

July 31, 2015



An interview with:

DAVID COLEMAN

DAVID COLEMAN: It's important for you to know who we are and what we do in terms of the staffing of the Pac-12 Football Officiating program. In-house, in our headquarters in San Francisco, we have Mike Ortiz, who is the Director of Video Operations, and we have Jamie Alfieri who is the Coordinator of Officiating and Sports Management.

Then you have our supervisors. We have a supervisor for each of the eight on-field positions. A supervisor for instant replay, and a command center supervisor who is in the command center on game day handling everything that's going on, and having people monitor the game so that we are up to date in realtime on everything that's happening.

You need to know that the people who are in this supervisory group are a diverse background of experience, both at the NFL level and at the major college level.

Now on to the NCAA football rules and mechanics updates. We'll look at these by rule. The rule that's applicable will be at the top of each slide, and I'll give you a little insight into what's going on with each of these. Let's back up. Rule 11-2-1: This rule allows for there to be six, seven or eight officials on the field. All of the 10 FCS conferences will have the 8th official this year. And there are several other conferences at Division II and Division III level who will have the 8th official. I'll talk more about the 8th official and how we're integrating that into our program in a few minutes.

Rules 1-4-7, and 1-4-8 has to do with a non-standard, overbuilt face mask. The rule book has pictures in the appendix of the acceptable face masks, and it also has a picture of the overbuilt face mask. I'll show you an example of that in a moment. The diagrams are there. Couple of reasons this is being done, one is for safety reasons, and actually safety of the player. When a player is injured and is on the ground and he's receiving assistance, the trainers and the doctors

want to be able to see his face. With these overbuilt face masks, it's tough to see what's going on inside there.

Also, for safety reasons in terms of that mask being very heavy, and we want to make sure that we're consistent on that. If a player wears illegal equipment, they must leave the game for at least a down. A coach can prevent this by calling timeout and keep the player in the game, but the player leaves if no timeout is called and the equipment must be made legal before the player can come back.

The rule book specifies the various examples of illegal equipment. Here's an example of the overbuilt face mask. If you look back at video from last year's season, you can notice that there were a good number of Pac-12 players who had these face masks.

I met with the coaches yesterday. We talked about this. They acknowledged that they are responsible for ensuring that this rule is adhered to with respect to the face mask. In rule 3, and this is a game management type of situation. Officials are not involved in this. These are the folks, the event managers and the folks who control what is going on during the game. During the regular season teams must have access to the field at least 22 minutes before kickoff. So the 22-minute point, they will leave. But once again, game management controls this.

Rule 3-3. If a defensive player's helmet comes off, then the play clock is always going to be set to 40 seconds. And even in situations where we'd have a ten-second runoff possibility in the last minute of the second quarter or the fourth quarter, the 40-second play clock will be in effect for the defensive player's helmet coming off.

Obviously, also, any player who loses their helmet in the conduct of a play must stop playing. They cannot continue, and also they must leave the field for at least one play until their helmet is put back on.

Rule 9-2-1. This has to do with un-sportsmanlike conduct. There is an add to the list of things that are identified as un-sportsmanlike conduct, and now it is illegal to forcibly push or pull an opponent off the pile. This is a situation in

which we have a scrum, a fumble, loose ball, everybody's going for it. The officials are trying to get in there to find out who has the ball so they can declare possession, and sometimes players will push or pull an opponent, trying to push or pull an opponent away from the pile. That is now an un-sportsmanlike conduct foul.

You're aware that if a player receives two un-sportsmanlike conduct fouls, they are disqualified from further participation in the game. So what our referees are going to do to assist in making sure that we track that and everyone knows what the status of the un-sportsmanlike conduct fouls are, the referee will announce when a player receives the first un-sportsmanlike conduct foul that, in fact, they have received that first foul. Then when that player, if and when they get a second un-sportsmanlike conduct foul, they will be disqualified and that will be announced as well.

But keep down any misinformation or uncertainty, that will be announced.

Rule 9-2-5 A. This has to do with sideline administration. Point of emphasis this year for the NCAA is management of the activities on the sidelines. You know there is a white border that goes around the field. On the sidelines, I refer that to as the office. That's where the wing officials work. The headlines men, the line judge the side judge and the field judge. That is their area of operation. That's where they move up and down the field to cover the plays.

Therefore, coaches, people on the sidelines are not allowed to be in that area when the ball is live. That's six feet wide. The officials will start out as they prepare for the play at the sideline once the teams are out and declare themselves, they will step back towards the back of that six-foot area, and the six feet behind that white around the field is the coach's area. They have six feet in which they can work. Then behind the coaches is the team area. Point of emphasis, once again, we'll be focusing on the manager of the sidelines. Had a discussion with the coaches about this yesterday as well.

For the first infraction, for the first infraction of the sideline warning we will give the signal for sideline warning, which is the referee making the announcement, and then to indicate a sideline warning. You'll recall that was in the game a few years ago. It was taken out, but it's back again.

Obviously, before we even warn, we're going to have a conversation. It's about communicating with the coaches on the field and letting them know that we've got a problem with the sidelines and we want them to maintain the proper

positioning and the proper access. Now this is during live-ball situations. If there is a dead-ball situation, it's okay for the coach to step on the field to give signals. But once the ball is declared ready for play and we're getting ready to go, they need to back out.

Now, with respect to that sideline warning, there is a situation where there can be an immediate penalty for un-sportsmanlike conduct. And that is, if, in fact, the wing officials are in their office and they're doing their work, they're moving down the field to call a play, to be in position to make the call, if someone from the sideline gets run into or obstructs and causes the official to have to run around them, then we have an immediate 15-yard penalty for un-sportsmanlike conduct.

What this does is make reviewable blocking by the kicking team before being eligible to touch the ball on an on-side kick. Okay. The replay official can create this foul. That's new this year.

Want to update you on a few mechanics. There is a book of mechanics, and this year the book is for mechanics of the 8th official as it's integrated into the entire group. But I'd like you to understand what we're really looking at in mechanics. The first one there is with respect to the head linesman and line judge taking the goal line at the 7-yard line.

What this means is when the ball is snapped from the 7-yard line or in, the head linesman will and the line judge will immediately go to the goal line to cover the goal line. Previously that happened at the 5-yard line. So at the 7-yard line the head linesman and line judge will move to the goal line at the snap of the ball to be there for the coverage.

There is emphasis on rule compliance -- excuse me, uniform compliance. If you look in the rule book, you will see that there are certain things about the size of numbers, the contrast of numbers, how the uniform is supposed to be worn. We're focusing on making sure that is handled properly this year.

On a scrimmage kick: If a scrimmage kick is declared dead ball inside the 5-yard line, the ball will be placed exactly where it was declared dead. Previously, officials would place the ball on the line that's closest going forward to that spot, but we want to have the exact spot at the declaration of the dead ball inside the 5-yard line.

If there is a running play that goes into team A's team area, out of bounds, into the area that's occupied by the team that is with the ball, the referee will set up for a substitution. When the

referee indicates substitution to allow the defense to match-up, he will stand with his arms straight out to his side, and the side judge will do that on his side, the field judge on his side, if, in fact, that's happening, and the center judge will stand over the ball.

So if we have this situation of the ball going out of bounds, we're going to automatically declare that a substitution situation, because you have defensive players inside that area. We need them to get back out. The offense may be taking that time and that opportunity to change personnel. We want the match-up to take place, and we want to make sure we get early notification out that we're doing that.

The referee and umpire during non-conference games will meet with the head coaches at 90 minutes prior, and this is something that's very important with respect to social media and game officials. We want to make sure that they understand clearly and it's in their agreement, their employment agreement with us, that they are not to engage in any social media that has to do with their work as a football official for the Pac-12.

The points of emphasis: These are the things that the NCAA is making sure that everyone understands that are important and are going to be focused on in the conduct of the game in 2015. First of all, targeting. Everyone knows about targeting and what the rule is for targeting. That's contact with a defenseless player in the head and neck area. It's also the use of the crown of the helmet to strike a blow on an opponent. Targeting is a point of emphasis. We need to reduce that. We need to eliminate that. The Pac-12 did not have that many situations of targeting last year, but we're still focusing on that.

Pace of play: The pace of play is something that we want to maintain. The things like matching up, the things like having the 8th official to give us greater coverage, and spotting of the ball, and movement and coverage on the field. Those are important and we're focusing on keeping the games moving.

Un-sportsmanlike conduct: We've talked about that. It's clear that un-sportsmanlike conduct is something that's not going to be tolerated in the game. You don't get a warning for un-sportsmanlike conduct. As I talk to coaches, they understand that their players need to know those rules and know what they can do and what they cannot do, and we went through it in detail and during the month of August I'm going to be visiting each of our teams, meeting with the coaches, meeting with their staffs, and also meeting with the players to talk about these things,

answer questions and make sure we're all on the same page and all ready to go.

Then finally, sideline management: We've talked about that. Those are the points of emphasis. Before we go into training, development, and performance evaluation, I'd like to talk a little bit more about the 8th official. The 8th official is the center judge.

Once again, we have all of the Power Five conferences now with eight officials on the field. Now if we look at the field and we look at the line of scrimmage with looking from the sideline with the offense on the right, the defense on the left, in the offensive back field you have the referee with the white hat.

You also have the 8th official, the center judge. With the mechanics of this position, the referee will always be on the right side of the offense. He'll be 12 to 15 yards deep. The center judge will be on the left side of the offense, approximately 12 to 14 yards deep. They will angle off of the outside tackle, and they will start the play in that position. Now, the center judge is always going to be over the ball unless it's a situation where another official spots the ball during a dead ball situation. The center judge will stay in the gap between the center and the left guard with communication with the center and the offensive line to hold up until he is moved out of the position and back towards the position that he holds that I described.

The referee on every play will direct the center judges what to do. He'll tell him to stay or he'll tell him to move out. When the center judge moves out, he'll take kind of a banana exit, back peddling, and straight back to his position, getting out of the way before the ball is snapped. Okay. This is going to happen on every play.

Now, when the play is underway, if it's a play to the left, the referee will have backside coverage, the center judge will have frontside coverage. If it's a play to the right, the referee will have frontside coverage; the center judge will have backside coverage.

The center will offer input and will be able to make the call on situations of roughing the passer and things like that, even though that's the referee's primary responsibility. Another thing that's different with the center judge mechanic, because this was not done in conferences that had center judges last year, is that the center judge when the quarterback is moving to the left and heads out of bounds, it's the center judge who is going to follow the quarterback into the side zone and protect the quarterback. The referee will

watch the back side blocking and activity behind that. So that is the center judge.

Now for training, development, performance evaluation. Everyone knows that we evaluate our officials. What I want to emphasize for you this morning is how we are going to do that in the Pac-12. First, it's training, training our officials, getting them ready mentally and physically to work. Knowing the rules, being physically fit, mobile, have the stamina to work the games, and then we will evaluate their performance in every game.

Our focus this year in terms of the message to the officials, and they have received it loud and clear, is excellence in officiating. How are we going to do that? We're going to educate, we're going to train, we're going to develop and we're going to evaluate. We're going to use training videos. Every week I will do a voiceover on a training video for the entire previous week. What were the interesting plays? What happened that we did well? What happened that we could do better?

And really, without calling anyone out or anything like that, we're going to make sure everyone understands how we did that previous week, that including the feedback that they'll receive from their position supervisors on their work will kind of set the tone of the week past moving to the middle of the week to discuss all of those things, and then looking forward to the week ahead.

We'll focus on rules, mechanics, officiating philosophy, interpretations. You know, every game something's going to happen. I don't think I ever officiated a game where something didn't happen that I'd never seen before. Something happened I'd never seen it before, and you think you've seen everything if you do this for years and years, but you have to learn from those types of situations.

So when we get into the evaluation of the games, the position supervisors will evaluate games. They'll look at every play of every game, evaluating the performance of the official who was involved in that play, also looking at the activities of the other officials on the field and making sure they were doing what they were supposed to do.

There are five indicators of performance on each play. Those are shown by the initials there. CC is for correct call, IC is for incorrect call, NC is for no call, CJ is for correct judgment, and IJ is for incorrect judgment. I think those are self-explanatory in terms of what we're talking about.

Now the CJ, correct judgment, that's the Golden nugget. That doesn't happen very often. We will only give a CJ, the correct judgment for action, what I refer to, as above and beyond, really saving the crew, making the big call. When the chips are down, being there and being ready and doing it right. That is the correct judgment.

So the officials will receive feedback on their work. They'll understand exactly how they did from their position supervisors, and they will receive feed forward. How do we take that feedback? How do we accept it? How do we take it and use it to do better and to make sure that we are operating with excellence going forward? The reward will be the postseason assignments starting with the Conference Championship Game.

Our focus for 2015, and this relates to you, not just to the people officiating in the conference. This relates to you as well.

Number one, consistency. We want everyone to understand what it is we're going to do and how we're going to do it, and that's what I'm making sure is happening right now with our officials. Everyone understands what we're going to do and how we're going to do it. In being consistent, it should be not important, it is not important as to what crew is there. This is crew X or this is crew Y, because our officials are going to be there, striving to call the game in accordance with the rules as they understand the rules have to be applied and the mechanics of officiating.

Number two is accountability. As I explained through our training, development and evaluation program, it's about being accountable for our work, stepping up, doing the job.

Number three is communications. Communicating in all aspects of what we do, from me to the officials, the officials to me, to the supervisors, with the Commissioner, with you as members of the media, and in that regard, we're looking at putting out a periodic video to you of what's happening to keep you informed of what the trends are, to let you know what's important to us and what we're focusing on.

Then finally, transparency. If we do it well, pat us on the back. If we don't, we'll stand up and take ownership for any mistakes that we make. That's important. That transparency is key to our effort to bring quality and excellence in officiating to the Pac-12 Conference.

So that's my message to you. I appreciate this opportunity, and I'll be glad to take any questions.

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