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NCAA Rule Changes 2005

It's that happy time of the year when the new rule book is published. For the first time since I've been writing this annual paper, the NCAA Rules Committee has released the original memorandum of changes with its rationales for change. This has proven most helpful and helped reduce some of my occasional bewilderment.

This is a very quiet year with only 2 major rule changes and 45 editorial changes (plus a couple of signal changes). This year there is further tightening to the rules about clipping, a significant tweak to the new leaping rule, changes to fouls in extra periods, and clarifications galore, particularly in the area of unsportsmanlike conduct, where there has been further specification of prohibited behaviours in the hope that the rule will be enforced consistently. Disappointingly, a provision that would have allowed for spontaneous celebration amongst team mates, as long as it was not prolonged, taunting or did not bring attention to an individual, which appears both in the Rules Committee's original list of changes and the June 2005 edition of *Referee* magazine has not made it to the Rule Book. However, it could be argued that there was no need for a change, as the USC rule is designed to curtail individual behaviour and not team celebration, which is to be encouraged. Readers of *RefMag* (and other pundits) should be aware that an editorial change to the rule regarding cancellation of a score by a fouling team after a change of possession during overtime has also been extended to try downs during regulation. This renders as incorrect some of the examples given in *RefMag*.

Below are all of the major rule changes and the editorial changes for the coming season, together with some analysis of their implications. They appear here in the same order as in the rulebook, with the major changes first, followed by the editorial changes and the Approved Rulings. The wording is exactly as it appears in the book. As always, I am grateful to Dick Honig for checking over my work and adding a few comments of his own. My thanks also to Tony Martin of the Victoria Gridiron Officials Association for proof-reading the draft and helping to tidy up some of my more rambling commentary.

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Major Changes

Rule 9-1-2-d

A player in the rectangular area may not block an opponent with the force of the initial contact from behind and at or below the knee (**Exception:** Against the runner).

There are two changes to this part of the rule, one editorial and the other major. The editorial change, which is consistent across the whole book, replaces the legal clipping zone with "the rectangular area". This is because the major change to this rule trims allowable clipping down significantly, thus making the old term rather obsolete. Now, any contact by Team A linemen in the zone from behind must be above the knee. Therefore, the only time that it is legal to block from behind and at or below the knees is

against the runner (or simulated runner) or when the player turns his back on a committed blocker (the definition of clipping at any other point in the game remains the same as before). Remember also that the rectangular area is only in existence for a very short time, as long as it takes for the ball to be touched outside of the area, or for it to end up outside the area after a muff or fumble.

Rule 9-1-2-q

No defensive player, in an attempt to gain an advantage, may step, jump or stand on an opponent. No defensive player who runs forward from beyond the neutral zone and leaps from beyond the neutral zone in an obvious attempt to block a field goal or try may land on any player(s). It is not a foul if the leaping player was originally lined up within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped.

Last year's new leaping rule has been expanded by now prohibiting contact with players of one's own team. The basics of the rule remain the same. The foul only applies to scoring-attempt kicks when a Team B player moves towards the line of scrimmage from a position one yard away from it, jumps to block the ball and lands on another player. The NCAA Rules Committee feels that this can cause quite a devastating injury, hence the foul. Dick Honig advises that specific instructions have been given that if a player lands on another player who was attempting to block him, then the leaper has still fouled. This is a change from some earlier opinions and a complete change from last year. If the leaping foul is against the snapper and occurs within a second of the snap, then this is roughing the snapper, and the penalty may be carried over to the succeeding kick off (this has also changed from some publications). But, if the foul occurs due to contact with the snapper after one second, this is a leaping foul and not roughing the snapper. The penalty must be enforced on a replay of the down and cannot be carried across to the succeeding kick off. Dick also notes that even on a good Field Goal teams will take the foul – and a first down. This should make the foul significantly easier to officiate. Last year, it was often difficult to distinguish between players when it came to the contact: was it Team A or Team B? That no longer matters.

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
1-1-7-b	NCAA-affiliated officiating organizations shall use the current Football Officials Manual published by the Collegiate Commissioners Association.	NCAA-affiliated officiating organizations shall use the current Football Officials Manual published under the jurisdiction of the Collegiate Commissioners Association.	This and other similar changes acknowledge the fact the the mechanics manuals are now published by <i>RefMag</i> .
1-2-1	The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and pylons as indicated and titled in the diagrams on pages FR-15-16.	The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and pylons as indicated and titled in the diagrams on pages FR-18-19 .	
1-2-1-a Exception	All field-dimension lines shown must be marked 4 inches in width with a white, nontoxic material that is not injurious to the eyes or skin. (Exceptions: Sidelines and end lines may exceed 4 inches in width, and Rule 1-2-1-g).	All field-dimension lines shown must be marked 4 inches in width with a white, nontoxic material that is not injurious to the eyes or skin. (Exceptions: Sidelines and end lines may exceed 4 inches in width, goal lines may be 4 or 8 inches in width , and Rule 1-2-1-g).	Straight goal lines would be nice... This change recognises that multi-use fields in the States often already have wider goal lines marked.
1-2-4-b	The team area shall be limited to squad members in full uniform and a maximum of 60 other individuals directly involved in the game. The 60 individuals not in full uniform shall wear special team area credentials numbered 1 through 60. No other credential is valid for the team area.	The team area shall be limited to squad members in full uniform and a maximum of 60 other individuals directly involved in the game. 'Full uniform' is defined as being equipped in accord with NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations, and ready to play. The 60 individuals not in full uniform shall wear special team area credentials numbered 1 through 60. No other credential is valid for the team area.	Just in case there was any argument...

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
1-4-5-1	<p>Anything on the uniform other than a player's numbers; a player's name; NCAA Football logo; memorial recognition; the American flag; or institution, conference or game identification. No other words, numbers or symbols are permitted on a player's person or tape (<i>Exception:</i> Game information on a player's wrist or arm). Uniforms and all other items of apparel (e.g., warm-ups, socks, headbands, T-shirts, wristbands, visors, hats, towels or gloves) may bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark) not to exceed 2 1/4 square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. No sizing, garment-care or other non-logo labels shall be on the outside of the uniform. Professional league logos are prohibited.</p>	<p>Anything on the uniform other than a player's numbers; a player's name; NCAA Football logo; memorial recognition; the American flag; or institution, conference or game identification. No other words, numbers or symbols are permitted on a player's person or tape (<i>Exception:</i> Game information on a player's wrist or arm). Uniforms and all other items of apparel (e.g., warm-ups, socks, headbands, T-shirts, wristbands, visors, hats or gloves) may bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark) not to exceed 2 1/4 square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. No sizing, garment-care or other non-logo labels shall be on the outside of the uniform. Professional league logos are prohibited.</p>	<p>Prescriptions regarding towels are contained in the towel rule and this was a redundant and conflicting reference.</p>
1-4-5-n	<p>Gloves that do not have a securely attached label or stamp ("NF/NCAA Specifications") indicating voluntary compliance with test specifications on file with the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, unless made of unaltered plain cloth.</p>	<p>Gloves and hand pads that do not have a securely attached label or stamp ("NF/NCAA Specifications") indicating voluntary compliance with test specifications on file with the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, unless made of unaltered plain cloth. (<i>Exception:</i> Hand pads become subject to this rule in 2006.)</p>	

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
1-4-5-p	Uniform attachments [Exceptions: (1) On scrimmage plays, one white moisture-absorbing towel without markings may be worn by one interior offensive lineman, one offensive backfield player and a maximum of two defensive players. The towels of the offensive backfield and defensive players must be 4-inches by 12-inches and must be worn on the front or side belt. There are no restrictions on the size or location of the towel worn by the offensive lineman; (2) On free kicks, one white moisture absorbing towel without markings may be worn by a maximum of two Team A and two Team B players. The towels worn on free kicks must be 4-inches by 12-inches and must be worn on the front or side belt; and (3) Hand warmers worn during inclement weather].	Uniform attachments [Exceptions: (1) On scrimmage plays, one white moisture-absorbing towel without markings may be worn by one interior offensive lineman, one offensive backfield player and a maximum of two defensive players. The towels of the offensive backfield and defensive players must be 4-inches by 12-inches and must be worn on the front or side of the belt. There are no restrictions on the size or location of the towel worn by the offensive lineman; (2) On free kicks, one white moisture absorbing towel without markings may be worn by a maximum of two Team A and two Team B players. The towels worn on free kicks must be 4-inches by 12-inches and must be worn on the front or side of the belt; and (3) Hand warmers worn during inclement weather].	What would life be without the annual tweak to the Towel Rule. This one is a clarification. After all, what is a ‘side belt’?
1-4-5-s	Exceptions must be documented by an ophthalmologist with the request signed by the player’s head trainer, athletics director and the player’s parents or guardians if the player is under 21 years of age. The request is then submitted to a medical doctor designated by the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports for review (Refer to Appendix B [page FR-141] for the procedure to apply for an exception).	Eye shields that are not transparent and made from molded or rigid material. Exceptions must be documented by an ophthalmologist with the request signed by the player’s head trainer, athletics director and the player’s parents or guardians if the player is under 21 years of age. The finalized information is then under the jurisdiction of the head trainer, who then will determine when it becomes public information. (Refer to Appendix B [page FR-142] for the procedure to apply for an exception.)	There’s a two-fold change here. Eye shields must now be merely transparent instead of clear. Also, training staffs are responsible for determining the legality and safety of eye shields.
1-4-9-c-3	A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to cables that extend over the team area.	A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to cables that extend over the team area and field of play, including the end zones.	Finally, ‘skycams’ can extend over the whole field.

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
2-2-7-c	To catch, intercept or recover a ball, a player who leaves his feet to make a catch, interception or recovery must have the ball in his possession when he first returns to the ground inbounds or is so held that the deadball provisions of Rule 4-1-3-p apply (A.R. 2-2-7-I-V and A.R. 7-3-6-IV).	To catch, intercept or recover a ball, a player who leaves his feet to make a catch, interception or recovery must have the ball in his possession when he first returns to the ground inbounds with any part of his body or is so held that the dead-ball provisions of Rule 4-1-3-p apply (A.R. 2-2-7-I-V and A.R. 7-3-6-IV).	This change clarifies that it is not just the foot or knee that needs to contact the ground, as some officials were interpreting.
2-3-3-a	An obviously delayed block at the thigh or below against an opponent (except the runner) who is in contact with a teammate of the blocker, is in the act of disengaging from the first blocker or has just disengaged from the first blocker but is still confronting him. When in question, the contact is at the thigh or below (A.R. 2-3-3-I and II).	An obviously delayed block at the thigh or below against an opponent (except the runner) who is in contact with a teammate of the blocker, is in the act of disengaging from the first blocker or has just disengaged from the first blocker but is still confronting him. When in question, the contact is at the thigh or below (A.R. 2-3-3-I-V).	
2-3-5	The frame of the opponent's body is at the shoulders or below other than the back [Rule 9-3-3-a-1-(c) Exception].	The frame of a player's body is at the shoulders or below other than the back [Rule 9-3-3-a-1-(c) Exception].	This is part of the definition of blocking.
2-18-2-a	After the ball is ready for play, offside occurs when a defensive player is in or beyond the neutral zone when the ball is legally snapped, contacts an opponent beyond the neutral zone before the ball is snapped, contacts the ball before it is snapped, threatens an offensive lineman (who immediately reacts) before the ball is snapped, or is not behind his restraining line when the ball is legally free-kicked (Rule 7-1-5-a-2) (A.R. 7-1-3-VIII Note).	After the ball is ready for play, offside occurs when a defensive player is in or beyond the neutral zone when the ball is legally snapped, contacts an opponent beyond the neutral zone before the ball is snapped, contacts the ball before it is snapped, threatens an offensive lineman (who immediately reacts) before the ball is snapped, or is not behind his restraining line when the ball is legally free-kicked (Rule 7-1-5-a-2) (A.R. 7-1-3-VIII Note).	The foul that occurs when kicking team players are beyond their restraining line at the kick is now know as 'offside' instead of 'encroachment'. This brings the rule into line with the NFL, although the NFHS still has this foul as encroachment. Now, any breach by either team of their respective restraining line is offside.

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
2-18-2-b		<p>b. Offside occurs when players of the kicking team are not behind their restraining line when the ball is legally free-kicked (<i>Exception: The kicker and holder are not offside when they are beyond their restraining line</i>).</p>	
2-24-1	<p>Spearing is the intentional use of the helmet (including the face mask) in an attempt to punish an opponent.</p>	<p>Spearing is the use of the helmet (including the face mask) in an attempt to punish an opponent.</p>	<p>This is quite a significant change in that officials are now no longer required to judge whether or not the player intended to use the helmet, only whether or not he intended to punish the opponent. The only consideration is that the action should be an attempt to punish the opponent. Apparently some officials were reluctant to call spearing on the basis that they could not judge intent, and the Rules Committee have attempted to remove the need for that judgement from the rule. However, Dick notes that making the determination of a spear on a player that is on the ground is relatively easy. In the tackling situation it is more difficult. The fact that a player hits an opponent with this helmet is just not enough – did the player making the tackle intend to use his head or did the runner move such that it caused the helmet to make contact instead of the shoulder? Common Sense here tells us that you still have to read some intent in determining a foul in this situation.</p>

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
2-25-11	The postscrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. Team B retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the postscrimmage kick spot. Team B fouls behind the postscrimmage kick spot are spot fouls (Rule 10-2-2-e Exception 3).	The postscrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. Team B retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the postscrimmage kick spot. Team B fouls behind the postscrimmage kick spot are spot fouls (Rules 2-25-9 Exceptions and 10-2-2-e Exception 3).	Just a tidy up of the cross references.
2-31-4	The playing surface is the material or substance within the field.	The playing surface is the material or substance within the field of play, including the end zones.	Clarification.
3-1-3-g-2	Scores by fouling teams are canceled.	A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled.	This rewording is designed to capture unsportsmanlike conduct fouls into the procedure for enforcing fouls after team B possession in extra periods. There has been a concept that USC fouls occurring whilst the ball is live, like purely dead-ball fouls, are not considered to have altered the result of the play, hence the reason they are enforced as dead ball fouls. Because of this there was the practice that the rule as written, following this convention, would only apply to live-ball fouls penalised as live-ball fouls, treating the USC as if it did not happen during the down. The score would stand and the penalty would be declined by rule. This rewording makes it clear (and the following new example ensures this) that the score is also cancelled. There has been a similar change to Rule 8-3-4-b, which covers the same situation during a try. Remember, though, that this only applies during OT or a try.
3-1-3-g Example 4	Example 4 added	During the first series of an extra period, B37 intercepts a forward pass and has a clear field to the goal line when he makes an obscene gesture toward the nearest opponent. RULING: Team B's score is canceled and Team B begins its series on the 40-yard line (Rules 3-1-3 and 3-1-3-g-1, 2).	

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
3-3-7-a	A charged team timeout requested by any player or head coach shall not exceed one minute, 30 seconds (<i>Exception:</i> Rule 3-3-4-e-3). Any charged team timeout shall be 30 seconds in duration upon a visual signal of the hands touching the shoulders, made by the head coach of the team requesting the timeout. The signal must be made promptly after the timeout is requested. Other timeouts shall be no longer than the referee deems necessary to fulfill the purpose for which they are declared, including a radio or TV timeout, but any timeout may be extended by the referee for the benefit of an injured player (Refer to Appendix A [page FR-140] for the guidelines for game officials to use during a serious on-field player injury).	A charged team timeout requested by any player or head coach shall not exceed one minute, 30 seconds (<i>Exception:</i> Rule 3-3-4-e-3). Any charged team timeout shall be 30 seconds in duration upon a visual signal of the hands touching the shoulders, made by the head coach of the team requesting the timeout. The signal must be made promptly after the timeout is requested. Other timeouts shall be no longer than the referee deems necessary to fulfill the purpose for which they are declared, including a radio or TV timeout, but any timeout may be extended by the referee for the benefit of an injured player (Refer to Appendix A [page FR-141] for the guidelines for game officials to use during a serious on-field player injury).	
3-5-2-e Penalty	PENALTY —Dead-ball foul. Delay of game on Team B for not completing its substitutions promptly, or delay of game on Team A for causing the 25-second clock to expire. Five yards from the previous spot [S7 and S21]. The referee will then notify the head coach that any further use of this tactic will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul.	PENALTY —Dead-ball foul. Delay of game on Team B for not completing its substitutions promptly, or delay of game on Team A for causing the 25-second clock to expire. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21]. The referee will then notify the head coach that any further use of this tactic will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul.	Whoops. Big error in last year's enhancement to the illegal substitution procedure when Team A substitutes and rushes quickly to the line. Being a dead-ball foul, it should be enforced from the succeeding spot.
5-1-1-a	A series of four consecutive scrimmage downs shall be awarded to the team that is next to put the ball in play by a snap after a free kick, touchback, fair catch or change in team possession.	A series of four consecutive scrimmage downs shall be awarded to the team that is next to put the ball in play by a snap after a free kick, touchback, fair catch, change in team possession or to the offensive team in overtime.	This simply corrects an editorial oversight that left what goes on in OT in a bit of a limbo.

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
5-1-4-b	A player of Team B first touches a scrimmage kick that has crossed the neutral zone.	A scrimmage kick has crossed the neutral zone.	The continuity of downs is now broken simply by a scrimmage kick crossing the neutral zone.
6-1-2-a	Each Team A player, except the holder and kicker of a place kick, must be behind the ball (A.R. 6-1-2-V and VI) [S19].	Each Team A player, except the holder and kicker of a place kick, must be behind the ball (A.R. 6-1-2-V and VI) [S18].	Reflects the change in designation from encroachment to offside.
6-1-2-a Penalty	PENALTY —Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot, five yards from the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B after Team B’s run, or the spot where the ball is placed after a touchback [S19].	PENALTY —Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot, five yards from the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B after Team B’s run, or the spot where the ball is placed after a touchback [S18] (A.R. 6-1-2-VII).	Ditto.
6-1-2-b	All players of each team must be inbounds [S18 or S19].	All players of each team must be inbounds [S19].	Players who are out of bounds when the ball is kicked will now be treated as committing an illegal procedure foul, regardless of team.
6-1-2-d	After a safety, when a punt or drop kick is used, the ball may be kicked from behind the kicking team’s restraining line. If a yardage penalty for a live-ball foul is enforced from the previous spot, administration is from the 20-yard line, unless the kicking team’s restraining line has been relocated by a previous penalty [S19].	After a safety, when a punt or drop kick is used, the ball may be kicked from behind the kicking team’s restraining line. If a yardage penalty for a live-ball foul is enforced from the previous spot, administration is from the 20-yard line, unless the kicking team’s restraining line has been relocated by a previous penalty [S18 or appropriate signal].	The Rules Committee’s notes state that this corrects an editorial error, but it is unclear what other “appropriate signal” might be available, as the only breach of this rule would be that the ball has been kicked from beyond the restraining line, in which case the kicker is apparently offside.

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
6-4-1-a	This protection terminates when the kick touches the ground or is touched by any player of Team B beyond the neutral zone (Rule 6-5-1- a) (A.R. 6-4-1-IV).	This protection terminates when the kick touches the ground or is muffed by any player of Team B beyond the neutral zone (Rule 6-5-1-a) (A.R. 6-4-1-IV).	This change gives more of an unimpeded opportunity to the receiver to catch the kick. Protection now extends until the ball is muffed and not simply touched. Remember that muffing the ball is an unsuccessful attempt to catch or recover the ball that is touched in the attempt. Also remember that when a fair catch signal has been given, the protection still lasts for as long as the player has an opportunity to complete the catch. The protection ends when the ball touches the ground.
7-1-5-a-2	No player may enter the neutral zone causing an offensive lineman to react immediately. An official shall sound his whistle immediately [Rules 2-18-2 and 7-1-3-a-4-(c) Exception] (A.R. 7-1-3-VIII and IX) [S7 and S18].	No player may enter the neutral zone causing an offensive lineman to react immediately. An official shall sound his whistle immediately [Rules 2-18-2- a and 7-1-3-a-4-(c) Exception] (A.R. 7-1-3-VIII and IX) [S7 and S18].	This change corresponds with the splitting of Rule 2-18-2 with the new offside provision at the kick.

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
<p>7-3-2-f Exception 1 Exception 2</p>	<p>If, to save loss of yardage, a forward pass is thrown where no eligible Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch it. When in question, the Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch the pass (A.R. 7-3-2-I) [S36 and S9].</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <p>1. It is not a foul when the passer, who is five or more yards toward a sideline from the position of the ball at the snap, throws the ball so that it lands in or out of bounds beyond the neutral zone. (A.R. 7-3- 2-IX).</p> <p>2. It is not a foul when the passer, who is five or more yards toward a sideline from the position of the ball at the snap, throws the ball so that it touches a player, an official, or anything beyond the neutral zone.</p>	<p>If, to save loss of yardage, a forward pass is thrown where no eligible Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch it. When in question, the Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch the pass (A.R. 7-3-2-I) [S36 and S9].</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <p>1. It is not a foul when the passer, who is outside the frame of the body of the normal tackle position toward a sideline, throws the ball so that it lands in or out of bounds beyond the neutral zone. (A.R. 7-3-2-IX).</p> <p>2. It is not a foul when the passer, who is outside the frame of the body of the normal tackle position toward a sideline, throws the ball so that it touches a player, an official, or anything beyond the neutral zone.</p>	<p>This is a rewording of the intentional grounding rule. Rather than using yardage (which can be difficult to gauge), the NFL principle of the tackle box has been introduced. This should make it easier for Referees to judge the foul. Dick notes that when in doubt, the passer is outside the frame (there is no foul).</p>
<p>7-3-4</p>	<p>No eligible offensive player who goes out of bounds during a down shall touch a legal forward pass in the field of play or end zones or while airborne until it has been touched by an opponent or official (A.R. 7-3-4-I-III).</p>	<p>No eligible offensive receiver who goes out of bounds during a down shall touch a legal forward pass in the field of play or end zones or while airborne until it has been touched by an opponent or official (A.R. 7-3-4-I-III).</p>	
<p>8-3-4-b</p>	<p>Scores by fouling teams are canceled (A.R. 8-3-2-VII).</p>	<p>A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled (A.R. 8-3-2-VII).</p>	<p>This is consistent with the change made for a similar occurrence in overtime.</p>

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
9-1-2-d Exception 1-(b) Exception 1-(c)	(a) A player on the line of scrimmage within the legal clipping zone may not leave the zone and return and legally clip. (b) The legal clipping zone exists until the ball is touched outside the legal clipping zone or the ball is outside the legal clipping zone after a fumble or muff from inside the clipping zone.	(b) A player on the line of scrimmage within the rectangular area may not leave the zone and return and legally clip. (c) The rectangular area exists until the ball is touched outside the area or the ball is outside the area after a fumble or muff from inside the area .	This section has been renumbered with the addition of the new Exception 1-a, and the now-obsolete legal clipping zone has been replaced by the rectangular area.
9-1-2-1	No player intentionally shall use his helmet (including the face mask) to butt or ram an opponent (A.R. 9-1-2-XVI).	No player shall use his helmet (including the face mask) to butt or ram an opponent in an attempt to punish him (A.R. 9-1-2-XVI).	This is a clean up of the wording of the rule, as well as bringing the butting and ramming rule into line with the new definition of spearing, removing intent as a factor.
9-1-2-n	No player intentionally shall strike a runner with the crown or the top of his helmet.	No player shall strike a runner with the crown or the top of his helmet in an attempt to punish him .	The new definition of spearing.
9-2-1-a-1	No player, substitute, coach or other person subject to the rules shall use abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning to an opponent, to game officials or to the image of the game, including:	No player, substitute, coach or other person subject to the rules shall use abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning to an opponent, to game officials or to the image of the game, including but not limited to :	The rule has been reworded again, expanding the list of proscribed activities significantly. The hope is that by providing more examples, officials will be more inclined to call the foul. The new wording was developed by the CCA supervisors of officials and others to encourage a more consistent approach. However, this first section makes it clear that the rule is not restricted to these specific situations.
9-2-1-a-1-(c)	Inciting an opponent or spectators in any other way.	Inciting an opponent or spectators in any other way, such as simulating the firing of a weapon or placing a hand by the ear to request recognition .	
9-2-1-a-1-(g)	Added for 2005	Punching one's own chest or crossing one's arms in front of the chest while standing over a prone player.	

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
9-2-1-a-1-(h)	Added for 2005	Going into the stands to interact with spectators, or bowing at the waist after a good play.	
9-3-5-b-1	Step, jump or stand on a teammate.	Step, jump or stand on a teammate (Rule 9-1-2-q).	This new cross reference refers back to the leaping rule.
10-2-2-e Exception 5	Encroachment by Team A on a free kick may be enforced from the previous spot or from the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B after Team B's run (Rule 6-1-2-a).	Offside by Team A on a free kick may be enforced from the previous spot or from the spot where the dead ball belongs to Team B after Team B's run (Rule 6-1-2-a).	The Foul Formerly Known As Encroachment.
11-1-3-a	Each official is responsible for knowing the yardage to gain and the number of the down, granting timeouts, declaring the ball dead, starting the clock on free kicks, determining scores, using proper signals, and mastering NCAA playing rules. Officials shall use the current Football Officials Manual published by the Collegiate Commissioners Association.	Each official is responsible for knowing the yardage to gain and the number of the down, granting timeouts, declaring the ball dead, starting the clock on free kicks, determining scores, using proper signals, and mastering NCAA playing rules. Officials shall use the current Football Officials Manual published under the jurisdiction of the Collegiate Commissioners Association.	
11-1-4	Officials shall wear a uniform prescribed in the current Football Officials Manual published by the Collegiate Commissioners Association. A prescribed uniform includes: a whistle, a marker to designate fouls, a marker to record important field locations, a game card for recording fouls and a down recorder.	Officials shall wear a uniform prescribed in the current Football Officials Manual published under the jurisdiction of the Collegiate Commissioners Association. A prescribed uniform includes: a whistle, a marker to designate fouls, a marker to record important field locations, a game card for recording fouls and a down recorder.	
Summary of Penalties-Leaping		Added for 2005 - See Rule Book	

Rule	Old wording	New Wording	Notes
Official Signals 18 and 19		Added for 2005 - See Rule Book	The legends for signals 18 and 19 have been amended to correspond with the rule changes. Free kick team offside has been added to signal 18, whilst the NFHS penalty of illegal procedure has been removed from signal 19.
Appendix B		Added for 2005 - See Rule Book	This appendix covers the procedures for requesting an exception to the eye shield rule.

Wagging the dog – Changes to Approved Rulings

So often over the years changes to the ARs have lead to rule changes in succeeding years as the Rules Committee realised that it had got ahead of itself. Having said this, it is noticeable that a change from 2001 (AR 7-1-5-III), which effectively introduced the NFL's unabated-towards-the-quarterback rule still has not been ratified by a genuine rule change.

This year there are four new ARs. One (AR 6-1-2-VII) addresses the issue of what happens when there are multiple changes of possession and Team A is offside on a free kick. The rule does not cover a second run and therefore the penalty must be enforced from the previous spot and the ball re-kicked (unless the penalty is declined). Two more (ARs 8-3-1-IV and 8-3-2-XII) give examples of the extraordinarily rare one-point safety. The fourth (AR 2-3-3-V) provides an example of a Team B chop block, something which was overlooked in previous years. However, the AR, without giving any guidance as to where the foul occurred or where the ball becomes dead, specifies that the penalty be enforced from the previous spot, which seems to contradict Rule 9-1-2, which calls for basic spot enforcement.

There are 18 editorial changes. Five make changes to cover the Foul Formerly Known As Encroachment, one to clarify what happens when the ball goes out of bounds on a free kick, three to cover the change to intentional grounding, seven to remove differentiation between one- and two-point try attempts, and two to deal with the revised spearing rule. I have seen no reports that suggest that any of these are material changes.

Changes to Mechanics

Mechanics changes this year include (finally) removing the practice, when a first down has been obtained and the ball was inbounds, of first winding the clock and then stopping it. In many conferences (and New Zealand) the covering wing has been simply stopping the clock and informing the Referee that the clock will start on the ready by other means. There has been considerable online debate about this change, with a number of comments resisting the change. However, the practicality of the situation is that time is lost through signalling firstly "wind the clock" and then "stop the clock". It also gives an impression of indecision.

One change that has been made between 2001 and 2004 (the years that I didn't get a copy of the 5-man mechanics) has been to the formation on punts. Last year, I had some reservations about the mechanic, and I've had another look at it. The Back Judge moves to the Linesman's sideline deep with the receivers. Once the ball is kicked, the Linesman now moves only partially downfield (about 10 yards) and concentrates on the action in the middle of the field. The BJ has the receivers from the sideline for kicks that go 25 yards or more. The Line Judge holds the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses it, and then hoofs it downfield to pick up the runner (if he's on his side of the field). I can see the logic behind the change. Under the old mechanic, the BJ had coverage of the receivers until the catch had been made, and then looked after the rubbish in the middle of the field. That left much of that action uncovered for a short while, as the Umpire would have been pivoting. However, the new mechanic presents challenges for us. The LJ has quite a task, holding the line until the last moment and then having to shoot off downfield to pick up the receivers. Many of our kicks do not travel a great distance. This has the potential to place the BJ in a redundant position as the L is obliged to take the runner. If there is a long return, the BJ and L have to respond as if on a 7-man crew and bracket the runner. If the play is to the far side of the field it is the L who has responsibility for covering the action behind the LJ. BAFRA's most recent mechanics manual for the 2004 season still has the old mechanic. Dick says that the change does not enhance coverage as the CCA believed it would. This change will certainly merit some discussion before we decide whether to adopt it or not.

Other changes include the R, U and L recording down, distance and lateral position of the ball at the end of the first and third quarters on their info cards, the two-fingered signal for the L and LJ when they have two men off the line on their side of the field (which has been in informal use for some time), reverse goal line mechanics for 5 yards and in at Team A's end of the field (it was 3 yards), and the U having the flexibility to position himself 5-10 yards from the line on punts (it was 10 yards last year).

I have to say that the new *Referee Magazine*-published manuals are an enormous improvement on the old ones self-produced by the CCA. This year there are interesting sections on handling fights, illegal contact, and whistles and signals, all with comment from Dave Parry. The mechanics themselves are still bare-bones, without the superb detail and explanation in the BAFRA manual used in New Zealand. However, they are aimed at an audience where there is expert support readily on call. I'm not sure that the cost (USD15.95) warrants everyone buying a copy each year, but the additional insights are very useful indeed.

So there you have it: the wonder that is this year's rule changes. I hope you enjoyed reading about them as much as I enjoyed writing about them. If you don't have access to a printed copy of the rulebook, an online version can be downloaded from the NCAA's website:

http://www.ncaa.org/library/rules/2005/2005_football_rules.pdf

You'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view it. Go to <http://www.adobe.com/> and follow the links.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions and I will endeavour to get an answer.

Happy reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Bowness', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Bowness
Editor, NZGOA Rules Committee