the uniform. Professional league logos are prohibited.

- m. Gloves or hand pads that are not gray in color (Rule 1-4-3-d) or not in conformance with Rule 1-4-5-b. A glove is a fitted covering for a hand having separate sections for each finger and thumb, without any additional material that connects any of the fingers and/or thumb, and that completely covers each finger and thumb.
- n. Gloves and hand pads that do not have a securely attached label or stamp ("NF/NCAA Specifications") indicating voluntary compliance with test specifications on file with the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association. (Exception: Hand pads became subject to this rule in 2006.)

- o. Jerseys that have been taped or tied in any manner.
- p. Uniform attachments [Exceptions: (1) On scrimmage plays, one white moisture-absorbing towel may be worn by one interior offensive lineman, one offensive backfield player and a maximum of two defensive players. The towels of the offensive backfield and defensive players must be 4 inches by 12 inches and must be worn on the front or side of the belt. There are no restrictions on the size or location of the towel worn by the interior offensive lineman; (2) On free kicks, one white moisture-absorbing towel without markings may be worn by a maximum of two Team A and two Team B players. The towels worn on free kicks must be 4 inches by 12 inches and must be worn on the front or side of the belt; and (3) Hand warmers worn during inclement weather].
- q. Rib pads, shoulder pad attachments and back protectors not totally covered.
- r. Visible bandannas worn on the field of play or end zones (A.R. 1-4-5-II).
- s. Eye shields that are not clear, that are tinted, or that are not made from molded or rigid material.

*Note:* No player wearing illegal equipment shall be permitted to play. If illegal equipment is discovered by an official, the team shall be charged a team timeout. VIOLATION—Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b-2 [S23, S3 or S21].

*Exception:* If equipment in Rule 1-4-5 becomes illegal through play, the player must leave the game until the illegal equipment is corrected but will not be charged a team timeout.

### Mandatory and Illegal Equipment Enforcement

ARTICLE 6. Failure to wear mandatory equipment or the use of illegal equipment is enforced as follows:

- a. Each of the first three infractions for failure to wear mandatory equipment or wearing illegal equipment requires a charged timeout. The fourth infraction in a half requires a five-yard penalty. The delay penalty for the fourth timeout could be the first violation for not wearing mandatory equipment or wearing illegal equipment. The first three timeouts could have been taken by the team as charged team timeouts.
  - 1. The timeouts are granted.

2. There is no offset for the first three violations when an opponent has fouled.
  3. When timeouts are exhausted, the next violation is a dead-ball delay penalty at the succeeding spot.
  4. A timeout is called, the offending team is indicated by the referee, and the captain and coaches are notified through the officials nearest the sidelines.
- b. Officials should ascertain before the ball is ready for play if players are not wearing mandatory equipment or are wearing illegal equipment. Only in an emergency should the play clock be interrupted. Examples: A player(s) not wearing a helmet or a mouthpiece (A.R. 1-4-6-I). The team will be charged a timeout or, if all timeouts have been used, a delay-of-game foul. VIOLATION—Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b-2 [S23, S3 or S21].
  - c. No jersey may be changed on the field of play, and such changes must be made in the team area of the player making the change. When it is determined that a jersey does not comply with Rule 1-4-4-e and/or f, a team timeout will be charged to that team at the succeeding spot. If the team has expended its three timeouts, a delay will be charged under Rule 3-4-2-b-2. Players may change torn jerseys during team timeouts and return to play. A player may change a jersey and return during a delay penalty only if the game is not further delayed by that action.
  - d. Tape may not cover or partially cover a glove. Tape may be used to secure glove fasteners.

### Coaches' Certification

ARTICLE 7. The head coach or his designated representative shall certify to the umpire before the game that all players:

- a. Have been informed what equipment is mandatory by rule and what constitutes illegal equipment.
- b. Have been provided the equipment mandated by rule.
- c. Have been instructed to wear and how to wear mandatory equipment during the game.
- d. Have been instructed to notify the coaching staff when equipment becomes illegal through play during the game.

### Prohibited Signal Devices

ARTICLE 8. Players are prohibited from being equipped with any electronic, mechanical or other signal devices for the purpose of communicating with any source (Exception: A medically prescribed hearing aid of the sound-amplifier type for hearing-impaired players).

**PENALTY—15 yards and disqualification of the player. Penalize as a dead-ball foul at the succeeding spot [S7, S27 and S47].**

### Prohibited Field Equipment

ARTICLE 9. a. Television replay or monitor equipment is prohibited at the sidelines, press box or other locations within the playing enclosure for coaching purposes during the game. Motion pictures, any type of film, facsimile machines, videotapes, photographs, writing-transmission machines and computers may not be used by coaches or for coaching purposes anytime during the game or between periods.

- b. Only voice communication between the press box and team area is permitted. Where press-box space is not adequate, only voice communication may originate from any area in the stands between the 25-yard lines extended to the top of the stadium. No other communication for coaching purposes is permitted anywhere else.
- c. Media communication equipment, including cameras, sound devices, computers and microphones, is prohibited on or above the field, or in or above the team area (Rule 2-31-1).

#### *Exceptions:*

- 1. Camera equipment attached to a goal support behind the uprights and crossbar.
- 2. A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to the cap of the umpire with prior approval of the umpire and the participating institutions.
- 3. A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to cables that extend over the team area and field of play, including the end zones.
- d. Microphones, provided by home management, are strongly recommended on referees. (*Note: Microphones for referees will be mandatory in 2010.*) They may be used only on referees for penalty or other game

announcements. It is strongly recommended that they be lapel-type microphones. They must be controlled by the referee and may not be open at other times. Microphones on other officials are prohibited.

- e. Microphones attached to coaches during the game for media transmission are prohibited. Team personnel may not be interviewed from the start of the first period until the referee declares the game ended (Exception: Only coaches may be interviewed between the conclusion of the second period and the beginning of the third period).
- f. No one in the team area or coaching box may use any artificial sound amplification to communicate with players on the field.
- g. Any attempt to record, either through audio or video means, any signals given by an opposing player, coach or other team personnel is prohibited.

#### Coaches' Phones

ARTICLE 10. Coaches' phones and headsets are not subject to the rules before or during the game.

#### Use of Tobacco

ARTICLE 11. Players, squad members and game personnel (e.g., coaches, trainers, managers and game officials) are prohibited from using tobacco products from the time the officials assume jurisdiction until the referee declares the game over.

**PENALTY—Disqualification. On-the-field violations will be penalized as a dead-ball foul at the succeeding spot [S47].**

#### New Equipment

ARTICLE 12. The NCAA Football Rules Committee is responsible for formulating the official playing rules for the sport. The committee is not responsible for testing or approving playing equipment for use in intercollegiate football.

Equipment manufacturers have undertaken the responsibility for the development of playing equipment that meets the specifications established by the committee. The NCAA urges manufacturers to work with the various independent testing agencies to ensure the production of safe products. Neither the NCAA nor the NCAA Football Rules Committee certifies the safety of any football equipment. Only equipment that meets the dimensions

and specifications in the NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations may be used in intercollegiate competition.

While the committee does not regulate the development of new equipment and does not set technical or scientific standards for testing equipment, the committee may, from time to time, provide manufacturers with guidelines as to the equipment-performance levels it considers consistent with the integrity of the game. The committee reserves the right to intercede to protect and maintain that integrity.

The NCAA Football Rules Committee suggests that manufacturers planning innovative changes in football equipment submit the equipment to the NCAA Football Rules Committee for review before production.

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# RULE 2

## Definitions

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### SECTION 1. Approved Rulings and Official's Signals

ARTICLE 1. a. An approved ruling (A.R.) is an official decision on a given statement of facts. It serves to illustrate the spirit and application of the rules. The relationship between the rules and an approved ruling is analogous to that between statutory law and a decision of the Supreme Court.

If there is a conflict between the official rules and approved rulings, the rules take precedence.

b. An official's signal [S] refers to the Official Football Signals 1 through 47.

### SECTION 2. The Ball: Live, Dead, Loose

#### Live Ball

ARTICLE 1. A live ball is a ball in play. A pass, kick or fumble that has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight.

#### Dead Ball

ARTICLE 2. A dead ball is a ball not in play.

#### Loose Ball

ARTICLE 3. a. A loose ball is a live ball not in player possession during:

1. A running play.
2. A scrimmage or free kick before possession is gained or regained or the ball is dead by rule.
3. The interval after a legal forward pass is touched and before it becomes complete, incomplete or intercepted. This interval is during a forward pass play, and any player eligible to touch the ball may bat it in any direction.

- b. All players are eligible to touch, catch or recover a ball that is loose from a fumble (Exceptions: Rules 7-2-2-a-2 and 8-3-2-d-5) or a backward pass, but eligibility to touch a ball loose from a kick is governed by kick rules (Rule 6) and eligibility to touch a forward pass is governed by pass rules (Rule 7).

#### When Ball Is Ready for Play

ARTICLE 4. A dead ball is ready for play when:

- a. With the 40-second play clock running, an official places the ball at an inbounds mark or between the inbounds marks and steps away to his position.
- b. With the play clock set at 25 seconds, the referee sounds his whistle and either signals to start the game clock [S2] or signals that the ball is ready for play [S1]. (A.R. 4-1-4-I and II)

#### In Possession

ARTICLE 5. "In possession" means the holding or controlling of a live ball or a ball to be free-kicked. It may refer either to player possession or team possession.

- a. A player gains possession when he secures the ball firmly by holding or controlling it while contacting the ground inbounds. The ball is then in player possession.
- b. A team has team possession:
  - (1) When one of its players is in possession, including when he is attempting a punt, drop kick or place kick;
  - (2) While a forward pass thrown by one of its players is in flight; or
  - (3) During a loose ball if one of its players was last in possession.
- c. A team is in legal possession if it has team possession when its players are eligible to catch or recover the ball.

#### Belongs To

ARTICLE 6. "Belongs to," as contrasted with "in possession," denotes custody of a dead ball. Such custody may be temporary, because the ball must next be put in play in accordance with rules governing the existing situation.

## Catch, Interception, Recovery

ARTICLE 7. a. To catch a ball means that a player:

1. Gains possession of a live ball in flight; or
2. Leaves his feet and firmly grasps a live ball in flight, the ball first touching the ground inbounds while still in his firm grasp; or
3. Leaves his feet, firmly grasps a live ball in flight and either first returns to the ground inbounds with any part of his body or is so held that the dead-ball provisions of Rule 4-1-3-p apply (A.R. 2-2-7-I-V and A.R. 7-3-6-IV).

If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch even though a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out of bounds (A.R. 7-3-6-XVII). A player who satisfies any of these three conditions is said to have completed a catch.

- b. An interception is a catch of an opponent's pass or fumble.
- c. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception (Rules 7-3-6 and 7).
- d. A player recovers a ball if he fulfills any of the three criteria for catching a ball that is still alive after hitting the ground.
- e. Loss of ball simultaneous to returning to the ground is not a catch, interception or recovery.
- f. When in question, the catch, recovery or interception is not completed.

## Simultaneous Catch or Recovery

ARTICLE 8. A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch or recovery in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players inbounds (A.R. 7-3-6-II and III).

## SECTION 3. Blocking

### Blocking

ARTICLE 1. a. Blocking is obstructing an opponent by contacting him with any part of the blocker's body.

- b. Pushing is blocking an opponent with open hands.

### Below Waist

ARTICLE 2. a. Blocking below the waist is the initial contact below the waist with any part of the blocker's body against an opponent, other than the ball carrier. When in question, the contact is below the waist (Rule 9-1-2-e).

b. Blocking below the waist applies to the initial contact by a blocker against an opponent who has one or both feet on the ground. A blocker who makes contact above the waist and then slides below the waist has not blocked below the waist. If the blocker first contacts the opposing player's hands at the waist or above, it is a legal "above the waist" block (Rule 9-1-2-e).

### Chop Block

ARTICLE 3. A chop block is a high-low or low-high combination block by any two players against an opponent (not the ball carrier) anywhere on the field, with or without a delay between blocks; the "low" component is at the opponent's thigh or below (A.R. 2-3-3-III and IV, A.R. 9-1-2-XXVI).

### Block in the Back

ARTICLE 4. a. A block in the back is contact against an opponent occurring when the force of the initial contact is from behind and above the waist (Exception: Against the ball carrier). When in question, the contact is below the waist (Rule 9-3-3-c) (A.R. 9-1-2-XVII, A.R. 9-3-3-VII, and A.R. 10-2-2-XXII).

b. The position of the blocker's head or feet does not necessarily indicate the point of initial contact.

### Frame (of the Body)

ARTICLE 5. The frame of a player's body is at the shoulders or below other than the back [Rule 9-3-3-a-1-(c) Exception].

### Blocking Zone

ARTICLE 6. a. The blocking zone is a rectangle centered on the snapper and extending five yards laterally and three yards longitudinally in each direction. (See diagram in the front of this book.)

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

## SECTION 4. Clipping

ARTICLE 1. a. Clipping is a block against an opponent occurring when the force of the initial contact is from behind and at or below the waist (Exception: Against the ball carrier) (Rule 9-1-2-d).

b. The position of the blocker's head or feet does not necessarily indicate the point of initial contact.

## SECTION 5. Deliberate Dead-Ball Advance

Deliberately advancing a dead ball is an attempt by a player to advance the ball after any part of his person, other than a hand or foot, has touched the ground or after the ball has been declared dead by rule (Exception: Rule 4-1-3-b Exception).

## SECTION 6. Down and Between Downs

### Down

ARTICLE 1. A down is a unit of the game that starts with a legal snap or legal free kick after the ball is ready for play and ends when the ball next becomes dead [Exception: The try is a scrimmage down that begins when the referee declares the ball ready for play (Rule 8-3-2-b)].

### Between Downs

ARTICLE 2. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.

## SECTION 7. Fair Catch

### Fair Catch

ARTICLE 1. a. A fair catch of a scrimmage kick is a catch beyond the neutral zone by a player of Team B who has made a valid signal during a scrimmage kick that is untouched beyond the neutral zone.

b. A fair catch of a free kick is a catch by a player of Team B who has made a valid signal during an untouched free kick.

c. A valid or invalid fair catch signal deprives the receiving team of the opportunity to advance the ball, and the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch or recovery or at the spot of the signal if the catch precedes the signal.

- d. If the receiver shades his eyes from the sun, the ball is live and may be advanced.

#### Valid Signal

ARTICLE 2. A valid signal is a signal given by a player of Team B who has obviously signaled his intention by extending one hand only clearly above his head and waving that hand from side to side of his body more than once.

#### Invalid Signal

ARTICLE 3. An invalid signal is any waving signal by a player of Team B that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal (Rule 6-5-3).

## SECTION 8. Forward, Beyond and Forward Progress

#### Forward, Beyond

ARTICLE 1. Forward, beyond or in advance of, as related to either team, denotes direction toward the opponent's end line. Converse terms are backward or behind.

#### Forward Progress

ARTICLE 2. Forward progress is a term indicating the end of advancement by the ball carrier or airborne pass receiver of either team and applies to the position of the ball when it became dead by rule (Rules 4-1-3-a, b and p; Rules 4-2-1 and 4; and Rule 5-1-3-a Exception) (A.R. 5-1-3-I-VI and A.R. 8-2-1-I-IV) (Exception: Rule 8-5-1-a, A.R. 8-5-1-I).

## SECTION 9. Foul and Violation

#### Foul

ARTICLE 1. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. A flagrant personal foul is a rule infraction so extreme or deliberate that it places an opponent in danger of catastrophic injury.

#### Violation

ARTICLE 2. A violation is a rule infraction for which no penalty is prescribed. Since it is not a foul, it does not offset a foul.

## SECTION 10. Fumbling, Muffing, Batting, Touching or Blocking a Kick

### Fumble

ARTICLE 1. A fumble is any act other than passing, kicking or successful handing that results in loss of player possession (A.R. 2-19-2-I, A.R. 4-1-3-I and A.R. 7-2-2-I).

### Muff

ARTICLE 2. A muff is an unsuccessful attempt to catch or recover a ball that is touched in the attempt.

### Batting

ARTICLE 3. Batting the ball is intentionally striking it or intentionally changing its direction with the hands or arms.

### Touching

ARTICLE 4. Touching of a ball not in player possession denotes any contact with the ball (Exceptions: Rules 6-1-4-a and b and 6-3-4-a and b). It may be intentional or unintentional, and it always precedes possession and control. Intentional touching is deliberate or intended touching. When in question, a ball has not been touched on a kick or forward pass.

### Blocking a Scrimmage Kick

ARTICLE 5. Blocking a scrimmage kick is touching the ball by an opponent of the kicking team in an attempt to prevent the ball from advancing beyond the neutral zone (Rule 6-3-1-b).

## SECTION 11. Lines

### Sidelines

ARTICLE 1. A sideline runs from end line to end line on each side of the field and separates the field of play from the area that is out of bounds. The entire sideline is out of bounds.

### Goal Lines

ARTICLE 2. The goal line at each end of the field of play runs between the sidelines and is part of the vertical plane that separates the end zone from the field of play. This plane extends beyond the sidelines (Exception: Rule

4-2-4-e). The two goal lines are 100 yards apart. The entire goal line is in the end zone. A team's goal line is that which it is defending (A.R. 2-11-2-I).

### End Lines

ARTICLE 3. An end line runs between the sidelines 10 yards behind each goal line and separates the end zone from the area that is out of bounds. The entire end line is out of bounds.

### Boundary Lines

ARTICLE 4. The boundary lines are the sidelines and the end lines. The area enclosed by the boundary lines is "in bounds," and the area surrounding and including the boundary lines is "out of bounds."

### Restraining Lines

ARTICLE 5. A restraining line is part of a vertical plane that limits a team's alignment for free kicks. The plane extends beyond the sidelines (A.R. 2-11-5-I).

### Yard Lines

ARTICLE 6. A yard line is any line in the field of play parallel to the end lines. A team's own yard lines, marked or unmarked, are numbered consecutively from its own goal line to the 50-yard line.

### Inbounds Lines (Hash Marks)

ARTICLE 7. The two inbounds lines are 60 feet from the sidelines. Inbounds lines and short yard-line extensions shall measure 24 inches in length.

### Nine-Yard Marks

ARTICLE 8. Nine-yard marks 12 inches in length, every 10 yards, shall be located nine yards from the sidelines. They are not required if the field is numbered according to Rule 1-2-1-i.

## SECTION 12. Handing the Ball

ARTICLE 1. a. Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing, fumbling or kicking it.

b. Except when permitted by rule, handing the ball forward to a teammate is illegal.

- c. Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of attempted handing is a fumble by the last player in possession [Exception: The snap (Rule 2-23-1-c)].
- d. A backward handoff occurs when the ball carrier releases the ball before it is beyond the yard line where the ball carrier is positioned.

## SECTION 13. Huddle

A huddle is two or more players grouped together after the ball is ready for play and before a snap or a free kick.

## SECTION 14. Hurdling

ARTICLE 1. a. Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is still on his feet (Rule 9-1-2-i).

- b. "On his feet" means that no part of the opponent's body other than one or both feet is in contact with the ground.

## SECTION 15. Kicks

### Legal and Illegal Kicks

ARTICLE 1. a. Kicking the ball is intentionally striking the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot.

- b. A legal kick is a punt, drop kick or place kick made according to the rules by a player of Team A before a change of team possession. Kicking the ball in any other manner is illegal (A.R. 6-1-2-I).
- c. Any free kick or scrimmage kick continues to be a kick until it is caught or recovered by a player or becomes dead.
- d. When in question, a ball is accidentally touched rather than kicked.

### Punt

ARTICLE 2. A punt is a kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it before it strikes the ground.

### Drop Kick

ARTICLE 3. A drop kick is a kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it as it touches the ground.

### Place Kick

ARTICLE 4. a. A field goal place kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession while the ball is controlled on the ground by a teammate.

- b. A free kick place kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession while the ball is positioned on a tee or the ground. It may be controlled by a teammate. The ball may be positioned on the ground and contacting the tee.
- c. A tee is a device that elevates the ball for kicking purposes. It may not elevate the ball's lowest point more than one inch above the ground (A.R. 2-15-4-I).

### Free Kick

ARTICLE 5. a. A free kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession made under restrictions specified in Rules 4-1-4, 6-1-1 and 6-1-2.

- b. A free kick after a safety may be a punt, drop kick or place kick.

### Kickoff

ARTICLE 6. A kickoff is a free kick that starts each half and follows each try or field goal (Exception: Extra periods). It must be a place kick or a drop kick.

### Scrimmage Kick

ARTICLE 7. a. A scrimmage kick made in or behind the neutral zone is a legal kick by Team A during a scrimmage down before team possession changes.

- b. A scrimmage kick has crossed the neutral zone when it touches the ground, a player, an official or anything beyond the neutral zone (Exception: Rule 6-3-1-b) (A.R. 6-3-1-I-V).

### Return Kick

ARTICLE 8. A return kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession after change of team possession during a down. It is an illegal kick that causes the ball to become dead.

### Field Goal Attempt

ARTICLE 9. A field goal attempt is a scrimmage kick. It may be a place kick or drop kick.

### Scrimmage Kick Formation

ARTICLE 10. a. A scrimmage kick formation is a formation with at least one player seven yards or more behind the neutral zone, no player in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs, and it is obvious that a kick may be attempted (A.R. 1-4-2-I and A.R. 9-1-2-XVIII-XX).

- b. If Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap, any action by Team A during the down is deemed to be from a scrimmage kick formation.

### SECTION 16. Loss of a Down

"Loss of a down" is an abbreviation meaning "loss of the right to repeat a down."

### SECTION 17. The Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 1. a. The neutral zone is the space between the two lines of scrimmage extended to the sidelines and is the length of the ball.

- b. The neutral zone is established when the ball is ready for play and is resting on the ground with its long axis at right angles to the scrimmage line and parallel to the sidelines.
- c. The neutral zone exists until there is a change of team possession or until the ball is declared dead.

### SECTION 18. Encroachment and Offside

#### Encroachment

ARTICLE 1. After the ball is ready for play, encroachment occurs when an offensive player is in or beyond the neutral zone after the snapper touches or simulates (hand[s] at or below his knees) touching the ball before the snap (Exception: When the ball is put in play, the snapper is not encroaching when he is in the neutral zone).

#### Offside

ARTICLE 2. After the ball is ready for play, offside occurs (Rule 7-1-5) when a defensive player:

- a. Is in or beyond the neutral zone when the ball is legally snapped;

- b. Contacts an opponent beyond the neutral zone before the ball is snapped;
- c. Contacts the ball before it is snapped;
- d. Threatens an offensive lineman, causing an immediate reaction, before the ball is snapped (A.R. 7-1-3-VIII Note);
- e. Crosses the neutral zone and charges toward a Team A back (A.R. 7-1-5-III); or
- f. Is not behind his restraining line when the ball is legally free-kicked.

Offside occurs when players of the kicking team are not behind their restraining line when the ball is legally free-kicked (Exception: The kicker and holder are not offside when they are beyond their restraining line) (Rule 6-1-2).

## SECTION 19. Passes

### Passing

ARTICLE 1. Passing the ball is throwing it. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or intercepted by a player or the ball becomes dead.

### Forward and Backward Pass

ARTICLE 2. a. A forward pass is determined by the point where the ball first strikes the ground, a player, an official or anything beyond the spot of the pass. All other passes are backward passes. When in question, it is a forward pass rather than a backward pass when thrown in or behind the neutral zone.

- b. When a Team A player is holding the ball to pass it forward toward the neutral zone, any intentional forward movement of his hand or arm starts the forward pass. If a Team B player contacts the passer or ball after forward movement begins and the ball leaves the passer's hand, a forward pass is ruled regardless of where the ball strikes the ground or a player (A.R. 2-19-2-I).
- c. When in question, the ball is passed and not fumbled during an attempted forward pass.
- d. A snap becomes a backward pass when the snapper releases the ball (A.R. 2-23-1-I).

### Crosses Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 3. a. A legal forward pass has crossed the neutral zone when it first strikes the ground, a player, an official or anything beyond the neutral zone inbounds. It has not crossed the neutral zone when it first strikes the ground, a player, an official or anything in or behind the neutral zone inbounds.

- b. A player has crossed the neutral zone if his entire body has been beyond the neutral zone.
- c. A legal forward pass is beyond or behind the neutral zone where it crosses the sideline.

### Catchable Forward Pass

ARTICLE 4. A catchable forward pass is an untouched legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone to an eligible player who has a reasonable opportunity to catch the ball. When in question, a legal forward pass is catchable (A.R. 2-19-4-I and II and A.R. 7-3-8-XVIII).

## SECTION 20. Penalty

A penalty is a result imposed by rule against a team that has committed a foul and may include one or more of the following: loss of yardage, loss of down, automatic first down or disqualification.

## SECTION 21. Scrimmage

### Scrimmage

ARTICLE 1. A scrimmage play is the action between the two teams during a down that begins with a legal snap.

### Scrimmage Line

ARTICLE 2. The scrimmage line for each team when the ball is ready for play is the yard line and its vertical plane that passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line and extends to the sidelines.

## SECTION 22. Shift

A shift is a simultaneous change of position by two or more offensive players after the ball is ready for play for a scrimmage play and before the next snap (A.R. 7-1-3-II and III and A.R. 7-1-4-I-IV).

## SECTION 23. Snapping the Ball

ARTICLE 1. a. Legally snapping the ball (a snap) is handing or passing it backward from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand or hands, the ball actually leaving the hand or hands in this motion (Rule 4-1-4).

- b. The snap starts when the ball is moved legally and ends when the ball leaves the snapper's hands (A.R. 7-1-5-I-II).
- c. If, during any backward motion of a legal snap, the ball slips from the snapper's hand, it becomes a backward pass and is in play (Rule 4-1-1).
- d. While resting on the ground and before the snap, the long axis of the ball must be at right angles to the scrimmage line (Rule 7-1-3-a-1).
- e. Unless moved in a backward direction, the movement of the ball does not start a legal snap. It is not a legal snap if the ball is first moved forward or lifted.
- f. If the ball is touched by Team B during a legal snap, the ball remains dead and Team B is penalized. If the ball is touched by Team B during an illegal snap, the ball remains dead and Team A is penalized (A.R. 7-1-5-I-II).
- g. The snap need not be between the snapper's legs; but to be legal, it must be a quick and continuous backward motion.
- h. The ball must be snapped on or between the inbounds lines.
- i. The position of the ball at the snap (Rule 9-1-2-e) refers to an imaginary line through the ball parallel to the sidelines from end line to end line (A.R. 9-1-2-III-IX).

## 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.

## SECTION 25. Spots

### Enforcement Spot

ARTICLE 1. An enforcement spot is the point from which the penalty for a foul or violation is enforced.

### Previous Spot

ARTICLE 2. The previous spot is the point from which the ball was last put in play.

### Succeeding Spot

ARTICLE 3. The succeeding spot is the point at which the ball is next to be put in play.

### Dead-Ball Spot

ARTICLE 4. The dead-ball spot is the point at which the ball became dead.

### Spot of the Foul

ARTICLE 5. The spot of the foul is the point at which that foul occurs. If out of bounds between the goal lines, it shall be the intersection of the nearer inbounds line and the yard line extended through the spot of the foul. If out of bounds between the goal line and the end line or behind the end line, the foul is in the end zone.

### Out-of-Bounds Spot

ARTICLE 6. The out-of-bounds spot is the point at which, according to the rule, the ball becomes dead because of going or being declared out of bounds.

### Inbounds Spot

ARTICLE 7. The inbounds spot is the intersection of the nearer inbounds line and the yard line passing through the dead-ball spot, or the spot where the ball is left between an inbounds line and a sideline by a penalty.

### Spot Where Run Ends

ARTICLE 8. The spot where the run ends is at that point:

- a. Where the ball is declared dead in player possession.
- b. Where player possession is lost on a fumble.
- c. Where handing of the ball occurs.

- d. Where an illegal forward pass is thrown.
- e. Where a backward pass is thrown.
- f. Where an illegal scrimmage kick is made beyond the line of scrimmage.
- g. Where a return kick occurs.

#### 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 by rule (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; or
  - (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. 10-2-3-V).
2. When Rule 6-3-11 is in effect, the postscrimmage kick spot is Team B's 20-yard line.

## SECTION 26. Tackling

Tackling is grasping or encircling an opponent with a hand(s) or arm(s).

## SECTION 27. Team and Player Designations

### Teams A and B

ARTICLE 1. Team A is the team that is designated to put the ball in play, and Team B is the opponent. The teams retain these designations until the ball is next ready for play.

### Offensive and Defensive Teams

ARTICLE 2. The offensive team is the team in possession or the team to which the ball belongs; the defensive team is the opposing team.

### Kicker and Holder

ARTICLE 3. a. The kicker is any player who punts, drop kicks or place kicks according to rule. He remains the kicker until he has had a reasonable time to regain his balance.

b. A holder is a player who controls the ball on the ground or on a kicking tee. During a scrimmage-kick play, he remains the holder until no player is in position to make the kick or, if the ball is kicked, until the kicker has had a reasonable time to regain his balance.

### Lineman and Back

ARTICLE 4. a. Any Team A player in one of the following positions is a lineman.

1. A lineman is any Team A player legally on his scrimmage line when the ball is snapped. An interior lineman is any Team A player legally on his scrimmage line and positioned between the end Team A players who are also on the line of scrimmage at the snap. An ineligible pass receiver of Team A is “on his scrimmage line” at the snap when he faces his opponent’s goal line with the line of his shoulders parallel thereto and his head breaking the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the snapper.
2. An eligible pass receiver of Team A is “on his scrimmage line” at the snap when he faces his opponent’s goal line with the line of his shoulders approximately parallel thereto and his head breaking the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the snapper.

3. A Team A player also is a lineman when, after the ball is ready for play and the snapper touches or simulates (hand[s] at or below his knees) touching the ball, his head breaks the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the snapper (Exception: Rule 7-1-3-b-1).
- b. A back is any Team A player whose head or body does not break the plane of the line drawn through the rear-most part, other than the legs or feet, of the nearest Team A player (except the snapper) on the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. A lineman becomes a back before the snap when he moves to a position as a back and stops.

#### Passer

ARTICLE 5. The passer is the player who throws a legal forward pass. He is a passer from the time he releases the ball until it is complete, incomplete or intercepted or he moves to participate in the play (A.R. 10-2-1-I).

#### Player

ARTICLE 6. a. A player is any one of the participants in the game who is not a substitute or a replaced player and is subject to the rules when inbounds or out of bounds.

- b. An airborne player is a player not in contact with the ground.
- c. A departing player is a player leaving the field, having been replaced by a substitute.

#### Runner and Ball Carrier

ARTICLE 7. a. The runner is a player in possession of a live ball or simulating possession of a live ball.

- b. A ball carrier is a runner in possession of a live ball.

#### Snapper

ARTICLE 8. The snapper is the player who snaps the ball. He becomes the snapper when he assumes his position and touches or simulates (hand[s] at or below his knees) touching the ball (Rule 7-1-3-a-1).

#### Substitute

ARTICLE 9. a. A legal substitute is a replacement for a player or a player vacancy during the interval between downs.

- b. A legal incoming substitute becomes a player when he enters the field of play or end zones and communicates with a teammate or an official,

enters the huddle, is positioned in an offensive or a defensive formation, or participates in a play.

#### Replaced Player

ARTICLE 10. A replaced player is one who participated during the previous down, has been replaced by a substitute and has left the field of play and the end zones.

#### Player Vacancy

ARTICLE 11. A player vacancy occurs when a team has fewer than 11 players in the game.

#### Disqualified Player

ARTICLE 12. A disqualified player is one who is declared ineligible for further participation in the game.

#### Squad Member

ARTICLE 13. A squad member is part of a group of potential players, in uniform, organized for participation in the ensuing football game or football plays.

## SECTION 28. Tripping

Tripping is intentionally using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knees (Rule 9-1-2-c).

## SECTION 29. Timing Devices

#### Game Clock

ARTICLE 1. The game clock is any device under the direction of the appropriate official used to time the 60 minutes of the game.

#### Play Clock

ARTICLE 2. Each stadium shall have a visual play clock at each end of the playing enclosure. The play clock must be capable of counting down from both 40 seconds and 25 seconds. It should automatically default to 40 seconds and start immediately upon being reset by the play-clock operator when any official signals that the ball is dead after a play.

## SECTION 30. Play Classification

### Forward Pass Play

ARTICLE 1. A legal forward pass play is the interval between the snap and when a legal forward pass is complete, incomplete or intercepted.

### Free Kick Play

ARTICLE 2. A free kick play is the interval from the time the ball is legally kicked until it comes into player possession or is declared dead by rule.

### Scrimmage Kick Play

ARTICLE 3. A scrimmage kick play is the interval between the snap and when a scrimmage kick comes into player possession or the ball is declared dead by rule.

### Running Play

ARTICLE 4. a. A running play is any live-ball action other than that during a free kick play, a scrimmage kick play or a legal forward pass play.

- b. A run is that segment of a running play during which a ball carrier has possession.
- c. If a ball carrier loses possession by a fumble, backward pass or illegal forward pass, the running play includes the spot where the run ends and the loose-ball interval before possession is regained or the ball is declared dead (A.R. 2-30-4-I and II).
- d. A new running play begins when a player gains or regains possession.

## SECTION 31. Field Areas

### The Field

ARTICLE 1. The field is the area within the limit lines and includes the limit lines and team areas, and the space above it (Exception: Enclosures over the field).

### Field of Play

ARTICLE 2. The field of play is the area enclosed by the sidelines and the goal lines.

## End Zones

ARTICLE 3. The end zone at each end of the field is the rectangle defined by the goal line, sidelines and end line. The goal line and goal line pylons are in the end zone, and a team's end zone is the one it is defending (A.R. 8-5-1-X and A.R. 8-6-1-I).

## Playing Surface

ARTICLE 4. The playing surface is the material or substance within the field of play, including the end zones.

## Playing Enclosure

ARTICLE 5. The playing enclosure is that area bounded by the stadium, dome, stands, fences or other structures. (Exception: Scoreboards are not considered within the playing enclosure.)

## SECTION 32. Fighting

ARTICLE 1. Fighting is any attempt by a player, coach or squad member in uniform to strike an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to:

- a. An attempt to strike an opponent with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.
- b. An unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes any opponent to retaliate by fighting (Rules 9-2-1-a and 9-5-1-a-c).

## 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.

## 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 snapper, and Team A's end line. (See diagram in the front of this book.)

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# RULE 3

## Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

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### SECTION 1. Start of Each Period

#### First and Third Periods

ARTICLE 1. Each half shall start with a kickoff. Three minutes before the scheduled starting time, the referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of not more than four field captains from each team and another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. Before the second half, the referee will obtain the teams' second-half options.

During the coin toss, each team shall remain in the area between the nine-yard marks and its sideline or in the team area. The coin toss begins when the field captains leave the nine-yard marks and ends when the captains return to the nine-yard marks.

**PENALTY—Five yards from the succeeding spot [S19].**

- a. The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:
  1. To designate which team shall kick off.
  2. To designate which goal line his team shall defend.
  3. To defer his selection to the second half.
- b. The opponent shall then choose option 1 or 2 above, as available.
- c. If the winner of the toss chooses option 3 above, then after the opponent's choice the winner selects the available option (1 or 2 above).

#### Second and Fourth Periods

ARTICLE 2. Between the first and second periods and also between the third and fourth periods, the teams shall defend opposite goal lines.

- a. The ball shall be relocated at a spot corresponding exactly, in relation to goal lines and sidelines, to its location at the end of the preceding period.
- b. Possession of the ball, the number of the down and the distance to be gained shall remain unchanged.

### Extra Periods

ARTICLE 3. The NCAA tiebreaker system will be used when a game is tied after four periods. NCAA football-playing rules apply, with the following exceptions:

- a. Immediately after the conclusion of the fourth quarter, officials will instruct both teams to retire to their respective team areas. The officials will assemble at the 50-yard line and review the tiebreaker procedures.
- b. The officials will escort the captains (Rule 3-1-1) to the center of the field for the coin toss. The referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of not more than four field captains from each team and another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:
  1. Offense or defense, with the offense at the opponent's 25-yard line to start the first possession series.
  2. Which end of the field shall be used for both possession series of that overtime period.

*Note: The winner of the toss may not defer his choice.*

- c. The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first extra period and shall have the first choice of the two options for subsequent even-numbered extra periods.
- d. Extra periods: An extra period shall consist of two possession series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap on or between the inbounds lines on the designated 25-yard line, which becomes the opponent's 25-yard line. The snap shall be from midway between the inbounds lines on the 25-yard line, unless a different position on or between the inbounds lines is selected before the ready-for-play signal. After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated after a charged team timeout, unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting penalties.

- e. Possession series: Each team retains the ball during a possession series until it scores or fails to make a first down. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead. However, Team A may not have a first and 10 if it again possesses the ball after a change of team possession (A.R. 3-1-3-I-XII).

Team A and B designations are the same as defined in Rule 2-27-1.

- f. Scoring: The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winner. There shall be an equal number of possession series, as described in (e) above, in each extra period, unless Team B scores other than on the try. Beginning with the third extra period, teams scoring a touchdown must attempt a two-point try. Although not illegal, a one-point try attempt by Team A will not score a point (A.R. 3-1-3-XIII).
- g. Fouls after a change of team possession (A.R. 3-1-3-XIV-XVII):
  1. Distance penalties against either team are declined by rule in extra periods (Exceptions: Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, dead-ball fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced on the succeeding play).
  2. A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled.
  3. If both teams foul during the down and Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls offset and the down is not replayed.
- h. Timeouts: Each team shall be allowed one timeout for each extra period. Timeouts not used during the regulation periods may not be carried over into the extra period(s). Unused extra-period timeouts may not be carried over to other extra periods. Timeouts between periods shall be charged to the succeeding period.

Radio and television timeouts are permitted only between extra periods (first and second, second and third, etc.). Charged team timeouts may not be extended for radio and television purposes. The extra period(s) begins when the ball is first snapped.

## SECTION 2. Playing Time and Intermissions

### Length of Periods and Intermissions

ARTICLE 1. The total playing time in a collegiate game shall be 60 minutes, divided into four periods of 15 minutes each, with one-minute intermissions between the first and second periods (first half) and between the third and fourth periods (second half) (Exception: A one-minute intermission between the first and second and the third and fourth periods may be extended for radio and television timeouts).

- a. No period shall end until the ball is dead and the referee declares the period ended [S14].
- b. The intermission between halves shall be 20 minutes, unless altered before the game by mutual agreement of the administrations of both schools. Immediately after the second period ends, the referee should begin the intermission by signaling to start the game clock [S2].

### Timing Adjustments

ARTICLE 2. Before the game starts, playing time and the intermission between halves may be shortened by the referee if he is of the opinion that darkness may interfere with the game. The four periods must be of equal length if the game is shortened before its start.

- a. Any time during the game, the playing time of any remaining period or periods and the intermission between halves may be shortened by mutual agreement of the opposing head coaches and the referee.
- b. Timing errors on the game clock may be corrected but shall be corrected only in the period in which they occur.
- c. If the referee has positive knowledge of the elapsed time, he will reset and appropriately start the game clock.
- d. Timing errors on a play clock may be corrected by the referee. The play clock shall start again (Rule 2-29-2).
- e. When the play-clock count is interrupted by circumstances beyond the control of either team (without positive knowledge of game clock elapsed time), a new count shall be started and the game clock shall start per Rule 3-2-4-b.
- f. The 40/25-second clock is not started when the game clock is running with fewer than 40 or 25 seconds, respectively, in a period.

- g. The game clock should not be stopped if the play clock is started in conflict with Rule 3-2-2-f.

### 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 10-2-5-a). The period is *not* extended if the statement of the penalty includes loss of down (A.R. 3-2-3-IX).
  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).

### Timing Devices

ARTICLE 4. a. *Game Clock*. Playing time shall be kept with a game clock that may be either a stop watch operated by the line judge, back judge, field judge or side judge, or a game clock operated by an assistant under the direction of the appropriate judge. The type of game clock shall be determined by the game management.

- b. *40-Second Clock*. 1. When an official signals that the ball is dead, the play clock shall begin a 40-second count.
2. If the 40-second clock does not start or the count is interrupted for reasons beyond the control of the officials or the play-clock operator (e.g., clock malfunction), the referee shall stop the game clock and signal (both palms open in an over-the-head pumping motion) that the play clock should be reset at 40 seconds and started immediately.
  3. In the event that the 40-second clock is running and the ball is not ready to be snapped after 20 seconds into the count, the referee shall declare a timeout and signal that the play clock be set at 25 seconds. When play is to be resumed, the referee will give the ready-for-play signal [S1] and the play clock shall begin the 25-second count. The game clock will start on the snap unless it had been running when the

referee declared a timeout; in that case, it will start on the referee's signal (Rule 3-3-2-f).

- 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:
1. Penalty administration.
  2. Charged team timeout.
  3. Media timeout.
  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.
  5. Measurement.
  6. Change of possession.
  7. After a kick down.
  8. Score.
  9. Start of each period.
  10. Start of a team's possession series in an extra period.
  11. Instant replay review.
  12. Other administrative stoppage.

When play is to be resumed, the referee will give the ready-for-play signal [S1] and the play clock will begin the 25-second count.

- d. *Device Malfunction.* If a visual 40/25-second timing device becomes inoperative, both coaches shall be notified by the referee immediately and both clocks shall be turned off.

## 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. The referee may declare and charge himself with a discretionary timeout for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules (A.R. 3-3-1-V and VI).

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

- b. *Scrimmage Down*. 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. 3-3-2-I-IV).
- c. *After a Score*. 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 Team A ball carrier, fumble or backward pass is ruled out of bounds. (Exception: After 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 (A.R. 3-3-2-VI).
  - 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. 3-3-1-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. 3-3-1-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. *Snap Supercedes Referee's Signal.* 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.

### Suspending the Game

ARTICLE 3. a. The referee may suspend the game temporarily when conditions warrant such action.

- b. When the game is stopped by actions of a person(s) not subject to the rules or for any other reasons not in the rules and cannot continue, the referee shall:
  1. Suspend play and direct the players to their team areas.
  2. Refer the problem to those responsible for the game's management.
  3. Resume the game when he determines conditions are satisfactory.
- c. If a game is suspended under Rules 3-3-3-a and b before the end of the fourth period and cannot be resumed, there are four possible options:
  1. Resume the game at a later date;
  2. Terminate the game with a determined final score;
  3. Forfeit of the game; or
  4. Declare a no contest.

The option that takes effect shall be determined by conference policy if both institutions are members of the same conference. In non-conference competition, the directors of athletics at the participating institutions or their designees, in consultation with the coaches, must agree on one of the four options. This agreement will include the final score if the game is terminated (Rule 8-1-2).

- d. If a game is suspended under Rules 3-3-3-a and b after four periods of play and cannot be resumed, the game shall be ruled a tie. The final score shall be the score at the end of the last completed period. (Note: If a winner must be determined in a conference playoff game, conference policy shall determine when and where the game will be resumed.)
- e. A suspended game, if resumed, will begin with the same time remaining and under the identical conditions of down, distance, field position and player eligibility.

### Charged Team Timeouts

ARTICLE 4. When timeouts are not exhausted, an official shall allow a charged team timeout when requested by any player or head coach when the ball is dead (A.R. 3-3-4-I and II).

- a. Each team is entitled to three charged team timeouts during each half.
- b. After the ball is declared dead and before the snap, a legal substitute may request a timeout if he is between the nine-yard marks (A.R. 3-3-4-III and IV).
- c. A player who participated during the previous down may request a timeout between the time the ball is declared dead and the snap without being between the nine-yard marks (A.R. 3-3-4-I and II).
- d. A head coach who is in, or in the vicinity of, his team area or coaching box may request a timeout between the time the ball is declared dead and the next snap.
- e. A player, incoming substitute or head coach may request a head coach's conference with the referee, if the coach believes a rule has been enforced improperly. If the rule enforcement is not changed, the coach's team will be charged a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used.
  1. Only the referee may stop the clock for a head coach's conference.
  2. A request for a head coach's conference or challenge must be made before the ball is snapped or free-kicked for the next play and before the end of the second or fourth period (Rules 5-2-9 and 11-1-1).
  3. After a head coach's conference or challenge, the full team timeout is granted if charged by the referee.

### Injury Timeout

ARTICLE 5. a. In the event of an injured player(s):

1. The referee may charge himself a timeout provided the player(s) for whom the timeout is taken is removed from the game for at least one down.
2. The player(s) may remain in the game if his team is charged a timeout in the interval between downs or the period ends.

3. After a team's charged timeouts have been exhausted, the injured player(s) must leave for one down.
  4. Whenever a participant suffers a laceration or wound from which oozing or bleeding occurs, the player or game official shall go to the team area and be given appropriate medical treatment. He may not return to the game without approval of medical personnel (A.R. 3-3-5-I-VII).
- b. Any official may stop the clock for an injured player(s). When in question, the clock shall be stopped for an injured player.
  - c. To curtail a possible time-gaining advantage by feigning injuries, attention is directed to the strongly worded statement in The Football Code concerning the feigning of any injury.
  - d. An injury timeout may follow a charged team timeout.
  - e. The referee may charge himself with a timeout for an injured official.
  - f. After a timeout for an injured Team B player, the play clock shall be set at 40 seconds.

### Violation Timeouts

ARTICLE 6. For noncompliance with Rules 1-4-4, 1-4-5 or 9-2-2-d during a down, or noncompliance with Rules 1-4-5-r, 1-4-6-b or 3-3-4-e while the ball is dead, a timeout shall be charged to a team at the succeeding spot (Rule 3-4-2-b).

### Length of Timeouts

- ARTICLE 7. a. A charged full team timeout requested by any player or head coach shall not exceed one minute, 30 seconds (Exception: Rule 3-3-4-e-3). This includes the 25-second play clock interval.
- b. For live televised games only, a charged team timeout shall be 30 seconds plus the 25-second play clock interval.
  - c. Any charged team timeout shall be 30 seconds in duration upon a visual signal of the hands touching the shoulders, made by the head coach of the team requesting the timeout. The signal must be made promptly after the timeout is requested.
  - d. Other timeouts shall be not longer than the referee deems necessary to fulfill the purpose for which they are declared, including a radio or TV timeout, but any timeout may be extended by the referee for the benefit of an injured

player (Refer to Appendix A for the guidelines for game officials to use during a serious on-field player injury).

- e. If the team charged with a one-minute, 30-second team timeout wishes to resume play before the expiration of one minute and its opponent indicates readiness, the referee will declare the ball ready for play.
- f. The length of a referee's timeout depends on the circumstances of each timeout.
- g. The field captain must exercise his penalty option before he or a teammate consults with his coach on a sideline during a timeout.
- h. The intermission after a safety, try or successful field goal shall be not more than one minute. It may be extended for radio or television.

#### Referee's Notification

ARTICLE 8. During a full team timeout (Rule 3-3-7-a) the referee shall notify both teams after one minute. Five seconds later he shall declare the ball ready for play. During a 30-second team timeout (Rule 3-3-7-b, c) the referee shall notify both teams after 30 seconds. Five seconds later he shall declare the ball ready for play.

- a. When a third timeout is charged to a team in either half, the referee shall notify the field captain and head coach of that team.
- b. Unless a visual game clock is the official timepiece, the referee also shall inform each field captain and head coach when approximately two minutes of playing time remain in each half. He may order the clock stopped for that purpose.
  - 1. The play-clock count is not interrupted.
  - 2. The clock starts on the snap after the two-minute notification.
- c. If a visual game clock is not the official timing device during the last two minutes of each half, the referee or his representative shall notify each captain and head coach of the time remaining each time the clock is stopped by rule. Also, a representative may leave the team area along the limit line to relay timing information under these conditions.

## SECTION 4. Delays

### Delaying the Start of a Half

ARTICLE 1. a. Each team shall have its players on the field for the opening play at the scheduled time for the beginning of each half. When both teams refuse to enter the field first for the start of either half, the home team must be the first to enter.

**PENALTY—15 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].**

- b. The home management is responsible for clearing the field of play and end zones at the beginning of each half so the periods may start at the scheduled time. Bands, speeches, presentations, homecoming and similar activities are under the jurisdiction of home management, and a prompt start of each half is mandatory.

**PENALTY—10 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].**

[Exception: The referee may waive the penalty for circumstances beyond the control of the home management.]

### Illegal Delay of the Game

ARTICLE 2. a. The officials shall make the ball ready for play consistently throughout the game. Consuming more than 40 seconds or 25 seconds to put the ball in play (Rule 3-2-4) after it is made ready for play is an illegal delay.

- b. Illegal delay also includes:
1. Deliberately advancing the ball after it is dead.
  2. When a team has expended its three timeouts and commits a Rule 1-4-4, 1-4-5, 1-4-6-b, 3-3-4-e or 9-2-2-d infraction.
  3. When a team is not ready to play after an intermission between periods (other than the half), after a score, after a radio/television/team timeout or anytime the referee orders the ball put in play (A.R. 3-4-2-I).
  4. Defensive verbal tactics that disconcert offensive signals (Rule 7-1-5-a-3).
  5. Defensive actions designed to cause a false start (Rule 7-1-5-a-4).
  6. Putting the ball in play before it is ready for play (Rule 4-1-4).
  7. Sideline interference (Rule 9-1-6).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].**

Unfair Clock Tactics

ARTICLE 3. The referee shall order the game clock or play clock started or stopped whenever either team conserves or consumes playing time by tactics obviously unfair. This includes starting the game clock on the snap if the foul is by the team ahead in the score. The game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal after Team A throws an illegal forward or backward pass to conserve time (Rule 3-3-2-e-15) (A.R. 3-4-3-I-V).

## SECTION 5. Substitutions

### Substitution Procedures

ARTICLE 1. Any number of legal substitutes for either team may enter the game between periods, after a score or try, or during the interval between downs only for the purpose of replacing a player(s) or filling a player vacancy(ies).

### Legal Substitutions

ARTICLE 2. A legal substitute may replace a player or fill a player vacancy provided none of the following restrictions is violated:

- a. No incoming substitute shall enter the field of play or an end zone while the ball is in play (live-ball foul) [S22].
- b. No player, in excess of 11, shall leave the field of play or an end zone while the ball is in play (A.R. 3-5-2-I) (live-ball foul) [S22].
- c. An incoming legal substitute must enter the field of play directly from his team area, and a substitute, player or departing player must depart at the sideline nearest his team area and proceed to his team area. A departing player must immediately leave the field of play, including the end zones. A departing player who leaves the huddle or his position within three seconds, after a substitute becomes a player, is considered to have left immediately. Team A may not break its huddle with 12 or more players (A.R. 3-5-2-II-VIII, A.R. 9-1-5-V-VII and A.R. 9-2-2-IV) (dead-ball foul) [S7 and S22].
- d. Substitutes who become players must remain in the game for one play and replaced players must remain out of the game for one play, except during the interval between periods, after a score, or when a timeout is charged to

a team or to the referee with the exception of a live-ball out of bounds or an incomplete forward pass (A.R. 3-5-2-VI) (live-ball foul) [S22].

**PENALTY—If the ball is dead: Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S22]; otherwise, five yards from the previous spot [S22].**

- e. While in the process of substitution or simulated substitution, Team A is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious attempt of creating a defensive disadvantage. If the ball is ready for play, the game officials will not permit the ball to be snapped until Team B has placed substitutes in position and replaced players have left the field of play. Team B must react promptly with its substitutes.

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Delay of game on Team B for not completing its substitutions promptly, or delay of game on Team A for causing the play clock to expire. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21]. The referee will then notify the head coach that any further use of this tactic will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul.**

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. An official will sound his whistle immediately. 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S27].**

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# RULE 4

## Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds

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### SECTION 1. Ball in Play—Dead Ball

#### Dead Ball Becomes Alive

ARTICLE 1. After a dead ball is ready for play, it becomes a live ball when it is legally snapped or legally free-kicked. A ball snapped or free-kicked before it is ready for play remains dead (A.R. 2-15-4-I, A.R. 4-1-4-I and II, A.R. 7-1-3-VI, and A.R. 7-1-5-I and II).

#### Live Ball Becomes Dead

ARTICLE 2. a. A live ball becomes a dead ball as provided in the rules or when an official sounds his whistle (even though inadvertently) or otherwise signals the ball dead (A.R. 4-2-1-II and A.R. 4-2-4-I).

- b. If an official sounds his whistle inadvertently or otherwise signals the ball dead during a down (Rules 4-1-3-k and m):
1. When the ball is in player possession, then the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
  2. When the ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass or illegal pass, then the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
  3. During a legal forward pass or a free or scrimmage kick, then the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.
  4. After Team B gains possession on the try or during an extra period, then the try is over or the extra-period possession series is ended.
- c. If a foul or violation occurs during any of the above downs, the penalty or violation privilege shall be administered as in any other play situation if not in conflict with other rules (A.R. 4-1-2-I and II).

## Ball Declared Dead

ARTICLE 3. A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound his whistle or declare it dead:

- a. When it goes out of bounds other than a kick that scores a field goal after touching the uprights or crossbar, when a ball carrier is out of bounds, or when a ball carrier is so held that his forward progress is stopped. When in question, the ball is dead (A.R. 4-2-1-II).
- b. When any part of the ball carrier's body, except his hand or foot, touches the ground or when the ball carrier is tackled or otherwise falls and loses possession of the ball as he contacts the ground with any part of his body, except his hand or foot [Exception: The ball remains alive when an offensive player has simulated a kick or is in position to kick the ball held for a place kick by a teammate. The ball may be kicked, passed or advanced by rule] (A.R. 4-1-3-I).
- c. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, field goal or successful try occurs; or when an unsuccessful field-goal attempt that has crossed the neutral zone and is then untouched by Team B, lands in Team B's end zone or out of bounds (A.R. 6-3-9-I).
- d. When, during a try, a dead-ball rule applies (Rule 8-3-2-d-5).
- e. When a player of the kicking team catches or recovers any free kick or a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone (A.R. 4-1-3-II).
- f. When a free kick, scrimmage kick or any other loose ball comes to rest and no player attempts to secure it.
- g. When a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone or a free kick is caught or recovered by any player after a valid or invalid fair-catch signal; or when an invalid fair-catch signal is made after a catch or recovery by Team B (Rules 2-7-1, 2-7-2 and 2-7-3).
- h. When a return kick or scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone is made.
- i. When a forward pass strikes the ground.
- j. When, before a change of team possession on fourth down or a try, a Team A fumble is caught or recovered by a Team A player other than the fumbler (Rules 7-2-2-a and -b and 8-3-2-d-5).

- k. When a live ball not in player possession touches anything inbounds other than a player, a player's equipment, an official, an official's equipment or the ground (inadvertent-whistle provisions apply).
- l. When a simultaneous catch or recovery of a live ball occurs.
- m. When the ball becomes illegal while in play (inadvertent-whistle provisions apply).
- n. When the live ball is in possession of an official.
- o. When a ball carrier simulates placing his knee on the ground.
- p. When an airborne pass receiver from either team is so held and subsequently carried that he is prevented from immediately returning to the ground (A.R. 7-3-6-IV).
- q. When a ball carrier's helmet comes completely off.

#### Ball Ready for Play

ARTICLE 4. No player shall put the ball in play before it is ready for play (A.R. 4-1-4-I and II).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul for delay of game. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].**

#### Play-Clock Count

ARTICLE 5. The ball shall be put in play within 40 or 25 seconds after it is made ready for play (Rule 3-2-4), unless, during that interval, play is suspended. If play is suspended, the play-clock count will start again.

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul for delay of game. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].**

## SECTION 2. Out of Bounds

### Player Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 1. a. A player or an airborne player is out of bounds when any part of his person touches anything, other than another player or game official, on or outside a boundary line (A.R. 4-2-1-I and II).

b. A player or an airborne player who touches a pylon is out of bounds.

### Held Ball Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 2. A ball in player possession is out of bounds when either the ball or any part of the ball carrier touches the ground or anything else that is on or outside a boundary line except another player or game official.

### Ball Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 3. a. A ball not in player possession, other than a kick that scores a field goal, is out of bounds when it touches the ground, a player, a game official or anything else that is on or outside a boundary line.

- b. A ball that touches a pylon is out of bounds behind the goal line.
- c. If a live ball not in player possession crosses a boundary line and then is declared out of bounds, it is out of bounds at the crossing point.

### Out of Bounds at Forward Point

ARTICLE 4. a. If a live ball is declared out of bounds and the ball does not cross a boundary line, it is out of bounds at the ball's most forward point when it was declared dead (A.R. 4-2-4-I) (Exception: Rule 8-5-1-a, A.R. 8-5-1-I).

- b. A touchdown may be scored if the ball is inbounds and has broken the plane of the goal line before or simultaneous to the ball carrier going out of bounds.
- c. A receiver who is in the opponent's end zone and contacting the ground is credited with a completion if he reaches over the sideline or end line and catches a legal pass.
- d. The most forward point of the ball when declared out of bounds between the end lines is the point of forward progress (A.R. 8-2-1-II and A.R. 8-5-1-X).
- e. When a ball carrier dives or jumps toward the sideline and is airborne as he crosses the sideline, forward progress is determined by the position of the ball as it crosses the sideline (A.R. 8-2-1-III and IV).

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# RULE 5

## Series of Downs, Line to Gain

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### SECTION 1. A Series: Started, Broken, Renewed

#### When To Award Series

ARTICLE 1. a. A series of four consecutive scrimmage downs shall be awarded to the team that is next to put the ball in play by a snap after a free kick, touchback, fair catch, or change in team possession, or to the offensive team in overtime.

- b. A new series shall be awarded to Team A if it is in legal possession of the ball on or beyond its line to gain when the ball is declared dead.
- c. A new series shall be awarded to Team B if, after fourth down, Team A has failed to earn a first down (A.R. 5-1-1-I and A.R. 10-1-5-II).
- d. A new series shall be awarded to Team B if Team A's scrimmage kick goes out of bounds or comes to rest and no player attempts to secure it (Exception: Rule 8-5-1-a) (A.R. 8-5-1-II).
- e. A new series shall be awarded to the team in legal possession when the ball is declared dead:
  - 1. If a change of team possession occurs during the down.
  - 2. If a player of Team B first touches a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone (Exception: When the down is replayed).
  - 3. If an accepted penalty awards the ball to the offended team.
  - 4. If an accepted penalty mandates a first down.
- f. A new series shall be awarded to Team B whenever Team B, after a scrimmage kick, elects to take the ball at a spot of illegal touching (Exception: When the down is replayed) (Rules 6-3-2-a and b).

### Line to Gain

ARTICLE 2. The line to gain for a series shall be established 10 yards in advance of the most forward point of the ball; but if this line is in the opponent's end zone, the goal line becomes the line to gain.

### Forward Progress

ARTICLE 3. a. The most forward point of the ball when declared dead between the end lines shall be the determining point in measuring distance gained or lost by either team during any down. The ball always shall be placed with its length axis parallel to the sideline before measuring (A.R. 8-2-1-I-IV) (Exception: When an airborne pass receiver of either team completes a catch inbounds after an opponent has driven him backward and the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch, the forward progress is where the player received the ball) (Rule 4-1-3-p) (A.R. 5-1-3-I, III, IV and VI, and A.R. 7-3-6-VI).

- b. Questionable distance for a first down should be measured without request. Unnecessary measurements to determine first downs shall not be granted.
- c. No request for a measurement shall be granted after the ball is ready for play.

### Continuity of Downs Broken

ARTICLE 4. The continuity of a series of scrimmage downs is broken when:

- a. Team possession of the ball changes during a down.
- b. A scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone.
- c. A kick goes out of bounds.
- d. A kick comes to rest and no player attempts to secure it.
- e. At the end of a down, Team A has earned a first down.
- f. After fourth down, Team A has failed to earn a first down (A.R. 8-7-2-VIII and IX).
- g. An accepted penalty mandates a first down.
- h. There is a score.
- i. A touchback is awarded to either team.
- j. The second period ends.
- k. The fourth period ends.

## SECTION 2. Down and Possession After a Penalty

### Foul During Free Kick Down

ARTICLE 1. When a scrimmage follows the penalty for a foul committed during a free kick down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with a new line to gain.

### Penalty Resulting in First Down

ARTICLE 2. It is a first down with a new line to gain:

- a. After a penalty that leaves the ball in possession of Team A beyond its line to gain.
- b. When a penalty mandates a first down (A.R. 5-2-2-I).

### Foul Before Change of Team Possession

ARTICLE 3. a. If a penalty is accepted for a foul that occurs between the goal lines before a change of team possession during a scrimmage down, the ball belongs to Team A. The down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves loss of a down, mandates a first down, or leaves the ball on or beyond the line to gain (Exceptions: Rules 8-3-3-b-1, 10-2-3 and 10-2-5).

- b. If the penalty involves loss of a down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series (A.R. 5-2-3-I and II, A.R. 10-1-6-III and A.R. 10-2-3-I).

### Foul After Change of Team Possession

ARTICLE 4. If a penalty is accepted for a foul that occurs during a down after a change of team possession, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The down and distance established by any such penalty shall be first down with a new line to gain (Exception: Rule 10-2-5-a) (A.R. 5-2-4-I).

### Penalty Declined

ARTICLE 5. If a penalty is declined, the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.

### Foul Between Downs

ARTICLE 6. After a distance penalty incurred between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as that established before the foul

occurred, unless enforcement for a foul by Team B leaves the ball on or beyond the line to gain or a penalty mandates a first down (Rules 9-1-1 and 9-1-2) (A.R. 5-2-6-I and II and A.R. 10-1-5-I-IV).

#### Foul Between Series

ARTICLE 7. The penalty for any dead-ball foul (including live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls and fouls after a free kick down) that occurs after a series ends and before the ball is ready for play shall be enforced before the line to gain is established. The penalty for any dead-ball foul that occurs after the ball is ready for play shall be enforced after the line to gain is established (A.R. 5-2-7-I-VI).

#### Fouls by Both Teams

ARTICLE 8. If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated (Rule 10-1-4 Exceptions) (A.R. 10-1-4-II-X).

#### Rule Decisions Final

ARTICLE 9. No rule decision may be changed after the ball is next legally snapped, legally free-kicked or the second or fourth periods have ended (Rules 3-2-1-a, 3-3-4-e-2 and 11-1-1).

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# RULE 6

## Kicks

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### SECTION 1. Free Kicks

#### Restraining Lines

ARTICLE 1. For any free kick formation, the kicking team's restraining line shall be the yard line through the most forward point from which the ball shall be kicked, and the receiving team's restraining line shall be the yard line 10 yards beyond that point. Unless relocated by a penalty, the kicking team's restraining line on a kickoff shall be its 30-yard line, and for a free kick after a safety, its 20-yard line.

#### Free Kick Formation

ARTICLE 2. A ball from a free kick formation must be kicked legally and from some point on Team A's restraining line (Exception: Rule 6-1-2-d) and on or between the inbounds lines. The referee will declare the ball ready for play when the officials are in position after the kicker has received the ball. After the ball is ready for play and for any reason falls from the tee, Team A shall not kick the ball and the official shall sound his whistle immediately. When the ball is kicked (A.R. 6-1-2-I-IV):

- a. Each Team A player, except the holder and kicker of a place kick, must be behind the ball (A.R. 6-1-2-V and VI) [S18].
- b. All Team A players must be inbounds [S19].
- c. At least four Team A players must be on each side of the kicker [S19].
- d. After a safety, when a punt or drop kick is used, the ball may be kicked from behind the kicking team's restraining line. If a yardage penalty for a live-ball foul is enforced from the previous spot, administration is from the 20-yard line, unless the kicking team's restraining line has been relocated by a previous penalty [S18 or appropriate signal].
- e. All players of Team A must have been between the nine-yard marks after the ready-for-play signal [S19].

- f. A Team A player who goes out of bounds during a free kick down may not return inbounds during the down (Exception: This does not apply to a Team A player who is blocked out of bounds and attempts to return inbounds immediately) [S19].
- g. No Team A player may block an opponent until Team A is eligible to touch a free-kicked ball [S19].

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot, or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B, or from the spot where the ball is placed after a touchback [S18] (A.R. 6-1-2-VII).**

- h. All Team B players must be inbounds [S19].
- i. All Team B players must be behind their restraining line [S18].

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S18 or S19].**

#### Touching and Recovery of a Free Kick

ARTICLE 3. a. No Team A player may touch a free-kicked ball until after:

1. It touches a Team B player (Exception: Rules 6-1-4 and 6-5-1-b);
2. It breaks the plane of and remains beyond Team B's restraining line (Exception: Rule 6-4-1) (A.R. 2-11-5-I); or
3. It touches any player, the ground, an official or anything beyond Team B's restraining line.

Thereafter, all players of Team A become eligible to touch, recover or catch the kick.

- b. Any other touching by Team A is illegal touching, a violation that, when the ball becomes dead, gives the receiving team the privilege of taking the ball at the spot of the violation.
- c. If a penalty incurred by either team before the ball becomes dead is enforced, or if there are offsetting fouls, the illegal touching privilege is canceled (A.R. 6-1-3-I).
- d. Illegal touching in Team A's end zone is ignored.

#### Forced Touching Disregarded

ARTICLE 4. a. A player blocked by an opponent into a free kick is not, while inbounds, deemed to have touched the kick.

- b. An inbounds player touched by a ball batted by an opponent is not deemed to have touched the ball.

### Free Kick at Rest

ARTICLE 5. If a free kick comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot.

### Free Kick Caught or Recovered

ARTICLE 6. a. If a free kick is caught or recovered by a player of the receiving team, the ball continues in play (Exceptions: Rules 4-1-3-g, 6-1-7, and 6-5-1 and 2). If caught or recovered by a player of the kicking team, the ball becomes dead (A.R. 4-1-3-II and A.R. 6-1-6-I). The ball belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot, unless the kicking team is in legal possession when the ball is declared dead. In the latter case, the ball belongs to the kicking team.

- b. When opposing players, each eligible to touch the ball, simultaneously recover a rolling kick or catch a free kick, the simultaneous possession makes the ball dead. A kick declared dead in joint possession is awarded to the receiving team.

### Touching Ground On or Behind Goal Line

ARTICLE 7. When a free kick untouched by Team B touches the ground on or behind Team B's goal line, the ball becomes dead and belongs to Team B.

### Fouls by Kicking Team

ARTICLE 8. Penalties for all fouls by the kicking team other than kick-catch interference (Rule 6-4) during a free kick play may be enforced at the previous spot or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.

## SECTION 2. Free Kick Out of Bounds

### Kicking Team

ARTICLE 1. A free kick out of bounds between the goal lines untouched by an inbounds player of Team B is a foul (A.R. 6-2-1-I-IV).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot; or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B; or the receiving team may put the ball in play 30 yards beyond Team A's restraining line at the inbounds spot [S19].**

## Receiving Team

ARTICLE 2. When a free kick goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball belongs to the receiving team at the inbounds spot. When a free kick goes out of bounds behind the goal line, the ball belongs to the team defending that goal line (A.R. 6-2-2-I-IV).

## SECTION 3. Scrimmage Kicks

### Behind the Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 1. a. A scrimmage kick that fails to cross the neutral zone continues in play. All players may catch or recover the ball behind the neutral zone and advance it (A.R. 6-3-1-I-III).

- b. The blocking of a scrimmage kick by an opponent of the kicking team who is not more than three yards beyond the neutral zone is considered to have occurred within or behind that zone (Rule 2-10-5).

### Beyond the Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 2. a. No inbounds player of the kicking team shall touch a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone before it touches an opponent. Such illegal touching is a violation that, when the ball becomes dead, gives the receiving team the privilege of taking the ball at the spot of the violation (Exception: Rules 6-3-4 and 8-4-2-b) (A.R. 2-11-2-I and A.R. 6-3-2-I).

- b. If a penalty incurred by either team before the ball becomes dead is enforced or there are offsetting fouls, the privilege is canceled (Exception: Rule 8-4-2-b) (A.R. 6-3-2-I-VI, A.R. 6-3-11-I-III and A.R. 10-1-4-VIII).
- c. Illegal touching in Team A's end zone is ignored.

### All Become Eligible

ARTICLE 3. When a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone touches a player of the receiving team who is inbounds, any player may catch or recover the ball (Rule 6-3-1-b) (Exception: Rules 6-3-4 and 6-5-1-b).

### Forced Touching Disregarded

ARTICLE 4. a. A player blocked by an opponent into a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone shall not, while inbounds, be deemed to have touched the kick (A.R. 6-3-4-I, II and IV).

- b. An inbounds player touched by a ball batted by an opponent is not deemed to have touched the ball (A.R. 6-3-4-III).

### Catch or Recovery by Receiving Team

ARTICLE 5. If a scrimmage kick is caught or recovered by a player of the receiving team, the ball continues in play (Exceptions: Rules 4-1-3-g, 6-3-9, 6-5-1 and 2) (A.R. 8-4-2-IX).

### Catch or Recovery by Kicking Team

ARTICLE 6. a. If a player of the kicking team catches or recovers a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone, the ball becomes dead (A.R. 6-3-1-V). The ball belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot, unless the kicking team is in legal possession when the ball is declared dead. In the latter case, the ball belongs to the kicking team.

- b. When opposing players, each eligible to touch the ball, simultaneously recover a rolling kick or catch a scrimmage kick, the simultaneous possession makes the ball dead. A kick declared dead in joint possession of opposing players is awarded to the receiving team (Rules 2-2-8 and 4-1-3-1).

### Out of Bounds Between Goal Lines or at Rest Inbounds

ARTICLE 7. If a scrimmage kick goes out of bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot (Exception: Rule 8-4-2-b).

### Out of Bounds Behind Goal Line

ARTICLE 8. If a scrimmage kick (other than one that scores a field goal) goes out of bounds behind a goal line, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team defending that goal line (Rule 8-4-2-b).

### Touching Ground On or Behind Goal Line

ARTICLE 9. The ball becomes dead and belongs to the team defending its goal line when a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone is subsequently untouched by Team B before touching the ground on or behind Team B's goal line (Rule 8-4-2-b) (A.R. 6-3-9-I-III and A.R. 8-4-2-IV).

### Legal and Illegal Kicks

ARTICLE 10. a. A legal scrimmage kick is a punt, drop kick or place kick made according to rule.

- b. A return kick is an illegal kick and a live-ball foul that causes the ball to become dead.

**PENALTY—For a return kick (live-ball foul): Five yards from the spot of the foul [S31].**

- c. A scrimmage kick made when the kicker's entire body is beyond the neutral zone is an illegal kick and a live-ball foul that causes the ball to become dead.

**PENALTY—For an illegal kick beyond the neutral zone (live-ball foul): Five yards from the previous spot and loss of down [S31 and S9].**

- d. Any device or material used to mark the spot of a scrimmage place kick or elevate the ball makes the kick illegal.

**PENALTY—For an illegal kick (live-ball foul): Five yards from the previous spot [S31].**

#### Loose Behind the Goal Line

ARTICLE 11. If a scrimmage kick untouched by Team B after crossing the neutral zone is batted in Team B's end zone by a player of Team A, it is a violation for illegal touching (Rule 6-3-2). The spot of the violation is Team B's 20-yard line, which may be a penalty enforcement spot for fouls by Team A during the kick play (Rules 6-3-13 and 10-2-4) (Exception: Rule 8-4-2-b) (A.R. 6-3-11-I-III and A.R. 2-11-2-I).

#### Out-of-Bounds Player

ARTICLE 12. No Team A player who goes out of bounds during a scrimmage kick down may return inbounds during the down (Exception: This does not apply to a Team A player who is blocked out of bounds and attempts to return inbounds immediately).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B [S19].**

#### Fouls by Kicking Team

ARTICLE 13. Penalties for all fouls by the kicking team other than kick-catch interference (Rule 6-4) during a scrimmage kick play (except field-goal attempts) may be enforced at the previous spot or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.

## SECTION 4. Opportunity To Catch a Kick

### Interference With Opportunity

ARTICLE 1. A player of the receiving team within the boundary lines attempting to catch a kick, and so located that he could have caught a free kick or a scrimmage kick that is beyond the neutral zone, must be given an unimpeded opportunity to catch the kick (A.R. 6-3-1-III, A.R. 6-4-1-V and A.R. 6-4-1-X).

- a. This protection terminates when the kick touches the ground, when any player of Team B muffs a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone, or when any player of Team B muffs a free kick in the field of play or in the end zone (Rule 6-5-1-a) (A.R. 6-4-1-IV).
- b. If interference with a potential receiver is the result of a player being blocked by an opponent, it is not a foul.
- c. It is an interference foul if the kicking team contacts the potential receiver before, or simultaneous to, his first touching the ball (A.R. 6-4-1-II, III, VII and IX). When in question, it is an interference foul.

**PENALTY—For foul between the goal lines: Receiving team’s ball, first down, 15 yards beyond the spot of the foul for an interference foul [S33]. For foul behind the goal line: Award a touchback and penalize from the succeeding spot. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

## SECTION 5. Fair Catch

### Dead Where Caught

ARTICLE 1. a. When a Team B player makes a fair catch, the ball becomes dead where caught and belongs to Team B at that spot.

- b. When a valid fair catch signal is made, the unimpeded opportunity to catch a free or scrimmage kick is extended to a player who muffs the kick and still has an opportunity to complete the catch. This protection terminates when the kick touches the ground. If the player subsequently catches the kick, the ball is placed where it was first touched (A.R. 6-5-1-I-IV).
- c. Rules pertaining to a fair catch apply only when a scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone or during free kicks.

- d. The purpose of the fair catch provision is to protect the receiver who, by his fair catch signal, agrees he or a teammate will not advance after the catch (A.R. 6-5-5-III).
- e. The ball shall be put in play by a snap by the receiving team at the spot of the catch if the ball is caught (Exceptions: Rules 6-5-1-b, 7-1-2 and 8-6-1-b).

#### No Advance

ARTICLE 2. No Team B player shall carry a caught or recovered ball more than two steps in any direction after a valid or invalid fair catch signal by any Team B player (A.R. 6-5-2-I-IV).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21].**

#### Invalid Signals

ARTICLE 3. a. During a down in which a kick is made, no player of Team B shall make any invalid fair catch signal during a free kick or beyond the neutral zone during a scrimmage kick. Any signal is invalid after a scrimmage kick is caught beyond the neutral zone, strikes the ground or touches another player beyond the neutral zone. A signal is invalid after a free kick is caught, strikes the ground or touches another player (A.R. 6-5-3-IV-VI).

- b. A catch after an invalid signal is not a fair catch, and the ball is dead where caught. If the signal follows a catch, the ball is dead when the signal is first given (A.R. 6-5-1-II).
- c. Invalid signals beyond the neutral zone apply only to Team B (A.R. 6-5-3-II).
- d. An invalid signal beyond the neutral zone is possible only when the ball has crossed the neutral zone (Rule 2-15-7) (A.R. 6-5-3-I).

#### Illegal Block or Contact

ARTICLE 4. A player of Team B who has made a valid or invalid signal for a fair catch and does not touch the ball shall not block or foul an opponent during that down (A.R. 6-5-4-I and II).

**PENALTY—Free kick: Receiving team's ball 15 yards from the spot of the foul [S40]. Scrimmage kick: 15 yards, postscrimmage kick enforcement [S40].**

### No Tackling

ARTICLE 5. No player of the kicking team shall tackle or block an opponent who has completed a fair catch. Only the player making a fair catch signal has this protection (A.R. 6-5-5-I and III).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Receiving team's ball 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S38].**

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# RULE 7

## Snapping and Passing the Ball

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### SECTION 1. The Scrimmage

#### Starting With a Snap

ARTICLE 1. The ball shall be put in play by a legal snap unless the rules provide for a legal free kick (A.R. 4-1-4-I and II).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S19].**

#### Not Outside an Inbounds Line

ARTICLE 2. The ball may not be snapped between an inbounds line and the nearer sideline. If the starting point for any scrimmage down is between an inbounds line and the nearer sideline, it shall be transferred to the inbounds spot.

#### Offensive Team Requirements

ARTICLE 3. The offensive team requirements are as follows:

- a. After the ball is ready for play and before the ball is snapped:
  1. (a) The snapper, after assuming his position for the succeeding snap and touching or simulating (hand[s] at or below his knees) touching the ball, may not move to a different position.
  - (b) The snapper may not lift the ball, move it beyond the neutral zone or simulate the start of a play.
  - (c) The snapper may take his hand(s) off the ball if it does not simulate the start of a play.
  - (d) Penalties for infractions of (a), (b) and (c) may be enforced whether or not the ball is snapped, and the foul for any resulting

- offside by an opponent shall be nullified [S7 and S19] (A.R. 7-1-3-V and VI).
2. (a) Each substitute of Team A shall have been between the nine-yard marks. Team A players who participated in the previous down shall have been between the nine-yard marks after the previous down and before the next snap (A.R. 3-3-4-III and IV) [S19].  
(b) All Team A players shall have been between the nine-yard marks after a team timeout, an injury timeout, a radio timeout, a television timeout or the end of a period [S19].
  3. No player of the offensive team shall be in or beyond the neutral zone after the snapper touches or simulates (hand[s] at or below his knees) touching the ball [Exceptions: (1) The snapper (Rule 7-1-3-b-3); (2) Substitutes and departing players; and (3) offensive players in a scrimmage kick formation who, after the snapper touches the ball, point at opponents and break the neutral zone with their hand(s)] [S7 and S19].
  4. No offensive player shall contact an opponent or make a false start, which includes (A.R. 7-1-3-IV) [S7 and S19]:
    - (a) Feigning a charge.
    - (b) A shift or movement that simulates the beginning of a play. This includes the snapper who, after assuming a position for the succeeding snap and touching or simulating (hand[s] at or below his knees) touching the ball, moves to another position.
    - (c) A lineman between the snapper and the player on the end of the line, after having placed a hand(s) on or near the ground (below the knees), moving his hand(s) or making any quick movement; or a lineman other than the snapper wearing number 50 through 79, after having placed a hand(s) on or near the ground (below the knees), moving his hand(s) or making any quick movement (A.R. 7-1-3-VII, VIII, X and XI).  
[Exception: It is not a false start if any player on the line of scrimmage immediately reacts when threatened by a Team B player in the neutral zone (Rule 7-1-5-a-2) (A.R. 7-1-3-VIII and IX)].

- (d) An offensive player between the snapper and the player on the end of the line, neither legally in the backfield nor legally on the line of scrimmage, after having placed a hand(s) on or near the ground (below the knees), moving his hand(s) or making any quick movement.
5. An official shall sound his whistle when (A.R. 4-1-4-I):
- (a) There is a false start (A.R. 3-3-2-I and A.R. 7-1-3-VII-IX).
- (b) An offensive player is in or beyond the neutral zone after the snapper touches or simulates (hand[s] at or below his knees) touching the ball.

*Note: The penalty for an infraction of this rule may be enforced whether or not the ball is snapped, and the penalty for any resulting offside by an opponent shall be canceled [S7 and S19].*

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul: Five yards from the succeeding spot. [S7, S19 or S20].**

- 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. [S19].

*Exceptions:*

1. Rule 1-4-2-b (A.R. 1-4-2-I).
2. One player may be between his scrimmage line and the backs if in a position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs. When in such position, that player may receive the snap himself or it may go directly to any player legally a back [S19].
2. The player on each side of and next to the snapper may lock legs with the snapper, but any other lineman must have both feet outside the outside foot of the player next to him when the ball is snapped [S19].
3. All players must be inbounds, and only the snapper may be encroaching on the neutral zone; but no part of his person may be beyond the neutral zone, and his feet must be stationary behind the ball [S19].

4. One player may be in motion, but not in motion toward his opponent's goal line. A lineman may not be in motion at the snap. Other players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head or arms [S20] (A.R. 7-1-3-I, III and XII-XIV).

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul: Five yards from the previous spot (S19 or S20). For live-ball fouls occurring when or after the snap starts during scrimmage kick plays: Five yards from the previous spot or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (Field Goal Plays Exempted) (S18, S19, S22).**

### Shifts and False Starts

ARTICLE 4. a. If a snap is preceded by a huddle or shift, all players of the offensive team must come to an absolute stop and remain stationary in their positions, without movement of the feet, body, head or arms, for at least one full second before the ball is snapped (A.R. 7-1-4-I) [S20].

- b. It is not intended that Rule 7-1-4-a should prohibit smooth, rhythmical shifts if properly executed. A smooth cadence shift or unhurried motion is not an infraction. However, it is the responsibility of an offensive player who moves before the snap to do so in a manner that in no way simulates the beginning of a play. After the ball is ready for play and all players are in scrimmage formation, no offensive player shall make a quick, jerky movement before the snap, including but not limited to (A.R. 7-1-4-II-IV):
  1. A lineman moving his foot, shoulder, arm, body or head in a quick, jerky motion in any direction [S19].
  2. The snapper shifting or moving the ball or moving his thumb or fingers, flexing his elbows, jerking his head, or dipping his shoulders or buttocks [S19].
  3. The quarterback “chucking” his hands at the snapper, flexing his elbows under the snapper, jerking his head or dropping his shoulders quickly just before the snap [S19].
  4. A player, before the snap, simulating receiving the ball by “chucking” his hands toward the snapper or quarterback or making any quick, jerky movement that simulates the beginning of a play [S19].

**PENALTY—For fouls before the ball is snapped: Five yards from the succeeding spot. For fouls when the ball is snapped: Five yards from the previous spot [S7, S19 or S20].**

**PENALTY—For live-ball fouls occurring when the snap starts during scrimmage kick plays: Five yards from the previous spot or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (Field Goal Plays Exempted) [S20].**

### Defensive Team Requirements

ARTICLE 5. The defensive team requirements are as follows:

- a. After the ball is ready for play and before the ball is snapped:
  1. No player may touch the ball except when moved illegally as in Rule 7-1-3-a-1, nor may any player contact an opponent or in any other way interfere with him. An official shall sound his whistle immediately (A.R. 7-1-5-I-III) [S7 and S18].
  2. No player may enter the neutral zone causing an offensive lineman to react immediately or commit any other dead-ball offside foul. An official shall sound his whistle immediately [Rules 2-18-2 and 7-1-3-a-4-(c) Exception] (A.R. 7-1-3-VIII and IX, A.R. 7-1-5-III) [S7 and S18].
  3. No player shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play. No player may call defensive signals that simulate the sound or cadence of (or otherwise interfere with) offensive starting signals. An official shall sound his whistle immediately [S7 and S21].
  4. Player(s) aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage may not make quick or abrupt actions that are not part of normal defensive player movement in an obvious attempt to cause an offensive player(s) to foul (false start). An official shall sound his whistle immediately [S7 and S21] (A. R. 7-1-5-IV).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7, S18 or S21].**

- b. When the snap starts:
  1. No player may be in or beyond the neutral zone at the snap.
  2. All players must be inbounds.

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S18].**

## Handing the Ball Forward

ARTICLE 6. No player may hand the ball forward except during a scrimmage down as follows:

- a. A Team A player who is behind his scrimmage line may hand the ball forward to a backfield teammate who is also behind that line.
- b. A Team A player who is behind his scrimmage line may hand the ball forward to a teammate who was on his scrimmage line when the ball was snapped, provided that teammate left his line position by a movement of both feet that faced him toward his own end line and was at least two yards behind his scrimmage line when he received the ball (A.R. 7-1-6-I).

**PENALTY—Five yards from the spot of the foul; also loss of a down if by Team A before team possession changes during a scrimmage down [S35 and S9].**

## Planned Loose Ball

ARTICLE 7. A Team A player may not advance a planned loose ball in the vicinity of the snapper.

**PENALTY—Five yards from the previous spot and loss of down [S19 and S9].**

## SECTION 2. Backward Pass and Fumble

## During Live Ball

ARTICLE 1. A ball carrier may hand or pass the ball backward at any time, except to throw the ball intentionally out of bounds to conserve time.

**PENALTY—Five yards from the spot of the foul; also loss of down if by Team A before team possession changes during a scrimmage down (A.R. 3-4-3-III) [S35 and S9].**

## Caught or Recovered

ARTICLE 2. a. When a backward pass or fumble is caught or recovered by any inbounds player, the ball continues in play (A.R. 7-2-2-I and II, A.R. 2-23-1-I).

*Exceptions:*

1. Rule 8-3-2-d-5 (Team A fumble on the try).
  2. On fourth down before a change of team possession, when a Team A fumble is caught or recovered by a Team A player other than the fumbler, the ball is dead. If the catch or recovery is beyond the spot of the fumble, the ball is returned to the spot of the fumble. If the catch or recovery is behind the spot of the fumble, the ball remains at the spot of the catch or recovery.
- b. When a backward pass or fumble is caught or recovered simultaneously by opposing players, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team last in possession (Exception: Rule 7-2-2-a Exceptions).

#### After the Ball Is Snapped

ARTICLE 3. No offensive lineman may receive a hand-to-hand snap.

**PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S19].**

#### Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 4. a. *Backward Pass*. When a backward pass goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball belongs to the passing team at the out-of-bounds spot.

- b. *Fumble*. When a fumble goes out of bounds between the goal lines:
1. In advance of the spot of the fumble, the ball belongs to the fumbling team at the spot of the fumble (Rule 3-3-2-e-2).
  2. Behind the spot of the fumble, the ball belongs to the fumbling team at the out-of-bounds spot.
- c. *Behind or Beyond Goal Line*. When a fumble or backward pass goes out of bounds behind or beyond a goal line, it is a safety or touchback depending on impetus and responsibility (Rules 8-5-1, 8-6-1 and 8-7) (A.R. 7-2-4-I, A.R. 8-6-1-I and A.R. 8-7-2-VIII-IX).

#### At Rest

ARTICLE 5. When a backward pass or fumble comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing or fumbling team at the dead-ball spot.

## SECTION 3. Forward Pass

### Legal Forward Pass

ARTICLE 1. Team A may make one forward pass during each scrimmage down before team possession changes, provided the pass is thrown from a point in or behind the neutral zone.

### Illegal Forward Pass

ARTICLE 2. A forward pass is illegal:

- a. If thrown by a Team A player whose entire body is beyond the neutral zone when he releases the ball [S35 and S9].
- b. If thrown by a Team B player or if thrown by a Team A player after team possession has changed during the down [S35].
- c. If it is the second forward pass by Team A during the same down [S35 and S9].
- d. If, to conserve time, the pass is not thrown immediately after the ball is first controlled after the snap or is thrown after the ball has touched the ground. If, to conserve time, the pass is thrown where no eligible Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch it (A.R. 7-3-2-II-VIII) [S35 and S9].
- e. If thrown from in or behind the neutral zone after a ball carrier in possession of the ball has gone beyond the neutral zone [S35 and S9].

**PENALTY—Five yards from the spot of the foul; also loss of down if by Team A before team possession changes during a scrimmage down (A.R. 3-4-3-IV and A.R. 7-3-2-II) [S35 and S9].**

- f. If, to save loss of yardage, a forward pass is thrown where no eligible Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch it. When in question, the Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch the pass (A.R. 7-3-2-I) [S36 and S9].

[Exception: It is not a foul when the passer, who is or has been outside the tackle box, throws the ball so that it crosses or lands beyond the neutral zone or neutral zone extended (Rule 2-19-3) (A.R. 7-3-2-IX)].

**PENALTY—Loss of down at the spot of the foul [S36 and S9].**

### Eligibility To Touch Legal Pass

ARTICLE 3. Eligibility rules apply during a down when a legal forward pass is thrown. All Team B players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. When the ball is snapped, the following Team A players are eligible:

- Each player who is in an end position on his scrimmage line and who is wearing a number other than 50 through 79 (A.R. 7-3-3-I).
- Each player who is legally positioned as a back wearing a number other than 50 through 79.
- A player wearing a number other than 50 through 79 in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs.

### Eligibility Lost by Going Out of Bounds

ARTICLE 4. No eligible offensive receiver who goes out of bounds during a down shall touch a legal forward pass in the field of play or end zones or while airborne until it has been touched by an opponent or official (A.R. 7-3-4-I-III).

[Exception: This does not apply to an eligible offensive player who attempts to return inbounds immediately after going out of bounds due to contact by an opponent (A.R. 7-3-4-IV)].

**PENALTY—Loss of down at the previous spot [S16 and S9].**

### Eligibility Gained or Regained

ARTICLE 5. When a Team B player or an official touches a legal forward pass, all players become eligible (A.R. 7-3-5-I).

### Complete Pass

ARTICLE 6. Any forward pass is complete when caught by a player of the passing team who is inbounds, and the ball continues in play unless completed in the opponent's end zone or the pass has been caught simultaneously by opposing players. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players inbounds, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team (Rule 2-2-7) (A.R. 2-2-7-III and A.R. 7-3-6-I-IX).

### Incomplete Pass

ARTICLE 7. a. Any forward pass is incomplete if the ball is out of bounds by rule or if it touches the ground when not firmly controlled by a player. It also is incomplete when a player leaves his feet and receives the pass but first lands on

or outside a boundary line, unless his progress has been stopped in the field of play or end zone (Rule 4-1-3-p) (A.R. 2-2-7-III and A.R. 7-3-7-I).

- b. When a legal forward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the previous spot.
- c. When an illegal forward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the spot of the pass (Exception: If the offended team declines the penalty for an illegal pass thrown from the end zone, the ball shall next be put in play at the previous spot.) (A.R. 7-3-7-II-IV).

### Illegal Contact and Pass Interference

ARTICLE 8. a. During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone, illegal contact by Team A and Team B players is prohibited from the time the ball is snapped until it is touched by any player or an official (A.R. 7-3-8-II and III).

- b. Offensive pass interference by a Team A player beyond the neutral zone during a legal forward pass play in which a forward pass crosses the neutral zone is contact that interferes with a Team B eligible player. It is the responsibility of the offensive player to avoid the opponents. It is not offensive pass interference (A.R. 7-3-8-VI, VII, XIII, XVIII and XIX):
  1. When, after the snap, a Team A ineligible player immediately charges and contacts an opponent at a point not more than one yard beyond the neutral zone and does not continue the contact more than three yards beyond the neutral zone.
  2. When two or more eligible players are making a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch or bat the pass. Eligible players of either team have equal rights to the ball (A.R. 7-3-8-XII).
  3. When the pass is in flight and two or more eligible players are in the area where they might receive or intercept the pass and an offensive player in that area impedes an opponent, and the pass is not catchable.
- c. Defensive pass interference is contact beyond the neutral zone by a Team B player whose intent to impede an eligible opponent is obvious and it could prevent the opponent the opportunity of receiving a catchable forward pass. When in question, a legal forward pass is catchable. Defensive pass interference occurs only after a legal forward pass is thrown. It is not defensive pass interference (A.R. 7-3-8-I, IV, V, IX-XI, XIV and XV):

1. When, after the snap, opposing players immediately charge and establish contact with opponents at a point that is within one yard beyond the neutral zone.
2. When two or more eligible players are making a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch or bat the pass. Eligible players of either team have equal rights to the ball (A.R. 7-3-8-XII).
3. When a Team B player legally contacts an opponent before the pass is thrown (A.R. 7-3-8-XIII).
4. When a Team A potential kicker, from scrimmage kick formation, simulates a scrimmage kick by throwing the ball high and deep, and contact by a Team B player occurs.

**PENALTY—Pass interference by Team A: 15 yards from the previous spot [S33].**

**Pass interference by Team B: Team A's ball at the spot of the foul, first down, if the foul occurs fewer than 15 yards beyond the previous spot. If the foul occurs 15 or more yards beyond the previous spot, Team A's ball, first down, 15 yards from the previous spot [S33].**

**When the ball is snapped on or inside the Team B 17-yard line and outside the Team B two-yard line, and the spot of the foul is on or inside the two-yard line, the penalty from the previous spot shall place the ball at the two-yard line, first down (A.R. 7-3-8-XVII).**

**No penalty enforced from outside the two-yard line may place the ball inside the two-yard line (Exception: Rule 10-2-5-b).**

**If the previous spot was on or inside the two-yard line, first down halfway between the previous spot and the goal line (Rule 10-2-6 Exception).**

### Contact Interference

ARTICLE 9. a. Either Team A or Team B legally may interfere with opponents behind the neutral zone.

- b. Players of either team legally may interfere beyond the neutral zone after the pass has been touched (A.R. 7-3-9-II).

- c. Defensive players legally may contact opponents who have crossed the neutral zone if the opponents are not in a position to receive a catchable forward pass.
  - 1. Those infractions that occur during a down in which a forward pass crosses the neutral zone are pass interference infractions only if the receiver had the opportunity to receive a catchable forward pass.
  - 2. Those infractions that occur during a down in which a forward pass does not cross the neutral zone are Rule 9-3-4 infractions and are penalized from the previous spot.
- d. Pass interference rules apply only during a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone (Rules 2-19-3 and 7-3-8-a and c) (A.R. 10-2-2-XXIV).
- e. Contact by Team B with an eligible receiver involving a personal foul that interferes with the reception of a catchable pass may be ruled either as pass interference or as a personal foul with the 15-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot. Rule 7-3-8 is specific about contact during a pass. However, if the interference involves an act that ordinarily would result in disqualification, the fouling player must leave the game.
- f. Physical contact is required to establish interference.
- g. Each player has territorial rights, and incidental contact is ruled under “attempt to reach...the pass” in Rule 7-3-8. If opponents who are beyond the line collide while moving toward the pass, a foul by one or both players is indicated only if intent to impede the opponent is obvious. It is pass interference only if a catchable forward pass is involved (A.R. 7-3-9-I).
- h. Pass interference rules do not apply after the pass has been touched anywhere inbounds by an inbounds player or has touched an official. If an opponent is fouled, the penalty is for the foul and not pass interference (A.R. 7-3-9-II).
- i. After the pass has been touched, any player may execute a legal block during the remaining flight of the pass.
- j. Tackling or grasping a receiver or any other intentional contact before he touches the pass is evidence that the tackler is disregarding the ball and is therefore illegal.
- k. Tackling or running into a receiver when a forward pass obviously is underthrown or overthrown is disregarding the ball and is illegal. This is

not pass interference but a violation of Rule 9-1-2-f and is penalized 15 yards from the previous spot plus a first down. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified.

#### 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].**

#### Illegal Touching

ARTICLE 11. No originally ineligible player while inbounds shall intentionally touch a legal forward pass until it has touched an opponent or an official (A.R. 5-2-3-I and A.R. 7-3-11-I-III).

**PENALTY—Five yards from the previous spot [S16].**

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# RULE 8

## Scoring

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### SECTION 1. Value of Scores

#### Scoring Plays

ARTICLE 1. The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown — 6 Points

Field Goal — 3 Points

Safety (points awarded to opponent) — 2 Points

Successful Try:

Touchdown — 2 Points

Field Goal or Safety — 1 Point

#### Forfeited Games

ARTICLE 2. The score of a forfeited game, or a suspended game that later results in a forfeiture, shall be: Offended Team—1, Opponent—0. If the offended team is ahead at the time of forfeit, the score stands (Rules 3-3-3-a and b, and Rules 9-2-3-a and b).

### SECTION 2. Touchdown

#### How Scored

ARTICLE 1. A touchdown shall be scored when:

- A ball carrier advancing from the field of play has possession of a live ball when it penetrates the plane of the opponent's goal line (Exception: Rule 4-2-4-e) (A.R. 2-23-1-I and A.R. 8-2-1-I-IV).
- A player catches a forward pass in the opponent's end zone (A.R. 5-1-3-I and II).
- A fumble or backward pass is recovered, caught, intercepted or awarded in the opponent's end zone (Exceptions: Rules 7-2-2-a Exception 2 and 8-3-2-d-5) (A.R. 7-2-4-I).

- d. A free kick or scrimmage kick is legally caught or recovered in the opponent's end zone. (A.R. 6-3-9-VI).
- e. The referee awards a touchdown under the provisions of Rule 9-1-5 Penalty or Rule 9-2-3 Penalty.

## SECTION 3. Try Down

### How Scored

ARTICLE 1. The point or points shall be scored according to the point values in Rule 8-1-1 if the try results in what would be a touchdown, safety (Exception: Rule 8-3-4-a) or field goal under rules governing play at other times (A.R. 8-3-1-I-III; A.R. 8-3-2-I-III, V and VIII; and A.R. 10-2-5-X-XVIII).

### Opportunity to Score

ARTICLE 2. A try is an opportunity for either team to score one or two points while the game clock is stopped after a touchdown. It is a special interval in the game which, for purposes of penalty enforcement only, includes both a down and the "ready" period that precedes it.

- a. The ball shall be put in play by the team that scored a six-point touchdown. If a touchdown is scored during a down in which time in the fourth period expires, the try shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game.
- b. The try, which is a scrimmage down, begins when the ball is declared ready for play.
- c. The snap will be midway between the inbounds lines on the opponent's three-yard line or from any other point on or between the inbounds lines on or behind the opponent's three-yard line if the position of the ball is selected by the team designated to put the ball in play before the ready-for-play signal. The ball may be relocated after a charged timeout to either team unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting penalties (Rules 8-3-3-a and 8-3-3-c-1).
- d. The try ends when:
  - 1. Either team scores.
  - 2. The ball is dead by rule (A.R. 8-3-2-IV and VI).
  - 3. An accepted penalty results in a score.

4. A Team A loss-of-down penalty is accepted (Rule 8-3-3-c-2).
5. Before a change of team possession, a Team A player fumbles and the ball is caught or recovered by any Team A player other than the fumbler. There is no Team A score (A.R. 8-3-2-IX-XI).

#### Fouls During a Try Before a Change of Team Possession

ARTICLE 3. a. *Offsetting fouls:* If both teams foul during the down and Team B fouls before the change of possession, the fouls offset and the down is replayed, even if additional fouls occur after the change of possession. Any replay after offsetting fouls must be from the previous spot (A.R. 8-3-3-II).

#### b. *Fouls by Team B on a try:*

1. Team A shall have the option of declining the score and repeating the try after enforcement, or declining the penalty(ies) and accepting the score. Team A may accept the score with penalties for personal fouls enforced on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods (A.R. 3-2-3-VII; A.R. 8-3-2-II; A.R. 8-3-3-I; and A.R. 10-2-5-XII-XIV).
2. A replay after a penalty against Team B may be from any point on or between the inbounds lines on or behind the yard line where the penalty leaves the ball.

#### c. *Fouls by Team A on a try:*

1. After a foul by Team A on a successful try, the ball shall be put in play at the spot where the penalty leaves it (A.R. 8-3-3-I and III).
2. If Team A commits a foul for which the penalty includes loss of down, the try is over, and the score is canceled, and no yardage penalty is assessed on the succeeding kickoff.
3. If before a change of team possession Team A commits a foul that is not offset, and during the down there is neither another change of team possession nor a score, the penalty is declined by rule.

#### d. *Dead-ball enforcement:*

1. Penalties for fouls occurring after the ball is ready for play and before the snap are enforced before the next snap.
2. Penalties for live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls occurring during the try down are enforced on the succeeding kickoff or from

the succeeding spot in extra periods. If the try is replayed, these penalties are enforced on the replay (Rule 10-1-6) (A.R. 3-2-3-VIII).

- e. *Roughing or running into kicker or holder*: Roughing or running into the kicker or holder is a live-ball foul.
- f. *Kick-catch interference*: The penalty for interference with a kick catch is declined by rule. Any score by Team A is canceled.

#### Fouls During a Try After a Change of Team Possession

ARTICLE 4. a. Distance penalties against either team are declined by rule (Exception: Penalties for flagrant personal fouls, dead-ball fouls and live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.) (A.R. 8-3-4-I and II).

- b. A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled (A.R. 8-3-2-VII).
- c. If both teams foul during the down and Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls offset, the down is not replayed, and the try is over.

#### Fouls After a Try

ARTICLE 5. Penalties for fouls occurring after a try are enforced on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot in extra periods. However, if the try is replayed, these penalties are enforced before the replay (Rule 10-1-6) (A.R. 10-2-5-XVI-XVII).

#### Next Play

ARTICLE 6. After a try, the ball shall be put in play by a kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. The team scoring the six-point touchdown shall kick off.

## SECTION 4. Field Goal

#### How Scored

ARTICLE 1. a. A field goal shall be scored for the kicking team if a drop kick or place kick passes over the crossbar between the uprights of the receiving team's goal before it touches a player of the kicking team or the ground. The kick shall be a scrimmage kick but may not be a free kick.

- b. If a legal field goal attempt passes over the crossbar between the uprights and is dead beyond the end line or is blown back but does not return over the crossbar and is dead anywhere, it shall score a field goal. The crossbar and uprights are treated as a line, not a plane, in determining forward progress of the ball.

### Next Play

ARTICLE 2. a. After a field goal is scored, the ball shall be put in play by a kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. The team scoring the field goal shall kick off.

- b. After an unsuccessful field goal attempt that has crossed the neutral zone, the ball will next be put in play by Team B. If the ball is untouched by Team B after having crossed the neutral zone and is subsequently declared dead beyond the neutral zone, Team B will next snap it at the previous spot, or extra-period rules govern. If the previous spot was between Team B's 20-yard line and the goal line, Team B will next snap the ball on or between the inbounds lines at its 20-yard line, or extra-period rules govern. The snap shall be from midway between the inbounds lines on the 20-yard line, unless a different position on or between the inbounds lines is selected by Team B before the ready-for-play signal. After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated after a charged team timeout, unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting penalties. Otherwise, all rules pertaining to scrimmage kicks apply (A.R. 6-3-4-III, A.R. 8-4-2-I-X and A.R. 10-2-3-V).

## SECTION 5. Safety

### How Scored

ARTICLE 1. It is a safety when:

- a. The ball becomes dead out of bounds behind a goal line, except from an incomplete forward pass, or becomes dead in the possession of a player on, above or behind his own goal line, or becomes dead by rule, and the defending team is responsible for the ball being there (A.R. 6-3-1-IV and V; A.R. 7-2-4-I; A.R. 8-5-1-I-III, VIII and XI; A.R. 8-7-2-V; and A.R. 9-4-1-IX).

When in question, it is a touchback, not a safety.

*Exceptions:*

1. When a Team B player intercepts a forward pass, fumble or backward pass or catches a scrimmage or free kick between his five-yard line and the goal line and the ball carrier's original momentum carries him into the end zone, where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted or the kick was caught (A.R. 8-5-1-V-VII).
  2. When a Team B player recovers an opponent's fumble, backward pass, scrimmage kick or free kick between his five-yard line and the goal line and the ball carrier's original momentum carries him into the end zone, where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where the fumble, backward pass or kick was recovered (A.R. 8-5-1-V).
  3. When, after a change of team possession, a Team A player intercepts an illegal forward pass, or intercepts or recovers a fumble or backward pass between Team A's five-yard line and the goal line, and the ball carrier's original momentum carries him into the end zone, where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession, the ball belongs to Team A at the spot where the illegal forward pass, fumble or backward pass was intercepted or recovered.
- b. An accepted penalty for a foul leaves the ball on or behind the offending team's goal line (Exception: Rules 3-1-3-g-3 and 8-3-4-a) (A.R. 8-5-1-IV and A.R. 10-2-2-VIII and IX).

**Kick After Safety**

ARTICLE 2. After a safety is scored, the ball belongs to the defending team at its own 20-yard line, and that team shall put the ball in play on or between the inbounds lines by a free kick that may be a punt, drop kick or place kick (Exception: Extra-period and try rules).

**SECTION 6. Touchback****When Declared**

ARTICLE 1. It is a touchback when:

- a. The ball becomes dead out of bounds behind a goal line, except from an incomplete forward pass, or becomes dead in the possession of a player on, above or behind his own goal line and the attacking team is

responsible for the ball being there (Rules 7-2-4-a and b) (A.R. 6-3-9-IV, A.R. 7-2-4-I, A.R. 8-6-1-I and II, and A.R. 10-2-2-XXV).

- b. A kick becomes dead by rule behind the defending team's goal line and the attacking team is responsible for the ball being there (Exception: Rule 8-4-2-b) (A.R. 6-3-4-IV).

### Snap After a Touchback

ARTICLE 2. After a touchback is declared, the ball belongs to the defending team at its own 20-yard line, and that team shall put the ball in play on or between the inbounds lines by a snap (Exception: Extra-period rules). The snap shall be from midway between the inbounds lines on the 20-yard line, unless a different position on or between the inbounds lines is selected by the team designated to put the ball in play before the ready-for-play signal. After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated after a charged team timeout, unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting penalties.

## SECTION 7. Responsibility and Impetus

### Responsibility

ARTICLE 1. The team responsible for the ball being out of bounds behind a goal line or being dead in the possession of a player on, above or behind a goal line is the team whose player carries the ball or imparts an impetus to it that forces it on, above or across the goal line, or is responsible for a loose ball being on, above or behind the goal line (A.R. 6-3-4-I).

### Initial Impetus

ARTICLE 2. a. The impetus imparted by a player who kicks, passes, snaps or fumbles the ball shall be considered responsible for the ball's progress in any direction even though its course is deflected or reversed after striking the ground or after touching an official or a player of either team (A.R. 6-3-4-IV; A.R. 8-5-1-II, III, VIII, IX and XI; and A.R. 8-7-2-I-IX).

- b. Initial impetus is considered expended and the responsibility for the ball's progress is charged to a player:
1. If he kicks a ball not in player possession or bats a loose ball after it strikes the ground (Exception: The original impetus is not changed when a loose ball is batted or kicked in the end zone.) (A.R. 8-7-2-V).

2. If the ball comes to rest and he gives it new impetus by any contact with it.

*Exceptions:*

1. Rules 6-1-4-a and 6-3-4-a (A.R. 6-3-4-I-IV).
  2. The original impetus is not changed when a ball at rest in the end zone is moved when touched by an official or a player.
- c. A loose ball retains its original status when there is new impetus.

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# RULE 9

## Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules

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### SECTION 1. Contact and Interference Fouls

#### Flagrant Fouls

ARTICLE 1. Before the game, during the game and between periods, all flagrant fouls require disqualification. Team B disqualification personal fouls require first downs if not in conflict with other rules.

#### Persons Subject to the Rules Restrictions

ARTICLE 2. No person subject to the rules shall commit a personal foul before the game, during the game or between the periods. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul.

- a. No person subject to the rules shall strike an opponent with the knee; strike an opponent's helmet (including the face mask), neck, face or any other part of the body with an extended forearm, elbow, locked hands, palm, fist, or the heel, back or side of the open hand; or gouge an opponent (A.R. 9-1-2-I and II).
- b. No person subject to the rules shall strike an opponent with his foot or any part of his leg that is below the knee.
- c. There shall be no tripping (Exception: Tripping the ball carrier is not a foul).
- d. There shall be no clipping.

#### *Exceptions:*

1. Offensive players who are on the line of scrimmage at the snap within the blocking zone (Rule 2-3-6) legally may clip in the blocking zone, subject to the following restrictions:

- (a) A player in the blocking zone may not block an opponent with the force of the initial contact from behind and at or below the knee (Exception: Against the runner).
  - (b) A player on the line of scrimmage within the blocking zone may not leave the zone and return and legally clip.
  - (c) The blocking zone exists until the ball is touched outside the zone or the ball is outside the zone after a fumble, backward pass or muff from inside the zone.
2. When a player turns his back to a potential blocker who has committed himself in intent and direction or movement.
  3. When a player attempts to reach a runner or legally attempts to recover or catch a fumble, a muff, a backward pass, a kick or a touched forward pass, he may push an opponent below the waist at or to the buttocks (Rule 9-3-3-c, Exception 3) (A.R. 6-3-1-III).
  4. When an eligible player behind the neutral zone pushes an opponent below the waist at or to the buttocks to get to a forward pass (Rule 9-3-3-c, Exception 5).
- e. Blocking below the waist is permitted except as follows (A.R. 9-1-2-III-IX):
1. Offensive linemen at the snap positioned more than seven yards from the snapper are prohibited from blocking below the waist toward the original position of the ball in or behind the neutral zone and within 10 yards beyond the neutral zone.
  2. Backs at the snap positioned with the frame of their body completely outside the tackle box, or in motion at the snap, are prohibited from blocking below the waist toward the original position of the ball in or behind the neutral zone and within 10 yards beyond the neutral zone. The frame of the body does not include arms or legs extended sideways (A.R. 9-1-2-XXI).
  3. During a scrimmage down, defensive players are prohibited from blocking an eligible Team A receiver below the waist beyond the neutral zone unless attempting to get at the ball or ball carrier. A Team A receiver remains eligible until a legal forward pass is no longer possible by rule.

4. During a down in which there is a scrimmage kick from a scrimmage kick formation or a free kick, all players are prohibited from blocking below the waist, except against the ball carrier.
  5. After any change of team possession, all players are prohibited from blocking below the waist, except against the ball carrier.
  6. A Team A player behind the neutral zone and in position to receive a backward pass shall not be blocked below the waist or contacted by way of a personal foul.
- f. No player shall tackle or run into a receiver when a forward pass to him obviously is not catchable. This is a personal foul and not pass interference.
  - g. There shall be no piling on, falling on or throwing the body on an opponent after the ball becomes dead (A.R. 9-1-2-X).
  - h. No opponent shall tackle or block the ball carrier when he is clearly out of bounds or throw him to the ground after the ball becomes dead.
  - i. There shall be no hurdling (Exception: The ball carrier may hurdle an opponent.).
  - j. No player shall run into or throw himself against an opponent obviously out of the play either before or after the ball is dead (A.R. 9-1-2-XVI).
  - k. No player shall continuously contact an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (Exception: By or against the ball carrier).
  - l. No defensive player shall charge into a passer or throw him to the ground when it is obvious the ball has been thrown. This is roughing the passer. The penalty is added to the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down (Exception: A defensive player who is blocked by a Team A player[s] with a force so that he has no opportunity to avoid contact with the passer. However, this does not relieve the defensive player of responsibility for personal fouls as described in Rule 9-1-2-a.) (A.R. 2-30-4-I and II; A.R. 9-1-2-XI, XXII and XXIII; A.R. 10-2-1-I and II; and A.R.10-2-2-XXIII).
  - m. There shall be no chop blocking (A.R. 2-3-3-III and IV, A.R. 9-1-2-XXVI).

- n. No defensive player, in an attempt to gain an advantage, may step, jump or stand on an opponent (Rule 9-3-5-b). No defensive player who runs forward from beyond the neutral zone and leaps from beyond the neutral zone in an obvious attempt to block a field goal or try may land on any player(s). It is not a foul if the leaping player was aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped.
- o. When a team is in scrimmage kick formation, a defensive player may not initiate contact with the snapper until one second has elapsed after the snap (A.R. 9-1-2-XVIII-XX).
- p. All players are prohibited from grabbing the inside back collar of the shoulder pads or jersey, or the inside collar of the side of the shoulder pads or jersey, and immediately pulling the ball carrier down. This does not apply to a ball carrier, including a potential passer, who is inside the tackle box (Rule 2-34).
- 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 (A.R. 9-1-2-XII).

**PENALTY (a-q)—15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for Team B fouls if the first down is 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 or S46]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

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

#### Initiating Contact/Targeting an Opponent

ARTICLE 3. a. No player shall initiate contact and target an opponent with the crown (top) of his helmet. When in question, it is a foul.

- b. No player shall initiate contact and target a defenseless opponent above the shoulders. When in question, it is a foul. (Refer to Points of Emphasis for a description of “Defenseless Player.”)

**PENALTY (a-b)—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 (field goal plays exempted): Enforcement may be at the previous spot or the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (Rules 6-1-8 and 6-3-13).**

*Note: See Rule 9-6 for mandatory conference review procedures.*

#### Roughing or Running Into Kicker or Holder

ARTICLE 4. a. When it is obvious that a scrimmage kick will be made, no opponent shall run into or rough the kicker or the holder of a place kick (A.R. 5-2-2-I and A.R. 9-1-4-I, III and VI).

1. Roughing is a personal foul that endangers the kicker or holder.
2. Running into the kicker or holder is a foul that occurs when the kicker or holder is displaced from his kicking or holding position but is not roughed (A.R. 9-1-4-II).
3. Incidental contact with a kicker or holder is not a foul.
4. The kicker and holder must be protected from injury, but contact that occurs when or after a scrimmage kick has been touched is not roughing or running into the kicker or holder.
5. The kicker’s protection under this rule 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.

6. A defensive player legally blocked into the kicker or holder by a member of the kicking team is not exempt from fouls for running into or roughing the kicker or holder. A defensive player illegally blocked into the kicker or holder by a member of the kicking team is exempt from fouls for running into or roughing the kicker or holder.
7. When a player, other than one who blocks a scrimmage kick, runs into or roughs the kicker or holder, it is a foul.
8. When in question whether the foul is “running into” or “roughing,” the foul is “roughing.”

**PENALTY—Five yards from the previous spot for running into the kicker or holder [S30]. 15 yards from the previous spot and a first down for roughing the kicker or holder if the first down is not in conflict with other rules [S38 and S30]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

- b. A kicker or holder simulating being roughed or run into by a defensive player commits an unsportsmanlike act (A.R. 9-1-4-V).

**PENALTY—15 yards from the previous spot [S27].**

- c. The kicker of a free kick may not be blocked until he has advanced five yards beyond his restraining line or the kick has touched a player, an official or the ground.

**PENALTY—15 yards from the previous spot [S40].**

#### Illegal Interference

ARTICLE 5. a. No substitute, coach, authorized attendant or any person subject to the rules, other than a player or official, may interfere in any way with the ball, a player or an official while the ball is in play.

**PENALTY—15 yards. The referee may enforce any penalty he considers equitable, including awarding a score [S27].**

- b. Participation by 12 or more players is illegal participation (A.R. 9-1-5-I-VII).

**PENALTY—15 yards from the previous spot [S28]. For fouls during scrimmage kick plays (other than field goal plays): 15 yards from the previous spot or 15 yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B [S28].**

- c. No person not subject to the rules may interfere in any way with the ball or a player while the ball is in play.
- d. When anything other than persons subject to the rules and those not subject to the rules interferes in any way with a player or the ball in play, it is illegal interference.

**PENALTY—The referee may replay the down or take any action he deems equitable, including awarding a score [S27].**

#### Game Administration Interference

ARTICLE 6. While the ball is in play, coaches, substitutes and authorized attendants in the team area may not be between the sideline and coaching line or on the field of play.

**PENALTY—Administer as a dead-ball foul.**

**First and second infractions: Delay of game for sideline interference, five yards from the succeeding spot [S21 and S29].**

**Third and subsequent infractions: Unsportsmanlike conduct for sideline interference, 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S27 and S29].**

## SECTION 2. Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

### Unsportsmanlike Acts

ARTICLE 1. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct or any act that interferes with orderly game administration on the part of players, substitutes, coaches, authorized attendants or any other persons subject to the rules, before the game, during the game or between periods.

- a. Specifically prohibited acts and conduct include:
  - 1. No player, substitute, coach or other person subject to the rules shall use abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning to an opponent, to game officials or to the image of the game, including but not limited to:
    - (a) Pointing the finger(s), hand(s), arm(s) or ball at an opponent, or imitating the slashing of the throat.

- (b) Taunting, baiting or ridiculing an opponent verbally.
- (c) Inciting an opponent or spectators in any other way, such as simulating the firing of a weapon or placing a hand by the ear to request recognition.
- (d) Any delayed, excessive, prolonged or choreographed act by which a player (or players) attempts to focus attention upon himself (or themselves).
- (e) An unopposed ball carrier obviously altering stride as he approaches the opponent's goal line or diving into the end zone.
- (f) Removal of a player's helmet before he is in the team area (Exceptions: Team, media or injury timeouts; equipment adjustment; through play; between periods; and during a measurement for a first down).
- (g) Punching one's own chest or crossing one's arms in front of the chest while standing over a prone player.
- (h) Going into the stands to interact with spectators, or bowing at the waist after a good play.

If committed while the ball is alive, these fouls are treated as dead-ball fouls.

2. After a score or any other play, the player in possession immediately must return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot. This prohibits:

- (a) Kicking, throwing, spinning or carrying (including off of the field) the ball any distance that requires an official to retrieve it.
- (b) Spiking the ball to the ground [Exception: A forward pass to conserve time (Rule 7-3-2-d)].
- (c) Throwing the ball high into the air.
- (d) Any other unsportsmanlike act or actions that delay the game.

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul or live-ball foul treated as dead-ball foul. 15 yards [S7 and S27] from the succeeding spot. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be disqualified [S47]. If a player or an identified squad member in uniform commits two unsportsmanlike fouls in the same game, he shall be disqualified.**

- b. Other prohibited acts include:
1. During the game, coaches, substitutes and authorized attendants in the team area shall not be on the field of play or outside the 25-yard lines without permission from the referee unless legally entering or leaving the field (Exceptions: Rules 1-2-4-g and 3-3-8-c).
  2. Team area personnel who are outside the team area and who have involvement or impact on live-ball play are subject to penalty under Rule 9-1-5-a.
  3. No disqualified person shall enter the field of play or end zones.
  4. No person or mascot subject to the rules, except players, officials and eligible substitutes, shall be on the field of play or end zones during any period without permission from the referee. If a player is injured, attendants may come inbounds to attend him, but they must obtain recognition from an official.
  5. No substitute(s) may enter the field of play or end zones for purposes other than replacing a player(s) or to fill a player vacancy(ies). This includes demonstrations after any play (A.R. 9-2-1-I).
  6. Persons subject to the rules, including bands, shall not create any noise that prohibits a team from hearing its signals (Rule 1-1-6).

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. 15 yards [S7 and S27] from the succeeding spot. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be disqualified [S47].**

### Unfair Tactics

ARTICLE 2. a. No player shall conceal the ball in or beneath his clothing or equipment or substitute any other article for the ball.

- b. No simulated replacements or substitutions may be used to confuse opponents. No tactic associated with substitutes or the substitution process may be used to confuse opponents (Rule 3-5-2-e) (A.R. 9-2-2-I-VII).
- c. No equipment may be used to confuse opponents (Rule 1-4-2-e).

**PENALTY [a-c]—Live-ball foul. 15 yards from the previous spot [S27]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

- d. No player may play with cleats more than 1/2-inch in length (Rules 1-4-5-e and f).

**PENALTY—Disqualification for the remainder of the game and the team’s next game [S27 and S47]. Administer as a dead-ball foul; penalty enforced at the succeeding spot, and Team B fouls do not require a first down. Team timeout. VIOLATION—Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b [S23, S3 or S21]. If the disqualification occurs during the last game of a season, players with eligibility remaining will serve the next-game disqualification during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

- e. The referee will notify (in writing) his assigning agent of all disqualifications for illegal cleats. The assigning agency becomes responsible for implementation of the penalty.

### Unfair Acts

ARTICLE 3. The following are unfair acts:

- a. A team refuses to play within two minutes after ordered to do so by the referee.
- b. A team repeatedly commits fouls for which penalties can be enforced only by halving the distance to its goal line.
- c. An obviously unfair act not specifically covered by the rules occurs during the game (A.R. 4-2-1-II).

**PENALTY—The referee may take any action he considers equitable, including assessing a penalty, awarding a score, or suspending or forfeiting the game.**

### Contacting an Official

ARTICLE 4. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game by persons subject to the rules is a foul.

**PENALTY—Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot and disqualification [S7, S27 and S47].**

## SECTION 3. Blocking, Use of Hands or Arms

### Who May Block

ARTICLE 1. Players of either team may block opponents, provided it is not pass interference, interference with the opportunity to catch a kick or a personal foul (Exception: Rules 6-1-2-g and 6-5-4).

### Interfering for or Helping the Ball Carrier or Passer

ARTICLE 2. a. The ball carrier or passer may use his hand or arm to ward off or push opponents.

- b. The ball carrier shall not grasp a teammate; and no other player of his team shall grasp, pull, push, lift or charge into him to assist him in forward progress.
- c. Teammates of the ball carrier or passer may interfere for him by blocking but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner while contacting an opponent.

### **PENALTY—Five yards [S44].**

#### Use of Hands or Arms by Offense

ARTICLE 3. a. A teammate of a ball carrier or a passer legally may block with his shoulders, his hands, the outer surface of his arms or any other part of his body under the following provisions.

1. The hand(s) shall be:
  - (a) In advance of the elbow.
  - (b) Inside the frame of the opponent's body (Exception: When the opponent turns his back to the blocker) (A.R. 9-3-3-VI and VII).
  - (c) At or below the shoulder(s) of the blocker and the opponent (Exception: When the opponent squats, ducks or submarines).
  - (d) Apart and never in a locked position.
2. The hand(s) shall be open with the palm(s) facing the frame of the opponent or closed or cupped with the palms not facing the opponent (A.R. 9-3-3-I-IV and VI-VIII).

### **PENALTY—10 yards (Exception: Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) [S42].**

- b. Holding or illegal obstruction by a teammate of the ball carrier or passer applies to Rule 9-3-3-a:
  1. The hand(s) and arm(s) shall not be used to grasp, pull or encircle in any way that illegally impedes or illegally obstructs an opponent.
  2. The hand(s) or arm(s) shall not be used to hook, clamp or otherwise illegally impede or illegally obstruct an opponent (A.R. 9-3-3-I).

**PENALTY—10 yards (Exception: Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) [S42].**

- c. A block in the back is illegal (A.R. 9-1-2-XVII, A.R. 9-3-3-VII, A.R. 9-3-4-III and A.R. 10-2-2-XXII).

*Exceptions:*

1. Offensive players who are on the line of scrimmage at the snap within the blocking zone (Rule 2-3-6) may legally block in the back in the blocking zone, subject to the following restrictions:
  - (a) A player on the line of scrimmage within this blocking zone may not leave the zone and return and legally block in the back.
  - (b) The blocking zone exists until the ball is touched outside the zone or the ball is outside the zone after a fumble or muff from inside the zone.
2. When a player turns his back to a potential blocker who has committed himself in intent and direction or movement.
3. When a player attempts to reach a runner or legally attempts to recover or catch a fumble, a muff, a backward pass, a kick or a touched forward pass, he may push an opponent in the back above the waist (Rule 9-1-2-d Exception 3) (A.R. 6-3-1-III).
4. When the opponent turns his back to the blocker under Rule 9-3-3-a-1-(b).
5. When an eligible player behind the neutral zone pushes an opponent in the back above the waist to get to a forward pass (Rule 9-1-2-d Exception 4).

**PENALTY—10 yards (Exception: Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) [S43].**

- d. The following acts by a teammate of the ball carrier or passer are illegal:
1. The fist(s) and arm(s) shall not be used to deliver a blow (Rule 9-1-2-a) (A.R. 9-3-3-IV).
  2. Continuous contact to an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (Rule 9-1-2-k).

**PENALTY—15 yards (Exception: Penalties for Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) [S38]. Disqualification if flagrant [S47].**

**For Team A fouls during a free or scrimmage kick play (field-goal plays exempted): Enforcement may be at the previous spot or the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.**

- e. A player on the kicking team may:
  - 1. During a scrimmage kick play, use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off an opponent attempting to block him when he is beyond the neutral zone.
  - 2. During a free kick play, use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off an opponent who is attempting to block him.
  - 3. During a scrimmage kick play or a free kick play, when he is eligible to touch the ball, legally use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to push an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball.
- f. An eligible player of the passing team legally may use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off or push an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball after a legal forward pass has been touched by any player or official (Rules 7-3-5, 7-3-8, 7-3-9 and 7-3-11).

#### Use of Hands or Arms by Defense

ARTICLE 4. a. Defensive players may use hands and arms to push, pull, ward off or lift offensive players when attempting to reach the runner.

b. Defensive players may not use hands and arms to tackle, hold or otherwise illegally obstruct an opponent other than a ball carrier.

**PENALTY—10 yards [S42].**

- c. Defensive players may use hands and arms to push, pull, ward off or lift offensive players obviously attempting to block them. Defensive players may ward off or legally block an eligible pass receiver until that player occupies the same yard line as the defender or until the opponent could not possibly block him. Continuous contact is illegal (A.R. 9-3-4-I, II and IV).

**PENALTY—10 or 15 yards [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- d. When no attempt is being made to get at the ball or the runner, defensive players must comply with Rules 9-3-3-a, b, c and d.

**PENALTY—10 or 15 yards [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- e. When a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone during a forward-pass play and a contact foul that is not pass interference is committed beyond the neutral zone, the enforcement spot is the previous spot. This includes Rule 9-3-4-c (A.R. 7-3-9-II and A.R. 9-3-4-I and II).

**PENALTY—10 or 15 yards from the previous spot, plus first down if the foul occurred against an eligible receiver before the pass was touched [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- f. A defensive player legally may use his hands or arms to ward off or block an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball (Rule 9-1-2-d, Exceptions 3 and 4 and Rule 9-3-3-c, Exceptions 3 and 5):
1. During a backward pass, fumble or kick that he is eligible to touch.
  2. During any forward pass that crossed the neutral zone and has been touched by any player or official.
- g. A defensive player may not continuously contact an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (Exception: Against the ball carrier).

**PENALTY—15 yards and a first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules [S38].**

#### Player Restrictions

ARTICLE 5. a. No player may position himself with his feet on the back or shoulders of a teammate before the snap.

**PENALTY—Dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S27].**

- b. No defensive player, in an attempt to block, bat or catch a kick, may:
1. Step, jump or stand on a teammate (Rule 9-1-2-n).
  2. Place a hand(s) on a teammate to get leverage for additional height.
  3. Be picked up by a teammate, or be elevated, propelled or pushed.

**PENALTY—15 yards from the previous spot [S27].**

### When Ball Is Loose

ARTICLE 6. When the ball is loose, no player shall hold an opponent; illegally block an opponent in the back; twist, turn or pull an opponent's face mask or any helmet opening; or illegally use his hands or commit a personal foul (A.R. 7-3-9-II).

**PENALTY—10 or 15 yards (Exception: Penalties for these Team A fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) (Rule 10-2) [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

## SECTION 4. Batting and Kicking

### Batting a Loose Ball

ARTICLE 1. a. While a pass is in flight, any player eligible to touch the ball may bat it in any direction (Exception: Rule 9-4-2).

- b. Any player may block a scrimmage kick in the field of play or the end zone.
- c. No player shall bat other loose balls forward in the field of play or in any direction if the ball is in the end zone (Rule 2-2-3-a) (Exception: Rule 6-3-11) (A.R. 6-3-11-I, A.R. 9-4-1-I-XI and A.R. 10-2-2-II).

**PENALTY—15 yards and loss of down if the loss of down is not in conflict with other rules [S31 and S9] [Exception: No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick is beyond the neutral zone].**

### Batting a Backward Pass

ARTICLE 2. A backward pass in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team.

**PENALTY—15 yards [S31].**

### Batting Ball in Possession

ARTICLE 3. A ball in player possession may not be batted forward by a player of that team.

**PENALTY—15 yards [S31].**

### Illegally Kicking Ball

ARTICLE 4. A player shall not kick a loose ball, a forward pass or a ball being held for a place kick by an opponent. These illegal acts do not change the status of the loose ball or forward pass; but if the player holding the ball for a place kick loses possession during a scrimmage down, it is a fumble and a loose ball; if during a free kick, the ball remains dead (A.R. 8-7-2-VII).

**PENALTY—15 yards, plus loss of down if the loss of down is not in conflict with other rules [S31 and S9] (Exception: No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick is beyond the neutral zone).**

## SECTION 5. Fighting

ARTICLE 1. a. Before the game, squad members in uniform or coaches shall not participate in a fight (Rule 2-32-1).

During the first half, players shall not participate in a fight.

**PENALTY—15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Also, first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules. Disqualification for the remainder of the game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47].**

b. During the half-time intermission, squad members in uniform or coaches shall not participate in a fight.

During the second half, players shall not participate in a fight.

**PENALTY—15 yards. For dead-ball fouls, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Also, first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules. Disqualification for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47]. For fights that occur in the last game of a season, squad members in uniform, coaches and players with eligibility remaining will serve fight-related suspensions during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

c. During either half, coaches or substitutes shall not leave their team area to participate in a fight, nor shall they participate in a fight in their team area.

**PENALTY—15 yards from the succeeding spot, plus first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules. Disqualification for the remainder of the game and for the next game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47]. For fights that occur in the last game of a season, coaches and substitutes with eligibility remaining will serve fight-related suspensions during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

ARTICLE 2. a. If the squad member, coach or player is disqualified for fighting a second time during that season, he shall be disqualified for that game and suspended for the remainder of the season.

b. If a second fighting suspension occurs in the final game of a season, he shall be suspended for the first game of the next season for which he is eligible. This suspension is considered to be his first fight of that season.

ARTICLE 3. The referee will notify (in writing) his assigning agency of all disqualifications for fighting. The assigning agency becomes responsible for implementation of the penalty.

## 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.

### Initiating Contact/Targeting an Opponent

ARTICLE 2. When there is a foul called for initiating contact/targeting an opponent (Rule 9-1-3) that does not result in a player disqualification, 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.

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# RULE 10

## Penalty Enforcement

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### SECTION 1. Penalties Completed

#### How and When Completed

ARTICLE 1. a. A penalty is completed when it is accepted, declined or canceled according to rule, or when the choice is obvious to the referee.

- b. Any penalty may be declined, but a disqualified player must leave the game whether the penalty is accepted or declined.
- c. When a foul is committed, the penalty shall be completed before the ball is declared ready for play for any ensuing down.
- d. Penalties as stated are not enforced if in conflict with other rules (A.R. 9-4-1-XI).

#### Simultaneous With Snap

ARTICLE 2. A foul that occurs simultaneously with a snap or free kick is considered as occurring during that down (Exception: Rule 3-5-2-e).

#### Live-Ball Fouls by the Same Team

ARTICLE 3. When two or more live-ball fouls by the same team are reported to the referee, the referee shall explain the alternative penalties to the field captain of the offended team, who then may elect only one of these penalties [Exception: When a foul(s) occurs for unsportsmanlike conduct (Rule 9-2), the penalty(ies) is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for any other foul] (A.R. 10-1-3-I).

#### Offsetting Fouls

ARTICLE 4. If live-ball fouls by both teams are reported to the referee, the fouls offset and the down is replayed (A.R. 10-1-4-II, IX and X).

#### *Exceptions:*

1. When there is a change of team possession during a down, and the team last gaining possession had not fouled before last gaining

possession, it may decline offsetting fouls and thereby retain possession after completion of the penalty for its foul (A.R. 10-1-4-I-VIII).

2. When Team B's foul is governed by postscrimmage kick rules, Team B may decline offsetting fouls and accept postscrimmage kick enforcement.
3. When a live-ball foul is administered as a dead-ball foul, it does not offset any other foul, and any penalties are enforced in order of occurrence.
4. Rules 8-3-4-c and 3-1-3-g-3 (during a try or extra period after Team B possession).

### Dead-Ball Fouls

ARTICLE 5. Penalties for dead-ball fouls are administered separately and in order of occurrence (A.R. 10-1-5-I-VI) [Exception: When unsportsmanlike or dead-ball personal fouls by both teams are reported to the referee and before any of the penalties have been completed, the fouls offset, the number or type of down established before the fouls occurred is unaffected, and the penalties are canceled, except that any disqualified player must leave the game (Rules 5-2-6 and 10-2-2-a)].

### Live-Ball—Dead-Ball Fouls

ARTICLE 6. When a live-ball foul by one team is followed by one or more dead-ball fouls (including live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls) by an opponent or by the same team, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence (A.R. 10-1-6-I-V).

### Interval Fouls

ARTICLE 7. Penalties for fouls that occur between the end of the fourth period and the start of the extra period for overtime are enforced from the 25-yard line, the spot of the first possession series (Exception: Rule 10-2-5) (A.R. 10-2-5-I-XV).

## 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-VI, X, XII and XVI).

- b. *Fouls by the 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 after 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. 10-2-3-I, II and V).
- 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. 10-2-3-IV).
- 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 free kick restraining line behind a team's five-yard line are enforced from the next succeeding spot.

### Half-Distance Enforcement Procedures

ARTICLE 6. No distance penalty, including tries from on or inside the three-yard line, shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line [Exceptions: (1) Defensive pass interference on scrimmage downs, other than the try (Rules 7-3-8 and 10-2-5-b); and

(2) On the try, defensive pass interference when the ball is snapped from outside the three-yard line].

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# RULE 11

## The Officials: Jurisdiction and Duties

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### SECTION 1. Jurisdiction

The officials' jurisdiction begins 60 minutes before the scheduled kickoff and ends when the referee declares the score final [S14].

### SECTION 2. Responsibilities

ARTICLE 1. The game shall be played under the supervision of four, five, six or seven officials.

ARTICLE 2. Officiating responsibilities and mechanics are specified in the current edition of the Football Officials Manual, published annually under the jurisdiction of the Collegiate Commissioners Association. Officials are responsible for knowing and applying the material in the Manual.

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# Rule 12

## Instant Replay

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### 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 2. Eligibility for Instant Replay

#### Participation

ARTICLE 1. a. Any member institution may use instant replay, but there is no requirement to do so. If instant replay is used, it must be used in full compliance with this rule.

- b. For any nonconference game, if the home team is using instant replay, the visiting team does not have the option of declining its use for that game. If the home team is not using instant replay, it is not required to honor a request by the visiting team that it be used.

### 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 ball carrier 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.
  1. If the pass is ruled forward and is incomplete, the play is reviewable only if there is clear recovery of a loose ball in the immediate continuing action after the loose ball. If the replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers, the ruling of incomplete pass stands.
  2. If the replay official reverses an incomplete forward pass ruling and the ball is recovered, it belongs to the recovering team at the spot of the recovery and any advance is nullified.

### 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.
- b. Loose ball by a passer ruled incomplete forward pass when there is clear recovery in the immediate continuing action after the loose ball.
  1. If the replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers, the ruling of incomplete pass stands.

2. If the replay official rules fumble, the ball belongs to the recovering team at the spot of the recovery and any advance is nullified.
- c. Live ball not ruled dead in possession of a ball carrier.
  - d. Live ball ruled dead in possession of a ball carrier when the clear recovery of a loose ball occurs in the immediate continuing action after 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.
  - e. Ball carrier's forward progress with respect to a first down.
  - f. 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.
  - g. 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.
  - h. Catch, recovery or touching of a loose ball by a player potentially touching a sideline or end line.
  - i. 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 after 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, 12-3-4-b and 12-3-5-a).

## SECTION 4. Instant Replay Personnel, Equipment and Location

### Personnel

ARTICLE 1. Instant replay personnel shall consist of the number of persons needed to operate the replay equipment within the necessary time constraints. There shall be a minimum of three persons to ensure that all plays are reviewed in an efficient and timely manner. Such persons are normally referred to as replay official, communicator and technician. Additional personnel may be used as needed.

### Equipment

ARTICLE 2. The type of equipment used to carry out necessary instant replay duties shall be determined by each conference or member institution using instant replay.

### Location

ARTICLE 3. a. All equipment used reviewing a play during the replay process and the personnel using that equipment shall be located in a separate, secure location in the press box. This room shall not be available or accessible to any person not directly involved in instant replay.

b. Additional telephonic equipment needed to allow instant replay personnel to communicate with the game referee when a game has been stopped for a

play review shall be located on a sideline near the field of play and preferably outside a team area. Such equipment shall provide the game referee and the replay official a secure and private means of communication.

## SECTION 5. Initiating the Replay Process

### Game Stop

ARTICLE 1. There are two methods to stop a game to review a ruling on the field.

- a. The replay official and his crew shall review every play of a game. He may stop a game at any time before the ball is next legally put in play (Exception: Rule 12-3-5-c) whenever he believes that:
  1. There is reasonable evidence to believe an error was made in the initial on-field ruling.
  2. The play is reviewable.
  3. The outcome of a review would have a direct, competitive impact on the game.
- b. The head coach of either team may request that the game be stopped and a play be reviewed by challenging the on-field ruling.
  1. A head coach initiates this challenge by taking a team timeout before the ball is next legally put in play (Exception: Rule 12-3-5-c) and informing the referee that he is challenging the ruling of the previous play. If a head coach's challenge is successful, he retains the challenge, which he may use only once more during the game. Thus, a coach may have a total of two challenges if and only if his initial challenge is successful.
  2. After a review has been completed, if the on-field ruling is reversed, that team's timeout will not be charged.
  3. After a review has been completed, and the on-field ruling is not reversed, the charged team timeout counts as one of the three permitted that team for that half or the one permitted in that extra period.
  4. A head coach may not challenge a ruling in which the game was stopped and a decision has already been made by the replay official.

5. If a head coach requests a team timeout to challenge an on-field ruling and the play being challenged is not reviewable, the timeout shall count as one of the three permitted his team during that half of the game or the one permitted in that extra period.
6. A head coach may not challenge an on-field ruling if all the team's timeouts have been used for that half or in that extra period.

### When To Stop a Game

ARTICLE 2. a. A game may be stopped, either by the replay official or by a head coach's challenge, at any time before the ball is next legally put in play (Exception: Rule 12-3-5-c).

- b. No game official may request that a game be stopped for a play to be reviewed.

## SECTION 6. Reviewing an On-field Ruling

### Procedures

ARTICLE 1. a. When a game is to be stopped either by the replay official or by a head coach's challenge, the designated officials on the field will be notified by a buzzer system or other appropriate means.

- b. If the review is initiated by the replay official, the referee shall announce:

*"The previous play is under further review."*

If the game has been stopped due to a head coach's challenge, the referee shall announce:

*"The (name of institution) head coach has challenged the ruling on the previous play. The play is under further review."*

- c. All reviews shall be based upon video evidence provided by and coming directly from the televised production of the game or from other video means available to the replay official.
- d. After the referee has conferred with the replay official and the review process has been completed, he shall make one of the following announcements:

1. If the video evidence confirms the on-field ruling:

*"After further review, the ruling on the field is confirmed."*

2. If there is no indisputable (conclusive) evidence to reverse the on-field ruling:

*“After further review, the ruling on the field stands.”*

3. If the on-field ruling is reversed (Rule 12-7):

*“After further review, the ruling is [followed by a brief description of the video evidence]. Therefore, [followed by a brief description of the impact of the ruling].”*

- e. If a ruling is reversed, the replay official shall supply the referee with all pertinent data as needed (next down, distance, yard line, position of the ball, clock status/adjustment) in order to resume play under the correct game conditions.

### Restrictions

ARTICLE 2. a. There is no restriction on the number of times the replay official may stop a game for reviews.

- b. The replay official is under no time limit for a review.

## SECTION 7. Reversing an On-Field Ruling

### Criterion for Reversal

ARTICLE 1. To reverse an on-field ruling, the replay official must be convinced beyond all doubt by indisputable video evidence through one or more video replays provided to the monitor.

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# Summary of Penalties

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**LEGEND:** “O” refers to official’s signal number (see Code of Official’s Signals); “R” is the rule number; “S” is the section number; “A” is the article number.

## LOSS OF A DOWN

	O	R	S	A
Illegal scrimmage kick [also loss of five yards].....	31*	6	3	10
Illegally handing ball forward [also loss of five yards].....	35*	7	1	6
Planned loose ball play [also loss of five yards].....	19*	7	1	7
Intentionally throwing backward pass out of bounds [also loss of five yards].....	35*	7	2	1
Illegal forward pass by Team A [also loss of five yards].....	35*	7	3	2
Intentionally grounding forward pass.....	36*	7	3	2
Forward pass illegally touched by player out of bounds.....	16*	7	3	4
Illegally batting ball [also loss of 15 yards] (see exceptions).....	31*	9	4	1
Illegally kicking ball [also loss of 15 yards] (see exceptions).....	31*	9	4	4

## LOSS OF FIVE YARDS

Alteration of playing surface for an advantage.....	27	1	2	9
Improper numbering or illegal formation.....	23	1	4	2
Coin-toss infractions.....	19	3	1	1
Delay after three timeouts expended.....	21	3	4	2
Illegal delay of the game.....	21	3	4	2
Advancing a dead ball.....	21	3	4	2
Disconcerting offensive signals.....	21	3	4	2
Substitution rules infractions.....	22	3	5	2
Putting ball in play before it is ready.....	21	4	1	4
Exceeding 40/25-second count.....	21	4	1	5
Infraction of free kick formation.....	18, 19	6	1	2
Team A blocking during a free kick.....	19	6	1	2
Player out of bounds when ball free-kicked.....	19	6	1	2
Team A player illegally goes out of bounds (free kick).....	19	6	1	2
Free kick out of bounds.....	19	6	2	1
Illegal kick [also loss of down if by Team A].....	31*	6	3	10
Team A player illegally goes out of bounds (scrimmage kick).....	19	6	3	12
Taking more than two steps after fair catch.....	21	6	5	2
Illegal snap.....	19	7	1	1
Snapper’s position and ball adjustment.....	19	7	1	3
Team A not within nine-yard marks after ready.....	19	7	1	3
False start or simulating start of a play.....	19	7	1	3
Infraction of scrimmage formation.....	19	7	1	3
Encroachment (offense) at snap.....	19	7	1	3
Player out of bounds when ball is snapped.....	19	7	1	3

*\*Also Signal 19*

Offensive player illegally in motion at the snap .....	20	7	1	3
Failure to pause full second in shift play.....	20	7	1	4
Offside (defense) .....	18	7	1	5
Abrupt defensive actions .....	21	7	1	5
Interference with opponent or ball.....	18	7	1	5
Illegally handing ball forward [also loss of down if by Team A]. 35*	7	1	6	6
Planned loose ball play [also loss of down].....	19*	7	1	7
Intentionally throwing backward pass out of bounds [also loss of down if by Team A] .....	35*	7	2	1
Player on scrimmage line receiving snap.....	19	7	2	3
Illegal forward pass [also loss of down if by Team A] .....	35*	7	3	2
Ineligible receiver downfield.....	37	7	3	10
Forward pass illegally touched .....	16	7	3	11
Running into kicker or holder.....	30	9	1	4
Sideline/restraining line infraction [also 15 yards].....	29	9	1	6
Interlocked interference or helping ball carrier.....	44	9	3	2

### LOSS OF 10 YARDS

Home-team delay .....	21	3	4	1
Illegal use of hands or arms (offense).....	42	9	3	3
Holding or obstruction (offense).....	42	9	3	3
Illegal block in the back (offense) .....	43	9	3	3
Locked hands.....	42	9	3	3
Illegal use of hands (defense).....	42	9	3	4
Holding or obstruction (defense).....	42	9	3	4
Illegal block in the back (defense) .....	43	9	3	4
Holding or obstruction (loose ball).....	42	9	3	6

### LOSS OF 15 YARDS

Marking ball.....	27	1	3	3
Numbers changed .....	27	1	4	2
Illegal signal devices [also disqualification].....	27	1	4	8
Team not ready to play at start of either half .....	21	3	4	1
Simulated substitutions.....	22, 27	3	5	2
Interference with opportunity to catch a kick.....	33	6	4	1
Illegal block by fair-catch signaler .....	40	6	5	4
Tackling or blocking fair-catcher.....	38	6	5	5
Offensive pass interference .....	33	7	3	8
Defensive pass interference [first down] .....	33	7	3	8
Continuous contact to opponent's helmet [first down] .....	38	9	1	2
Striking, kicking, kneeling, elbowing, etc. [first down] .....	38	9	1	2
Meeting with knee, striking with open hand, etc. [first down] .....	38	9	1	2
Tripping [first down].....	46	9	1	2
Clipping [first down].....	39	9	1	2
Piling on [first down].....	38	9	1	2
Tackling out of bounds [first down].....	38	9	1	2
Hurdling [first down] .....	38	9	1	2

\*Also Signal 9

Twisting, turning or pulling face mask, helmet opening or chin strap of opponent [first down] .....	38, 45	9	1	2
Butting or ramming with helmet [first down] .....	24	9	1	2
Obviously uncatchable pass [first down] .....	38	9	1	2
Roughing the passer [first down] .....	34	9	1	2
Top of helmet striking [first down] .....	24	9	1	3
Chop blocking [first down] .....	41	9	1	2
Blocking below the waist [first down] .....	40	9	1	2
Running into opponent out of play [first down] .....	38	9	1	2
Stepping on opponent for an advantage [first down] .....	38	9	1	2
Illegal contact with snapper [first down] .....	38	9	1	2
Grabbing the inside back collar or inside collar of side of shoulder pads or jersey .....	38	9	1	2
Leaping [first down] .....	38	9	1	2
Initiating contact and targeting a defenseless opponent at or above the shoulders .....	38	9	1	3
Blocking a free-kicker .....	40	9	1	4
Roughing the kicker or holder [first down] .....	38, 30	9	1	4
Simulating roughed or run into .....	27	9	1	4
Substitute interferes .....	27	9	1	5
Illegal participation .....	28	9	1	5
Sideline/restraining line infraction [also five yards] .....	29	9	1	6
Obscene or vulgar language .....	27	9	2	1
Persons illegally on the field .....	27	9	2	1
Player not returning ball to official .....	27	9	2	1
Engendering ill will .....	27	9	2	1
Unsportsmanlike conduct .....	27	9	2	1
Persons leaving team area .....	27	9	2	1
Illegal return of disqualified player .....	27	9	2	1
Noise by persons subject to rules .....	27	9	2	1
Concealing the ball .....	27	9	2	2
Simulated replacements or substitutions .....	27	9	2	2
Equipment to confuse opponents .....	27	9	2	2
Intentionally contacting an official [also disqualification] .....	27	9	2	4
Defensive restrictions .....	27	9	3	5
Illegally batting loose ball [also loss of down] .....	31*	9	4	10
Illegally batting a backward pass .....	31	9	4	1&2
Batting ball in possession by player in possession .....	31	9	4	3
Illegally kicking ball [also loss of down] .....	31*	9	4	4
Fighting [also disqualification] .....	27, 38, 47	9	5	1

### LOSS OF HALF DISTANCE TO GOAL LINE

If distance penalty exceeds half the distance (except on defensive pass interference) .....	—	10	2	3
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### OFFENDED TEAM'S BALL AT SPOT OF FOUL

Defensive pass interference (if less than a 15-yard penalty) [first down] .....	33	7	3	8
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*\*Also Signal 9*

**CHARGED TIMEOUT FOR A VIOLATION**

Not wearing mandatory equipment .....	23	1	4	4
	23	1	4	6
Wearing illegal equipment.....	23	1	4	5
Head coach's conference.....	21	3	3	4
Head coach's challenge.....	21	12	5	1
Illegal cleats.....	23	9	2	2

**VIOLATION**

Illegal touching of free kick by kicking team.....	16	6	1	3
Illegal touching of scrimmage kick.....	16	6	3	2
Scrimmage-kick-batting exception .....	16	6	3	11

**DISQUALIFICATION**

Prohibited signal devices.....	47	1	4	8
Use of tobacco.....	47	1	4	11
Flagrant fouls .....	47	9	1	1
Two unsportsmanlike fouls.....	47	9	2	1
Illegal cleats.....	47	9	2	2
Contacting an official.....	47	9	2	4
Fighting .....	47	9	5	10

**AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWNS (DEFENSIVE FOULS)**

Pass interference.....	33	7	3	8
Striking, kicking, kneeling, elbowing, etc. ....	38	9	1	2
Meeting with knee, striking with open hand, etc. ....	38	9	1	2
Piling on.....	38	9	1	2
Tripping .....	46	9	1	2
Clipping .....	39	9	1	2
Hurdling .....	38	9	1	2
Tackling out of bounds.....	38	9	1	2
Face mask defense [15 yards].....	38, 45	9	1	2
Running into opponent out of play.....	38	9	1	2
Top of helmet striking.....	24	9	1	2
Roughing the passer.....	34	9	1	2
Tackling receiver of uncatchable pass.....	38	9	1	2
Blocking below the waist .....	40	9	1	2
Chop blocking.....	41	9	1	2
Stepping, jumping or standing on opponent .....	38	9	1	2
Continuous contact to opponent's helmet .....	38	9	1	2
Illegal contact with snapper .....	38	9	1	2
Grabbing the inside back collar or inside collar of side of shoulder pads or jersey.....	38	9	1	2
Leaping .....	38	9	1	2
Initiating contact and targeting a defenseless opponent at or above the shoulders.....	38	9	1	3
Roughing the kicker or holder.....	38, 30	9	1	4

Illegal contact with eligible receiver .....	38	9	3	4
Fighting [also disqualification] .....	27, 38, 47	9	5	1

**WHEN-IN-QUESTION RULES**

Catch or recovery not completed .....	—	2	2	7
Block below waist.....	—	2	3	2
Chop block .....	—	2	3	3
Block in the back.....	—	2	3	4
Ball not touched on kick or forward pass.....	—	2	10	4
Ball is accidentally kicked (touched).....	—	2	15	1
Forward pass rather than backward pass .....	—	2	19	2
Forward pass and not fumble.....	—	2	19	2
It is a catchable forward pass.....	—	2	19	4
Stop clock for injured player .....	—	3	3	5
Forward progress stopped.....	—	4	1	3
Kick-catch interference.....	—	6	4	1
Reasonable opportunity to catch.....	—	7	3	2
It is a catchable forward pass.....	—	7	3	8
Touchback rather than safety .....	—	8	5	1
Twisting, turning or pulling face mask (helmet opening) .....	—	9	1	2
Initiating contact and targeting a defenseless opponent at or above the shoulders.....	38	9	1	3
Roughing kicker rather than running into .....	—	9	1	4

**REFEREE'S DISCRETION**

Penalty for illegal interference.....	—	9	1	5
Penalty for unfair acts.....	—	9	2	3

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# Appendix A

## Guidelines for Game Officials To Use During a Serious On-Field Player Injury

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1. Players and coaches must go to and remain in the bench area. Direct players and coaches accordingly. Always ensure adequate lines of vision between the medical staffs and available emergency personnel.
2. Attempt to keep players a significant distance away from the seriously injured player or players.
3. Do not allow a player to roll an injured player over.
4. Do not allow players to assist a teammate who is lying on the field; i.e., removing the helmet or chin strap, or attempting to assist breathing by elevating the waist.
5. Do not allow players to pull an injured teammate or opponent from a pile.
6. Once the medical staff begins to assist an injured player, all members of the officiating crew should control the total playing field environment and team personnel, and allow the medical staff to perform services without interruption or interference.
7. Players and coaches should be appropriately controlled to avoid dictating medical services to the athletic trainers or team physicians, or taking up their time to perform such service.

*Note: Officials should have a reasonable knowledge of the location of emergency personnel equipment at all stadiums.*

(The NCAA Football Rules Committee expresses its appreciation to the National Football League for development of these guidelines.)

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# Appendix B

## Guidelines for Game Officials and Game Management To Use Regarding Lightning

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*The purpose of this appendix is to provide information to those responsible for making decisions about suspending and restarting games based on the presence of lightning.*

### GUIDELINE 1d

#### Lightning Safety

July 1997 • Revised June 2007

The NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports acknowledges the significant input of Brian L. Bennett, formerly an athletic trainer with the College of William and Mary Division of Sports Medicine; Ronald L. Holle, a meteorologist, formerly of the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL); and Mary Ann Cooper, M.D., Professor of Emergency Medicine of the University of Illinois at Chicago, in the development of this guideline.

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect intercollegiate athletics. Within the United States, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates that 60 to 70 fatalities and about 10 times as many injuries occur from lightning strikes every year. While the probability of being struck by lightning is low, the odds are significantly greater when a storm is in the area and proper safety precautions are not followed.

Education and prevention are the keys to lightning safety. The references associated with this guideline are excellent educational resources. Authorities

should begin prevention long before any intercollegiate athletics event or practice by being proactive and having a lightning safety plan in place. The following steps are recommended by the NCAA and NOAA to mitigate the lightning hazard:

1. Designate a person to monitor threatening weather and to make the decision to remove a team or individuals from an athletics site or event. A lightning safety plan should include planned instructions for participants and spectators, designation of warning and all-clear signals, proper signs, and designation of safer places for shelter from the lightning.
2. Monitor local weather reports each day before any practice or event. Be diligently aware of potential thunderstorms that may form during scheduled intercollegiate athletics events or practices. Weather information can be found through various means via local television news coverage, the Internet, cable and satellite weather programming, or the National Weather Service (NWS) Web site at [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov).
3. Be informed of National Weather Service issued thunderstorm “watches” or “warnings,” and the warning signs of developing thunderstorms in the area, such as high winds or darkening skies. A “watch” means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a “warning” means that severe weather has been reported in an area and everyone should take proper precautions. A NOAA weather radio is particularly helpful in providing this information.
4. Know where the closest “safer structure or location” is to the field or playing area, and know how long it takes to get to that location. A safer structure or location is defined as:
  - a. Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and/or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using the shower or plumbing facilities and having contact with electrical appliances during a thunderstorm.
  - b. In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (neither a convertible, nor a golf cart) with the windows shut provides a measure of safety. The hard metal frame and roof, not the rubber tires, are what protects occupants by dissipating lightning current around the vehicle and not through the occupants. It is important not to touch the metal framework of the

vehicle. Some athletics events rent school buses as safer shelters to place around open courses or fields.

5. Lightning awareness should be heightened at the first flash of lightning, clap of thunder, and/or other criteria such as increasing winds or darkening skies, no matter how far away. These types of activities should be treated as a warning or “wake-up call” to intercollegiate athletics personnel. Lightning safety experts suggest that if you hear thunder, begin preparation for evacuation; if you see lightning, consider suspending activities and heading for your designated safer locations.

The following specific lightning safety guidelines have been developed with the assistance of lightning safety experts. Design your lightning safety plan to consider local safety needs, weather patterns and thunderstorm types.

- a. As a minimum, lightning safety experts strongly recommend that by the time the monitor observes 30 seconds between seeing the lightning flash and hearing its associated thunder, all individuals should have left the athletics site and reached a safer structure or location.
- b. Please note that thunder may be hard to hear if there is an athletics event going on, particularly in stadiums with large crowds. Implement your lightning safety plan accordingly.
- c. The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not guarantees that lightning will not strike. At least 10 percent of lightning occurs when there is no rainfall and when blue sky is often visible somewhere in the sky, especially with summer thunderstorms. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 (or more) miles away from the rain shaft.
- d. Avoid using landline telephones, except in emergency situations. People have been killed while using a landline telephone during a thunderstorm. Cellular or cordless phones are safe alternatives to a landline phone, particularly if the person and the antenna are located within a safer structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.
- e. To resume athletics activities, lightning safety experts recommend waiting 30 minutes after both the last sound of thunder and last flash of lightning. If lightning is seen without hearing thunder, lightning

may be out of range and therefore less likely to be a significant threat. At night, be aware that lightning can be visible at a much greater distance than during the day as clouds are being lit from the inside by lightning. This greater distance may mean that the lightning is no longer a significant threat. At night, use both the sound of thunder and seeing the lightning channel itself to decide on resetting the 30-minute “return-to-play” clock before resuming outdoor athletics activities.

- f. People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. If possible, an injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need prompt emergency help. If you are in a 911 community, call for help. Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes.

Automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) have become a common, safe and effective means of reviving persons in cardiac arrest. Planned access to early defibrillation should be part of your emergency plan. However, CPR should never be delayed while searching for an AED.

*Note: Weather watchers, real-time weather forecasts and commercial weather-warning devices are all tools that can be used to aid in decision-making regarding stoppage of play, evacuation and return to play.*

### Dangerous Locations

Outside locations increase the risk of being struck by lightning when thunderstorms are in the area. Small covered shelters are not safe from lightning. Dugouts, rain shelters, golf shelters and picnic shelters, even if they are properly grounded for structural safety, are usually not properly grounded from the effects of lightning and side flashes to people. They are usually very unsafe and may actually increase the risk of lightning injury. Other dangerous locations include areas connected to, or near, light poles, towers and fences that can carry a nearby strike to people. Also dangerous is any location that makes the person the highest point in the area.

## References

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2. Bennett BL. A Model Lightning Safety Policy for Athletics. Journal of Athletic Training. 32(3):251-253. 1997.
3. Price TG, Cooper MA: Electrical and Lightning Injuries. In: Marx et al. Rosen's Emergency Medicine, Concepts and Clinical Practice, Mosby, 6th ed. 2006; 22: 67-78.
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9. Holle RL. 2005: Lightning-caused recreation deaths and injuries. Preprints, 14th Symposium on Education, January 9-13, San Diego, California, American Meteorological Society, 6 pp.
10. The Weather Channel on satellite or cable, and on the Internet at [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com).



# OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE



<p>1</p> <p>Ball ready for play *Untimed down</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Start clock</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Timeout Discretionary or injury time-out (follow by tapping hands on chest)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>TV/Radio timeout</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>Touchdown Field goal Point(s) after touchdown</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Safety</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Dead ball foul Touchback (move side to side)</p>	<p>8</p> <p>First down</p>	
<p>9</p> <p>Loss of down</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Incomplete forward pass Penalty declined No play, no score Toss option deferred</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Legal touching of forward pass or scrimmage kick</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Inadvertent whistle (Face Press Box)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Disregard flag</p>
<p>14</p> <p>End of period</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Sideline warning (NFHS)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>First touching (NFHS) Illegal touching</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Uncatchable forward pass (NCAA)</p>	
<p>18</p> <p>Encroachment (NFHS) Offside defense or free-kick defense (NCAA)</p>	<p>19</p> <p>False start Illegal formation</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Illegal shift - 2 hands Illegal motion - 1 hand</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Delay of game</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Substitution infraction</p>



# OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE



<p>23</p> <p>Failure to wear required equipment</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Illegal helmet contact</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Illegal Horse-Collar Tackle</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Illegal participation</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Sideline interference (Face Press Box)</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Running into or Roughing kicker or holder</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Illegal batting/kicking (Followed by pointing toward toe for kicking)</p>	<p>32</p> <p>Invalid fair catch signal (NFHS)</p>	<p>33</p> <p>Forward pass interference Kick catching interference</p>
<p>34</p> <p>Roughing passer</p>	<p>35</p> <p>Illegal pass/forward handing (Face Press Box)</p>	<p>36</p> <p>Intentional grounding</p>	<p>37</p> <p>Ineligible downfield on pass</p>	<p>38</p> <p>Personal foul</p>
<p>39</p> <p>Clipping</p>	<p>40</p> <p>Blocking below waist Illegal block</p>	<p>41</p> <p>Chop block</p>	<p>42</p> <p>Holding/obstructing Illegal use of hands/arms</p>	<p>43</p> <p>Illegal block in the back</p>
<p>44</p> <p>Helping runner Interlocked blocking</p>	<p>45</p> <p>Grasping face mask or helmet opening</p>	<p>46</p> <p>Tripping</p>	<p>47</p> <p>Disqualification</p>	

NOTE: Signal number 26 is for future expansion.

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# Part II:

## Interpretations

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A rule interpretation, or approved ruling (A.R.), is an official decision on a given statement of facts. It serves to illustrate the spirit and application of the rule.

The Football Code, which appears in the Official Football Rules and Interpretations, should be studied carefully so the accepted conduct and practices are understood by all persons associated with college football.

ROGERS REDDING, Secretary-Rules Editor

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# Index to New Approved Rulings

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## NEW APPROVED RULINGS

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### **Rule 7**

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### **Rule 12**

12-3-3-X and XI

12-3-5-II

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# RULE 1

## The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

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### SECTION 3. The Ball

#### Administration and Enforcement—ARTICLE 2

##### **Approved Ruling 1-3-2**

- I. On fourth down, kicker A1 enters the field with an approved game ball and asks the referee to substitute it for the ball used during the previous down. **RULING:** Substitution of the ball is not permitted.

### SECTION 4. Players and Playing Equipment

#### Players' Numbering—ARTICLE 2

##### **Approved Ruling 1-4-2**

- I. Team A, with fourth and eight, sends two substitutes numbered 21 and 33 into the game as exceptions to the mandatory numbering, and they are positioned legally on their line of scrimmage between the end players on the line of scrimmage. After the ball is snapped, a Team A player, 15 yards deep in a scrimmage kick formation, throws a legal forward pass to an eligible receiver for a 10-yard gain. **RULING:** Legal play (*Note:* The same play from a field goal formation is legal).
- II. During a down, either team is discovered to have two players with identical numbers at the snap. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.
- III. A13 at the snap is wearing a number that has a dash between the 1 and 3. The number appears as 1-3. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.
- IV. A33, an exception to the mandatory numbering rule, assumes a position on the line of scrimmage next to end A88. Before the snap,

A88 shifts to a backfield position with the flanker on the opposite side of the line shifting to an end position on the line. **RULING:** Illegal formation. Since A33 is now an end, he is in an illegal position at the snap (live-ball foul). Penalty—five yards, previous spot.

- V. A33, an exception to the mandatory numbering rule, assumes a position on the line of scrimmage to the left of snapper A85, who is on the end of the line. All other Team A players on the line are to A33's left. After a one-second stop, all players on the line except A85 legally shift to the other side of the ball, with A33 now positioned as an end. **RULING:** If the ball is snapped with A33 in this position, it is a foul for an illegal formation. A33 must be between the end players at the snap. Penalty—five yards, previous spot.

### Contrasting Colors—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 1-4-3

- I. A team's gloves are gray on the back and the back of the fingers, and the palms are black. The back of the gloves also has black and/or white piping along the stitching. **RULING:** Legal glove. The intent of the rule is that the portion of the glove viewed in contact with an opponent's jersey is dominantly gray in color.
- II. A team is wearing gloves that have palms that are mostly a color other than gray or black. **RULING:** Not legal. Players may not wear these gloves when participating in the game.

### Mandatory Equipment—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 1-4-4

- I. A player or players of a team wear(s) tights (with stirrups) that cover their legs. **RULING:** Legal. All other squad members of this team also must wear tights or knee-length socks of the same color. All squad members of a team must wear socks or leg coverings that are identical in color, design and length. All squad members of a team may wear short socks of the same color, design and length.

## Illegal Equipment—ARTICLE 5

### Approved Ruling 1-4-5

- I. A33 is wearing a bandanna under his helmet, with part of the bandanna protruding from underneath the back of the helmet. **RULING:** Illegal. Bandannas may be worn under the helmet as long as no part of the bandanna is visible when the helmet is in place. The visible bandanna is considered a uniform attachment. Team A is charged one of its three timeouts for the half. If its timeouts are expended, the penalty is five yards from the succeeding spot.
- II. During a charged Team B timeout, B33 removes his helmet while on the field of play and is wearing a bandanna. **RULING:** Team B is charged with an additional timeout. If its timeouts are exhausted, Team B will be penalized five yards at the succeeding spot (Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b-2).
- III. Both teams come onto the field before the game wearing colored jerseys. The visiting team has not obtained written agreement from the home team to wear other than white jerseys, or if such agreement has been obtained the home team's conference has not certified that the jerseys are of contrasting colors. **RULING:** Foul by the visiting team for violation of the jersey-color rule. A 15-yard penalty will be assessed at the succeeding spot after the ball is dead following the opening kickoff of each half. If the opening kickoff of a half is returned for a touchdown, the 15-yard penalty is assessed either on the try or the kickoff.

## Mandatory and Illegal Equipment Enforcement—ARTICLE 6

### Approved Ruling 1-4-6

- I. After the ball is ready for play, an official identifies a player(s) who is obviously not wearing a mouthpiece. **RULING:** Even though the snap or free kick may be imminent, a timeout is charged to that player's team (Rule 3-3-6). If timeouts are exhausted, a five-yard penalty will be assessed (Rule 3-4-2-b). The clock will start on the snap after the five-yard penalty unless an unfair timing advantage is possible (Rule 3-4-3). The player(s) may remain in the game if he (they) produces a legal mouthpiece and the game is not further delayed by that action.

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# RULE 2

## Definitions

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### SECTION 2. The Ball: Live, Dead, Loose Catch, Interception, Recovery—ARTICLE 7

#### Approved Ruling 2-2-7

- I. B1 attempts to catch a punt (no fair catch signal) that crosses the neutral zone, strikes his shoulder (a muff) and bounces into the air. The ball does not touch the ground. Airborne A1 receives the ball in flight and first returns to the ground out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline. First and 10.
- II. On third down, B1 blocks a Team A scrimmage kick that goes into the air and does not cross the neutral zone. The ball does not touch the ground. A1 jumps and receives the ball in flight and first returns to the ground out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline. First and 10 (Rule 6-3-7).
- III. Airborne A3 receives a pass at Team A's 40-yard line. As he receives the ball, he is contacted by B1 and comes to the ground out of bounds with the ball at Team A's 37-yard line. **RULING:** Incomplete pass (Rule 7-3-7-a).
- IV. On second down, A1 fumbles the ball, which strikes the ground and bounces high in the air. B2 receives the ball while off the ground and returns to the ground out of bounds (a) in advance of the spot of the fumble or (b) behind the spot of the fumble. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball at the spot of the fumble. (b) Team A's ball at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline (Rule 4-2-4-e).
- V. A1 fumbles the ball, which strikes the ground and bounces high into the air. B1 receives the ball while off the ground and returns to the ground inbounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the spot where Team B recovered the fumble; ball continues in play.

## SECTION 3. Blocking

### Chop Block—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 2-3-3

- I. On a forward pass play, A75 is blocking B66 at the waist behind the neutral zone. While A75 maintains contact, A47 subsequently blocks B66 at his thigh. **RULING:** Chop block, 15 yards from the previous spot.
- II. As the flow of the play moves to the left, right tackle A77 is disengaging from his block above the thigh with B50 when A27 blocks B50 at his knee. **RULING:** Chop block, 15 yards. Previous-spot enforcement if the foul occurs behind the neutral zone.
- III. Immediately after the snap, left guard A65 and left tackle A79 simultaneously block B66, who is in the neutral zone. (a) Both blocks are at the thigh. (b) One contact is at the waist and the other at the knee. **RULING:** (a) Legal blocks for a low-low combination. (b) Foul, chop block.
- IV. Tight end A87 and wingback A43 are leading the play when both simultaneously block linebacker B17, who is three yards beyond the neutral zone. (a) Both blocks are above the waist. (b) One block is above the waist and the other at the knee. **RULING:** (a) Legal blocks. (b) Foul, chop block.
- V. As tight end A88 leaves the line of scrimmage, he is blocked by B76 at the knee in an attempt to restrict A88's path. After a short delay and while B76 maintains contact, B53 blocks A88 at the knee. **RULING:** Legal. Both blocks are below the thigh. The low-low combination is not a chop block.

## SECTION 11. Lines

### Goal Lines—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 2-11-2

- I. Team A's untouched scrimmage kick strikes the ground in the field of play and breaks the plane of Team B's goal line. While the ball is in the air, A81, who is on the one-yard line, bats the ball into the field of play. **RULING:** Violation for illegal touching (Rule 6-3-11).

Team B may accept the result of the play or next snap the ball at its 20-yard line (Exception: Rule 8-4-2-b).

#### Restraining Lines—ARTICLE 5

##### **Approved Ruling 2-11-5**

- I. A free kick breaks the plane of Team B's restraining line. While the ball is in the air, A1, who is behind Team B's restraining line, touches the ball. **RULING:** Legal touching (Rule 6-1-3-b).

### SECTION 15. Kicks

#### Place Kick—ARTICLE 4

##### **Approved Ruling 2-15-4**

- I. On a free kick to start a game, the kicker uses the toe of a teammate for a tee or builds a tee with a mound of dirt or sod. **RULING:** Illegal kick. Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.

### SECTION 19. Passes

#### Forward and Backward Pass—ARTICLE 2

##### **Approved Ruling 2-19-2**

- I. A1 intends to throw a forward pass, but B1 bats the ball from his hand before A1's hand or arm starts forward. **RULING:** Fumble (Rule 2-10-1).

#### Catchable Forward Pass—ARTICLE 4

##### **Approved Ruling 2-19-4**

- I. A88, beyond the line of scrimmage, is maneuvering to catch a legal forward pass thrown directly to his position. Just before the ball reaches A88, defensive back B30 drives through A88's back. B12 then steps in front of A88 and intercepts the pass. **RULING:** Pass interference by B30, if the pass is ruled as catchable and the interception occurs after the block by B30.
- II. A88, beyond the line of scrimmage, is maneuvering to catch a legal forward pass thrown directly to his position. Just before the ball reaches A88, defensive back B30 drives through A88's back. B12 intercepts or touches the pass before the block by B30. **RULING:** Not pass interference. Even though the pass was thrown directly to

A88's position, the touching voids pass interference, but another foul is possible (Rule 7-3-8-a).

## SECTION 23. Snapping the Ball

### Approved Ruling 2-23-1

- I. Fourth and goal on Team B's five-yard line. A55's legal snap is muffed by A12 and (a) any player of Team A recovers and advances the ball into the end zone, or (b) a player of Team B recovers and advances the ball. **RULING:** The snap is a backward pass and may be advanced by any player. (a) Touchdown. Since this is a backward pass and not a fumble there is no restriction on a Team A player recovering and advancing the ball. (b) Ball continues in play.

## SECTION 30. Play Classification

### Running Play—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 2-30-4

- I. A21 catches a forward pass with his knees on the ground. The passer is roughed during the pass. **RULING:** A21's catch started a running play, which ended immediately. Penalize 15 yards from the end of the run, first down for Team A.
- II. Third and 10. A21 catches a forward pass and fumbles when tackled after gaining 10 yards. The fumble is recovered by grounded A24 five yards in advance of the fumble. During the pass, the passer is roughed. **RULING:** Penalize 15 yards from the spot of recovery by A24 (end of last run), first down for Team A.

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# RULE 3

## Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

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### SECTION 1. Start of Each Period

#### Extra Periods—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 3-1-3

- I. After each team has put the ball in play by snap at the beginning of its possession series, the score remains tied. **RULING:** Begin the second extra period with the loser of the toss at the beginning of the first extra period having the choice of the two options.
- II. Other than on the try, Team B scores a touchdown after intercepting a forward pass, or intercepting or recovering a backward pass or fumble. **RULING:** Period and game are ended, and Team B is the winner.
- III. During the first possession series of a period, Team B intercepts a forward pass, or intercepts or recovers a fumble or a backward pass, and does not score a touchdown. **RULING:** Team A's possession series is ended and Team B starts its series. Team B becomes Team A when the referee declares the ball ready for play.
- IV. During the first possession series of a period, Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. Team A recovers the ball and runs for a touchdown. **RULING:** Six points for Team A. Team B begins its possession series after the try.
- V. Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. A23 recovers the ball and is tackled beyond the line to gain. **RULING:** Team A retains the ball to continue its possession series. First and 10.
- VI. On first, second or third down, Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. A23 recovers the ball and is

tackled short of the line to gain. **RULING:** Team A's ball, next down.

- VII. Team A's field goal attempt is blocked. Team B recovers the kick and carries it into Team A's end zone. **RULING:** Touchdown. The try is canceled and the game is ended.
- VIII. During the first possession series of a period, Team B gains possession and then loses possession to Team A, which scores a touchdown. **RULING:** The score counts, and Team B begins its possession series following the try.
- IX. During the first possession series of a period, Team B gains possession and then loses possession to Team A, which fails to score a touchdown. **RULING:** Team A's possession series is ended, and Team B begins its possession series.
- X. During the first possession series of a period, Team A fumbles into Team B's end zone on second down of a series. Team B recovers and downs the ball in its end zone. **RULING:** Team A's possession series is ended. Team B begins its possession series.
- XI. During the first possession series of a period, B10 intercepts a forward pass on his six-yard line and downs the ball in his end zone. **RULING:** Safety: two points for Team A. Team A's possession series is over. Team B will put the ball in play, first and 10 on the 25-yard line at the same end of the field.
- XII. Team A's field goal attempt is untouched beyond the neutral zone until B17 muffs it at the five-yard line. A75 recovers at the three-yard line. **RULING:** Team A's possession series continues; first down for Team A at the three-yard line.
- XIII. On the first possession series of a period, Team A scores a touchdown. On the try, Team B intercepts a pass and returns it for a two-point touchdown. **RULING:** Team B starts its possession series at the 25-yard line with Team A leading in the overtime score 6-2.
- XIV. After the end of the first possession series by Team A, Team B commits a dead-ball foul. **RULING:** Team B starts its possession series on the 40-yard line, first and 10.
- XV. During the first possession series of a period, A12 throws a forward pass and Team A is flagged for an illegal shift. B25 intercepts

the pass, and B38 clips before B25 crosses Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Score not allowed. The possession series is ended, and Team B begins its possession series at the 25-yard line. The penalty is not carried over.

- XVI. During the second possession series of a period, B25 intercepts a pass and carries the ball across Team A's goal line. During the run, B79 clips at midfield. **RULING:** No touchdown. Either the game is over, or the next period will start with first and 10 at the 25-yard line, since the penalty is not carried over.
- XVII. During the first possession series B37 intercepts a forward pass and has a clear field to the goal line when he makes an obscene gesture toward the nearest opponent. **RULING:** Team B's score is canceled and the penalty is carried over. Team B begins its possession series on the 40-yard line, first and 10 (Rules 3-1-3 and 3-1-3-g-1 and 2).

## SECTION 2. Playing Time and Intermissions

### Extension of Periods—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 3-2-3

- I. During the extension of a period after the ball is ready for play and before the snap, Team A commits a foul. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Team A is penalized for the foul and is entitled to complete the down.
- II. Time expires during Team A's free kick. A1 is offside on the kick. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot, the end of Team B's run, or the touchback spot, and the period is extended. Repeat the free kick or Team B is awarded an untimed down.
- III. Time expires during Team A's attempted field goal. Team B was offside or committed another foul less than three yards beyond the neutral zone during the kick. **RULING:** Penalty—Five, 10 or 15 yards from the previous spot, the period is extended (Rules 10-2-2-d-4-a and 10-2-3).
- IV. A Team A player interferes with the opportunity to catch a kick (not a try) during a down in which time expires. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul. The period is extended.

- V. Time expires during Team A's run for a touchdown after A70 fouls at the snap or clips during the down. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot for the foul at the snap or 15 yards for the clip. The 15-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot if the clipping foul occurs behind the neutral zone. The period is extended.
- VI. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. After the touchdown, but before the try, either team fouls. **RULING:** The period is not extended other than for the try. The penalty may be enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff.
- VII. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. During Team A's successful try, Team B fouls. **RULING:** The period is not extended for the kickoff. Team A may accept the penalty and replay the try, or decline the penalty and accept the score. Penalties for personal fouls may be enforced on the subsequent kickoff or the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- VIII. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. After the try ends, either team commits a dead-ball foul. **RULING:** The try may be repeated due to an accepted penalty for a live-ball foul that occurred during the try; the penalty for the dead-ball foul will then also be enforced on the replayed try. The period is not extended to enforce a penalty for a dead-ball foul. If accepted, this penalty must be enforced on the kickoff to start the next period or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- IX. Time expires in the first half on a play in which A12 is beyond the neutral zone when he completes a pass to A88 in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Team B accepts the penalty to nullify the score, but the period is not extended because the penalty includes loss of down. The first half ends.

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

### Timeout—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 3-3-1

- I. Neither team has been charged with a timeout when a field captain or an official designates an obviously injured player who is replaced. **RULING:** Referee's timeout.

- II. On third and 2-1/2, A45 fumbles a live ball after gaining three yards. The officials cannot determine who has recovered the fumble, so the line judge signals the clock to stop while the ball is being located. A45 is found to be in possession of the ball and (a) has not made his line to gain or (b) has made his line to gain. **RULING:** The 40-second clock starts when the ball is declared dead. (a) The referee immediately will signal the game clock to start. (b) The game clock will start on the referee's signal when the ball is ready for play.
- III. On second and 14, A45 gains six yards and is downed with the ball in his possession. The linesman, mistaking the back stake of the line-to-gain chain for the front stake, erroneously signals the clock to stop. **RULING:** As soon as the error is detected by any official, the signal to start the clock shall be given by the game official detecting the error.
- IV. Team A fumbles or the ball is loose after a backward pass. Several players dive on the ball, creating a "pile." **RULING:** The covering official(s) shall stop the clock and the 40-second clock shall start. Upon positive knowledge of who recovered, the referee will point in the direction governed by possession and start the game clock (a) immediately if Team A has recovered short of the line to gain (no first down), or (b) on the snap if Team B has recovered.
- V. The ball goes out of bounds after being declared dead in the field of play. **RULING:** The clock is stopped only if there is an unusual delay or unfair tactics are involved.
- VI. A shoelace, padlace, jersey, number or equipment breaks or tears. **RULING:** No referee's discretionary timeout permitted for repair or replacement.

## Starting and Stopping the Clock—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 3-3-2

- I. Team B makes a fair catch. **RULING:** Clock starts on the snap. The clock stopped at the end of a legal kick down.
- II. Fourth and six. Team A's running play, which ends inbounds, gains (a) eight yards or (b) five yards. B1 is offside during the play. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball. First and 10. The clock starts on the

- ready-for-play signal. (b) Team A's ball. Fourth and one. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal. (Rules 3-3-2-d-3 and 3-3-2-e-1)
- III. Fourth and four. Team A's running play, which ends inbounds, gains (a) six yards or (b) three yards. B1 is offside during the play. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball, first and 10. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal. (b) Team A's ball, first and 10 after accepting the penalty. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal.
- IV. Third and four. Team A's pass is intercepted by B1, who is downed inbounds. B2 was offside during the play. **RULING:** Team A's ball. First and 10. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal. Although the clock was stopped to award Team B a first down, Team B will not next snap the ball.
- V. Late in the second or fourth quarter, ball carrier A37 goes out of bounds. When the game clock is stopped it reads (a) 2:00, or (b) 1:59. **RULING:** (a) The game clock starts on the referee's signal when the ball is ready for play. (b) The game clock starts on the snap.
- VI. Late in the second or fourth quarter, Team A has second and eight. B44 intercepts a legal forward pass and carries the ball out of bounds. B79 is in the neutral zone at the snap. When the game clock is stopped it reads (a) 2:00, or (b) 1:59. **RULING:** Team A accepts the penalty and retains possession of the ball. In both (a) and (b) the game clock starts on the referee's ready-for-play signal, because Team B will not next snap the ball.

#### Charged Team Timeouts—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 3-3-4

- I. Before the snap, a Team B linebacker requests a timeout. **RULING:** Timeout request granted.
- II. Before the snap, the Team A quarterback requests a timeout. **RULING:** Timeout request granted.
- III. Before the snap, a legal substitute of either team running from the bench requests a timeout from any official before being within the nine-yard marks. He does not request a timeout again before the ball is snapped. **RULING:** Timeout request not granted (Rule 7-1-3-a-2).

- IV. Before the snap, a legal substitute of either team running from the bench requests a timeout before being within the nine-yard marks. He then requests a timeout again after being within the nine-yard marks. **RULING:** Second timeout request granted (Rule 7-1-3-a-2).

#### Injury Timeout—ARTICLE 5

#### Approved Ruling 3-3-5

- I. At the end of a play, with the game clock running, the referee notices that A22 is bleeding. **RULING:** The referee stops the clock and declares an injury timeout. A22 leaves the field of play or the end zone) for treatment by appropriate medical personnel. Unless there is also an injury to a Team B player the play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rule 3-2-4-c-4).
- II. After being treated for a bleeding or oozing wound, A22 (A.R. 3-3-5-I) attempts to enter the game before the next snap. **RULING:** Unless the period has ended or Team A has taken a timeout, A22 must remain out of the game for one play.
- III. B52's jersey has blood spots on it. **RULING:** Unless the official determines that the jersey is saturated with blood, B52 may remain in the game. (*Note:* Saturated is defined as soaked with moisture or drenched. If blood has penetrated through a garment to the skin or can be transferred to another player or game official, the garment is saturated.)
- IV. An official notices that blood has soaked through B10's jersey. **RULING:** B10 must leave the game until medical personnel have determined if the jersey must be replaced.
- V. B10 tackles A12. An official determines that B10's jersey is saturated with blood from a cut on A12's arm. **RULING:** Both players must leave the game—A12 for treatment of his open wound, B10 for a determination by medical personnel as to whether he has to replace his jersey.
- VI. During a dead-ball interval, A85 notices a bleeding cut on his arm. He voluntarily goes to the team area and is replaced by A88. **RULING:** This is a legal substitution and there is no variation in game timing. A85 may return to the game after the injury has been treated, but he must adhere to substitution rules.

- VII. During a dead-ball interval, A12 notices that he has a bleeding elbow and runs to the sideline adjacent to his team's bench. Medical personnel at the sideline bandage the elbow and approve A12's immediate return to the game. **RULING:** Legal. The starting of the play clock will not be delayed to accommodate A12's trip to the sideline.
- VIII. On second down the Team A ball carrier is tackled inbounds. The clock is then stopped for an injury to a player of Team B. (a) No other players are injured on the play. (b) There is also an injury to a player of Team A. (c) The referee grants a media timeout. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c) upon preparing to resume play the referee will indicate that the play clock be set to 40 seconds. Both the play clock and the game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal.

## SECTION 4. Delays

### Illegal Delay of the Game—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 3-4-2

- I. After any timeout, one of the teams is not ready to play. **RULING:** Illegal delay. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- II. On a running play late in the half the Team A ball carrier is tackled inbounds. Team B players are deliberately slow to “unpile” in an obvious attempt to consume time and prevent the officials from making the ball ready for play. **RULING:** Team B foul for delay of game. Penalty—five yards at the succeeding spot. The game clock will start on the snap (Rule 3-4-3).

### Unfair Clock Tactics—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 3-4-3

- I. In an attempt to consume time in the fourth period, Team A stalls and exceeds the 40- or 25-second count. **RULING:** Foul for delay of game. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. The clock starts on the snap.
- II. A Team B player, late in either half and with no timeouts remaining, crosses the neutral zone and touches a Team A player in an effort to conserve time. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from

- the succeeding spot. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal. At his discretion the referee may have the play clock set at 40 seconds.
- III. A ball carrier, late in the second period, throws a backward pass out of bounds from behind or beyond the neutral zone to conserve time. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal.
- IV. A ball carrier throws a forward pass while beyond the neutral zone to conserve time. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rule 7-3-2 Penalty).
- V. Late in the fourth quarter Team A trails by four points and is driving for a potential score. After a running play on which the ball carrier is tackled inbounds, Team B players are obviously and deliberately slow in letting him get to his feet or otherwise are employing tactics to delay the officials in making the ball ready for play. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul against Team B, delay of game. When the ball is ready for play, the referee will signal the 25-second clock to start, but the game clock will start on the snap.

## SECTION 5. Substitutions

### Legal Substitutions—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 3-5-2

- I. Any player(s), in excess of 11, obviously is withdrawing but has not reached a boundary line when the ball is put in play and he does not interfere with play or players. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot (Rules 7-1-3-b Penalty and 7-1-4-b Penalty).
- II. A1 enters from outside his team area. **RULING:** Illegal substitution. Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. Sound the whistle.
- III. A33, an incoming substitute, enters the huddle or assumes a position in a formation and (a) after approximately two seconds, A34 leaves the huddle and departs the field of play at his sideline, or (b) after approximately four seconds, A34 leaves the huddle and departs the field of play at his sideline. **RULING:** (a) Legal. (b) Foul. (*Note:* A

departing player who leaves the huddle or his position within three seconds is considered to have left immediately.)

- IV. After the ball is made ready for play, substitute B12 enters the huddle or defensive formation and the departing player delays more than three seconds before leaving the huddle or formation and departing the field of play. **RULING:** Violation of the substitution rule. Dead-ball foul. (*Note:* The referee is not required to warn a departing player to leave the huddle immediately.)
- V. After a change of team possession or any timeout, the ball is declared ready for play. When Team A has completed its offensive formation, Team B must promptly position its personnel. Team B will be allowed time to complete substitutions. **RULING:** Either team is subject to a delay-of-game foul—Team B for not completing its substitutions promptly (Rule 3-4-2-b-3) or Team A for causing the 25-second clock to expire. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- VI. On third down (no change of team possession), ball carrier A27 goes out of bounds or Team A's legal forward pass falls incomplete. During this interval between downs, there is no other referee's timeout. Before the fourth-down snap, substitute B75 enters the game and then departs without remaining in the game for one play. **RULING:** Live-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.
- VII. Team A has 11 players in the huddle. A81 mistakenly thinks he has been replaced and runs to his team area. He is immediately sent back onto the field and assumes a position on the line of scrimmage near his sideline. The entire team has been stationary for one second before the snap and there has not been a referee's timeout. **RULING:** Live-ball foul. A player loses his status as a participant when he enters the team area while the ball is dead, and then must adhere to substitution rules. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot or 15 yards from the previous spot, depending upon defensive coverage (Rules 3-5-2-d and 9-2-2-b).
- VIII. Team A has 11 players in its huddle when A27 approaches the huddle (within 10 yards) as it breaks. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 2-27-9-a).

- IX. After the ball is ready for play and the umpire is in his regular position, Team A quickly replaces some players with substitutes, gets set for the required one second and snaps the ball. The umpire is attempting to get to the ball to allow the defense to match up, but he is unable to prevent the snap. **RULING:** The play is shut down, the game clock is stopped and the defense is allowed to substitute in response to Team A's late substitutions. No foul. The play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts on the ready-for-play signal. The game clock starts on the ready-for-play signal or the snap, depending on its condition when play was stopped.

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# RULE 4

## Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds

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### SECTION 1. Ball in Play—Dead Ball

#### Live Ball Becomes Dead—ARTICLE 2

##### **Approved Ruling 4-1-2**

- I. Fourth and 16 at the 50-yard line, Team A kicks. B1 clips on Team B's 40-yard line, and B2 muffs the kick on the 25-yard line. While the ball is loose, an inadvertent whistle is sounded. **RULING:** If Team A accepts the penalty, penalize Team B from the 50-yard line. Team A's ball, first and 10 on the 35-yard line. If Team A declines the penalty, replay the down.
- II. Fourth and 16 at the 50-yard line. At the snap, B1 is offside. Team A advances the ball to the 30-yard line and fumbles. During the loose ball, an inadvertent whistle is sounded. **RULING:** Team A may refuse the penalty and put the ball in play on the 30-yard line, first and 10.

#### Ball Declared Dead—ARTICLE 3

##### **Approved Ruling 4-1-3**

- I. While A1 is holding the ball for a place kick, Team B plays the ball by (a) recovering a loose ball, (b) snatching it from A1 or (c) batting it from his hands. **RULING:** (a) The ball remains alive. (b) The ball remains alive. (c) Fumble, the batting by Team B is legal.
- II. A player, ineligible to touch a kick, catches or recovers it. **RULING:** The ball is dead, no exception for illegal possession.

## Ball Ready for Play—ARTICLE 4

**Approved Ruling 4-1-4**

- I. Snapper A1 snaps the ball before the ball is made ready for play. A2 muffs the snap and B1 recovers the ball. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul, Team A snap infraction. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot, Team A's ball. The ball does not become alive, and all action should be stopped immediately by the game officials.
- II. Kicker A1 kicks off before the referee has declared the ball ready for play. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. The ball does not become alive, and all action should be stopped immediately by the game officials.

## SECTION 2. Out of Bounds

## Player Out of Bounds—ARTICLE 1

**Approved Ruling 4-2-1**

- I. An inbounds ball carrier bumps into or is touched by a player or game official on the sideline. **RULING:** The ball carrier is not out of bounds.
- II. Ball carrier A1 is running inbounds near the sideline when he is contacted by a substitute of Team B, who is on the sideline. **RULING:** Rule 4-2-1 states a player is out of bounds when any part of his person touches anything other than a player or an official. Penalty—15 yards or other illegal-interference penalties (Rules 9-1-5-a and 9-2-3).

## Out of Bounds at Forward Point—ARTICLE 4

**Approved Ruling 4-2-4**

- I. A player with one foot out of bounds behind a goal line touches a loose ball in the field of play. **RULING:** Ball is out of bounds and dead at its most forward point in the field of play. If this loose ball was an untouched free kick, it is a free kick out of bounds and a foul. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot or Team B's ball 30 yards beyond Team A's free-kick line.

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# RULE 5

## Series of Downs, Line to Gain

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### SECTION 1. A Series: Started, Broken, Renewed

#### When to Award Series—ARTICLE 1

##### **Approved Ruling 5-1-1**

- I. After Team A's fourth-down fumble out of bounds between the goal lines, with the spot of the fumble short of the line to gain, the ball belongs to Team A at the spot of the fumble or out-of-bounds spot, but Team B is awarded a new series of downs. The clock starts on the snap.

#### Forward Progress—ARTICLE 3

##### **Approved Ruling 5-1-3**

- I. Airborne A1 receives a legal forward pass one yard within the opponent's end zone. As A1 receives the ball, he is contacted by B1 and first comes to the ground with the catch at the one-yard line, where the ball is declared dead. **RULING:** Touchdown (Rule 8-2-1-a).
- II. Airborne A1 receives a legal forward pass one yard within Team B's end zone. As A1 receives the ball, he is contacted by B1 and first comes to the ground, on his feet, with the catch at the one-yard line. After he regains his balance, he runs and is downed at Team B's five-yard line. **RULING:** Not a touchdown. Team A's ball at the spot where the ball is declared dead.
- III. Airborne A2 receives a legal forward pass at Team A's 35-yard line. As A2 receives the ball, he is contacted by B1 and first comes to the ground with the ball at Team A's 33-yard line, where the ball is

declared dead. **RULING:** Team A's ball at the 35-yard line. This is the point of forward progress.

- IV. A4, with the ball breaking the plane of the 50-yard line while in his possession, dives over the 50-yard line, which is the line to gain for a first down. He is knocked back to Team A's 49-yard line, where any part of his body except his hand or foot touches the ground. **RULING:** First down at forward progress spot (Rule 4-1-3-b).
- V. A6 has the ball in his possession and is not controlled by an opponent, as he dives over the 50-yard line, which is the line to gain for a first down, and is forced back across the 50-yard line. A6 continues to run and is tackled at Team A's 49-yard line, where any part of his body except his hand or foot strikes the ground. **RULING:** No first down. The point of forward progress is Team A's 49-yard line.
- VI. A5, with the ball breaking the plane of the goal line while in his possession, dives over the goal line and is knocked back to the one-yard line, where any part of A5's body except his hand or foot touches the ground. **RULING:** Touchdown. The ball is dead when it breaks the plane of the goal line in A5's possession.

## SECTION 2. Down and Possession After a Penalty

### Penalty Resulting in First Down—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 5-2-2

- I. Fourth and 20 on the 50-yard line. Team B roughs the kicker. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. Team A's ball, first and 10 (Rule 9-1-4-a).

### Foul Before Change of Team Possession—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 5-2-3

- I. Team A's fourth-down legal forward pass strikes the ground after it touches an originally ineligible receiver who is illegally more than three yards beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot. Team B's ball, first and 10, if the penalty is declined (Rule 7-3-10).

- II. A Team A ball carrier attempts a backward pass that is ruled forward and illegal. The pass strikes the ground. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the spot where the pass was thrown and, unless thrown after a change of team possession, the scrimmage down counts (Rule 7-3-2-a).

#### Foul After Change of Team Possession—ARTICLE 4

##### **Approved Ruling 5-2-4**

- I. Team B runs back Team A's kick or intercepted pass. During the run, a Team B player clips. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards. Team B's ball, first and 10. Start the clock on the snap.

#### Foul Between Downs—ARTICLE 6

##### **Approved Ruling 5-2-6**

- I. Fourth and two on Team A's 35-yard line. A1 receives the snap and fumbles the ball on Team A's 38-yard line, with the ball going out of bounds on (a) Team A's 40-yard line or (b) Team A's 30-yard line. Immediately after the ball goes out of bounds, Team A commits a personal foul. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball, first and 10 on Team A's 23-yard line. Start the clock on the ready-for-play signal. (b) Team B's ball, first and 10 on Team A's 15-yard line. Start the clock on the snap.
- II. First and 10 for Team A. A Team A ball carrier gains seven yards, then deliberately advances the ball after it is declared dead. **RULING:** Delay of game. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. Second down for Team A (Rule 2-5-1).

#### Foul Between Series—ARTICLE 7

##### **Approved Ruling 5-2-7**

- I. Team A's punt goes out of bounds at Team B's 20-yard line, immediately after which a Team B player clips. **RULING:** First and 10 for Team B on its 10-yard line. Start the clock on the snap.
- II. Team A's ball on Team B's 30-yard line. Third and four. A Team A ball carrier goes out of bounds on the 18-yard line. Team B commits a foul immediately after the ball is out of bounds. **RULING:** First and goal for Team A at the nine-yard line. Clock starts on the ready-for-play signal except in the last two minutes of a half.

- III. Team A's ball on Team A's 16-yard line. Fourth and four. A Team A ball carrier goes out of bounds on the 18-yard line. A Team A player commits a foul immediately after the ball is out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball on the nine-yard line. First and goal. Start the clock on the snap.
- IV. B20 intercepts a legal forward pass at the 50-yard line and returns the ball to Team A's 18-yard line, where he goes out of bounds. Immediately after the ball becomes dead, A55 commits a personal foul. **RULING:** Team B's ball on the nine-yard line. First and goal. Start the clock on the snap.
- V. On fourth and five, Team A gains six yards and is awarded a new series. After the ball is made ready for play and before the snap, A55 commits (a) a personal foul or (b) a false start. **RULING:** (a) First and 25. (b) First and 15.
- VI. Team A's ball, third and four from the 50-yard line. After the ball is made ready for play and before the snap, B60 charges across the neutral zone and contacts snapper A50. A61 then fouls B60. A61's foul is a personal foul. **RULING:** Penalize Team B five yards for B60's offside, then penalize Team A 15 yards and reset the line-to-gain indicator to indicate first and 10 from Team A's 40-yard line.

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# RULE 6

## Kicks

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### SECTION 1. Free Kicks

#### Free-Kick Formation—ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 6-1-2

- I. The ball is kicked while teed illegally, punted on a kickoff or kicked from a spot between the inbounds line and the nearer sideline. **RULING:** Illegal kick. Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 2-15-1-a).
- II. Kicker A11 places the ball on the tee in the center of the field for a free kick with four teammates to the left side of the ball and six teammates to the right side of the ball. The ball blows off the tee. A55, who was lined up to the left of the ball, then holds the ball on the tee for right-footed kicker A11. No other Team A players move. When the ball is kicked by A11, A55 is to the kicker's right. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for illegal formation at the kick. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.
- III. Free-kicker A11 places the ball on the tee just inside the inbounds line on his right. All of his teammates line up to his left. At the ready for play, four Team A players who were on A11's left run to their right and are in the area to A11's right when he kicks the ball. **RULING:** Legal formation.
- IV. A11 places the ball on the tee for a free kick on the 30-yard line in the center of the field. A12 lines up near the ball. After the ready for play, A11 starts forward as if to kick the ball, and A12 suddenly crosses in front of him and kicks the ball. When the ball is kicked, A11 is directly behind the ball with three teammates on one side of the ball. A12 plants his nonkicking foot on the same side of the ball as his three teammates. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for illegal formation. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot, and rekick if Team B

chooses; or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.

- V. Team A is offside during its free kick and B27 recovers the kick with his knee touching the ground. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for offside. The ball is dead at the spot of the recovery. Penalty—Team B may choose five yards from the previous spot and another free kick, or five yards from the dead-ball spot with a first and 10. B27's recovery started a running play that ended immediately. This scenario also would have been valid if B27 had completed a fair catch.
- VI. Team A is offside during its free kick and B37 fumbles while returning the kick. The ball is recovered by B45, who has a knee touching the ground. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for offside. The ball is dead at the spot of the recovery. Penalty—Team B may choose five yards from the previous spot and another free kick, or five yards from the spot of B45's recovery with a first and 10.
- VII. Team A is offside on its free kick and B17 catches the ball at his 15-yard line. B17 returns the ball to his 45-yard line where he fumbles. A67 recovers at the B-47 and runs to the B-35 where he fumbles, with B20 recovering while downed at his 33-yard line. **RULING:** Foul by Team A for offside. Team B may choose to have Team A kick again after a five-yard penalty from the previous spot, or Team B may have first and 10 at its 38-yard line.

#### Free-Kick Recovery—ARTICLE 3

##### **Approved Ruling 6-1-3**

- I. A player of Team A illegally touches a free kick; then he or a teammate illegally recovers the kick. **RULING:** Unless there is an accepted penalty or offsetting fouls, Team B may elect to take the ball at any spot of the illegal touching.

#### Free-Kick Caught or Recovered—ARTICLE 6

##### **Approved Ruling 6-1-6**

- I. A player of Team A recovers a rolling free kick beyond Team B's restraining line and makes a backward pass that goes out of bounds. **RULING:** The ball is dead and belongs to Team A where recovered (Rule 4-1-3-e).

## SECTION 2. Free Kick Out of Bounds

### Kicking Team—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 6-2-1

- I. A kickoff from Team A's 30-yard line goes out of bounds untouched by Team B. **RULING:** Team B has three options. It may accept a five-yard penalty from the previous spot with Team A kicking from the 25-yard line; put the ball in play at Team B's 40-yard line at the inbounds spot; or put the ball in play at the inbounds spot after a five-yard penalty from the spot where the ball went out of bounds.
- II. A kickoff from Team A's 30-yard line goes out of bounds untouched by Team B, and Team A has illegally touched the kick. **RULING:** Team B has four options: It may snap the ball at the spot of the violation; accept a five-yard penalty from the previous spot with Team A kicking from the 25-yard line; put the ball in play at the inbounds spot on its 40-yard line; or put the ball in play at the inbounds spot five yards from where the ball went out of bounds (Rule 6-1-8).
- III. A kickoff goes out of bounds after Team B has touched it, and no fouls occur. **RULING:** Team B snaps at the inbounds spot.
- IV. Team A is offside or commits a substitution infraction, and the kickoff from the 30-yard line goes out of bounds after it has been touched by Team B. **RULING:** For either the offside foul or the substitution foul, Team B may elect to have the kick repeated at Team A's 25-yard line, or snap the ball at the inbounds spot five yards from where the ball went out of bounds (Rule 6-1-8).
- V. Team A kicks off at its 30-yard line. The untouched free kick goes out of bounds at the Team B 34-yard line. **RULING:** Team B may choose to have the ball free-kicked after a five-yard penalty from the previous spot, or put the ball in play at the Team B 40-yard line.

### Receiving Team—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 6-2-2

- I. A free kick from Team A's 30-yard line, untouched by Team B, goes out of bounds between the goal lines, and Team A was offside. **RULING:** Team B has these options: It may accept a five-yard

penalty at the previous spot with Team A re-kicking from the 25-yard line; snap the ball at its 40-yard line at the inbounds spot; or snap the ball at the inbounds spot five yards from where the ball went out of bounds (Penalty).

- II. A free kick from Team A's 30-yard line, untouched by Team B, goes out of bounds between the goal lines, and Team A fouled after the ball went out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B has the choice of Team A kicking again after a five-yard penalty followed by a 12-1/2-yard penalty, or putting the ball in play at the inbounds spot either on Team A's 45-yard line or at the inbounds spot 20 yards beyond the spot where the ball went out of bounds.
- III. A free kick in flight strikes a Team B player who is in his end zone, and the ball then goes out of bounds at the three-yard line. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first and 10, on the three-yard line at the inbounds spot.
- IV. Airborne B17 has leaped from inbounds and is the first player to touch Team A's free kick when he receives the ball. He subsequently lands out of bounds with the ball in his possession. **RULING:** Foul, free kick out of bounds. Team B has these options: It may accept a five-yard penalty at the previous spot with Team A re-kicking; snap the ball at its 40-yard line at the inbounds spot (assuming the free kick was from the 30-yard line); or snap the ball at the inbounds spot five yards from where the ball crossed the sideline.
- V. Team A is in free kick formation behind its 30-yard line. As A3 kicks the ball from the 30-yard line, A26 is airborne at the Team A 32-yard line. **RULING:** Team A is offside. Five-yard penalty from the previous spot or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (Rules 2-11-2 and 6-1-2-a).

## SECTION 3. Scrimmage Kicks

### Behind the Neutral Zone—ARTICLE 1

#### **Approved Ruling 6-3-1**

- I. A Team A punt crosses the neutral zone. The ball is touched (not blocked) by a Team B player and then rebounds behind the zone, where it is recovered by Team A in the field of play. **RULING:** The

ball is dead when recovered and may not be advanced. First down for Team A (Rules 6-3-3 and 6-3-6-a). Clock starts on the snap following a legal kick down.

- II. Team A's untouched kick goes beyond the neutral zone in flight, is blown back by the wind and first touches the ground, a player or an official behind the neutral zone. **RULING:** The kick is not considered to have crossed the neutral zone until it has touched the ground, a player, an official or anything beyond that zone. Any scrimmage kick may be advanced after catch or recovery by Team B, or after catch or recovery by Team A in or behind the neutral zone if the kick had not crossed the neutral zone (Rule 2-15-7).
- III. A1 interferes with B1's opportunity to catch a kick when a scrimmage kick fails to cross the neutral zone. **RULING:** Interference with the opportunity to catch a kick does not apply, and all players are eligible to touch, recover and advance the ball. Therefore, any player legally may push an opponent in an actual attempt to get at the ball; but no player may hold an opponent to prevent his reaching the ball or in an attempt to permit a teammate to reach it (Rules 9-1-2-d Exception 3 and 9-3-3-c Exception 3).
- IV. Team A's punt from behind its own goal line crosses the neutral zone into the field of play. It then strikes a Team B player and rebounds across Team A's goal line, where Team A falls on the ball. **RULING:** Safety (Rules 6-3-3, 6-3-6-a and 8-5-1-a).
- V. Team A's punt from behind its own goal line crosses the neutral zone into the field of play. It then strikes a Team B player and rebounds behind Team A's goal line, where Team A recovers the ball and advances to the one-yard line. **RULING:** Safety—Ball dead where recovered (Rules 6-3-3, 6-3-6-a and 8-5-1-a).

## Beyond the Neutral Zone—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 6-3-2

- I. Team A illegally touches its kick; then after Team B has touched it, Team A recovers. **RULING:** Touching by Team A after Team B has touched the kick is legal; and, in order to get the ball, Team B must take it where Team A illegally touched it. Unless illegal touching is also illegal recovery by the kicking team and no fouls are involved,

- the receiving team may play the ball with the assurance that it later may elect the ball at any spot of illegal touching.
- II. During a scrimmage kick, A1 commits a touching violation, after which B1 recovers, advances and fumbles. A2 recovers the fumble and, during the advance, B2 holds, trips or slugs. **RULING:** Team A may have the ball where left by the penalty for Team B's foul; but if Team A declines the penalty, Team B will have the ball by electing the touching violation. B2 is disqualified if flagged for slugging.
- III. Players of both teams attempt to recover a blocked kick behind Team A's scrimmage line, forcing the ball across the neutral zone. **RULING:** After a scrimmage kick has crossed the neutral zone, no Team A player may touch the ball until it has been touched by an opponent.
- IV. Team A commits illegal touching. **RULING:** Not a foul. Team B may choose to put the ball in play at any spot of illegal touching or where the ball is dead, including a touchback. If this was an unsuccessful field goal attempt and Team B did not touch the kick beyond the neutral zone, the options of Rule 8-4-2-b are available to the receiving team.
- V. Team A's punt goes beyond the neutral zone and is first touched by A80, then picked up by B40, who runs five yards and fumbles. A20 picks up the fumble and scores. During A20's run, B70 holds. **RULING:** Five- and 10-yard penalties are not administered on the try or the succeeding kickoff. The penalty for Team B's foul is declined by rule. The ball belongs to Team B at the spot of illegal touching (Rule 10-2-5-a-2).
- VI. Team A's ball, fourth and 12 at Team A's 20-yard line. During Team A's scrimmage kick, B85 taunts A44. The ball is illegally touched by A20 at the 50-yard line and then recovered by B14, who advances the ball before fumbling at Team A's 25-yard line. A27 recovers the fumble and is downed immediately. **RULING:** A20 is guilty of illegal touching. Team A accepts the penalty for B85's foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 at Team B's 35-yard line after enforcement of the penalty for the live-ball foul treated as a dead-ball foul. The illegal-touching privilege is not canceled

by the accepted penalty because enforcement is after the ball is dead.

- VII. Team A's punt goes beyond the neutral zone and is first touched by A80, then picked up by B40, who runs five yards and fumbles. B70 holds during B40's run. A20 picks up the fumble and scores. **RULING:** Five- and 10-yard penalties are not administered on the try or the succeeding kickoff. The penalty for Team B's foul may be enforced, per Rule 5-2-4. The ball belongs to Team B, either at the spot of illegal touching if Team A declines the penalty, or at the spot resulting from enforcement of the penalty (Rule 10-2-5-a-2).

#### Forced Touching Disregarded—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 6-3-4

- I. Team A's scrimmage kick comes to rest at the Team B two-yard line. A7 blocks receiver B4, forcing him to touch the ball. **RULING:** Touching by Team B is disregarded since B4 is deemed not to have touched the kick. A new impetus is not possible without contact of the ball by a player (Rule 8-7-1).
- II. Team A kicks from its own 30-yard line. The untouched kick has come to rest on Team B's three-yard line when A3 blocks B1 into the ball, which is forced through the end zone by Team B's contact with the ball. **RULING:** Touchback. Since Team A blocked Team B into the ball, Team B is not deemed to have touched the ball. Impetus cannot be charged to Team B (Rule 8-7-1).
- III. Team A's long field goal attempt is first touched when A1 bats the rolling ball backward into nearby B1. **RULING:** Illegal touching by A1. Team B is not deemed to have touched the ball (Rule 8-4-2-b).
- IV. Team A's untouched scrimmage kick is at rest on the Team B three-yard line when B22 blocks A80 into the ball, forcing it into the end zone where it touches the ground. **RULING:** The ball is dead when it touches the ground in the end zone. Touchback—Ignore touching by A80. By rule, neither team has touched the kicked ball (Rule 8-6-1-b).

## Touching Ground On or Behind Goal Line—ARTICLE 9

**Approved Ruling 6-3-9**

- I. A Team A player illegally touches a punt and the ball then rolls into Team B's end zone, where Team B recovers and advances the ball into the field of play. **RULING:** The ball is dead when it strikes the ground in the end zone. Team B may choose a touchback or take the ball at the spot of Team A's illegal touching (Rule 4-1-3-c).
- II. Team A's scrimmage kick goes into Team B's end zone untouched by Team B beyond the neutral zone. Team B commits a personal foul after the ball touches the ground in the end zone. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul after the touchback. Team B's ball, first and 10 on the 10-yard line after enforcement of the penalty at Team B's 20 (Exception: Rule 8-4-2-b).
- III. Team A's scrimmage kick goes into Team B's end zone untouched by Team B beyond the neutral zone. Team A commits a personal foul after the ball touches the ground in the end zone. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 on the 35-yard line. If the snap was outside the 20-yard line on an unsuccessful field goal attempt, the penalty is at the previous spot.
- IV. A Team B player touches a scrimmage kick in flight in Team B's end zone and downs the ball in the end zone. **RULING:** Touchback (Rule 8-6-1-a).
- V. A Team B player touches a scrimmage kick in flight in Team B's end zone and catches or recovers the ball and runs to Team A's end zone. **RULING:** Team B touchdown (Rule 6-3-5).
- VI. A Team B player touches a scrimmage kick in flight in Team B's end zone, and Team A downs the ball in the end zone. **RULING:** Team A touchdown (Rules 6-3-3 and 8-2-1-e).

## Loose Behind the Goal Line—ARTICLE 11

**Approved Ruling 6-3-11**

- I. Team A kicks from the 50-yard line. During the kick, B1 clips at Team B's 25-yard line. The untouched kick is batted backward out of bounds from the end zone by Team A and goes out of bounds on the two-yard line. **RULING:** No foul by Team A. B1's foul is governed

by postscrimmage kick rules. Team B's ball, first and 10 on the 10-yard line.

- II. Team A snaps at the 50-yard line and punts. The kick is untouched beyond the neutral zone when A88 reaches across Team B's goal line and bats the ball back into the field of play. B22 recovers at the B-2 and advances to the B-12 where A66 tackles him by pulling his facemask. **RULING:** Team B may accept the penalty, which cancels the illegal touching privilege, and have first and 10 at the B-27.
- III. Team A snaps at the 50-yard line and punts. The kick is untouched beyond the neutral zone when A88 reaches across Team B's goal line and bats the ball back into the field of play. B22 muffs the ball at the B-2 and A43 recovers it at the B-6. While the ball is loose B77 holds A21 at the B-10. **RULING:** Team A may cancel the illegal touching privilege by accepting the holding penalty, which is enforced at the previous spot with the down replayed. Postscrimmage kick rules do not apply to Team B's foul since Team A is in legal possession of the ball when it is declared dead.

## SECTION 4. Opportunity to Catch a Kick

### Interference With Opportunity—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 6-4-1

- I. A Team A player catches a free kick very near receiver B25, thus preventing him from making the catch. **RULING:** Illegal interference. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul.
- II. A Team B player, about to catch a scrimmage kick, is tackled before the ball arrives but catches the kick while he is falling. **RULING:** Illegal interference. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul. Disqualification of the Team A player if the contact is flagrant. If the foul is between the goal lines, enforcement is from the spot of the foul and Team B puts the ball in play by a snap; if behind Team B's goal line, award a touchback and penalize from the succeeding spot. The ruling would be the same had the kick been muffed or fumbled. The ruling is also the same on an unsuccessful field goal attempt since Team B touched the ball beyond the neutral zone.

- III. Beyond the neutral zone A1 is standing or running between a kick in flight and B1, and (a) A1 is struck by the ball while B1 is in a position to catch the ball; or (b) B1, in attempting to catch the ball, bumps into A1. **RULING:** Illegal interference. Penalty—(a) and (b): 15 yards for interference with the opportunity to catch the kick.
- IV. A player of Team B, attempting to catch a kick (no fair catch signal), muffs the ball which is then touched by an opponent who was not interfering with the opportunity of the receiver when he was in position to make the catch. **RULING:** Not interference. Protection against interference with the opportunity to catch a kick ends when any player of Team B muffs the ball.
- V. A Team A player beyond the neutral zone first touches or catches a scrimmage kick that no receiver could have caught while it was in flight. **RULING:** Illegal touching but not interference.
- VI. On a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone, A89 stands in or runs through an area close to B23 who is in position to catch the ball and is deemed to have impeded the Team B player. **RULING:** Interference with the opportunity to catch a kick. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul, which is where A89 was located when he committed the foul.
- VII. On a free kick, catch interference occurs. The ball subsequently goes out of bounds between the goal lines untouched by Team B. **RULING:** Two fouls by Team A. Team B may accept or decline either penalty: for kick-catch interference or for the free kick out of bounds.
- VIII. B10 signals for a fair catch, muffs the ball and then catches it. **RULING:** If B10 has an opportunity to catch the kick after the muff, he must be given an unimpeded opportunity to complete the catch. If B10 catches the muffed kick, the ball is dead where first touched by B10.
- IX. Team A's ball, fourth and 10 at the 50-yard line. B17 is at Team B's 20-yard line and in position to catch Team A's high scrimmage kick. During the downward flight of the ball, A37 contacts B17 viciously and flagrantly before he touches the ball. A37 did not alter his speed or make any attempt to elude B17. **RULING:** Team A personal foul,

interference with the opportunity to catch a kick. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul. A37 is disqualified.

- X. Team A's ball, fourth and 10 at the 50-yard line. Team A's windblown scrimmage kick is on its downward flight at Team B's 30-yard line. B18, starting at the 20-yard line, must detour around A92 at the 25-yard line to make the catch at the 30-yard line. **RULING:** Foul by A92 for interference with the opportunity to catch a kick. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul, which is the 25-yard line.

## SECTION 5. Fair Catch

### Dead Where Caught—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 6-5-1

- I. After a valid or invalid signal, B1 muffs the punt and B2, who did not signal, catches the kick. **RULING:** The ball is dead when and where caught.
- II. After a valid or invalid signal by both B1 and B2, one muffs the kick and the other catches it. **RULING:** Ball is dead. Team B's ball at the spot of the catch.
- III. B1 has a foot out of bounds when he gives a valid or invalid signal. He then catches the kick inbounds. **RULING:** There is no rule against a receiver going out of bounds during a kick. The inbounds catch is legal, and the ball is dead.
- IV. After his valid fair catch signal, B17 muffs the kick but still has a reasonable opportunity to catch the kick. **RULING:** After a valid fair catch signal, the unimpeded opportunity to complete the catch does not end when the kick is muffed. The player who signaled must be given a reasonable opportunity to catch the ball without being interfered with by members of the kicking team. An intentional muff forward before the catch is an illegal bat.

### No Advance—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 6-5-2

- I. A Team B player who has made a fair catch is tackled after he has carried the ball more than two steps. **RULING:** Foul by the catcher. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.

- II. B1 gives a fair catch signal before a muff by B2, and then B1 catches or recovers the kick and advances. **RULING:** Advancing after the fair catch does not cancel the dead ball that is established when the ball is caught or recovered. Two steps are permitted to enable B1 to come to a stop or to regain balance. A third or subsequent step inbounds is subject to penalty from where the ball is caught or recovered. If B1 is tackled, the tackle is disregarded unless deemed unnecessarily rough or is so late that the tackler should know that there was no intention to advance. If the kick is caught or recovered by Team B in the end zone, it is a touchback. If B1 is tackled before completion of a third step, only the tackler has fouled.
- III. B1, who signaled for a fair catch, is on the run and off balance when he catches the ball, and his third step ends on or outside a boundary line. **RULING:** No advantage is gained by carrying a dead ball out of bounds. Therefore, the third step is disregarded and the ball is put in play at the succeeding spot, the spot of the catch.
- IV. Team A punts. After signaling for a fair catch on his 20-yard line, B1 deliberately lets the ball strike the ground, where B2 recovers the bouncing ball and advances to Team B's 35-yard line. **RULING:** The ball is dead at the spot of recovery. Advance is illegal. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot, the spot of recovery. Team B's ball, first and 10 (Rule 5-2-7).

### Invalid Signals—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 6-5-3

- I. A1 or B1 signals for a fair catch beyond the neutral zone during a kick that does not cross the neutral zone. **RULING:** The signals are of no consequence, since the ball did not cross the neutral zone, and the ball remains alive (Rule 2-7-1-a).
- II. A1 signals for a fair catch beyond the neutral zone during a kick that crosses the neutral zone. **RULING:** Not an invalid signal (Rule 2-7-3).
- III. On a free kick, B17 makes an invalid signal for fair catch near the sideline, muffs, and the kick goes out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first and 10 at the inbounds spot.

- IV. A scrimmage kick strikes the ground beyond the neutral zone and bounces high into the air, and B1 signals for a fair catch. **RULING:** Invalid signal. The ball is dead when recovered.
- V. B1 catches a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone and then signals for a fair catch. **RULING:** Invalid signal. The ball is dead where the signal first was given.
- VI. Team A's scrimmage kick is rolling beyond the neutral zone when B17 alerts his teammates to stay away from the ball by a "get away" signal at his waist or below. **RULING:** Invalid signal. The ball is dead by rule when either team recovers.

#### Illegal Block or Contact—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 6-5-4

- I. B1 signals and does not touch a punt, but while the untouched ball is loose in the field of play, he blocks an opponent (a) more than three yards beyond the neutral zone or (b) in the receiver's end zone. **RULING:** (a) If the ball crosses the neutral zone and Team B has possession when the down ends, Team B is penalized 15 yards from the postscrimmage kick enforcement spot. (b) Safety. The ruling is the same on an unsuccessful field goal attempt.
- II. B1 signals at the 50-yard line and does not touch a punt. While the ball is rolling on the ground at Team B's 45-yard line, B1 illegally uses his hands in an attempt to get to the ball, and the ball is declared dead in Team B's possession. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards, postscrimmage kick enforcement. The ball belongs to Team B (Rule 10-2-3).

#### No Tackling—ARTICLE 5

##### Approved Ruling 6-5-5

- I. B1 and B2 each signal. B1 muffs, and B2 is about to catch the muffed ball when he is tackled by A1. **RULING:** Not interference, but holding. Penalty—10 yards from the previous spot or from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.
- II. A Team B player who has made a fair catch signal is tackled before he has carried the ball more than two steps. **RULING:** Foul by the tackler. Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot.

- III. The fair catch signal is made by a teammate of B1, who catches the ball. **RULING:** The ball is dead when and where caught. B1 is not entitled to catch protection but is entitled to the same protection he has after any other dead ball (Rule 6-5-1-c).

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# RULE 7

## Snapping and Passing the Ball

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### SECTION 1. The Scrimmage

#### Offensive Team Requirements—ARTICLE 3

##### **Approved Ruling 7-1-3**

- I. A Team A player moves when the snap is started. **RULING:** Legal. A Team A player may start motion of any part of his body when the snap is started.
- II. A21 is legally on the end of the line of scrimmage next to A88, who is in the stance of a restricted lineman. Team A stops for one second while A21 and A88 are in the above positions, and then A21 moves to a legal backfield position and stops. Then A88 shifts to a wider position on the line. **RULING:** Legal if both A21 and A88 are stationary at the snap (Rules 2-22-1 and 7-1-4-a).
- III. A21 is legally on the end of the line of scrimmage next to A88, who is in the stance of a restricted lineman. Team A has stopped for one second when A21 leaves the line of scrimmage and goes in motion into the backfield. A88 shifts to a wider position on the line. **RULING:** A88 may break his three-point stance since he is now on the end of the line of scrimmage, but Team A must stop again for one second before the snap to make the play legal (Rule 7-1-4).
- IV. B71 crosses the neutral zone into the Team A backfield and does not threaten any Team A player. A23, legally in the backfield, intentionally reaches to contact B71. **RULING:** Team A foul, false start. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- V. Snapper A7 touches the ball and then releases it to communicate with teammate A1. **RULING:** The snapper may release the ball after touching to communicate with a teammate.

- VI. Snapper A1 lifts or moves the ball forward before backward motion of the snap. B2 bats the ball, causing it to roll loose with B3 recovering. **RULING:** Team A foul, illegal snap, ball remains dead. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 4-1-1).
- VII. A73, a lineman between the snapper and the player on the end of the line who is restricted in the movement of his hand or hands, adjusts his feet and:
1. Draws no reaction from B1. **RULING:** No foul.
  2. Draws a charge resulting in contact by B1. **RULING:** Dead ball. Team A foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
  3. B1 contacts A73 with a delayed charge. **RULING:** Dead ball. Team B foul. Penalty—Five or 15 yards from the succeeding spot (Rules 7-1-5-a and 9-1-2-j).
- VIII. A66, a restricted lineman between the snapper and the player on the end of the line, or A72, a restricted player on the end of the line of scrimmage:
1. Lifts a hand or hands from the ground immediately when threatened by B1, who is in the neutral zone. **RULING:** Blow the whistle immediately. Team B dead-ball foul, offside. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
  2. Lifts a hand or hands from the ground immediately when threatened by B1, who is in the neutral zone, and A66 or A72 is in or beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Blow the whistle immediately. Team B dead-ball foul, offside. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
  3. Lifts a hand or hands from the ground upon initial charge by B1, who (a) does not enter the neutral zone or (b) enters the neutral zone but does not threaten the position of A66 or A72. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), blow the whistle immediately. Team A dead-ball foul, false start. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.

*Note: Before the snap, a Team B player who enters the neutral zone may threaten a maximum of three Team A linemen. If the Team B player enters the neutral zone directly toward a Team A lineman, then that Team A player and the two adjacent linemen are considered to be threatened. If the Team B player*

*enters the neutral zone toward a gap between two Team A linemen, then only those two Team A players are considered to be threatened.*

- IX. A Team A player on the line of scrimmage whose hand(s) is not on or near the ground:
1. Moves immediately into the neutral zone when threatened by B1, who is in the neutral zone. **RULING:** Blow the whistle immediately. Team B dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
  2. Moves immediately, but not into the neutral zone, when threatened by B1, who is in the neutral zone. **RULING:** Blow the whistle immediately. Team B dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- X. Before the snap, A80 on the end of the line, a nonrestricted interior lineman or a back, misses the snap count and makes an abrupt movement that simulates the start of a play. No Team B player reacts. **RULING:** Team A foul, false start. Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- XI. Before the snap, A80 on the end of the line, a nonrestricted interior lineman or a back, misses the snap count and makes a casual movement that is not abrupt, quick or jerky and does not simulate the start of a play. **RULING:** No foul by Team A.
- XII. A30, lined up legally as a back, starts in motion legally. He then turns so that he still is legally in motion but is facing his line of scrimmage using a “side-step” motion. At the snap, A30 is bent slightly forward at the waist and is either continuing his “side-step” motion or is “marking time” in place. **RULING:** Legal.
- XIII. A30, lined up legally as a back, starts in motion legally. He then turns so that he still is legally in motion but is facing his line of scrimmage using a “side-step” motion. At the snap, A30, still behind the neutral zone, is moving slightly forward from the waist up or his “side-step” motion has veered slightly toward the line of scrimmage. **RULING:** Live-ball foul at the snap for illegal motion. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.
- XIV. A30, lined up legally as a back, starts in motion legally. He then turns so that he still is legally in motion but is facing his line of scrimmage

using a “side-step” motion. At the snap, A30 has inadvertently moved forward while still facing his line of scrimmage with his sideways shuffling motion and is now moving along Team A’s line of scrimmage. **RULING:** Illegal motion. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.

- XV. Team A’s formation at the snap includes only 10 players: five players on the line of scrimmage numbered 50-79, one player on the line wearing number 82, and four players in the backfield. **RULING:** The formation is legal because Team A has no more than four players in the backfield and the required number of players (five) on the line wearing 50-79.

#### Shifts and False Starts—ARTICLE 4

##### **Approved Ruling 7-1-4**

- I. After a huddle or shift, all Team A players come to a stop and remain stationary for one second. Then, before the snap, two or more simultaneously change their positions. **RULING:** All 11 Team A players must remain stationary for one second before the snap, otherwise it is a live-ball foul at the snap for an illegal shift. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot (Rule 2-22-1).
- II. After a huddle or shift, Team A players take preliminary positions then advance or drop into final positions. **RULING:** Such movement constitutes a shift; players must hold their final positions for one second before the snap (Rule 2-22-1).
- III. Ten Team A players shift while A1 remains stationary. A1 then starts moving backward before one second elapses and the ball is snapped. **RULING:** If A1, who moved, did not halt with the other Team A players for one second before the snap, it is a live-ball foul at the snap for an illegal shift. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot (Rule 2-22-1).
- IV. After the Team A players have stopped for one second, end A88 runs wide and stops, and before one second elapses, back A36 starts moving backward. **RULING:** Legal. But if back A36 starts before end A88 stops, the simultaneous movement of two players constitutes a shift, and all Team A players must be stationary for one second before the snap (Rule 2-22-1).

## Defensive Team Requirements—ARTICLE 5

**Approved Ruling 7-1-5**

- I. Snapper A1 lifts the ball before backward passing it, B2 bats the ball away, and B3 recovers the ball. **RULING:** Team A dead-ball foul, illegal snap. The ball remains dead because it was not put in play by a legal snap. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. Team A retains possession.
- II. Snapper A1 legally begins the snap, but B2 bats the ball before A1 completes the snap, and B3 recovers the ball. **RULING:** Team B foul and the ball remains dead. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot. Team B may not touch the ball until it has been snapped. Team A retains possession.
- III. Before the snap, a Team B player crosses the neutral zone and, without making contact, continues his charge behind a Team A lineman and directly toward the quarterback or kicker. **RULING:** A Team B player who is on Team A's side of the neutral zone and is moving in a direct path toward the quarterback or kicker while he is behind an offensive lineman is considered to be interfering with Team A's formation. Penalty—Team B foul, offside. Dead ball. Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- IV. Linebacker B56 is stationary within one yard beyond the neutral zone. As the offense is calling its snap signals, B56 feints toward the line in an obvious attempt to induce a false start by the offense. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul, delay of game. Five-yard penalty at the succeeding spot.

## Handing the Ball Forward—ARTICLE 6

**Approved Ruling 7-1-6**

- I. Eligible receiver A83 is on the end of his scrimmage line and adjacent to the snapper in an unbalanced "T" formation. Quarterback A10 receives a handed snap and immediately conveys the ball to A83. **RULING:** If the movement of the ball is forward and it left A10's hand before having been touched by A83, it is a legal forward pass. A83 may have turned sufficiently to receive a backward pass or handoff (legal); but if the action immediately followed the snap, it

is not likely that a handoff would have had time to comply with the “turn” and “two yards behind the line” requirement.

## SECTION 2. Backward Pass and Fumble

### Caught or Recovered—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 7-2-2

- I. An opponent snatches (steals) the ball from the ball carrier in the field of play. **RULING:** Fumble; the ball continues in play (Rule 2-10-1).
- II. A player of the receiving team in the field of play catches a kick, then fumbles the ball. A player of the kicking team intercepts or recovers the fumbled ball. **RULING:** The ball continues in play.

### Out of Bounds—ARTICLE 4

#### Approved Ruling 7-2-4

- I. B20 intercepts a legal forward pass (a) in his end zone, (b) on his three-yard line, and his momentum carries him into his end zone, or (c) in the field of play and retreats into his end zone (no momentum). In each instance, B20 fumbles in the end zone and the ball rolls forward and out of bounds on Team B’s two-yard line. **RULING:** The ball belongs to Team B at the spot of the fumble (Team B’s end zone); (a) touchback, (b) Team B’s ball at the three-yard line, and (c) safety (Rules 8-5-1 and 8-6-1).

## SECTION 3. Forward Pass

### Illegal Forward Pass—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 7-3-2

- I. Anytime during the game, quarterback A10, who is not outside the tackle box and is attempting to save yardage, intentionally throws a desperation forward pass that falls incomplete where no eligible Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch it. **RULING:** Intentional grounding. Penalty—Loss of down at the spot of the foul. The clock starts on the snap (Rule 3-3-2-d-4).
- II. In the closing minutes of either half, A10 is unable to locate an open receiver. To conserve time, he throws a forward pass that

is incomplete where no eligible Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch it. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass. Penalty—Five yards and loss of down from the spot of the foul. The clock will start on the ready-for-play signal (Rule 3-3-2-e-15 and 3-4-3).

- III. On third down near the end of either half, potential field goal holder A4 muffs the snap and A4 or potential kicker A3 recovers the ball and immediately throws it forward to the ground. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass, not a valid attempt to conserve time. Penalty—Five yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down. Clock starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rules 3-3-2-e-15 and 3-4-3).
- IV. The ball is snapped over the head of quarterback A12, who is in the “shotgun” formation. A12 recovers the ball and immediately throws it forward to the ground. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass, not a valid attempt to conserve time. Penalty—Five yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down. Clock starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rules 3-3-2-e-15 and 3-4-3).
- V. On third down near the end of the first half, A1 muffs the hand-to-hand snap, immediately recovers the ball and throws it forward into the ground. **RULING:** Illegal forward pass, not a valid attempt to conserve time. Penalty—Five yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down. Clock starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rules 3-3-2-e-15 and 3-4-3).
- VI. On third down near the end of the half, A1 muffs the snap. A1 or A4 catches the muffed ball and immediately throws it forward into the ground. **RULING:** Legal play.
- VII. On third down near the end of the half, A1—positioned seven yards behind the snapper—catches the snap and immediately throws the ball forward to the ground. **RULING:** Legal play.
- VIII. With seconds remaining in a half and the ball ready for play, Team A quickly lines up and the ball is legally snapped to quarterback A12, who throws the ball forward directly to the ground. Team A’s formation was not legal at the snap. When the ball becomes dead, two seconds show on the game clock. **RULING:** Illegal formation. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot. The clock starts on the snap.

- IX. Quarterback A10 sprints toward a sideline and is outside the tackle box when he throws a legal forward pass that lands beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Legal play. It is not intentional grounding when a passer, who is outside the frame of the normal tackle position, and facing loss of yardage, throws a forward pass that crosses or lands beyond the neutral zone extended.

#### Eligibility to Touch Legal Pass—ARTICLE 3

##### Approved Ruling 7-3-3

- I. At the snap, tight end A85 is on the line of scrimmage. Flanker A23 is two yards outside of A85 and is neither on his line of scrimmage nor in the backfield. **RULING:** A23 is in an illegal position and is an ineligible pass receiver. A85 is an eligible pass receiver since he is on the end of the line of scrimmage (Rules 2-21-2 and 2-27-4).

#### Eligibility Lost by Going Out of Bounds—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 7-3-4

- I. Eligible A88 goes out of bounds but does not touch the pass, which is legally completed to A80. **RULING:** Legal play.
- II. Eligible A88 voluntarily goes out of bounds, returns, and is the first player to touch the legal forward pass. This touching by A88 occurs in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Illegal touching. Penalty—Loss of down at the previous spot.
- III. Eligible A88 voluntarily goes out of bounds during a down in which a legal forward pass is thrown. He returns to the field of play but does not touch the ball and is fouled by an opponent before the ball is touched by any player. **RULING:** Not pass interference—A88 is not eligible to catch a legal forward pass. Penalty—Ten or 15 yards from the previous spot.
- IV. Wide receiver A88 is blocked out of bounds by B1 and then runs 20 yards before returning to the field of play. A88 catches a legal pass in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Foul for illegal touching due to A88's failure to return inbounds immediately. Penalty—Loss of down at the previous spot.
- V. Eligible receiver A44 is running a pass pattern near the sideline. As a legal forward pass comes toward him, he accidentally steps on

the sideline, leaps, muffs the pass into the air, returns to the ground inbounds, grabs the ball and lands on his knees inbounds with the ball firmly in his possession. **RULING:** Illegal touching. Penalty—loss of down at the previous spot. A44 lost his eligibility by stepping out of bounds and did not regain his eligibility before touching the ball the second time.

#### Eligibility Gained or Regained—ARTICLE 5

##### Approved Ruling 7-3-5

- I. Team B touches the legal forward pass near a sideline while originally eligible A1 is out of bounds. A1 comes inbounds and touches the pass. **RULING:** Legal play. Touching by Team B made all players eligible during the remainder of the down.

#### Completed Pass—ARTICLE 6

##### Approved Ruling 7-3-6

- I. Team A's legal forward pass is first touched by one of its eligible players, then caught by another. **RULING:** Completed pass.
- II. Two opposing players receive a legal forward pass while both are off the ground, and both players return to the ground inbounds at the same time. **RULING:** Simultaneous catch; the ball is awarded to the passing team (Rule 2-2-8).
- III. Two opposing players receive a ball while both are off the ground, and one player returns to the ground inbounds before the other. **RULING:** No simultaneous catch. The legal forward pass is completed or intercepted by the player who first returned to the ground (Rule 2-2-8).
- IV. An airborne player receives a legal forward pass. While still in the air, he is tackled by an opponent and obviously held for a moment before being carried in any direction. He then lands inbounds or out of bounds with the ball. **RULING:** Completed pass. The ball is dead at the yard line where the receiver/interceptor was held in a manner that prevented him from immediately returning to the ground (Rule 4-1-3-p).
- V. Airborne A80 receives a legal forward pass at his 30-yard line. While still in the air, he is tackled by B40 and driven forward to Team A's

- 34-yard line, where he is downed. **RULING:** Team A's ball at its 34-yard line (Rule 5-1-3-a).
- VI. Airborne A80 receives a legal forward pass at his 30-yard line. While still in the air, he is tackled by B40 and driven backward to Team A's 26-yard line, where the ball becomes dead. **RULING:** Team A's ball at the 30-yard line (Rule 5-1-3-a Exception).
- VII. A86 is legally blocked out of bounds by B18 at Team B's two-yard line. A86, while attempting an immediate return to the field of play, leaps from out of bounds and is airborne as he receives A16's legal forward pass. He lands in Team B's end zone completing the catch. **RULING:** Touchdown (Rules 4-1-3-c, 4-2-3-a, 7-3-4 Exception and 8-2-1-b).
- VIII. B33 leaps from out of bounds and is airborne as he receives Team A's legal forward pass. He completes the interception by landing (a) in the field of play or (b) in Team B's end zone, and is then tackled. **RULING:** B33 is a ball carrier until he loses player possession or the ball becomes dead by rule. (a) First and 10 for Team B. (b) Touchback. (Rules 4-1-3-c, 4-2-3-a, 5-1-1-e and 7-3-4).
- IX. A84 voluntarily goes out of bounds to elude B28. A84 leaps from out of bounds and is airborne as he receives A15's legal forward pass. He subsequently lands in the field of play completing the catch. **RULING:** Illegal touching. A84 loses eligibility by going out of bounds. Penalty—Loss of down at the previous spot (Rules 4-2-3-a and 7-3-4).
- X. While airborne, eligible receiver A89 touches a forward pass when he propels it toward: (a) eligible receiver A80, who catches the pass; or (b) B27, who intercepts the pass. **RULING:** Legal play, and the ball remains live in both (a) and (b). A89 has batted a forward pass (Rules 2-2-7, 2-10-3 and 9-4-1-a).
- XI. Airborne receiver A85 grasps a forward pass and in the process of going to the ground, first contacts the ground with his left foot as he falls to the ground inbounds. Immediately upon A85 hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and touches the ground. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. An airborne receiver must maintain control of the ball while going to the ground in the process of completing a catch.

- XII. Airborne receiver A85 grasps a forward pass and in the process of going to the ground, first contacts the ground with his left foot as he falls to the ground inbounds. Immediately upon A85 hitting the ground, the ball comes loose but never touches the ground before he regains control. **RULING:** Catch. If the receiver is inbounds and is going to the ground and loses control, as long as the player remains inbounds and the ball never touches the ground, it is a completed pass.
- XIII. Airborne receiver A85 grasps a forward pass and in the process of going to the ground, first contacts the ground with his left foot inbounds as he falls to the ground out of bounds. Immediately upon A85 hitting the ground out of bounds, the ball comes loose. **RULING:** Incomplete pass regardless of whether or not the ball hits the ground because the receiver is out of bounds.
- XIV. Receiver A85 stretches out at the Team B two-yard line and grasps a forward pass and is going to the ground on his own as he is attempting to complete the catch. As A85 falls to the ground in the end zone, the ball immediately comes loose and falls to the ground. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. Any receiver going to the ground on his own in the process of making a catch must maintain control of the ball when he hits the ground.
- XV. Receiver A85 is airborne in the end zone and grasps a forward pass, but while airborne he is hit by a defender, which causes A85 to fall to the ground. Immediately upon A85 hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and strikes the ground. **RULING:** Incomplete pass. An airborne receiver contacted before completing all the requirements of a catch must still maintain control of the ball after hitting the ground.
- XVI. Eligible A80 is airborne when he receives a legal forward pass. He grasps the ball firmly in his hands, and as he is returning toward the ground, the nose of the football touches the ground before any part of his body. A80 retains his firm control of the ball and it does not move during this action. A80's knees then touch the ground and he maintains control of the ball. **RULING:** Completed pass.
- XVII. Eligible A80 is airborne near the sideline when he receives a legal forward pass. As he comes to the ground facing the field of play,

his toe (a) clearly drags the ground inbounds before he falls out of bounds; (b) touches the ground inbounds and then his heel comes down on the sideline in a continuous motion. He maintains firm control of the ball in both cases. **RULING:** (a) Complete pass. (b) Incomplete pass. The continuous toe-heel touching is part of a single process and by interpretation he has landed out of bounds, thus not executing a catch.

### Incomplete Pass—ARTICLE 7

#### Approved Ruling 7-3-7

- I. A player touches a legal forward pass while he is contacting a boundary line. **RULING:** The ball is out of bounds, the pass is incomplete, and the down counts. Eligibility of the touching player does not affect this ruling (Rule 4-2-3-a).
- II. Third and nine on Team A's six-yard line. A1 intentionally grounds a forward pass in his end zone to save loss of yardage. **RULING:** Team B may accept the penalty for a safety. If they decline the penalty, it is Team A's ball, fourth and nine on the six-yard line. The clock starts on the snap.
- III. Fourth and nine on Team A's six-yard line. A1 intentionally grounds a forward pass in his end zone to save loss of yardage. **RULING:** Team B may accept the penalty for a safety. If they decline the penalty, it is Team B's ball, first and goal on the six-yard line.
- IV. Third and nine on Team A's six-yard line. A1 throws a second forward pass from his end zone. B2 intercepts and is downed on Team A's 20-yard line. **RULING:** Team B may accept the penalty which results in a safety, or take the result of the play, retaining the ball for a first down on Team A's 20-yard line.

### Illegal Contact and Pass Interference—ARTICLE 8

#### Approved Ruling 7-3-8

- I. A Team B player, defending against a legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone, has his back to the ball and is waving his arms in the face of an eligible player of Team A, who, in his attempt to catch the pass, bumps into the Team B player. **RULING:** Pass interference by the Team B player, first down. He was not making a bona fide attempt to catch or bat the pass.

- II. Wide receiver A80, 15 yards beyond the neutral zone, turns his back toward the neutral zone. The passer throws the ball over A80's hands, which are extended above his head. The ball is overthrown and beyond the receiver (uncatchable pass) when B2 intentionally fouls A80. **RULING:** Personal foul (Rule 9-1-2-f), not pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. First and 10 for Team A. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified.
- III. Wide receiver A88, 15 yards beyond the neutral zone, runs a curl pattern and stops near the sideline. The passer throws the ball several yards over A88's hands, which are extended above his head (uncatchable pass) when B2 intentionally fouls A88. **RULING:** Personal foul (Rule 9-1-2-f), not pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. First and 10 for Team A. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified.
- IV. A83, a wide receiver 10 yards from the nearest interior lineman, slants toward the middle of the field. Before the ball is thrown, B1, a back, legally blocks him and knocks him down. **RULING:** Legal unless the block was below the waist (Rule 9-1-2-e-2).
- V. Before the ball is thrown, A88 is directly in front of B1, a back, who legally pushes him with both hands and knocks him down. **RULING:** Legal.
- VI. At the snap, A88 is on the line of scrimmage 10 yards from the tackle position and A44 is in the backfield, four yards to his inside. Just before the Team A passer releases the ball, A88 contacts B1 five yards beyond the neutral zone. The pass is thrown to A44, who has moved in front and to the outside of the spot where A88 had contacted B1. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- VII. Before the ball is thrown, wide receiver A88 moves four yards downfield directly toward and in front of the defender, B1. At this spot, B1 pushes A88, who then uses his hands to contact B1. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference, if the legal forward pass is beyond the neutral zone. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- VIII. Before the ball is thrown, wide receiver A88 slants to the inside where B1, the back, attempts to block him. A88 uses his hands to

shove B1 away. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference, if the legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone. If B1's initial contact was below the waist and beyond the neutral zone, Team B also has fouled and the live-ball fouls offset.

- IX. A88, an eligible receiver, curls and stops 10 yards beyond the neutral zone. After a catchable forward pass is thrown and before the ball touches A88, B1 contacts A88 from the back or side with a tackle, grasp or push and the pass is incomplete. **RULING:** Team B foul, defensive pass interference. Penalty—Spot foul and first down.
- X. A88, a spread receiver, runs a 10-yard route and cuts 90 degrees to the sideline. After the ball is thrown, B2 contacts A88 with a tackle, block, grasp or push before A88 touches the ball, a catchable forward pass. **RULING:** Team B foul, defensive pass interference. Penalty—Spot foul and first down.
- XI. A80, a tight end, runs 10 yards into the secondary and cuts toward the goal posts. B1 is one step behind and to the outside when he recovers. After the legal forward pass has been thrown, B1 contacts A80 with a tackle, block, grasp or push as the ball goes over A80's outstretched hands. **RULING:** Team B foul for defensive pass interference. Penalty—Spot foul and a first down if the infraction occurs less than 15 yards from the previous spot; 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and a first down if the foul is more than 15 yards beyond the neutral zone.
- XII. A88 and B2 are running closely together before or after the ball has been thrown. Either A88 or B2 or both fall when their feet become entangled. Neither player was tripped intentionally. **RULING:** No foul.
- XIII. Before the pass is thrown, wide receiver A88 and defender B1 are running shoulder to shoulder and side by side 15 yards beyond the neutral zone. A88 is nearest to the sideline, and B1 is nearest to the hash mark. A88 breaks to the inside. B1 does not move, and A88 collides with him. **RULING:** No foul.
- XIV. Wide receiver A88 and defender B1 are running shoulder to shoulder and side by side 15 yards beyond the neutral zone. A88 is nearest to the sideline, and B1 is nearest to the hash mark. A legal forward pass is thrown toward the goal post. While the ball is in the air, A88

breaks to the inside toward the catchable forward pass. B1 does not move and makes no attempt to go for the pass, and A88 collides with him. **RULING:** Team B foul, defensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot and a first down.

- XV. A44, a slot back, runs a pattern 25 yards downfield toward the goal line pylon. B1, a safety, is positioned between A44 and the pylon when the ball is thrown. B1 obviously reduces his speed and collides with A44 before the catchable ball touches the ground. **RULING:** Team B foul, defensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot and first down.
- XVI. A80, a tight end, moves across the formation on a pass pattern at a depth of 25 yards where he contacts B1, a safety, before or after the ball has been thrown. A88, a wide receiver positioned on the opposite side from the tight end at the snap, crosses behind the contact of A80 and B1 and catches the legal forward pass. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- XVII. Fourth and goal for Team A on Team B's five-yard line. Team A's legal forward pass is incomplete, but Team B interfered on its one-yard line or in its end zone. **RULING:** First and goal for Team A on Team B's two-yard line.
- XVIII. A80 and B60 are attempting to catch a forward pass thrown toward A80's position, which is beyond the neutral zone. The pass is high and ruled uncatchable. As the ball passes overhead, A80 pushes B60 in the chest. **RULING:** Not offensive pass interference.
- XIX. On a legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone, A80 and B60 are attempting to catch the pass thrown to A80's position. A14, who is not attempting to catch the pass, blocks B65 downfield, either before the pass is thrown or while the uncatchable pass is in flight. **RULING:** Team A foul, offensive pass interference. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.

#### Contact Interference—ARTICLE 9

##### **Approved Ruling 7-3-9**

- I. A80, a tight end, goes downfield eight yards, stops and turns to catch a pass, and does not contact an opponent. A44, a wing back,

goes downfield eight yards and cuts to the inside, causing B1, who is pursuing him, to contact A80 after the ball was thrown. **RULING:** No foul against B1 unless the ball, a catchable forward pass, is thrown to A80.

- II. A legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone is tipped or muffed by an eligible receiver of either team or glances off an official. Then, while the pass is still in flight, either Team A or Team B holds or otherwise fouls an eligible opponent who is beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Interference rules do not apply after the pass has been touched. Penalize as a foul during a loose ball. Penalty—10 or 15 yards from the previous spot (Rule 9-3-6).
- III. On a legal forward pass behind the neutral zone, eligible A1 “has position” on B1 and is about to touch the pass when B1 pushes A1 and the pass is incomplete. **RULING:** Legal. Interference rules do not apply behind the neutral zone (Rules 7-3-9-d, 9-1-2-d Exception 4 and 9-3-3-c Exception 5).

#### Ineligibles Downfield—ARTICLE 10

##### Approved Ruling 7-3-10

- I. Ineligible lineman A70 runs more than three yards beyond the neutral zone and does not make contact with an opponent. He circles toward the flank and returns across the neutral zone before A10 throws a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone. **RULING:** Ineligible downfield. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot.
- II. Ineligible lineman A70 makes contact with an opponent within one yard of the neutral zone. A70 drives B4 more than three yards beyond the neutral zone and then circles back across the neutral zone before A10 throws a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone. **RULING:** Team A foul, ineligible downfield or offensive pass interference. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot or 15 yards from the previous spot (Rule 7-3-8-b).

#### Illegal Touching—ARTICLE 11

##### Approved Ruling 7-3-11

- I. Late in the half, quarterback A10, who has not been outside the tackle box, throws a desperation pass to intentionally save yardage that falls incomplete after ineligible A58 touches the ball in an attempt to catch

- it. **RULING:** Foul for intentional grounding. No foul for illegal touching since the pass is illegal. Penalty—Loss of down at the spot of the pass. The clock starts on the snap (Rules 3-3-2-d-4 and 7-3-2-f). If time expires in the quarter the quarter is not extended.
- II. An originally ineligible player of Team A intentionally first touches a legal forward pass inbounds. **RULING:** Illegal touching. The ball continues in play, but the foul is subject to penalty when the ball becomes dead. Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot (Rule 4-1-3).
- III. Team A snaps on its 10-yard line. A10 retreats and then passes forward to ineligible A70 who, while in his end zone, (a) touches the ball as he attempts to catch the pass, and the pass is incomplete; (b) catches the pass and is downed in the end zone; or (c) catches the pass and is downed after having advanced to his three-yard line. **RULING:** (a) Team B may elect the penalty to get the five yards or refuse the penalty so the down will count. (b) The ball is dead in the end zone with impetus by Team A, and Team B may elect the safety or the penalty at the previous spot. (c) The down counts if the penalty is refused and the dead-ball spot is more advantageous to Team B than the penalty [*Note:* (a), (b) and (c) could be intentional grounding depending on the location of an eligible Team A player or the location of A10 when the ball is thrown] (Rule 10-1-1-b). If intentional grounding is warranted, there is no illegal touching.

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# RULE 8

## Scoring

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### SECTION 2. Touchdown

#### How Scored—ARTICLE 1

##### Approved Ruling 8-2-1

- I. The ball carrier is thrown or falls to the ground on his opponent's one-yard line, but his momentum causes him to slide across the goal line. **RULING:** Not a touchdown unless the ball's forward point was on, above or across the goal line when any part of the ball carrier's body except his hand or foot struck the ground (Rules 4-1-3-b and 5-1-3).
- II. Ball carrier A1, while attempting to score, strikes the pylon located on the right intersection of the goal line and sideline with his foot. He is carrying the ball in his right arm, which is extended over the sideline. **RULING:** Whether or not a touchdown is scored depends on the forward progress of the ball as related to the goal line when the ball becomes dead by rule (Rules 4-2-4-d and 5-1-3-a).
- III. Ball carrier A1, advancing in the field of play, becomes airborne at the two-yard line. His first contact with the ground is out of bounds three yards beyond the goal line. The ball, in possession of the ball carrier, passed over the pylon. **RULING:** Touchdown (Rule 4-2-4-e).
- IV. The ball, in possession of airborne ball carrier A21, crosses the sideline above the one-yard line, penetrates the plane of the goal line extended and is then declared dead out of bounds in possession of A21. **RULING:** Ball is declared out of bounds at the one-yard line (Rules 2-11-1 and 4-2-4-e).
- V. Quarterback A12 completes a forward pass to a teammate who is standing in Team B's end zone. (a) A12 is beyond the neutral zone when he releases the ball. (b) The receiver is wearing uniform number

73. **RULING:** In (a) and (b) the result of the play is a touchdown. The penalty is completed according to Team B's options.

## SECTION 3. Try Down

### How Scored—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 8-3-1

- I. During a try, after having obtained possession, Team B fumbles and Team A recovers in the Team B end zone. **RULING:** Team B can fumble after intercepting a pass, catching or recovering a fumble or recovering a backward pass. Touchdown. Award Team A two points (Rule 8-3-2-d-1).
- II. Team B intercepts Team A's legal forward pass and returns the ball for a touchdown. **RULING:** Award Team B two points. Team B will receive the next free kick, or extra-period rules govern (Rule 8-3-2-a).
- III. B19 is the first player beyond the neutral zone to touch Team A's blocked PAT kick when he muffs the kick in the end zone. A66 recovers in the end zone. **RULING:** Award Team A two points.
- IV. During a try, after having gained possession on the one-yard line, Team B fumbles there and then recovers, and is downed in the Team B end zone. **RULING:** Safety. Award Team A one point (Rule 8-1-1).

### Opportunity to Score—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 8-3-2

- I. On a try attempt, B2 adds new impetus to a Team A fumble that is recovered in the Team B end zone by Team B. **RULING:** Safety, award Team A one point (Rules 8-3-1 and 8-5-1).
- II. On a try attempt, B2 kicks a Team A fumble into the Team B end zone where Team B recovers while grounded. **RULING:** Safety, one point for Team A, or Team A may accept the penalty for illegally kicking the ball (Rules 8-3-1 and 8-3-3-b-1) and replay the down.
- III. On a one-point try attempt, B2 blocks A1's kick. The ball, which does not cross the neutral zone, is picked up by A2, and he advances the ball across Team B's goal line. **RULING:** Award Team A two points (Rule 8-3-1).

- IV. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked. A2 picks up the ball beyond the neutral zone in the field of play. **RULING:** The ball is dead where picked up by A2. The try is ended.
- V. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked. The ball is advanced by ball carrier B1 across Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Award Team B two points (Rule 8-3-1).
- VI. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked. The ball, untouched beyond the neutral zone, (a) is recovered by B3 on his one-yard line or (b) hits the ground in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** (a) B3 may advance the ball. (b) The ball is dead the try is ended (Rule 8-3-1).
- VII. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked. The ball is recovered by B3 and advanced across Team A's goal line. During B3's run, B4 clips. **RULING:** No score, the try is ended, and the penalty is declined by rule (Rule 8-3-4-b).
- VIII. On a try attempt, B1 intercepts Team A's legal forward pass in his end zone. He runs the ball across Team A's goal line, and (a) there are no fouls during the run, (b) B3 clips during the run or (c) A2 fouls during the run. **RULING:** (a) Award Team B two points. (b) No score, the try is ended, and the penalty is declined by rule. (c) Award Team B two points, and the penalty is declined by rule (Rules 8-3-1 and 8-3-4-a and b).
- IX. On a try attempt, A1 muffs the hand-to-hand snap from the snapper and it is recovered by A2, who runs it into the opponent's end zone. **RULING:** Award Team A two points (Rule 2-10-2).
- X. On a try attempt, A10 snaps the ball over the head of the holder or the holder muffs the ball. It is recovered by A3, who runs it into the end zone. **RULING:** Award Team A two points.
- XI. On a try attempt, quarterback A2, running an option play, throws a backward pass that is muffed and recovered by A9, who runs it into the end zone. **RULING:** Award Team A two points.
- XII. On a one-point try attempt, Team A's kick is blocked and B75 recovers at the two-yard line. As B75 attempts to advance, he fumbles and the ball rolls into the end zone, where B61 recovers

and is downed. **RULING:** Safety. Award Team A one point (Rule 8-1-1).

## Fouls During a Try Before Team B Possession—ARTICLE 3

### Approved Ruling 8-3-3

- I. During a try attempt, Team A's legal kick, untouched and in the air, has crossed the neutral zone when a foul occurs. **RULING:** If the foul is by Team A and the try is unsuccessful, and Team B does not gain possession, the try ends. If the foul is by Team A and the try is successful, the penalty is at the previous spot. If the foul is by Team B and the try is successful, score the point unless Team A chooses to accept the penalty and attempt a two-point play. The try is exempt from postscrimmage kick enforcement. Penalties for Team B personal fouls on a successful try may be enforced on the subsequent kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. If the try is unsuccessful, Team A may accept the penalty and the down will be replayed.
- II. Both teams foul during a try after playing time has expired, and Team B had not gained possession. **RULING:** Replay at the previous spot.
- III. During a try, Team A advances the ball into Team B's end zone or completes a pass there, but Team A fouls during the run or behind its line before the pass. **RULING:** Any replay is from the spot where the penalty leaves the ball. The privilege of replaying from any point between the inbounds lines applies only when a penalty is for a foul by Team B.
- IV. During a try, both teams foul before Team B intercepts a forward pass. On the return, (a) B23 clips or (b) A18 tackles the ball carrier by twisting his face mask. **RULING:** (a) and (b) The fouls offset and the down is replayed.
- V. During a try, B79 is in the neutral zone at the snap. B20 intercepts a forward pass and A55 tackles him by pulling the face mask. **RULING:** The fouls offset and the down is replayed.

## Fouls During a Try After Team B Possession—ARTICLE 4

**Approved Ruling 8-3-4**

- I. B15 intercepts Team A's legal forward pass and is running at midfield when tackled by A19, who grasps and pulls B15's face mask. **RULING:** The try is ended, and the penalty is declined by rule.
- II. B1 intercepts Team A's legal forward pass and runs it to midfield. During the run of the interception, B2 clips in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** The penalty is declined by rule.
- III. During a two-point try attempt, Team A is flagged for an illegal shift. B21 recovers a fumble and on the return, B45 clips and A80 slugs an opponent. B21 scores an apparent touchdown. **RULING:** A80 is disqualified. The score does not count, the fouls offset, the down is not replayed and the try is ended.
- IV. During a two-point try attempt, Team A is flagged for an illegal shift. B21 recovers a fumble and on the return, A80 slugs an opponent. B21 scores an apparent touchdown. **RULING:** The score counts and the penalty for A80's flagrant foul is enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. A80 is disqualified.

## SECTION 4. Field Goal

## Next Play—ARTICLE 2

**Approved Ruling 8-4-2**

- I. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's attempted field goal is touched by B1 at Team B's 10-yard line and rolls out of the end zone. **RULING:** Touchback.
- II. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's attempted field goal is touched and downed by Team B at the five-yard line. **RULING:** Team B's ball at Team B's five-yard line.
- III. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's untouched field goal attempt rolls dead on Team B's seven-yard line. **RULING:** Team B's ball at Team B's 40-yard line.
- IV. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's untouched field goal attempt strikes the ground in the end zone and bounces out to the three-yard line, where it is touched by B1. **RULING:** The ball is

- dead when it hits the ground in Team B's end zone. Team B's ball at Team B's 40-yard line (Rule 6-3-9-a).
- V. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's attempted field goal touches B1 at the 10-yard line and goes out of bounds at the five-yard line. **RULING:** Team B's ball at Team B's five-yard line.
- VI. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's field goal attempt is blocked or touched at the line of scrimmage and goes out of bounds, untouched beyond the neutral zone, at Team B's 25-yard line. **RULING:** Team B's ball at Team B's 40-yard line.
- VII. Fourth and eight on Team B's 40-yard line. Team A's attempted field goal strikes the ground at the three-yard line and bounces into the end zone, where it is received in the air and then downed by a Team B player. **RULING:** Touchback (Rule 8-6-1-b). Team B's ball at the 20-yard line.
- VIII. Fourth and eight on Team B's 18-yard line. Team A's unsuccessful field goal attempt goes out of the end zone. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the 20-yard line.
- IX. Team A's unsuccessful field goal attempt strikes the ground beyond the neutral zone and bounces back across the neutral zone, where it is recovered by B1 and advanced into the end zone. **RULING:** Touchdown (Rule 6-3-5).
- X. Fourth and six on Team B's 18-yard line. Team A's unsuccessful field goal attempt strikes the ground beyond the neutral zone and bounces back across the neutral zone to Team B's 28-yard line, where it goes out of bounds or is recovered and downed by either team. The kick is untouched beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first and 10 at Team B's 28-yard line (Rules 6-3-5 and 6-3-7).

## SECTION 5. Safety

### How Scored—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 8-5-1

- I. A10, after receiving the snap in his own end zone, is downed with the ball resting on his goal line, its forward point being in the field of play. **RULING:** Safety. A part of the dead ball is on the ball carrier's goal line.

- II. The ball is snapped to a Team A player who punts from his own end zone. The ball goes out of bounds behind the kicker's goal line. **RULING:** Safety (Rule 8-7-1).
- III. A scrimmage kick fails to cross the neutral zone, or crosses the neutral zone and is first touched by Team B, or is untouched and then rebounds into the end zone, where it is declared dead in Team A's possession. **RULING:** Safety (Rule 8-7-2-a).
- IV. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass (not a try) deep in his end zone and advances but does not get out of the end zone, where he is downed. During the run, B2 clips A1 in the end zone. **RULING:** Safety, since the penalty leaves the ball in Team B's possession in the end zone.
- V. B1 intercepts a pass or fumble or catches a scrimmage or free kick between his five-yard line and the goal line, and his momentum carries him into the end zone. The ball is declared dead in Team B's possession in the end zone. **RULING:** Team B's ball at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted, or the kick was caught. The ruling is the same if B1 had recovered a fumble, a backward pass or a kick under similar circumstances.
- VI. B1 intercepts a pass or fumble or catches a scrimmage or free kick between his five-yard line and the goal line, and his momentum carries him into the end zone. B1 then advances into the field of play from the end zone. **RULING:** If the ball is declared dead in his possession, it is Team B's ball at the dead-ball spot.
- VII. B1 intercepts a pass or fumble or catches a scrimmage or free kick between his five-yard line and the goal line, and his momentum carries him into the end zone. Before the ball is declared dead, B2 clips in the end zone. B1 does not get out of the end zone, and the ball is declared dead. **RULING:** Safety by penalty. The basic spot is the end of the run where B1 gained possession between the five-yard line and the goal line, and the foul is behind the basic spot.
- VIII. Team A's fumble or backward pass strikes the ground. Team B muffs the ball in an attempt to recover, but it crosses Team A's goal line, where Team A falls on the ball or the ball goes out of bounds from the end zone. **RULING:** Safety. The impetus came from the fumble or pass (Rule 8-7-2-a).

- IX. Team A's backward pass or fumble strikes the ground and is dead in Team A's end zone in possession of Team A, or is muffed out of bounds from Team A's end zone. **RULING:** Safety. Team A's impetus caused the ball to be behind Team A's goal line.
- X. Team A intends to punt from behind its goal line, but A36 muffs the ball. After A36 recovers the ball, he strikes the pylon at the intersection of the sideline and goal line. **RULING:** Safety, unless the entire ball is beyond the goal line as the ball carrier contacts the sideline or pylon. The ball is dead at its most forward point when A36 contacts the pylon or sideline (Rules 2-31-3 and 4-2-4-d and e).
- XI. B40 intercepts a pass on Team B's four-yard line. His momentum is taking him into the end zone when he fumbles the ball on the one-yard line and (a) B40, the fumbler, recovers the fumble in the end zone, or (b) B45, a teammate of the fumbler, recovers the fumble in the end zone. **RULING:** Safety in both (a) and (b).

## SECTION 6. Touchback

When Declared—ARTICLE 1

### Approved Ruling 8-6-1

- I. Team A's fumble strikes the pylon at the intersection of Team B's goal line and sideline. **RULING:** Touchback. Team B's ball at the 20-yard line (Rule 7-2-4-b).
- II. B1 intercepts Team A's legal forward pass in his own end zone, after which A1 snatches the ball from his hand while in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Touchdown. The ball is not automatically dead when intercepted, but it becomes dead when A1 gets possession. However, if in the judgment of the official there is perceptible time during which the Team B player made no attempt to advance after the interception, declaring a touchback is justified.

## SECTION 7. Responsibility and Impetus

### Initial Impetus—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 8-7-2

- I. A fumble occurring in the field of play crosses the goal line and is recovered in the end zone. **RULING:** The impetus is charged to the player who fumbled.
- II. A Team B player intercepts a legal forward pass in his own end zone, attempts to run it out, but is tackled and downed behind his goal line. **RULING:** Touchback (Rule 8-6-1-a).
- III. A Team B player catches a kick in his end zone, then fumbles and, in attempting to recover the ball, muffs it out of bounds behind his own goal line. **RULING:** Touchback (Rule 8-6-1-a).
- IV. Ball carrier A1, advancing toward Team B's goal line, fumbles when B1 bats the ball from his hand or tackles him from the rear. In either case, A1 loses possession short of the goal line, and the ball goes into Team B's end zone, where Team B recovers. **RULING:** Touchback. Impetus is charged to the fumble by Team A (Rule 8-6-1-a).
- V. Any kick by Team A strikes the ground and a Team B player bats the ball across Team B's goal line, where Team B recovers it while grounded or it goes out of bounds. **RULING:** New impetus is given by Team B. Safety, two points for Team A. Batting the kick is considered to have destroyed the impetus of the kick and imparted a new impetus. However, merely touching or deflecting the kick, or being struck by it, does not destroy the impetus of the kick (Rule 8-5-1-a).
- VI. Team A punts. The ball is touched by Team B (no impetus added) and crosses Team B's goal line. Then Team B falls on the ball or the ball goes out of bounds from the end zone. **RULING:** Touchback. The same ruling applies if a kick in flight strikes Team B or merely is deflected by an attempted catch. Team B may recover and advance, and it is a touchback if a Team B player is downed in the end zone or goes out of bounds behind the goal line (Rule 8-6-1-a).
- VII. Team A free kicks from its 30-yard line. The ball is rolling on the ground on Team B's three-yard line when B10 kicks the ball, forcing it out of bounds in the end zone. **RULING:** The result of the play

is a safety for Team A due to the new impetus by Team B. Foul for illegally kicking the ball. An accepted penalty will make it Team A's ball on the Team A 45-yard line, where the free kick will be repeated (Rules 9-4-4 and 10-2-2-d-4).

- VIII. Fourth and five on Team B's 20-yard line. A30 fumbles at Team B's 16-yard line. The ball rolls to the 10-yard line where B40, attempting to recover the loose ball (either at rest or still rolling), muffs it out of bounds at (a) Team B's five-yard line or (b) Team B's 18-yard line. **RULING:** In either instance, it is a fumble out of bounds. Since Team A did not make the line to gain before the fumble, it is Team B's ball, first and 10, at (a) Team B's 16-yard line since the fumble was forward, or (b) Team B's 18-yard line (Rules 5-1-4-f and 7-2-4-b).
- IX. Fourth and five on Team B's 20-yard line. A30 fumbles at Team B's 16-yard line. The ball rolls to the 10-yard line (either at rest or still rolling), where B40 bats the loose ball (a) backward and out of bounds at Team B's five-yard line or (b) forward and out of bounds at Team B's 18-yard line. **RULING:** In each instance, it is a fumble out of bounds. In (a), the bat is legal and it is Team B's ball, first and 10 at Team B's 16-yard line, since Team A did not make a first down. The clock starts on the snap. In (b), illegal batting, penalize Team B from the spot of the fumble, Team A's ball first and goal (Rules 5-1-4-f and 7-2-4-b). The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal.

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# RULE 9

## Conduct of Players and Others Subject to Rules

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### SECTION 1. Contact and Interference Fouls

#### Persons Subject to the Rules Restrictions—ARTICLE 2

##### Approved Ruling 9-1-2

- I. A player (a) strikes an opponent with the knee or (b) projects the knee before contact with an opponent (most apt to occur when the player is meeting a blocker). **RULING:** (a) and (b) Personal foul, striking with the knee. Penalty—15 yards. Enforce at the previous spot if foul by Team A occurs behind the neutral zone. Safety if the foul by Team A occurs behind Team A's goal line. First down if foul is by Team B. Disqualify if flagrant.
- II. A Team B player uses an extended forearm to strike a blow to the helmet of the ball carrier while attempting to tackle. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards and automatic first down. Disqualify if flagrant.
- III. A1, an end, is positioned 11 yards to the outside of the snapper at the snap. B2 is between the original position of A1 and the sideline. A1 blocks B2 away from the position of the ball at the snap. The block by A1 is below the waist. **RULING:** Legal block (Rule 2-23-1-i).
- IV. Quarterback A1 is forced to run out of his protecting pocket and scramble back and forth across the field. A2, a wide receiver positioned 12 yards outside the snapper, moves downfield and then returns toward the neutral zone. A2 then blocks B2 at the neutral zone and below the waist toward the ball at the snap. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty—15 yards (Rule 2-23-1-i).

- V. On a run or pass option play, wide receiver A2 at the snap is positioned 12 yards outside the snapper. He moves downfield and then returns toward the neutral zone. A2 then blocks B2 eight yards beyond the neutral zone and below the waist toward the ball at the snap. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty—15 yards (Rule 2-23-1-i).
- VI. A1, a flanker positioned to the left side of a formation, runs a deep reverse to the right side after receiving the ball from a teammate. A2, a spread end, at the snap is positioned 10 yards outside the snapper on the right side of the formation. A2 blocks B2, a defensive end, toward the ball. The block by A2 is below the waist and occurs behind or one yard beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty—15 yards. Enforce at previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone (Rule 2-23-1-i).
- VII. A1, a wing back positioned 10 yards outside the snapper, goes in motion toward the ball before the snap. At the snap, his motion has carried him past the snapper. After the snap, A1 blocks B2 below the waist away from the ball at the snap. **RULING:** Legal block (Rule 2-23-1-i).
- VIII. At the snap, flanker A2 is positioned 10 yards outside the snapper. As he moves toward the sideline he blocks a defensive halfback below the waist away from the ball. **RULING:** Legal block (Rule 2-23-1-i).
- IX. At the snap, wing back A1 is positioned 10 yards outside the snapper and five yards behind the neutral zone. After the snap, A1 blocks B2 toward the ball at the snap. The block by A1 is below the waist and behind the neutral zone. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot (Rule 2-23-1-i). Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- X. After the ball is dead, a player throws himself on a prostrate opponent who does not have the ball. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot and first down if by a Team B player and not in conflict with other rules. "Piling on" applies to a ball carrier or to any other opponent who is prostrate when the ball becomes dead.

- XI. A defensive player charges into the passer, who is standing still or fading back after the ball obviously has been thrown. **RULING:** Roughing the passer. Penalty—First down. 15 yards from the previous spot or the penalty will be added to the end of the last run under certain circumstances (Rule 9-1-2-1)
- XII. A defensive player, during a live ball, (a) grabs and releases or (b) twists, turns or pulls the face mask, chin strap or any opening of the opponent's helmet. **RULING:** (a) No foul. (b) Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards and first down.
- XIII. A player during a live ball rams an opponent with his helmet or face mask. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards. Enforce from the previous spot if foul by Team A occurs behind the neutral zone. First down if by Team B. Safety if the foul by Team A occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- XIV. B2, a defensive back, slugs A1 while A2 is running with the ball. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards and first down. B2 is disqualified.
- XV. A1, a ball carrier, strikes tackler B6 with his extended forearm just before being tackled. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards. Enforce from the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone. Disqualification if flagrant. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- XVI. A21 catches a legal forward pass for a touchdown. Clearly after the score, A21 is tackled by B40. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—15 yards enforced on the try down or the succeeding kickoff. No Team B player shall tackle or run into any player who has obviously scored (Rule 4-1-3-c).
- XVII. A6 is advancing the ball. During the run, A12 vigorously blocks B2 with a rough push in the back above the waist. **RULING:** Illegal block in the back. Penalty—10 yards.
- XVIII. A10 is in a shotgun-type formation 7-1/2 yards behind the snapper, who has his head down and is looking backward through his legs. Immediately after the snap, nose guard B55 charges directly at the snapper and contacts him by pushing him backward. **RULING:** Legal. The snapper is not afforded any

special protection because it was not reasonably obvious that a kick might be attempted (Rule 2-15-10). The snapper does have the usual protection against any personal foul for unnecessary roughness.

- XIX. Team A is in an obvious scrimmage kick formation. Immediately after the snap, nose guard B55 charges directly at the snapper, contacts him, and drives him backward. The ball is snapped to an upback three yards behind the scrimmage line or to the potential kicker, who instead runs with or passes the ball. **RULING:** Foul. Penalty—15 yards and automatic first down. The snapper may not be contacted until one second has elapsed after the snap when Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation and it is reasonably obvious that a kick might be attempted.
- XX. Immediately after the snap, with Team A in an obvious scrimmage kick formation, noseguard B71 attempts to “shoot the gap” between the snapper and the adjacent lineman. B71’s initial legal contact is with the lineman next to the snapper. **RULING:** Legal. Incidental contact with the snapper after this initial legal contact is not a foul (Rule 2-15-10).
- XXI. Team A is in an unbalanced line scrimmage formation or any other unusual alignment at the snap. Back A27 is a potential blocker. **RULING:** If the frame of A27’s body is positioned completely outside the tackle box, he is prohibited from blocking below the waist toward the original position of the ball in or behind the neutral zone, and within 10 yards beyond the neutral zone.
- XXII. As passer A9 releases the ball, B73 has one foot on the ground before his momentum carries him into A9. **RULING:** This is not a foul, since B73 may make direct contact with the passer only through the defender’s first step after A9’s release of the ball. B73 must be making an attempt to avoid A9 and must be easing up or have been blocked into A9 to avoid a foul. This does not relieve B73 of responsibility to avoid contact with the helmet or any other foul listed in Rule 9-1-2 or 9-1-3.
- XXIII. After passer A17 releases the ball, B68 takes two strides and charges into A17, showing no attempt to avoid contact. **RULING:**

Roughing the passer. The passer is a defenseless player who is vulnerable to injury and must be fully protected. After taking two strides, B68 should be aware that A17 has released the ball and be able to avoid contacting him.

- XXIV. As ball carrier A20 races down the field near the sideline, defender B56 grabs him from behind by the back of the jersey at the collar or by the collar of his shoulder pad and immediately pulls him to the ground. **RULING:** Personal foul (Rule 9-1-2-p). Penalty—15 yards plus automatic first down.
- XXV. As ball carrier A20 races downfield near the sideline, defender B56 grabs him from behind by the back of the jersey at the collar or by the collar of his shoulder pad. B56 continues with this contact for several yards but A20 does not go to the ground until tackled by another defender. **RULING:** Legal play. B56 did not foul, because he did not immediately pull A20 down.
- XXVI. After snapping the ball, snapper A54 brushes by nose guard B62 on his way to block a linebacker. A54 makes slight contact with B62, or B62 reaches out and uses his arm to initiate contact with A54. While B62 and A54 are in contact, right guard A68 blocks B62 at the knee from the front. **RULING:** Legal. A54 is not blocking B62. The incidental contact or B62's initiating contact does not constitute part of a combination block, and hence there is no chop block.

### Initiating Contact/Targeting an Opponent—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 9-1-3

- I. Passer A12 inside the tackle box is looking for an open receiver. Before or just as he releases the ball, A12 is hit from the side at the ribs, thigh or knee by B79, who leads with the crown (top) of his helmet. **RULING:** Foul by B79 for targeting his opponent and initiating contact with the top of his helmet. Ejection for a flagrant foul.
- II. Receiver A83 has just leaped and received a forward pass. As A83 is about to regain his balance, B45 launches and drives into A83 above the shoulder area with his helmet and shoulder. **RULING:** Foul by B45 for targeting and initiating contact with a

defenseless opponent above the shoulders. Ejection for a flagrant foul.

- III. As ball carrier A20 sweeps around the end and heads upfield, he lowers his head and contacts defensive end B89 who is trying to tackle him. The players meet helmet to helmet. **RULING:** No foul. Neither A20 nor B89 is a defenseless player and neither has targeted his opponent in the sense of Rule 9-1-3.

#### Roughing or Running Into Kicker or Holder—ARTICLE 4

##### **Approved Ruling 9-1-4**

- I. A1 catches a long snap and plans to punt from behind his line of scrimmage but misses the ball, which falls to the ground. A1 is then contacted by B1. **RULING:** Team A fumble. There is no kicker until the ball is kicked, so B1 is not guilty of roughing the kicker.
- II. A1 kicks the ball, after which B1, unable to stop his attempt to block the kick, runs into the kicker or holder. **RULING:** Penalty—Five yards from the previous spot. Roughing and 15 yards and first down if in question as to whether the foul is “running into” or “roughing.”
- III. A1, from a nonscrimmage kick formation, makes a quick, unexpected kick so suddenly that B1 cannot avoid contact. **RULING:** This is not roughing or running into the kicker since the rule applies only when it is reasonably obvious that a kick will be made.
- IV. B1 runs into player A1, who has kicked the ball and has had a reasonable time to regain his balance. **RULING:** Not a foul by B1 unless ruled as running into or throwing himself against an opponent obviously out of the play (Rule 9-1-2-j).
- V. After B1 runs into the kicker, kicker A25 simulates being roughed. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls.
- VI. Kicker A1, in a scrimmage kick formation, moves laterally two or three steps to recover a faulty snap, or recovers a snap that went over his head and then kicks the ball. He is contacted by B2 in an unsuccessful attempt to block the kick. **RULING:** A1 does not automatically lose his protection in either case unless he carries the ball outside the tackle box. While in the tackle box A1 is entitled to protection as in any other kicking situation. When it becomes

obvious that A1 intends to kick in a normal punting position, defensive players must avoid him.

- VII. Punter A22 is 15 yards behind the neutral zone when he catches the long snap, sprints to his right at an angle toward the line of scrimmage, and runs outside the tackle box. He then stops and punts the ball, and is immediately hit by a diving B89. **RULING:** Legal play, no foul by B89. A22 loses his roughing or running-into protection by carrying the ball outside the tackle box.

### Illegal Interference—ARTICLE 5

#### Approved Ruling 9-1-5

- I. Team A, with 12 men on the field of play, snaps at its 40-yard line and throws a complete or incomplete forward pass. **RULING:** Illegal participation. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- II. Team A, with 12 men on the field of play, snaps at its 40-yard line and punts the ball, which goes out of bounds at Team B's 10-yard line. **RULING:** Illegal participation. Penalty—15 yards. Enforce either at the previous spot and replay the down, or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.
- III. Team B has 12 men on the field of play when Team A snaps at its 40-yard line and punts the ball, which goes out of bounds at Team B's 10-yard line. **RULING:** Illegal participation on Team B. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- IV. With fourth and 30 on Team A's 40-yard line, A1's scrimmage kick is out of bounds at Team B's four-yard line. Team B has 12 players participating. **RULING:** Illegal participation on Team B. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot but it is not an automatic first down. Fourth and 15. The clock starts on the snap.
- V. Team B, with 11 players on the field of play, is setting up its defense. The ball is ready for play, and A13 is about to start calling snap signals. Two seconds before the snap, B54 enters from the team area to play defensive linebacker. Team B's coach has sent B54 into the game without realizing that he already has 11 players on the field. **RULING:** Allow the ball to be snapped. Illegal participation on Team B. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. (*Note:* This is not a violation of Rule 3-5-2-c.)

- VI. At the end of third down, Team B sends in its kick-return team. The responsible officials count the Team B players and are positive that Team B has 12 players on the field of play. After approximately four seconds, the officials sound their whistles and drop their penalty markers. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul, substitution violation. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- VII. At the end of third down, Team B sends in its kick-return team. The responsible officials count the Team B players and it appears that Team B has 12 players on the field of play. While the officials are attempting to recount the players, the ball is snapped. At the end of the down, the officials recount the Team B players and are positive that Team B had 12 players participate during the down. **RULING:** Illegal participation on Team B. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. (Note: If the officials are not positive that a team has violated Rule 3-5-2-c, they should not sound their whistles and penalize the team five yards for a substitution violation.)

## SECTION 2. Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

### Unsportsmanlike Acts—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 9-2-1

- I. Team B scores a touchdown on a kickoff return, and substitutes from the Team B area, with no intention of entering the game, run to the end zone to congratulate the ball carrier. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike act. Penalty—15 yards, enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff. Officials should note the numbers of the offending players, for possible disqualification later in the game upon committing a second unsportsmanlike conduct foul (9-2-1-a-Penalty).

### Unfair Tactics—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 9-2-2

- I. After the ball is ready for play, Team A goes into a formation with two players split wide on both sides of the snapper and two other Team A linemen adjacent to the snapper. No more than four players are legally in the backfield. Team A sends in two substitutes, who take positions on the line of scrimmage adjacent to the two split offensive linemen on the opposite side of the field of play from

their team bench. This leaves Team A with nine players on the line of scrimmage and four backfield players all legally in position. Immediately and before the snap, two Team A linemen nearest their team's bench leave the field of play and are off at the snap. Seven players are on the line of scrimmage, five of whom are Team A linemen numbered 50 to 79. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. This is a simulated replacement of a player to confuse the opponents.

- II. On fourth down at Team B's 12-yard line, A1 enters the field of play with a kicking shoe while his 11 teammates are in the huddle. A1 kneels and measures the distance from the neutral zone to the kicking spot. While his teammates are leaving the huddle, A1 leaves the field of play with the shoe. Team A quickly runs a play from scrimmage. **RULING:** Team A foul. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. There shall be no simulated replacement of a player to confuse the opponents, and a player who communicates must remain in the game for one down.
- III. A1 leaves the field of play during a down. Team A huddles with 10 players. Substitute A12 enters, and A2 simulates leaving the field but sets near the sideline for a "hide-out" pass. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. This is a simulated replacement of a player to confuse opponents.
- IV. Between scrimmage downs, one or more Team B substitutes enter the field of play. Before the snap for the next down, more than 11 Team B players intentionally stay on the field of play as long as possible (more than three seconds) to disguise the defensive personnel, the type of defense and the pass coverage. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul on Team B, illegal substitution. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 3-5-2-c).
- V. While a team is legally set to attempt a field goal, the potential holder for the kick goes toward his team area asking for a shoe. A shoe is thrown on the field and the player, in motion toward his team area, turns toward the goal line. The ball is snapped to the player in the kicking position, who throws a pass to the player who had turned up field after asking for a shoe. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.

- VI. Team A, with 12 players in the vicinity of the huddle (within 10 yards), breaks the huddle and two players start toward the sideline and Team A's bench. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty—Five yards from the succeeding spot.
- VII. Team A is lined up in scrimmage kick formation and has been set for one second. One of the offensive backs shouts to and motions to A40, the blocker on the right wing, to get off the field. At the snap, A40 is in legal motion toward his sideline. A40 turns downfield and becomes a pass receiver. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot. This is a tactic associated with the substitution process to deceive opponents.

## SECTION 3. Blocking, Use of Hand and Arm

### Use of Hands or Arms by Offense—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 9-3-3

- I. While a legal forward pass is in flight, a Team A player behind his scrimmage line holds an opponent. **RULING:** If the pass is completed, incomplete or intercepted, the penalty is 10 yards from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- II. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier, while charging across the neutral zone, contacts an opponent with his hands and arms not parallel to the ground or his hands cupped or closed but with the palms not facing the opponent. **RULING:** Legal use of hands.
- III. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier, behind the neutral zone, has his arms parallel to the ground and contacts an opponent above the shoulders. **RULING:** Illegal use of hands. Penalty—10 yards or 15 yards for personal foul, previous-spot enforcement. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- IV. A teammate of the passer or ball carrier delivers a blow with the hand(s) closed to an opponent below the shoulders. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty—15 yards. Enforce at the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.

- V. A2's hands contact defensive player B2 in a legal block. B2 spins to avoid blocker A2, whose hands then contact B2's back. **RULING:** Legal block.
- VI. A2's hands contact defensive player B2's back when B2 spins to avoid A2. A2 keeps his hands on B2's back while B2 advances toward the passer. **RULING:** Legal block.
- VII. A2's hands contact defensive player B2 when B2 spins to avoid blocker A2, whose hands then contact B2's back. After A2's hands lose contact with B2, A2 advances and pushes B2 in the back. **RULING:** Illegal block in the back. Penalty—10 yards. Enforce at the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone (Rule 2-3-4). Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.
- VIII. A1 in, beyond or behind the neutral zone contacts an opponent with an open hand or with hands closed or cupped and palms not facing the opponent. **RULING:** Legal block.

#### Use of Hands or Arms by Defense—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 9-3-4

- I. During a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone, B1 holds eligible A1 who is beyond the neutral zone. The pass is not catchable by A1. **RULING:** Team B foul, holding. Penalty—10 yards at the previous spot and first down.
- II. Before a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone is thrown, Team B holds eligible A1, who is beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Team B foul, holding. Penalty—10 yards and first down, previous-spot enforcement.
- III. B20 intercepts A10's legal forward pass on his 10-yard line. During the runback, B40 pushes A80 in the back above the waist at Team B's 24-yard line. B20's run ends at the 50-yard line. **RULING:** Team B foul, illegal block in the back. Penalty—10 yards from the spot of the foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 from its 14-yard line.
- IV. B50, in an attempt to reach the kicker, pulls lineman A60 by the shoulders and (a) releases A60 as he goes by or (b) continues to hold A60. **RULING:** (a) Legal. (b) Holding. Penalty—10 yards, previous-spot enforcement.

## SECTION 4. Batting and Kicking

### Batting a Loose Ball—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 9-4-1

- I. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes out of bounds in the end zone. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. During regulation play, postscrimmage kick enforcement gives a safety by penalty. In extra periods, enforcement of the 15-yard penalty is at the previous spot and Team A retains possession.
- II. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team A. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. The result of the play is a touchdown.
- III. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team B. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. The result of the play is a touchback, safety.
- IV. Team A attempts a field goal from Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the field of play. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. During regulation play, postscrimmage kick enforcement gives a safety by penalty. The ball remains alive, and Team A may elect the result of the play. If Team A recovers, does not score and accepts the penalty, or if the play occurs in an extra period, enforcement is at the previous spot.
- V. Team A attempts a place kick on the try. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes out of bounds in the end zone. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Penalty—Half the distance from the previous spot. Postscrimmage kick rules do not apply on the try (Rule 10-2-3).
- VI. Team A attempts a place kick on the try. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball

goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team A. **RULING:** Foul for batting the ball in the end zone. Team A may decline the penalty and scores two points.

- VII. Team A attempts a field goal, and B23, in the end zone, goes above the crossbar and catches the ball. **RULING:** Legal play.
- VIII. Team A's fumble in flight is batted forward by B1, and the ball goes out of bounds behind Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Safety. Batting a fumble in flight does not add a new impetus (Rule 8-7-2-b). Team B foul. Penalty—15 yards.
- IX. Team A's backward pass in flight is batted by B1, and the ball goes out of bounds behind Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Safety. A pass may be batted in any direction and the impetus is charged to Team A's pass (Rule 8-5-1-a).
- X. A free kick is muffed in flight by a Team B player in his end zone. While the ball is loose in the end zone, a Team B player bats the ball out of the end zone. **RULING:** The result of the play is a touchback. Team B foul for illegally batting a ball in the end zone. Penalty—15 yards from the previous spot.
- XI. After intercepting Team A's legal forward pass on Team B's 20-yard line, B1 fumbles at Team B's 38-yard line and B2 illegally bats the loose ball at Team B's 30-yard line. The ball goes forward and out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B foul. Penalty—15 yards from the spot of the foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the 15-yard line. No loss of down is included in the penalty since Team B is awarded a new series after the penalty enforcement (Rule 5-1-1-e-1).

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# RULE 10

## Penalty Enforcement

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### SECTION 1. Penalties Completed

#### Live-Ball Fouls by the Same Team—ARTICLE 3

##### Approved Ruling 10-1-3

- I. Team A commits two or more live-ball fouls during a down. **RULING:** Team B may choose one of the penalties or decline all of them (*Exception:* Penalties for live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls are enforced separately).

#### Offsetting Fouls—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 10-1-4

- I. Team A punts and is illegally in motion at the snap. The untouched ball goes out of bounds between the goal lines, after which Team B commits a personal foul. **RULING:** Possible options: (1) If Team B elects to replay the down, Team A will be penalized five yards at the previous spot followed by a 15-yard penalty against Team B, which includes an automatic first down. (2) Team B could decline the illegal-motion penalty and have the ball, first and 10 after a 15-yard penalty from the out of bounds spot. (3) Team B could accept the five-yard penalty enforced at the out of bounds spot (Rule 6-3-13) followed by the 15-yard penalty against Team B (7-1-3-b). In all options, the clock starts on the snap (Rule 3-3-2-d-8).
- II. On a Team A kickoff, Team B fouls before the untouched ball goes out of bounds between the goal lines. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls. Team A re-kicks at the previous spot.
- III. On a Team A kickoff from its 30-yard line, Team B fouls after the untouched ball goes out of bounds between the goal lines. **RULING:** Team B may elect a replay with Team A free-kicking at its 40-yard line. If Team B retains the ball, it will be at its 25-yard line, after the 15-yard penalty from its 40-yard line, or 15 yards behind the spot

where the five-yard penalty against Team A left the ball (Rules 6-1-8 and 10-1-6).

- IV. Team A commits an illegal shift just before the snap. A1's forward pass is intercepted by B1, who advances five yards and is tackled. Team B clips during B1's run. **RULING:** Team B has the option to accept offsetting fouls and replay the down or to decline offsetting fouls and retain the ball after its penalty is completed. In the latter case Team A may accept the penalty for Team B's clipping foul.
- V. A1 throws an illegal forward pass and Team B is in the neutral zone at the snap. B23 intercepts the pass and B10 clips on the return. B23 is tackled in the field of play. **RULING:** No option. The fouls offset and the down is replayed. Team B may not decline offsetting fouls because it had fouled before getting possession of the ball.
- VI. A1's forward pass is intercepted by B1, who advances and fumbles. B2 recovers and returns the ball five more yards. Team A fouls during or after the down, and Team B fouls during the return by B2 or during the fumble. **RULING:** If Team A's foul was a live-ball foul, Team B may select offsetting fouls and replay the down or select an option to retain the ball following the completion of its penalty. If Team A's foul was a dead-ball foul, Team B retains the ball after enforcement of both penalties.
- VII. Team A's legal forward pass is intercepted by B45, who advances several yards. On the return, B23 clips and A78 tackles B45 by pulling and twisting his face mask. **RULING:** Since Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, it may decline offsetting fouls and retain possession after completion of the clipping penalty.
- VIII. Team A punts and commits a touching violation. B1 clips during the runback of the punt, which is fumbled by B2. A1 recovers the fumble, and A2 fouls after the ball is dead. **RULING:** Team A has the option since it was the team last in possession and had not fouled before the change of possession. If Team A declines the penalty for Team B's foul, Team B will have the ball at the point of the violation, along with the option of accepting enforcement of the penalty for Team A's dead-ball foul. If Team A accepts the penalty for Team B's foul, the ball will belong to Team B after enforcement of the penalty for the live-ball foul followed by the penalty for the dead-ball foul.

- IX. B1 holds eligible A1 beyond the neutral zone before or during the flight of Team A's legal forward pass. During the down, eligible A2 voluntarily goes out of bounds but returns and is the first inbounds player to touch the pass. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls—no option.
- X. A1 receives the snap in his end zone. Team B was offside, and A1 stepped on the end line before the snap and received the ball when out of bounds. **RULING:** Team A's foul, out of bounds at the snap, offsets Team B's offside, and the down is repeated [*Note:* If Team B had not been offside, Team B could accept the penalty for Team A's foul or a safety (Rule 8-5-1-a)].

#### Dead-Ball Fouls—ARTICLE 5

##### **Approved Ruling 10-1-5**

- I. A1 is downed beyond the line to gain. B1 piles on. The referee checks for other fouls, and when he has completed the penalty, A2 slugs B2. **RULING:** Disqualify A2 for fighting. A2's foul does not offset B1's foul. Unless one enforcement is within 30 yards of a goal line and toward that goal, the ball will be at the same point it would have been had the fouls canceled. First and 10 for Team A (Rule 9-1-2-g).
- II. With fourth and eight, Team A gains four yards and the ball is declared dead, after which B1 is called for piling on. **RULING:** Team B personal foul. Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot. First and 10 for Team B (Rule 5-1-1-c). The clock starts on the snap.
- III. A1 is tackled on third down behind the neutral zone by B1. After the ball is dead, B2 piles on A1. **RULING:** Team B personal foul. Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot. First and 10 for Team A (Rule 9-1-2-g).
- IV. A personal or disqualifying personal foul occurs during action after a snap that was made before the ball was ready for play. **RULING:** Every effort should be made to prevent any such premature snap and resulting action, but if such a foul does occur, it is between downs. If both fouls are by Team A, both penalties are enforced. If the second foul was by Team B, both penalties are enforced, with a probable

net of 10 yards for Team A. The penalty for Team B's foul carries an automatic first down.

- V. Second and goal at the three-yard line. Ball carrier A14 is downed at the one-yard line and then B67 piles on. A14 retaliates by slugging B67. **RULING:** The penalties cancel since neither has been completed. A14 is disqualified for fighting. Third and goal (Rule 10-1-1).
- VI. Ball carrier B17 taunts pursuing A55 before scoring a touchdown on an intercepted pass. After B17 crosses the goal line, he is tackled by A55 five yards into the end zone. **RULING:** The penalties cancel since neither has been completed. The try will be at the three-yard line (Rule 10-1-1). B17's foul is for unsportsmanlike conduct and counts as one of two maximum such fouls by him.

#### Live-Ball—Dead-Ball Fouls—ARTICLE 6

##### **Approved Ruling 10-1-6**

- I. Team A fouls during a down and after the down ends. **RULING:** Team B may accept either or both penalties, or decline both.
- II. With second and five, Team A is illegally in motion at the snap. After the ball becomes dead, a Team B player is disqualified for fighting after striking an opponent. **RULING:** It is Team A's ball after a five-yard penalty against Team A from the previous spot and a 15-yard penalty against Team B from the succeeding spot. Team A will have a first down because of the disqualifying personal foul for fighting.
- III. B1 fouls during a down before B2 intercepts a legal forward pass. After the ball is declared dead, A1 piles on. **RULING:** Team A retains the ball after the penalty against Team B is enforced. Team A then will be penalized for the dead-ball foul (Rule 5-2-3).
- IV. Team B is offside on the snap at its three-yard line (not a try) and Team A throws a legal forward pass into Team B's end zone. Team B intercepts and runs 101 yards to Team A's end zone, after which Team A clips. **RULING:** Repeat the down with Team A putting the ball in play at the Team B 16-1/2-yard line.
- V. No fouls have occurred when Team B intercepts Team A's legal forward pass. On the runback, a Team B player clips. When the ball becomes dead, a Team A player piles on. **RULING:** Team B retains

possession. Penalize Team B for its clipping foul, followed by a penalty for Team A's dead-ball foul. The yardages will cancel unless one enforcement spot was inside the 30-yard line and enforcement was toward that goal.

## SECTION 2. Enforcement Procedures

### Enforcement Spots—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 10-2-1

- I. A legal forward pass is completed behind the neutral zone, and the receiver avoids tacklers for a considerable time but finally is downed beyond the neutral zone. The player who passed the ball is roughed behind the neutral zone while the pass is in flight. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the end of the run and a first down (Rules 2-27-5 and 9-1-2-1).
- II. Team B intercepts a legal forward pass, and the player who threw the pass is fouled before the interception. **RULING:** Team A's ball, first down after the penalty from the previous spot (Rules 2-27-5 and 9-1-2-1).

### Determining the Enforcement Spot—ARTICLE 2

#### Approved Ruling 10-2-2

- I. A kickoff untouched by Team B goes out of bounds after illegal touching by Team A. Team A commits a personal or holding foul during the kick. **RULING:** Team B has these options: It may snap the ball at the spot of the illegal touching; accept a five-, 10- or 15-yard penalty from the previous spot with Team A re-kicking; snap the ball five, 10 or 15 yards beyond the spot where the ball went out of bounds; or snap the ball 30 yards beyond Team A's restraining line.
- II. A Team A fumble or backward pass is loose in Team A's end zone, where the ball is kicked or batted illegally by Team A. **RULING:** Penalty—Safety (Rule 8-5-1-b).
- III. A Team A player clips in Team B's end zone before a fumbled ball in the field of play goes out of bounds between the goal lines. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards.

- IV. A Team A player clips in Team B's end zone when a scrimmage kick has touched a Team B player in the field of play and the loose ball is still a kick. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards. Enforcement is either at the previous spot (Team A retaining possession) or at the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.
- V. Team A punts from its end zone and the ball is returned to the A-30. A23 clips B35 in Team A's end zone during the return. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the basic spot, which is the end of the run (Team A's 30-yard line). Team B's ball, first and 10.
- VI. Team A punts from its end zone and the ball is returned to the A-30. A23 clips B35 in Team A's end zone after the ball has become dead in Team B's possession. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot. Team B's ball, first and 10.
- VII. Team A punts from its end zone and the ball is returned to the A-30. A23 clips B35 in Team A's end zone during the loose ball after Team B has fumbled. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the basic spot, which is the spot of the fumble. Team B's ball, first and 10.
- VIII. Team A's untouched punt from its end zone goes out of bounds at Team A's 40-yard line. A2, in his end zone, clips Team B before the ball is kicked. **RULING:** Penalty—Safety (Rule 9-1-2 Penalty) or Team B may snap the ball at the Team A 25-yard line after enforcement of the penalty from where the ball went out of bounds.
- IX. Team A's untouched punt from its end zone goes out of bounds at Team A's 40-yard line. A2, in his end zone, clips Team B during the kick. **RULING:** Penalty—Safety (Rule 9-1-2 Penalty) or Team B may snap the ball at the Team A 25-yard line after enforcement of the penalty from where the ball went out of bounds.
- X. Team A's untouched punt from its end zone goes out of bounds at Team A's 40-yard line. A2, in his end zone, clips Team B after the ball is out of bounds. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot. First and 10 for Team B on Team A's 25-yard line.
- XI. Team A snaps at its one-yard line, and ball carrier A1 is downed on his five-yard line. Team B commits a personal foul in the end zone while the ball is in play. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the basic spot (five-yard line).

- XII. Team A snaps at its one-yard line, and ball carrier A1 is downed on his five-yard line. Team B fouls in the end zone after the ball is dead. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the succeeding spot.
- XIII. A1, on his 40-yard line, punts from behind his neutral zone. B1 holds A2 behind or within three yards beyond the neutral zone after the kick crosses the neutral zone and before it has touched Team B. **RULING:** Penalty—10 yards from the previous spot. Team A retains possession.
- XIV. A1, on his 40-yard line, punts from behind his neutral zone. B1 holds A2 behind or within three yards beyond the neutral zone after the kick has been touched by Team B beyond the neutral zone and is still loose. **RULING:** Penalty—10 yards from the previous spot. Team A retains possession.
- XV. During Team A's free kick, the ball remains inbounds and Team B holds. **RULING:** Penalty—10 yards from the previous spot, and Team A repeats the free kick.
- XVI. Second and goal. After A1 is downed on the three-yard line, B79 slugs A22 behind Team B's goal line. **RULING:** First down for Team A on Team B's 1-1/2-yard line. B79 is disqualified for fighting.
- XVII. Fourth and goal. B1 fouls eligible A3 in Team B's end zone while A1 attempts to locate a receiver, and A1 is then downed behind his line. **RULING:** Not pass interference since the ball was not thrown. Enforce the penalty for B1's foul from the previous spot which is the basic spot.
- XVIII. During A1's run, B25 fouls 10 yards beyond the neutral zone. After advancing 30 yards, A1 fumbles and the ball is recovered by B48, who carries the ball across Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Penalize Team B from the basic spot, which is the spot of the fumble. Team A retains possession of the ball (Rule 5-2-3).
- XIX. First and 10 at the A-30. A1 advances the ball to the B-40, where he is downed. During the run B1 clips on Team A's 45-yard line. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards. First and 10 at the B-25.
- XX. First and 10 at the A-40. A1 advances to the B-40, where he fumbles. B1 recovers and returns the ball across Team A's goal line. During

- A1's run B2 commits a personal foul at the 50-yard line. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards from the basic spot, which is the end of the related run (Team B's 40-yard line) and first down for Team A.
- XXI. First and 10 at the A-40. A1 advances the ball to the B-40, where he is downed. During the run B1 clips at the A-30. **RULING:** Penalty—15 yards. Team A's ball, first and 10, at the B-25.
- XXII. During the return of a scrimmage kick, B40 blocks A80 in the back above the waist at the B25. Team B's ball carrier is downed with the ball in his possession at Team B's 40-yard line. **RULING:** Team B foul, illegal block in the back. Penalty—10 yards from the spot of the foul. Team B's ball, first and 10, from its 15-yard line.
- XXIII. Team B intercepts a legal forward pass, and the player who threw the pass is fouled during the return. **RULING:** Team B's ball, first down and 10, after enforcement of the penalty (Rules 2-27-5, 5-2-4 and 9-1-2).
- XXIV. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass (not a try) deep in his end zone and is unable to get out of the end zone, where he is downed. During the run, B2 clips A1 on the A-14. **RULING:** Team B's 20-yard line is the basic spot. Penalize Team B from the 14-yard line to the seven-yard line. First and 10 (Rules 8-6-1-a and 10-2-2-d-2-a).
- XXV. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass (not a try) deep in his end zone and is unable to get out of the end zone, where he is downed. During the run, B2 clips A1 on the A-25. **RULING:** Penalize Team B from the 20-yard line (the basic spot) to the 10-yard line. First and 10 (Rules 8-6-1-a and 10-2-2-d-2-a).
- XXVI. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass (not a try) deep in his end zone and is unable to get out of the end zone, where he is downed. During the run, B2 clips A1 in the end zone. **RULING:** Penalty—Safety. The 20-yard line is the basic spot. (Rules 8-5-1-b and 10-2-2-d-2-a).
- XXVII. B17 intercepts a legal forward pass (not a try) deep in his end zone and, as he attempts to run the ball out, A19 clips in the end zone. After the foul and before B17 leaves the end zone, B17 fumbles with A26 recovering on the two-yard line. **RULING:** Penalty—15

yards from the goal line. Team B's ball, first and 10 at its 15-yard line (Rule 10-2-2-d-2-c).

- XXVIII. After a safety, Team A punts the ball at Team A's 20-yard line. The ball goes out of bounds untouched by Team B. **RULING:** Team B captain has the choice of Team A kicking again from the A-15, or of putting the ball in play at the 50-yard line or five yards beyond the inbounds spot.

### Postscrimmage Kick Enforcement—ARTICLE 3

#### Approved Ruling 10-2-3

- I. Either team fouls during a scrimmage kick after the ball has been touched beyond the neutral zone. The foul is more than three yards beyond the neutral zone, and Team A is not in legal possession when the ball is declared dead. **RULING:** For fouls by Team B, penalty enforcement will be by the Three-and-One Principle with the postscrimmage kick spot as the basic spot (Rule 2-25-11). Team B's ball, first and 10. For fouls by Team A, penalty enforcement is either from the previous spot or from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (Rule 6-3-13).
- II. Team A's punt is blocked, crosses the neutral zone and is untouched by Team B beyond the neutral zone. It rebounds behind the neutral zone before clipping or holding by Team B occurs. The ball is loose at the time of the foul. **RULING:** If the holding or clipping occurs more than three yards beyond the neutral zone and Team B has possession when the down ends, enforcement is according to postscrimmage kick rules. Team B will have the ball, first down and 10. If the foul occurs behind or fewer than three yards beyond the neutral zone, Team A retains the ball after the penalty is enforced from the previous spot.
- III. Team A's kick from behind its line is blocked behind the neutral zone before clipping or holding by Team B occurs more than three yards beyond the neutral zone. The ball never crosses the neutral zone during the play. **RULING:** Rule 10-2-3 applies only when a scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone. Team A retains possession after the penalty is enforced at the previous spot.

- IV. Team A's successful field goal attempt is snapped from Team B's 30-yard line, and a Team B player fouls at the 20-yard line during the kick. **RULING:** Team A may decline the penalty and accept the score or void the score and have Team B penalized at the previous spot (Rule 10-2-3-a).
- V. Team A's untouched, unsuccessful field goal attempt is snapped from Team B's 30-yard line. Team B fouls at the 15-yard line during the kick. **RULING:** Team B's ball. The postscrimmage kick spot is at the 30-yard line and the enforcement is from the 15-yard line, the spot of the foul, with no possible replay (Rules 2-25-11 and 8-4-2-b).

#### Fouls During or After a Touchdown, Field Goal or Try— ARTICLE 5

##### **Approved Ruling 10-2-5**

*Fouls during a touchdown or field goal by Team A:*

- I. During a touchdown run Team B clips in the field of play or the end zone. **RULING:** Team A has the option of the penalty being enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff (Rule 10-2-5-a-1).
- II. Team B commits a personal foul during a down when Team A scores a touchdown, and then Team A fouls after the score and before the ready-for-play signal on the try. **RULING:** Allow the score. Team A has the option of enforcement on the try or the succeeding kickoff. Team B then also has the option of Team A being penalized on the try or the succeeding kickoff. The yardage assessed on the live-ball/dead-ball penalties may cancel (Rule 10-2-5).
- III. Team B holds during Team A's touchdown run. Team A fouls after the score. **RULING:** Allow the score. The penalty for Team B's holding foul is declined by rule. Team B has the option of Team A being penalized on the try or the succeeding kickoff (Rules 10-2-5-a-2 and 10-2-5-c).
- IV. A Team B player slugs an opponent during or after Team A's touchdown run. Team B is offside on the successful try. **RULING:** Allow the touchdown. Disqualify the Team B player for fighting. Team A has the option of a penalty against Team B on the try or the succeeding kickoff. After the successful try, Team A has the option of

repeating the try with the offside penalty enforced on the try (Rules 10-2-5 and 8-3-5).

- V. Team B roughs the passer during a touchdown pass play. **RULING:** Allow the touchdown. Team A has the option of enforcement on the try or the succeeding kickoff.
- VI. Team B is offside during a successful field goal down. **RULING:** Team A has the option of accepting the penalty at the previous spot and replaying the down or keeping the points by declining the penalty.
- VII. First and 10 at the A-40. A1 carries the ball across Team B's goal line. During the run B1 clips at the B-30. **RULING:** Touchdown counts. Penalty enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff.

*Fouls after a touchdown by Team A:*

- VIII. Team A fouls after it scores a touchdown, and Team B fouls on the successful try. **RULING:** Allow the touchdown. Team B has the option of Team A being penalized on the try or the succeeding kickoff. Team A then has the option of Team B being penalized on a replay of the try. Team B personal-foul penalties may be enforced on the subsequent kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods. Yardages assessed on the succeeding kickoff may cancel.
- IX. Team A fouls after it scores a touchdown, and Team B fouls after a successful try. **RULING:** Allow the score. Team B has the option of Team A being penalized on the try or the succeeding kickoff. For the foul after the try, Team B is penalized on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.

*Fouls during a try with no change of team possession (this does not include live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls or loss-of-down fouls):*

- X. Team A fouls during a successful try. **RULING:** The penalty is enforced, and the try is repeated (Rule 8-3-3).
- XI. Team A fouls during an unsuccessful try. **RULING:** The penalty is obviously declined (Rule 8-3-3).
- XII. Team B fouls during an unsuccessful try. **RULING:** Team B is penalized, and the try is repeated. The try is exempt from postscrimmage kick enforcement (Rule 10-2-3).

- XIII. Team B fouls during a successful try. **RULING:** Replay the down after enforcement, or the penalty is declined by rule. Penalties for personal fouls may be enforced on the succeeding kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods (Rule 8-3-3-b-1).
- XIV. During a successful kick try from the three-yard line, Team B is offside. After the ball is dead, Team B commits a personal foul. **RULING:** If Team A elects to replay the try, both penalties against Team B are enforced before the snap (Rule 10-1-6). If Team A declines the offside penalty and accepts the point, the penalty for Team B's dead-ball foul is then enforced on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.
- XV. During an unsuccessful kick try from the three-yard line, Team A commits an illegal-motion foul. After the ball becomes dead, Team B fouls. **RULING:** Team B obviously will refuse the penalty for the Team A foul. Team B is penalized on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.

*Fouls after a try and before the succeeding kickoff:*

- XVI. Either team fouls. **RULING:** Enforce the penalty on the kickoff unless the try is the last down of the game.
- XVII. Both teams foul before either penalty is completed. **RULING:** The fouls cancel.
- XVIII. The penalty for Team B's foul after a successful try is accepted and will be enforced on the free kick; then:
1. Team A fouls after the try. **RULING:** Enforce the penalties in occurrence order on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.
  2. Team B fouls after the try. **RULING:** Enforce both Team B penalties in occurrence order on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.
  3. Both teams foul before either penalty is completed. **RULING:** These fouls cancel. The penalty for Team B's original foul is enforced on the kickoff or at the succeeding spot in extra periods.

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# RULE 12

## Instant Replay

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### SECTION 3. Reviewable Plays

#### Scoring Plays-ARTICLE 1

##### **Approved Ruling 12-3-1**

- I. First and 10 on the Team A 4-yard line. A22 fumbles and B45 recovers near Team A's goal line. Officials award the ball to Team B at the Team A 1-yard line. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding where the fumble was recovered in relation to the goal line. Possible touchdown for Team B.
- II. First and 10 at the A-2. Ball carrier A22 fumbles when hit. B45 possesses the loose ball in Team A's end zone, possibly with his right knee down, but A22 knocks the ball out of B45's hands and A10 recovers the loose ball in the end zone. Officials rule Team A recovered for a safety. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether B45 was down when he recovered the ball. Possible touchdown for Team B.
- III. First and goal on the B-5. Ball carrier A22 loses possession as he nears Team B's goal line and the officials signal touchdown. The ball rolls out of bounds in the end zone. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether A22 lost possession before the ball broke the plane of the goal line.
- IV. First and 10 on the B-35. B45 intercepts a forward pass near his one-yard line and continues into the end zone where he is tackled. Officials rule the momentum exception to a safety applies and award Team B the ball at its one-yard line. Potentially the ball in B45's possession had broken the plane of the goal line when B45's foot came down at the one-yard line. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether B45 caught the ball before or after it broke the plane of the goal line.

- V. Fourth and 10 on the B-35. Team A's field goal attempt is ruled good. The ball goes very close to the upright and is possibly wide to the left. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether the ball was between the uprights if it was below the top of the uprights. Not reviewable if the ball crossed the plane of the goal posts above the top of the uprights.

## Passes—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 12-3-2

- I. Third and five on the Team A 30-yard line. In attempting to catch a low pass in the middle of the field, the receiver at the B-45 attempts to get his hands under the ball and control it. The pass is ruled incomplete. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether the pass was complete. If the ruling on the field is reversed, it will be Team A's ball, first and 10 at the B-45.
- II. First and 10 on the Team A 20-yard line. A10 throws a pass toward eligible A80 near the sideline at the A-35. A80 leaps, completes the catch, and carries the ball across Team B's goal line. Officials say A80 was touching the side line as he gained possession and rule the pass incomplete. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether A80 was out of bounds when he gained possession. Note that if the ruling on the field is reversed, the offense is entitled to the catch but not the advance.
- III. First and 10 on the Team A 20-yard line. A10 scrambles and throws a pass that is completed for an apparent touchdown. The line judge flags A10 for being beyond the neutral zone when he throws the pass. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether the passer was completely beyond the neutral zone when he released the ball.
- IV. Third and 10 at the A-30. A forward pass directed toward A80 is incomplete, but B45 is flagged for defensive pass interference. The pass possibly was tipped at the line of scrimmage by B77. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether B77 touched the pass. Note the possible cancellation of the foul for defensive pass interference.
- V. Second and 10 at the 50. As B45 dives trying to intercept a forward pass, his action results in the ball bouncing off his hands and high into the air. A80 catches the ball and runs for an apparent

touchdown. The back judge rules the pass incomplete. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether the pass is complete or incomplete. If the ruling on the field is reversed, the ball is dead where A80 gained possession.

- VI. First and 10 on the B-20. Flanker A88 moves from the backfield toward the line of scrimmage where he is set at the snap, apparently “covering up” tight end A80. A80 goes downfield and catches a pass. **RULING:** Not reviewable.
- VII. Fourth and 10 on the Team B 20-yard line. A10 drops back to pass, is hit and loses possession of the ball. Eligible A22 catches the ball in midair at the Team B 25-yard line and runs to the B-5. The referee rules a forward pass. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether it is a pass or fumble. If the ruling on the field is reversed, a fourth-down fumble is created.
- VIII. First and 10 on the A-20. Wide receiver A88 catches a pass at the 50 and carries the ball across Team B’s goal line. Officials flag A88 for illegal touching after he apparently stepped on the sideline at the A-38 prior to the catch. It is possible that A88 was blocked out of bounds by his defender. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether A88 contacted the sideline. **Replay official could reverse the ruling ONLY if the video showed absolutely that the receiver went out of bounds due to a block by the opponent.**

#### Dead Ball and Loose Ball—ARTICLE 3

##### **Approved Ruling 12-3-3**

- I. First and 10 on the Team A 30-yard line. Ball carrier A22’s run takes him very close along the sideline, until he is pushed out of bounds at the B-24. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding A22 possibly stepping on the sideline during his run before being pushed out.
- II. First and 10 on the A-20. Ball carrier A22 runs to the A-28 and fumbles. B77 falls on and gains possession of the ball at the A-30, possibly with his foot touching the sideline. Officials rule that the ball belongs to Team B. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether B77 was contacting the sideline when he touched the ball. Replay official should remember the possibility of a forward fumble out of bounds.

- III. Fourth and 5 on the A-20. B45 muffs a punt at the 50. A80 recovers very close to the sideline at the B-45, and the officials award the ball to Team A. It is possible that A80's right foot was touching the sideline as he made the recovery. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether A80 was touching the sideline.
- IV. Team A's punt apparently hits a sideline at the Team B 27-yard line. The ball bounces back toward the middle of the field where B25 picks it up and carries it across Team A's goal line. The officials rule touchdown. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether the ball hit the sideline.
- V. A punt hits the ground untouched very close to Team B's goal line and then bounces to the B-5. There B45 recovers and returns the ball to the B-38, where he is tackled. Officials give the ball to Team B at that spot. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether the ball touched the goal line.
- VI. First and 10 on the A-20. Ball carrier A40 runs to the A-25 where he loses the ball. B15 recovers. Officials rule fumble and give possession to Team B. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether A40 was down before losing the ball.
- VII. First and 10 on the A-20. A22 carries to the A-25 where he loses possession of the ball which is quickly recovered by B79. The line judge rules A22 down. **RULING:** Reviewable because of the immediate recovery.
- VIII. First and 10 on the A-20. A22 carries to the Team A 25-yard line, where he loses possession of the ball which quickly becomes buried under a pile of players. The head linesman rules A22 down. **RULING:** Reviewable because the ball was immediately recovered. If the replay official cannot determine which player recovered the ball, the ruling on the field stands.
- IX. Second and goal on the B-9. Ball carrier A22 is hit, stumbles forward and finally goes completely to the ground at the Team B 2-yard line. The line judge rules him down at the B-5. **RULING:** Not reviewable. The play does not involve a first down, sideline or a score.
- X. The quarterback drops back to pass. He has his arm cocked to pass and the ball comes out, hitting the ground. As the referee is signaling an incomplete pass, B88 recovers the ball and carries it across Team

A's goal line. **RULING:** The play is reviewable because B88's recovery was in the immediate continuing action following the ball coming loose. If the replay official reverses the ruling, Team B's score is canceled, and it is Team B's ball at the spot of the recovery.

- XI. The quarterback is behind his neutral zone when he throws a flare pass toward a receiver who is also behind the neutral zone. The head linesman blows his whistle and signals incomplete forward pass. (a) The ball bounces out of bounds; (b) Defender B45 assumes it is a backward pass and recovers the ball, carrying it for several yards before realizing that the play has been blown dead. **RULING:** (a) Not reviewable. (b) Play is reviewable because B45's recovery was in the immediate continuing action after the pass hit the ground. If the replay official rules that the pass was backward, Team B will have the ball at the point of recovery with no advance.

#### Kicks—ARTICLE 4

##### Approved Ruling 12-3-4

- I. On the opening kickoff at the A-30, Team A tries an onside kick. A80 has his feet at the Team A 39-yard line when he picks up the ball that is on the ground apparently at the Team A 41-yard line. Officials rule illegal touching. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether the ball had gone 10 yards before being touched by Team A.
- II. On an onside kick attempt at the A-30, the ball is apparently first touched by A20 at Team A's 36-yard line and then is recovered by A80 at the A-45. Officials award the ball to Team A at the 45. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding possible touching by A20.
- III. On the kickoff to open the second half, the officials rule that B45 touched the ball before it went out of bounds at the A-47 and give Team B the ball at that spot. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding possible touching by B45. If B45 did not touch the ball, there is a foul by Team A for a free kick out of bounds.
- IV. With five seconds remaining in the fourth quarter, the kickoff goes between the legs of receiver B15 and out of bounds at the B-5. Officials rule the ball touched B15 and wind the clock accordingly. The game clock runs down to 0:00 during the play. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding possible touching by B15. If the ruling on the

field is reversed, there is a Team A foul for a free kick out of bounds and the game clock should be reset to 0:05.

- V. A80 voluntarily touches a sideline while running downfield to cover a punt, then downs the ball at the B-37. Officials rule a foul by A80 for illegally returning inbounds. It is possible that A34 touched the ball at the B-40 before it was downed by A80. **RULING:** Reviewable for possible touching by A34. Not reviewable for A80 going out of bounds.
- VI. Team A's punt goes out of bounds untouched at the B-9. The officials mark the ball at the B-7. **RULING:** Not reviewable. The play did not involve the ball hitting a sideline or the kick being touched.

#### Miscellaneous—ARTICLE 5

##### Approved Ruling 12-3-5

- I. First and 10 on the A-20. A low pass that A80 apparently catches on his knees at the Team A 35-yard line is ruled complete. The game clock shows 10:00 remaining. After setting the chains and restarting the game clock, the replay official stops the game to review the play with 9:40 on the clock. **RULING:** Reviewable, regarding whether the pass was complete or incomplete. If the ruling on the field is reversed, the game clock will be adjusted to 10:00 and started on the snap.
- II. Second and 15 at the A-20. The quarterback runs to the A-26 before throwing a forward pass that falls incomplete. In enforcing the penalty the referee announces that second down will be replayed. **RULING:** The replay official should correct the number of the down on the loss-of-down penalty.

#### Limitations on Reviewable Plays—ARTICLE 6

##### Approved Ruling 12-3-6

- I. On a kickoff to start the game, A12 attempts an onside kick. The ball possibly hits the ground as soon as it leaves the tee and bounds high in the air to the Team A 43-yard line, where B25 signals for a fair catch. A20 contacts B25 before the ball arrives and A30 recovers it. Officials rule kick-catch interference. **RULING:** Not reviewable.

- II. On an onside kick attempt, the untouched ball goes out of bounds apparently at the Team A 39-yard line. The officials mark the ball at the Team A 41-yard line and give possession to Team B at that spot. **RULING:** Not reviewable.
- III. Team A kicks off and the ball apparently goes out of bounds at the Team B 1-yard line. Officials rule touchback. **RULING:** Not reviewable. However, the play would be reviewable regarding whether the ball possibly hit the pylon, and if it did, the ruling from the replay official would be a touchback.
- IV. First and 10 on the A-20. A22 carries to the A-25 and fumbles. A80 and B45 both dive for the ball and possibly recover it simultaneously in the middle of the field. Officials gave the ball to Team B. **RULING:** Not reviewable.
- V. First and 10 on the Team B 20-yard line. A22 catches a screen pass and runs for an apparent touchdown. A70 possibly was down field at the B-15 prior to the pass was thrown. **RULING:** Not reviewable.
- VI. First and 10 on the A-20. A10 is under pressure and throws a pass that lands incomplete behind the line of scrimmage. The referee flags A10 for intentional grounding. It is possible that eligible A22 was within two yards of the ball when it hit the ground. **RULING:** Not reviewable.
- VII. Fourth and 7 on the A-23. A80 voluntarily touches a sideline while running downfield to cover a punt. B45 muffs the punt, and A80 recovers at the B-30 yard line. **RULING:** Not reviewable.
- VIII. During a punt, A80 contacts receiver B45 before B45 touches the ball. The ball bounces off B45 and rolls to the Team B 35-yard line, where A88 recovers. Team A is awarded possession. **RULING:** Not reviewable.
- IX. During Team A's punt, B45 clearly signals for a fair catch. The ball hits the ground and bounces to B45, who returns it for an apparent touchdown. The officials on the field do not declare the ball dead when B45 recovers it. **RULING:** Not reviewable. However, the replay official may correct an egregious error.
- X. Team A's punt bounces untouched into Team B's end zone for a touchback when the game clock reads 7:35 in the first quarter. Team

B will have the ball at its 20-yard line. After the ball is dead, the officials on the field do not notice that the game clock continues to run. When the referee declares the ball ready for play, the game clock reads 6:22. **RULING:** Although there is no play to review, the replay official may interrupt the game before the ball is snapped and correct the clock error. He instructs the referee to announce that the game clock should be set to 7:35.

## SECTION 5. Initiating the Replay Process

### Game Stop—ARTICLE 1

#### Approved Ruling 12-5-1

- I. Trailing 28-0 midway through the fourth quarter, Team A has third and 10 at its 20-yard line. Ball carrier A22 is downed, with his knee touching the Team A 29-yard line. Officials spot the ball at the Team A 29-yard line, although A22 had possibly extended the ball to the Team A 31-yard line when his knee hit the ground. **RULING:** In principle, this is a reviewable play, regarding a possible first down. However, given the score and the time, this play would not be reviewed due to the lack of a direct competitive impact on the game. If the head coach challenges the ruling, the challenge is honored because the rules allow for the play to be reviewed.
- II. A head coach has not yet used his challenge when he decides to challenge a play that is reviewable. The challenge is successful, with the ruling on the field being reversed by the replay official. **RULING:** The team is not charged with a timeout. The head coach may challenge one more reviewable play during the game.



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Sportsmanship is a core value of the NCAA. The NCAA's Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct has identified *respect* and *integrity* as two critical elements of sportsmanship and launched an awareness and action campaign at the NCAA convention in January 2009.

Athletics administrators may download materials and view best practices ideas at the Websites below:

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