



2022 NCAA FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

(PROP Action April 20)

RULE CHANGE PROCESS

- Two-Year Rules Change Cycle
- 2022 Is an ON Year – Player Health and Safety and overall playing rules relating to football strategy are considered.
- Commissioner, Coordinator, AFCA, and Competition Committee Input.
- Rules Committee action on March 4th with PROP approval April 20th.



Pants / Knee Pads / Socks

(Rule 1-4-4-d & h)

- PROP not approved – sending back with comment to the Rules Committee.
- To reestablish a more uniform team appearance for NCAA football players and enforce mandatory equipment rules.
- Knee pads must be covered by pants. Furthermore, the pants and knee pads are recommended to cover the knees.
- Game socks and/or leg coverings must cover the entire area from the shoe to the bottom of the pants. Players are permitted to wear multiple layers of game socks and/or leg coverings, provided all players wear the same covering style and color in any particular game.
- (Exceptions: Unaltered knee braces, tape or a bandage on the lower leg to protect or prevent an injury, and barefoot kickers).
- This requirement will be in effect for the 2023 season for all FBS and FCS Teams. All DII and DIII teams must comply no later than the start of the 2024 season.



Uniform Expectations

(Rule 1-4-4-d)

- Officials will get involved when players uniform is significantly out of scope.
- No yardage penalty, but the player must leave the game for one down and can return when the equipment becomes legal (can buy back with time out).
- If equipment becomes illegal through play, the player not required to leave the game, but cannot participate until the equipment is made legal.



Illegal Block – Fair Catch

(Rule 6-5-4)

- A receiver that makes a valid or invalid fair catch signal during a kick and does not touch the ball and subsequently blocks an opponent has committed a foul.
- This block is not considered a personal foul.
- The penalty is being modified from 15-yards to 10-yards.
- If any personal foul is committed in conjunction with this blocking action, then the personal foul penalty enforcement will be followed.



Illegal Touching - Penalty

(Rule 7-3-11)

- No originally ineligible player while inbounds may intentionally touch a legal forward pass until it has touched an opponent or an official.
- The penalty is enforced five yards from the previous spot.
- The penalty will now include loss of down.
- New Approved Rulings will delineate issues between Intentional Grounding and Illegal Touching (and the progression).



Unsportsmanlike Conduct - Penalty (Rule 9-2-1-a-1 Penalty)

- The change to the Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty brings enforcement in line with the enforcement for Personal Fouls on pass plays.
- Namely, a Team B UNS foul occurring during a legal forward pass play may now be penalized with the enforcement added to the end of the last run by the offense if there is no change of team possession during the down.
- Previously, if the pass were to gain more than 15 yards, a personal foul penalty by the defense during the pass would be added on, but an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty would have to be declined.
- This rules change aligns these two penalty enforcements.



Defensive Holding – Automatic First Down **(Rule 9-3-4 [c-e] Penalty)**

- When the defense is guilty of holding, the penalty statement will now include an automatic first down.
- The previous penalty statement added an automatic first down only if during the play, the pass crossed the neutral zone, and the defense committed a holding foul against an eligible receiver during the pass play and the foul was beyond the neutral zone before the ball was touched.
- This change will simplify the enforcement of defensive holding by including an automatic first down.



Illegal Blindside Block

(Appendix F - Signal 28)

- Adding Signal 28, Illegal Blindside Block.
- This will follow Signal 38, Personal Foul.
- It is important that Referees include the word “Illegal” in their verbal penalty announcement.
- “Personal Foul, Illegal Blindside Block”.



Illegal blindside block



Feigning Injuries

(Rule 3-3-5-b)

- Feigning an injury for any reason is unethical.
- An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning an injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike, and contrary to the spirit of the rules.
- Past two seasons, rule initiatives have had limited success.
- For questionable game action, an institution or conference has the option to consult the National Coordinator of Football Officials who would then facilitate a video review.
- After the review, the National Coordinator will communicate any findings with the conference office for further action.



Sliding Ball Carrier

(Rule 4-1-3-r)

- When a ball carrier obviously begins a feet-first slide, the ball is dead as soon as any part of their backside is lowered.
- A ball carrier who slides feet first is protected as a defenseless player.
- Any time a ball carrier simulates or fakes a feet-first slide, the ball should be declared dead at that point by the on-field officials.
- The rule is in place to protect players who give themselves up and is designed to minimize contact.
- The simulated or fake slide is not a reviewable play.



Blocking Below the Waist

(Rule 9-1-6)

- Team A - Linemen with initial position completely inside the tackle box may legally block below the waist inside the tackle box on their initial line charge.
- A block initiated 1-yard beyond the neutral zone is considered within the tackle box.
- After the initial line charge, these linemen may block below the waist within the tackle box until the ball leaves the tackle box only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front.
- Stationary Backs lined up within the tackle box may block below the waist within the tackle box until the ball leaves the tackle box only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front.
- All other Team A players are not allowed to block below the waist.



Blocking Below the Waist

(Rule 9-1-6)

- Team B - Players aligned in a stationary position within 1-yard of the line of scrimmage within the tackle box may legally block below the waist in the tackle box on their initial line charge.
- All other Team B players are not allowed to block below the waist except against a ball carrier.
- All players are still prohibited from blocking below the waist after a change of possession or during a down in which there is a free kick or scrimmage kick.



Instant Replay – Clock Adjustment (Rule 12-3-6-b)

- The replay official may address any clock adjustment and status when a ruling is reviewed with less than two minutes in the second quarter or in the fourth quarter.
- For consequential game clock errors throughout the game, Rule 12-3-7 allows the replay official to correct obvious errors that have a significant outcome on the game, including errors involving the game clock whether or not the play is reviewable.



Targeting – Penalty Adjustment

(Rules 9-1-3 & 9-1-4)

- Targeting is a player safety rule and is in place to change player behavior in terms of the use of the helmet to target opponents and for protection of defenseless players.
- This change to the penalty component is to ensure accuracy when there is a carryover disqualification in games involving instant replay.
- This change is analogous to the current appeal process in games not involving Instant Replay.
- If a player is disqualified in the second half, the conference has the option to consult the national coordinator of football officials who would then facilitate a video review. Based on the review, if and only if the national coordinator concludes that it is clearly obvious the player should not have been disqualified, the conference may vacate the suspension.



Crown of the Helmet

(Rule 9-1-3)

- Currently the crown of the helmet is defined as the portion of the helmet above the level of the top of the facemask.
- New helmet designs dictate a change in definition, as follows:
- The crown of the helmet is the top segment of the helmet; namely, the circular area defined by a 6-inch radius from the apex (top) of the helmet.

