

# RULE 3

## Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

### SECTION 1. Start of Each Period

#### Pregame, First and Third Periods

- ARTICLE 1. a. Prior to the game, during warm-ups, teams must remain in an agreed separate half of the field, normally the half up to the line five yards from midfield to their left, looking from their team area towards the field ([Appendix D](#)).
- b. When any squad member enters the playing enclosure prior to the officials escorting the captains out for the coin toss, the head coach or an assistant coach from that team must be present on the field.
- c. When squad members are present within the playing enclosure subsequent to the officials' jurisdiction, they must be wearing their jerseys or have their numerals readily visible. Any player without their numeral readily visible must leave the playing enclosure. ([A.R. 3-1-1:I](#))
- d. Each half shall start with a kickoff.
- e. Three minutes before the scheduled starting time, the referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of not more than four field captains from each team and another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. Before the second half, the referee will obtain the teams' second half options.
- f. During the coin toss, each team shall remain in its team area. The coin toss begins when the field captains leave the sidelines and ends when the captains return to the sidelines.

#### **PENALTY – [f] Five yards from the succeeding spot [S19: IPR].**

- g. The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:
1. To designate which team shall kick off.
  2. To designate which goal line their team shall defend. (*Exception: This option is not available if only one goal is being used (Rule 1-2-5-f.)*)
  3. To defer their selection to the second half.
- h. The opponent shall then choose option 1 or 2 above, as available.
- i. If the winner of the toss chooses option 3 above, then after the opponent's choice the winner selects the available option (1 or 2 above).
- j. For the second half, the loser of the toss, or the winner who chooses option 3 above, shall choose option 1 or 2 above. The opponent then chooses the remaining available option.

#### **Approved Ruling 3-1-1**

- l. After the officials' jurisdiction has begun, a few home team players enter the playing enclosure without their game jersey, and do not have their numeral readily visible. **RULING:** The players with no game jersey or numeral readily visible must immediately leave the playing enclosure. The head coach or assistant coach(es) on the field may help with this situation. [Cited by 3-1-1-c]

## Second and Fourth Periods

ARTICLE 2. Between the first and second periods and also between the third and fourth periods, the teams shall defend opposite goal lines (*Exception: Rule 1-2-5-f-2-d*).

- a. The ball shall be relocated at the spot corresponding exactly, in relation to goal lines and sidelines, to its location at the end of the preceding period.
- b. Possession of the ball, the number of the down and the distance to be gained shall remain unchanged.

## Extra Periods

ARTICLE 3. The tiebreaker system will be used when a game is tied after four periods. (*Exception: ∇* Competitions may adopt regulations to forgo the tiebreaker system if the scores are tied at the end of a regular season game. In that event, the game shall be terminated and the result shall stand as a tie.) IFAF football-playing rules apply, with the following exceptions:

- a. Immediately after the conclusion of the fourth quarter, officials will instruct both teams to retire to their respective team areas. The officials will assemble at the midfield line and review the tiebreaker procedures.
- b. The officials will escort the captains (Rule 3-1-1) to the centre of the field for the coin toss. The referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of not more than four field captains from each team and another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. The winner of the toss may not defer the choice and must choose one of the following options:
  1. Offense or defense, with the offense at the opponent's 25-yard line to start the first possession series.
  2. Which end of the field shall be used for both possession series of that overtime period.
- c. The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first extra period and shall have the first choice of the two options for subsequent even-numbered extra periods.
- d. *Definition.* An extra period shall consist of two possession series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap on or between the hash marks on the designated 25-yard line (unless relocated by penalty); this becomes the opponent's 25-yard line. The snap shall be from midway between the hash marks, unless the offensive team selects a different position on or between the hash marks before the ready-for-play signal. After the ready-for-play signal, the ball may be relocated only after a charged team timeout, unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls.
- e. *Possession series.* Each team retains the ball during a possession series until it scores or fails to make a first down. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead. However, Team A may not have a first down if it regains possession after a change of team possession (**A.R. 3-1-3:I-IX**). Beginning with the third extra period, a team's possession series will be one play for a two-point try from the three-yard line, unless relocated by penalty.

Team A and B designations are the same as defined in Rule 2-27-1.
- f. *Scoring.* The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winner. There shall be an equal number of possession series, as described in (e) above, in each extra period, unless Team B scores other than on the try. Beginning with the second extra period, teams scoring a touchdown must attempt a two-point try. Although not illegal, a one-point try attempt by Team A will not result in a score (**A.R. 3-1-3:X, XV**).

- g. Fouls after a change of team possession are treated specially (Rule 10-2-7). (**A.R. 3-1-3:XI-XIV**)
- h. *Timeouts*. Each team shall be allowed one timeout for each extra period (Rule 3-3-7). Timeouts not used during the regulation periods may not be carried over into the extra period(s). Unused extra period timeouts may not be carried over to other extra periods. Timeouts between periods shall be charged to the succeeding period.  
Radio and television timeouts are permitted only between extra periods (first and second, second and third, etc.). Charged team timeouts may not be extended for radio and television purposes. The extra period(s) begins when the ball is first snapped.
- i. In the absence of a media timeout, after the second and fourth extra periods, there will be a two-minute mandatory break period.

### Approved Ruling 3-1-3

- I. Other than on the try, Team B scores a touchdown after intercepting a forward pass, intercepting or recovering a backward pass or fumble, or returning a blocked field goal attempt. **RULING:** Period and game are ended, and Team B is the winner. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- II. During the first possession series of a period, Team B intercepts a forward pass, or intercepts or recovers a fumble or a backward pass, and does not score a touchdown. **RULING:** Team A's possession series is ended and Team B starts its series. Team B becomes Team A when the referee declares the ball ready for play. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- III. During the first possession series of a period, Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. Team A recovers the ball and runs for a touchdown. **RULING:** Six points for Team A. Team B begins its possession series after the try. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- IV. Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. A23 recovers the ball and is tackled beyond the line to gain. **RULING:** Team A retains the ball to continue its possession series. First and 10. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- V. On first, second or third down, Team A's field goal attempt is blocked and does not cross the neutral zone. A23 recovers the ball and is tackled short of the line to gain. **RULING:** Team A's ball, next down. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- VI. During the first possession series of a period, Team B gains possession and then loses possession to Team A, which (a) scores a touchdown; (b) does not score a touchdown. **RULING:** (a) The score counts. In both (a) and (b), Team A's possession series ends and Team B begins its possession series. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- VII. During the first possession series of a period, Team A fumbles into Team B's end zone on second down of a series. Team B recovers and downs the ball in its end zone. **RULING:** Team A's possession series is ended. Team B begins its possession series. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- VIII. During the first possession series of a period, B10 intercepts a forward pass on their six-yard line and downs the ball in their end zone. **RULING:** Safety: two points for Team A. Team A's possession series is over. Team B will put the ball in play, first and 10 on the 25-yard line at the same end of the field. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- IX. Team A's field-goal attempt is untouched beyond the neutral zone until B17 muffs it at the five-yard line. A75 recovers at the three-yard line. **RULING:** Team A's possession series continues; first down for Team A at the three-yard line. [Cited by 3-1-3-e]
- X. On the first possession series of a period, Team A scores a touchdown. On the try, Team B intercepts a pass and returns it for a two-point touchdown. **RULING:** Team B starts its possession series at the 25-yard line with Team A leading in the overtime score 6-2. [Cited by 3-1-3-f]
- XI. After the end of the first possession series by Team A, Team B commits a dead-ball personal foul. **RULING:** Team B starts its possession series on the 40-yard line, first and 10. [Cited by 3-1-3-g]
- XII. During the first possession series of a period, A12 throws a forward pass and Team A is flagged for an illegal shift. B25 intercepts the pass, and B38 (a) clips or (b) commits a flagrant personal foul before B25 crosses Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Score not allowed. The fouls cancel and the down is not repeated. Team A's possession series is ended, and

Team B begins its possession series at the 40-yard line. In (b), B38 is disqualified. [Cited by 3-1-3-g]

- XIII. During the second possession series of the first period, B25 intercepts a pass and carries the ball across Team A's goal line. During the run, B79 clips at midfield. **RULING:** No touchdown. Either the game is over, or the next period will start with first and 10 at either the 12½ or 40-yard lines as the penalty carries over. [Cited by 3-1-3-g]
- XIV. During the first possession series B37 intercepts a forward pass and has a clear field to the goal line when they make an obscene gesture toward the nearest opponent. **RULING:** Team B's score is cancelled and the penalty is carried over. Team B begins its possession series on the 40-yard line, first and 10. (Rules 3-1-3, 10-2-7-a and 10-2-7-b). [Cited by 3-1-3-g]
- XV. In the third or subsequent extra period, Team B intercepts a pass and returns it for a 2-point touchdown. **RULING:** The game is over. Team B has won. There is no need for Team B to have its possession series (Rule 3-1-3-f). [Cited by 3-1-3-f]

## SECTION 2. Playing Time and Intermissions

### Length of Periods and Intermissions

ARTICLE 1. The normal total playing time in a game shall be 48 minutes, divided into four periods of 12 minutes each, with one-minute intermissions between the first and second periods (first half) and between the third and fourth periods (second half) (*Exception:* A one-minute intermission between the first and second and the third and fourth periods may be extended for radio and television timeouts).

∇ Competitions or national federations may adopt regulations to set the maximum playing time in a game to 60, 48, 40 or 32 minutes, provided the four periods are of equal length.

- a. No period shall end until the ball is dead and the referee declares the period ended [S14].
- b. ∅ The intermission between halves shall be 20 minutes, unless altered before the game by mutual agreement of the administrations of both teams and the competition authority. Immediately after the second period ends, the referee should begin the intermission by signalling to start the game clock [S2].
- c. § Game management will determine the timing of halftime activities. The field will be available to squad members no later than three minutes prior to the second half kickoff. When any squad member enters the playing enclosure during the halftime intermission, a staff member from that team must be present on the field. If kickers or other squad members come onto the playing enclosure before the field is available, their activities must be confined to the team area.
- d. § It is strongly recommended that game management schedule the kickoff time no later than four hours before darkness (defined as the time of local sunset or the time at which any artificial lights must be switched off).
- e. # If a game (delayed by five or more minutes) kicks off less than 3½ hours before darkness, playing time shall be limited to a maximum of 48 minutes.
- f. # If a game (delayed by five or more minutes) kicks off less than 3 hours before darkness, playing time shall be limited to a maximum of 40 minutes. (**A.R. 3-2-1:I**)

### Approved Ruling 3-2-1

- l. A game is scheduled with a kickoff time 3 hours before darkness. (a) It kicks off on schedule. (b) The kickoff is delayed by 5 or more minutes. **RULING:** (a) The playing time will be as determined by the competition (48 minutes by default). (b) The playing time will be limited to a maximum of 40 minutes. [Cited by 3-2-1-f]

## Timing Adjustments

ARTICLE 2. Before the game starts, playing time and the intermission between halves may be shortened by the referee if they are of the opinion that darkness or other conditions may interfere with the game. The four periods must be of equal length if the game is shortened before its start.

- a. ∅ Any time during the game, the playing time of any remaining period or periods and the intermission between halves may be shortened by mutual agreement of the opposing head coaches and the referee. **(A.R. 3-2-2:I)**
- b. Timing errors on the game clock may be corrected but only in the period in which they occur.
- c. If the referee has positive knowledge of the elapsed time, they will reset and appropriately start the game clock.
- d. Timing errors on a play clock may be corrected by the referee. The play clock shall start again (Rule 2-29-2).
- e. When the play-clock count is interrupted by circumstances beyond the control of either team (without positive knowledge of game clock elapsed time), a new count shall be started and the game clock shall start per Rule 3-2-4-b.
- f. The 40/25-second clock is not started when the game clock is running with fewer than 40 or 25 seconds, respectively, in a period. The play clock shall be set appropriately and continuously display this time (40 or 25 seconds) and hold.
- g. The game clock should not be stopped if the play clock is started in conflict with paragraph f above.
- h. Timing adjustments for games using video review are governed by Rule 12-2-2-a-12.

### Approved Ruling 3-2-2

- i. At halftime the score is 56-0. The head coaches and the referee agree that the third and fourth quarters should be shortened to 10 minutes each. The coaches also request that the second half be played with a "running clock," i.e., that the game clock not be stopped. **RULING:** The remaining quarters may be shortened to 10 minutes each. Whether a "running clock" is implemented or not depends on Competition Regulations relating to Rule 3-3-2. If Rule 3-3-2 is not in effect, normal clock rules apply for the entire game. [Cited by 3-2-2-a]

## Extension of Periods

ARTICLE 3.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A period shall be extended for an untimed down if one or more of the following occurs during a down in which time expires <b>in the 2nd or 4th quarter</b> (provided it is not during a running clock session) <b>(A.R. 3-2-3:I-VIII)</b>:           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A penalty is accepted for a live-ball foul(s). (<b>Exception:</b> Rules 10-2-5-a and 10-2-5-d). At the option of the offended team, the period is <i>not</i> extended if the foul is by the team in possession and the statement of the penalty includes loss of down <b>(A.R. 3-2-3:VIII)</b>.</li> <li>2. At the option of the offended team, an illegal touching violation is accepted.</li> <li>3. There are offsetting fouls.</li> <li>4. An official sounds their whistle inadvertently or otherwise incorrectly signals the ball dead.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |
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- b. Additional untimed downs will be played until a down is free of the circumstances in Rule 3-2-3-a (above).
  - c. If a touchdown is scored during a down in which time in a period expires, the period is extended for the try (**Exception:** Rule 8-3-2-a).

### Approved Ruling 3-2-3

- I. During the extension of a period after the ball is ready for play and before the snap, Team A commits a foul. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Team A is penalised for the foul and is entitled to complete the down. [Cited by 3-2-3-a]
- II. Time expires during Team A's free kick [at the end of the second quarter](#). A1 is offside on the kick. **RULING:** Penalty — Five yards from the previous spot, the end of Team B's run, or the touchback spot, and the period is extended. Repeat the free kick or Team B is awarded an untimed down. [Cited by 3-2-3-a]
- III. Time expires during Team A's attempted field goal [at the end of the second quarter](#). Team B was offside. **RULING:** Penalty — Five yards from the previous spot, the period is extended (Rule 10-2-2-d-4-a). [Cited by 3-2-3-a]
- IV. A Team A player interferes with the opportunity to catch a kick (not a try) during a down in which time expires [in the first quarter](#). **RULING:** Penalty — 15 yards from the spot of the foul. [The period is not extended and the penalty will be enforced at the beginning of the second quarter](#). [Cited by 3-2-3-a]
- V. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. After the touchdown, but before the try, either team fouls. **RULING:** The period is extended only for the try. The penalty may be enforced on the try or the succeeding kickoff, or the succeeding spot in extra periods. [Cited by 10-2-5-c, 3-2-3-a]
- VI. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. During Team A's successful try, Team B fouls. **RULING:** The period is not extended for the kickoff. Team A may accept the penalty and repeat the try, or decline the penalty and accept the score. Penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct are enforced on the subsequent kickoff or the succeeding spot in extra periods. [Cited by 10-2-5-e, 3-2-3-a, 8-3-3-b-1]
- VII. Team A scores a touchdown during a down in which time expires. After the try ends, either team commits a dead-ball foul. **RULING:** The try may be repeated for an accepted penalty if a live-ball foul occurred during the try; the penalty for the dead-ball foul will then also be enforced on the repeated try. The period is not extended to enforce a penalty for a dead-ball foul. If accepted, this penalty must be enforced on the kickoff to start the next period or at the succeeding spot in extra periods [Cited by 10-2-5-e, 3-2-3-a, 8-3-3-d-2, 8-3-5]
- VIII. Time expires in the first half on a play in which A12 is beyond the neutral zone when they complete a pass to A88 in Team B's end zone. **RULING:** Team B accepts the penalty to nullify the score, and at the option of the offended team the period is not extended because the penalty includes loss of down. The first half ends. [Cited by 3-2-3-a-1, 3-2-3-a]

### Timing Devices

- ARTICLE 4. a.  *Game clock*. Playing time shall be kept with a game clock that may be either a stopwatch operated by the line judge, back judge, field judge or side judge, or a game clock operated by an assistant under the direction of the appropriate judge. The type of game clock [and the location of the game clock operator](#) shall be determined by the game management. [The game clock operator may be located on the sideline or in the press box area. If the clock operator is in the press box, it is recommended the location is between the goal lines. This location shall be shielded from public interference and shall afford a direct and unobstructed view of the playing field.](#) The game clock shall not display fractions of seconds.
- b.  *40-Second Clock*.
1. When an official signals that the ball is dead, the play clock shall begin a 40-second count.
  2. If the 40-second clock does not start or the count is interrupted for reasons beyond the control of the officials or the play-clock operator (e.g. clock malfunction), the referee shall stop the game clock and signal (both palms open in an over-the-head pumping motion) that the play clock should be reset at 40 seconds and started immediately.

3. In the event that the 40-second clock is running and reads 20 before the ball is ready to be snapped, the referee shall signal that the play clock be set at 25 seconds. If there is a delay in doing this, the referee shall declare a timeout and signal that the play clock be set at 25 seconds. When play is to be resumed, the referee will give the ready-for-play signal [S1] and the play clock shall begin the 25-second count. The game clock will start on the snap unless it had been running when the referee declared a timeout; in that case, it will start on the referee's signal (Rule 3-3-2-f). (**A.R. 3-2-4:I, II and III**)
- c. *25-Second Clock*. If the officials signal the game clock to be stopped for any of the following reasons, the referee shall signal (one open palm in an over-the-head pumping motion) that the clock should be set at 25 seconds:
1. Penalty administration.
  2. Charged team timeout.
  3. Media timeout.
  4. Timeout for an injury to or a helmet coming off a player or players on the offensive team only. The play clock is set to 40 seconds for an injury to or helmet coming off a player or players on the defensive team, or if injuries or helmets off are by both teams. This rule only applies if the injury and/or helmet off was the only reason for stopping the clock.
  5. Measurement.
  6. Team B is awarded a first down other than after a free kick.
  7. After a kick down, other than a free kick where Team B will next snap the ball.
  8. Scores other than a Team A touchdown (not the try).
  9. Start of each period.
  10. Start of a team's possession series in an extra period.
  11. Video review.
  12. Other administrative stoppage.
- When play is to be resumed, the referee will give the ready-for-play signal [S1] and the play clock will begin its count.
- d. *Device malfunction*. If a visual 40/25-second timing device becomes inoperative, both coaches shall be notified by the referee immediately and both clocks shall be turned off.

#### **Approved Ruling 3-2-4**

- I. When the ball is dead after a running play that ends out of bounds, the 40-second play clock is started. The umpire receives the ball from the line judge, and as they are placing it on the ground, they see that it is not a legal game ball. They toss the ball to the line judge who attempts to get a legal ball from the ball person. **RULING:** If the play clock reads 20 seconds or less before the correct ball is in from the sideline and ready for play, the referee declares a timeout and signals to reset the play clock to 25 seconds. When the correct ball is ready for play they signal to start the play clock and the game clock. [Cited by 3-2-4-b-3]
- II. When the ball is dead after a running play that ends in the side zone, the officials have difficulty getting the ball in to the hash mark. As the play clock nears 20 seconds, the umpire places the ball on the ground, and by the time the officials are ready, the play clock is somewhat below 20 when the umpire steps away. **RULING:** Without stopping the game clock, the referee gives the "pump" signal to indicate that the play clock is to be reset to 25. If the play clock is quickly reset to 25, the game clock does not stop. Only if the play clock operator does not quickly respond to the referee's "pump" signal will the referee declare a timeout, signal for the play clock to be set at 25, and then signal to start both the play and game clocks. [Cited by 3-2-4-b-3]

- III. Team A scores a touchdown and the 40-second play clock is started. Without stopping the game, the referee receives positive confirmation from the video judge that the touchdown is good. The play clock displays: (a) 20 or more seconds, or (b) 19 or fewer seconds. **RULING:** The referee (a) signals to clear the centre judge or umpire and to allow the ball to be snapped. (b) The referee will signal the play clock be reset to 25 seconds, and will then signal to clear the centre judge or umpire and allow the ball to be snapped. [Cited by 3-2-4-b-3]
- IV. Team A scores a touchdown and the 40-second play clock is started. With less than 25 seconds on the play clock, Team A's head coach or team captain requests the ball be moved to the left hash mark. **RULING:** The officials will not honour the request. Team A may call a timeout to relocate the ball unless preceded by a Team A foul or offsetting fouls. [Cited by 8-3-2-c]

### Minimum time for a play after spiking the ball

- ARTICLE 5. a. If the game clock is stopped and will start on the referee's signal with three or more seconds remaining in the quarter, the offense may reasonably expect to throw the ball directly to the ground (Rule 7-3-2-f) and have enough time for another play.
- b. With two seconds or one second on the game clock there is enough time for only one play. **(A.R. 3-2-5:I)**

#### Approved Ruling 3-2-5

- I. Late in a quarter Team A, out of timeouts, makes a first down, stopping the clock which reads 0:03. Team A intends to spike the ball and run an additional play. The referee appropriately blows their whistle and signals, which starts the game clock. The quarterback takes the snap and raises the ball high over their head before throwing it directly to the ground. The game clock shows 0:00. **RULING:** Time in the quarter has expired. Although there were 3 seconds on the game clock when the referee signalled it to start, there is no guarantee of enough time to run an additional play other than spiking the ball. The offense must execute the spike in a timely manner. [Cited by 3-2-5-b]

## SECTION 3. Timeouts: Starting and Stopping the Clock

### Timeout

- ARTICLE 1. a. An official shall signal timeout when the rules provide for stopping the clock or when a timeout is charged to a team or to the referee. Other officials should repeat timeout signals. The referee may declare and charge themselves with a discretionary timeout for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules **(A.R. 3-3-1:I, II and IV)**.
- b. When a team's charged timeouts are exhausted **or are not available** and it requests a timeout, the officials shall not acknowledge the request (Rule 3-3-4) **(A.R. 3-3-1:V, VI)**.
- c. Once the game begins, players shall not practice with a ball on the field of play or the end zones except during the half-time intermission.

#### Approved Ruling 3-3-1

- I. On third and 2½, A45 fumbles a live ball after gaining three yards. The officials cannot determine who has recovered the fumble, so the line judge signals the clock to stop while the ball is being located. A45 is found to be in possession of the ball and (a) has not made their line to gain or (b) has made their line to gain. **RULING:** The 40-second clock starts when the ball is declared dead. (a) The referee immediately will signal the game clock to start. (b) The game clock will start on the referee's signal when the ball is ready for play. [Cited by 3-3-1-a, 3-3-2-e-1]
- II. On second and 14, A45 gains six yards and is downed with the ball in their possession. The linesman, mistaking the back stake of the line-to-gain chain for the front stake, erroneously signals the clock to stop. **RULING:** As soon as the error is detected by any official, the signal to start the clock shall be given by the game official detecting the error. [Cited by 3-3-1-a]



- III. Team A fumbles or the ball is loose after a backward pass. Several players dive on the ball, creating a "pile". **RULING:** The covering official(s) shall stop the clock and the 40-second clock shall start. Upon positive knowledge of who recovered, the referee will point in the direction governed by possession and start the game clock (a) immediately if Team A has recovered short of the line to gain (no first down), or (b) on the snap if Team B has recovered. [Cited by 3-3-2-e-8]
- IV. A shoelace, padlace, jersey, number or equipment breaks or tears. **RULING:** No referee's discretionary timeout permitted for repair or replacement. [Cited by 3-3-1-a]

- V. 3/5 @ B-30. It is late in the half and both teams have all their timeouts remaining. With Team A at the line and ready to snap the ball, the Team B head coach requests a timeout, and the timeout is granted. After the timeout, both teams are in formation and the ball is ready for play. (a) Team B head coach requests a timeout, or (b) Team A head coach requests a timeout. **RULING:** (a) The officials shall not acknowledge the timeout request. Team B still has 2 timeouts remaining, but since they have already called a timeout in the dead-ball period, a timeout is not available for Team B, (b) Team A timeout is granted. Since they have timeouts remaining and have not called a timeout in this dead-ball period, Team A has a timeout available. [Cited by 3-3-1-b, 3-3-4-a]
- VI. 3/5 @ B-30. It is late in the half and both teams have all their timeouts remaining. With Team A at the line and ready to snap the ball, the Team B head coach requests a timeout, and the timeout is granted. After the timeout, both teams are in formation and the ball is ready for play. Just before the snap, A77 commits a false start. Team A is penalized 5 yards creating a 3/10 situation. Both teams are back in formation with the ball ready for play, and Team B head coach requests a timeout. **RULING:** The officials shall not acknowledge the Team B head coach's timeout request. Team B still has 2 timeouts remaining, but since they have already called a timeout in the dead-ball period, a timeout is not available for Team B. Because the false start is a dead-ball foul, we are still in the same dead-ball period from when Team B called a timeout, so a timeout is not available to Team B. [Cited by 3-3-1-b, 3-3-4-a]

### Starting and Stopping the Clock

ARTICLE 2. ∇ If the margin in the score becomes more than 34 points, a *running clock session* will start. During a running clock session, the game clock will stop only for reasons marked \* below. For other events listed here, the clock will keep running. Competitions may adopt regulations to:

1. forgo the running clock rule completely;
  2. forgo the rule only in the first half of a game;
  3. limit the running clock rule to use after an elapsed time no later than 2 hours 15 minutes after kickoff, but only in games that are broadcast live;
  4. reduce the score margin below 34 points.
- a. *Free Kick*. After the ball is free-kicked, the game clock shall be started on an official's signal when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, or when it crosses the goal line after being touched legally by Team B in its end zone. It is subsequently stopped on an official's signal when the ball is dead by rule. **(A.R. 3-3-2:VII)**
- b. *Scrimmage Down*. When a period begins with a scrimmage down, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally snapped. On all other scrimmage downs, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally snapped (Rule 3-3-2-d) or on a prior signal by the referee (Rule 3-3-2-e). The game clock shall not run during a try, during an extension of a period or during an extra period. **(A.R. 3-3-2:I-IV)**
- c. *After a Score*. The game clock shall stop on an official's signal after a touchdown, field goal or safety. It shall be started again as in (a) above unless an accepted penalty erases the score or the down is repeated in which cases it shall be started when the ball is legally snapped.

- d. *Starts on the Snap*. For each of the following, the game clock is stopped on an official's signal. If the next play begins with a snap, the game clock will start on the snap:
1. Touchback (provided Team B will next snap the ball).
  2. With fewer than two minutes remaining in a half a Team A ball carrier, fumble or backward pass is ruled out of bounds. (**Exception:** After a Team A forward fumble goes out of bounds, the clock starts on the referee's signal.)
  3. Team B is awarded a first down and will next snap the ball. (**A.R. 3-3-2:V**)
  4. A forward pass is ruled incomplete.
  5. A team is granted a charged timeout. \*
  6. The ball becomes illegal. \*
  7. A period ends. \*
  8. A legal kick down ends. (**A.R. 3-3-2:VI**)
  9. A return kick is made.
  10. A scrimmage kick is made beyond the neutral zone.
  11. Team A commits a delay-of-game foul while in a scrimmage kick formation.
- e. *Starts on the Referee's Signal*. For each of the following reasons, the game clock is stopped on an official's signal. If the next play begins with a snap, the game clock will start on the referee's signal:
1. Team A is awarded a first down, either through play or by penalty (**A.R. 3-3-1:I**).
  2. A Team A forward fumble goes out of bounds.
  3. Other than with fewer than two minutes remaining in a half, a Team A ball carrier, fumble or backward pass is ruled out of bounds.
  4. To complete a penalty (**Exception:** Rule 3-4-6-b). \*
  5. An injury timeout is allowed for one or more players or an official (**A.R. 3-3-5:I-V**). \*
  6. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.
  7. A possible first-down measurement. \*
  8. Both teams cause a delay in making the ball ready for play (**A.R. 3-3-1:III**).
  9. A live ball comes into possession of an official.
  10. A head coach requests a conference or video review. \*
  11. The referee grants a media timeout. \*
  12. The referee declares a discretionary timeout. \*
  13. The referee declares a timeout for unfair noise (Rule 9-2-1-b-5).
  14. An illegal pass is thrown to conserve time (**A.R. 7-3-2:II-VII**) (**Exception:** Rule 3-4-6-b).
  15. The referee interrupts the 40/25-second count.
  16. A player's helmet comes completely off through play.
  17. When either team commits a dead-ball foul. \*
- f. *Snap Supersedes Referee's Signal*. Whenever one or more incidents that cause the game clock to be started on the referee's signal (Rule 3-3-2-e) occur in conjunction with any that cause it to be started on the snap (Rules 3-3-2-c and 3-3-2-d), it shall be started on the snap. (**Exception:** Rule 3-4-6 (10-second runoff) supersedes this rule, other than when a team is granted a charged timeout. (**A.R. 3-3-2:VIII-IX**))
- g. *Running clock*.
1. During a running clock session, the clock will always be started on the ready for play rather than the snap. (**A.R. 3-3-2:XII-XIII**)

2. If, during a running clock session, the margin in the score continues to be more than **24 points**, the running clock session will continue. If the margin drops to **24 or fewer points**, the running clock session will end immediately on the relevant score and normal clock rules will apply unless and until the margin becomes more than 34 points again. (**Exception:** If a competition reduces the score margin to start a running clock session below 34 points, the margin to end it will be **10 points** lower.) (**A.R. 3-3-2:X-XI**)

### Approved Ruling 3-3-2

- I. Fourth and six. Team A's running play, which ends inbounds, gains (a) eight yards or (b) five yards. B1 is offside during the play. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball. First and 10. The clock starts on the referee's signal. (b) Team A's ball. Fourth and one. The clock starts on the referee's signal. (Rules 3-3-2-e-1 and 3-3-2-e-4) [Cited by 3-3-2-b]
- II. Fourth and four. Team A's running play, which ends inbounds, gains (a) six yards or (b) three yards. B1 is offside during the play. **RULING:** (a) Team A's ball. First and 10. The clock starts on the referee's signal. (b) Team A's ball. First and 10 after accepting the penalty. The clock starts on the referee's signal. [Cited by 3-3-2-b]
- III. Third and four. Team A's pass is intercepted by B1, who is downed inbounds. B2 was offside during the play. **RULING:** Team A's ball. First and 10. The clock starts on the referee's signal. Although the clock was stopped to award Team B a first down, Team B will not next snap the ball. [Cited by 3-3-2-b]
- IV. Late in the second or fourth quarter, ball carrier A37 goes out of bounds. When the game clock is stopped it reads (a) 2:00 or (b) 1:59. **RULING:** (a) If there is a two-minute warning, the game clock will start on the snap. Otherwise, the game clock starts on the referee's signal when the ball is ready for play. (b) The game clock starts on the snap. [Cited by 3-3-2-b]
- V. Late in the second or fourth quarter, Team A has second and eight. B44 intercepts a legal forward pass and carries the ball out of bounds. B79 is in the neutral zone at the snap. When the game clock is stopped it reads (a) 2:00, or (b) 1:59. **RULING:** Team A accepts the penalty and retains possession of the ball. In both (a) and (b) if there is a two-minute warning, the game clock will start on the snap. Otherwise, the game clock starts on the referee's signal, because Team B will not next snap the ball. In (b) if Team B is leading or tied, the clock will start on the snap at the option of Team A (Rule 3-4-3). [Cited by 3-3-2-d-3]
- VI. Fourth and eight at the A-12, late in the fourth quarter. The punt is blocked and the ball does not cross the neutral zone. At the A-10, back A22 recovers the ball and throws a forward pass to eligible A88 who is tackled at the B-3. The game clock reads 0:03. **RULING:** Team A's ball at the B-3, first and goal. The game clock starts on the snap because of the legal kick play. (Rules 3-3-2-d-8, 3-3-2-e-1, 3-3-2-f) [Cited by 3-3-2-d-8]
- VII. Free Kick @ A-35. Team A executes an onside kick. After the ball has traveled 10 yards, (a) B21 gives a valid fair catch signal and makes a clean catch; (b) A80 is first to touch the ball and makes a clean legal catch or recovery; (c) B21 catches or recovers the ball and immediately goes to the ground; (d) B21 makes a clean recovery with their knees on the ground. **RULING:** The ball is declared dead and (a) No time will run off the clock; (b) No time will run off the clock; (c) the clock operator shall start the clock when the ball is legally touched and will stop the clock when the ball is declared dead (Rule 3-3-2-a); (d) No time will run off the clock. [Cited by 3-3-2-a]
- VIII. Third and five at the B-15 late in the fourth quarter, with Team A trailing 10-7. Quarterback A11 rolls out and is at the B-12 when they throw a forward pass that is incomplete. When the ball is dead the game clock shows 0:13. Team B accepts the penalty for the illegal forward pass. **RULING:** Fourth and seven at the B-17. Team B has the option for a 10-second runoff. Assuming that Team B accepts the runoff, the game clock is set at 0:03 and starts on the referee's signal. [Cited by 3-3-2-f, 3-4-6-b-Note]
- IX. Second and seven at the A-5 late in the second quarter. Quarterback A11 drops back to pass and is scrambling in their end zone as they try to find an open receiver. About to be tackled in the end zone, A11 throws the ball forward to the ground in an area where there is no eligible receiver. The referee throws a flag for intentional grounding. When the ball is dead the game clock shows 0:18. Team B accepts the penalty. **RULING:** The penalty

results in a safety, and Team A will free kick at the A-20. Team B has the option for a 10-second runoff. If Team B accepts the runoff, the game clock is set at 0:08 and starts on the referee's signal. If Team B declines the runoff, the game clock remains at 0:18 and starts when the kicked ball is legally touched in the field of play. [Cited by 3-3-2-f, 3-4-6-b-Note]

- X. The score is 35-0 and a running clock session has started. It then becomes 35-6. The trailing team scores a touchdown to make the score 35-12. **RULING:** The clock stops when the touchdown is scored – the margin is no longer more than 24 points. Normal clock rules then apply unless/until the leading team increases the lead to more than 34 points again. [Cited by 3-3-2-g-2]
- XI. The score is 41-10 during a running clock session. The trailing team scores a touchdown to make the score 41-16. Then they kick the extra point to make the score 41-17. **RULING:** The clock stops when the try is scored – it is only then that the margin drops to 24 points. [Cited by 3-3-2-g-2]
- XII. The score is 30-0. The leading team scores a touchdown to make the score 36-0. **RULING:** The clock is stopped for the touchdown and will restart when the ball is declared ready for play on the ensuing try, but will not stop again until one of the events marked \* occurs. (Rule 3-3-2-g) [Cited by 3-3-2-g-1]
- XIII. The score is 28-0. The leading team scores a touchdown to make the score 34-0. Then they score a try touchdown to make the score 36-0. **RULING:** The clock was stopped for the original touchdown and will restart when the ball is declared ready for play on the ensuing free kick, and will not stop again until one of the events marked \* occurs. [Cited by 3-3-2-g-1]

### Suspending the game

ARTICLE 3. a. The referee may suspend the game temporarily when conditions warrant such action.

- b. When the game is stopped by actions of a person(s) not subject to the rules, or for any other reasons not specified in the rules, and cannot continue, the referee shall:
  1. Suspend play and direct the players to their team areas.
  2. Refer the problem to those responsible for the game's management.
  3. Resume the game when conditions are satisfactory.
- c. ∇ If a game is suspended under Rules 3-3-3-a and b before the end of the fourth period and cannot be resumed, there are four possible options:
  1. Resume the game at a later date;
  2. Terminate the game with a determined final score;
  3. Forfeit of the game; or
  4. Declare a no contest.

The option that takes effect shall be determined by competition regulations.

- d. ∇ If a game is suspended under Rules 3-3-3-a and b after four periods of play and cannot be resumed, the game shall be ruled a tie. The final score shall be the score at the end of the last completed period. (Note: If a winner must be determined in a competition playoff game, competition regulations shall determine when and where the game will be resumed.)
- e. A suspended game, if resumed, will begin with the same time remaining and under the identical conditions of down, distance, field position and player eligibility.

### Charged Team Timeouts

ARTICLE 4. When timeouts are not exhausted and are available, an official shall allow a charged team timeout when requested by any player or head coach when the ball is dead.

Consecutive charged team timeouts are not allowed by the same team in any specific dead-ball period.

- a. Each team is entitled to three charged team timeouts during each half, with no more than one charged team timeout available per team, per specific dead-ball period (A.R. 3-3-1:V, VI).
- b. After the ball is declared dead and before the snap, a legal substitute may request a timeout if they are between the nine-yard marks. (A.R. 3-3-4:I)
- c. A player who participated during the previous down may request a timeout between the time the ball is declared dead and the snap without being between the nine-yard marks. (A.R. 3-3-4:I)
- d. A head coach who is in, or in the vicinity of, their team area or coaching box may request a timeout between the time the ball is declared dead and the next snap.
- e. A player, incoming substitute or head coach may request a head coach's conference with the referee if the coach believes a rule has been enforced improperly. If the rule enforcement is not changed, the coach's team will be charged a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used.
  1. Only the referee may stop the clock for a head coach's conference.
  2. A request for a head coach's conference or video review must be made before the ball is snapped or free-kicked for the next play and before the end of the second or fourth period (Rule 5-2-9).
  3. After a head coach's conference or video review, the full team timeout is granted if charged by the referee.

#### Approved Ruling 3-3-4

- l. Before the snap, a legal substitute of either team running from the bench requests a timeout before being within the nine-yard marks. They then request a timeout again after being within the nine-yard marks. **RULING:** Initial timeout request not granted. Second request granted (Rule 7-1-3-b). [Cited by 3-3-4-b, 3-3-4-c, 7-1-3-b-1]

### Injury Timeout

ARTICLE 5. a. In the event of an injured player(s):

1. An official will declare a timeout and the player(s) must leave the game. They must remain out of the game for at least one down, even if their team is granted a team timeout. When in question, officials will take a timeout for an injured player.
  2. The player(s) may not return to the game until they receive approval of medical personnel designated by their team.
  3. Officials, coaches and trainers shall give special attention to players who exhibit signs of a concussion. (See Appendix C.)
  4. Whenever a participant (player or game official) is bleeding, has blood saturated on the uniform, or has blood on exposed skin, the player or game official shall go to the team area and be given appropriate medical treatment. They may not return to the game without approval of medical personnel. (A.R. 3-3-5:I-VII)
- b. Feigning an injury for any reason is unethical. An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning an injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules. For questionable game action, a team or an official has the option to report the matter to the relevant disciplinary authority, who may choose to take action against the player(s) and coach(es) involved. Attention is directed to the statement in "The Football Code" (Coaching Ethics, section g).
  - c. An injury timeout may follow a charged team timeout.

- d. The referee will declare a timeout for an injured official.
- e. Following a timeout for an injured player of the defensive team (potentially combined with a timeout for a defensive helmet off), the play clock shall be set at 40 seconds. This rule only applies if the injury and/or helmet off was the only reason for stopping the clock.
- f. *Ten-Second Runoff*. If the player injury is the only reason for stopping the clock (other than their or a teammate's helmet coming off, Rule 3-3-9) with less than one minute in the half, the opponent has the option of a 10-second runoff.
  - 1. The play clock will be set at 40 seconds for an injury to a player of the defensive team and at 25 seconds for an injury to a player of the offensive team (Rule 3-2-4-c-4).
  - 2. Rule 3-4-6 applies. **(A.R. 3-3-5:VIII-XIII)**

### Approved Ruling 3-3-5

- I. At the end of a play, with the game clock running, the referee notices that A22 is bleeding. **RULING:** The referee stops the clock and declares an injury timeout. A22 leaves the field of play (or the end zone) for treatment by appropriate medical personnel. Unless there is also an injury to a Team B player the play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rule 3-2-4-c-4). [Cited by 3-3-2-e-5] [Cited by 3-3-5-a-4]
- II. After being treated for a bleeding or oozing wound, A22 (A.R. 3-3-5:I) attempts to enter the game before the next snap. **RULING:** A22 must remain out of the game for at least one play. In any event, they may return only on the approval of their team's medical personnel. [Cited by 3-3-2-e-5, 3-3-5-a-4]
- III. B52's jersey has blood spots on it. **RULING:** Unless the official determines that the jersey is saturated with blood, B52 may remain in the game. (Note: Saturated is defined as soaked with moisture or drenched. If blood has penetrated through a garment to the skin or can be transferred to another player or game official, the garment is saturated.) [Cited by 3-3-2-e-5, 3-3-5-a-4]
- IV. An official notices that blood has soaked through B10's jersey. **RULING:** B10 must leave the game until medical personnel have determined if the jersey must be replaced. [Cited by 3-3-2-e-5, 3-3-5-a-4]
- V. B10 tackles A12. An official determines that B10's jersey is saturated with blood from a cut on A12's arm. **RULING:** Both players must leave the game – A12 for treatment of their open wound, B10 for a determination by medical personnel as to whether they have to replace their jersey. [Cited by 3-3-2-e-5, 3-3-5-a-4]
- VI. During a dead-ball interval, A85 notices a bleeding cut on their arm. They voluntarily go to the team area and are replaced by A88. **RULING:** This is a legal substitution and there is no variation in game timing. A85 may return to the game after the injury has been treated, but they must adhere to substitution rules. [Cited by 3-3-5-a-4]
- VII. On second down the Team A ball carrier is tackled inbounds. The clock is then stopped for an injury to a player of Team B. (a) No other players are injured on the play. (b) There is also an injury to a player of Team A. (c) The referee grants a media timeout. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c) upon preparing to resume play the referee will indicate that the play clock be set to 40 seconds. Both the play clock and the game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal. [Cited by 3-3-5-a-4]
- VIII. Late in the half, ball carrier A35 is tackled. B79 goes to the ground with an injury, and the officials stop the game clock, which shows (a) 12 seconds; (b) eight seconds. **RULING:** Team A has the option of a 10-second runoff. If there is no 10-second runoff the game clock starts on the snap. If Team A accepts the option, (a) there will be two seconds on the game clock which will start on the referee's signal; (b) time in the half has expired. [Cited by 3-3-5-f-2]
- IX. Late in the half, ball carrier A35 is tackled beyond the line to gain. B79 goes to the ground with an injury. **RULING:** There is no option for a 10-second runoff because the game clock stops on the first down as well as the injury. The game clock starts on the referee's signal. [Cited by 3-3-5-f-2]
- X. A play ends inbounds with 1:03 left in the 4th quarter and the game clock continues to run. Five seconds later, an official sees an injured player and stops the clock. **RULING:** A

10-second runoff option applies because the clock was stopped for the injury and less than one minute in the half remained when that happened. The time the play ended is not relevant unless the game clock should have stopped then. [Cited by 3-3-5-f-2]

- XI. 1st and 10 at midfield with 0:59 remaining in the game. A34 gains 5 yards on the play and is tackled inbounds. During the play, A78 is flagged for holding and B99 is injured on the play. **RULING:** The play clock is set to 25 seconds as the game clock was stopped both to administer the penalty and for the injury to B99. There is no option for a 10-second runoff. [Cited by 3-3-5-f-2, 3-4-6-a]
- XII. 1st and 10 at midfield with 0:59 remaining in the game. A34 gains 5 yards on the play and is tackled inbounds. During the play, A78's helmet comes off and B99 is injured on the play. **RULING:** The play clock is set to 40 seconds as the game clock was stopped for an injury or helmet off on players of both teams. There is no option for a 10-second runoff. [Cited by 3-3-5-f-2, 3-4-6-d]
- XIII. 1st and 10 at midfield with 0:59 remaining in the game. A34 gains 5 yards on the play and is tackled inbounds by B56 grabbing, twisting and pulling A34's facemask, which causes A34's helmet to come off. B99 is injured on the play. **RULING:** The play clock is set to 25 seconds because the game clock was stopped to administer the penalty, in addition to A34's helmet coming off and for the injury to B99. There is no option for a 10-second runoff. Due to the helmet foul, A34 may remain in the game. [Cited by 3-3-5-f-2, 3-3-9-a, 3-4-6-a]

### Violation Timeouts

ARTICLE 6. For noncompliance with Rule 1-4-5-c-2, the team will be charged a timeout (Rule 3-4-2-b-2).

### Length of Timeouts

- ARTICLE 7. a. A charged full team timeout requested by any player or head coach shall be one minute plus the five-second referee notification and the 25-second play clock interval. (**Exception:** Rule 3-3-4-e-3).
- b. Other timeouts shall be not longer than the referee deems necessary to fulfill the purpose for which they are declared, including a radio or TV timeout, but any timeout may be extended by the referee for the benefit of an injured player (Refer to Appendix A for the guidelines for game officials to use during a serious on-field player injury).
- c. If the team charged with a full team timeout wishes to resume play before the expiration of one minute and its opponent indicates readiness, the referee will declare the ball ready for play.
- d. The length of a referee's timeout depends on the circumstances of each timeout.
- e. Penalty options must be exercised before a team timeout.
- f. The intermission after a safety, try or successful field goal shall be not more than one minute. It may be extended for radio or television.

### Referee's Notification

ARTICLE 8. During a full team timeout (Rule 3-3-7-a) the referee shall notify both teams after one minute. Five seconds later the referee shall declare the ball ready for play.

- a. When a third timeout is charged to a team in either half, the referee shall notify the field captain and head coach of that team.
- b. Unless a visual game clock is the official timepiece, the referee also shall inform each field captain and head coach when two minutes or less of playing time remain in each half. They may order the clock stopped for that purpose. If the game clock is running at 2:00 and the ball is dead, the clock shall be stopped and the two-minute warning given then. If the ball is live at 2:00, the two-minute warning shall be given after the ball becomes dead.

1. The play clock may be interrupted for this purpose and shall then be reset to 25 seconds.
  2. The clock starts on the snap after the two-minute notification.
  3. ∇ Competitions may adopt regulations that even if a visual game clock is the official timepiece, a two-minute warning shall still be given.
- c. If a visual game clock is not the official timing device during the last two minutes of each half, the referee or their representative shall notify each captain and head coach of the time remaining each time the clock is stopped by rule. Also, a team representative may leave the team area along the limit line to relay timing information under these conditions.

### Helmet Comes Off – Timeout

- ARTICLE 9. a. If a player's helmet comes completely off through play, other than as the direct result of a foul by an opponent, the player must leave the game for the next down. The game clock will stop at the end of the down. The player may remain in the game if their team is granted a charged timeout (**A.R. 3-3-5:XIII**).
- b. When the helmet coming off is the only reason for stopping the clock, other than due to an injury to the player or their teammate (Rule 3-3-5), the following conditions apply (**A.R. 3-3-9:I-III**):
1. The play clock will be set at 25 seconds if the player is on offense and at 40 seconds if the player is on defense or for players on both teams. With one minute or more remaining in either half, the game clock will start on the referee's signal.
  2. *Ten-Second Runoff*. If there is less than one minute in the half and the clock was stopped for player(s) on one team only, the opponent has the option of a 10-second runoff, unless the helmet comes off as the direct result of a foul by the opponent. Rule 3-4-6 applies (**A.R. 3-3-9:IV, V**) (**A.R. 3-4-4:VI**).
- c. If the ball carrier's helmet comes off as in paragraph a (above) the ball is dead (Rule 4-1-3-q). If the player is not the ball carrier the ball remains alive, but they must not continue to participate in the play beyond the immediate action in which they are engaged. Prolonged participation is a personal foul (Rule 9-1-17). By definition such a player is obviously out of the play (Rule 9-1-12-b).
- d. A player who intentionally removes their helmet during the down commits a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct (Rule 9-2-1-a-1-i).

### Approved Ruling 3-3-9

- I. After the ball is dead, A55 blocks B33 at their waist, knocking them to the ground. As B33 hits the ground their helmet comes off. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul by A55, 15-yard penalty from the succeeding spot. B33 must leave the game for the next down as their helmet came off through play and not due to a helmet foul. B33 may remain in the game if Team B takes a timeout. [Cited by 3-3-9-b]
- II. Late in the first quarter ball carrier A22 is legally tackled, and their helmet comes off just after their back hits the ground. The game clock reads 0:00. **RULING:** A22 must leave the game for the next down, which will be the initial down of the second quarter. A22's helmet came off through play and there was no helmet foul by Team B. However, A22 may remain in the game if Team A takes a timeout. [Cited by 3-3-9-b]
- III. During the down A22's helmet comes off (no helmet foul by the defense) and B77 goes down with an injury. The ball carrier is tackled inbounds. When the clock is stopped it reads 0:58 in the fourth quarter. **RULING:** Unless Team A takes a charged timeout, A22 must leave the game for one play. The play clock is set at 40 seconds, due to the defensive injury, rather than 25 seconds due to the helmet coming off the offensive player. There is no option for a 10-second runoff because the clock stops for both the helmet off and the injury, and these occur for opposing players. [Cited by 3-3-9-b]



- IV. During the down A22's helmet comes off (no helmet foul by the defense) and A45 goes down with an injury. The ball carrier is tackled inbounds. When the clock is stopped it reads 0:58 in the fourth quarter. **RULING:** Because the injury and the helmet off occur to players on the same team, there is an option for a 10-second runoff. Team A may keep A22 in the game and also avoid the 10-second runoff by taking one charged timeout. [Cited by 3-3-9-b-2]
- V. During a running play that ends in bounds, a linebacker's helmet comes off. When the ball becomes dead the game clock is stopped and reads 0:45 in the second quarter. **RULING:** The play clock is set at 40 seconds. Team A has the option for a 10-second runoff. If Team A exercises this option, unless Team B is charged with a timeout, the game clock is set to 0:35 and starts on the referee's signal. If Team B uses a timeout to avoid the 10-second runoff, the game clock remains at 0:45, the play clock is set at 25 and starts on the referee's signal, and the game clock starts on the snap. [Cited by 3-3-9-b-2]

## SECTION 4. Delays/Clock Tactics

### Delaying the Start of a Half

ARTICLE 1. a. Each team shall have its players on the field for the opening play at the scheduled time for the beginning of each half. When both teams refuse to enter the field first for the start of either half, the home team must be the first to enter.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S21: DSH].**

- b. Game management is responsible for clearing the field of play and end zones at the beginning of each half so the periods may start at the scheduled time. Bands, speeches, presentations, homecoming and similar activities are under the jurisdiction of game management and a prompt start of each half is mandatory.

**PENALTY – 10 yards from the succeeding spot [S21: DSH].**

*(Exception: The referee may waive the penalty for circumstances beyond the control of game management.)*

### Illegal Delay of the Game

ARTICLE 2. a. The officials shall make the ball ready for play consistently throughout the game. The play clock will start its count-down from either 40 seconds or 25 seconds, by rule depending on circumstances. A foul for illegal delay occurs if the play clock is at :00 before the ball is put in play (Rule 3-2-4).

- b. Illegal delay also includes:

1. Deliberately advancing the ball after it is dead.
2. When a team has expended its three timeouts and commits a Rule 1-4-5-c-2 or 3-3-4-e infraction.
3. When a team is not ready to play after an intermission between periods, after a score, after a radio/television/team timeout, or any time the referee orders the ball put in play. **(A.R. 3-4-2:I)**
4. Defensive verbal tactics that disconcert offensive signals (Rule 7-1-5-a-5).
5. Defensive actions designed to cause a false start (Rule 7-1-5-a-4).
6. Putting the ball in play before it is ready for play (Rule 4-1-4).
7. Sideline interference (Rule 9-2-5).
8. Action clearly designed to delay the officials from making the ball ready for play. **(A.R. 3-4-2:II)**

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S7 and S21: DOG/DOD].**

### Approved Ruling 3-4-2

- I. After any timeout, one of the teams is not ready to play. **RULING:** Illegal delay. Penalty — Five yards from the succeeding spot. [Cited by 3-4-2-b-3]
- II. On a running play late in the half the Team A ball carrier is tackled inbounds. Team B players are deliberately slow to "unpile" in an obvious attempt to consume time and prevent the officials from making the ball ready for play. **RULING:** Team B foul for delay of game. Penalty — five yards at the succeeding spot. The game clock will start on the snap (Rule 3-4-3). [Cited by 3-4-2-b-8]

### Unfair Clock Tactics

ARTICLE 3. The referee has broad authority in the timing of the game.

- a. The referee shall order the game clock or play clock started or stopped whenever either team conserves or consumes playing time by tactics obviously unfair. This includes starting the game clock on the snap if the foul is by the team ahead in the score. As a guideline, referees should consider invoking this rule when the game clock is under five minutes of each half.
- b. If the game clock is stopped to complete a penalty for a foul by the team ahead in the score (or either team if the score is tied) inside the last two minutes of a half **and the clock would start by rule on the referee's signal**, it will start on the snap, at the option of the offended team. The game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal after Team A throws an illegal forward or backward pass to conserve time (Rule 3-3-2-e-14) **(A.R. 3-4-3:I-VII)**.

### Approved Ruling 3-4-3

- I. In an attempt to consume time in the fourth period, Team A stalls and the play clock expires. **RULING:** Foul for delay of game. Penalty — Five yards from the succeeding spot. The clock starts on the snap. [Cited by 3-4-3-b]
- II. With two minutes remaining in either half and their team with no timeouts remaining, B77 crosses the neutral zone and touches a Team A player in an effort to conserve time. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty — Five yards from the succeeding spot. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal. At their discretion, the referee may have the play clock set at 40 seconds. *Note: If there is less than one minute remaining in the half, this foul comes under the 10-second runoff rule (Rule 3-4-4).* [Cited by 3-4-3-b]
- III. A ball carrier, late in the second period, throws a backward pass out of bounds from behind or beyond the neutral zone to conserve time. **RULING:** Penalty — Five yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal. *Note: If there is less than one minute remaining in the half, this foul comes under the 10-second runoff rule (Rule 3-4-4).* [Cited by 3-4-3-b, 7-2-1 Penalty]
- IV. A ball carrier throws a forward pass while beyond the neutral zone to conserve time. **RULING:** Penalty — Five yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down. The clock starts on the ready-for-play signal (Rule 7-3-2 Penalty). *Note: If there is less than one minute remaining in the half, this foul comes under the 10-second runoff rule (Rule 3-4-4).* [Cited by 3-4-3-b, 7-3-2 Penalty]
- V. Late in the fourth quarter Team A trails by four points and is driving for a potential score. After a running play on which the ball carrier is tackled inbounds, Team B players are obviously and deliberately slow in letting them get to their feet or otherwise are employing tactics to delay the officials in making the ball ready for play. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul against Team B, delay of game. When the ball is ready for play, the referee will signal the 25-second clock to start, and the game clock will start on the snap. [Cited by 3-4-3-b]
- VI. Second and seven at the A-25. Team A is ahead in the score late in the second quarter. When ball carrier A22 is tackled in the field of play, the game clock reads 1:47. The umpire reports to the referee that they have a flag for holding by snapper A55. On the play, A22 gained (a) three yards; (b) nine yards. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), after enforcement of the penalty, the game clock starts on the snap or on the referee's signal, at the option of Team B. [Cited by 3-4-3-b]

- VII. Team B is leading, and the clock is running with less than two minutes left in a half. Ball carrier A21 is tackled in bounds short of the line to gain. After the ball is dead, A65 and B50 are both flagged for unsportsmanlike acts. **RULING:** The clock starts on the ready for play. Because both teams fouled, Team A does not have the option to start the clock on the snap (Rule 3-4-3-b). [Cited by 3-4-3-b, 3-4-6-d]

### 10-second Runoff from Game Clock – Foul

ARTICLE 4. a. With the game clock running and less than one minute remaining in either half, before a change of team possession if either team commits a foul that causes the clock to stop immediately and the penalty for the foul is accepted, the referee will subtract 10 seconds from the game clock at the option of the offended team. The fouls that fall into this category include but are not limited to:

1. Any foul that prevents the snap (e.g. false start, encroachment, defensive offside by contact in the neutral zone, etc.); (A.R. 3-4-4:I-III, V)
2. Intentional grounding to stop the clock;
3. Incomplete illegal forward pass;
4. Backward pass thrown out of bounds to stop the clock;
5. Any other foul committed with the intent of stopping the clock.

The offended team may accept the yardage penalty and decline the 10-second runoff. If the yardage penalty is declined, the 10-second runoff is declined by rule.

- b. 10-second runoff procedures are specified in Rule 3-4-6.

#### Approved Ruling 3-4-4

- I. Second and 10 at the B-30. The game clock is running in the second half. Team A trails by two points and is out of timeouts. After the ball is ready for play lineman A66 commits a false start, and when the officials stop the game clock it reads (a) 13 seconds; (b) 8 seconds. Team B accepts the yardage penalty and the clock runoff. **RULING:** (a) Five-yard penalty with 10 seconds subtracted from the game clock, which is set at 3 seconds. Second and 15 at the B-35. The clock starts on the referee's signal. (b) The game is over. Team B wins. [Cited by 3-4-4-a-1]
- II. Second and 10 at the B-30. The game clock is running in the second half. Team A trails by two points and is out of timeouts. At the snap Team A has five players in the backfield. A22 carries for a three-yard gain to the B-27. When the ball is declared dead the game clock reads (a) 13 seconds; (b) 8 seconds. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Five-yard penalty, illegal formation. Second and 15 at the B-35. Because the illegal formation is not a foul that causes the clock to stop immediately, the 10-second runoff does not apply. After the penalty is administered the game clock starts on the referee's signal. [Cited by 3-4-4-a-1]
- III. Team A is leading 24-21 with less than one minute in the game and the game clock running. With the ball ready for play on third and seven at the B-35, tackle B55 jumps across the neutral zone and contacts A77. The officials shut the play down with the game clock showing 0:38. Team B is out of timeouts. **RULING:** Offside against Team B. Five-yard penalty and a 10-second runoff from the game clock. The game clock is set at 0:28. Third and two at the B-30. The clock starts on the referee's signal. [Cited by 3-4-4-a-1]
- IV. Fourth quarter with the game clock running. Second and five at the B-20. Tackle B77 is in the neutral zone at the snap, but does not make contact. QB A12 rolls out to pass, runs to the B-17 and throws a forward pass, which falls incomplete. The game clock reads 0:15. **RULING:** Team A illegal forward pass and Team B offside. Offsetting fouls. No 10-second runoff. Second and five at the B-20. The game clock remains at 15 seconds and starts on the snap. [Cited by 3-4-6-d]
- V. Second and 10 at the B-30 with the game clock running. Team A trails in the score. Guard A66 in a three-point stance misses the snap count and lurches forward, committing a false start. B77 then commits a dead-ball personal foul or a dead-ball foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. The game clock is stopped with 8 seconds remaining in the game. This occurs (a) in the fourth quarter; (b) in the second quarter. **RULING:** (a) The game is over because Team B will accept the 10-second runoff associated with the false start. Thus the

penalty for B77's dead-ball foul is not enforced. (b) The half is over because Team B will accept the 10-second runoff associated with the false start. The penalty for the Team B dead-ball foul carries over to the second half. Due to the 10-second runoff, by interpretation the Team B dead-ball foul effectively occurs after the half has ended and the penalty is thus carried over. In either (a) or (b) Team A may avoid the 10-second runoff by using an available charged timeout. In that case the penalty for the foul by B77 would be enforced, giving Team A first and 10 at the B-20 after enforcement of both penalties. If this is B77's second unsportsmanlike conduct foul, they are disqualified. [Cited by 3-4-4-a-1]

- VI. Second quarter **with the score tied**. At the snap the game clock reads 0:45. During the play, A55 loses their helmet. Right tackle A77 is flagged for holding. The ball carrier is tackled inbounds short of the line to gain. **RULING:** A55 must leave the game for one play. There is no option for a 10-second runoff, because at the end of the play the clock is stopped both for the helmet off and to administer the holding penalty. The play clock is set to 25 seconds and the game clock starts on the referee's signal **or snap at the option of the offended team**. (Rule 3-3-9) [Cited by 3-3-9-b-2]

### 10-second Runoff Summary

ARTICLE 5. The following is a summary of when the 10-second runoff process is in effect:

- a. Injury timeout (Rule 3-3-5-f).
- b. Helmet comes off timeout (Rule 3-3-9-b-2).
- c. Foul (Rule 3-4-4).
- d. Video review (Rule 12).

### 10-second Runoff from Game Clock — Common Procedures

ARTICLE 6. a. The 10-second rule only applies if the game clock is running when the event occurs and the event causes the game clock to stop (A.R. 3-3-5:XI, XIII).

- b. If there is a 10-second runoff, the game clock will start on the referee's signal. If there is no 10-second runoff, the game clock will start on the snap.

*NOTE:* This rule supersedes Rule 3-3-2-f (snap supersedes referee's signal) but does not supersede Rule 3-3-2-g (running clock). (A.R. 3-3-2:VIII and IX)

- c. If the team that caused the event has a team timeout remaining they may avoid the 10-second runoff by using a team timeout. In this case the game clock will start on the snap after the timeout.
- d. The 10-second runoff does not apply when both teams are equally responsible for stopping the clock (e.g. offsetting fouls, or injured or helmet-off players from both teams) (A.R. 3-4-4:IV) (A.R. 3-3-5:XII) (A.R. 3-4-3:VII).

## SECTION 5. Substitutions

### Substitution Procedures

ARTICLE 1. Any number of legal substitutes for either team may enter the game between periods, after a score or try, or during the interval between downs only for the purpose of replacing a player(s) or filling a player vacancy(ies).

### Legal Substitutions

ARTICLE 2. A legal substitute may replace a player or fill a player vacancy provided none of the following restrictions are violated:

- a. No incoming substitute shall enter the field of play or an end zone while the ball is in play.
- b. No player, in excess of 11, shall leave the field of play or an end zone while the ball is in play. (A.R. 3-5-2:I)

**PENALTY – [a-b] Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S22: SUB].**

- c. 1. An incoming legal substitute must enter the field of play directly from their team area, and a substitute, player or departing player must depart at the sideline nearest their team area and proceed to their team area.
- 2. A departing player must immediately leave the field of play, including the end zones. A departing player who leaves the huddle or their position within three seconds, after a substitute becomes a player, is considered to have left immediately.
- d. Substitutes who become players (Rule 2-27-9) must remain in the game for at least one play and replaced players must remain out of the game for at least one play, except during the interval between periods, after a score, or when a timeout is charged to a team or to the referee with the exception of a live ball out of bounds or an incomplete forward pass (A.R. 3-5-2:III, IV and VI).

**PENALTY – [c-d] Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S22: SUB].**

- e. When Team A sends in its substitutes, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped until Team B has been given an opportunity to substitute. While in the process of substitution or simulated substitution, Team A is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious attempt of creating a defensive disadvantage. If the ball is ready for play, the game officials will not permit the ball to be snapped until Team B has placed substitutes in position and replaced players have left the field of play. Team B must react promptly with its substitutes (A.R. 3-5-2:II, V, VII, VIII).

**PENALTY – [e] (First offence) Dead-ball foul. Delay of game on Team B for not completing its substitutions promptly, or delay of game on Team A for causing the play clock to expire. Five yards from the succeeding spot [S21: DOG]. The referee will then notify the head coach that any further use of this tactic will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul.**

**(Second and subsequent infractions) Dead-ball foul, team unsportsmanlike conduct. An official will sound their whistle immediately. 15 yards from the succeeding spot. [S27: UC-UNS].**

#### **Approved Ruling 3-5-2**

- I. Any player(s), in excess of 11, obviously is withdrawing but has not reached a boundary line when the ball is put in play and they do not interfere with play or players. **RULING:** Live-ball foul. Penalty — Five yards from the previous spot. [Cited by 3-5-2-b]
- II. After a change of team possession or any timeout, the ball is declared ready for play. When Team A has completed its offensive formation, Team B must promptly position its personnel. Team B will be allowed time to complete substitutions. **RULING:** Either team is subject to a delay-of-game foul – Team B for not completing its substitutions promptly (Rule 3-4-2-b-3) or Team A for causing the 25 second clock to expire. Penalty — Five yards from the succeeding spot. [Cited by 3-5-2-e]
- III. On third down (no change of team possession), ball carrier A27 goes out of bounds or Team A's legal forward pass falls incomplete. During this interval between downs, there is no other referee's timeout. Before the fourth down snap, substitute B75 enters the game and then departs without remaining in the game for one play. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty — Five yards from the succeeding spot. [Cited by 3-5-2-d]
- IV. Team A has 11 players in the huddle. A81 mistakenly thinks they have been replaced and runs to their team area. They are immediately sent back onto the field and assumes a position on the line of scrimmage near their sideline. The entire team has been stationary for one second before the snap and there has not been a referee's timeout. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. The player loses their status as a participant when they enter the team area while the ball is dead, and then must adhere to substitution rules. Penalty — Five yards from the succeeding spot, or 15 yards from the succeeding spot if this is judged to be a violation of Rule 9-2-2-b. (Rules 3-5-2-d and 9-2-2-b). [Cited by 3-5-2-d, 9-2-2-b]
- V. After the ball is ready for play and the umpire (or centre judge) is in their regular position, Team A quickly replaces some players with substitutes, gets set for the required one second and

snaps the ball. The umpire (or centre judge) is attempting to get to the ball to allow the defense to match up, but they are unable to prevent the snap. **RULING:** The play is shut down, the game clock is stopped and the defense is allowed to substitute in response to Team A's late substitutions. No foul. The play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts on the ready-for-play signal. The game clock starts on the ready-for-play signal or the snap, depending on its condition when play was stopped. The referee informs the Team A head coach that any subsequent such actions will result in a foul against the team for unsportsmanlike conduct under Rule 9-2-3 (**see also A.R. 9-2-3:I**). [Cited by 3-5-2-e]

- VI. After a down that resulted in first and 10 at the B-40, eleven players of Team A, which runs a no-huddle offense, move to their various positions to set for the next play. The ball is ready for play when A22 runs onto the field from their team area, and after they pause at the top of the numbers, they or the coaching staff apparently realise that they are the 12th player. A22 then turns and runs back to their team area. The ball has not been snapped. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul for a substitution infraction. By interpretation A22 has become a player by entering their team's "effective huddle" and thus must remain in the game for at least one play. Five-yard penalty. Team A will have first and 15 at the B-45. (Rule 2-27-9-b) [Cited by 2-27-9-b, 3-5-2-d]
- VII. Late in the first half Team A is out of timeouts. A pass play on third down ends inbounds at the B-25 short of the line to gain with the game clock showing 0:10. Facing fourth down and three, Team A immediately hurries its field goal team onto the field. **RULING:** Team B should reasonably expect that Team A will attempt a field goal in this situation and should have its field-goal defense unit ready. The umpire will not stand over the ball, as there should be no issue of the defense being uncertain about the next play. [Cited by 3-5-2-e]
- VIII. Late in the first half Team A is out of timeouts. A pass play on third down ends inbounds at the B-25 short of the line to gain with the game clock showing 0:30. Facing fourth down and three, Team A gives no indication as to its next play until the game clock reads 0:10. They then rush their field goal unit onto the field, and Team B then hurries to respond. **RULING:** The umpire moves to the ball to prevent the snap until Team B has had a reasonable opportunity to get its field-goal defense unit onto the field. The umpire will step away when they judge that the defense has had enough time. If the game clock reads 0:00 before the ball is snapped after the umpire steps away, the half is over. [Cited by 3-5-2-e]

### More than eleven players on the field

ARTICLE 3. a. Team A may not break the huddle with more than 11 players nor keep more than 11 players in the huddle or in a formation for more than three seconds. Officials shall stop the action whether or not the ball has been snapped.

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul. Five yards at the succeeding spot. [S22: SUB]**

- b. Team B is allowed to briefly retain more than 11 players on the field to anticipate the offensive formation, but it may not have more than 11 players on the field when the ball is snapped. The infraction is treated as a live-ball foul. (**A.R. 3-5-3:I-VII**)

**PENALTY – Live-ball foul. Five yards at the previous spot. [S22: SUB]**

- c. When Team A is in formation, Team B must not have more than 11 players in its formation. If the play clock is at :00 (or at :05 or less and Team A calls a timeout) and Team B has more than 11 players on the field, it is a foul against Team B.

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul. Five yards at the succeeding spot. [S22: SUB]**

### Approved Ruling 3-5-3

- I. A33, an incoming substitute, enters the huddle or assumes a position in a formation and (a) after approximately two seconds, A34 leaves the huddle and departs the field of play at their sideline, or (b) after approximately four seconds, A34 leaves the huddle and departs the field of play at their sideline. **RULING:** (a) Legal. (b) Foul. (*Note:* A departing player who leaves the huddle or their position within three seconds is considered to have left immediately.) [Cited by 3-5-3-b]
- II. 3/5 @ B-35. Team B has 12 players in the formation, and no Team B player is attempting to leave the field while the ball is ready for play. Team A snaps the ball and the run by A44 gains 3 yards. **RULING:** Live-ball foul, Team A 1/10 @ B-30. [Cited by 3-5-3-b]

- III. Team A has 11 players in its huddle when A27 approaches the huddle (within 10 yards) as it breaks. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty — Five yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 2-27-9-a). [Cited by 3-5-3-b]
- IV. 3/5 @ B-35. Team B has 12 players in the formation, and B44 recognises that they are the 12th player and is attempting to leave the field. When the ball is snapped, (a) B44 is on the field but their next stride takes them off the field; or (b) B44 touches out of bounds just before the snap. Team A snaps the ball and the run by A44 gains 3 yards. **RULING:** (a) Live-ball foul by B44. Team A 1/10 @ B-30. (b) No foul by B44, 4/2 @ B-32. To not be counted as the 12th player, B44 must be off the field of play. [Cited by 3-5-3-b]
- V. Team A is in formation to kick a field goal and Team B has 11 players in its formation. Just before the ball is snapped a 12th Team B player runs onto the field. The ball is snapped and the kicker completes their kick. **RULING:** Live-ball foul. Five-yard penalty, previous spot, or Team A may accept the result of the play. [Cited by 3-5-3-b]
- VI. Team A lines up for a two-point try attempt at the B-3. Team B has 11 players in its defensive formation. A 12th Team B player runs onto the field just before or just as the ball is snapped. A22 takes the handoff from the quarterback and (a) is tackled at the one-yard line; or (b) carries the ball into the end zone. **RULING:** Live-ball foul by Team B for illegal substitution. (a) Penalise Team B half the distance to the goal and repeat the try at the B-1½. (b) Team A will decline the penalty on the successful try. [Cited by 3-5-3-b]
- VII. 3/5 @ B-35. Team B has 12 players in the formation, and no Team B player is attempting to leave the field. The ball is ready for play, both teams are in formation and the snap is imminent. Quarterback A12, late in the play clock, is struggling to read the defense and (a) calls timeout; or (b) the play clock expires. **RULING:** When the deep officials count 12 Team B players, both teams are in formation, no Team B player is attempting to leave the field and the snap is imminent, (a) the crew will offer Team A their timeout back and penalise Team B for a substitution foul. Team A 1/10 @ B-30; (b) no foul for delay of game, penalise Team B for a substitution foul. Team A 1/10 @ B-30. [Cited by 3-5-3-b]