



New Zealand Gridiron Officials Association

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## NCAA Rule Changes 2006 – Update

As promised when I wrote my original paper in August, here is an update to this year's rules changes. I had a very good week in Michigan and Ohio, and some of the following information is based on my time with the Michigan Collegiate Football Officials Association.

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### Major Changes

#### **Rule 3-2-5-e**

When Team B is awarded a first down, the clock will be stopped and will start on the ready for play signal. (*Exceptions:* After a team timeout and the succeeding play after the end of a period.)

In my last paper, I mentioned that John Adams had issued a bulletin reminding officials to take account of the rule change when a penalty occurs in these circumstances that awards the ball back to Team A. Another bulletin has now been issued which alters this position. The rule has now been 'interpreted' (note that this is not a rule change, according to the bulletin) as follows:

When Team B is awarded a first down, the clock will be stopped and will start on the ready for play signal when Team B will snap the ball.

The underlining is mine. This reverses the previous information. Now, if there was a change of possession which would have given Team B the ball, and the ball is subsequently returned to Team A because of a penalty, then the clock starts on the snap.

There's little doubt that of this year's rules changes, the one has caused most discussion. The change has forced teams to, in some cases, fundamentally change the way they are coached when it comes to a change of possession. It was even suggested that the Rules Committee had no mandate to make this particular change.

### Correction

#### **Rule 8-3-5**

In my original paper, I had this listed as a change. There has been no change to this rule.

## Changes to Mechanics

There are no major mechanics changes this year. One enhancement that is being used in Michigan pertains to the introduction last year of the 'two off' signal. This signal is used by the Linesman or Line Judge when the two receivers closest to them are off the line. Because of the difficulty in seeing the difference between an open or closed hand and two fingers from 160 feet away, the signalling official waves his two fingers to his partner over his head. The opposite wing acknowledges the signal by touching the bill of his cap. The signalling official then holds his arm out to his side as normal, still with two fingers showing.

I hope that this update has been useful. 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/2006/2006\\_football\\_rules.pdf](http://www.ncaa.org/library/rules/2006/2006_football_rules.pdf)

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

In addition, take a look at the NCAA's site dedicated to the rules and officiating. The link is ridiculously long, and I won't print it here. Go to [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org). Hover over 'Sports and Championships' and then click on 'Fall'. Click on 'Football (M)', and then on 'Rules and Officiating Page'. It is a far-from-pretty site, but it does have some useful information, including the Play Bulletins published by the Rules Committee during the season. There is also a very good newsletter prepared for the NCAA by *Referee* magazine which explains the changes in a more illustrated fashion.

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

Happy reading.



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