



COLLEGE FOOTBALL OFFICIATING, LLC

2017 NCAA FOOTBALL PLAY INTERPRETATIONS BULLETIN NO. 2

Defensive Team Requirements – Prior to the Snap

Rule 7-1-5-a-4 states that a player aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage may not make quick, abrupt or exaggerated actions that are not part of normal defensive player movement. The intent of this rule is to prevent Defensive team players from making these type exaggerated actions near the line of scrimmage in an obvious attempt to create a false start by the Offense. Currently, the requirement is that the Defender be aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage. We are now seeing action where defenders from the second level are running toward the line of scrimmage and making these same type exaggerated actions to cause a false start. Based on the spirit of the current rule, this also is a foul.

Play #1: Third and 3 at the B-35 and Team A is set in a legal formation. Just before the snap, linebacker B54 runs forward toward the line of scrimmage and just before entering the neutral zone pumps both arms at the offensive line in an exaggerated non-football movement in order create a false start by the offense. Team A lineman A55 reacts to this movement and lifts his hand from the ground while rocking back.

Ruling: Dead-ball foul, delay of game. Penalize Team B 5 yards and it will be First and 10 at the B-30.

Play #2: Third and 3 at the B-35 and Team A is set in a legal formation. Just before the snap, linebacker B54 runs forward toward the line of scrimmage trying to time his blitz with the snap. As he approaches the neutral zone, Team A does not snap the ball and B54 stops clearly before entering the neutral zone. Team A lineman A55 subsequently lifts his hand from the ground while rocking back.

Ruling: Dead-ball foul, False Start. Penalize Team A 5 yards and it will be Third and 8 at the B-40.

Free Kick Formation

Rule 6-1-2-c-1 states that when the ball is kicked, each Team A player, except the holder and kicker of a place kick, must be behind the ball. The exception for the kicker is to allow a plant foot to be beyond the ball, and likewise for the holder as he is holding the ball. The exception does not intend to allow the kicker to be beyond the restraining line after the ready for play signal.

Play #3: Late in the game Team A trails by 2 points and will Free Kick from The A-35. Kicker A10 places the ball down at the A-35 in the center of the field for an apparent onside kick. After the ready for play, from the right hash, A10 walks forward to the A38. A10 subsequently approaches the ball and executes an onside kick. When the ball was kicked, Team A met the requirement of at least 4 players on each side of the kicker.

RULING: By interpretation, after the ready for play signal all Team A players must be behind their restraining line. Live-ball foul, five yards from the previous spot, or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B.

Forward Progress

Play #4: Third and 3 at the A-47, Team A ball carrier A44 runs up the middle and approaches the line to gain which is the 50 yard line. As he is being tackled, A44 extends the ball forward beyond the line to gain, and subsequently pulls the ball back into his body and the ball is at the A49 when A44's knee touches the ground.

RULING: Team A, fourth and one at the A-49. The line to gain is not a plane, and the ball is placed at the forward progress spot. Forward progress is a term indicating the end of advancement by the ball carrier and applies to the position of the ball when it became dead by rule.

***Steve Shaw, Secretary-Rules Editor
October 2017***