

# Memorandum

To: MIAA Football Officials  
From: Dennis Donovan, Football Officials Representative  
Re: 2016 NCAA Changes & Modifications  
Date: August 15, 2016

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All NCAA changes were adopted, but note that #1 and 6 do not apply to MIAA games so there is no change in MIAA rules as a result these items. Also, there is one notable editorial change mentioned after the rule changes.

The book may be downloaded in .pdf format from the NCAA at the following link:  
<http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/FR17.pdf>

## **Rules Changes:** (In rule book order)

### **1. Field markings for neutral-site games. (Rule 1-2-1) FR-15 Additional language in paragraph h-1**

“1. For post-season *and neutral site* games the title sponsor...”

### **2. TV Access Inside the Limit Lines (Rule 1-2-3) FR-16 Add exception to paragraph b:**

“**Exception:** Hand-held cameras under the supervision of the television partners may briefly be between the limit lines and the sideline after the ball is dead and the game clock has been stopped. This exception does not allow cameras to be on the field of play or in the end zone at any time.”

*Comments:* Results from the experimental rule used in the 2015 season.

### **3. Scrimmage Kick Formation (Rule 2-16-10) FR-35 Change to paragraph a:**

“A scrimmage kick formation is a formation with no player in position to receive a hand- to-hand snap from between the snapper’s legs, *and with either (1) at least one player 10 or more yards behind the neutral zone; or (2) a potential holder and potential kicker seven or more yards behind the neutral zone in position for a place kick. For either (1) or (2) to qualify as a scrimmage kick formation,* it must be obvious that a kick *will* be attempted.”

*Comments:* This clarification of the definition of a scrimmage kick formation reinforces the intent of the rule that allows exceptions to the numbering rule when a team apparently is going to punt or attempt a field goal. Since some shotgun quarterbacks are positioned 7 yards behind the neutral zone, the distance back for punters was lengthened.

### **4. Sliding Ball Carrier: Defenseless Player (Rule 2-27-14) FR-41 and Note 2 (FR-88) Add new paragraph j:**

“j. A ball carrier who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet-first.”

*Comments:* A sliding ball carrier is now protected under the defenseless-player portion of the targeting rules.

5. **Outcome of a Suspended Game (Rule 3-3-3)** FR-50 Add sentence to the end of paragraph c:  
“In the event that the directors of athletics do not reach an agreement, the conference policy of the home team shall be used to determine the outcome.”

*Comments:* Establishes the default position when a suspended interconference game cannot be resumed.

6. **Length of Charged Team Timeouts (Rule 3-3-7)** FR-52 Change to paragraph b.  
b. For live televised games only, a charged team timeout shall be 30 seconds plus the 25-second play clock interval. *However, the head coach may request that one of the allowed three timeouts in each half be a full timeout. This request should be communicated to the referee when the timeout request is made to the officials. The charged team timeout during an extra period may be a full timeout, at the request of the head coach.*”

*Comments:* Gives a team in a live televised game the flexibility for a full timeout when there is no concurrent media timeout. This change will not have any effect on MIAA games

7. **Game Clock in the Last Two Minutes of a Half (Rule 3-4-3)** FR-54

Insert this sentence before the last sentence of the paragraph:

“If the game clock is stopped only to administer the penalty for a foul by the team ahead in the score inside the last two minutes of a half, the game clock will start on the snap, at the option of the offended team.

*(Exception: Rule 3-4-4)*”

*Comments:* Provides consistent application of the authority of the referee in circumstances where the game clock is most critical. **Note:** The exception verifies that the ten-second runoff rule takes precedence, **but in MIAA games this exception is ignored because there is no ten-second runoff.**

8. **Tripping the Ball Carrier (Rule 9-1-2-c)** FR-87 Delete the Exception. Add the following:

“Tripping is intentionally using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knees. (Rule 2-28)”

*Comments:* Gives the ball carrier the same protection from tripping that other players have had for many years.

9. **Blocking Below the Waist (Rule 9-1-6)** FR-89 Changes to paragraph a:

“a. Team A prior to a change of team possession:

1. The following Team A players may legally block below the waist inside the *tackle box until they leave the tackle box or* until the ball has left the *tackle box*: (a) players on the line of scrimmage completely **inside the tackle box** and (b) stationary backs who are at least partially inside the tackle box and at least partially inside the frame of the body of the second lineman from the snapper.
2. *Except as in paragraph 3 (below)*, players not covered in paragraph 1 (above) while the ball is still in the *tackle box*, and all players after the ball has left the *tackle box*, are allowed to block below the waist only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front. “From the front” is understood to mean within the clock-face region between “10 o’clock and 2 o’clock” forward of the player being blocked.
3. Players not covered in paragraph 1 (above) may not block below the waist toward the *line through the* original position of the ball at the snap **until the ball carrier is clearly beyond the neutral zone.**
4. Once the ball has left the *tackle box* a player may not block below the waist toward his own end line.”

*Comments:* Simplifies and clarifies the rule. Note that the “low-blocking zone” is no longer defined, and everything is in reference to the tackle box. Also clarifies the rule regarding the timing of the illegal crack-back block. **By interpretation: 1. Only the first two linemen from the snapper are unrestricted under this**

rule, so tight ends in normal formations will be restricted to only blocking 10-2 and may not block below the waist toward the original position of the ball unless the ball carrier is clearly beyond the NZ; 2. Unrestricted linemen at the snap may legally block from 9-3 on the initial block against opposing defensive linemen even though they may technically be outside the tackle box when this block is executed; 3. Unrestricted linemen at the snap become restricted if they go to the second level beyond the NZ (i.e. blocking on a linebacker), they are restricted to only 10-2 blocking (it has also been reported that they may not block below the waist toward the original position of the ball unless the ball carrier is clearly beyond the NZ, but that was not covered in the document 2016\_FAQ\_BBW.pdf).

**10. Low Hits on the Passer (Rule 9-1-9-b) FR-90 Change to Exception (2):**

“It is not a foul if the defender grabs or wraps this opponent in an attempt to make a conventional tackle *without making forcible contact with the head or shoulder.*”

*Comments:* Clarifies the rule when a player makes a conventional tackle.

**11. Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Coach (Rule 9-2-6) FR-96 Change in paragraph a**

“a. Any *coach*, player, or identified squad member in uniform who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game shall be disqualified.”

Add new paragraph c:

“A coach disqualified from the game must leave the playing enclosure within a reasonable amount of time after the disqualification and must remain out of view of the field of play for the remainder of the game.”

*Comments:* Strengthens the coach’s accountability for sideline behavior and brings football in concert with all other major intercollegiate sports.

There were also 2 changes in Rule 12, but they don’t apply to MIAA games, so they are not listed.

Notable Editorial Changes

1. Rule 7-3-2-Ex – Who is eligible to ground a forward pass legally – Only the player who controls and **maintains possession** of the snap or resulting backward pass.

*Comments:* Generally, this rule only applies to the QB since he is usually the player to control the snap, but this editorial change clarifies that in order to be able to ground the ball legally, he must also maintain possession of the ball after controlling the snap. Note, if another back controls the snap, then he is the only player who may legally ground the ball. **By Interpretation: If the player who controls the snap fumbles the ball and recovers, he may legally ground a forward pass, but if the player who controls the snap hands the ball off or throws a backward pass to another player and then regains possession he may not legally ground a forward pass. i.e. plays like flea-flickers do not allow the passer to legally ground a forward pass.**

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**Note:**

There was initially a rule change regarding the use of technology in the press box and locker room for coaching purposes, it would not allow technology on the playing field, sideline or team area. But this rule was postponed until 2017 at the request of NCAA Conferences, so they could establish specific guidelines for game management. The MIAA Football Committee will establish guidelines under which this rule will be allowed. This rule will not be under the jurisdiction of the officials.