



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

MEMORANDUM

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TO: Football Head Coaches ]  
Conference Commissioners ] - - of NCAA Member Institutions.  
Coordinators of Officials ]

FROM: Mike Bellotti, chair  
NCAA Football Rules Committee.

Rogers Redding, secretary rules-editor  
NCAA Football Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Clarification of Blocking Zone and Blocking Below the Waist.

Input from several head coaches and discussions among coordinators of officials have drawn attention to the need for clarification of the blocking rules as they relate to player safety. Experience in the summer scrimmages demonstrated that action which was illegal in 2008 had inadvertently and unintentionally become legal through the way in which the blocking zone and blocking below the waist are defined in the 2009-2010 rule book.

The clarification of the rules language below, which has the endorsement of the coordinators of officials, is intended to clarify the committee's intent regarding blocking action that impacts the safety of the student athlete. This language appropriately frames the blocking zone to account for an unbalanced line, and it also specifies in more detail the restrictions for blocking below the waist by a player in the offensive backfield.

**Clarification of Rule: Blocking Zone and Blocking Below the Waist**

**1. Re-define blocking zone (2-3-6-a, FR-45)**

“The blocking zone is a rectangle centered on the **middle lineman of the offensive formation** and extending five yards laterally and three yards longitudinally in each direction.”

*(Bold-faced words replace “snapper”)*

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2. **Re-phrase the rules for blocking below the waist (Rule 9-1-2-e-1 and 2, FR-117)**

“1. Offensive linemen at the snap positioned more than seven yards from the **middle lineman of the offensive formation** are prohibited from blocking below the waist toward the original position of the ball in or behind the neutral zone and within 10 yards beyond the neutral zone.”

*(Bold-faced words replace “snapper”)*

“2. Backs at the snap positioned with the frame of their body completely outside the **right or left side of the blocking zone or completely outside the frame of the body of the second lineman from the middle lineman of the offensive formation in either direction toward a sideline**, or in motion at the snap, are prohibited from blocking below the waist toward the original position of the ball in or behind the neutral zone and within 10 yards beyond the neutral zone. The frame of the body does not include arms or legs extended sideways.”

*(Bold-faced words are new language replacing “tackle box”)*

Thank you for your attention to this information. If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact secretary-editor Rogers Redding ([rredding@sec.org](mailto:rredding@sec.org)).

MB/RR:nb