



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2015 NCAA FOOTBALL PLAY INTERPRETATIONS

BULLETIN NO. 2

Substitution Process to Deceive

1. 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 live-ball foul, unsportsmanlike conduct for unfair tactics: using the substitution process to confuse the opponents. Live-ball foul. Penalty: 15 yards at the previous spot. (9-2-2)

Blindside Block

2. On a punt return, B44 launches from the blind side and drives his shoulder into A66. 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. (9-1-4)

Kick Receiver Pointing at the Ball

3. B22 is standing at the B-10 to receive a punt. As the ball comes toward him, B22 points at it, but his action does not include a waving of his hands or arms. The ball hits the ground at the B-20. B22 recovers at the B-15 and is tackled at the B-30.

RULING: Legal play. Because B22 does not make a waving signal, and only points at the ball, he has not given an invalid fair catch signal and thus may legally advance the ball. (2-8-3, 6-5-2)

Scrimmage Kick Formation—Numbering Exception

4. Team A's ball 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 eight 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.

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 may 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 may be attempted. (b) Legal play: touchdown. On third or fourth down a team may be likely to kick. (2-16-10, 7-1-4-a)

Illegal Forward Pass

5. Second and 10 at the A-40. A11 in a shotgun formation 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 out of bounds beyond the neutral zone.

RULING: Illegal forward pass. Loss of down at the A-35; third and 15. While the exception to Rule 7-3-2-h applies to the player who receives the ball from the snapper, the spirit and intent of the rule is that he does not give up the ball until he throws the forward pass. (7-3-2-h)

Illegal Forward Pass—“Intentional Grounding”

6. 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. We refer to “intentional grounding,” but there is nothing in the rule about the ball hitting the ground. The foul is for throwing 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. (7-3-2-h, 7-3-11)

10-Second Runoff—Helmet Off Plus Foul

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

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. (3-3-9)

Instant Replay—Foul

8. First and 10 at the A-30. A11 completes a pass to A88 who makes a diving catch for an eight-yard gain. After the ball is ready for play for second and two at the A-38, (a) guard A66 commits a false start; or (b) either A53 or B78 jumps across the line and slugs an opponent. The Instant Replay Official then stops the game to review the first-down pass play. The ruling on the field of a completed pass is overturned.

RULING: The first-down play may be reviewed because the ball has not been snapped. The reversal results in second and 10 at the A-30. (a) The false start penalty is not enforced. (b) The penalty for the flagrant personal is enforced and the player is disqualified. If the foul is by A53, Team A will have second and 25 at the A-15. If the foul is by B78, Team A will have first and 10 at the A-45. (12-5-1-a)

Potential Kick-Catch Interference

9. Punt receiver B22 is at the B-30 awaiting the punt as it makes its downward flight and his teammate B88 is in front of him at the B-34. Down field to cover the kick, A44 blocks B88 into B22 just as the ball reaches him. The ball hits B22 in the shoulder and bounces away. Team A recovers at the B-25.

RULING: Team A's ball, first and 10 at the B-25. This is not kick-catch interference. The action by A44 is against B88 who is not in position to catch the kick, and not against B22. Thus A44 is not deemed to have interfered with B22's opportunity to catch the ball. B22's touching of the ball allows Team A to recover legally. (6-4-1-b)

Potential Forced Touching

10. As a punt rolls along the ground A44 blocks B33 into the ball, which bounces away and strikes B48 in the leg. Team A recovers.

RULING: Team A's ball, first and 10 at the spot of recovery. Although the touching by B33 is forced, that by B48 is not. B48's touching of the ball allows Team A to recover legally. (6-3-4-a)

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SECRETARY-RULES EDITOR

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