

## NCAA FOOTBALL RULES

### 2010 INTERPRETATIONS BULLETIN No. 3

1. Fourth and 10 at the B-32. Team A kicks a field goal. Linebacker B56 starts from two yards beyond the neutral zone, runs forward, and leaps in an attempt to block the kick. He (a) lands on the ground and barely brushes snapper A50 as he falls; (b) lands on either snapper A50 or teammate B76; **(c) is blocked by snapper A50 as he is coming down from his leap and then lands on any player.**

**RULING:** (a) No foul as the contact is incidental. (b) Personal foul. Team A may decline the penalty and keep the three points or accept the penalty to have an automatic first down at the B-17. **(c) No foul as the contact is caused by A50's block.** (9-1-2-n, 10-2-5-d)

*Note: Part (c) is a re-interpretation of Play 9 (c) on the 2009 Play Situations Bulletin No. 1, August 19, 2009.*

2. Second and two at the A-40. Quarterback A10 drops back to pass and, under duress, scrambles to his right and outside the tackle box. At the A-30 he throws a forward pass toward the sideline where there is no eligible Team A receiver. A10 intends for the ball to go out of bounds beyond the neutral zone extended. B88 rushes in from his defensive end position and is a yard in front of A10 when he bats the pass to the ground. The ball lands at the A-32.

**RULING:** Legal play; not a foul for intentional grounding. The intent and spirit of the rule are satisfied as the pass would have landed beyond the neutral zone had not B88 batted it to the ground. (7-3-2-f-Exc)

3. Second and two at the A-40. Quarterback A10 drops back to pass and, under duress, scrambles to his right and outside the tackle box. B88 rushes in from his defensive end position and is about to make the tackle at the A-30 when A10 throws a forward pass in the direction of eligible A22 who is at the A-38. The ball hits the ground (a) at the back of the feet of A22 who is looking downfield, not expecting the pass; (b) at the A-37 in the direction of A22 who is looking back at A10; (c) at the A-31 in the direction of A22 who is looking back at A10.

**RULING:** (a) Foul for intentional grounding—A22 has no reasonable opportunity to make the catch. (b) Legal play. A22 has a reasonable opportunity to catch the pass as he is looking at the passer and the ball lands one yard in front of him. (c) Foul for intentional grounding. The ball is thrown to the ground so far in front of A22 that he has no reasonable opportunity to make the catch. (7-3-2-f)

4. Second and four at the B-30. Ball carrier A33 breaks free and races toward the Team B goal line. He drops the ball just inside the one-yard line and, thinking he has scored a touchdown, circles through the end zone and toward his team area. There is

no touchdown signal by any official. The fumbled ball hits the ground just outside or just inside the goal line, rolls along the ground in the end zone, and is declared dead there when it comes to rest and no player attempts to recover it.

**RULING:** Touchdown. The ball belongs to the team last in possession at the dead-ball spot. By definition an awarded fumble in the opponent's end zone is a touchdown. (7-2-5, 8-2-1-c)

5. Second and four at the B-30. Ball carrier A33 breaks free and outdistances the defenders as he races toward the Team B goal line. He drops the ball near the goal line as he and the loose ball continue into the end zone. The Back Judge on the goal line signals a touchdown. In the immediate continuing action players on both teams try to recover the ball. The ball is clearly recovered in the end zone.

**RULING *With Instant Replay:*** If Instant Replay is being used at the game, the play is reviewable because of the clear recovery in the immediate continuing action. (If there is no such clear recovery the play may not be reviewed.) The score counts if the Instant Replay Official confirms the ruling on the field or lets it stand. If he determines that A33 fumbled before crossing the goal line and if he can determine indisputably which team recovers the fumble, then the result of the review is a touchdown or a touchback, depending on which team recovers. If the Instant Replay Official determines that A33 fumbled the ball before crossing the goal line but is not able to determine indisputably which team recovers, there is no touchdown or touchback, and the dead-ball ruling on the field takes effect. Thus the ball belongs to Team A at the spot of the fumble. (12-3-1, 12-3-3-d)

**RULING *Without Instant Replay:*** In a game in which Instant Replay is not used, if the crew determines that the Back Judge erred in ruling a premature touchdown, then inadvertent whistle rules apply. The ball is returned to Team A at the spot of the fumble. (4-1-2-b-2)

6. Second and 18 at the B-40. Before the ball is snapped tackle B76 lifts linebacker B55 and places him astride his shoulders.

**RULING:** Dead-ball foul, 15 yards at the succeeding spot. The action should be stopped whether or not the ball is snapped before the officials can react. Team B is penalized 15 yards and Team A will have second and three at the B-25. (9-3-5)

7. On the try at the B-3 the ball has been declared ready for play when guard A66 lifts his hand off the ground after the snapper has touched the ball. Nose guard B55 immediately fires across the line and strikes A66 in the neck with his elbow, knocking A66 to the ground. A66 retaliates by slugging B55 in the stomach.

**RULING:** There are three dead-ball fouls: false start by A66 and personal fouls by A66 and B55. The penalty for the false start is enforced and the two dead-ball fouls offset.

A66 is disqualified. B55 is disqualified if his action is deemed a flagrant foul. Team A will attempt the try at the B-8. (8-3-2-b, 8-3-3-d-1, 10-1-5-Exc.)

8. Fourth and eight at the A-35. Team A is in a scrimmage kick formation with A90 fifteen yards deep as an apparent punter and A22, A33, and A44 positioned about seven yards in front of him inside the tackle box as “personal protectors.” The ball is snapped to A90. As defensive end B88 rushes in A33 blocks him in the front at the knees. A90 then circles right end and carries the ball to the A-45 where he is tackled.

**RULING:** Legal play. First and 10 for Team A at the A-45. The block below the waist by A33 is legal because the ball was not kicked. (9-1-2-e-4)

9. The ball is dead following a play that resulted in a first down at the B-40. Eleven players of Team A, which runs a no-huddle offense, are going to their various spread-offense positions in preparation for the next play. The ball is ready for play when A22 runs onto the field from his team area, and after he passes the top of the numbers, he or the coaching staff apparently realizes that he is the 12<sup>th</sup> player. He then turns and runs back to his team area. The ball has not been snapped.

**RULING:** Dead-ball foul for a substitution infraction. By interpretation A22 has become a player by entering his team’s “effective huddle” and thus must remain in the game for one play. Five-yard penalty. Team A will have first and 15 at the B-45. (2-27-9-b, 3-5-2-d)

10. During a game between Middle State University and Riverfront College, MSU player Johnny Doe plays two different positions on offense. On occasion he is an offensive tackle, wearing uniform number 77, while at other times he lines up at tight end wearing number 88.

**RULING:** While the rules do not prohibit a player from wearing different numbers during a game, the change of numbers may not be done to deceive the opponents. To insure that no deception is inferred, the appropriate protocol is for MSU before the game to inform the Riverfront coaching staff and the press box that Doe will play at different times wearing the different numbers. (1-4-2-e)