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NCAA News Release

NCAA Football Rules Committee Recommends Video Review For All Conferences In 2005; Tightens Rules Around The Line Of Scrimmage**For Immediate Release**

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KEY WEST, FLORIDA --- The NCAA Football Rules Committee has recommended the expanded experimental use of in-game video officiating review to all member conferences and institutions for the 2005 season, using the same parameters that were approved for experimentation in the 2004 season.

All of the committee's recommendations will be considered by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) on a conference call February 24. If approved by PROP, the recommendations will be in place for the 2005 football season.

The committee heard a detailed report from the Big Ten Conference concerning its video replay system, which was granted experimentation privileges for the 2004 season. Numerous Division I-A conferences requested the ability to experiment with a replay system for the 2005 season.

"The response to video replay nationally and in the Big Ten was overwhelmingly positive," said Charles Broyles, athletics director and head football coach at Pittsburg State University and chair of the committee. "When we have the ability to correct a potentially game-changing error, and we have the technology to do so, we feel this improves the fairness of the game and directly improves the student-athlete experience."

The committee decided to be consistent with what may or may not be reviewed, but to be flexible with regard to the specific procedure a conference uses.

"The preparation, training and educational effort needed to properly administer a system of review requires a commitment from a conference to make it run successfully," said Broyles. "There certainly is interest in the Division I-A level and our committee wants to encourage developments that will help the game. But we also want to make sure it is accomplished properly."

Any conference that wishes to use video replay must confirm its administrative plans (e.g., equipment) and system for use with the rules committee by June 1. Any exceptions to the approved process must be requested of the rules committee and will be discussed on a committee conference call June 8. The committee will send guidelines used last season to all conferences that indicated an interest in using video replay.

Video replay will not be allowed in post-season bowl games or an NCAA championship as the committee feels further experimentation is needed.

"The logistics of properly running a video replay system are such that we did not feel comfortable allowing blanket approval for bowl games or championships," Broyles said.

In other news, the committee focused on the safety of the student-athletes in the area of line blocking. In the past, blocking from behind was allowed near the line of scrimmage. The committee passed a rule that will limit these blocks to contact above the knee.

"We all feel that this rule protects the student-athlete and will make the game safer, which is one of our main charges," Broyles said. "This is a significant change that we hope will eliminate some dangerous line blocks."

Another safety concern helmet-to-helmet contact and spearing was discussed at length by the committee. The group reviewed a report from the American Football Coaches Association task force in this area and made some suggested wording changes, mainly deleting any reference to intentional contact in this area.

"The committee feels it is important to clarify this rule for officials and by taking a player's intention out of the equation, we hope this will assist proper enforcement of this rule," Broyles said. "That said, it should be clear when a player uses his helmet to punish an opponent, it is a foul and must be penalized. This type of act is dangerous for both the player being hit and the player doing the hitting."

The committee also passed more defined regulation in the area of unsportsmanlike conduct and celebration penalties to assist officials, players and coaches to understand what type of action warrants a penalty.

While this should not be regarded as a lessening of the standard, the committee does believe that spontaneous celebrations that are not prolonged or intended to bring attention to the individual should be allowed on a limited basis. A defined list of unacceptable behavior will be included in the 2005 rules book.

"College football is fun," Broyles said. "For the most part, our officials understand what is and isn't excessive or taunting the opponent. We just want to better define those things and make sure everyone is on the same page in this area."

The committee's small number of changes underscores the health of the game and effectiveness of past alterations.

"Above all, we feel like we have a wonderful game and we're doing things to try and make it better," Broyles said.

A full listing of the rules changes, once approved by the oversight panel, will be made available on the NCAA Web site.