

NCAA FOOTBALL RULES
2009 PLAY SITUATIONS #3

1. Team A is granted a team timeout and gathers at the numbers near its sideline. Included in the huddle are coaches and 15-20 squad members. When the referee blows the whistle to mark the ball ready for play for second down at the B-45, 10 players trot into the offensive formation, but A88 remains at the top of the numbers as the coaches and remaining squad members return to the team area. At the snap A88 is one of four players in the offensive backfield. He runs a fly pattern near the sideline and catches a legal forward pass for a touchdown.

RULING: Live-ball foul, no score. Unsportsmanlike conduct, use of the substitution process to confuse opponents. Fifteen yards at the previous spot, repeat second down. Whether Team A has actually made any substitutions is irrelevant. They clearly are using the substitution process in an unsportsmanlike manner. (9-1-2)

2. Second and 10 at the A-45. Quarterback A12 is in a “shotgun” formation. All players are stopped for a full second when A12 turns (no false start) and begins to trot toward his sideline in apparent confusion about what play is to be called or whether the coach wants to request a timeout. He is moving parallel to his end line and is almost to his sideline when the ball is snapped to A45 who is five yards behind the snapper. A45 then completes a forward pass to A12 for a long gain.

RULING: Unsportsmanlike conduct for an unfair act to deceive the opponents. The referee may impose any penalty he deems reasonable. In this case the penalty is for a live-ball foul, 15 yards at the previous spot and the down is repeated. Second and 25 at the A-30. (9-2-3-c)

3. Third and seven at the A-40. At the snap guard A64 runs to the A-42 where he blocks a linebacker either before or after quarterback A12 throws a forward pass that crosses the neutral zone. Eligible A88 catches the ball at the B-49 where he is tackled. After making his block A64 does not go beyond the A-42.

RULING: Foul on A64, offensive pass interference; fifteen yards at the previous spot, repeat third down. Because he has not gone more than three yards beyond the neutral zone A64 is not illegally downfield. However, his block during a play in which a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone is offensive pass interference. (7-3-8-b-1, 7-3-10)

4. Team A is trailing 38-34. Back A43 runs for a touchdown as the game clock goes to 0:00 in the fourth quarter, making the score 40-38 in favor of Team A. Team A’s coach tells the referee that his team will not attempt the try.

RULING: Because the margin is less than three points Team A must attempt the try. The result of the try could affect the outcome of the game. (8-3-2-a)

5. Trailing 30-28, Team A is in field goal formation on third and 10 at the B-25 with the game clock stopped at 0:04 in the fourth quarter. The kick is blocked. As the ball is rolling on the ground linebacker B63 is flagged because he races toward the Team A sideline making vulgar, taunting gestures toward the opponents. By the time B89 recovers the ball while grounded at the B-20, the game clock reads 0:00.

RULING: B63's action is unsportsmanlike conduct, a live-ball foul treated as a dead-ball foul. Because the penalty can only be enforced after the down is over, in this case there can be no enforcement. The game is over. Team B wins, 30-28. (9-2-1)

6. B45 intercepts a pass and races down the sideline toward Team A's goal line. As he crosses Team A's 15-yard line he breaks into a "goose step" and prances into the end zone, drawing a flag from the referee. When B45 is seven yards deep in the end zone, A89 tackles him, resulting in a flag from the head linesman for a dead-ball personal foul.

RULING: The penalties cancel because neither has been completed. The try is at the A-3. The officials should note that the unsportsmanlike conduct foul by B45 is one of the two maximum such fouls by him. (10-1-5, AR 10-1-5-VI)

7. Third and seven at the B-35. The game clock is running late in the first half of a tie game.
 - (a) The quarterback spikes the ball as soon as he receives the direct snap, and Team A is flagged for an illegal shift because not all eleven players stopped for a full second before the snap. When the ball becomes dead the game clock is stopped at 0:09.
 - (b) A79 commits a false start and the officials correctly shut down the play, stopping the game clock, which reads 0:09.

RULING: (a) Team B will likely decline the penalty and accept the result of the play, which brings up fourth down. Regardless of Team B's decision about the penalty, the game clock starts on the snap due to the incomplete pass. (b) Team B will likely accept the penalty since the next play will be third down whether the penalty is accepted or declined. Regardless of Team B's decision about the penalty, the clock starts on the ready-for-play signal because it was stopped only to complete the penalty. (3-3-2-d-4, 3-3-2-e-4, AR 7-3-2-VIII)

8. Team A executes an on-side kick at its 30-yard line. At Team A's 36-yard line A65 blocks B23 in the front at the waist, and then A25 touches the ball at the A-38.
 - (a) The ball rolls to the A-42 where it is recovered by A88.
 - (b) B42 recovers the ball while grounded at the 50-yard line.

RULING: Illegal touching by A25 and a foul by A65 for blocking before being eligible to touch the ball. (a) Team A is in legal possession of the ball at the A-42, so Team B has two options: they may take the ball at the spot of the illegal touching (the A-38), or they may have Team A re-kick at the A-25 following the five-yard penalty for the illegal block by A65. (b) Team B has three options: take the ball at the spot of the illegal touching (the A-38); have Team A re-kick at the A-25 following the five-yard penalty for the illegal block by A65; or have the five-yard penalty enforced at the dead-ball spot, the 50-yard line (they will not choose this last option). NOTE: The illegal-touching spot is not an enforcement spot since the illegal-touching privilege is canceled if the penalty is accepted. (6-1-2-g, 6-1-3, 6-1-8).

9. B43 intercepts a forward pass in his end zone. He then throws a forward pass to teammate B21 who is also in the end zone where he downs the ball.

RULING: The result of the play is a touchback. B43 has thrown an illegal forward pass, for which the penalty is enforced at the spot of the foul. Thus the result of the penalty is a safety. (7-3-2-b, 8-5-1-b, 8-6-1-a).

10. Ball carrier A32 is driven out of bounds and into the Team B team area at the B-45. As A32 is trying to return to the field of play a person in business attire pushes him to the ground or obviously taunts him.

RULING: Team B is charged with either a dead-ball personal foul or a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. In either case the penalty is 15 yards from the succeeding spot. All persons in the team area are subject to the rules, whether or not they have an official capacity with the team. (1-1-6-a, 9-1-2 Penalty, 9-2-1 Penalty)

11. Second and seven at the A-40 early in the second quarter. A12 completes a legal forward pass to eligible A27 who catches the ball near the sideline and races toward the goal line, far ahead of any opponent. At the B-15 he turns and runs backward into the end zone, taunting his pursuers. After he reaches the end zone A27 punts the ball into the stands.

RULING: A27 has committed two clearly separate fouls for unsportsmanlike conduct and is ejected from the game. Team B may choose to have both penalties enforced on the try, both enforced on the succeeding kickoff, or one enforced on the try and the other on the succeeding kickoff. (9-2-1 Penalty, 10-2-5-c)

12. A night game between teams from different conferences is suspended in the second quarter when the stadium loses electrical power. After a lengthy delay it is determined that power will not be restored until at least the following day.

RULING: By rule the athletics directors (or their designees) of the competing institutions must agree to (a) resume the game at a later date, (b) terminate the game with a determined final score; or (c) declare the game a no contest. In the event that the institutional representatives are unable to come to an agreement on one of these options, the game is a no contest. The referee should file a full report of the circumstances with the commissioners and officiating coordinators of the two conferences. (3-3-3-c)