



## **COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC**

### **2019 NCAA FOOTBALL PLAY INTERPRETATIONS BULLETIN NO. 1**

#### **Illegal Wedge Formation – Rule 6-1-10**

**Play #1:** During a Free Kick from the A-35, the kickoff is high and deep towards the pylon where B22 is in position to make the catch. The ball (a) hits B22 in the facemask at the B-3 and caroms forward and out of bounds at the B-10; (b) lands at the B-3 and goes out of bounds untouched at the B-2. During the kick, B56 and B44 form a two man wedge at the B-40 yard line.

**RULING:** The intent of 6-1-10-d is that there is no foul for an illegal wedge if the play results in a touchback, a foul for a free kick out of bounds or a fair catch. Based on this interpretation, (a) foul for an illegal wedge formation. After enforcement, it will be Team B's ball 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 at the B-5; (b) foul for free kick out of bounds and no foul for an illegal wedge formation.

#### **Invalid Fair Catch Signal – Rule 2-8-3**

**Play #2:** During Team A's punt from the A-20, receiver B44 points at the grounded punt at midfield. As B44 points at the ball, (a) he keeps his hands below his shoulders with no waving motion; (b) he keeps his hands below his shoulders and has a waving motion; (c) he has his hands just above the shoulders with no waving motion.

**RULING:** Rule 2-8-3 states that any waving motion that does not meet the criteria for a valid signal is an invalid signal. Additionally, by interpretation the receiver is allowed to point at a kick as long as his hands remain below the shoulder and there is no waving motion. Both (b) and (c) would be an Invalid Fair Catch Signal. In (a), this would not be considered a signal at all, and Team B would retain the right to recover the ball and advance.

### **False Start – Rule 7-1-2**

**Play #3:** Team A has 3<sup>rd</sup> and 3 at the B-40. QB A12 is in shotgun formation, (a) makes a fake clap standing in position; (b) makes a fake clap while chucking his shoulders and hands forward in an exaggerated motion simulating the start of the play.

**RULING:** Rule 7-1-2-b-4-c states that it is a false start if the quarterback makes any quick, jerky movement that simulates the start of the play. In (a) no foul; (b) false start on A12.

### **Passes Crossing the Neutral Zone – Rule 2-19-3**

**Play #4:** QB A12 throws a legal forward pass, and receiver A88 first touches the pass when the ball is 1 ½ yards beyond the neutral zone. The receiver's back foot is not beyond the neutral zone.

**RULING:** The legal forward pass has crossed the neutral zone. Rule 2-19-3-a states that a pass has crossed the neutral zone when it strikes anything beyond the neutral zone. By Rule 2-19-3-b, A88 as a player is not beyond the neutral zone. Nevertheless, by Rule 2-19-3-a the pass has crossed the neutral zone since it was beyond the neutral zone when A88 touched it. The guiding principle on a pass crossing the neutral zone is the location of the ball when it is first touched.

### **Instant Replay / Dead Ball and Loose Ball Rule 12-3-3**

**Play #5:** QB A12 is hit while attempting to throw a forward pass and the Referee rules an incomplete pass. The ball hits the ground and bounces back into Team A's end zone where it goes into a pile of players from both teams that scramble for the ball. The ball is clearly in the end zone. After review, Replay determines that it was clear and obvious that A12 fumbled the ball.

**RULING:** There is no clear recovery by the defensive team, so a touchdown cannot be awarded. However, the ball is obviously in the end zone where someone recovered while grounded, making the ball dead by rule: safety. The on-field ruling of an incomplete pass is therefore reversed to fumble and a safety.

### **Targeting / Blind Side Block Rule 9-1-4**

**Play #6: This Interpretation replaces 9-1-4, III from page FI-60 of the 2019 Rules Book.** A44 is covering the kickoff that opens the second half. As A44 is running at the Team B 45-yard line, B66 targets and launches into A44 from the side, a blind-side block. B66 first makes contact with his forearm at A44's (a) neck; (b) upper arm or shoulder.

**RULING:** (a) Foul by B66 for blind-side block with targeting. 15-yard penalty at the end of the run. B66 is disqualified for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game. (b) Based on this year's rule change (Rule 9-1-18), this is now a foul for blind-

side block. No foul for targeting - Although A44 is a defenseless player and B66 targets him, the contact by B66 is not to the head or neck area. (Rule 2-27-14)

**Play #7: This Interpretation replaces 9-1-4, X from page FI-61 of the 2019 Rules Book.**

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:** Foul for blind-side 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.

**Blocking Below the Waist Rule 9-1-6**

**Play #8: This Interpretation replaces 9-1-6, VI from page FI-62 of the 2019 Rules Book.**

Defensive end B88 blocks below the waist against tackle A75 one yard beyond the line of scrimmage. The block is (a) directed from the front; (b) at the opponent's side.

**RULING:** (a) Legal block because it is directed from the front and takes place within the 10-yard belt. (b) Foul for blocking below the waist because the block is not directed from the front.

**Play #9: This Interpretation replaces 9-1-6, IX from page FI-62 of the 2019 Rules Book.**

First and 10 at the A-40. A12 takes the snap and starts on a sweep to his right. Guard A66 pulls and leads the play. As the play develops linebacker B55 blocks A66 (a) from the front at the thigh at the A-44; (b) from the side at the thigh at the A-44. A12 is driven out of bounds at the A-48.

**RULING:** (a) No foul. B55's block below the waist is legal because it occurs fewer than 5 yards beyond the neutral zone and is directed from the front; (b) Foul for a block below the waist.

***Steve Shaw, Secretary-Rules Editor***

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