

NCAA FOOTBALL RULES

2010 INTERPRETATIONS BULLETIN No. 5

1. With the game clock showing 0:03 in the fourth quarter Team A is leading 14-12 when they kick off at the A-30. The ball is kicked high into the air. B20 is in position at the B-45 to catch the ball and gives a fair-catch signal. A80 directly in front of B20 jumps to try to catch the ball which hits his hand at the B-45 and falls to the ground, and several players scramble for the ball. The game clock reads 0:00 when the ball is finally recovered and downed at the B-40 by (a) Team A (b) Team B.
RULING: Foul by A80 for interference with the opportunity to catch the kick. The game clock was properly started when A80 touched the ball, since the touching is legal. Team B will accept the 15-yard penalty which extends the quarter for one untimed down. In (a) and (b) the penalty is enforced at the spot of the foul, Team B's ball, first and 10. (6-1-3, 6-4-1, 3-2-3-a-1, 3-3-2-a)
2. Punt receiver B44 is standing at his 30-yard line in position to catch the kick. Defender A11 races down the field to cover the punt and reaches a point about a foot directly in front of B44 as the ball descends. B44 makes the catch without having to adjust his position or manner of catching the ball because of the presence of A11, who does not pull back to give B44 more room.
RULING: No foul for kick-catch interference, since B44 did not have to make any change in his position or actions in catching the ball. His opportunity to make the catch was in no way impeded. Note that whether B44 gives a fair-catch signal has no impact on this ruling. (6-4-1)
3. Punt receiver B44 is standing at his 30-yard line in position to catch the kick. Defender A11 races down the field to cover the punt and reaches a point about a foot directly in front of B44 as the ball descends. B44 makes the catch after having to move to one side because of the position of A11.
RULING: Foul by A11 for interference with the opportunity to catch the kick. Fifteen-yard penalty at the spot of the foul. (6-4-1)
4. Punt receiver B44 is standing at his 30-yard line in position to catch the kick. Defender A11 races down the field to cover the punt. B44 does not give a fair-catch signal. Immediately after B44 catches the ball, A11 tackles him.
RULING: No foul for kick-catch interference. Without giving a fair-catch signal, B44 has no protection once he catches the ball. (6-4-1)
5. Fourth and 12 at the A-25. Punter A22 is in deep punt formation. He receives the long snap, circles to his left, and is tackled for a first down at the A-40. The 40-second play clock starts after the ball is declared dead. The Umpire correctly stands over the ball as both teams remove their special teams and send their offensive and defensive units back onto the field. After the Umpire moves away from the ball, Team A sends another substitute onto the field with about 10 seconds on the play clock, and the Umpire again moves to the ball to allow Team B an opportunity to

adjust. The play clock goes to 0:00. (a) Team B makes its adjustments quickly and the Umpire moves away from the ball with five seconds remaining on the play clock. (b) Team B is slow in making its adjustments, and the Umpire does not move away from the ball before the play clock expires.

RULING: (a) Foul by Team A, delay of game. Five-yard penalty at the succeeding spot: first down and 15 at the A-35. (b) Foul by Team B, delay of game. Five-yard penalty at the succeeding spot, first down and 5 at the A-45. (3-2-4-b-1, 3-5-2-e)

6. Second and 5 at the A-35. A89 is lined up on the line of scrimmage at the right side of the formation. At the snap he turns to his left and runs at an angle behind the neutral zone. QB A12 takes the snap, drops back, and hands the ball forward to A89 as A89 crosses in front of him at the A-30. A89 carries the ball around left end and is tackled at the A-45.

RULING: Foul, illegal forward handoff. To legally receive a forward handoff, lineman A89 must first make a movement of both feet that faces him toward his own end line. The penalty is five yards at the spot of the foul plus loss of down. Third and 15 at the A-25. (7-1-6-b)

7. Third and 15 at the A-35. Taking the snap at the right hash mark, QB A12 rolls out to his left, runs past the left hash mark, and then retraces his steps back to the right. As A12 reaches the right hash mark, directly behind the position of the ball at the snap, linebacker B55 grabs the back of his collar and immediately pulls him to the ground at the A-25.

RULING: Foul by B55, horse-collar tackle. Although A12 is inside the tackle box when he is tackled, by interpretation this is illegal. The spirit of the rule is to provide protection for the safety of a player who is “on the run,” as A12 is on this play. (9-1-2-p)

8. Team A has two players, Smith and Jones, who both wear uniform number 45. Normally Smith is an offensive back and Jones plays only on the kick-return team as a punt receiver. However, late in the game the Team A coach sends in both players as offensive backs. With both Smith and Jones in the game wearing 45, Team A snaps the ball.

RULING: Players wearing identical numbers is a live-ball foul at the snap that carries a five-yard penalty at the previous spot. (1-4-2-e)

9. Team A is in position for a free kick at the A-30. The Back Judge hands the ball to kicker A66 and then runs toward his kickoff position on the sideline. When the Back Judge reaches the hash mark, A66 kicks the ball.

RULING: Dead-ball foul for putting the ball in play before it is made ready for play. Five-yards at the succeeding spot. Team A will kick off at the A-25. (4-1-4)

10. Punt receiver B44 catches the kick at the B-15 and starts his return. To better position himself to block on gunner A89, B80 circles wide to his right and steps on the sideline at the B-30 before returning inbounds to block A89 above the waist during the return. Ball carrier B44 is tackled at the B-40.

RULING: Legal play. Although Team A players may not return from out of bounds during a kick down, there is no such rule for Team B. (6-3-12)