



Media Center 4/16/2025 11:16:00 PM Greg Johnson

## ***Changes to injury timeouts approved in football***

*Playing Rules Oversight Panel also OKs limiting timeouts after third overtime*

The NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel on Wednesday approved modifications to the injury timeout rules in football, beginning with the 2025-26 season.

Under the new rule, if medical personnel enter the field to evaluate an injured player after the ball is spotted by the officiating crew for the next play, that player's team will be charged a timeout.

If the team does not have any timeouts remaining, a 5-yard delay-of-game penalty will be assessed.

The injury timeout proposal was made by the NCAA Football Rules Committee after many in the college football community raised concerns about strategies in which players fake an injury to stop the opposition's momentum or to avoid using an allotted timeout.

This has been a topic of discussion for the NCAA Football Rules Committee in recent years. Before the 2021 season, a framework was instituted that allows a school or conference to request a postgame video review headed by Steve Shaw, the NCAA secretary-rules editor/national coordinator of officials, regarding questionable actions involving injuries.

If it was determined that a player faked an injury to manipulate the rules, the offending team's conference was notified, and any possible disciplinary action could be made by the conference office.

The impetus for the rule change next season is to provide an in-game mechanism that can curtail the faking of injuries because Football Rules Committee members think these actions negatively affect the overall perception of the game.

## **Overtime timeouts**

The panel also approved a rule change regarding overtime timeouts. If a game reaches a third overtime, each team will have one timeout beginning with the third overtime until a winner is determined.

Previously, teams were allotted one timeout for each overtime period. At the start of the third overtime, teams alternate running 2-point plays until a winner is decided.

Football Rules Committee members want to keep the action moving once a game reaches a third extra period.

## **Other rule changes**

The panel approved:

- When the decision on instant replay is announced, the referee will only say that the call on the field is "upheld" or "overturned." The terms "confirmed" and "stands" will not be used.
- No offensive player can be in the direct line of the snap to the potential kicker or within the frame of the snapper on punts for the formation to qualify as a scrimmage kick formation. If a team is not in scrimmage kick formation, it must have five players numbered 50 through 79 on the line of scrimmage. Additionally, if the snapper is on the end of the line by formation, the snapper will lose scrimmage kick protection, and the opposition can line a player over the snapper.
- If any player on a kickoff-return team makes a "T" signal with his arms during the kick, the team gives up the right to return the kick, and the play will be whistled dead.
- Enhanced rules regarding simulating action at the snap and words or signals that distract opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play will also be effective next season. No player can call defensive signals that simulate the sound or cadence of the offensive signals. The defensive terms "move" and "stem" would be reserved for players on that side of the ball and could not be used by the offense.
- After the two-minute timeout in either half, if the defense commits a foul with 12 or more players on the field and all the players participate in the play, the officials will administer a 5-yard penalty. The offensive team would have the option to reset the game clock back to the time at the start of the play. If the 12th player is attempting to leave the field and has no influence on the play, the defensive team will be penalized 5 yards with no adjustment to the game clock.
- Coach-to-player communication, similar to technology implemented for the Football Bowl Subdivision last year, will be a permissive option for teams that compete in the Football Championship Subdivision.