



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2024 NCAA FOOTBALL PLAY INTERPRETATIONS

BULLETIN NO. 4

End of Half / End of Game Team B Substitution Fouls – Rule 3-5-3-b

Questions have been raised concerning end of half / end of game situations when the defense has more than 11 players participate in a down. There are scenarios where the defense could potentially gain a clock advantage by having more than 11 players on the field actively participating in a play. This action violates a guiding principle in our football playing rules, that there should be no profit when a team fouls.

Leveraging off a current Approved Ruling (AR 9-2-3 II, included at the bottom of this document), we are introducing a new play interpretation dealing with the defense playing with more than 11 players on the field in late in the half / late in the game situations. The goal of this in season interpretation is to eliminate the clock advantage for committing a substitution foul and take away any gain for the defense if they violate the substitution rule.

The new interpretation is:

After the Two-Minute Timeout in either half, if the defense commits a substitution foul and 12 or more players are on the field and participate in a down, officials will penalize the defense for the foul and at the option of the offended team, reset the game clock back to the time displayed at the snap. The game clock will then restart on the next snap. If the 12th defender was attempting to exit but was still on the field at the snap and had no influence on the play, then the normal substitution penalty would be enforced with no clock adjustment.

Play #1: 1/10 @ B-25. Team A snaps the ball with 12 seconds remaining on the game clock in the 4th quarter. QB A12 can find no receiver open, scrambles outside the tackle box and throws the ball away beyond the neutral zone and the play ends with 6 seconds remaining. The defense participated with 12 players on the field.

RULING: Foul by Team B for a substitution infraction. The 5-yard penalty will be enforced from the previous spot. At the option of Team A, the game clock will be reset to 0:12 and will start on the snap.

Play #2: 1/10 @ B-25. Team A snaps the ball with 12 seconds remaining on the game clock in the 4th quarter. QB A12 can find no receiver open, scrambles outside the tackle box and throws the ball away beyond the neutral zone and the play ends with 6 seconds remaining. The defense had 12 players on the field at the snap but B21 was hustling to get off the field and the ball was snapped just before B21 exited the field.

RULING: Foul by Team B for a substitution infraction. The 5-yard penalty will be enforced from the previous spot. If B21 had no influence on the play, there would be no clock adjustment.

Play #3: 1/10 @ B-25. Team A snaps the ball with 12 seconds remaining on the game clock in the 4th quarter. QB A12 can find no receiver open, scrambles outside the tackle box and runs for 10 yards and is downed inbounds and the clock is stopped with 6 seconds remaining. The defense participated with 12 players on the field.

RULING: Foul by Team B for a substitution infraction. There is no requirement to accept the penalty to have the clock reset. The offense may decline the 5-yard penalty and keep the option to reset the game clock to 0:12 and have the game clock start on the next snap.

Approved Ruling 9-2-3 II

Team A, trailing by nine points, has 1st-and-10 on the B-22 with 0:35 showing on the game clock. At the snap, B21, B40 and B44 blatantly hold, wrapping both arms around Team A's wideouts and take them to the ground. Quarterback A12 has no receiver in the route, scrambles and then legally throws the ball away. After the play, the game clock reads 0:26. The back judge, field judge and side judge have a flag down for Team B holding on each of their keys.

RULING: This is a blatant and obvious unfair act designed to take time off the clock. The referee will convert the holding fouls to an unsportsmanlike conduct fouls. Penalize half the distance to the goal. Team A will have 1st and 10 at the B-11. The game clock is reset to 0:35 and starts on the next snap. B21, B40 and B44 each have one unsportsmanlike foul counter.

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