



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

SIDELINE MANAGEMENT

A small minority of coaches continue to come on to the field of play regularly during the course of a game, in clear violation of the rules. This conduct not only interferes with the orderly management of the game, it also creates an unfavorable public perception.

The purpose of this memorandum is to review the rules that govern when coaches are allowed on the field of play, and to advise everyone that there will be an emphasis nationally to apply these rules fairly and consistently.

The applicable rules are clear:

1. **“During the game, coaches...shall not be on the field of play....without permission of the referee.”** *Rule 9-2-1-b-1* **NOTE:** Coaches who enter the field of play to question, protest or otherwise demonstrate disagreement with an officiating decision are subject to an immediate 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct. This unsportsmanlike conduct foul counts as one of the two leading to disqualification from the game. (*Rule 9-2-6*)

Penalty – Unsportsmanlike conduct. Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B.

2. **“While the ball is alive and during the continuing action after the ball has been declared dead, coaches... must be behind the coaching line.”** *Rule 9-2-5-a*

Violations of these rules will result in the following progressive penalty protocol:

- First Occurrence: **Official warning**
- Second and Third Occurrences: **Delay of Game, 5-yard penalty**
- Subsequent Occurrences: **Team Unsportsmanlike Conduct; 15-yard penalty**

3. Exceptions to these rules allow coaches to enter the field of play, but only in specific limited situations:

- After the ball becomes dead, head coaches may enter the field of play to attend to an injured player.
- During timeouts coaches may enter the field of play near the sideline to communicate with players. These team huddles should not extend beyond the bottom of the numbers.
- If the ball is being snapped from beyond the team area, the head coach may leave the coaching box to request a time-out or to initiate an instant replay

challenge. He must stay “in the white” and move directly to the nearest official on his sideline.

These are the only situations in which coaches are permitted to enter the field of play.

Coaches are not allowed to enter the field of play to call plays, to congratulate players, to follow a play down the field, to get a better look at the action, or to communicate with game officials. They are allowed to move down the sideline off the field of play beyond the team area **only** to request a timeout or to initiate an instant replay challenge.

4. Physical interference with an official during a play results in an automatic 15-yard penalty. The applicable rule is:

“While the ball is alive and during the continuing action after the ball has been declared dead, physical interference with an official is a foul charged to the team for unsportsmanlike conduct.” Rule 9-2-5-b

Penalty –Team unsportsmanlike conduct. Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B.

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February 2017