



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

MECHANICS: Preventive Officiating and Unsportsmanlike Conduct

The guidelines for officiating unsportsmanlike conduct fouls by players are clear and have been in place for a number of years. Players, coaches, and officials should have no question when a foul has occurred. Spontaneous reactions to a great play are allowed as long as the specific act does not become prolonged nor violate the restrictions of Rule 9-2-1-a-2.

In the past, officials have attempted to prevent unsportsmanlike acts by rushing toward the player who has scored, intercepted a pass, sacked the quarterback, etc. There are several issues that arise in an official's zeal to prevent a foul. The official:

- appears over-officious by "attacking" a player who has done nothing wrong;
- narrows his field of vision making it difficult to discern the exact nature of the player's actions; and
- is put in harm's way when he enters an area where multiple players are excitedly celebrating a good play by a teammate.

Effective with the 2011 season, officials should not rush toward any player or players to prevent potential celebratory, unsportsmanlike acts. They should maintain a presence at a reasonable distance and observe the actions of the players. If the actions border on unsportsmanlike conduct, no foul is to be called and that information should be relayed to the head coach. If a foul is committed, a flag should be thrown without emotion or further action toward the player.

Note: These mechanics are for situations when the actions involve the players of only one team. If there is a threat of a foul involving opponents, officials should, as always, intervene to avoid further escalation, such as taunting or unnecessary roughness fouls.

Thanks to Coordinators Terry McAulay (Big East), Ken Rivera (Mountain West) and Steve Shaw (Southeastern) for developing these guidelines.