



# NCAA FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES FOR 2016

*With New Approved Rulings*

*EAIFO Empire Chapter*

*May 16, 2016*

# 1. FIELD MARKINGS

Field markings for neutral-site games.  
(Rule 1-2-1) (FR-15)

Additional language in paragraph h-1

“1. For post-season *and neutral site games* the title sponsor...”

# 1. FIELD MARKINGS

h. Advertising is prohibited on the field except as follows:

1. For **postseason and neutral site games** the title sponsor whose name is associated with the name of that game may advertise on the field, with the restriction that there be a maximum of three such advertisements: a single advertisement centered on the 50-yard line and no more than two smaller flanking advertisements. These advertisements must adhere to paragraph f above. No other advertisements, either by the title sponsor or by any other commercial entity, may be on the field.

## 2. TV ACCESS

### TV Access Inside the Limit Lines (Rule 1-2-3) FR-16

Add exception to paragraph b:

“Exception: Hand-held cameras under the supervision of the television partners may **briefly** be between the limit lines and the sideline **after the ball is dead and the game clock has been stopped**. This exception does not allow cameras to be on the field of play or in the end zone at any time.”

*Comments:* Results from the experimental rule used in the 2015 season.

# 3. TECHNOLOGY

To expand the use of video and Internet technology in the press-box coaches' booths and in the team locker room.

## SHELVED UNTIL 2017

Current Rule 1-4-11-a, FR-25:

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.

*(Exception: Monitors may only be used to view the live telecast or webcast. The home team is responsible for assuring identical television capability in the coaches' booths of both teams. This capability may not include replay equipment or recorders.)*

# 4. SCRIMMAGE KICK FORMATION

## (Rule 2-16-10) FR-35

Change to paragraph a:

“A scrimmage kick formation is a formation with no player in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper’s legs, *and with either (1) at least one player 10 or more yards behind the neutral zone; or (2) a potential holder and potential kicker seven or more yards behind the neutral zone in position for a place kick. For either (1) or (2) to qualify as a scrimmage kick formation, it must be obvious that a kick will be attempted.*”

# 4. SCRIMMAGE KICK FORMATION

**(Rule 2-16-10) FR-35**

*Comments:* This clarification of the definition of a scrimmage kick formation reinforces the intent of the rule that allows exceptions to the numbering rule when a team apparently is going to punt or attempt a field goal.

# AR:SCRIMMAGE KICK FORMATION

## Scrimmage Kick Formation—ARTICLE 10

### Approved Ruling 2-16-10

I. At the snap Team A has four linemen numbered between 50-79 and three linemen numbered outside this range. A potential kicker is eight yards deep but there is no potential holder.

RULING: Illegal formation. Team A is not in a scrimmage kick formation and does not have the required number of linemen with proper jersey numbers.



# AR:SCRIMMAGE KICK FORMATION

## Offensive Team Requirements—At the Snap—ARTICLE 4

### Approved Ruling 7-1-4

VII. At the B-45, Team A is in an alignment in which the snapper A88 is on the right end of the line. The linemen on his left are numbered 56, 63, 72, 22, 79, and 25. There are four players in the backfield. A44 is ten yards directly behind the snapper, and the other backs are to his left a few yards behind the line of scrimmage. No player is in position to hold for a place kick. After the snap, A44 completes a pass to snapper A88 for a touchdown. This happens on (a) first or second down; (b) third or fourth down.

# AR:SCRIMMAGE KICK FORMATION

## Offensive Team Requirements—At the Snap—ARTICLE 4

### Approved Ruling 7-1-4

RULING: Because there are only four offensive linemen numbered in the 50-79 range, the legality of the play depends on whether Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation. One of the requirements for such a formation is that “it is obvious that a kick will be attempted.” (a) Illegal formation: on first or second down, a team is very unlikely to punt, so it is not obvious that a kick will be attempted. (b) Legal play: touchdown. On third or fourth down a team may be likely to kick. (Rule 2-16-10)

# AR:SCRIMMAGE KICK FORMATION

## Contact Against the Snapper—ARTICLE 14

### Approved Ruling 9-1-14

I. 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 Team A is not in a scrimmage kick formation, as A10 is not at least 10 yards deep (Rule 2-16-10). The snapper does have the usual protection against any personal foul for unnecessary roughness.

## 5. SLIDING BALL CARRIER

### Defenseless Player (Rule 2-27-14) FR-41 and Note 2 (FR-88)

Add new paragraph j:

“j. A ball carrier who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet-first.”

*Comments:* A sliding ball carrier is now protected under the defenseless-player portion of the targeting rules.

## 6. SUSPENDED GAME

### (Rule 3-3-3) FR-50

Add sentence to the end of paragraph c:

“In the event that the directors of athletics do not reach an agreement, the conference policy of the home team shall be used to determine the outcome.”

*Comments:* Establishes the default position when a suspended interconference game cannot be resumed.

# AR: SUSPENDED GAME

## Suspending the Game—ARTICLE 3

### Approved Ruling 3-3-3

I. A game between teams from different conferences has been suspended in the middle of the third quarter very late at night due to weather. It is clear that the game cannot be resumed. The directors of athletics for the participating teams are unable to arrive at an agreement on which option should be in effect.

RULING: The outcome of the game is determined by the conference policy of the home team.

# 7. LENGTH OF TIMEOUTS

## (Rule 3-3-7) FR-52

Change to paragraph b:

b. For live televised games only, a charged team timeout shall be 30 seconds plus the 25-second play clock interval. *However, the head coach may request that one of the allowed three timeouts in each half be a full timeout. This request should be communicated to the referee when the timeout request is made to the officials. The charged team timeout during an extra period may be a full timeout, at the request of the head coach.*

# 7. LENGTH OF TIMEOUTS

**(Rule 3-3-7) FR-52**

*Comments:* Gives a team in a televised game the flexibility for a full timeout when there is no concurrent media timeout.



## 8. GAME CLOCK TACTICS

### (Rule 3-4-3) FR-54

Insert this sentence before the last sentence of the paragraph:

“If the game clock is stopped only to administer the penalty for a foul by the team ahead in the score inside the last two minutes of a half, the game clock will start on the snap, at the option of the offended team. (Exception: Rule 3-4-4)”

*Comments:* Provides consistent application of the authority of the referee in circumstances where the game clock is most critical. The exception verifies that the ten-second runoff rule takes precedence.

# AR: UNFAIR CLOCK TACTICS

## Unfair Clock Tactics—ARTICLE 3

### Approved Ruling 3-4-3

VI. Second and seven at the A-25. Team A is ahead in the score late in the second quarter. When ball carrier A22 is tackled in the field of play, the game clock reads 1:47. The umpire reports to the referee that he has a flag for holding by snapper A55. On the play, A22 gained (a) three yards; (b) nine yards.

**RULING:** After enforcement of the penalty, the game clock starts (a) on the snap or on the referee's signal, at the option of Team B, because the clock stops only to administer the penalty; (b) on the referee's signal, because both administering the penalty and the first down caused the game clock to stop.

# 9. TRIPPING THE BALL CARRIER

## (Rule 9-1-2-c) FR-87

Delete the Exception. Add the following:

“Tripping is intentionally using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knees. (Rule 2-28)”

*Comments:* Affords the ball carrier the same protection from tripping that other players have had for many years.

# AR: TRIPPING

## Striking Fouls and Tripping—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 9-1-2

I. A player on defense sticks out his foot and trips an opponent.  
(a) The opponent is a wide receiver running a passing route. (b)  
The opponent is the ball carrier.

RULING: (a) and (b) Personal foul, Tripping. Penalty—15 yards, automatic first down.

# 10. BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

## (Rule 9-1-6) FR-89

*Comments:* Simplifies and clarifies the rule. Note that the “low-blocking zone” is no longer defined, and everything is in reference to the tackle box. Also clarifies the rule regarding the crackback block.

# 10. BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

## (Rule 9-1-6) FR-89

Changes to paragraph a:

“a. Team A prior to a change of team possession:

1. The following Team A players may legally block below the waist inside the *tackle box until they leave the tackle box or until the ball has left the tackle box*:
  - (a) players on the line of scrimmage completely *inside the tackle box* and
  - (b) stationary backs who are at least partially inside the tackle box and at least partially inside the frame of the body of the second lineman from the snapper.

# 10. BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

## (Rule 9-1-6) FR-89

Changes to paragraph a:

“a. Team A prior to a change of team possession:

2. *Except as in paragraph 3 (below)*, players not covered in paragraph 1 (above) while the ball is still in the *tackle box*, and all players after the ball has left the *tackle box*, are allowed to block below the waist only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front. “From the front” is understood to mean within the clock-face region between “10 o’clock and 2 o’clock” forward of the player being blocked.

# 10. BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

## (Rule 9-1-6) FR-89

Changes to paragraph a:

“a. Team A prior to a change of team possession:

3. Players not covered in paragraph 1 (above) may not block below the waist toward the *line through the original position of the ball at the snap until the ball carrier is clearly beyond the neutral zone.*



# 10. BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

## (Rule 9-1-6) FR-89

Changes to paragraph a:

“a. Team A prior to a change of team possession:

4. Once the ball has left the *tackle box* a player may not block below the waist toward his own end line.”

# AR: LOW BLOCKS

## Blocking Below the Waist—ARTICLE 6

### Approved Ruling 9-1-6

IV. At the snap A82 is positioned on the line of scrimmage to the right side of the formation, 10 yards from the snapper. Back A31, a flanker positioned to the left side of the formation, runs a deep reverse to the right side after receiving the ball from a teammate. As the play develops A82 blocks linebacker B62 toward the line through the original position of the ball. The block by A82 is below the waist and directly at the front, clearly inside the “10 o’clock to 2 o’clock” width. The block occurs (a) before ball carrier A31 has reached the line of scrimmage; (b) after ball carrier A31 is clearly beyond the neutral zone.

# AR: LOW BLOCKS

## Blocking Below the Waist—ARTICLE 6

### Approved Ruling 9-1-6

RULING: (a) Illegal crackback block. The block below the waist is directed toward the line through the original position of the ball before it has crossed the neutral zone. 15-yard penalty. (b) Legal play. The crackback block is allowed once the ball carrier is beyond the neutral zone.

# AR: LOW BLOCKS

## Blocking Below the Waist—ARTICLE 6

### Approved Ruling 9-1-6

VII. Back A22 is stationary inside the tackle box at the snap. After the snap he shoots between the tackle and the guard on his side and blocks low on linebacker B55 before the ball has left the tackle box. The contact is at B55's thigh from the side and is directed straight ahead of A22.

RULING: Illegal block below the waist. Since A22 leaves the tackle box before making the block, he is restricted from blocking other than with a "10-2" block. 15-yard penalty.

# AR: LOW BLOCKS

## Blocking Below the Waist—ARTICLE 6

### Approved Ruling 9-1-6

X. At the snap tight end A85 is aligned six yards from the snapper. Before the ball has left the tackle box A85 blocks tackle B77 below the waist at the side.

RULING: Illegal block below the waist. A85 is outside the tackle box at the snap, so he may block below the waist only within the 10-2 regime. 15-yard penalty.

# 11. LOW HITS ON THE PASSER

## (Rule 9-1-9-b) FR-90

Change to Exception (2):

“It is not a foul if the defender grabs or wraps this opponent in an attempt to make a conventional tackle *without making forcible contact with the head or shoulder.*”

*Comments:* Clarifies the rule when a player makes a conventional tackle.

# 11. LOW HITS ON THE PASSER

## **(Rule 9-1-9-b) FR-90:**

**When an offensive player is in a passing posture with one or both feet on the ground, no defensive player rushing unabated shall hit him forcibly at the knee area or below. The defensive player also may not initiate a roll or lunge and forcibly hit this opponent in the knee area or below.**

# 11. LOW HITS ON THE PASSER

**(Rule 9-1-9-b) FR-90:**

**[Exceptions. (1) It is not a foul if the offensive player is a runner not in a passing posture, either inside or outside the tackle box. (2) It is not a foul if the defender grabs or wraps this opponent in an attempt to make a conventional tackle *without making forcible contact with the head or shoulder*. (3) It is not a foul if the defender is not rushing unabated or is blocked or fouled into this opponent.]**



# 12. UNS BY COACH

## (Rule 9-2-6) FR-96:

### Change in paragraph a:

“a. Any *coach*, player, or identified squad member in uniform who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game shall be disqualified.”

### Add new paragraph c:

*“A coach disqualified from the game must leave the playing enclosure within a reasonable amount of time after the disqualification and must remain out of view of the field of play for the remainder of the game.”*

# 12. UNS BY COACH

**(Rule 9-2-6) FR-96**

*Comments:* Strengthens the coach's accountability for sideline behavior and brings football in concert with all other major intercollegiate sports.

# AR: UNS

## Unsportsmanlike Acts—ARTICLE 1

### Approved Ruling 9-2-1

XII. During a dead-ball time, a head coach or an assistant coach is flagged for coming out to the numbers and cursing the officials in a loud and abusive manner.

RULING: The officials charge either the head coach or the assistant coach with a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. The referee announces that this is either the first or second unsportsmanlike conduct foul against the coach in question. If it is the second, the coach in question is disqualified from the game.

# 13. IR: MEDICAL OBSERVER

**(Rule 12-3-5) FR-108**

**ARTICLE 5. Situations that may be addressed by the replay official:**

**Add new paragraph f.**

***“An injured player at the initiation of the Medical Observer.”***

***Comments: Results from the experimental rule used in the 2015 season.***

# 14. IR: TARGETING

## (Rule 12-3) FR-109

*Comments:* Gives the instant replay official expanded flexibility to review **all aspects** of a targeting ruling. Also calls upon the instant replay official to make a ruling of targeting when an **egregious** targeting action goes undetected by the on-field officials.

# 14. IR: TARGETING

## (Rule 12-3) FR-109

Delete paragraph f of 12-3-5 and create new Article 5.  
The current Article 5 (Miscellaneous) and Article 6  
(Limits on Reviewable Plays) are re-numbered.

# 14. IR: TARGETING

## (Rule 12-3) FR-109

ARTICLE 5. a. The replay official shall review all targeting fouls, Rules 9-1-3 and 9-1-4. The review includes all aspects of the targeting foul to ascertain whether there is at least one indicator of targeting action (Note 1 to Rules 9-1-3 and 4), and:

1. Whether the crown of the helmet is used to make forcible contact (Rule 9-1-3); OR
2. Whether there is forcible contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless opponent (Rules 9-1-4 and Rule 2-27-14).

# 14. IR: TARGETING

## **(Rule 12-3) FR-109**

**ARTICLE 5. b. The replay official may create a targeting foul only in egregious instances in which a foul is not called by the officials on the field. Such a review may not be initiated by a coach's challenge."**



# *New Approved Rulings*

# AR: ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT

## Illegal Equipment—ARTICLE 7

### Approved Ruling 1-4-7

V. Each member of the offensive line is wearing a towel, all of which are white, 4" by 12", with a small team logo. The snapper's towel also has a large skull-and-cross-bones symbol.

RULING: It is legal for any player to wear a towel. The towels are all legal except the snapper's. He must leave the game for at least one down and may not return until the towel is removed or replaced with one that is legal. Team A may keep him in the game by using a charged timeout, but he may not wear the illegal towel. (Rules 1-4-6-a and 1-4-8)

# AR: 10-SECOND RUNOFF (FOUL)

## 10-Second Runoff From Game Clock--Foul—ARTICLE 4

### Approved Ruling 3-4-4

VI. Second quarter. At the snap the game clock reads 0:45. During the play, A55 loses his helmet. Right tackle A77 is flagged for holding. The ball carrier is tackled inbounds short of the line to gain.

RULING: A55 must leave the game for one play. There is no option for a 10-second runoff, because at the end of the play the clock is stopped both for the helmet off and to administer the holding penalty. The play clock is set to 25 seconds and the game clock starts on the Referee's signal. (Rule 3-3-9)

# AR: 10-SECOND RUNOFF (FOUL)

**10-Second Runoff From Game Clock--Foul—ARTICLE 4**

**Approved Ruling 3-4-4**

**VII. Second quarter. Second and 10 at the B-30 with the game clock running. Guard A66 in a three-point stance misses the snap count and lurches forward, committing a false start. B77 then commits a dead-ball personal foul or a dead-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. The game clock is stopped with 8 seconds remaining.**

# AR: 10-SECOND RUNOFF (FOUL)

10-Second Runoff From Game Clock--Foul—ARTICLE 4

Approved Ruling 3-4-4

RULING: Because of the 10-second subtraction associated with the false start, the half is over. The penalty for the Team B dead-ball foul would carry over to the second half. Due to the 10-second subtraction, by interpretation the Team B dead-ball foul effectively occurs after the half has ended and the penalty is thus carried over. Team A may avoid the 10-second runoff by using an available charged timeout. In this case the penalty for the foul by B77 would be enforced, giving Team A first and 10 at the B-20 after enforcement of both penalties.

# AR: BALL DECLARED DEAD

## Ball Declared Dead—ARTICLE 3

### Approved Ruling 4-1-3

II. Team A is in formation to attempt a field goal. At the snap A22 is in position to execute a right-footed place kick and A33 is in position as the holder. The snap goes to A33 who has a knee on the ground. Just after the snap A22 breaks to his left and toward the neutral zone, and A33, while still on his knee, flips a forward pass to A22 who carries the ball beyond the line to gain before he is tackled.

RULING: Legal play, because at the snap A22 was in position to attempt a place kick. First and 10 for Team A.

# AR: ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS

## Illegal Forward Pass—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 7-3-2

XI. Second and 10 at the A-40. In a shotgun formation A11 takes the backward pass from the snapper and hands the ball off to back A44. A44 takes a few steps toward the line of scrimmage and then throws a backward pass to A11, who is still inside the tackle box. Avoiding tacklers, A11 scrambles outside the tackle box, and unable to find an open receiver, at the A-35 he throws the ball toward an area where there are no eligible receivers, and it lands out of bounds beyond the neutral zone.

**RULING:** Illegal forward pass. Loss of down at the A-35; third and 15. A11 loses the right to throw the ball away legally because he does not retain possession before passing it

# AR: ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS

## Illegal Forward Pass—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 7-3-2

XII. Third and 10 at the A-30. Quarterback A11 drops back to pass. About to be tackled at the A-20, he throws the ball forward to an area where there are no eligible receivers. Tackle A77 catches the pass at the A-28 and is tackled at the A-32.

RULING: Illegal forward pass; loss of down at the spot of the pass. Fourth and 20 at the A-20. This is “intentional grounding” since A11 throws the ball into an area where there are no eligible Team A receivers. Note that this is not illegal touching by A77, because the rule for illegal touching applies only to a legal forward pass. (Rule 7-3-11)



# AR: PASS INTERFERENCE

Illegal Contact and Pass Interference—ARTICLE 8

Approved Ruling 7-3-8

I. B33, 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 eligible A88, but does not make contact.

RULING: No foul. There is no foul for defensive pass interference if there is no contact.

# AR: TARGETING

Targeting and Making Forcible Contact to Head or Neck Area of a Defenseless Player—ARTICLE 4

Approved Ruling 9-1-4

X. On a punt return, B44 launches at A66 from the blind side and drives his shoulder into him. The force of the contact is at A66's side below the shoulder.

RULING: Legal block. A66 is a defenseless player because B44 executes a blind-side block. However, this is not a targeting foul because the forcible contact is not to the head/neck area.

# AR: UNFAIR TACTICS

## Unfair Tactics—ARTICLE 2

### Approved Ruling 9-2-2

VI. After the down is over, Team A sends in three substitutes, and three players begin to leave the field. A88, who participated in the previous play, trails the three replaced players toward the Team A sideline. The three replaced players continue into the team area, but A88 stops and sets up on the line of scrimmage very close to the sideline. After the ball is snapped A88 runs down the sideline and catches a forward pass.

**RULING:** Team A at the snap, unsportsmanlike conduct for unfair tactics: using the substitution process to deceive the opponents. Live-ball foul. Penalty: 15 yards at the previous spot.

# AR: ILLEGALLY KICKING BALL

## Illegally Kicking Ball—ARTICLE 4

### Approved Ruling 9-4-4

I. Fourth and eight at the A-48. From a scrimmage kick formation, A32 punts the ball to the B-7 where it hits B25 on the leg. As the ball rolls along the ground, B25 then kicks it at the B-4 to prevent Team A from recovering. The ball bounces into Team B's end zone and over the end line.

RULING: The result of the play is a safety, as B25's kicking the ball provides new impetus. Foul by B25 for illegally kicking the ball. Team A may decline the penalty and take the two points, or accept the penalty. The foul by B25 is governed by postscrimmage kick rules, so the accepted penalty would give Team B the ball at the B-2, first down and 10. (Rules 8-5-1-a and 8-7-2-b).