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The following are the results of the Onondaga Community College protest of their game played against Clarkson University on September 28, 2012.

**Game (7:00 p.m.) Game result: Onondaga 10, Clarkson 14**

Game protested by Onondaga for an official's decision in violation of NCFA rules.

**Requested action:** Declare the game "Exhibition" rather than an "NCFA Sanctioned Football Game".

After review, Onondaga Head Coach (Derek Demperio) protested the game because clock operations rules were used that were differing from the NCFA rules. When it comes to clock operation rules, the NCFA defaults to NCAA rules. Since this was an Officiating decision believed to be in violation to NCFA rules, this is classified as an On Field Protest per NCFA Rules (14.02.1). NCFA Rules (14.02.2) dictate that any On Field protest by the coach of a competing team must be made at the time of the action or incident that caused the protest and before play is resumed. NCFA Rules (14.02.2.2) dictate that all On Field protests must be made to the Referee. NCFA Rules (14.02.2.3) dictate that all On Field protests must be reported to the NCFA (via the NCFA GAME PROTEST FORM) no later than midnight E.S.T. of the Tuesday following the "NCFA Week" in which the protested game occurred. Onondaga submitted the appropriate protest form on time (Saturday Sept 29) and stated that they informed the Referee on two occasions that there was a discrepancy in the clock operation rules and that they were playing the game under protest.

In response to the protest, Clarkson Head Coach (Mike Britton) explained that a differing set of clock operation rules were in fact used because that is what they were accustomed to using before joining the NCFA. The specific difference in the rules was: a) During the first 25 minutes of either half, following an incomplete pass, the clock was started on READY instead of on the SNAP (NCAA) and b) During the first 25 minutes of either half, following a first down where the player is tackled in bounds, the clock continued to run instead of stopping and being restarted on READY (NCAA). Coach Britton additionally stated "I find it very ironic that a protest was presented to the officials and not a word was said anytime during the game or immediately after the game to me by the game officials or by Mr. Demperio himself as I know he was near our coaching staff after the contest as we were discussing the game and placing equipment in top my personal vehicle. Any notification of a protest was not received until we received this email from the NCFA (Sunday Sept 30)."

After speaking with the Referee for the game (John Simons) he confirmed that the differing set of clock rules were in fact used in the game because that was how he was instructed to call the game by his assignor. However, he stated that at no time during or after the game was he informed by Onondaga that they had a problem with how the clock operation rules were being handled nor did they ever express to him their intent to play the game under protest. He stated that until he was contacted today (Monday Oct 1) in regards to this protest ruling, he had no idea that Onondaga had a problem with how the game was officiated.

Upon further contacting the Onondaga Head Coach (Derek Demetrio) for clarification, he stated that the only time he spoke with the Referee (John Simons) was at midfield at kickoff. He then stated that it was actually the



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side official that he had voiced his clock operation complaints to and in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter voiced his protest intentions.

**Ruling:** Protest denied. The game remains an official NCFA Sanctioned Football Game and the results remain as reported (Onondaga 10, Clarkson 14); and all stats from this game remain valid.

**Notes:** Despite the fact that it has been confirmed that the game was in fact officiated with clock operation rules which were in violation of NCFA Rules, since the Referee of the game stated that he was never informed by Onondaga that they were playing the game under protest the NCFA has no choice but to deem the protest in valid since informing the Referee of a protest is required by NCFA rule 14.02.2.2. By not informing the Referee that there was a discrepancy in how the clock operation rules were being implemented, neither the Referee nor Clarkson were ever given the opportunity to address the discrepancy and correct it. Had Onondaga in fact informed the Referee that they were playing the game under protest, there would have been an opportunity to adjust how the clock was being used to avoid a protest and if it hadn't, the NCFA would have been able to grant Onondaga their protest of the game. The NCFA must strongly warn Clarkson of the importance of playing their NCFA Sanctioned Football Games by NCFA rules so as to avoid any future potential protests and subsequently having to vacate an earned victory.

**Sandy Sanderson, Commissioner**