

## Twitter Thread by Kyle Lamb



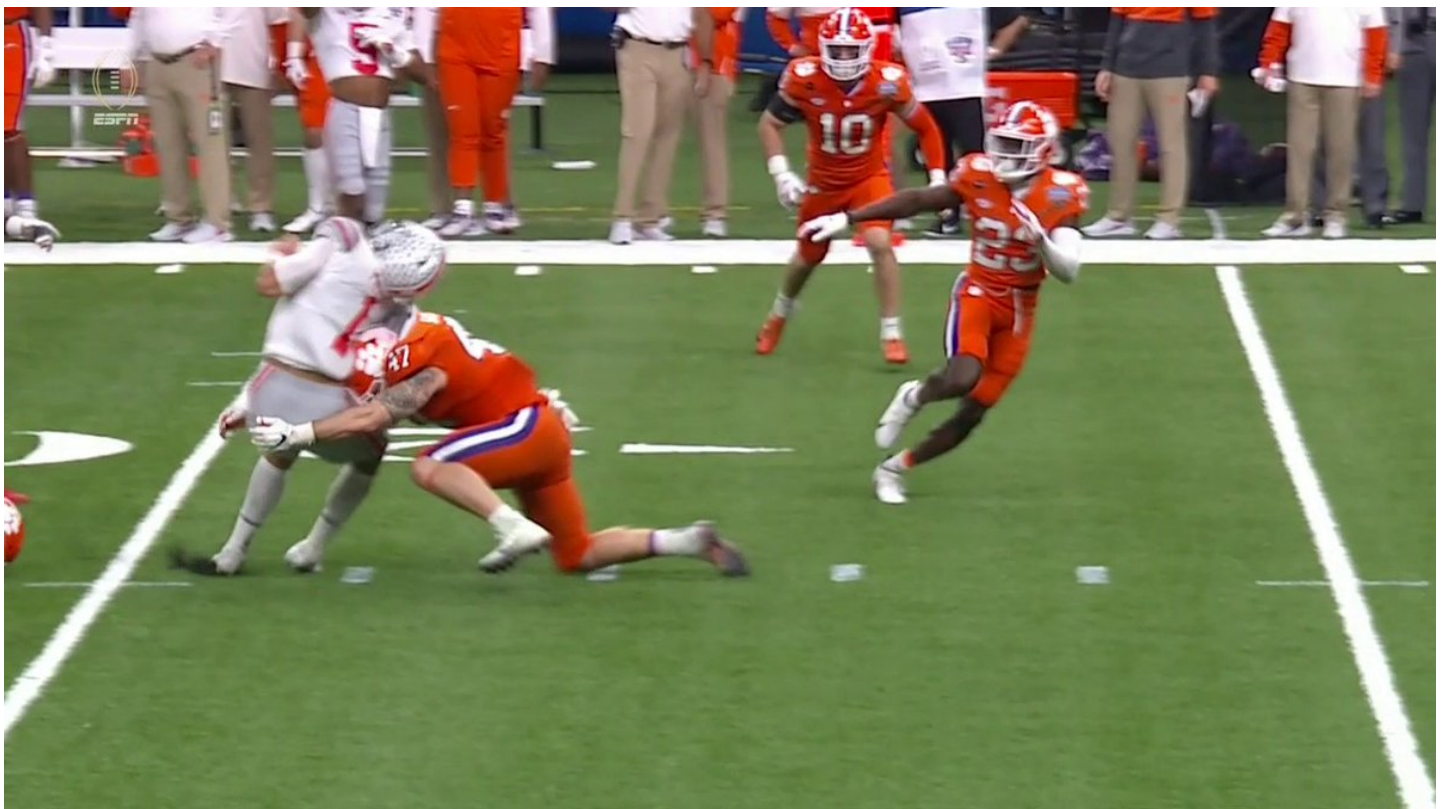
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It's time we have a discussion about targeting. Let's set aside with the ejection aspect, for a moment, as I believe that needs changed. But undeniably, undoubtedly and unequivocally this was not only not a "textbook" form tackle, it was textbook targeting (formerly spearing).

1



The version of this targeting rule predates targeting itself. The rule began in 1975 as what was called "spearing" as the "deliberate use of the head and helmet" to punish an opponent. No player should use helmet "butt" or "ram" an opponent.

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Anyone that played pee wee football in the 80s, 90s or beyond should know this as common sense. Every little leaguer football player was taught on day one not to look down when form tackling and not use the top of your helmet. This was a

spear. Kids know this.

3

In 1976, the rule was modified more adding the indicator "(N)o player shall intentionally strike a runner with the crown or top of his helmet," to the rule.

This revision brought more clarity to what you could and could not do with the crown of your helmet.

4

Again the rule was modified, slightly, in 1990 to include the facemask. Although leading with the facemask WAS actually a good form tackle, you couldn't do it maliciously. This version of the rule continued on until 2005. Then...

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The rule was again changed there in 2005. See a snippet of an ESPN/AP wire article as they removed "intentional" from the definition as it had always been difficult to enforce trying to judge intent of a malicious or otherwise reckless hit...

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The hit got Courson thinking about how rarely he's seen spearing called in college football. The problem, he found, was in the wording of the rule.

"The rule said 'He must intentionally use his helmet to spear,' and we felt like it's hard to find an official to realize whether or not the players intentionally used it or whether he was just making a hit," Southeastern Conference coordinator of officials Bobby Gaston said. "So that will be a rule and a point of emphasis, not only in our conference, but nationally."

The NCAA is providing each school with posters showing what an illegal hit looks like. Courson also put together a video with examples of dangerous hits along with a presentation for athletic trainers to show their players and coaches.

Florida safety Jarvis Herring said the "See What You Hit" sign is in the Gators' locker room.

Two years later, the spearing rule was modified and put into an overarching targeting initiative that people now know. It now reads you cannot "target and make forcible contact" with the crown of the helmet. Targeting requires one indicator...

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### **Targeting and Making Forcible Contact With the Crown of the Helmet**

ARTICLE 3. No player shall target and make forcible contact against an opponent with the crown of his helmet. The crown of the helmet is the portion of the helmet above the level of the top of the facemask. This foul requires that there be at least one indicator of targeting (See *Note 1* below). When in question, it is a foul. (Rule 9-6) (A.R. 9-1-3-I)

In the case of the old version of spearing, striking a player with the crown of the helmet, here are the indicators. Take your pick on the Skalski tackle, as both of the last two indicators are a perfect description of what he did...

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**Note 1:** “Targeting” means that a player takes aim at an opponent for purposes of attacking with forcible contact that goes beyond making a legal tackle or a legal block or playing the ball. Some *indicators of targeting* include but are not limited to:

- Launch—A player leaving his feet to attack an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body to make forcible contact in the head or neck area.
- A crouch followed by an upward and forward thrust to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area, even though one or both feet are still on the ground.
- Leading with helmet, shoulder, forearm, fist, hand or elbow to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area.
- Lowering the head before attacking by initiating forcible contact with the crown of the helmet.

Remember that targeting requires only one indicator. A player does not need to be defenseless; a tackler does not need to launch or thrust. There need not be intent. If you strike with the crown of your helmet, it's counter to how you're taught to tackle and it's a penalty.

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So going back to the original hit it does not matter if Fields "spun into" the tackle or that it wasn't a launch. It was targeting. Period. But I do believe that targeting should not be an ejection unless it's malicious or it's like the yellow card/soccer system of multiple.

End

