



MEMORANDUM

April 26, 2019

VIA EMAIL

TO: NCAA Football Conference Commissioners, Head Coaches and Coordinators of Officials.

FROM: Steve Shaw, secretary-rules editor
NCAA Football Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: 2019 NCAA Football Rules Changes.

Included with this communication are the final playing rules changes for the 2019 season. These changes were approved by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel on April 22 after the membership comment period and go into effect immediately.

Thank you for your attention to this information. If you have any questions, please contact me directly (footballrules@ncaa.org).

SS:bh

Attachment

cc: NCAA Football Rules Committee
Selected NCAA Staff

National Collegiate Athletic Association

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**NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE
2019 Rules Changes**

The following rules changes received final approval by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP).

1. Targeting – Instant Replay Review - Rule 12-3-5

For a player to be disqualified and the Targeting foul to be enforced, all elements of a Targeting foul must be confirmed by the Instant Replay Official. There is no option for stands as a part of a Targeting review. If any element of Targeting cannot be confirmed, then the Replay Official shall overturn the targeting foul.

Rationale: This adjustment is being made because of the significant impact on the image of the game. The Targeting rule, since its inception in 2008, has positively changed student-athlete technique and coaching philosophy. This rule better connects the instruction to the on-field officials (when in doubt, it is a foul) and the instant replay official. In some cases, student-athletes were being disqualified without the elements of targeting present, due to instant replay philosophy and education. This carves out targeting separately and requires the instant replay official to review all aspects of the play due to the significance of the rule and penalty involved. Note that this only impacts games with an instant replay official; games using halftime replay are not impacted.

2. Targeting – Progressive Penalty - Rule 9-1-3 / 9-1-4

If a student-athlete receives a third or any subsequent targeting foul within the same season, that player is disqualified for the remainder of that game and the player would receive an automatic one-game suspension in his team's next scheduled game.

Rationale: This change continues the evolution of the targeting rule. In very few cases, a student-athlete has been disqualified for targeting more than two times in the same season. This underscores the need for coaches and student-athletes to review their approach after any targeting penalty.

3. Kickoff – Illegal Wedge Formation - Rule 6-1-10

A wedge is defined as two or more players aligned shoulder to shoulder within two yards of each other.

For a Free-kick down only: After the ball has been kicked, it is illegal for two or more members of the receiving team intentionally to form a wedge for the purpose of blocking for the ball carrier. This is a live-ball foul, whether or not there is contact between opponents. There is no foul if the play results in a Touchback, Free Kick Out of Bounds or Fair Catch.

Rationale: This change is being made for student-athlete safety reasons.

4. Blind Side Block – Rule 2-3-7 and Rule 9-1-18

A blind side block is defined as an open field block against an opponent that is initiated from outside the opponent's field of vision, or otherwise in such a manner that the opponent cannot

reasonably defend himself against the block. (Exceptions: (1) the runner; (2) a receiver in the act of attempting to make a catch.)

It is a Personal Foul if a player delivers a blind-side block by attacking an opponent with forcible contact. **Note:** In addition, if this action meets all the elements of targeting, it is a blind-slide block with targeting (Rule 9-1-3 / 9-1-4).

Rationale: This change is being made for student-athlete safety reasons.

5. Overtime Scoring - Rule 3-1-3-f

There is no change to the first four overtime periods. Beginning with the fifth extra period, a team's possession series will be one play for a two-point try from the three-yard line, unless relocated by penalty.

In the absence of a media timeout, after the second and fourth extra period, there will be a two-minute mandatory break period.

Rationale: This is a small adjustment to the overtime rules to end contests that go past four overtime periods more quickly and with fewer plays. This change is being made for student-athlete safety reasons.

6. Supervision – Officiating Crews - Rule 11-2-1-b

Officiating crews, including the Instant Replay Official, will be assigned from the same officiating organization (effective August 1, 2020).

Rationale: This clarifies that the instant replay official and function is to be managed by the same entity that is assigning the on-field officials for consistency and proper management of this important function.

7. Blocking Below the Waist - Defense - Rule 9-1-6-b

When the defense is allowed to block below the waist by rule, the block must be directed from the front. This now lines up with the offensive team's requirement.

Rationale: This adjustment will align the rules appropriately for both the offensive and defensive teams.

*Steve Shaw, Secretary-Rules Editor
April 2019*