

CCA Mechanics Changes 2014

CHANGES FROM 2014 MANUAL

New philosophies adopted.	26, 28-30, 49, 55, 116
Pregame meeting with coaches modified	35
Pregame field inspection procedures clarified.	36
Head Linesman and Line Judge bring out teams before the game	36
Head Linesman has game balls before opening kickoff.	38-9
Line Judge added to pregame meeting with chain crew.	37
Head Linesman and Side Judge, Line Judge and Field Judge change sidelines for second half	40
Back Judge and Umpire free kick coverage amended	42-3
Offense' s ball comes in from press box side	48
Pre-snap keys for Umpire, Head Linesman and Line Judge clarified	48
Signals for counting players amended	50, 156-7
Substitution procedure clarified	50-1
Positioning and coverage for goal line plays altered	57-9
Punt coverage amended	80-1
TV/radio timeout signal changed	84, 147
Measurement procedure clarified.	90-2
Procedure for bringing out teams for second half amended	93
Referee announcement when there is a foul in addition to targeting.	99
When penalty is enforced on succeeding kickoff, back judge enforces the penalty	100

Mechanics Points of Emphasis

2.1 Coaches' Sideline Management and Control

Since 2011, keeping the working area (six-foot white border) clear of coaches and players while the ball is in play has been a Point of Emphasis. Although some teams have made some progress, that area continues to be a Point of Emphasis for 2014. Officials will be instructed to aggressively enforce the rule, especially during live-ball action.

Coaches will be allowed to only step to the sideline to call offensive and defensive signals after all action has ceased. That working space (six-foot white border) is intended to allow officials to adequately perform their duties; to protect the safety of officials, players and coaches; and to allow teams to demonstrate good sportsmanship within the team area.

There is no place for the excessive demonstrations that are occurring after plays by coaches and/or players coming onto the field of play, and there is no reason anyone should be on the field even during dead-ball action unless allowed by rule, such as to attend to an injured player. Actions by coaches and team personnel have risen to the point of taunting opposing players, unacceptable verbal abuse toward officials and is not consistent with the demeanor or bench decorum that is expected in our game. Those types of actions are a violation under Rules 9-2-1-a-1 and 9-2-2-b-1 and carry a 15-yard penalty from the succeeding spot.

The NCAA Football Rules Committee has instructed officials to be more diligent in their observations of those actions and they are instructed to flag violations of the rule when it occurs in an area they can observe. Officials have also been instructed to aggressively enforce Rule 9-2-5 dealing with sideline and coaching box violations. Coaches are expected to set an appropriate, professional example for their players, fans and the many others who watch the game and to intervene when they see members of their team exhibit behavior that is not acceptable under the Sportsmanship guidelines of the Football Code.

2.2 Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

The NCAA Football Rules Committee, the CFO National Coordinator of Football Officials and the conference coordinators want to continue to emphasize to coaches, players and officials the expectation of appropriate behavior by all who are a part of the game of football.

Game officials must continue to consistently apply the unsportsmanlike conduct rule for behavior that clearly extends beyond what is acceptable. While officials are directed to not be overly technical in applying the rule, there are certain acts that should be penalized without warning.

TAUNTING

- "In your face" ; standing or bending over an opponent.
- Comments that are racist, ethnic or demeaning.
- Gestures toward an opponent, coaches or opponent' s sideline.

GESTURES

- Throat slash.
- Demonstrate violence such as six guns or machine gun.
- Remove helmet to celebrate or protest.

Being demonstrative after making an exceptional play or score is accepted as long as it' s a spontaneous burst of energy that' s not prolonged, clearly self-congratulatory or makes a mockery of the game. When possible, give the head coach an opportunity to correct and instruct his players on what is appropriate celebratory behavior.

A list of Unsportsmanlike Fouls are listed in the NCAA Rules and Interpretations under rule 9-2-1-a through j. Officials should be familiar with those fouls.

Other than taunting and those actions appearing Appendix F, officials should use the same judgment in determining whether to call an UNS foul. Officials should say to themselves, "It's a foul ... it's a foul ... now throw." If officials cannot complete that process, they shouldn' t throw a flag but advise the head coach that he should talk with his player(s), after that player(s) has been warned.

Also in the rules, a personal foul can now be included in the UNS category for a possible later disqualification if there are two UNS fouls. However, to be included, the foul should be clearly after the play was over and not part of the continuing action of the play. That means the action may be after

the play and a personal foul, but the separation of time would not be sufficient to meet the UNS requirement.

Using the “accordion effect” after a play is over helps to keep players under control. However moving too quickly and too close, especially after a score, reduces an official’s “cone of vision” to officiate the entire dead-ball area when there is no threat of a problem.

Appropriate and timely intervention by the officials for action by one or both teams should act as a deterrent to unsportsmanlike fouls.

2.3 Targeting and Dangerous Contact Fouls

The NCAA Football Rules Committee in 2014 has made rules and editorial changes for targeting to continue to promote player safety and seek to continue to eliminate specific targeting actions from the game. The key editorial changes in Rules 9-1-3 and 9-1-4 modify the definition of targeting.

This new language stipulates that no player shall target and make forcible contact to the head or neck area or contact an opponent with the crown (top) of his helmet. The term “forcible contact” replaces the word “initiate to ensure the intent of the rule is clear. Additionally, if instant replay overturns the player disqualification for targeting, the yardage penalty for targeting is no longer enforced. If another personal foul is committed in conjunction with the targeting foul, the penalty for that personal foul will be enforced. Implementation of the rule requires that the calling official and the crew must take special care in analyzing and reporting any foul in conjunction with targeting.

The addition of an automatic disqualification for a player guilty of a targeting foul has resulted in significant progress in modifying player behavior. It is imperative that officials continue to aggressively enforce those dangerous contact fouls.

Also note, the definition of a defenseless player in Rule 2-27-14 has been expanded. Each official must thoroughly understand the list and understand how it impacts enforcement of Rule 9-1-4 targeting fouls. Playing time is the most precious commodity to players, and a potential impact on playing time is the most effective way to modify player and coach behavior. It is imperative that targeting actions be penalized in all games. Officials must be diligent in penalizing targeting fouls in order promote player safety and continue to drive that behavioral change.

The NCAA Football Rules Committee introduced more stringent guidelines in 2008 around initiating contact and targeting an opponent. Those rules are now contained in Rule 9-1-3 (Targeting and Initiating

Contact with the Crown of the Helmet) and Rule 9-1-4 (Defenseless Player: Contact to Head or Neck Area). As more data is accumulated and understood about the impact of those fouls, it is imperative that officials are vigilant in recognizing those fouls and are ready to penalize offenders.

Additionally, officials must have the courage and be prepared to make that call regardless of the penalty and remember that when in question, it is a foul.

It is important that each official completely understands the rules, namely that no player shall target and make forcible contact against an opponent with the crown (top) of his helmet and that no player shall target and initiate contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless opponent with the helmet, forearm, elbow or shoulder. Each official must review the definition of a defenseless player and understand the examples provided in Rule 2-27-14.

Many times officials simply walk away from a foul thinking that the contact was “just a good football play.” That line of thinking must change, and officials must view the contact and determine if it met the guidelines of Rules 9-1-3 or 9-1-4.

Some of the key indicators for an official to help recognize a targeting foul include but are not limited to:

- The presence of a launch – a player leaving his feet to contact an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body, making contact in the head/neck area.
- A player leading with forearm, fist, hand or elbow to the head/neck area.
- A player lowering the head before initiating contact to the head/neck area of a defenseless player. A player completing a heads up or wrap up tackle may indicate less risk of a foul.

As coaching techniques and player behavior continues to change on those dangerous contact fouls, it is important that officials fulfill their role and penalize those acts. That will help preserve our great game.

2.4 Officials' Responsibilities and Pace of Play

Since the implementation of the 40-second play clock, we have seen an ever-increasing use of the up-tempo offense. That style of play is often used to prevent the defense from matching up to the current game situation by not being able to substitute, which may create an advantage for the offense.

The rules and properly executed officiating mechanics work well to prevent the offense from gaining an unintended advantage by allowing the defense to match up when the offense substitutes. The section on no-huddle substitutions has been updated and is being emphasized here to make certain that all officials thoroughly understand the role of game officials in that situation. Adherence to those guidelines will allow a reasonable amount of time for the defense to change personnel if desired following an offensive substitution.

Equally important are plays in which the offense does not substitute. In those situations, officials have been instructed that they should not significantly increase the pace used to spot the ball and make it ready for play. Doing so places the defensive team at a distinct disadvantage not intended by rule. These guidelines have also been updated. It is important that a consistent pace be maintained when spotting the football and making it ready for play in all games. That will allow defensive coaches the ability to recognize how much time is available prior to the ball being ready for play and whether they will have an opportunity to make adjustments to personnel.

Proper implementation of the guidelines will ensure that the mechanics of game officials will not affect the balance between offense and defense and that neither team will gain an advantage not intended by rule regardless of the style of play.

Line of Scrimmage Philosophy

- When in question as to whether an action is a false start or illegal motion, it is a false start.

Blocking Philosophy

- If a player is illegally blocked or held "into" making a tackle, no foul should be called unless the action is a personal foul or there is an element of time between the foul and the tackle.

Plays at the Sideline Philosophy

- If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, consider it a legal hit unless the runner has obviously given up on the play very near the sideline and forcible contact is made with intent to punish.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct Philosophy

- When in question whether an unsportsmanlike act is a live-ball or dead-ball foul, it is a dead-ball foul.

Game Clock Philosophy

- When in question, a charged team timeout precedes a foul that prevents the snap.

Pregame Duties

The Referee and Umpire visit each dressing room 90 minutes before kickoff. The Umpire inspects player equipment and bandages, tape, etc., and should record the numbers of players with illegal equipment. Those players are to be rechecked when they come onto the field.

Per conference policy, for conference games only, the meeting may be conducted by officials other than the Referee and Umpire. If the Referee is not present for that meeting, he shall meet with the head coaches on the field before the game.

The Referee and Back Judge shall inspect the entire field. As noted in NCAA Rule 1-2-8-a through d:

- 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.
- After the officials' pregame inspection of the playing enclosure, the Referee shall order removed any hazardous obstructions or markers located inside the limit lines.
- The Referee shall report to game management personnel any markers or obstructions constituting a hazard within the playing enclosure but outside the limit lines. Final determination of corrective action shall be the responsibility of game management personnel.
- After the officials have completed their pregame inspection of the playing enclosure, it is the responsibility of game management personnel to ensure that the playing enclosure remains safe throughout the game.

At five minutes before game time, the Side Judge and Field Judge escort the captains of the teams on their respective sidelines from the locker room to their respective sidelines. The Line Judge and Head Linesman ensure their respective teams are on the field three minutes before the start of the game. On a signal from the Referee, the Field Judge and Side Judge escort the respective captains as far as the nine-yard marks and remain there to ensure no team personnel move closer to the field than the nine-yard marks. The Back Judge, Head Linesman and Line Judge remain on their sidelines.

The Head Linesman and Line Judge shall meet with the chain crew before the game. The box holder and chain crew should be instructed to place markers, rods and the clip where indicated by the Head Linesman and Line Judge.

Coin Toss

The Head Linesman should have a game ball from each team in his possession. Once the toss is completed, the correct ball can be given to the Back Judge for the opening kickoff.

NOTE: The Line Judge and Field Judge will be positioned opposite the press box in the first half and the Line Judge will be responsible for the chains. The Head Linesman and Side Judge will be opposite the press box in the second half and the Head Linesman will be responsible for the chains. Mechanics and keys do not change regardless of which side of the field the officials are working, other than responsibility for the chains. If a sideline penalty recorder is present, he shall remain with the Head Linesman throughout the game.

Free Kick Coverage

Umpire and Back Judge: The Umpire will watch illegal action on the kicker. Move between the numbers and the hashmark. Move downfield no more than eight to 10 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action. If kick is to opposite side, move to the hashmark. Move downfield no more than eight to 10 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.

Note: After any change of possession, the offensive team's game ball always comes in from the press box side.

Before the Snap

Umpire: Rule on illegal movement by center and both guards prior to the snap, and be certain that the defensive team does not use words or signals to disconcert opponents.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Watch for illegal formations, including encroachment prior to the snap and false starts by tackle and players outside the tackle on your side.

Officials with counting duties must count and confirm their count with other officials who share the responsibility. The signals: thumb up for a count of 11, twirling index finger for more than 11 players, open palms below waist level for less than 11. All officials are expected to monitor the legality of substitutions.

Substitution Procedures

To help simplify the application of rules regarding substitution, consider that the elements for Team A involve either a huddle or no-huddle. If Team A is in a huddle and sends in a substitution, Team B must be alert and be prepared to react promptly.

In the absence of Team A breaking the huddle quickly and rushing to the line, Team B is not afforded any additional time to match up and the Umpire shall assume his normal position without delay. When Team A uses a no-huddle offense, the Umpire will be primary in spotting the ball. For consistency, the officials shall not significantly increase the pace of spotting the football for teams seeking to snap the ball as soon as possible. The Umpire should neither sprint nor walk but move throughout the game at a consistent pace that puts neither team at a disadvantage. After the ball is properly spotted, the Umpire looks to the Referee to determine if he must remain near the ball to prevent the snap or if he may assume his normal position.

The Referee will manage the no huddle substitution process and the Umpire must assume all responsibility to prevent the snap as determined by the Referee. The Referee must assume his normal position as soon as possible in order to manage the process described below. The Umpire is not required to count the number of players on offense as his primary responsibility is to prevent a quick snap prior to the defense being allowed to complete their substitution under Rule 3-5-2- e and then to assume his position as quickly as possible once cleared by the Referee.

If Team A is in a no-huddle formation and sends in substitutes, or if Team A has already broken the huddle and a substitute then enters the field, Rule 3-5-2-e goes into effect: Team A is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious intent 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.

If Team A does not substitute and is in hurry-up mode, Team B must be prepared to react promptly and is not afforded any match-up provisions. The following mechanics will be used:

- The Referee is primarily responsible to use signal 012 when Team A is substituting and Team B is allowed a match-up opportunity.
- Officials on the Team A sideline should also be aware of and shall signal (012) when Team A substitutes. Officials on the opposite side, as well as the Back Judge, may also assist in recognition by the Referee.
- The Umpire shall check with the Referee prior to leaving the ball after placement. Should he notice the Referee with extended hands at any point, he should remain in the vicinity of the ball or return to the vicinity of the ball until the Referee clears him by dropping his

extended hands and pointing at him. While waiting for the signal, the Umpire should make note of the best exit route to be clear of players when the ball is snapped.

- Once the Referee initiates the substitution rule by extending his arms, he monitors the offensive substitution until it is obvious who the replaced player(s) are and they begin leaving the field. He then observes the defense to allow them reasonable time to match up, position its players and allow replaced players to leave the field.
- If Team A substitutes so late that the play clock expires while Team B, reacting promptly, was not in position prior to the play clock expiring, the offense is responsible for and will be penalized for delay of game.
- The Umpire should be alert for the Referee signals for late substitutions. If the Umpire is remiss the Referee must move in quickly to prevent the snap. The Umpire should then assume a position in the vicinity of the ball as the Referee returns to his position prior to the snap.
- If the officials are delayed in getting to the ball to prevent a snap, the officials will stop the game and warn Team A that it must allow Team B the opportunity to substitute. Further attempts by Team A to create a defensive disadvantage in that manner will result in a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Any official should be prepared to step in and shut down a play that violates the substitution rule.

Other Substitution Provisions

- If Team A breaks the huddle with 12, it is an immediate foul; if Team A fails to send the replaced player out of the huddle more than three seconds after the substitute enters the huddle, it is an immediate foul. Therefore, the Referee must count players while they are still in the huddle. Too often, teams are allowed to break the huddle with more than 11 players and a foul is not called until the snap is imminent.
- If the replaced player clearly leaves the huddle first, and then the huddle breaks and is not hurrying to the line of scrimmage before the substitute leaves the field, Team A has met its requirements and Team B must be prepared to play in a normal manner.
- When a Team A player enters the game having changed jersey numbers, he must report to the Referee. The Referee uses his microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing head coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. Team A must complete the process before the play clock expires. During the process, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped. Normal substitution rules still apply.
- When a Team B player enters the game having changed jersey numbers, he must report to the Referee. The Referee uses his microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing head coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. The player must complete the process and get into position on his side of the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped or be subject to a foul. During the process, if the ball is ready, the officials will not prevent Team A from snapping the ball. Normal substitution rules still apply.
- These procedures, which are intended to prevent the defense from being unable to match up during normal scrimmage situations, should not be used in the case of substitution for a last-second field goal. In that situation, the offense is making a normal and not unexpected personnel change. The defense should be prepared to respond appropriately. In no case should the Umpire be standing over the ball to prevent the snap as the clock runs out.

Goal Line Positioning and Zones

Referee: Starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. Signal a score only if you're positive all requirements have been met. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yardline, you are responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward.

Umpire: Starting position needn't be as deep as scrimmage plays. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yardline, you are primarily responsible for the line of scrimmage in determining if the passer was beyond the line of scrimmage and if the pass is beyond the line of scrimmage.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. You are responsible for the goal line when the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's **seven yardline**. In order to rule on a score, you must be on the goal line. Be alert for a pass.

Side Judge and Field Judge: When the ball is snapped outside Team B's 25 yardline, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped from inside Team B's 25 yardline to Team B's **seven yardline**, starting position is on the goal line at the pylon and you are responsible for the goal line. You should never take an initial position between the five yardline and the goal line. In order to rule on a score, you must be on the goal line. When the ball is snapped from Team B's **seven yardline** in, starting position is on the endline where it intersects with the sideline.

Back Judge: When the ball is snapped outside **Team B's 25 yardline**, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped **on or inside Team B's 25 yardline to the goal line, starting position is on the endline.** You may get help from the deep wings on passes to the corners of the end zone. When the ball is snapped from Team B's **seven yardline in**, you will get help on the endline from the deep wings. If necessary on a close play, look through and coordinate with the official facing the receiver.

Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own three yardline, the Head Linesman and Line Judge must use reverse goal line mechanics. Move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If the snap is between the three and five yardline, the Line Judge retreats immediately to the goal line and the Head Linesman reads the play and retreats to the goal line if necessary. **If the ball is snapped between Team A's five and 10 yardlines, the Line Judge should be prepared to move to the goal line if the play dictates.** Remember that a Team A runner must advance the ball completely over the goal line to avoid a safety. Be alert for fumbles and know which team provided the impetus for a ball that goes into the end zone.

Punts

If initial starting position is on the goal line, Field Judge and Side Judge must remain on the goal line until it is no longer threatened. If initial position is not on the goal line, Field Judge and Side Judge must move immediately to the goal line should it be threatened at any point during the down. If all deep officials are lined up on the goal line and there is a short kick, the Back Judge has primary responsibility for the ball and must leave the goal line if necessary.

Note: **There is a new signal for a TV or media timeout – Punch-out T**

Intermission between Halves

With five minutes left in the intermission, the Side Judge and Head Linesman and Field Judge and Line Judge go to the locker rooms to alert the same teams they had for the coin toss. The coaches' second-half options may be obtained either in the locker room or on the field before the second half.

Targeting Fouls

In cases of a targeting foul, the calling official must determine if the action would have been a foul if targeting were not involved. If the targeting foul does include another foul, both fouls must be reported to the Referee. The Referee will then announce both fouls. For example, "Personal foul, kick catch interference, with targeting, kicking team, (player number), 15-yard penalty. By rule, (player number) is disqualified. The play is under review." The signals should be coordinated with the announcement. In the example above, that would be signals 38, 33, 24 and 47. If targeting is the only reason there is a foul on a defenseless passer, do not announce roughing the passer.

Enforcement

When fouls are committed that require enforcement at the next free kick, the Referee make the announcement and point to the spot of the free kick. The **Back Judge** will enforce the penalty at the succeeding spot without signaling.