



NCAA Rules Review

A quick look at common rules that we often forget

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Free Kick



- Team A will kickoff from the 30 yard line
- Team A can keep the ball if they recover kick
 - beyond B's restraining line **–OR–**
 - after B touches kick **–OR–**
 - after ball touches ground, official or player beyond B's restraining line (even if it subsequently bounces back)
- Team A must have 4 players on either side of kicker when kicked
- Team A player that goes out of bounds and returns (unless forced out)
 - 5 yard Illegal Procedure from **Previous Spot** or **Succeeding Spot** [S19]
- Team A may not block until eligible to touch kick
 - 5 yard Illegal Procedure from **Previous Spot** or **Succeeding Spot** [S19]
- Penalty for free kick out of bounds is for Team B to take the ball
 - **30 yards Beyond Free Kick Line [New for 2008] –OR –**
 - **5 yards from the Previous Spot –OR –**
 - **5 yards from the Out of Bounds Spot**



Free Kick (con't)



- If free kick is caught by airborne Team B player who lands out-of-bounds, it is a foul against Team A for kick out-of-bounds
- If free kick is touched by Team B player who is straddling the sideline it is a foul against Team A for kick out-of-bounds
- Team B right to accept spot of Illegal Touching can only be canceled if a penalty is accepted (penalty acceptance has priority)
- Any Team A foul during a free kick (except Kick Catch Interference) can be enforced from
 - **Previous Spot OR**
 - **Dead Ball Spot** if Team B has possession at the end of the down **OR**
 - **20 Yard Line** if play results in touchback
- A player is not considered to have touched a free kick if
 - He is blocked into the ball by an opponent **OR**
 - An opponent bats the ball into the player
- Game clock starts when ball is legally touched in the field of play



Scrimmage Kick



- Team A can recover but cannot advance a kick that lands beyond the neutral zone and then bounces back behind the neutral zone
- Ball is dead if kick lands in Team B's endzone (unless touched by B after kick crosses the neutral zone)
- If Team A commits Illegal Touching by batting the ball in Team B's endzone, B may elect a touchback (unless touched by B beyond neutral zone). The basic enforcement spot will be the 20 yard line if a subsequent foul occurs.
- Team A player that goes out of bounds and returns (unless forced out)
 - 5 yard Illegal Procedure from **Previous Spot** or **Succeeding Spot** [S19]
- Any Team A foul (except Kick Catch Interference) prior to or during a scrimmage kick can be enforced from the **Dead Ball Spot** (except field goal attempt)
- A player is not considered to have touched a free kick if
 - He is blocked into the ball by an opponent **OR**
 - An opponent bats the ball into the player
- Blocking below the waist
 - Prohibited by any player (A or B) from the time of the snap (not the kick) if team A is in a scrimmage kick formation



Field Goal



- Field Goal
 - If unsuccessful FG attempt is declared dead beyond the neutral zone, ball is returned to **Previous Spot** or **20 Yard Line** (unless touched by Team B after kick crosses neutral zone)
 - Note: The **Previous Spot** or **20 Yard Line** will also serve as the basic spot for post scrimmage kick enforcement under these conditions



Forward Pass



- Pass Eligibility Lost
 - Team A player goes out of bounds (unless forced out and returns immediately)
- Pass Eligibility Gained (or Regained)
 - Ball touches Team B player (or official)
- Pass Interference Restrictions End
 - Any touching (Team A, Team B or official)
- Illegal Touching by an originally ineligible player
 - 5 yards from **Previous Spot** (not spot of foul)
- Illegal Touching by a player who steps out of bounds on his own and returns
 - **Loss of Down** from **Previous Spot**
- Team B fouls prior to or during a forward pass include an automatic first down if:
 - Pass crossed the neutral zone untouched by Team A or Team B **–AND–**
 - Team B foul was a contact foul against an eligible receiver **–AND–**
 - Team B foul occurred beyond the neutral zone **–AND–**
 - Team B foul occurred before pass was touched



Impetus



- Initial Impetus is caused by the offense when a ball is carried, passed, kicked, fumbled or snapped from the field of play into the end zone.
- Once the ball is loose, impetus can only be changed if a player
 - Bats the ball after it strikes the ground
 - Kicks the ball (regardless of whether it has struck the ground)
 - Contacts the ball after it has comes to rest
- Note: Muffing a loose ball that is still rolling and batting a ball in flight do not change the original impetus!



Penalty Enforcement – Basic Principles



- **Basic Spot** is normally:
 - **End of Related Run** ...for running plays that end beyond the neutral zone
 - **Previous Spot** ...otherwise
- Offensive Fouls that occur behind the basic spot (but beyond the neutral zone) are enforced from the **Spot of the Foul**
- Offensive Fouls (all contact fouls and illegal touching) that occur behind the neutral zone are enforced from the **Previous Spot**. The only fouls that can be enforced from behind the neutral zone are:
 - Intentional Grounding
 - Illegal Forward Pass
 - Illegal Batting
 - Illegal Kicking
- Contact Fouls by Team A in their own end zone result in a safety
- Defensive Fouls are never enforced from behind the neutral zone



Post Scrimmage Kick Enforcement



- Criteria
 - During scrimmage kick play
 - Ball crosses neutral zone
 - Foul occurs three or more yards beyond neutral zone
 - Foul occurs before the end of the kick
 - Team B ends with possession
- No PSK on try or extra periods
- PSK does not apply on a successful field goal (penalty is enforced from **Previous Spot**)
- If punt ends in Team B endzone then PSK spot is the **20 Yard Line**
- If unsuccessful FG attempt (untouched by Team B beyond NZ) is declared dead beyond NZ then PSK spot is the **Previous Spot** (if snapped outside the 20 yard line) or **20 Yard Line** (if snapped inside the 20 yard line)
- If Team A bats kick in Team B endzone (touchback) and kick is untouched by Team B beyond NZ then PSK spot is the **20 Yard Line**



Penalty Enforcement when play includes a Touchback or Momentum Exception



- If the result of a play is a **touchback** then
 - The **basic spot** of enforcement is the **20 yard line**
 - Fouls by Team B behind the **20 yard line** are enforced from the **spot of the foul**
 - Fouls by Team B in the **endzone** result in a **safety**
 - Fouls by Team A are enforced from the **20 yard line**
- If the result of a play is the momentum exception then
 - The **basic spot** of enforcement is the **momentum spot**
 - Fouls by Team B behind the **momentum spot** are enforced from the **spot of the foul**
 - Fouls by Team B in the **endzone** result in a **safety**
 - Fouls by Team A are enforced from the **momentum spot**
- If Team B player fumbles the ball forward from his end zone into the field of play and the ball is subsequently recovered by either team (i.e., it does not roll out of bounds), then the **touchback / momentum exception** no longer applies. Thus:
 - Fouls by Team B result in a **safety** because the end of the run is the **goal line**
 - Fouls by Team A are enforced from the **goal line**



Fouls on Scoring Plays



- During Touchdown
 - Personal fouls by opponents of scoring team and unsportsmanlike fouls by either team are enforced on try or succeeding kickoff (offended team has choice)
- During Dead Ball Interval between Touchdown and Try
 - Personal (or unsportsmanlike) fouls after the touchdown but before the ready for play by either team are enforced on try or succeeding kickoff (offended team has choice)
 - Fouls after the ready for play are enforced prior to the next snap
- During Try
 - Personal Foul by Team B – Team A may keep point(s) and have penalty enforced from succeeding spot
 - Live ball fouls penalized as dead ball fouls during the try are enforced on the succeeding kickoff (or succeeding spot in extra periods)
 - Defensive Pass Interference penalties are enforced $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance if try was attempted from the B3 (declined if try successful)
- During Field Goal
 - No special rules apply. Team A cannot keep points and have penalty enforced



Non-Standard Penalty Enforcements



- Team B player fouls after giving a valid, invalid or illegal fair catch signal during **free** kick he did not touch
 - 15 yards from **Spot of Foul** (not previous spot)
- Illegal kick beyond neutral zone
 - 5 yards from **Previous Spot** (not spot of foul) and **Loss of Down** and **Ball Becomes Dead**
- Return kick (kick after change of possession)
 - 5 yards from **Spot of Foul** and **Ball Becomes Dead**
- Illegal Kick (using a tee)
 - 5 yards from **Previous Spot**
- Team A player that goes out of bounds and returns during a *scrimmage kick* down (unless blocked out)
 - 5 yards from **Previous Spot** (not all-but-one)
- Team A player that goes out of bounds and returns and touches a forward pass (unless blocked out **or** pass touches Team B **or** pass touches official)
 - **Loss of Down** from **Previous Spot** (not all-but-one)



Non-Standard Penalty Enforcements



- Kick-catching interference (free kick or scrimmage kick)
 - 15 yards from **Spot of Foul** (not previous spot)
- Illegal forward handing to teammate who was on the line and did not turn 180 degrees to receive the ball (and must be 2 yards behind line to legally receive ball)
 - 5 yards from **Spot of Foul** and **Loss of Down**
- Planned loose ball
 - 5 yards from **Previous Spot** and **Loss of Down**
- Throwing the ball intentionally out of bounds to conserve time
 - 5 yards from **Spot of Foul** and **Loss of Down**
- Illegal Forward Pass / Intentional Grounding
 - **Spot of Foul** and **Loss of Down** *if thrown to avoid loss of yardage*
 - 5 yards from **Spot of Foul** and **Loss of Down** *otherwise*
- Delay of Game Penalty if game clock was running [5 yards]
 - Clock on snap *if Scrimmage Kick Formation or Team A intentionally consuming time*
 - Clock on ready *otherwise*



Blocking Below the Waist



- Offense
 - Prohibited towards original position of the ball [behind NZ or within 1st 10 yards beyond NZ] by:
 - Stationary backs entirely outside the tackles
 - Backs in motion regardless of position
 - Offensive lineman 7+ yards from ball at snap
- Defense
 - Prohibited against eligible pass receivers beyond neutral zone (while a legal forward pass is still permissible) unless attempting to get to ball or runner
- Free Kick
 - Prohibited (both teams) for entire down
- Scrimmage Kick
 - Prohibited (both teams) for entire down if Team A was in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap
 - Applies even to rugby-style kickers **[New for 2008]**
- Change of Possession
 - Prohibited (both teams) for remainder of down



Clipping



- Offensive Lineman positioned < 5yds from ball
 - Legal in 10x6 Rectangular Area
 - Ball must be in area at time of clip
 - Player may not leave zone then reenter and clip
 - Contact must be above the knee



Illegal Chop Blocks



- [New for 2008] Combination Block with or without delay (except against runner):
 - High/Low
 - Low/High

“Low” means at the thigh or below

- *Note: High/High and Low/Low [New for 2008] combination blocks are legal (no foul)*



Illegal Substitution



- If the offense rushes quickly to the line from the sideline or the huddle:
 - Umpire will cover the ball and allow defense an opportunity to match up
 - If play clock expires it will be a Delay of Game (DOG) foul against Team A
- If the offense is at the line of scrimmage and quickly substitutes and it appears that a quick snap is imminent then the Referee will shut down the play and:
 - Penalize 5 yards and warn the Head Coach that the next occurrence will result in a 15 yard Unsportsmanlike Conduct (USC) penalty



Illegal Substitution (con't)



- Illegal Substitution (Live Ball Fouls – 5 yards)
 - 12th player (either team) running off the field at the snap; does not participate or influence the play
 - Substitute (either team) enters and then departs during same dead ball interval
 - Player (either team) departs then re-enters during same dead ball interval
- Illegal Substitution (Dead Ball Fouls – 5 yards)
 - Substitute (either team) enters from outside of designated team area
 - Team A breaks huddle with 12 or more players
 - Replaced player (either team) does not leave within 3 seconds



Batting / Kicking a Loose Ball



- Batting a Loose Ball
 - Forward Pass in Flight
 - Legal: Any eligible player in any direction
 - Backward Pass in Flight
 - Illegal for offense to bat forward to gain an advantage [15 yards but **no** loss of down]
 - Fumble in Flight or Grounded Loose Ball in Field of Play
 - Legal: Bat backward
 - Illegal: Bat forward [15 yards and **Loss of Down**]
 - Fumble in Flight or Grounded Loose Ball in Endzone
 - Illegal: [15 yards and **Loss of Down**]
 - Exception: Team A batting a kick in opponent's endzone
- Kicking a Loose Ball
 - Always a foul [15 yards and **Loss of Down**]



Try Exceptions



- Fourth-down fumble rule is in effect (on a Team A fumble before change of possession)
- Any personal foul by Team B may enforced from succeeding spot if try is successful.
- Kick Catch Interference penalties are declined (or combined to form offsetting penalties)
- Defensive Pass Interference fouls are enforced $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance to the goal if the ball was snapped from the 3 yard line.
- If there is a change of possession and both teams foul during the try, the Team B foul will dictate whether the try is replayed:
 - Team B fouls prior to change of possession – Replay Try from **Previous Spot** (penalties offset) **[New for 2008]**
 - Team B fouls after the change of possession (“clean hands”) – Try ends; no replay
- PSK fouls by Team B (if accepted) are enforced from **Previous Spot**
- After a change of possession, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, live ball fouls enforced as dead ball fouls and flagrant personal fouls **[New for 2008]** are enforced from the **Succeeding Spot** (i.e., carryover)
- If Team A commits a foul that includes in loss of down, the try ends (no score)
- If touchdown is scored on the last play of regulation, the try must be attempted unless margin is 3 points or more.



Extra Periods Exceptions



- If Team B gains possession the play continues but the Team A series will end (A can score on a double change of possession but cannot regain 1st-and-10)
- Only 2-point tries may be scored from the 3rd extra period on
- Exactly one timeout per team per period (No carryover from regulation to overtime and no carryover across overtime periods)
- If there is a change of possession and both teams foul during the down, the Team B foul will dictate whether the down is replayed:
 - Team B fouls prior to change of possession – Replay down from **Previous Spot** (penalties offset); Team A series continues. **[New for 2008]**
 - Team B fouls after the change of possession (“clean hands”) – Series ends; no replay
- PSK fouls by Team B (if accepted) are enforced from **Previous Spot**
- After a change of possession, unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, live ball fouls enforced as dead ball fouls and flagrant personal fouls **[New for 2008]** are enforced from the **Succeeding Spot** (i.e., carryover)



Sideline Interference [New for 2008]



- Sideline interferes with official (*Game Administration Interference*)
 - 1st offense
 - 5 yard penalty from **Succeeding Spot**
 - 2nd offense
 - 5 yard penalty from **Succeeding Spot**
 - 3rd offense (and subsequent offenses)
 - 15 yard penalty from **Succeeding Spot**
- Sideline interferes with live ball or player (*Illegal Interference*)
 - 15 yard penalty from the **Basic Spot**
 - Referee may enforce any penalty he considers equitable including a score
 - Additionally, if the non-player touches a loose ball, the play is immediately dead and inadvertent whistle procedures also apply



Roughing the Passer / Kicker



- Roughing the Passer
 - No foul against defense if blocked (legally or illegally) into passer
- Roughing the Kicker
 - Foul against defense even if blocked (legally) into the kicker
 - No foul against defense if blocked illegally into the kicker
 - *Thought Process for Referee: If kicker is roughed it is either a foul against defense (roughing) or a foul against the blocker (illegal block). A “No-Call” is not permissible by rule*
 - If Player B1 touches the kick and Player B2 illegal contacts the kicker it is still a foul against Team B. Only the player that touches is exempted from roughing penalties.



Unsportsmanlike Conduct vs. Personal Foul



- Unsportsmanlike Conduct
 - No automatic first down
 - Non-contact fouls such as:
 - Taunting
 - Excessive Celebration
 - Disrespecting an official
 - Contacting an official (plus ejection)
 - Team-A rushing a substitution to gain an advantage for 2nd time (1st offense is 5 yards)
- Personal Fouls
 - Automatic first down (if foul against defense)
 - Contact fouls such as:
 - Late Hits
 - Fighting (plus ejection)
 - If a player's unsportsmanlike act (such as taunting) causes opponent to physically retaliate it is considered fighting and both players are ejected



Illegal Player Equipment



- Jerseys must be tucked
- All team members must wear socks or leg coverings that are identical in color, design and length
- Cleats that are longer than ½ inch are illegal
- Umpire must inspect/approve tape or bandage on hand, wrist, forearm or elbow
- Jerseys that are taped, tied or knotted are illegal
- Visible bandannas are illegal
- Eye shields that are not clear are illegal
- Towels (must be solid white)
 - One Offensive Backfield Player and Two Defensive Players may wear towels. The towels:
 - must be 4 x 12
 - must be in front or side
 - One Interior Offensive Lineman may wear a towel. The towel:
 - may be any size
 - may be worn anywhere
 - Free Kick Down, Two players on each side may wear towels. The towels:
 - must be 4 x 12
 - must be worn in front or side



Game Clock – Ready versus Snap



- Runner out of bounds
 - *Ready* - prior to last **2:00** of the half [New for 2008]
 - *Snap* - during last **2:00** of the half
- Backward Pass out of bounds
 - *Ready* - prior to last **2:00** of the half [New for 2008]
 - *Snap* - during last **2:00** of the half
- Fumble backwards out of bounds
 - *Ready* - prior to last **2:00** of the half [New for 2008]
 - *Snap* - during last **2:00** of the half
- Fumble forward out of bounds
 - *Ready* – regardless of clock status (*return ball to spot of fumble*)
- Team B ends down with possession of ball in field of play
 - *Snap* – if Team B is next to snap the ball
 - *Ready* – if enforcement of a Team B penalty results in Team A retaining possession [New for 2008]



40/25 Second Play Clock [New for 2008]



- Generally, the play clock will be reset to **40 seconds** and immediately start counting down at the conclusion of each play. This includes:
 - Ball dead inbounds or out of bounds (even if a first down is awarded)
 - Incomplete Pass
 - *In these cases, the Referee will not whistle the ready for play but may wind (without whistle) as appropriate after the ball is spotted*
- The play clock countdown will be reset to **25 seconds** if one of the following occurs:
 - Start of Period (or start of series in Extra Periods)
 - Free Kick
 - Try for Point
 - Change of Possession
 - Timeout
 - Charged Team Timeout
 - Media Timeout
 - Administrative Stoppage
 - Measurement
 - Instant Replay Review
 - *In all of these cases, the Referee will whistle the ready for play and chop or wind as appropriate*



Inadvertent Whistle



- Sounded while ball in player possession
 - Team in possession may take ball at the spot (down counts) or replay the down
- Sounded while ball is loose following backward pass, fumble or illegal forward pass
 - Team in possession may take ball at end of run (down counts) or replay the down
- Sounded during legal forward pass, scrimmage kick or free kick
 - Replay down
- Sounded while Team B is in possession on try or in extra periods
 - Down ends. No replay

- Penalty enforcement (accepted penalty) or accepting the spot of Illegal Touching (on a kick) take precedence over the inadvertent whistle procedure