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An Interview With:

DAVID COLEMAN

DAVID COLEMAN: Good morning. It's great to be here with you to spend a few minutes talking about officiating football in the Pac-12. The focus of what I present to you will be the rule changes and points of emphasis, and then as Dave Hirsch said, we'll take some questions.

Our focus is something we established last year. We discussed that. It's something that I constantly work with our officials about and emphasize the need to do certain things. We'll talk just a minute about what happened in 2015, what our success was, what we learned, and then also we'll go through those new rules and points of emphasis. Some of them are really rule changes. There are a couple of things that are new.

Consistency, accountability, transparency, communications. Actually communications comes before transparency, as you can see up here. But those are the four things that we emphasize day to day, week to week, game to game, throughout the season, throughout the off-season.

When we walk on the field, we have to present a group of officials who are going to call the game by the rule, using the proper mechanics, and it should not make any difference who's on the field that day, which referee it is or which back judge it is. That's what we strive for in terms of consistency.

With respect to accountability, every official is graded, evaluated on every play. At the middle of the season, they are given a mid-season report, letting them know if postseason assignments were made at that time, they would either qualify or not qualify for consideration for postseason assignment.

Transparency: open and honest. I sent you all some videos last season. I've just done a video on offensive pass

interference for the NCAA that will be made available to you, and you have had access to the video that I did on new rules and points of emphasis.

And then finally, communications: 360 communications, on the crew, on the field, me to them, them to me, them to the supervisors, the supervisors to them, the coaches, the players. Those are our areas of focus.

The highlights of last year are on this slide, and this was what we did in the postseason. Obviously the real honor was the opportunity to work the National Championship game. We had four other bowl games. We also had, of course, the Pac-12 Championship. 76 percent of our officials qualified for -- excuse me, everyone except about seven or eight of the 56 qualified for a postseason assignment. 76 percent of them got the postseason assignment.

Okay, the rules and points of emphasis are on this slide. I'll just mention a couple of them. If you have questions about others, you can shoot those at me once we finish with this.

Let's highlight first the sliding ball carrier. The sliding ball carrier. Usually a quarterback, right, usually a quarterback. We have nine -- up to this year, nine categories of a defenseless player. Now we have 10. No. 10 is a sliding quarterback. When a quarterback gives himself up, he becomes a defenseless player. Previously, a quarterback who gave himself up and went into a slide did not become a defenseless player until he was on the ground.

So what does this mean? That he cannot be contacted in the head or neck area by a shoulder, a helmet, an elbow, a forearm. He's defenseless.

And also, the interpretation of that rule in the NCAA is that when that quarterback begins his slide, and it's like a baseball slide, you know when the player is getting ready to slide into second base, when he begins that slide, that's where the ball will be spotted. The point of the ball at that particular moment is where the ball will be spotted,

not when he hits the ground, okay? Sliding quarterback.

Instant replay this year has broadened authority to get involved in the calling of a targeting foul. The aspects of targeting have not changed. Those remain the same. But this year if we have the unfortunate circumstance that we miss it on the field, then instant replay, if they see it, and I'm talking about a big one, if you're watching on TV, you saw it, everybody in the stands saw it, the player who did it probably knows that he did it, the player who received the blow knows he received the blow, but for some reason the officials on the field did not get it, replay will stop the game, targeting will be called and administered under the normal procedure.

Low hits on the passer: Low hits on the passer are -- you're coming in, the passer is in -- the quarterback is in a throwing position. We like for our players to stay away from contact at the knees or below. In the past any contact at the knees or below was a foul for roughing the passer. Now that contact is only a foul if, in fact, the defender makes forcible contact with his helmet or his shoulder at the knees or below, roughing the passer.

Tripping the ball carrier: We know that tripping is not allowed. Players cannot trip other players. But historically the ball carrier could be tripped. No longer the case. Can't trip the ball carrier anymore.

The points of emphasis for this year: Offensive pass interference. As I said, we've done the NCAA video on that. We want to make sure that offensive pass interference, like defensive pass interference, has material effect on the play. No ticky-tack calls, no fouls that aren't really there. So in that regard, we're going to make sure that everyone is on the same page and understands the dos and don'ts of calling pass interference on the offense.

Uniform violations: I'll just mention this, in terms of the fact -- we need to make sure that all of our players are legally and properly equipped before the game begins. The head coach or his designated representative actually certifies and signs to the fact that they are. But there are some violations in terms of how the uniform is worn.

The main one I'll mention is that the jersey, if it is a long jersey and it's long enough to be tucked in, it has to be tucked in. If it's not long enough to be tucked in, it has to come to the waistline and meet the pants, meet the player's pants.

And then also sometimes we'll see players with a T-shirt on and that waist-length jersey and the T-shirts hanging down. That's a uniform violation. We're just going to get that cleaned up. That's the image of the game. That's the rule of the game, so we are going to make sure that we're complying on that.

Okay, that's what I've got from a presentation standpoint, so what are your questions?

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about the targeting reviews? Last year it seemed like those decisions were made on the field without any review, and it was done -- those reviews for the targeting fouls, are they being done in the booth? Are they being done somewhere at another location? And even after the game, are those still up for review after the game at a later date?

DAVID COLEMAN: Okay, multiple questions there. I'll get them all. Give it back to me if I miss something.

Number one, last year targeting had to be called on the field. When it was called on the field, then it went to instant replay to be either confirmed as a correct call or the other decision is that it stands. They had nothing to change the call that was on the field.

The third option was that they could overrule the targeting if, in fact, it was the wrong call. The helmet didn't hit the -- it was not a helmet-to-helmet hit, or the targeting action did not take place. That happened maybe once in terms of turning over a call that was made on the field.

Many of them stood, and a number of them were confirmed, okay; that's the way it worked last year.

We had 10 or so targeting fouls that were called, and as you know, the results of the foul are if it's in the first half of the game, the player who was disqualified leaves the game and cannot return for the remainder of the game. If it's in the second half of the game, the player who's disqualified is out for the remainder of the game and the first half of the following game.

So this year, we are now able to -- like I said, the one or two that we miss, we can get it from replay if it's a big call, and it's all done there in the stadium, okay, by the replay crew and communication with the referee and the crew, and then after it's over, if something is missed

altogether, there's two things that can happen.

Number one, the officials who missed the call, the responsible officials in that area who missed the call, receive a downgrade, which affects their performance appraisals. And then from a conference perspective, we can look at that and decide if there is additional discipline that might be necessary based on the level of the foul, the egregious nature of the foul that took place.

If we overturn it, it's over. What happens in the game is going to stand in the game because we're going to get it right there.

Q. With the proliferation of run-pass option plays, linemen downfield has been a focus for fans watching on TV the last couple years. How would you say the officials handled that aspect of the game last year, and are there any new interpretations of that rule?

DAVID COLEMAN: Okay, we did a good job with that. We might have missed one or two, and of course that rule on going downfield, a lineman downfield, they can make contact, and they can go downfield not more than three yards.

Now, the NCAA did look at moving that back to one yard. There was a lot of discussion at the NCAA level during the off-season. Some folks had recommended let's move it back to just give them a yard, but that did not go through.

We did well with that, and that's the responsibility of the wing officials on the line of scrimmage, and they have mechanics that they execute to watch the interior line and observe how far they go downfield.

I think from the previous year to last year, we did a better job.

Q. With the emphasis now on offensive pass interference, are there any changes in how you're going to interpret pick plays, because that seems to be one of the issues involved?

DAVID COLEMAN: There's no difference in how we interpret pick plays. We just focus on what they are and what they aren't, and that's what that video I mentioned to you is going to do.

One of the things that we have implemented over the last year and will continue to focus on has to do with the material effect. If I'm the quarterback and I look over that way at a receiver and the receiver is being held by the defense or the receiver is committing a foul of offensive pass interference and then I look over here and throw the ball, that's a foul over there,

because whatever happened over there could have taken the receiver out of the play, and if the receiver committed the foul, then could have taken the defender out of the play.

And the same goes for, like I say, defensive pass interference. So we're focusing on material effect on the play.

Before last year, you might have seen us calling something is happening over here, no attention over there, not in the play at all, but there was some contact offensively or defensively and there could have been a flag on the ground for pass interference, either offense or defense. That's gone. Okay, we're very specific about the material effect on the play.

Q. I wanted to ask about TV access inside the limit lines, how far they're going to be able to go up, or what does that entail?

DAVID COLEMAN: Okay. There is an exception now that's been added to that rule, and it states as follows: Handheld 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.

So there's the line on the field that's the limit line. That's the way it goes.

Now, that's not something officials are going to be handling. That's game security and people on the sideline who have responsibility for keeping people back off the field.

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