



MEMORANDUM

September 7, 2017

VIA E-MAIL

TO: Head Football Coaches.

FROM: Steve Shaw, secretary-rules editor  
NCAA Football Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: NCAA Football Rules Bulletin No. 1.

Enclosed with this memorandum are several play situations for the 2017 season. The committee hopes this information assists with the understanding of NCAA football rules. This information has been provided to game officials through the NCAA's officiating educational partner, ArbiterSports, on the College Football Officiating, LLC website (<https://cfo.arbitersports.com>).

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

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Enclosure

cc: NCAA Football Rules Committee  
Selected NCAA Staff Members

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**2017 NCAA FOOTBALL PLAY INTERPRETATIONS**  
**BULLETIN NO. 1**

**Leaping or Hurdling**

**Play #1:** Fourth and 10 at B-18 and Team A attempts a Field Goal. B21 is lined up at the B-12 yard line and prior to the snap begins running forward. At the snap, B21 is still running forward and at the B-16 yard line he jumps straight up in an attempt to block the kick. B21 (a) lands on A71 at the B-17 or (b) lands on his feet at the B-17. The field goal is good.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b), B21 has committed a foul for leaping. Team A can decline the penalty and keep the 3 points or accept the penalty and have 1<sup>st</sup> and goal at the B-9. Rule 9-1-11-b now has no reference as to whether a Team B player lands on another player.

**Play #2:** Fourth and 10 at B-18 and Team A attempts a Field Goal. B21 is lined up at the B-17 yard line and as the ball is being snapped, steps up and leaps in an attempt to block the kick. B21 lands on A71 at the line of scrimmage. The field goal is good.

**RULING:** There is no foul for leaping. Score 3 points for Team A. It is not a foul for leaping if a Team B player is lined up in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. (9-1-11-b)

**Play #3:** Fourth and 10 at B-18 and Team A attempts a Field Goal. B21 is lined up at the B-15 yard line and as the ball is being kicked, steps up and leaps in an attempt to block the kick. The field goal is good.

**RULING:** There is no foul for leaping. Score 3 points for Team A. Since B21 is not running forward there is no foul for leaping. (9-1-11-b)

**Free Kick Formation**

**Play #4:** Late in the game with the score tied, Team A lines up to Free Kick from The A-35. Kicker A10 places the ball down at the right hash for an apparent onside kick. After the Referee's ready-for-play signal, A10 approaches the ball and then picks up the ball runs to the left hash at the A-35, places the ball down and quickly kicks the ball. Team A legally recovers the grounded kick at the A-46. When the ball was kicked, Team A met the requirement of at least 4 players on each side of the kicker.

**RULING:** By interpretation, once the ball position between the hash marks has been selected by Team A and after the ready-for-play, the ball may be relocated only after a charged team timeout or before any re-kick. Live-ball foul. Five yard penalty from the previous spot and re-kick. (6-1-2) Had Team B recovered at the A-46, an additional option would be for Team B to snap the ball after a 5 yard penalty from the A-46. (6-1-8)

**Clock Status on Free Kicks**

**Play #5:** Team A lines up to Free Kick from The A-35, and executes an on-side kick. After the ball has traveled 10 yards, (a) B21 gives a Valid Fair Catch signal and makes a clean catch, (4-1-

3-g) (b) A80 is first to touch the ball and makes a clean legal catch or recovery (4-1-3-e) or (c) B21 catches or recovers the ball and immediately goes to the ground.

**RULING:** By interpretation, (a) No time will run off the clock, (b) No time will run off the clock, and (c) the clock operator shall start the clock when the ball is legally touched and will stop the clock when the ball is declared dead. (3-3-2-a)

### **Unfair Acts**

Rule 9-2-3 gives our Referee much latitude in handling obviously unfair acts during a game. This would include situations that arise when a team commits a blatant and obvious intentional foul or fouls to gain a clock advantage late in a game. As cited in The Football Code, such actions are in direct conflict with the strong statements under Coaching Ethics.

As a new interpretation, we should treat these intentional fouls as Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls and subsequently reset the game clock in these type situations back to the time at the snap on the play in question. We will also note that each player committing these unsportsmanlike acts will have a counter in terms of UNS. As point of note, this does not apply to intentional fouls committed during the course of the game, as the rules handle these situations quite well.

**Play #6:** Team A, trailing by 9 points has 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 on the B-22 with 0:35 showing on the game clock. At the snap, B21, B40 and B44 blatantly hold, wrapping both arms around Team A's wide-outs and take them to the ground. QB A12 has no receiver in the route, scrambles and then legally throws the ball away. After the play, the game clock reads 0:26. The BJ, FJ and SJ have a flag down for Team B holding on each of their keys.

**RULING:** This is a blatant and obvious unfair act designed to take time off the clock. The Referee will convert the holding fouls to an Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls. Penalize half the distance to the goal. Team A will have 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 at the B-11. The game clock is reset to 0:35 and starts on the next snap. B21, B40 and B44 each have one UNS counter. (9-2-3-c)

**Play #7:** Team A, ahead in the score by 4 points has 4<sup>th</sup> and 10 at the A-30 with 0:14 seconds remaining in the game. From a shotgun formation, A12 receives the snap, retreats back toward his own goal line, and moves out of the tackle box. At the snap, each Team A lineman blatantly holds the Team B player in front of them, preventing the defensive linemen from immediately rushing the passer. When rushers approach A12, he throws the ball high so that it lands beyond the line of scrimmage and out of bounds. When the pass hits the ground, the game clock reads 0:00. The U, CJ and R each have a flag on the ground for holding on Team A.

**RULING:** This is a blatant and obvious unfair act designed to take time off of the clock. The Referee will convert the holding fouls to Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls. Penalize Team A 15 yards from the previous spot. Team A will have 4<sup>th</sup> and 25 at the A-15. The game clock is reset to 0:14 and starts on the next snap. Each Team A lineman guilty of holding will have one UNS counter. (9-2-3-c)