

NCAA Football Rules Changes for 2004

In addition to approving an experimental rule that would allow the use of video replay to review officials' calls in games played at Big Ten stadiums in 2004, The NCAA Football Rules Committee made several other rules changes during its meetings in February 2004.

The rules changes for 2004 are:

Rule 1-4-5-m: A glove is a fitted covering for a hand having separate sections for each finger and thumb, without any additional material that connects any of the fingers and/or thumb, and that completely covers each finger and thumb.

Intent: To keep gloves with material sewn between the fingers and/or thumb out of the collegiate game. This rule would not prohibit the common practice of taping fingers together, so long as the tape is wrapped around the fingers. **Rationale:** Players are already skilled enough to catch the ball that they do not need the advantage that a web-type glove would provide.

Rule 1-4-9-c Exception 3: A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to cables that hang over the team area. **Intent:** To allow television entities the opportunity to use technology that provides audiences with more unobstructed angles.

Rationale: Television entities indicated that their camera angles on plays that occur at or near the sideline are often blocked by players, coaches, etc., in the team area. A camera, operated by remote control, attached to a cable over the team area provides a clearer view of such plays. It also can follow players running downfield close to the sideline.

Rule 3-3-4: When timeouts are not exhausted, an official shall allow a charged team timeout when requested by any player or the head coach when the ball is dead. **Intent:** To give an additional person the opportunity to call team timeouts. This responsibility cannot be assigned to an assistant coach and is not extended to head coaches that are not on the field.

Rationale: There may be occasions when the head coach may be closer to an official than any players. Allowing the head coach to request a team timeout also may enable a team to stop the clock faster in late-game situations.

Rule 3-5-2-e: While in the process of substitution or simulated substitution, Team A is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious attempt of creating a defensive disadvantage (Delete 'and snapping the ball').

Intent: To allow a defensive team to make legal substitutions based on the substitutions made by the offensive team. **Rationale:** The current rule did not charge the offensive team with a foul if it rushed quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious attempt of creating a defensive disadvantage until the ball was snapped. Consequently, defensive teams would either have to request a team timeout or not substitute, since they could not be absolutely certain that the foul would be called.

Rule 6-1-2-b: Allow Team B (receiving team) the option of assessing the penalty for encroachment by Team A during a free kick from either the previous spot or from the end of Team B's run. **Intent:** To possibly avoid a re-kick when it would be of no benefit to the receiving team.

Rationale: Currently, if the kicking team commits an encroachment foul (more commonly referred to as offside) and the receiving team accepts the penalty, a re-kick is required. Since special teams play ranks high in injury rates (according to NCAA Injury Surveillance System data), and additional kicks increase the length of games, adding this option may enhance player safety and maintain suitable lengths of games.

Rule 7-3-8-c-4: Delete the possibility of pass interference against Team B when a potential Team A kicker simulates a scrimmage kick by throwing the ball high and deep. **Intent:** To keep the receiving teams on punts from being penalized for defensive pass interference when its players could not be

expected to know that the ball was actually thrown. **Rationale:** Players on the receiving teams, particularly those guarding the kicking-team players lined up nearest the sidelines, are instructed to block those players legally as they go downfield. Occasionally, the kicking teams will have the punter throw the ball in a manner similar to a kick in the direction of its players. Once the ball is thrown, the receiving-team players who are blocking are at risk for defensive pass interference fouls. This change would eliminate that risk. The offensive (kicking) team would still have the option of throwing the ball in a typical fake-punt play. It also could still throw the ball high and deep, but would not have the protection of possible defensive pass interference fouls.

Rule 9-1-2-o: A defensive player who is blocked into the passer may not be penalized for roughing the passer. Intent: To exempt a defensive player who is blocked into the passer from being penalized for roughing the passer.

Rationale: A defensive player who is blocked into the passer does not have the control necessary to avoid contact, and should not be penalized. However, the defensive player is not permitted to contact the passer in other illegal ways covered in Rule 9-1-2.

Rule 9-1-2-q: No defensive player who runs forward from beyond the neutral zone and leaps in an obvious attempt to block a field goal or try, may land on an opponent. Intent: To provide kicking-team members protection from defensive players who run forward and leap while attempting to block kicks.

Rationale: While recognizing that defensive players should be given the opportunity to block kicks, the committee is concerned with player safety when defenders run forward and leap in their attempts.

Rule 11-2-1-d: The referee, if he is equipped with a microphone, will announce the number of the player committing the foul. Intent: To provide key information on players committing fouls faster.

Rationale: Officials already are required to report the position or number of the player who fouled to the player's coach (Rule 11-1-3-b). Depending on the circumstances of the game, it can take several plays for this information to be delivered to the coach. Using the referee to deliver the information provides all interested parties (coaches, media outlets, spectators, etc.) with the correct information faster.