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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

MEMORANDUM

October 1, 2009

TO: Divisions I, II and III Supervisors of Football Officials,  
Conference Commissioners and Head Football Coaches.

FROM: Rogers Redding, secretary-rules editor  
NCAA Football Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: NCAA Football Clarification and Play Situations Bulletin No. 2.

Enclosed with this memorandum are the second set of play situations for the 2009 season. The committee hopes these examples assist in the understanding of NCAA Football rules. Each play includes the ruling and a rule reference to assist.

If you have any questions, please contact Rogers Redding, secretary-rules editor of the NCAA Football Rules Committee, via e-mail at ([footballrules@ncaa.org](mailto:footballrules@ncaa.org)).

RR:nkb

Enclosure

cc: NCAA Football Rules Committee  
Selected NCAA Staff Members

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N a t i o n a l C o l l e g i a t e A t h l e t i c A s s o c i a t i o n

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**NCAA FOOTBALL RULES**  
**2009 PLAY SITUATIONS #2**

1. Third and five at the B-30. Team B has no timeouts remaining. The game clock is running as Team A breaks the huddle and settles into a formation with several receivers split wide. Linebacker B57, confused by the offensive formation, requests a timeout from the Head Linesman. The Head Linesman erroneously signals timeout and grants the request.

**RULING:** There is no foul by Team B. The play clock is reset to 25 seconds, and as soon as possible the referee signals to start both the play clock and the game clock. (3-3-1-b)

2. Fourth and four at the B-40. Following the third-down play, Team A's players remain on the field apparently waiting for the coaching staff to make its decision about the next play. With 28 seconds remaining on the play clock, all 11 Team A players jog toward the sideline as 10 Team A players run onto the field and settle into a typical field-goal formation. A80 participated in the third-down play and jogs toward the sideline with his teammates. He does not leave the field but, undetected by the defense, stands behind the line of scrimmage within a few yards of the Team A sideline. When the snap goes directly to the potential field-goal kicker, A80 runs downfield near the sideline and catches a legal forward pass in Team B's end zone.

**RULING:** Live-ball foul by Team A, unfair tactics: use of the substitution process to deceive the opponent. No score. 15-yard penalty, previous spot. Team A will have fourth and 19 at the A-45. (9-2-2-b)

3. Third and 12 at the B-35. Team A makes no substitutions following the second-down play. Back A23, positioned at the B-40 between the hash marks, trots toward his team's sideline, indicating that his shoelace is broken and apparently intends to leave the game. He remains on the field very close to the sideline at the B-38, and the defense ignores him. At the snap, A23 runs down the sideline and catches a legal forward pass in Team B's end zone.

**RULING:** Live-ball foul by Team A, unfair tactics: use of equipment to confuse opponents. No score. 15-yard penalty, previous spot. Team A will have third and 27 at the 50. (9-2-2-c)

4. Fourth and 10 at the B-40. Team A punts from a formation in which there are five players in the backfield at the snap. A88 is the first to touch the kick when he reaches across the plane of Team B's goal line and bats the ball backward into the field of play. The ball rolls dead at the B-5.

**RULING:** The illegal touching spot is the B-20 which is a possible enforcement spot for fouls by Team A during the kick play. Team B may have the penalty enforced either at the previous spot, to give fourth and 15 at the B-45, or at the B-20. The latter would give Team B the ball, first and 10 at the B-25. (6-3-2, 6-3-11, 9-4-1-c)

5. Fourth and 10 at the B-40. Team A punts. A88 is the first to touch the kick when he reaches across the plane of Team B's goal line and bats the ball backward into the field of play. B23 recovers at the B-2 and advances to the B-3 where A45 tackles him by grasping and twisting his face mask.

**RULING:** Team B will decline the penalty for the face-mask foul and accept the ball at the B-20 on the illegal touching privilege. The B-20 is not an enforcement spot in this case because A45's foul occurs during the running play, not during the kick play. (6-3-2, 6-3-11, 9-1-2-q)

6. Fourth and 10 at the A-40. Team A punts and B33 signals for a fair catch. He muffs the kick at the B-25 and completes the catch at the B-30. During the kick B65 blocks in the back against an opponent at the B-45.

**RULING:** The result of the play will give Team B the ball at the B-25 (the spot where B33 muffed the ball following the fair catch signal). Because this is effectively the end of the kick, by interpretation it serves as the postscrimmage spot for enforcement of the penalty for B65's foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the B-15. (2-25-11-a, 6-5-1-b, 9-3-3-c)

7. Fourth and 10 at the A-40 late in the second quarter. Team A has five players in the backfield at the snap and punts. Receiver B22 catches the kick at the B-30 and is tackled at the B-45. During the return B55 clips at the B-40. Time in the first half expires during the down.

**RULING:** The option resides with Team B; they may allow offsetting fouls and have the down repeated, or they may decline offsetting fouls leading to completion of the penalty for the clip. However, if Team A declines the clipping penalty, the half ends and Team B will not snap the ball. In that case, only by Team B accepting offsetting fouls is the period extended for the repeat of the down, fourth and 10 at the A-40. (3-2-3, 7-1-3-b-1, 10-1-1-b, 10-1-4-Exc. 1)

8. Second at 10 at the A-40 late in the second quarter. At the snap B79 is lined up in the neutral zone. Quarterback A12 runs to the A-42 and completes a forward pass to A80 who is tackled at the B-45. Time in the first half expires during the down.

**RULING:** Offsetting fouls. The period is extended to repeat the down, second and 10 at the A-40. While the penalty for A12's foul would include loss of down, in this case there is no penalty because the fouls offset. (3-2-3-a-2)

9. Ball carrier A22 strikes the pylon at the right intersection of the sideline and Team B's goal line. He carries the ball in his right arm so that the ball is extended over the sideline. (a) The ball penetrates the plane of the goal extended (i.e., outside the pylon) before A22 touches the pylon. (b) A22 touches the pylon before the ball breaks the plane of the goal line extended.

**RULING:** (a) Touchdown. The ball is still alive when it breaks the goal-line plane which is extended for a ball carrier. (b) Not a touchdown. The ball becomes dead when A22 touches the pylon and belongs to Team A at the forward-progress point. (2-11-2, 4-2-1-b, 8-2-1-a, AR 8-2-1-II)

10. Ball carrier A22 is running near the sideline in an attempt to score. At the B-1 he is hit, the contact causing him to leave the ground such that the ball passes across the goal line extended outside the pylon. A22 lands out of bounds beyond the goal line extended.

**RULING:** Touchdown. By interpretation A22 is considered a ball carrier because his leaving the ground was not voluntary but was due to contact by an opponent. (2-11-2, 4-2-4-e, 8-2-1-a)

11. Ball carrier A22 is running near the sideline in an attempt to score. At the B-1 he goes airborne by leaping such that the ball passes across the goal line extended outside the pylon. A22 lands out of bounds beyond the goal line extended.

**RULING:** Not a touchdown. The goal line is not extended for an airborne player, i.e., one who leaves the ground voluntarily. The ball is out of bounds at the point where it crossed the sideline. (2-11-2, 4-2-4-e, AR 8-2-1-IV)

12. Second and 10 at the A-40. Team A has seven men on the line of scrimmage in an unbalanced formation with A89 to the right of the snapper and five linemen to his left. The middle lineman of the offensive formation is thus the second player to the snapper's left. At the snap A24 is stationary in the backfield outside the frame of A89. Quarterback A12 takes the snap and sprints to his right. A24 turns to his left and at the A-38 blocks linebacker B34 at the front below the waist toward the original position of the ball as B34 pursues the ball carrier. A12 is tackled at the A-48.

**RULING:** Foul by A24, illegal block below the waist ("crackback block"). Because A24 is to the right of the second lineman from the middle of the formation, he may not block below the waist toward the ball. The 15-yard penalty is enforced at the previous spot. Second and 25 at the A-25. (9-1-2-e-2, Bellotti-Redding: Blocking Zone Clarification, NCAA Memorandum, 9/4/09)

13. Second and 10 at the A-40. Team A has seven men on the line of scrimmage in a balanced formation with minimal "splits" between linemen. At the snap, A24 is in the backfield directly behind tight end A89 and outside the frame of tackle A77 (second man to the right of the snapper). Due to the tightness of the formation, A24 is inside the blocking zone, i.e., fewer than five yards to the right of the middle lineman.

**RULING:** A24 is not allowed to block below the waist toward the original position of the ball anywhere behind the neutral zone and within 10 yards beyond the neutral zone. Although A24 is inside the blocking zone, he is outside the frame of the second lineman from the middle lineman of the formation. (9-1-2-e-2, Bellotti-Redding: Blocking Zone Clarification, NCAA Memorandum, 9/4/09)