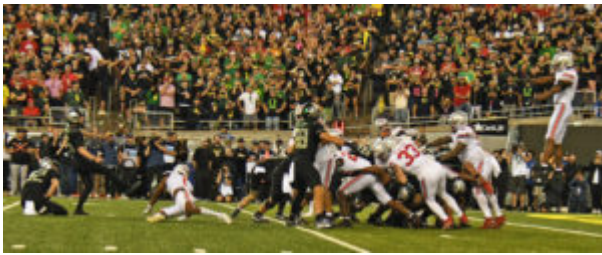


NCAA Considers In-Season Rule Change After Oregon Exposes 12-man Loophole



The NCAA is considering a potential midseason rule change after Oregon's 32-31 win over Ohio State, where Oregon put 12 players on the field in the late stages of the game, according to Yahoo Sports' Ross Dellenger.

After a pass interference call on freshman wide receiver Jeremiah Smith, the Buckeyes were backed up to Oregon's 43-yard line and around 15 yards out of comfortable field goal range for kicker Jayden Fielding with 16 seconds to go down 32-31. An incomplete pass from Will Howard in the direction of Gee Scott gave the Buckeyes 11 seconds to get into Fielding's field goal range with one timeout remaining.

However, before the play, Oregon head coach Dan Lanning called a timeout. It was there that the Ducks decided to put out 12 defenders onto the field for the pivotal 3rd-and-25 play.

The Ducks were flagged for illegal substitution, but the five-yard illegal substitution penalty didn't get the Buckeyes into field goal range, and the four seconds it took for Howard to attempt to find Jeremiah Smith on an incomplete pass still remained off the clock even after the penalty was called.

In the NFL, the game clock would have returned to what it had been before the play, but in college, the game clock stays at whatever it was following the play.

With six seconds to go in the game, the Buckeyes didn't have enough time to get off more than one play, as Howard's 12-yard scamper took a half-second longer than the Buckeyes needed it to, and it was the final play of the game.

In a press conference on Monday, Lanning seemed to confirm that the team's decision to bring the 12th defender onto the field wasn't made by mistake.

"There was a timeout before that. We spend an inordinate amount of time on situations," Lanning said. "There are some situations that don't show up very often in college football, but this was one that obviously was something we had worked on. So, you can see the result."

On Tuesday, Dellenger reported that Yahoo Sports was told by Steve Shaw, the NCAA secretary rules editor, that the NCAA Football Playing Rules Committee is actively "engaged" in examining the play for possible action.

Shaw didn't comment on how the rule would be specifically changed, but the action could be discouraged by resetting the game clock to its original time.