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An Interview With:

SUPERVISOR OF OFFICIALS WALT ANDERSON

WALT ANDERSON: Good morning. I might add that the introductory comments here will be relatively short. Once I get into some of the video, it's really easier for us, if there are questions during each of the topics that I end up covering, to have you and the ladies be prepared to probably answer those at that time rather than waiting for the entire presentation. I'm going to end up going over a number of the rule changes, which are not many, and some of the points of emphasis.

I'd probably like to first say that -- and this is really reflecting upon some of Commissioner Bowlsby's comments from yesterday that there are always things that we're looking at doing in terms of officiating, to improve our officiating. We're not ever going to be an organization that is satisfied with our status quo. We may be very pleased with where we are, but we're also going to, just like the teams are expected to, be always working, getting better.

And part of that effort this year was -- we created what we call a football working group, which was comprised of coaches and athletic directors as well as Ed Stewart and I from the Conference office. Commissioner Bowlsby did participate in that process as well. And our real focus was really just how can we improve officiating and, at the same time, how can we improve the communication between officiating and coaching so that it will help coaches be better and they can end up helping players be better.

It was a very good process. We had many meetings with this working group throughout the spring. And we came to several conclusions, and we came up with several initiatives, not the least of which was one of the things that the coaches want to have the availability to do is to have more access not only to me in comments, which is ongoing and always has been very open, but, at

the same time, for them to have access to more information about plays and calls and rules, what's correct, what's incorrect. It ends up helping them do a better job of coaching their players.

So one of the things that we do -- and we actually invite all of you to our summer Combine clinic that we hold with not only the Big 12 staff but six other conferences. It's the largest college officiating clinic in the country. We held that last week, and there were over 440 officials from seven different conferences. We invite members of the media to that, and there were a number of you that I know were there, and we encourage you to come.

We also invite coaches to come to that. It's a more difficult time for the coaches, and we've traditionally had that in the second week of July. One of the results of this working group is we're going to change the date of our clinic to the second weekend in June. They feel like that is a time in which maybe not only they as head coaches can be more involved, but it's much easier for them to get other members of their staff at that particular timetable. We feel very important about that initiative, and we feel like that changing the date -- and it's now set with us for the next two years for the second weekend in June.

So I want to encourage you, if you want to attend that, we'd like to have you there. Just coordinate that with Bob Burda. Bob has done a great job of reaching out to you and you guys and ladies reaching out to him.

We try to have officiating be a little bit more accessible than what it has. By its nature, it's a little bit more of a behind-the-scenes operation. Officiating should not be more a part of the game than what is absolutely necessary. That should be reserved for coaches, players, strategies, et cetera, but there are times when officiating does have to interject, if you will, to make sure that the game is played fairly.

That said, I want to move on to the topic of the new rules. This is the lightest year that I can ever remember relative to rules changes in the NCAA. So we don't have a lot, but there are a

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couple I want to go over. I'm not going to have a lot of video of some of them because some of them are more administrative, but just to make you a little more aware of it.

You may have seen a lot of the face masks that are really getting to be more like the cage fighting arenas. Those oversized face masks have been eliminated, not a big deal. We communicated with the equipment managers throughout the spring, and we feel like we probably got that under control even before the season starts.

Some of them have sent us photographs of their anticipated face mask, and we've already approved and/or disapproved some of them. So we've got some good communication there.

The number of officials has now been formally expanded to eight for all conferences. One thing that you will see this year, all ten of the FBS conferences will all work all of their games with eight officials. It's something that obviously we developed and pioneered three years ago on an experimental basis to see how that worked. It's been very well received not only by us and our coaches and staff, but during that experimental period, the rest of the country began trying it. And it's something that -- with the changes in the game, it was something that was seen as necessary.

There is some language that -- and I'll actually show you a play on that one. It's not really so much of a rule change. It's more of an administrative change. But it occurs on kicking plays relative to roughing or running into the kicker. It can occur on pass interference relative to whether or not you have pass interference, and although rare, it could also occur in a situation where you may have potentially intentional grounding.

But on this play right here, you've got a kick, and the kick ends up being touched, and then the kicker gets contacted. Of course, by rule, if the ball is touched, then you're allowed to hit the kicker. The change this year -- and this often happens on the field, and sometimes you'll see this, as to whether or not replay, instant replay can get involved in reviewing this play. The only thing instant replay can look at is whether or not the ball was tipped.

But the rules committee felt, if the decision on the field is made by the referee -- in a referee's mind, I'm a referee, so I'll kind of talk as I would on the field. I'm looking at this play, and I see the ball tipped, very often as a referee, I might give a tipped signal or might give a safe signal, indicating

that there's no foul. If I don't end up saying anything, instant replay can't affect that.

But starting this year, as a referee, if the referee turns his mic on and he makes an announcement that there is no foul for roughing the kicker because the ball was tipped, if he makes that announcement, instant replay can still look at that play. And if, in fact, we have video evidence that the ball was not tipped because the referee did make an announcement that there would otherwise have been a foul, then instant replay can tell the referee that we are going to penalize that play. So instant replay can end up creating the foul.

The only thing they can't do is they can't change the foul that the referee first announced. So if the referee announced it was running into the kicker and the instant replay official, he hits his plant leg or the contact is severe, we can't convert what was announced as running into roughing, but there can be a foul.

We have a question over here on my left side.

Q. What determines whether the referee makes an announcement or not?

WALT ANDERSON: That's completely up to him. What determines whether or not he's going to make an announcement should be whether or not he would have had a foul. The only reason he would have potentially not had a foul is if the ball was tipped. So if he ends up seeing action -- obviously, if they don't hit the kicker, they just slide under him, but if they miss him, he probably wouldn't make any announcement at all because there's no potential for a foul.

So the announcement should come if you would have had a foul except for the fact that the ball was tipped, and the ball being tipped is the only reviewable aspect of that play. So that's the only thing he needs to make an announcement in reference to.

The same holds true downfield relative to pass interference because touching of a pass is also reviewable. So if an official downfield sees action that would have been pass interference and he's about to throw his flag and all of a sudden he looks and he sees the umpire giving this tipped signal, well, if the pass is tipped, you can't have pass interference. So if the official sees that, he really should communicate that to the referee so that an announcement could be made that there is

no foul for pass interference because the ball was tipped.

But because the tipping of a pass, just like the touching of a kick, is reviewable, if the instant replay official has indisputable evidence that the ball wasn't even touched, then he can stop the game, that play can review, and what would have normally been a correct call can still be called. But he can't change the aspect of anything else.

He can't say, I didn't think there was roughing the kicker because I didn't think the contact was severe enough. That's not a reviewable aspect, only the touching of the kick. But very good question.

So, again, not necessarily a major change, probably not something, I don't think, you're going to see a lot of. We had maybe a couple of examples. This is one right here where the ball was actually tipped, rolls out over here on the side somewhere. So the referee didn't end up calling that.

But there may be some, and you may see it, where the referee feels like it was tipped. So he announces that there was no foul. In fact, if it shows that there absolutely was no touching, then replay can create that foul.

Like most rules, that was put in because there were a couple of plays across the country that ended up happening and probably happened to someone on the rules committee. So that one got put in there.

Sideline warnings for coaches, that's been put back in. Not a major thing, but we brought that back. Just an effort to continue with the emphasis that started last year to try to keep the sidelines as clear as we can. If the coaches are in an area where they're not supposed to be, they're given first a warning; offenses two and three carry a five-yard penalty; and anything four and after carries a 15-yard penalty.

Then the final change -- let me get back to the video. I want to show you some video of that next -- involves review of an onside kick. This is a significant change. Normally, there's a resistance to getting instant replay involved in making judgement calls. Part of that is because, okay -- and they are in some areas. Targeting is one of them and some of the others.

The issue is, if we have instant replay involved in judgment calls, why not let them review holding and pass interference. Those arguments have very good merit, and I would not necessarily be unsupportive of some of those if we had a little bit more of a coaches challenge system.

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In the NCAA, where the instant replay official is responsible for all 60 minutes of the game, unlike in the NFL where he's responsible for 4 of the 60 minutes, it's just a different mechanism. So there's a lot on their plate up there.

But the rules committee looked at several plays, and these are two examples. These are going to be back to back. These are two of the plays they looked at that they felt there was a need for, because it's a very difficult play to officiate, which I'll show you, because we ended up with a foul here that we ended up missing.

It often occurs at the end of the game. Obviously, the team that's kicking, which is this team here, they're behind. So they're going to try and onside kick. Let me get to the TV version because this is the version the instant replay will be looking at. So we got a roller up the middle. Boom, there's a lot of contact. And the offensive team ends up recovering the football.

Now, it has always been reviewable since we've had instant replay, where is the ball touched. That's always been a reviewable aspect. The ball is touched right here at 10 yards. The difficulty comes in is when you see right here there's a block. Number 37 of the receiving team is stepping up here trying to come up and recover this kick, and No. 22 of the kicking team blocks him. The key is he blocks him before the kicking team is eligible to touch the ball, which is a foul.

The problem from an officiating standpoint, there's a lot of bodies in here. The officials who have to make this call are also looking for the point of first touching. It happens very, very fast. So the rules committee felt like that's something we wanted to end up taking a look at.

So this would be one here. The flag that you see here was not for the blocking. They were actually offsides. We ended up getting this right for the wrong reason.

So what instant replay this year would do, they would stop this play. And what they would end up looking at -- and they will make this judgement call in replay -- is they'll determine is this player blocking this player. Or sometimes you'll see this. If a player on the receiving team is attempting to block a player on the kicking team, he's certainly entitled to protect himself. So that would not be considered as a block. But that's a judgment call, and that will be made in replay.

You can see here that clearly it's a block. This player is just stepping up to try to recover the

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kick, which right here is right about there. It's before it's gone 10 yards. This is illegal. This would then be communicated to the referee that we're going to have a five-yard penalty for what really is an illegal free kick formation by blocking before you're entitled to.

So we ended up on this series, they were penalized five yards, but let's say for this year the offside was not there, replay creates the foul for five yards. We put it back five yards. We're going to kick it again. And this is the very next play from the 30-yard line. Looks like the same play, doesn't it? Same technique, same actions, and, once again, the kicking team recovers the ball.

So they're awarded the ball here. Obviously, you've got the potential for the same actions involving the same two players, 22 and 37. So a replay official will stop this play, and what he's charged now to look at is, if this player blocks him before either he touches the ball or the ball has gone ten yards, either one of those, then we've got a potential for a foul.

We end up with a pretty good look. This would actually be one whether there was a foul called on the field. Let's say on the field, let's say this was called as a foul, and the replay official looks at this, and he's got indisputable evidence that, in fact, the receiving team player touched the ball first, and then he was blocked, then he'll tell the referee that we're going to pick that flag up, and there will be no foul.

If there was no flag thrown on the play, which there was not in this particular case, and he determines this is a little too tight, but, at the same time, it's probably indisputable, this is one we would probably let stand one way or the other. But if he can, in fact, determine that No. 22 does contact the receiver before the receiver touches the ball or the ball has gone ten yards, then just like the previous play, we're going to create that five-yard penalty.

So that's really the major change in terms of the rules for this year that I've got.

There are a couple of points of emphasis that I'm going to go over relative to targeting. We're going to talk a little bit about ineligibles downfield on the pass, which was a proposed rule and did come out of the rules committee as a recommendation, and, in fact, was recommended on a national survey by a majority of coaches. However, when it got to the prop committee of the NCAA, it was withdrawn, created a little bit of controversy. And there's now some administrative processes that, going forward, will probably be a

little more comprehensive in terms of not only how rules are developed but how they're finalized.

I think that warrants discussion because it is a hot topic among coaches. It's a very difficult play to officiate. But before I get into that, are there any questions relative to just the new rules changes, as few as they may be?

That said, let me just get into -- over the last several years, obviously, as all of you are aware, targeting has been a major focus and point of emphasis. Initially, a couple of years ago, when instant replay first got involved as being able to look at it, it carried a little bit more controversy. Most all of us feel like last year went very well, partly because of the rule change that was made last year that allowed instant replay to not only remove the disqualifying part of the penalty, but, in fact, if there was not targeting, that the entire penalty could be removed. That was very well received. It seemed in general to work very well.

But targeting will continue to be a point of emphasis. The good news is it appears to be accomplishing exactly what it was intended to do, and that's changing the behavior of players, getting players adjusting to the rule, changing their technique, getting their heads to the side to where they're not using that as a weapon, lowering their strike zone to where you can see in countless videos that they're making concerted efforts and they're being coached to make concerted efforts to avoid contact to the head and neck area.

We're still going to have some targeting, but it was evident to us last year, whether it was in the stadium with fans, with members, when it ended up getting called, especially when it was there and correctly called, it wasn't a surprise as to what was about to happen. Even in the stadiums, we'd often hear, even with the offended team fans, the big sigh in terms of uh-oh, he's gone. Here it comes. People are getting used to it, and that's a good thing, but it will continue to be a point of emphasis.

This is one here that was called last year, correctly so. It's a blind side block right here because you've got the offensive player coming back to his own goal line. He not only lowers his head and strikes with the crown of the helmet, but because it's a blind side block, any contact to the head and neck area would be unbelievable.

We had a number of plays last year, this is one of them, where we're continuing to work with our officials where we end up with the potential for

a blind side block. You have a hit, ends up being a touchdown. And one of the things we've talked with our officials, just so that you all are aware, so that if it looks like there's a delay on the field, there's an intentional delay. We've told every official that, if you have a flag for targeting, before you can make any communication to the referee, you have to have a conversation with at least one other official.

And the reason for that is we just want to make sure that potentially another official from a different angle may have had a different perspective. So we also want to give you an opportunity to think that through in your mind, to let's be sure if that's what we've got because of the consequences of that penalty if it's not changed, that we just want to be sure. So we actually create that somewhat of a delay.

This is one here where we ended up with the delay, and we actually announced and we stayed with the ruling of targeting. It was reviewed on the field, and you can end up seeing the hit, as vicious as it might be, though, it is with the shoulder, shoulder to the chest, and you actually don't have targeting. This ended up being the type of play that was changed in replay.

And because of the new rule that was added last year, this was changed to not only a disqualification part of the penalty removed, the 15-yard penalty was removed because the replay official had determined that there was no -- you might recognize that guy. In fact, I think that guy is here today. He's not here today? Hey, Mike, how are you doing?

But it will continue. Targeting will continue to garner a lot of interest simply because of the focus on safety, which is always going to be our paramount and first priority relative to players.

But it seemed to be settling in last year, at least to a greater degree, of a more and greater understanding in terms of what's going to be called, what's not going to be called, what potentially might be changed, and, again, that was one where we correctly picked up.

This is an example here, and I'm going to show you this from our wide angle that we try to shoot so that from an officiating standpoint -- doesn't really give you the detail, but I can go back and show you that. What we're going to end up with is the back judge is going to call a foul for targeting in this action here. It's a blind side hit on this defender.

What you end up seeing after the play is here comes the -- so here, before the back judge

has even come to the referee, he's going to have a conversation. In this case, the side judge comes in. He talks to the back judge who said, I had a very, very good look at that and he got him with the shoulder to the chest. Now, we can go back, and we can look at the detail of that.

Referee then actually makes the announcement that there is no foul for targeting. And, again, you can see here turning to the side, hitting with the shoulder. It's actually shoulder-to-shoulder contact. These happen very fast on the field. But by rule, officials are instructed, by rule, that, when in question, it is a foul. So that's why sometimes you'll see that they may throw the flag. It is going to be reviewed, and we fortunately have that process.

But just like we have various philosophies on a number of fouls, the most of which is, when in question, things are not fouls. But relative to targeting and other safety related areas, by rule, when in question, it is a foul.

So coaches are aware of this, and it's long been a practice with roughing the passer. We rarely have questions anymore from coaches relative to protecting the quarterbacks because they know that the referees, when in question, are going to make the call, and they're going to call that.

They can coach their defensive linemen up that, look, don't put yourself in the position where you're having that referee guess whether you hit him high or not. If you've got a clear shot on the quarterback, you'd better be thinking, I'd better get low. You've just got to keep that in mind.

So any questions relative to targeting or anything that came up? Again, it's a credit, I think, to the players and the coaches in terms of adjusting, and that's exactly what the rules committee wanted to have happen relative to that.

Q. How many targeting calls?

WALT ANDERSON: For us we had eight total, four of which were changed and removed and four of which were confirmed. Not necessarily a great number, four more than we'd like to have. Again, I'm not sure what they were across the country other than I know Rogers reported to us that you can see the numbers starting to go down, which is the result that we wanted to see.

I'm going to move on to ineligible downfields on the pass. I'm going to cover that really similar to how I covered it in our general

session at our clinic in front of all 440 officials and the media members. I know some of you were there, so this is a repeat of some of this. But I'm going to talk to you exactly like I talked to them in terms of covering it.

The rule wasn't changed, so it's still three yards. Linemen can go down three yards. The difficulty, in terms of officiating this play, is because the college game has become so spread out, so complex, so fast. There's so many things going on that -- and whenever you consider the rule, linemen can be now up to three yards when the pass is thrown.

What you're going to end up seeing so many times -- and you end up seeing it here -- is by the time the ball is touched, which a lot of times people reference that, you say, well, this lineman is way downfield. That's a no-brainer. You ought to be able to make that call. The issue here is it's really whenever it's thrown. So right here -- and this just happens to be wasn't planned this way, but we end up with a big line here as a reference.

The ball is snapped at the 47, so our magic line here is the 50. It would be nice on the field if we could always place the ball where we have big lines, but that's not the reality of the game. So even though it's tight here, whenever the ball ends up being released, the player is just beyond. So this was actually called by the umpire, was evaluated as correct.

The problem is -- and I want to show you another play, same game. We're going to watch -- I believe it's the left tackle. So the ball here is snapped on the 47 going in. So our magic line here is the 44. I'm sorry. It's the right guard. So what ends up happening is the ball gets thrown over here. Here's the right guard. Same umpire who made the correct call earlier, he ends up seeing this. The problem is, when the ball is released, where is he? He's right at the three yards. This is legal. This is an incorrect call.

And we can understand why officials often will make this call because they see this, but part of the dilemma we've got is more and more teams are running these stretch plays. They've got blocking schemes by the linemen, which is always run blocking, basically, because they're going to be firing out. They have pass routes by the receivers, and it's kind of up to the quarterback to make the decision. And most of the time they'll throw it quickly, and we don't end up with that issue.

But when we end up with any kind of a delay and you end up with these players downfield, it's a very difficult play to officiate. But that said,

the rule is what it is, and we're going to have to do a better job of figuring out how to officiate it.

One of the things we feel like we can do going forward is take advantage of the fact that now, since everybody's working eight-man mechanics, is we may get the line of scrimmage officials, which are the two officials here on the side, that although they do have receiver responsibilities, they're probably in a better position. And I believe we're going to need to spend more time developing mechanics to possibly get them to help out.

Because like some fouls -- and this may sound like we're getting into the weeds with some of this -- but this is a foul that requires a two-step process by the official. I'll end up showing it.

Let me get to a better play that we missed in one of our games. You're going to watch the center here. So the ball snapped right inside the 9-yard line, right around the 9-yard line, you've got a fake run. Ball's thrown. He's at the 5. So he's at the 9. So he's got till the 6, but he doesn't have till the 5. It's not enough, but it's enough.

This is what ends up happening. Again, part of this -- and this is from that football working group. Part of what I learned from this is the continuing ability to learn how the game is coached and learn how the game is played so that I can try to translate that then to the officials in terms of giving us a better understanding of what to look for and what not to look for in terms of that's just how things are done. We're looking for too much or we're not looking for enough.

When you watch here the safety, which is this guy right here -- and these are all schemed intentionally. He's reading run because everything is showing run here, except this guy knows he's going to fake it, and this receiver knows he's going to run a route. When the quarterbacks see this, they're looking to see how the defense reacts. He could hand off, or he could not hand off, which he doesn't here, and the receiver ends up being wide open.

The dilemma we have in officiating is the official who's responsible for all three of these players is this official right here, the umpire. Now, when you take a look from an officiating standpoint, all the activity, he's got a block here that's going on that's active and a potential run to his right. He's got a block here that's going on that's active and a potential run to his right. And if we have holding, this is going to be the guy that

has to cover that.

Now, with eight men we can get some help from the center judge that goes this way, and we can get some help from the referee. But, typically, when we have players what we call running in space like this, we kind of have a tendency to forget about them because there's other players not running in space that are actively engaged that we're responsible to look at. So it's a tough play. We missed it. It should have been a foul here.

Let me go back to the same game. We didn't have a very good game, this game on IDP, by the way. We're going to watch the left tackle on this play. He's this guy right down here. The ball is caught. He's like seven, eight yards downfield. You might think maybe that's a no-brainer. He's obviously too far down. But when you take a look at it, the ball is snapped from the 20. So he's got to the 17. When the ball's released, he's at the 17. It doesn't really matter how long the ball's in flight, and it doesn't matter, when the ball's in flight, how far he is downfield. It's when it's released.

The difficulty is the umpire has to make the assessment, I see the guy, find the ball in terms of that reference, it's just a tough read for him. We don't want umpires watching quarterbacks. That's the referees and the center judge's responsibility. But like defensive holding on receivers, the deep wing officials, they see defensive holding, they're taught to look back to the quarterback. If the ball is in the airway to some other part of the field, it's not a foul. If the quarterback still has the ball, then he's got a flag for defensive holding.

These are a number of two-step processes. They're difficult to work. We've got to continue to work to get better at it. You'll see and read about, maybe you've even talked to the coaches, it's a point of emphasis for both sides. Whether or not it gets considered again next year for a rule change or not, there will be a lot of debate about it, rest assured. Because I know in the proposal this year, because I know Ed and I spent some time with our coaches talking about it in the off-season, when it was up before the rules committee in terms of how do you all feel about this. Obviously, the rules are made by the rules committee, and we have input and we're allowed to make recommendations.

We actually polled our coaches, and the majority of our coaches were in favor of the rule. The most common response that Ed and I got from the coaches -- and even some of them, when we first decided let's take the vote -- we were kind of laughing, saying it will be 9-1 against the rule. It

really was almost the other way around. Only a couple of the teams were not really in favor of the rule, but the others, even though they run these types of offenses, their comment was we still have to play defense. It's such a difficult situation to put the defense in in terms of the difficulty of reading that.

So you can bet it's going to be continued to be talked about. We'll look at it throughout the season. We're going to have to work at that.

Another question over here. Same person, by the way. See, Barry has been at a number of our clinics, so he's learned tips on the questions to ask, on all the trigger points.

Q. What you're saying, Walt, if it was a one-yard rule, a one-yard buffer zone for the linemen instead of the three, it would be a lot easier on you guys?

WALT ANDERSON: Sure. There's so many aspects of the rule that involve one yard, quarterback's beyond the line, ball being touched, which is another part of this rule that doesn't exist, depends on where the ball is touched, and offensive pass interference gets into that category because, unlike the NFL, which they don't really care where the ball is touched, if a pass is thrown, you can't be blocking downfield.

Our officials have to make the judgment, if you have blocking downfield by a lineman, if the pass is thrown, where is it first touched. Well, if it's anywhere within a yard of the line of scrimmage or behind the line of scrimmage, it's not a foul. If it's clearly past the line of scrimmage, then that's when it becomes a foul.

But our college coaches, they know what the rule is, and you see that all over the place with them running these little bubble screens and they're sending linemen downfield and they're trying to block because the intent is to try to catch the ball at the line of scrimmage. The ones that we end up with the obvious fouls, which we often will see -- and we showed a number of those at the clinic, where the quarterback gets the ball. I'm going to go throw a real quick out here right at the line of scrimmage, but that quarterback ended up coming in press coverage, so he had my guy covered. Now I'm going to pull the ball back and rotate over here to see if I can find somebody. Well, I'm not telling my linemen that. So they're releasing downfield.

When you have broken plays, it's not so

difficult to officiate because people end up so far downfield, and then very often the quarterback dumps it to somebody well downfield. So you have those situations that are easy. But when they're coming right out at the line of scrimmage, officials already know, because that rule has been in place for quite a while, and we very often will have a flag on the ground. Just like with targeting, somebody's responsible to come in and talk to the official who's responsible to determine where a ball is touched.

The hard part of ineligible downfield, which might be a potential solution, is maybe getting replay involved in helping us be able to determine where a ball is touched, which right now is not reviewable. That's not a reviewable aspect of a play, but that might be something to consider from that standpoint.

Any other questions on ineligibles downfield on a pass?

The only other topic I really want to cover, just because there's so many questions that often get asked about it, is really in reference to pace of game. Obviously, it's rather quick. Let me go to a TV shot here. What you ended up on the previous play was, in this case, a first down by Texas Tech. They don't substitute.

So when a team doesn't substitute, the defensive team is not allowed an opportunity to match up. They're on their own. So what you see here is Texas Tech makes a first down. Occasionally, you'll see the officials delay, just to be sure the officials are in position. It wasn't needed necessarily here because it wasn't a real tight play for a first down.

But you may have a third and one, and it's right up the middle, right in the pile. The wing officials are pinching in. The referee may need to give them a few moments at least to get out and be in a position to officiate.

So you may see referees do this signal, even if there's no substitutions, and that's simply telling the center judge that he needs to just hold up a minute. I'm going to let the officials get clear, and then I'm going to release the center judge.

The more common signal that you see, just so all of you are mechanically aware, is any time you see the referee -- and he's the guy with the white hat that you need to look at -- any time you see him do this, this really is a signal to the coaches that we have a substitution situation, and we are giving you an opportunity to match up.

Now, you don't have forever to match up. You've got to begin that process by rule within just

a couple of seconds. But if you begin that process in a reasonable manner, then we're going to give you the opportunity to complete that process. In the absence of that, you'll either see the referees doing nothing, if they're not holding up for our purposes, or they'll point to the center judge, they're going to clear him, and that's what you see here.

In that case, as is here, it's all on the defense. Once the center judge clears and begins moving, this is a signal to the offense, you can snap the ball. In which case they do here. So the defense is caught with 12 players.

Now, if there had been a substitute here by the offense and the referee, you see the referee like this, that center judge is just going to stay right there in what we call the A-gap. He's going to get right behind the center. They're used to having a lot of verbal dialogue with both the centers and the quarterbacks. They know them by name, and they call them by name because they interact with them a lot. And we want them to be aware of that so that it's not a surprise to the players.

But you'll see the referee, had there been a substitution, he'll hold it up, and he's going to give the defensive players, when the last one steps off the field, then he'll point to the center judge, center judge will move off, and then they can snap the ball.

Q. I don't want to change subjects, but the thing I don't understand why the rules are not focused in on is this is a precise game, down to the inches and everything else, but if you watch this play, it's a perfect example. Texas Tech has the right to run a play except for the chains haven't been set. So the officials up top who's going to help them set the chains has got tons of things he needs to be watching and officiate. So we're relying on people to set the chains who are hired by the schools, whatever. Why don't we wait and let them set the chains? Why does the game have to go that split second faster? Because this ball is snapped before the guy tells us where the 10 yards are.

WALT ANDERSON: It's a really great question. The real answer is because we actually have mechanics in place -- this official here carries a little black -- what we call a beanbag. And what he'll do is he moves down to that spot and he just simply puts that bag down. That tells the guy first

on the down box, because the guy on the down box is moving without anything attached to it and the other two have a chain attached to it, which sometimes gets wrapped around coaches' feet and things like that. So very often they're slow in getting down.

The other reality is most of the stakeholders will tell you that they're not going to allow the development of the game to be dependent upon slow chain people. So that's part of it.

So it's a balance between what we can mechanically work through. But this official here has dropped his beanbag. So the guy with the down box is going to come, and he's going to put his mark right where he sees that beanbag, and then the other two people on the chain will then set off of him.

So there's just about always a little bit of a delay with the chain guy. So it's not like they don't know where they're going, they're just not going to get there as fast as the team will be.

The other thing that we see -- and you can see why on this side. This is actually now for us, it's a mandatory conference policy that we have to have an auxiliary down box, which has all four downs on it, not just some red or blue marker, and there also has to be an auxiliary line to gain marker on both sides. So you can see this guy is already down and set. So we also have that backup in terms of helping with that.

But it's a great question, and it's one of those things that we can get into the weeds about from a mechanics standpoint, in terms of figuring out how to administer the game as the game's being played. And there's sometimes when we do slow the game down because we should be.

Like I told you, if the officials weren't in position, had this been a tight play and this head linesman in this case was up here, because he had to spot the ball, then the referee is going to do this signal, what we call the stop sign. Because he can't do this signal because this tells the coach I'm going to hold up the game until you've matched your defense up. But if there's no substitute but I still need to hold up the play, I'm going to use this signal. So this is on us, this opens the window, so to speak, for the defense.

Q. To follow up on that point, if the referee is signaling to the coaches that it's okay to change, is there one person on the field who is ultimately responsible for watching when an offensive player checks out, or is it

just sort of the whole crew's job to see that the offense is subbing out, defense can sub in?

WALT ANDERSON: One of the great things we discovered about three years ago when we developed the eight-man mechanics and got into it, the first person it frees up is the referee, who is our quarterback with this process, because he no longer needed to be involved with coming in to help with dead ball officiating or having to spot the ball and so forth. So when the play ends, he's staying back, and he's always staying back.

So he's going to have a general scan of the field, and he can often see -- in this case he'd see a black jersey coming in from his right. Or, if it's the other way, he'd see a white jersey coming in from his left.

The other great question is the -- in this case it's the offense. This official here and this official -- you don't see him here. Both of the officials who are on the sideline of the offensive team are also charged with giving this signal. Now, this -- and we tell the coaches, this signal by the wing guys doesn't mean anything to you. It's the referee's signal that matters.

But we have them give this signal so that, if the referee, whatever -- he might have been -- maybe the quarterback was hit and taken to the ground. So he's a little bit delayed in getting off of his focus with the downed quarterback. Now he looks up, he looks across, and he sees his head linesman doing this, he knows he's got an offensive sub.

So now the first thing he'll do, offense is over here, I see that. I'm looking to the defense. What's the defense doing? He'll see that signal, and he'll go like this. He'll look to the defense, one thousand one, one thousand two, okay, you're not doing anything, and he's going to point to the center judge.

What we found out in some of the other conferences, a couple of them experimented with the eight officials last year, and then everybody is doing it this year, they'll find out pretty quick, the more your officials get used to operating within this system and working through the mechanics -- we've actually rewritten an entire new manual for officials, for eight officials, because now all ten of the FBS conferences are going to be using that. So Rogers and the other coordinators felt like we really needed to redo the manual because it just doesn't involve the center judge, it really opens up some changes with the other positions as well.

Q. Just a generalized question about the replay guys in the press box. Is there a minimum standard of technology those guys have access to at the game? Is it required that there's a 30-inch screen or a 40-inch screen, or is the picture always high definition? Are there standards in place for that?

WALT ANDERSON: Good question. Those standards continue to evolve, and they have through the years. All of the FBS conferences now utilize a system that's by DVSPORT, which they have upgraded now twice. All the screens are high definition. No longer are any of us operating within standard definition. But that transition occurred a couple of years ago.

There's a new generation now that's actively being developed, which is called multicapture. That's going to require a rule change, by the way, but that's already in the works to probably change that for next year because now the way the rule is the video source has to come from one component.

All of our games are televised. So the component it comes from is the network. So we get the one network feed, which obviously has lots of views, but it's dependent upon the views that the network sends us. The multicapture system would allow us to not only capture the network but also capture the in-house stadium production that's being done.

Right now that's not allowed by rule, but it's coming. That will be changed next year. That won't even be a major change. That's just an administrative change. But it's because of technologies like that that are continuing to evolve and develop that you're going to continue to see that.

The communication system, that's another thing you're starting to see more with officials, and you'll see that in the Big 12 this year. All of our crews in the Big 12 will be wearing earpieces. They'll be in communication with not only each other on the field, but with the observer who will be stationed up in the replay booth, just in terms of trying to enhance communication, not only among themselves but to get information to coaches quicker. Obviously, as many of you noticed, anytime a coach -- there's a foul and it's against his team, he wants to know right away what it was that the guy had or talk to the guy so he could tell him how wrong he was on the call and those types of things.

That will allow us, at least if the guy is caught in the flag from the other side, we try to get to him at the break, but maybe we can just get on the headset and tell him it was an arm bar on that DPI. Right or wrong, at least we've got something to communicate and tell him.

It will end up making the instant replay process, as we go forward, quicker. Right now we have a sideline assistant that holds a headset. Referee runs sometimes 80 yards to go put it on. It's not going to be that many more years where we'll be using the communication system and wireless. There won't be often a need for the referee to have to run any distance. That can be done while he's out on the field. Just another way to expedite the management of the game and to utilize technology.

And then part of what you're going to see coming out of the new competition committee that's being created for the college football structure is really getting into looking at a lot of the technology rules that are somewhat antiquated but they still exist. The competition committee, working with the rules committee, is going to be taking a hard look at that here for this next year to see what changes need to be made relative to using iPads, computers in the press box. There's probably not a lot of people that are working up their game plans anymore on Big Chief tablets. So there's probably a need for that, and I think there are mechanisms and policies that are being developed that are going to make that a lot easier.

Q. This is a bit of a more general question. With the push last year to, in particular, from defense-oriented coaches to try to have that ten-second grace period on the play clock to not snap the football, I'm curious if there's been any discussion to move college football towards NFL style of game clock rules in order to limit the number of total snaps and not affect the actual pace of play within each drive.

WALT ANDERSON: There was discussion even this year. There's really -- I think that will continue to be open in terms of them talking about that. There was discussion relative to eliminating the college rule where we stop the clock on the first down as an example, which eats up a lot of time. But the rules committee did not feel like that was something they wanted to make a change at.

In general, I think the average length of the college game is somewhere around 3:17, 3:18. We're at 3:25 in the Big 12. It's crept up a little bit, but when you take a look at the graph, it hasn't gone up that much.

That will continue to be monitored as well as -- and you make a great point. With the emphasis on player safety, if they feel like, regardless of the game time, they want to look at maybe considering reducing the number of plays that are run in the game, then they may end up considering it.

So I think that's going to be an open topic and one that I think you can count on being discussed next year by the rules committee. I know on average across the country in the FBS, we're right at about 182, I believe it is, plays per game. We're right at 187. I think we're in second place behind the Pac-12, who's at 192. But even the SEC is at 183. They often talk about how, quote, slow they are, but they're only slow by five plays. So it's not that much.

It's obvious that the pace of the college game is very much -- has been, at least in recent years, on the uptake, although we didn't see as much of a rise last year. Actually, the average numbers for some of the teams went down a bit. So it appears to be a little bit leveling off. There's only so fast you can go.

But I'm not so sure the ten-second rule is going to apply. We really don't have that many snaps where the play clock is in the 30s. It happens when you've got a three-yard run between the hash marks and the center judge gets the ball down right there, there's no subs, they get the ball up. They may snap it at 32, 33 on the play clock.

Most of the time -- and we look at this and track this. In a lot of our training video for the officials, we superimpose the play clock just so they have a feel, in terms of game administration, as to where they are relative to the play clock. Most all the snaps or the majority of snaps are under 30 anyway.

So I'm not so sure even that proposed rule would have accomplished what some that were proposing it would have wanted.

Thank you very much.

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