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## NCAA strengthens targeting rules, limits OTs

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By Joel Anderson

The NCAA football rules committee has approved several rule change proposals for the 2019 season, including some that would strengthen targeting rules and another meant to limit the potential for too many overtimes.

The change to targeting makes it a so-called "progressive penalty," meaning that players who commit three targeting fouls in the same season could face a one-game suspension. Under the current rules, players who commit targeting are ejected from that game and are required to miss the first half of the next game if the penalty occurred in the second half (there is no further suspension when the penalty occurs in the first half).

Additionally, referees will also be required to review replays of all targeting calls to confirm all elements of targeting were present. If the targeting penalty can't be confirmed by video review, the call on the field will not stand.

"We believe the targeting rule has made the game better," Ray Anderson, the athletic director at Arizona State, said in a podcast that accompanied the NCAA's news release. "It's had a change in behavior. But not enough ... and that's what we're continuing to try to push."

The committee also approved a change to overtime, deciding that if a game reaches a fifth overtime, teams will no longer trade off starts at the opponent's 25-yard line. Instead, teams will run alternating two-point conversions until a winner is determined.

Also, a two-minute rest period will be added after the second and fourth overtimes.

These changes come in the wake of last year's [Texas A&M-LSU](#) game, which lasted seven overtimes and called into question player safety. There have been just five FBS games over the past five seasons that have reached five overtimes.

"That was a four-hour-plus game," Anderson said, referring to the Nov. 24 game, which Texas A&M won 74-72. "The health and safety of players is paramount. So the concern is, you are [already] spent in the normal course of a four-quarter game."

The committee also approved changes that would mean the elimination of the two-man wedge blocking formation during kickoff returns and forcible contact on blindside blocks. A blindside block with forcible contact would result in a 15-yard personal foul.

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