



REPORT OF THE
NCAA FOOTBALL RULES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25-27, 2025, ANNUAL MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items. The Football Rules Committee approved the following rules change proposals for the 2025 season. The Football Rules Committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel for the following items:

a. Injury timeout – feigning injuries (Rule 3-3-6).

1. Recommendation. Amend injury timeout language for feigning injuries as follows:

Injury Timeout

ARTICLE 6. a. In the event of an injured player(s):

1. An official will declare a timeout and the player(s) must leave the game. That player must remain out of the game for at least one down, even if that team is granted a team timeout. When in question, officials will take a timeout for an injured player. If a player presents as injured after the ball is spotted by officials, that team will be charged a Team Timeout or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used (A.R. 3-3-6 X-XI).
2. The player(s) may not return to the game until receiving approval of professional medical personnel designated by their institution.

2. Effective date. Immediately.

3. Rationale. The injury timeout is an important tool for game officials to stop the game to allow medical personnel to enter the field and treat a player. In recent years, some have used this timeout allowance to gain an advantage, in some cases without a legitimate injury present. This proposal is an attempt to curb the use of an injury timeout to gain an unfair advantage.

4. Estimated budget impact. None.

5. Student-athlete impact. None.

b. Extra periods – timeouts (Rule 3-1-3-h).

1. Recommendation. Amend language for timeouts during extra periods as follows:

- h. Timeouts. Each team shall be allowed one timeout for the first and second extra period. Each team will be allowed one timeout beginning with the third extra period until the game is ended. (Rule 3-3-8) Timeouts not used during the regulation periods may not be carried over into the extra period(s). Unused extra-period timeouts may not be carried over to other extra periods. Timeouts between periods shall be charged to the succeeding period.
- Radio and television timeouts are permitted only after the first and second extra periods. Charged team timeouts may not be extended for radio and television purposes. The extra period(s) begins when the ball is first snapped.
- In the absence of a media timeout, after the second ~~and fourth~~ extra period, there will be a two-minute mandatory break period.
2. Effective date. Immediately.
3. Rationale. In the rare cases where more than two overtime periods are required to decide a game, this proposal is intended to streamline the process and reduce the number of further stoppages.
4. Estimated budget impact. None.
5. Student-athlete impact. None.
- c. **Instant replay – referee announcement (Rule 12-6-1-d).**
1. Recommendation. Amend language related to the instant replay process to allow for a decision to be either “upheld” or “overturned.”
- d. After the referee has conferred with the replay official and the review process has been completed, the referee shall make one of the following announcements:
1. If the video evidence confirms the on-field ruling or if there is no indisputable (conclusive) evidence to overturn the on-field ruling:
“After further review, the ruling on the field is upheld.”
2. ~~If there is no indisputable (conclusive) evidence to overturn the on-field ruling:~~
~~*“After further review, the ruling on the field stands.” (Exception: 12-3-5-a —*~~
~~*Stands is not an allowable ruling for targeting.)*~~
2. If the on-field ruling is overturned (Rule 12-7):
“After further review, the ruling is [followed by a brief description of the video evidence]. Therefore, [followed by a brief description of the impact of the ruling].”
2. Effective date. Immediately.
3. Rationale. This adjustment is intended to simplify the language around the instant replay process and focus on the ultimate decision, instead of spending time considering the difference between a play that “stands” or a play that is “confirmed.”

4. Estimated budget impact. None.

5. Student-athlete impact. None.

d. Scrimmage kick formation (Rules 2-16-10, 6-3-14-a and 9-1-14).

1. Recommendation. Amend language related to the scrimmage kick formation as follows:

Scrimmage Kick Formation (Rule 2-16-10)

ARTICLE 10.

a. A scrimmage kick formation is a formation with no player other than the potential kicker aligned within the frame of the snapper and no player aligned in the clear path from the snapper to the potential kicker, and with either (1) at least one potential kicker 10 or more yards behind the neutral zone; or (2) a potential holder and potential kicker seven or more yards behind the neutral zone in position for a place kick. For either (1) or (2) to qualify as a scrimmage kick formation, it must be obvious that a kick will be attempted (A.R.9-1-14-I-III).

b. If Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap, any action by Team A during the down is deemed to be from a scrimmage kick formation.

Defensive Linemen on Scrimmage Kick Plays (Rule 6-3-14-a)

ARTICLE 14.

a. If Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap and the snapper is not on the end of the line of scrimmage, any Team B player within one yard of the line of scrimmage must be aligned completely outside the frame of the body of the snapper at the snap (A.R.6-3-14-I and II).

Contact Against the Snapper (Rule 9-1-14)

ARTICLE 14. When a team is in scrimmage kick formation and the snapper is not on the end of the line of scrimmage, a defensive player may not initiate contact with the snapper until one second has elapsed after the snap (A.R.9-1-14-I-III).

2. Effective date. Immediately.

3. Rationale. These adjustments to the scrimmage kick formation are intended to address some unique alignments and better define this formation for rules application.

4. Estimated budget impact. None.

5. Student-athlete impact. None.

e. Invalid signal (Rule 2-8-3-b).

1. Recommendation. Include the use of the “T” signal as an invalid signal during a free kick to indicate no attempt will be made to return the kick by the receiving team.

Invalid Signal

ARTICLE 3. An invalid signal is any waving signal by any player of Team B:

- a. That does not meet the requirements of Article 2 (above); or
- b. Including a “T” signal given during a free kick; or
- c. That is given after a scrimmage kick is caught beyond the neutral zone, strikes the ground or touches another player beyond the neutral zone (A.R.6-5-3-III-V); or
- d. That is given after a free kick is caught, strikes the ground or touches another player.
[Exception: Rule 6-4-1-f]

2. Effective date. Immediately.
3. Rationale. Adding a relatively common signal that is used during a free kick to indicate the receiving team will not attempt to return the kick.
4. Estimated budget impact. None.
5. Student-athlete impact. None.

f. Defensive movement/disconcerting signals (Rule 7-1-5-a-4 & 5).

1. Recommendation. Amend language related to defensive movement and disconcerting signals as follows:
 4. Any player within one yard of the line of scrimmage (stationary or not) may not make quick and abrupt or exaggerated actions that simulate action at the snap and are not part of normal defensive player movement in an obvious attempt to make the offense foul (false start). (A.R.7-1-5-IV).
 5. No player shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play. No player may call defensive signals that simulate the sound or cadence of, or otherwise interfere with, offensive starting signals. The terms “move” and “stem” are reserved for defensive cadence and may not be used by the offense. The offense may use a “clap” as a starting signal and this signal may not be used by the defense.
- PENALTY [4-5]—Dead-ball foul, delay of game. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S21].

2. Effective date. Immediately.
3. Rationale. Action before the snap was a major point of discussion with the committee. These adjustments are intended to allow the offense and defense opportunities to signal legitimately for a fair start to plays, and provide coaches, players and game officials with clarity.
4. Estimated budget impact. None.

5. Student-athlete impact. None.

g. Substitutions (Rule 3-5-3-b).

1. Recommendation. Amend the penalty associated with substitution fouls after the two-minute timeout as follows:
 - b. Team B is allowed to briefly retain more than 11 players on the field to anticipate the offensive formation, but it may not have more than 11 players on the field when the ball is snapped. The infraction is treated as a live-ball foul (A.R.3-5-3-I-VII).
PENALTY—Live-ball foul. Five yards at the previous spot. [S22]
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 (A.R. VIII – X).
2. Effective date. Immediately.
3. Rationale. This change codifies an interpretation issued during the 2024 season to clarify participating with 12 or more players late in either half.
4. Estimated budget impact. None.
5. Student-athlete impact. None.

h. Technology – coach-to-player communications (Rule 1-4-11-b Exception).

1. Recommendation. Permit the use coach-to-player communications in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) starting in the 2025-26 academic year and permissive for Divisions II and III starting with the 2026-27 academic year.

Exception:

Coach-to-player communications through the helmet is permissive for the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) based on the following:

- Only one (1) player may be on the field per team at a time with radio receiving capability and the player must be identified by an unbranded green dot on the back midline of the helmet.
- Coach-to-player communications will be shut off when the play clock reaches 15 seconds or at the snap, whichever comes first, and will remain off throughout the down. When the play clock is reset to 25/40, the communications will be restored. If more than one green dot helmet per team is detected on the field by the game

officials, the result is a live ball 5-yard equipment violation penalty, and this penalty initiates a conference review.

- On free kick plays, the coach-to-player communications will not be in effect. There is no limitation to the number of green dot helmets for either team during free kick plays.
- A conference may develop a policy to provide guidance in handling situations dealing with communications failure (See Appendix I).

2. Effective date. Immediately.

3. Rationale. As communicated previously, this officially proposes the permissive use of coach-to-player technology for the 2025 season in Division I Football Championship Subdivision competition. The rules committee is also proposing the extension of this allowance to Divisions II and III starting with the 2026-27 academic year to allow for planning should institutions/conferences choose to implement. The committee will continue to gather feedback from Divisions II and III in this area.

4. Estimated budget impact. Varies depending on type of equipment used.

5. Student-athlete impact. None.

i. Technology – tablets (Rule 1-4-11-a Exception 3).

1. Recommendation. Permit the use of larger screens for in-game video for coaching during the halftime period while in the locker room.

3. Standard tablets for in-game video only is permissive for all football playing subdivisions and are subject to the following guidelines:

- Tablets shall be restricted to “in game video” (current game) and may not include analytics, data or data access capability or any other communications access. No other video is allowed (e.g., scouting video, practice video, etc.).
- Tablets may be used in the coaches’ booth, sideline, and locker room. Tablets may not be interconnected to other devices to project larger/additional images except during halftime intermission in the locker room.
- Video may include a coach’s sideline, a coach’s endzone, and a program feed per play from the current game only and may also display game circumstances including down, distance, time, quarter, play-number, and score.
- A team may have up to 18 standard tablets active, and all team personnel may view the tablets.
- Team personnel engaging an official with a tablet to show or review video is guilty of an automatic Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul.
- A conference may develop a policy to provide guidance in handling situations dealing with tablet failure (See Appendix I).

2. Effective date. Immediately.
3. Rationale. This adjusts current rules regarding the use of in-game video for coaching to allow for larger screen locker room use during the halftime period. Larger screens remain prohibited in the coaches' booth, on the sideline or in the playing enclosure for this purpose.
4. Estimated budget impact. Varies depending on type of equipment used.
5. Student-athlete impact. None.

j. Optional equipment – eye shields (Rule 1-4-6-c).

1. Recommendation. Permit the use of “nearly clear” eye shields without mirroring or reflective elements.
 - c. *Eye shields.* Eye shields must be clear, not tinted, and made from molded or rigid material. Eyeglasses and goggles also must be clear and not tinted. No medical exceptions are allowed. A manufacturer may submit a “nearly clear” eye shield without mirroring or reflective effects for review to the NCAA Football Rules Committee for the upcoming year. Neither the NCAA nor the committee certifies the safety of the eye shield.
2. Effective date. Immediately.
3. Rationale. In recent years, several institutions and conferences raised questions about the current rules for visors, which only permit a “completely clear” shield. This proposal allows a pathway to permit some newer designs without allowing an amount of shading that would impact the look of the game or assessing a student-athlete.
4. Estimated budget impact. Varies depending on type of equipment used.
5. Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome, introductions and establishment of committee leadership.** The NCAA staff liaison welcomed the Football Rules Committee and invited guests and reviewed the schedule for the meetings.
2. **Review committee structure, process and timeline.** The Football Rules Committee reviewed the committee operations manual, which included the NCAA conflict of interest policy, as well as guidance for committee members regarding meeting reports, notes and email, voting procedures, principles for rules writing, and experimental playing rules guidelines. The Football Rules Committee noted that this is a year in which any rules changes may be considered.
3. **Review of injury data.** The Football Rules Committee received a report from Avinash Chandran, Datalys Center, regarding the injury data collected in the most recent cycle. The report noted requested topics.
4. **American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) report.** The committee heard an update from Craig Bohl, executive director of the AFCA. As it relates to the rules committee, Bohl noted the proposal developed by the AFCA to deal with injury timeout concerns as an example of how he intends the AFCA to function. Bohl also offered support and expertise in other areas (e.g., kicking game, special teams, etc.) when helpful to the rules committee. Bohl also noted some staff changes that are likely to take effect soon.
5. **National Coordinator of Officials/Director of Instant Replay Reports.** Steve Shaw, national coordinator of officials, and Dean Blandino, director of instant replay, shared broad statistics and trends in officiating and the use of instant replay. The committee spent some time comparing different approaches to instant replay, including a streamlined approach (e.g., automatic reviews for scoring plays, turnovers, etc. but other items would be subject to a team challenge.). The committee plans to continue reviewing options for instant replay in conjunction with the conference coordinators of officials and administrators.
6. **National Football League – Competition Committee.** The committee heard a report from Steve Shaw, who attended the NFL Competition Committee meetings. The NFL data trends and a review of the new kickoff play used were the main focal points.
7. **Future Meetings.** The committee planned to reconvene after the membership comment period is completed and will resume its regular cadence of meetings after the rules cycle is complete.

Committee Co-Chairs: *A.J. Edds, Big Ten Conference*
 Kirby Smart, University of Georgia
Staff Liaison(s): *Ty Halpin, Championships and Alliances, Playing Rules and Officiating*

NCAA Football Rules Committee February 25-27, 2025, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Jon Drach, Union College (New York).	
A.J. Edds, Big Ten Conference.	
Thomas Hammock, Northern Illinois University.	
Doug Geiser, Ashland University.	
Jason Lener, Westminster College (Pennsylvania).	
Matthew Moore, University of Northwestern-St. Paul.	
Woody McCorvey, Clemson University.	
Steve Shaw, Secretary-Rules Editor.	
Kirby Smart, University of Georgia.	
Rich Wanninger, Patriot League.	
Eddie Weatherington, Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association.	
John Wristen, Colorado State University, Pueblo.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Dean Blandino, CFO.	
Avinash Chandran, Datalys Center.	
Keith Gill, Sun Belt Conference, Playing Rules Oversight Panel.	
Steve Marlowe, active referee.	
Jon Steinbrecher, CFO.	
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:	
Ty Halpin.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Geoff Bentzel, D.J. Brown, Amanda Conklin, LaGwyn Durden, Chris Johnson, Greg Johnson, Mallory Mickus and Kris Richardson.	