



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2025 NCAA FOOTBALL PLAY INTERPRETATIONS

BULLETIN NO. 1

Tablets – Rule 1-4-11-a Exception 3

Play #1: Midway through the 3rd quarter, there is threatening weather in the area, and the Referee temporarily suspends the game and sends the teams to their respective locker rooms. Both teams take their tablets to the locker room to review the “in game video” and interconnect the tablets to projectors to display larger images.

RULING: This action is legal. With the 2025 rule change that now allows interconnection of the tablets to other devices to project larger images during halftime intermission in the locker room, by interpretation, this provision applies anytime the game is suspended and the teams are directed to the locker room.

Extra Periods – Rule 3-1-3-a

Play #2: After the conclusion of the 4th quarter, the score is tied and both teams go to their team areas, and the officials assemble at the 50-yard line to review tiebreaker procedures. The officials escort the captains to the center of the field and during the toss procedure replay pages down to stop the game to review action from the last play of the 4th quarter.

RULING: The review is not allowed. At the conclusion of the 4th quarter in a tie game, after the teams are back in their team area and the Referee has: (1) Cleared the final play with the on-field crew; (2) Cleared the final play with the instant replay official; and (3) There is no head coach instant replay challenge, the Referee will declare the second half ended. After the Referee declares the second half ended, there shall be no additional replay reviews from the previous play.

Touching of a Scrimmage Kick - Rule 6-3-3

Play #3: 4/10 @ A-30. A91's punt lands at the B-30 and is recovered by A80 at the B-25. After the ball landed at the B-30 and before the recovery by A80, the ball bounced forward to the B-28 and tipped receiver B21's (a) towel, (b) mouthpiece (c) hair (d) Velcro closure flap from a pair of gloves tucked into A21's pants.

RULING: Team A's ball, 1/10 @ B-25. In all the scenarios (a – d), B21 is considered to have touched the ball. The guiding principle is that a player and their equipment, including optional equipment and/or attachments, are considered as a part of that player. If a player is wearing it – they own it in terms of contact with the ball. This same principle applies to a player touching out of bounds.

Disconcerting Signals - Rule 7-1-5-a-5

Play #4: 3/1 @ B-40. Team A is in position at the line with the play clock running. Before the snap, (a) linebacker B54 walks up to the line of scrimmage and yells "hut", (b) linebacker B54 from his position claps to initiate a defensive stem, or (c) QB A12 yells "move" as a part of his offensive signals.

RULING: No player shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when the ball is being prepared to be put in play. In (a), (b) and (c), this is a dead ball foul, delay of game for disconcerting signals. In (a) and (b), Team B will be penalized, and Team A will have 1/10 @ B-35, and in (c) Team A will be penalized and will have 3/6 @ B-45.

Fourth Down Fumble - Rule 7-2-2-a Exception 2

Play #5: 4/Goal @ B-5. A21 runs to the B-3 where he fumbles forward into the end zone. The fumbled ball (a) is recovered by B21 in the end zone while he is down, (b) is recovered by A80 in the end zone, or (c) rolls out the side of the end zone.

RULING: In (a) the recovery by B21 results in a touchback and Team B will have 1/10 @ B-20, (b) the recovery of the forward fumble by A80 on a 4th down play makes the ball dead and it is returned to the spot of the fumble and Team B will have 1/10 @ B-3, and (c) the ball is dead and Team B is awarded a touchback and will have 1/10 @ B-20.

10-Second Runoff - Foul - Rule 3-4-4-a

Play #6: 3/10 @ B-25. 0:15 / 4th, Score A-17, B-20. No timeouts remaining for either team. Under pressure and while still in the tackle box at the B-35, A16 throws an incomplete pass which lands just beyond the neutral zone in an area where there are no eligible receivers with 0:10 remaining. B98 lost his helmet at the line of scrimmage during the play.

RULING: The foul for intentional grounding causes the clock to stop immediately and a 10-Second Runoff applies. After the runoff, the game is over. The foul is specifically covered by 3-4-4-a-3, and as it reads, if we have a foul that causes the clock to stop immediately, we have a runoff. There is no mention in 3-4-4-a of "the only reason" ... and 3-3-10-b definitely does not apply because the helmet off is clearly not the only reason the clock stopped.

Injury Timeout, 10-Second Runoff - Rule 3-3-6-f

Play #7: 2/10 @ B-45. Team A leads 24 - 21 late in the 4th quarter after the Two-Minute Timeout. A21 runs for 5-yards and is tackled inbounds. After the ball is spotted by the CJ, B74 falls down injured and the Umpire stops the clock with 0:52 for the injury. Team B (a) has one timeout remaining, or (b) is out of timeouts.

RULING: A21's run is short of the line to gain so the clock is running when the Umpire stops the clock for B74's injury. B74 must leave the game for at least one play and can return when cleared by his team's medical personnel. Since B74 presented as injured after the ball was spotted, (a) Team B will be charged a timeout and the clock will start on the snap (the 10-second runoff is avoided due to the timeout), (b) Team B will be penalized 5-yards for delay of game which will result in a 1st down for Team A, and Team A has the option for a 10-second runoff. If the runoff is accepted, the game clock will be reset to 0:42 and will start on the ready for play. The play clock is set to 40 seconds following the Team B injury.

Instant Replay Interpretations

Play clock scenarios:

All plays take place in the 4th quarter after the two-minute timeout:

Play #8: 3/2 @ B-42. Team A leads 24-21 and Team B is out of timeouts. A2 takes a handoff and is tackled at the line to gain (1:05). The officials spot the ball at the B-41. The game clock continues to run, and replay stops the game to review the spot with 0:10 on the play clock. After review the ruling on the field is upheld.

RULING: A, 4/1 @ B-41, reset game clock to 1:05, play clock 0:40, ready.

Play #9: 3/2 @ B-42. Team A leads 24-21 and Team B is out of timeouts. A2 takes a handoff and is tackled at the line to gain (1:45). The officials spot the ball at the B-41. The game clock continues to run, and replay stops the game to review the spot with 0:10 on the play clock. After review the ruling is overturned to a 1st down at the B-40.

RULING: A, 1/10 @ B-40, reset game clock to 1:45, play clock 0:40, ready

Play #10: 3/2 @ B-42. Team A leads 24-21 and Team B is out of timeouts. A2 takes a handoff and is tackled at the line to gain (1:45). The officials spot the ball at the B-40. The game clock is stopped, then wound on the ready, and replay stops the game to review the spot with 0:10 on the play clock. After review the ruling is upheld.

RULING: A, 1/10 @ B-40, reset game clock to 1:45, play clock 0:40, ready.

Incomplete pass at goal line scenarios:

Guiding principle:

When a replay review involves the ball in relation to the goal line, but there is no on-field ruling on that aspect, replay will conduct the review with the assumption that the ball did not break the plane.

Play #11: 2/G @ B-8. Early in the 3rd quarter, A80 attempts to catch a pass near the pylon, but the ball hits the ground out of bounds and the officials rule incomplete. Replays show A80 gain control, get two feet down and reach the ball for the goal line pylon before it comes loose. It is not clear whether the ball broke the plane of the goal line or not before the ball came loose or where the ball went out of bounds in relation to the pylon.

RULING: A, 3/G @ B ½, Ready. Whether the pass was complete and the ball in relation to the goal line/pylon are both reviewable aspects of the play. The receiver does complete the process of the catch when he reaches the ball for the goal line (act common to the game) so replay will overturn to a completed pass. Without clear evidence on the goal line/pylon aspect replay will default to no score/no touchback and put the ball short of the line.

Play #12: 3/G @ B-12. QBA1's pass to A87 is ruled incomplete at the goal line. Replays show A87 control the ball, get two feet down, and then reach for the end zone before the ball came loose. The loose ball is recovered by Team B in the end zone in the continuing action. There is no definitive shot that shows whether the ball broke the plane of the goal line before it came loose

RULING: Touchback, B, 1/10 @ B-20, Snap. A87 did complete the process of the catch, but without a ruling on the field related to the goal line, replay cannot put the ball in the end zone for a TD without clear evidence. The ball was recovered by Team B in the continuing action, so the ruling is overturned to a touchback. The ruling would be the same if the loose ball went out of bounds over the end line in the continuing action.

Play #13: 4/2 @ B-5. QBA1's pass to A87 is ruled incomplete at the goal line. Replays show A87 control the ball, get two feet down, and then reach for the end zone before the ball came loose. The loose ball is recovered by A80 in the end zone in the continuing action. There is no definitive shot that shows whether the ball broke the plane of the goal line before it came loose.

RULING: A, 1/G @ B-1, Ready. A87 did complete the process of the catch, but without a ruling on the goal line, replay cannot make this a TD. The ball was recovered by the non-fumbling player on 4th down, so the ruling is changed to a catch in the field of play.

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