



CFO West Officials' Bulletin 2016.07

To: Head Football Coaches, Big 12, Mountain West, and Southland Officiating Staff
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Taunting Opponents and Crowd

We are seeing an increase in the number of Unsportsmanlike Fouls in the category of Taunting. This range from gestures at players after a big play, to getting in players faces with trash talk, to make gestures to the crowd. One specific action we are seeing more of this season is a player placing his finger up in front of his mouth to make a “shush” gesture to the crowd, usually after a score; such action is taunting and a foul. There is absolutely no legitimate reason a player would do this except to taunt his opponent. We have instructed officials to aggressively enforce these actions when they are observed and would encourage coaches to remind players of how such preventable penalties can be very costly to the team. In addition, all these types of actions are fouls that if called twice in a game result in automatic disqualification. This year, a new rule change also extends this automatic disqualification to the coach if two UNS fouls are called on him. Let’s all work to intervene if possible to prevent these but in the end, players are going to be held accountable for failing to demonstrate proper sportsmanship and respect to opponents.

Jersey Numerals must be Visible

Rule 1-4-5-c requires that jersey numerals ‘must be visible’ and this rule applies throughout the game. Players whose hair is so long or styled in any manner that obscures the numerals are in violation of wearing illegal equipment and as such will be required to leave the game until such condition is corrected. The player may be allowed to return without missing a down if the team takes a charged timeout, but in any event he may not play with illegal equipment or without mandatory equipment, and that includes a jersey whose numerals are visible.

Kickoff Formations

A few reminders relative to kickoffs:

- A kickoff after a TD (Try) or Field Goal, and the kickoffs to start the game and second half, can be a drop kick or place kick from a tee or from the ground; it cannot be a punt. It may be held by a teammate on the ground or the tee, or the ball can be on the ground while leaning against the tee.
- A kickoff after a Safety can be a punt, drop kick, or place kick with or without a tee, and also may be held by a teammate.
- Teams must have at least four players on each side of the ball when the ball is kicked. There is no restriction on the number of players who may be in motion or in which direction they are moving as long as they are no farther back from their



restraining line than 5 yards at any time from when the ball is made ready until it is kicked (exception for the kicker).

- Onside kicks that go straight into the ground and then take a high bounce or pooch kicks that go straight into the air still afford the receiving team an opportunity to catch the kick, regardless of whether or not the receiving team player gives a fair catch signal or not.
- If a kickoff is immediately caught by the kicking team or is fair caught by the receiving team, no time will run off the clock. If the receiving team catches the kickoff and he immediately goes to the ground, then :01 second will be taken off the clock. Other legal touching starts the game clock as usual.
- A Team A players who goes out of bounds at any time during a free kick down cannot return inbounds during the down, including during the runback, unless he was blocked out of bounds and returns immediately. This is a five-yard penalty and is not reviewable by instant replay.

Clapping of Hands by Defense

The below memo will be going out to all officials and conferences later this week but wanted to include in this week's bulletin so that all are aware. Rogers Redding has issued an official rules interpretation related to the use of clapping sounds by the defense, which has recently developed as a result of more offenses using this technique as a regular cadence.

[Officiating and Coaching Guidelines: Defensive Teams' Use of Clapping as a Signal](#)

Offensive and defensive teams may legally use a variety of signals in preparation for the snap. The offensive team has wide latitude in this regard, as long as the signals do not constitute a false start. The defensive team is more restricted; while they may give signals that prompt changes of position and alignment, by rule these signals may not disconcert the offense or simulate the sound or cadence of the offensive starting signals (Rule 7-1-5-a-5).

Clapping the hands has emerged as a way for offensive teams to give signals. This has been established across the country as an offensive team cadence to communicate starting signals. Defensive teams have only recently begun to use clapping, which thus gives it the appearance of having the intent to mimic the offense. Therefore, the use of clapping by the defensive team is in the same category as voice signals such as the sound "hut," the use of which is clearly contrary to the spirit and intent of the rule and has long been prohibited.

We are directing our officials to treat clapping by the defense that occurs prior to the snap as an attempt to simulate the offensive team's starting signals, and thus is a foul under Rule 7-1-5-a-5.

Rogers Redding
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