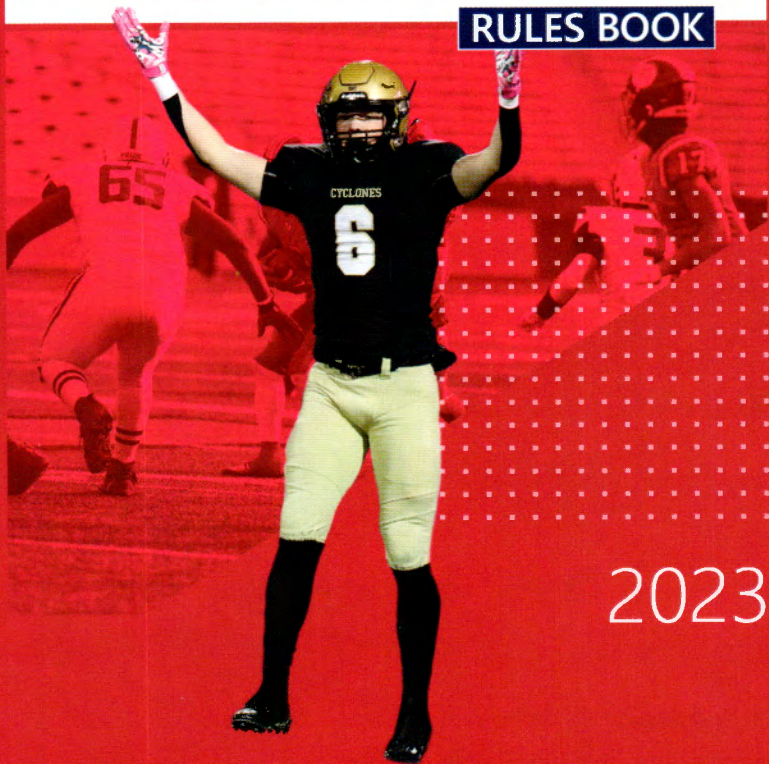




PLAY. PERFORM. COMPETE. TOGETHER.

FOOTBALL

RULES BOOK



2023



2023 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES BOOK

Dr. KARISSA L. NIEHOFF, Publisher
Bob Colgate, Editor
NFHS Publications

To maintain the sound traditions of this sport, encourage sportsmanship and minimize the inherent risk of injury, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) writes playing rules for varsity competition among student-athletes of high school age. High school coaches, officials and administrators who have knowledge and experience regarding this particular sport and age group volunteer their time to serve on the rules committee. Member associations of the NFHS independently make decisions regarding compliance with or modification of these playing rules for the student-athletes in their respective states.

NFHS rules are used by education-based and non-education-based organizations serving children of varying skill levels who are of high school age and younger. In order to make NFHS rules skill-level and age-level appropriate, the rules may be modified by any organization that chooses to use them. Except as may be specifically noted in this rules book, the NFHS makes no recommendation about the nature or extent of the modifications that may be appropriate for children who are younger or less skilled than high school varsity athletes.

Every individual using these rules is responsible for prudent judgment with respect to each contest, athlete and facility, and each athlete is responsible for exercising caution and good sportsmanship. These rules should be interpreted and applied so as to make reasonable accommodations for athletes, coaches and officials with disabilities.

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FACILITIES

Because facilities used for high school athletics come in many shapes, sizes and conditions, on-site event management may on occasion conclude that compliance with NFHS directives about event configuration is not feasible. Under all circumstances, on-site event management should utilize set-ups that minimize risk. If a given facility cannot be made reasonably hazard-free, the event should be relocated.

NOTE: Except as specifically stated within the rules of a given sport, any dimensions or other information in diagrams of courts, fields, pools, rinks and mats is suggestive only; it is not required by NFHS rules. The construction and layout of all facilities used for high school competition are subject to any applicable laws and building codes, and to the sound judgment of the persons in charge of the facilities.

2023 Football Rules Changes

(For comments on the 2023 rules changes, see page 93)

1-5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW) — Clarified that towels do not have to be the same solid color for each player.

2-29-1 — Clarified when a player is inbounds after being out of bounds.

2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g — Added a list of criteria to help identify players who should be defined as defenseless receivers.

7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5-2 d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5 (1)d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW) — Changed intentional grounding exception.

TABLE 7-5 2c (DELETED), 7-5 PENALTY — Removed “intentional” from pass interference in TABLE 7-5.

10-4, TABLE 10-4 (NEW), 10-6 (DELETED) — Changes in basic spot penalty enforcement.

Six-Player – Rule 7g (NEW) — Clarification on the ball being handed forward on a running play.

2023 Football Editorial Changes

1-1-7; 1-1-9; 1-3-2; 1-3-7 NOTE; TABLE 1-7; 1-8 (NEW); 3-6-1b(1); TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2; 9-5-1; 9-8-1; FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – II-5, X-3, X-5; RESOLVING TIED GAMES – 3-1; NINE-, EIGHT- AND SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES – RULES 2 and 7; PENALTY SUMMARY; INDEX.

Each state high school association adopting these rules is the sole and exclusive source of binding rules interpretations for contests involving its member schools. Any person having questions about the interpretation of NFHS rules should contact the rules interpreter designated by the respective state high school association.

The NFHS is the sole and exclusive source of model interpretations of NFHS rules. State rules interpreters may contact the NFHS for model rules interpretations. No other model rules interpretations should be considered.

2023 Points of Emphasis

Helping the Runner

Rule changes have been made at higher levels of football allowing offensive teams to pile in behind and directly push the runner. Because of these changes, we are now seeing similar plays at the high school level. As guardians of the game, it is imperative that all stakeholders work together to remove "helping the runner" from our high school game.

Administrators, coaches and football game officials all have a responsibility to know, respect and teach/enforce the NFHS rules of high school football. Football is a vigorous, physical contact game and, for this reason, much attention is given to minimizing risk of injury to all players. Each respective rules code (NFL, NCAA and NFHS) has rules that coincide with the physical development of competing athletes and their goals for the game.

The NFHS Football Rules Committee's main focus is risk minimization, followed closely by assurance of a balance between offensive and defensive rules. Because the players on defense must guard against the pass, they are not able to counter the advantages created by "helping the runner" formations. Allowing teams to help the runner by illegal techniques swings the balance heavily in favor of the offense.

Football game officials need to change their view of "helping the runner" to a risk issue (clipping, chop block) and remove it from the "pioneer call" category and refocus on ending plays when forward progress is stopped. Pushing the pile is legal; direct contact and pushing, pulling, lifting of the runner is not.

The NFHS Coaches Code of Ethics states: "Coaches shall master the contest rules and shall teach the rules to their team members. Coaches shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules. Coaches have a tremendous influence, for good or ill, on the education of the student, and thus shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character."

If school administrators/athletic directors truly believe that activities are an extension of the classroom, they must be actively involved with programs they supervise and redirect coaches when they observe them teaching prohibited tactics.

Removing "helping the runner" from high school football will at times be met with resistance. School administrative support of football game officials, re-focus of coaches and education of players will lead to a smooth transition. All those directly involved in our great game must stay committed to trying to minimize risk to all players and maintaining the balance between offensive and defensive play.

Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials

Coaches and game officials must demonstrate respect for one another. This mutual appreciation is the foundation of appropriate and professional communication.

Football is an emotional game. Coaches and game officials must realize that competition often leads to intense interactions on the field. Both must work together and strive to manage verbal and nonverbal exchanges in ways that avoid escalating conflict.

Game officials must recognize their role in the game: to provide a service to the coaches and student-athletes in an unemotional and impartial manner. Game officials must always be respectful and maintain a calm demeanor in their comments to coaches, especially when tension is high. Game officials must avoid the urge to argue with coaches who disagree

with their decisions. Coaches may ask questions, and game officials should make every effort to be approachable, actively listen, and provide correct and complete answers as soon as possible. Game officials should aim to be direct and concise in their communication of essential information.

When emotions are running especially high, game officials should de-escalate tensions and demonstrate empathy and understanding of the coach's perspective. Game officials must anticipate circumstances where coaches may become upset and pre-emptively diffuse the situation. A game official should never threaten the coach with consequences for their behavior, nor should a game official become defensive. If a coach exhibits inappropriate behavior and "crosses a line," the game official may choose to penalize the coach for unsportsmanlike conduct. However, throwing a flag should be a last resort. A better approach is to clearly and calmly tell the coach that the comments or behavior are unacceptable, and that it's difficult to focus on the on-field action if the coach continues to distract the game official.

Coaches model acceptable and unacceptable behavior for their student-athletes. If coaches disrespect game officials and make derogatory comments, players will behave in the same way. Coaches should win with grace and lose with dignity. Coaches must understand that the football field is an extension of the classroom and must exhibit proper conduct. This includes respecting the decisions of game officials even when they disagree, and handling differences of opinion in a civil and dignified manner. Dialogue with game officials should be constructive and respectful, not confrontational. Handling disagreements in a business-like manner teaches players good sportsmanship, which is a perennial focus of the NFHS.

Coaches and game officials have a professional responsibility to demonstrate respect for one another and communicate appropriately. Coaches and game officials love the game and desire to positively impact young people. Proper communication during competition teaches players a valuable life lesson about conflict resolution.

Game Management

Each school community must take pride in hosting an athletic contest or event. Proper advance planning is key to an orderly, secure, safe and enjoyable activity. Planning begins with clearly defined tasks for game administration and event personnel. Beginning with the arrival of players, game officials and spectators, each school must have a purposeful plan to address any and all expected issues, as well as the unforeseen.

Preparation begins with clear and concise communication between the host and the competing school regarding the logistics of arrival and departure. Meeting and greeting the visiting team is certainly the beginning of good sportsmanship. Clearly communicated information, such as parking information, location of ticket booths and entry gates, when given to the visitors is another step in assuring a great experience for all participants.

Game officials should be afforded the same communication considerations given the visiting school community. Host administration must provide accurate information for the officiating crew so as to ease any pre-game apprehension or uncertainty. Clear, concise communication is of utmost importance. Having assigned personnel to greet game officials and address all their pre-game and post-game needs is a bare minimum for the host school. Security of game officials must be an absolute priority. Make sure the locker room is properly supervised and access is limited to proper personnel only.

During the game, security of game personnel begins with ensuring that the sideline is properly secured and the playing field is restricted to essential game personnel. For safety

and security reasons, essential game personnel would include game participants, reporters, photographers and game administration. All other, non-essential personnel should be located in the bleachers. All non-participants on the event level should be credentialed and restricted to being no closer than 2 yards from the sideline. Game officials are responsible for securing the team boxes and coaches' area. Sideline management begins with the consistent enforcement of game rules pertaining to the restricted area and the team box. The restricted area is designated to make the sidelines safe for all participants and to give game officials ample space to work. Game administration should be alert to requests of game officials in addressing problems beyond the team box and coaches' area.

The conduct of non-participants is the domain of game and school administration. Expectations for the behavior of spectators and other attendees should be clearly, and repeatedly, communicated to all attendees. The reading of a sportsmanship script before the game is one method of communicating expectations. Good sportsmanship must become part of the culture of any school community. Behavior not acceptable in the school's hallways should not be acceptable on the courts or playing fields.

Appropriate conduct of the public-address announcer is vital to the game atmosphere. The public-address announcer must be the first line of sportsmanship and must exemplify expected and acceptable conduct. The goal of the public-address announcer is to inform and not entertain. Giving play-by-play of game action and/ or critiquing game officials is unacceptable. The public-address announcer must be positive and respectful to all involved in the game.

MINIMAL GAME ADMINISTRATION EXPECTATIONS

- Clearly communicated event itinerary
- Required field markings and game equipment
- Clock operator(s)
- Line-to-gain crew
- Game Official accommodations
- Visiting team accommodations
- Support personnel
- Medical personnel
- Security personnel
- Hospitality for game personnel and administration, inclusive of game officials

DISCLAIMER – NFHS Position Statements and Guidelines

The NFHS regularly distributes position statements and guidelines to promote public awareness of certain health and safety-related issues. Such information is neither exhaustive nor necessarily applicable to all circumstances or individuals, and is no substitute for consultation with appropriate health-care professionals. Statutes, codes or environmental conditions may be relevant. NFHS position statements or guidelines should be considered in conjunction with other pertinent materials when taking action or planning care. The NFHS reserves the right to rescind or modify any such document at any time. Please see pages 99-102 for these position statements.

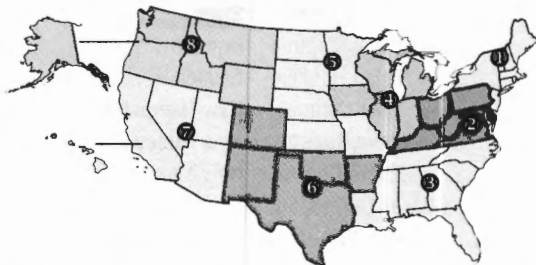
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Shared Responsibility and Football Helmet Warning Statement

Athletes who participate in the sport of football accept the risk of injuries. However, athletes also have the right to assume that those who are responsible for the conduct of the sport, i.e., administrators, coaches and athletic trainers, have taken reasonable precautions to minimize the risk of significant injury. Refinements in the playing rules, the development of risk minimization guidelines and the establishment of equipment standards have helped to reduce significant injuries. However, to legislate safety via the rules book and equipment standards is never a complete answer. All who are involved with participation in the sport of football share in the responsibility of minimizing the sport's inherent risks.

The coach is responsible for pregame verification that in addition to other required equipment, each player has a helmet which meet National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) standards when manufactured and that each helmet has an exterior warning label. While important, the fact the athletes are wearing certified helmets is only the first step. The athletes involved must be aware of all the basic principles of head and neck injury prevention.

HELMET WARNING STATEMENT

Since 1985, the NOCSAE football helmet standard has required a warning label on the outside of the helmet to inform each player of these risks and responsibilities. Each helmet shall have permanently affixed to the exterior of the shell a clearly legible statement which can be easily read without removal of any decal tape, other temporary material or permanent part, which contains language that effectively communicates to the purchaser and user the following information, using the same or similar language:

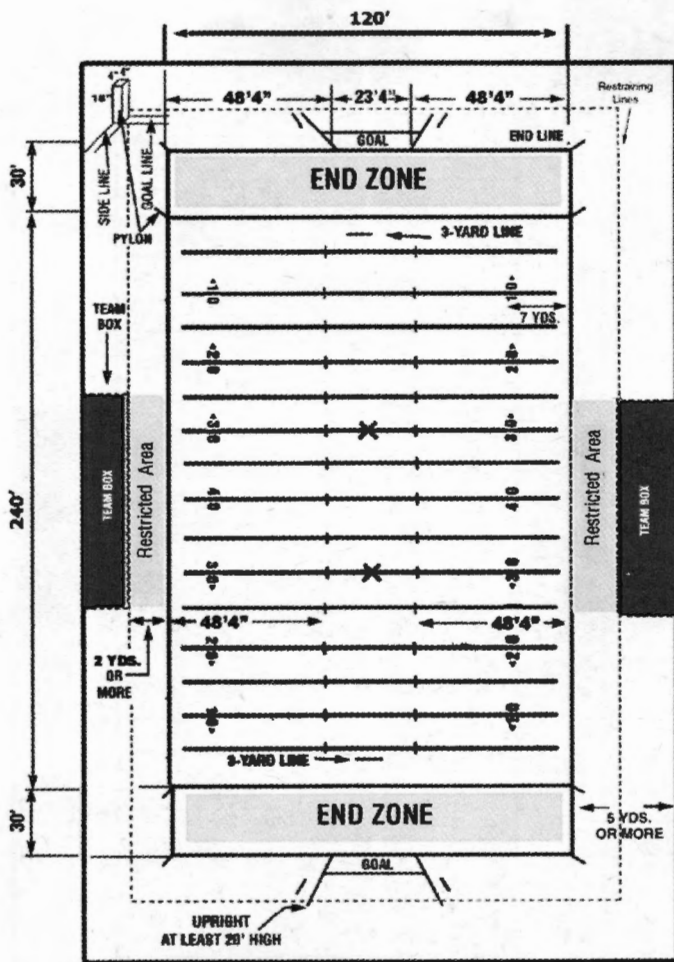
WARNING

NO HELMET CAN PREVENT ALL HEAD OR ANY NECK INJURIES A PLAYER MIGHT RECEIVE WHILE PARTICIPATING IN FOOTBALL. HELMETS CANNOT PREVENT CONCUSSION/BRAIN INJURY. SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE BEFORE RETURNING TO PLAY IF YOU SUSPECT ANY INJURY.

DO NOT USE THIS HELMET TO BUTT, RAM OR SPEAR AN OPPOSING PLAYER. THIS IS IN VIOLATION OF THE FOOTBALL RULES AND SUCH USE CAN RESULT IN SEVERE HEAD OR NECK INJURIES, PARALYSIS OR DEATH TO YOU AND POSSIBLE INJURY TO YOUR OPPONENT.



Football Field Diagram Nine-player Football Field

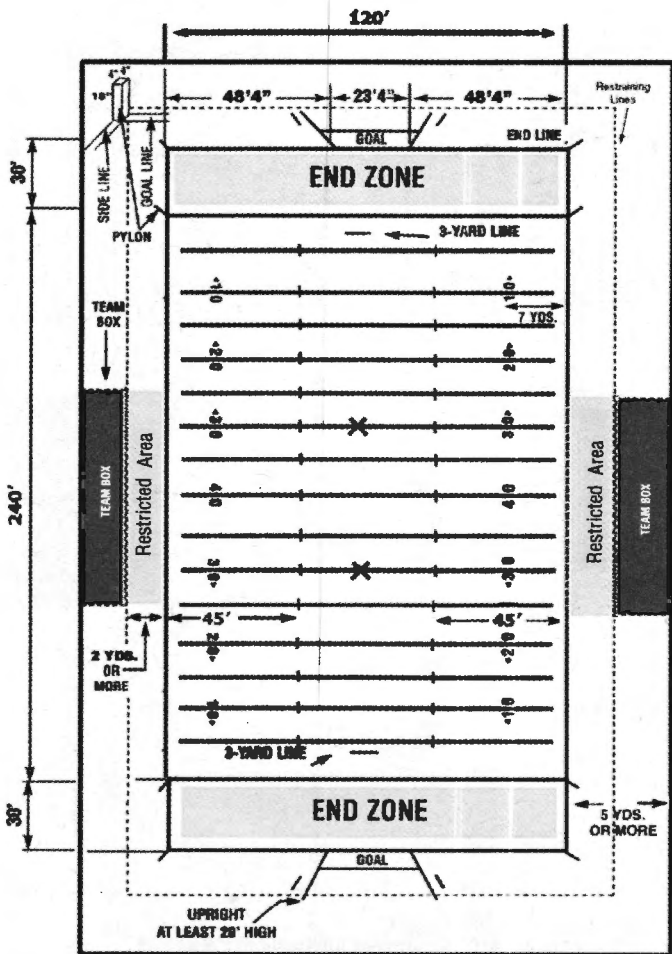


NOTE: By state association adoption, the dimensions of the field may be altered.



Football Field Diagram

Eight- and Six-player Football Field



NOTE: By state association adoption, the dimensions of the field may be altered.

Rule **1** The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

SECTION 1 THE GAME

ART. 1 . . . It is the object of the game for one team to carry or pass the ball across the opponent's goal line or to kick the ball through the opponent's goal by a place kick or drop kick. The game is won by the team which accumulates the most points.

ART. 2 . . . The game of football is played with an inflated ball by two teams on a rectangular field 360 by 160 feet. While the ball is live, an interval called a down is in progress and the team in possession attempts to advance the ball by carrying, kicking or passing it. If a foul occurs, the penalty loss, if not declined, is enforced during the interval between downs. The team in possession has a series of four downs numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 to advance the ball to the line to gain, which is usually 10 yards in advance of the spot where the series begins. Points are scored by touchdown, successful try, field goal or safety.

ART. 3 . . . Each team shall begin the game with 11 players, but if it has no substitutes to replace injured or disqualified players, it may continue with fewer.

ART. 4 . . . The game is administered by game officials whose title and duties are stated in the NFHS Football Game Officials Manual.

NOTE: Each state association may determine the number of game officials to be used.

ART. 5 . . . Prior to the game, the referee shall meet with the head coach(es) and captain(s) and explain that everyone is expected to exhibit good sportsmanship throughout the game.

ART. 6 . . . The referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

ART. 7 . . . The game officials shall assume authority for the game, including penalizing unsportsmanlike acts, 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time – an earlier time if required by the state association – or as soon thereafter as they are able to be present.

ART. 8 . . . The game officials' authority extends through the referee's declaration of the end of the fourth period or overtime. The game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the game officials had jurisdiction. State Associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents that occur before, during or after the game officials' jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a game is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play.

ART. 9 . . . The game officials shall have the authority to make decisions for infractions of the rules. The use of any replay or television monitoring equipment

by the game officials in making any decision relating to the game is prohibited, unless used in compliance with Rule 1-3-7 NOTE as authorized in a state association postseason game.

ART. 10 . . . The referee's decision to forfeit a game is final.

ART. 11 . . . Protests of NFHS rules are not recognized.

SECTION 2 THE FIELD AND MARKINGS

ART. 1 . . . The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and markers as shown on the accompanying diagram. There shall be two sidelines running the length of the field along each side that serve as boundary lines for play. It is recommended there be a slope of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch per foot from the center of the field to each sideline on a natural grass field. There shall be two goal lines, running parallel to each other and perpendicular to the sidelines. The field of play is the area within the boundary lines, and the goal lines. There shall be two endlines, running parallel to each other, parallel to the goal lines that serve as a boundary line for play.

NOTE: The rise from each sideline to the center of a natural grass field is 20 inches when the recommended slope is used.

ART. 2 . . . Yard-line markers, constructed of soft, pliable materials, if placed on the ground, should be no closer than 5 yards to the sideline.

ART. 3 . . . Lines and other markings:

- Lines shall be marked with a noncaustic, nontoxic material designed for marking fields such as powdered gypsum, calcium carbonate and liquid aerosol paint. It is recommended that these lines be white. Neither lime, hydrated lime or other chemical derivatives of lime, nor caustic material of any kind may be used for marking football fields.
- Yard lines shall be marked with a continuous line every 5 yards beginning and ending 4 inches from each sideline.

NOTES:

- Game administration may place on the field of play, 4 inches from each sideline, yard-line extensions that should be 24 inches in length and 4 inches in width.
- If the field of play has a logo in the center or at any other part of the field of play, that logo shall not obstruct the visibility of the required marks every five yards. A solid or shadow-bordered 4-inch-wide line is permissible. A shadow line is a line that designates the required 4-inch width by use of a border or outline lines, at least $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide which shall lie within the 4-inch width. Shadow lines that are the natural color of the field of play are permissible. The area within these lines need not be one color, but the continuous 4-inch-wide outline must be clearly visible to the game officials.
- End lines and sidelines shall be continuous lines at least 4 inches wide. All other field dimension lines should be marked 4 inches in width.
- A 4-inch-wide restraining line shall be placed around the outside of the field, at least 2 yards from the sidelines and end lines, as an extension of the line limiting the team box area, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit the restraining line. It is recommended that the restraining line be marked by placing 12-inch-long lines, separated at 24-inch intervals.

NOTE: Game administration may place 4-inch wide and 12-inch long bisecting marks along the restraining line at each 5-yard line between the goal lines.

- e. A series of "hash marks" should be 24 inches in length and 4 inches in width and shall be located 53 feet, 4 inches from and parallel with each sideline dividing the field of play longitudinally in thirds. The lines shall be marked so that each 5-yard line bisects the hash mark.

NOTES:

1. Game administration may place on the field of play, with the inner edge of the extension in line with the outer edge of the hash mark, yard-line extensions that should be 24 inches in length and 4 inches in width.
 2. It is permissible to use college or professional fields with hash marks marked at the distance specified by their respective codes, and with advertising and/or commercial markings placed on the field of play by home management that meet the requirements of Rule 1-2-3l.
- f. 9-yard marks, 12 inches in length and 4 inches in width, shall be located 9 yards from each sideline. The 9-yard marks shall be marked so that at least each successive 10-yard line bisects the 9-yard marks. These marks shall not be required if the field of play is visibly numbered. If on-the-field numbers are used, the tops of those numbers shall be 9 yards from the sideline, should be 6 feet in height and 4 feet in width and may include directional arrows next to the yard-line numbers indicating the direction toward the nearest goal line.
- g. Team boxes shall be marked on each side of the field outside the coaches' area between the 25-yard lines for use of coaches, substitutes, athletic trainers, etc., affiliated with the team. The coaches' area is a minimum of a 2-yard belt between the front of the team box and the sideline, and becomes a restricted area when the ball is live.

NOTES:

1. It is permissible for both team boxes to be on the same side of the field, provided each team box is marked between respective 20- and 45-yard lines.
 2. It is recommended goal lines and the team box boundaries be marked in a color which contrasts with other field markings and the area between the sidelines and the team box boundaries be solid white or marked with diagonal lines.
 3. It is permissible for state associations to approve an extension of the team box and to determine the individuals who may be in the extended area, provided such extension is the same for both teams.
- h. Decorative markings in the end zones shall be no closer than 2 feet from the boundary and the goal lines.
- i. Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the boundary marks, such marks being out of bounds.
- j. Each goal-line mark shall be entirely in its end zone so the edge toward the field of play and its vertical plane is the actual goal line. The goal line shall extend from sideline to sideline.
- k. A line, 4 inches wide and a minimum of 24 inches in length, shall be centered in the field of play, three yards from each goal line.
- l. Advertising and/or commercial markings shall not obstruct the yard lines, hash marks or 9-yard marks (7-yard marks in nine-, eight- and six-player competition).

ART. 4 . . . A soft, flexible pylon, which is 4 inches square, 18 inches high, either orange, red or yellow in color, and does not create risk, shall be placed at the inside corner of each of the intersections of the sidelines with the goal lines and the end lines, as well as with each intersection of the hash marks extended and shall be placed either 3 feet beyond the end lines or on the end lines. When properly placed, the goal line pylon is out of bounds at the intersection of the sideline and the goal line extended.

ART. 5 . . . The goal:

- The goal is the vertical plane midway between the sidelines extending indefinitely above the inside of the uprights and the front edge of the crossbar and in the same vertical plane as the inside edge of the end line.
- The top of the crossbar shall be 10 feet above the ground, measured from the base of each upright to the top of the crossbar at the intersection, or at each end of the crossbar perpendicular to the ground when a single pedestal is used.
- The crossbar shall be 23 feet, 4 inches long.
- The uprights shall be 23 feet, 4 inches apart inside to inside and each upright may not exceed 4 inches in width.

NOTE: It is permissible to use college or professional fields with goal post uprights set at the width specified by their respective codes.

- The uprights shall extend a minimum of 10 feet above the crossbar.
- The goal posts shall be padded with resilient, shock absorbing material to a height of at least 6 feet above the ground.
- The horizontal crossbar and the uprights above it shall be free from any decorative material except paint which is recommended to be either silver, white or yellow in color. One wind directional streamer may be attached to the top of each upright. Wind directional streamers shall be 4 inches in width, 42 inches in length and either red, orange, or yellow in color.

SECTION 3 GAME EQUIPMENT

The NFHS does not perform scientific tests on any specific items of equipment to determine if the equipment poses undue risks to student-athletes, coaches, officials or spectators. Such determinations are the responsibility of equipment manufacturers. For additional information on Equipment Guidelines, see Appendix C.

ART. 1 . . . The ball shall meet the following specifications:

- A tan-colored cover consisting of either pebbled-grain, cowhide or approved composition (leather or rubber) case without corrugations other than those formed by the natural seam grooves and the lace on one of the grooves.

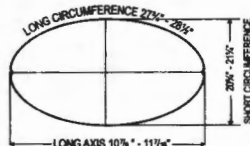


Figure 1-3-1
Football Dimensions

- b. One set of either eight or 12 evenly spaced laces. The length of the lace shall be confined to within $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches from each end of the ball.
- c. A continuous 1-inch white or yellow stripe centered 3 to $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches from each end of the ball free from decorations or logos added during or after production. Stripes shall be located only on the two panels adjacent to and perpendicular to the seam upon which the laces are stitched.
- d. Conforms to the shape and dimensions as shown in Figure 1-3-1.
- e. Weighs between 14 and 15 ounces.
- f. Inflated to a pressure of $12\frac{1}{2}$ to $13\frac{1}{2}$ psi (pounds per square inch) or 878.8 to 949.1 grams per square centimeter.
- g. The ball for 9th grade and above, shall include the NFHS Authenticating Mark. The mark can be displayed in either format:



A current list of NFHS authenticated products can be found on the website, www.nfhs.org.

- h. Contain only the following permissible items:
 - 1. Ball manufacturer's name and/or logo;
 - 2. School name, logo and/or mascot;
 - 3. Conference name and/or logo;
 - 4. State association name and/or logos; and
 - 5. NFHS name and/or logos.
- i. Method of measuring the ball:
 - 1. All measurements shall be made after the ball is inflated to 13 psi.
 - 2. The long circumference should be measured 90 degrees from lace around the ends of the ball, over the groove but not in the groove.
 - 3. The long axis should be measured from end to end but not in the nose indentation.
 - 4. The short circumference should be measured around the ball, over the valve, over the lace, but not over a cross lace.

ART. 2 . . . Each team shall provide at least one legal ball to the referee at the time the game officials assume authority for the game. Only legal balls approved by the referee may be used during the game.

Each team may use any referee-approved ball of its choice to free kick or start a new series of downs. If a touchdown occurs following a change of possession and the scoring team did not put the ball in play, any referee-approved ball may be used for the try.

NOTE: By state association adoption, a specific ball which meets specifications may be mandated for postseason or state playoff competition.

ART. 3 . . . The referee shall decide whether the ball meets specifications, and the referee or any other game official may order the ball changed between downs.

ART. 4 . . . A kicking tee shall be made of pliable material which elevates the lowest point of the ball no more than 2 inches above the ground.

ART. 5 . . . Either a yardage chain which joins two rods exactly 10 yards apart or any other 10-yard indicator with a visible line-to-gain indicator shall be used as the official line-to-gain equipment. This equipment and a down indicator shall be provided by game management.

- a. The line-to-gain indicator shall be used to fix the line to gain, and the down indicator shall be used to mark the spot of the ball and indicate the number of the down in a series. The game officials shall check the line-to-gain indicator for accuracy prior to the start of the game.
- b. The official line-to-gain and down indicators shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline opposite the press box, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. If there is no press box, the location will be specified by game management at the request of the head linesman. The line-to-gain indicator shall be removed from the sideline when the line to gain is the goal line.
- c. Unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain and down indicators may be used on the sideline opposite the official line-to-gain and down indicators, and shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit.
- d. All line-to-gain and down-indicator rods shall have flat lower ends covered by protective caps.

NOTE: It is recommended that the members of the crew wear distinctive vests or jackets furnished by home or game management.

ART. 6 . . . A timing device referred to as the "game clock" shall be provided by the game management. The operator(s) shall be approved by the referee.

ART. 7 . . . Other than replay or television monitoring equipment, game officials may use supplementary equipment to aid in game administration as authorized by the state association.

NOTE: A state association may create instant-replay procedures that permit game or replay officials to use a replay monitor during state postseason ~~games~~ to determine if a decision by the on-field game officials is incorrect.

SECTION 4 PLAYER DESIGNATIONS

ART. 1 . . . Each team shall designate a player as field captain, and he is the only player who may communicate with game officials.

ART. 2 . . . For convenience, a player is designated by his position on offense during the snap. Figure 1-4-2 shows one of the offensive formations and the recommended numbering of players according to position.

ART. 3 . . . Each player shall be numbered 0 through 99 inclusive. Any number preceded by the digit zero is illegal. See 7-2-5.

ART. 4 . . . Each head coach shall designate a representative who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination. His first choice of any offered decision is final. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted either team. The head coach's designee shall remain in place for the entire game except in case of emergency.



NEUTRAL ZONE

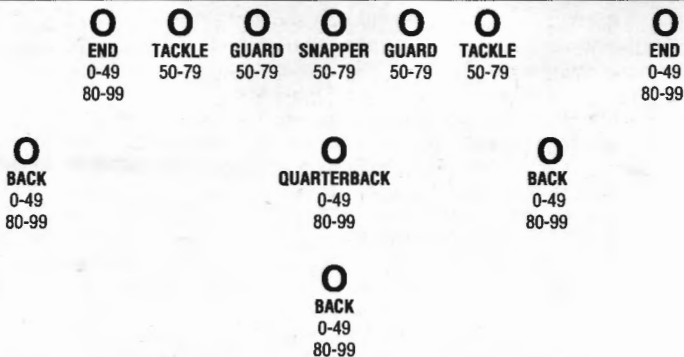


Figure 1-4-2
Recommended Numbering of Offensive Team Players

SECTION 5 PLAYER EQUIPMENT

The NFHS does not perform scientific tests on any specific items of equipment to determine if the equipment poses undue risks to student-athletes, coaches, officials or spectators. Such determinations are the responsibility of equipment manufacturers. For additional information on Equipment Guidelines, see Appendix C.

NOTE: As mentioned in Section 5, under Player Equipment, NOCSAE refers to the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment and SFIA refers to the Sports and Fitness Industry Association.

ART. 1 . . . Mandatory equipment. Each player shall participate while wearing the following pieces of properly fitted equipment, which shall be professionally manufactured and not altered to decrease protection:

a. **Helmet and Face Mask:**

1. A helmet and face mask which met the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. The face mask shall have a surface covered with resilient material designed to prevent chipping, burrs or abrasiveness and be properly secured to the helmet as designed by the manufacturer.
2. The helmet shall be secured by a properly fastened chin strap with at least four attachment points.

NOTE: All players shall wear helmets that carry a warning label regarding the risk of injury and a manufacturer's or reconitioner's certification indicating satisfaction of NOCSAE standards. All such reconitioned helmets shall show recertifi-

cation to indicate satisfaction with the NOCSAE standard. The coach's pregame verification to the referee and another game official that all players are legally equipped and in compliance with the rules includes the exterior warning label.

b. Jersey:

1. A jersey, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, and which shall be long enough to reach the top of the pants and shall be tucked in if longer. It must completely cover the shoulder pads and all pads worn above the waist on the torso.
2. Players of the visiting team shall wear jerseys, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, that meet the following criteria: The body of the jersey (inside the shoulders, inclusive of the yoke of the jersey or the shoulders, below the collar, and to the bottom of the jersey) shall be white and shall contain only the listed allowable adornments and accessory patterns in a color(s) that contrasts to white:
 - (a) as the jersey number(s) required in 1-5-1c or as the school's nickname, school logo, school name and/or player name within the body and/or on the shoulders,
 - (b) either as a decorative stripe placed during production that follows the curve of the raglan sleeve or following the shoulder seam in traditional yoke construction, not to exceed 1 inch at any point within the body of the jersey; or as decorative stripe(s) added in the shoulder area after production, not to exceed 1 inch per stripe and total size of combined stripes not to exceed 3.5 inches,
 - (c) within the collar, a maximum of 1 inch in width, and/or
 - (d) as a side seam (insert connecting the back of the jersey to the front), a maximum of 4 inches in width but any non-white color may not appear within the body of the jersey (inside the shoulders, inclusive of the yoke of the jersey or the shoulders, below the collar, and to the bottom of the jersey). The exception to (d) would be what is stated in (b) above.
 - (e) The visiting team is responsible for avoidance of similarity of colors, but if there is doubt, the referee may require players of the home team to change jerseys.

NOTE: One American flag, not to exceed 2 inches by 3 inches, may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel. By state association adoption, to allow for special occasions, commemorative or memorial patches, not to exceed 4 square inches, may be worn on the uniform without compromising its integrity.

3. Players of the home team shall wear jerseys, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, that meet the following criteria: The body of the jersey (inside the shoulders, inclusive of the yoke of the jersey or the shoulders, below the collar, and to the bottom of the jersey) may not include white, except as stated below. The jerseys of the home team shall be a dark color that clearly contrasts to white. If white appears in the body of the jersey of the home team, it may only appear:

- (a) as the jersey number(s) required in 1-5-1c or as the school's nickname, school logo, school name and/or player name within the body and/or on the shoulders,
- (b) either as a decorative stripe placed during production that follows the curve of the raglan sleeve or following the shoulder seam in traditional yoke construction, not to exceed 1 inch at any point within the body of the jersey; or as decorative stripe(s) added in the shoulder area after production, not to exceed 1 inch per stripe and total size of combined stripes not to exceed 3.5 inches,
- (c) within the collar, a maximum of 1 inch in width, and/or
- (d) as a side seam (insert connecting the back of the jersey to the front), a maximum of 4 inches in width but any white color may not appear within the body of the jersey (inside the shoulders, inclusive of the yoke of the jersey or the shoulders, below the collar, and to the bottom of the jersey). The exception to (d) would be what is stated in (b) above.
- (e) The visiting team is responsible for avoidance of similarity of colors, but if there is doubt, the referee may require players of the home team to change jerseys.

NOTE: One American flag, not to exceed 2 inches by 3 inches, may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel. By state association adoption, to allow for special occasions, commemorative or memorial patches, not to exceed 4 square inches, may be worn on the uniform without compromising its integrity.

c. Numbers

- 1. The numbers shall be clearly visible and legible using Arabic numbers 0-99 inclusive and shall be on the front and back of the jersey.
- 2. The numbers, inclusive of any border(s), shall be centered horizontally at least 8 inches and 10 inches high on front and back, respectively.
- 3. The entire body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) exclusive of any border(s) shall be approximately 1½-inches wide.
- 4. The color and style of the number shall be the same on the front and back.
- 5. Through the 2023 season, the body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) shall be either:
 - (a) a continuous color(s) contrasting with the jersey color; or
 - (b) the same solid color(s) as the jersey with a minimum of one border that is at least ¼-inch in width of a single solid contrasting color.
- 6. Effective with the 2024 season, the entire body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) shall be a single solid color that clearly contrasts with the body color of the jersey.

d. Pads and Protective Equipment – The following pads and protective equipment are required of all players:

- 1. Hip pads and tailbone protector which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production.
- 2. Knee pads which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/

- production, which are worn over the knee and under the pants and shall be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick or $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick if made of shock absorbing material.
3. Shoulder pads and hard surface auxiliary attachments, which shall be fully covered by a jersey.
 4. Thigh guards which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production.
 5. (a) A tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) which shall:
 - (1) include an occlusal (protecting and separating the biting surfaces) portion;
 - (2) include a labial (protecting the teeth and supporting structures) portion; and
 - (3) cover the posterior teeth with adequate thickness.(b) It is recommended that the protector be properly fitted, protecting the anterior (leading) dental arch and:
 - (1) constructed from a model made from an impression of the individual's teeth; or
 - (2) constructed and fitted to the individual by impressing the teeth into the tooth and mouth protector itself.
 - e. Pants which completely cover the knees, thigh guards and knee pads and any portion of any knee brace that does not extend below the pants.
 - f. Shoes which shall be made of a material which covers the foot (canvas, leather or synthetic) and attached to a firm sole of leather, rubber or composition material. Shoes may have cleats or may be cleatless. Among the items which do not meet these requirements are gymnastic slippers, tennis shoes cut so protection is reduced, ski and logger boots and other apparel not intended for football use:
 1. Removable cleats shall conform to the following specifications:
 - (a) Constructed of a material which does not chip or develop a cutting edge.
 - (b) Legal cleat material includes leather, nylon, rubber and non metallic polymers that will not chip or develop a cutting edge while functioning as a cleat. Cleats may be tipped with a steel material hardened to a Rockwell hardness approximately C55 to a depth of .005-.008 while minimizing the risk of brittle failure of the tip component, in its entirety, including any shafts or threads that may be a part of the tip.
 - (c) The base and the tip of the cleat shall be parallel.
 - (d) The free end of the cleat may be rounded in an arc with a radius of not less than $\frac{7}{16}$ inch provided the overall length is not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch measured from the tip of the cleat to the sole of the shoe.
 - (e) The cleat may be attached to a raised platform which is molded to the shoe. The platform may be no more than $\frac{5}{32}$ inch in height and must be wider than the base of the cleat. The widest part of the cleat must be in direct contact with the platform. The $\frac{5}{32}$ -inch raised platform must be wider than the base of the cleat and must extend across the width of the sole to within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or less of the outer edges of the sole.

- (f) A single toe cleat does not require a raised platform that extends across the width of the sole. The raised platform of the toe cleat is limited to $\frac{5}{32}$ inch or less.
 - (g) The $\frac{5}{32}$ -inch platform is measured from the lowest point of the platform to the sole of the shoe.
 - (h) An effective locking device which prevents the exposure of metal posts shall be incorporated.
 - (i) The cleat wall shall be at least $\frac{3}{16}$ inch in diameter.
 - (j) The sides of the cleat shall taper uniformly from a minimum base of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter to a minimum tip of $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter.
2. Nonremovable cleats are limited to studs or projections that do not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length measured from the sole of the shoe to the tip of the cleat and which are made with nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material that does not have or develop a cutting edge.

ART. 2 . . . The following auxiliary equipment may be worn if sanctioned by the umpire as being soft, nonabrasive, nonhardening material:

- a. Forearm pads, which may be anchored on each end with athletic tape.
- b. Gloves, which may be anchored with athletic tape, and even though modified, must meet the NOCSAE standard or the SFIA specification at the time of manufacture, unless made of unaltered plain cloth. Gloves, unless made of unaltered plain cloth, must have a permanent, exact replica of the NOCSAE glove seal (Meets NOCSAE Standard) or SFIA glove seal (Meets SFIA Specification), that must be visible and appear legibly on the exterior wrist opening of the glove.

NOTES:

- 1. A glove is a covering for the hand having separate sections for each finger. Pads worn on the hand, but not having separate sections encircling at least part of any finger are not gloves. The thumb is not considered a finger.
 - 2. Non-athletic gloves, worn solely for warmth and made of unaltered plain cloth, and which do not enhance contact with the ball, do not require a label or stamp indicating compliance.
- c. Tape, bandage or support wrap on the hand or forearm to protect an existing injury.

EXCEPTION: Tape, bandage or support wrap(s) not to exceed three thicknesses are legal without inspection or approval.

ART. 3 . . . Illegal equipment. No player shall participate while wearing illegal equipment. This applies to any equipment, which in the opinion of the umpire is dangerous, confusing or inappropriate. Illegal equipment shall always include but is not limited to:

- a. The following items related to the Game Uniform:
 - 1. Jerseys and pants that have:
 - (a) A visible manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference exceeding $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches and exceeding $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in any dimension.
 - (b) More than one manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference on the outside of either item. (The same size restriction shall apply to either the manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference).

- (c) Sizing, garment care or other nonlogo labels on the outside of either item.
- Slippery or sticky substance of a foreign nature on equipment, towel, uniform, opponent or on an exposed part of the body which affects the ball or an opponent.
 - Tear-away jerseys or jerseys that have been altered in any manner that produces a knot-like protrusion or creates a tear-away jersey.
 - Any transverse stripe on the sleeve below the elbow.
 - Uniform adornments, with the exception of:
 - One moisture-absorbing solid-colored towel that:
 - is not ball- or penalty flag-colored;
 - is no less than 4 inches in width and 12 inches in length;
 - is no greater than 18 inches in width and 36 inches in length;
 - has no more than one visible manufacturer's logo/trademark reference that does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches and does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in any dimension; and
 - has no more than one school logo/trademark reference that does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches and does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in any dimension.
 - Moisture-absorbing sweatbands, when worn on the wrist beginning at the base of the thumb and extending no more than 3 inches toward the elbow.
- b. The following items related to Pads and Padding:
- Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, or upper arm unless padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick.
 - Knee and ankle braces which are altered from the manufacturer's original design/production.
NOTE: Knee and ankle braces that are unaltered do not require any additional padding.
 - Knee braces worn over the pants.
 - Plastic material covering protective pads whose edges are not rounded with a radius equal to half the thickness of the plastic.
 - Rib pads and back protectors unless fully covered by a jersey.
 - Shin guards that do not meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.
- c. The following Other Illegal Equipment:
- Ball-colored helmets, jerseys, patches, exterior arm covers/pads, undershirts or gloves.
 - Electronic communication devices used to communicate with a player except during an outside 9-yard mark conference (7-yard marks in nine-, eight- and six-player competition), including electronic signage to signal plays or information from the sideline.
 - Eye shade (grease or no-glare strips or stickers) that is not a solid stroke or includes words, numbers, logos or other symbols within the eye shade.

4. Eyeshield attached to the helmet that is not:
 - (a) Constructed of a molded rigid material; or
 - (b) Clear without the presence of any tint.

NOTE: Tinted eyewear worn on the face and under the face mask is legal.
5. Jerseys, undershirts or exterior arm covers/pads manufactured to enhance contact with the football or opponent.
6. Jewelry. Religious and medical alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.
7. Metal which is projecting or other hard substance on clothes or person.
8. Play cards not worn on the wrist or arm.
9. Equipment not worn as intended by the manufacturer.

ART. 4 . . . Prior to the start of the game, the head coach shall be responsible for verifying to the referee and another game official that all of his players are legally equipped in compliance with these rules and will use no illegal equipment. Any questions regarding legality of a player's equipment or the presence of required equipment shall be resolved by the umpire.

ART. 5 . . . When any required player equipment is missing or worn improperly, an official's time-out shall be declared. If the missing or improperly worn equipment is detected during the down or subsequent dead-ball action related to the down without being directly attributable to a foul by an opponent or if a player is wearing otherwise legal equipment in an illegal manner, the player shall be replaced for at least one down, unless halftime intermission or an overtime intermission occurs. If proper and legal equipment has become improperly worn through use but prompt repair is possible and does not delay the ready-for-play for more than 25 seconds, such repair may be made without replacing the player for at least one down. (3-5-2b, 3-5-5b, 3-5-7e, 3-5-10d, 3-5-10e)

ART. 6 . . . Each player shall properly wear the mandatory equipment while the ball is live.

SECTION 6 COACHES FIELD EQUIPMENT

ART. 1 . . . Electronic communication devices including but not limited to audio recorder, Local Area Network (LAN) phones and/or headsets, mobile phones, still photograph(s), film, analog or digital video(s) and/or Internet depictions, shall not be used to communicate with a player except during an outside 9-yard mark conference (7-yard marks in nine-, eight- and six-player competition).

NOTE: Each state association may authorize the use of a drum by a team composed of deaf or partially deaf players, in order to establish a rhythmic cadence following the ready-for-play.

ART. 2 . . . Electronic communication devices including but not limited to audio recorder, Local Area Network (LAN) phones and/or headsets, mobile phones, still photograph(s), film, analog or digital video(s) and/or Internet depictions may be used by coaches and nonplayers.

SECTION 7 STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS

TABLE 1-7
TABLE OF STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS

1. Determine the number of game officials to be used in the game. (1-1-4 NOTE)	9. Establish a procedure to resolve games tied following the fourth period. (3-1-1 NOTE)
2. Determine the time for game officials to assume authority if greater than 30 minutes. (1-1-7)	10. Establish a point differential to terminate games or to use a running game clock when the point differential is reached. (3-1-2)
3. Approve an extension of the team box if the same for both teams. (1-2-3g NOTE 3)	11. Establish rules regarding continuation of interrupted games. (3-1-4)
4. Mandate the use of a specific ball for postseason or playoff competition. (1-3-2 NOTE)	12. Determine the length of halftime intermission. (3-1-6)
5. Authorize the use of supplementary equipment to aid in game administration. (1-3-7)	13. Determine when the coin toss is to be held. (3-2-1)
6. Authorize the use of instant replay during state postseason games. (1-3-7 NOTE)	14. Authorize the use of TV/radio time-out (3-5-7k)
7. Authorize the wearing of a commemorative/memorial patch. (1-5-1b, 2-3 NOTE)	15. Designate the 11-player field dimensions as official for nine-, eight- or six-player competition. (Football Field Diagrams)
8. Authorize the use of a drum for rhythmic cadence for deaf or partially deaf teams. (1-6-1 NOTE)	16. Determine the dimensions of the field for nine-, eight- and six-player competition. (Football Field Diagrams)

SECTION 8 STATE ASSOCIATION ACCOMMODATIONS

Each state association may, in keeping with applicable laws, authorize exceptions to NFHS playing rules to provide reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances. The accommodations should not fundamentally alter the sport, heighten risk to the athlete/others or place opponents at a disadvantage.

Rule **2** Definitions of Playing Terms

SECTION 1 STATUS OF BALL — DEAD, LIVE, LOOSE

ART. 1 . . . A dead ball is a ball not in play. The ball is dead during the interval between downs.

ART. 2 . . . A live ball is a ball in play. A ball becomes live when the ball has been legally snapped or free kicked and a down is in progress.

ART. 3 . . . A loose ball is a pass, fumble or a kick. The terms "pass," "fumble" and "kick" are sometimes used as abbreviations when the ball is loose following the acts of passing, fumbling or kicking the ball. A loose ball which has not yet touched the ground is in flight. A grounded loose ball is one which has touched the ground. Any loose ball continues to be a loose ball until a player secures possession of it or until it becomes dead by rule, whichever comes first.

SECTION 2 BATTING

Batting is intentionally slapping or striking the ball with the arm or hand.

SECTION 3 BLOCKING

ART. 1 . . . Blocking is obstructing an opponent by contacting him with any part of the blocker's body.

ART. 2 . . . In blocking, a player may contact opponents with the arms or hands provided the technique is legal. The legal techniques are as follows:

- a. Closed or cupped hand technique:
 1. The elbows may be inside or outside the shoulders.
 2. The hands must be closed or cupped with the palms not facing the opponent.
 3. The forearms are extended no more than 45 degrees from the body.
- b. Open hand technique. The hand(s) shall be:
 1. In advance of the elbow.
 2. Inside the frame of the blocker's body; the frame of the blocker's body is the front of the body at or below the shoulders.
 3. Inside the frame of the opponent's body, except when the opponent turns his back to the blocker during the block or after the blocker is committed to his charge. The frame of the opponent's body is at the shoulders or below other than the back.
 4. At or below the shoulders of the blocker and the opponent, except when the opponent squats, ducks or submarines during the block or after the blocker is committed to his charge.
 5. Open, when the palm(s) are facing the frame of the opponent or when the forearms are extended beyond the 45 degree angle from the body.

ART. 3 . . . The blocker's hand(s) may not be locked nor may he swing, throw or flip the elbow or forearm so that it is moving faster than the blocker's shoulders

at the time the elbow, forearm or shoulder contacts the opponent. The blocker may not initiate contact with his arm or hand against an opponent above the opponent's shoulder, but he may use his hand or arm to break a fall or maintain his balance.

ART. 4 . . . An offensive player may also use his hands or arms:

- When he is a runner, to ward off or push any player.
- During a kick, to ward off an opponent who is attempting to block him.
- To push, pull or ward off an opponent when the ball is loose if he may legally touch or possess the ball if such contact is not pass interference, a personal foul or illegal use of hands.

ART. 5 . . . A defensive player may also:

- Use unlocked hands, hand or arm to ward off an opponent who is blocking him or is attempting to block him.
- Push, pull or ward off an opponent in an actual attempt to get at the runner or a loose ball if such contact is not pass interference, a personal foul or illegal use of hands.

NOTE: When a player simulates possession of the ball, reasonable allowance may be made for failure of the defense to discover the deception. This does not cancel the responsibility of any defensive player to exercise reasonable caution in avoiding any unnecessary contact.

ART. 6 . . . When a player on defense uses a hand or arm, the hand must be in advance of the elbow at the time of the contact and at the shoulder or below unless the opponent squats, ducks or submarines.

ART. 7 . . . Blocking below the waist is making initial contact below the waist from the front or side against an opponent other than a runner. Contact with an opponent's hand(s) below the waist that continues into the body below the waist is considered blocking below the waist. Blocking below the waist applies only when the opponent has one or both feet on the ground.

ART. 8 . . . Chop block is a combination block by two or more teammates against an opponent other than the runner, with or without delay, where one of the blocks is below the waist and one of the blocks is above the waist.

ART. 9 . . . Interlocked blocking occurs when one player grasps or encircles a teammate just prior to or while blocking an opponent.

ART. 10 . . . A blindside block is a block against an opponent other than the runner, who does not see the blocker approaching.

SECTION 4 CATCH

ART. 1 . . . A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball which is in flight, and first contacting the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball or having the forward progress of the player in possession stopped while the opponent is carrying the player who is in possession and inbounds.

ART. 2 . . . Catching is always preceded by touching the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance.

ART. 3 . . . A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch or recovery in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds.

SECTION 5 CLIPPING/BLOCKING IN THE BACK

ART. 1 . . . Clipping is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is from behind, at or below the waist, and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner.

ART. 2 . . . Blocking in the back is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is in the opponent's back, inside the shoulders and below the helmet and above the waist, and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner.

SECTION 6 CONFERENCES

ART. 1 . . . Coach-Referee Conference – The referee confers with the coach at the sideline in front of his team box in the field of play.

ART. 2 . . . Authorized Team Conference – There are two types of authorized team conferences:

- a. Outside 9-Yard Mark Conference – One or more team members and one or more coaches directly in front of the team box within 9 yards of the sideline; or
- b. Between 9-Yard Mark Conference – One coach on the field to confer with no more than 11 players at his team's huddle between the 9-yard marks.

SECTION 7 DOWN — LOSS OF DOWN

ART. 1 . . . A down is action which starts with a legal snap (beginning a scrimmage down) or when the ball is kicked on a free kick (beginning a free-kick down). A down ends when the ball next becomes dead.

ART. 2 . . . Loss of a down is the loss of the right to replay a down.

SECTION 8 ENCROACHMENT

Encroachment occurs when a player is illegally in the neutral zone during the time interval starting at the ready-for-play and until the ball is snapped or free kicked as in 6-1-3a or 6-1-3b. For the purposes of enforcing encroachment restrictions, an entering substitute is not considered to be a player until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone. Encroachment also occurs when a player violates the free kick restrictions as in 6-1-4.

SECTION 9 FAIR CATCH

ART. 1 . . . A fair catch is a catch by a receiver of a free kick in or beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, or of a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, after a valid signal, under conditions in which the receiver forfeits the right to advance the ball in return for protection from being blocked or tackled by an opponent.

ART. 2 . . . An awarded fair catch occurs when the offended team chooses to take the ball after enforcement of a foul for kick-catching interference.

ART. 3 . . . A valid fair-catch signal is the extending and lateral waving of one arm, at full arm's length above the head, by any R player.

ART. 4 . . . An invalid fair-catch signal is any signal by a receiver before the kick is caught or recovered:

- That does not meet the requirements of a valid signal.
- After the kick has touched a receiver.
- After the kick has touched the ground.

ART. 5 . . . An illegal fair-catch signal is any signal by a runner:

- After the kick has been caught.
- After the kick has been recovered.

SECTION 10 FIELD AREAS

ART. 1 . . . The field is the area within the boundary lines.

ART. 2 . . . The field of play is the area within sidelines and the goal lines.

ART. 3 . . . The side zones are the areas bounded by the sidelines, the hash marks and the goal lines.

ART. 4 . . . The end zones are 10 yards in depth and are located at each end of the field between the goal line and the end line. The goal line is in the end zone and a team's end zone is the one it is defending.

SECTION 11 FIGHTING

Fighting is any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage a player or nonplayer in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.

SECTION 12 FIRST TOUCHING

ART. 1 . . . During a free kick it is first touching if the ball is touched in the field of play by any K player before it crosses R's free-kick line and before it is touched there by any R player.

ART. 2 . . . During a scrimmage kick it is first touching if the ball is touched by any K player in the field of play and beyond the expanded neutral zone before it is touched there by R and before the ball has come to rest.

SECTION 13 FORCE

ART. 1 . . . Force is the result of energy exerted by a player which provides movement of the ball. The term force is used only in connection with the goal line and in only one direction, i.e., from the field of play into the end zone. Initial force results from a carry, fumble, kick, pass or snap. After a fumble, kick or backward pass has been grounded, a new force may result from a bat, an illegal kick or a muff.

ART. 2 . . . Responsibility for forcing the ball from the field of play across a goal line is attributed to the player who carries, snaps, passes, fumbles or kicks the ball, unless a new force is applied to either a kick, fumble or backward pass that has been grounded.

ART. 3 . . . The muffing or batting of a pass, kick or fumble in flight is not considered a new force.

ART. 4 . . . Force is not a factor:

- On kicks going into R's end zone, since these kicks are always a touchback regardless of who supplied the force.
- When a backward pass or fumble is declared dead in the end zone of the opponent of the player who passed or fumbled, with no player possession.

SECTION 14 FORMATIONS

ART. 1 . . . A scrimmage formation requires a minimum of five A players legally on their line at the snap.

ART. 2 . . . A scrimmage kick formation is one in which no player is in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs, and at the snap, either:

- A player is in position with a knee on the ground 7 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage, in position to be the holder and receive the long snap and with another player 3 yards or less behind that player in position to attempt a place kick; or
- A player is 10 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage and in position to receive the long snap.

ART. 3 . . . A free-kick formation is a formation used for a free-kick down. Following the ready-for-play for a free-kick down and until the ball is kicked:

- All R players must be behind their free-kick line.
- All K players, other than the kicker and holder, must be behind their free-kick line.

SECTION 15 FORWARD PROGRESS

ART. 1 . . . Forward progress is the end of advancement of the ball, toward the opponent's goal, in a runner's possession or the forward-most point of the ball when it is fumbled out of bounds and it determines the dead-ball spot.

ART. 2 . . . When an airborne player makes a catch, forward progress is the furthest point of advancement after he possesses the ball if contacted by a defender.

SECTION 16 FOULS AND PENALTIES

ART. 1 . . . A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.

ART. 2 . . . Types of fouls are:

- Dead ball – a foul which occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before the ball is next snapped or free kicked.
- Double – one or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed by each team at such a time that the penalties offset.
- Flagrant – a foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury, and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.
- Live ball – a foul which occurs during a down.
- Multiple – two or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team at such a time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.

- f. Nonplayer or unsportsmanlike – a noncontact (other than unintentional contact as specified in 9-4-8) foul while the ball is dead or during the down which is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.
- g. Player – a foul (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) by a player in the game hereafter referred to as a foul.
- h. Post-scrimmage kick – a foul by R (other than an illegal substitution or illegal participation foul that occurs at the snap) when the foul occurs:
 - 1. During scrimmage kick plays, other than a try or successful field goal.
 - 2. During a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the expanded neutral zone.
 - 3. Beyond the expanded neutral zone.
 - 4. Before the end of a kick.
 - 5. And K will not be next to put the ball in play.
- i. Simultaneous with the snap – an act which becomes a foul when the ball is snapped or free kicked.

ART. 3 . . . No foul causes loss of the ball.

ART. 4 . . . No foul causes a live ball to become dead.

ART. 5 . . . A penalty is a result imposed by rule against a team or team member that has committed a foul.

ART. 6 . . . Game situations which produce results somewhat similar to penalties, but which are not classified as fouls are: disqualification of a player, first touching of a kick by K and forfeiture of a game.

SECTION 17 FREE-BLOCKING ZONE — LEGAL BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST AND LEGAL BLOCK IN THE BACK

ART. 1 . . . The free-blocking zone is a rectangular area extending laterally 4 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage. A player is in the free-blocking zone when any part of his body is in the zone at the snap.

ART. 2 . . . Blocking below the waist is permitted in the free-blocking zone when the following conditions are met:

- a. All players involved in the blocking are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap.
- b. The contact is in the zone.
- c. The block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.

ART. 3 . . . Blocking in the back is permitted in the free-blocking zone when the following conditions are met:

- a. By offensive linemen who are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap.
- b. Against defensive players who are in the zone at the snap.
- c. The contact is in the zone.

ART. 4 . . . The free-blocking zone disintegrates and the exception for an offensive lineman to block in the back is not to continue after the ball has left the zone.

SECTION 18 FUMBLE

A fumble is any loss of player possession other than by handing, passing or legal kick.

SECTION 19 HANDING

ART. 1 . . . Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one player to a teammate in such a way that the ball is still in contact with the first player when it is touched by the teammate. Handing the ball is not a pass. Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of attempted handing is a fumble.

ART. 2 . . . Forward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when the entire ball is beyond the yard line where the runner is positioned.

ART. 3 . . . Backward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when any part of the ball is on or behind the yard line where the runner is positioned.

SECTION 20 HELMET CONTACT — ILLEGAL, TARGETING

ART. 1 . . . Illegal helmet contact is an act of initiating contact with the helmet against an opponent. There are several types of illegal helmet contact:

- Butt Blocking is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent who is not a runner with the front of his helmet.
- Face Tackling is an act by a defensive player who initiates contact against a runner with the front of his helmet.
- Spearing is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent at the shoulders or below with the crown (top portion) of his helmet.

ART. 2 . . . Targeting is an act by any player who takes aim and initiates contact against an opponent above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulders.

SECTION 21 HUDDLE

A huddle is two or more players of the same team grouped together before a down.

SECTION 22 HURDLING

Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump (hurdle) with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one or both feet.

SECTION 23 INTERCEPTION

An interception is the catch of an opponent's fumble or pass.

SECTION 24 KICKS

ART. 1 . . . A kick is the intentional striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot.

ART. 2 . . . A kick ends when a player gains possession or when the ball becomes dead while not in player possession.

ART. 3 . . . A free kick is any kick which puts the ball in play to start a free-kick down. After the ready-for-play and before the kick, each player other than the kicker and holder for a place kick must be behind his free-kick line. A free kick is used for a kickoff, for a kick following a safety, and is used if a free kick is chosen following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

ART. 4 . . . A scrimmage kick is any kick from in or behind the neutral zone during a scrimmage down. Either a place kick, punt, or drop kick may be used. For a place kick, the ball must be controlled on the ground or on a legal kicking tee by a teammate.

ART. 5 . . . A kickoff is a free kick which puts the ball in play at the beginning of each half of the game, after a successful field goal and after any try. A place kick or a drop kick shall be used for the kickoff.

ART. 6 . . . A drop kick is a legal kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it when it touches the ground or as it is rising from the ground. A drop kick may be used for a scrimmage kick, a kickoff, a free kick following a safety or for a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

ART. 7 . . . A place kick is a legal kick made while the ball is in a fixed position on the ground or on a kicking tee. No material or device may be placed on the ground to improve the kicker's footing. The ball also may be held in position on the ground or on a kicking tee by a place-kick holder who shall be a teammate of the kicker. A place kick may be used for a scrimmage kick, a kickoff, a free kick following a safety or for a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

ART. 8 . . . A punt is a legal kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it before it has touched the ground. A punt may be used for a free kick following a safety or for a scrimmage kick.

ART. 9 . . . An illegal kick is any intentional striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot which does not comply with Articles 3 and 4. When the ball is loose following an illegal kick, it retains the same status as prior to the illegal kick.

ART. 10 . . . A pop-up kick is a free kick in which the kicker drives the ball immediately into the ground, the ball strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of a ball kicked directly off the tee.

SECTION 25 LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

ART. 1 . . . The line of scrimmage for each team is a vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. It is determined at the ready-for-play and remains until the next ready-for-play.

ART. 2 . . . An offensive player is on his line of scrimmage when he complies with the position requirements of a lineman.

ART. 3 . . . A defensive player is on his line of scrimmage when he is within 1 yard of his scrimmage line at the snap.

SECTION 26 LINES

ART. 1 . . . The boundary lines are the end lines and sidelines and are out of bounds.

ART. 2 . . . The end line is the outer limit of each end zone.

ART. 3 . . . The goal line is the vertical plane which separates the field of play from the end zone. When related to a live ball in a runner's possession (touching inbounds) while the ball is over the out-of-bounds area, the goal line includes the extension beyond the sidelines. A team's own goal line is the one it is defending.

ART. 4 . . . The hash marks are a series of marks parallel with the sidelines which divide the field of play longitudinally into thirds. The hash marks shall be marked so that they are bisected by the yard lines.

ART. 5 . . . The line to gain is the yard line established when a new series (first down) is awarded. Unless there is a penalty following the ready-for-play, the line to gain is 10 yards in advance of the foremost point of the ball when placed for the first down of the series. If the line to gain extends into the end zone, the goal line is the line to gain.

ART. 6 . . . The sideline is the lateral limit of the field of play and the end zones. It extends from one end line to the other.

ART. 7 . . . A yard line is any line and its vertical plane parallel to the end lines. The yard lines, marked or unmarked, in the field of play are numbered in yards from a team's own goal line to the middle of the field.

ART. 8 . . . A restraining line is a line placed around the outside of the field. No person, including but not limited to, spectators, game administrators or members of the media, shall be allowed within the restraining line. A maximum of three coaches as well as permitted nonplayers are allowed within the restraining line in front of the team box, as provided for in Rule 9-8-3.

SECTION 27 MUFF

A muff is the touching of a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession.

SECTION 28 NEUTRAL ZONE

ART. 1 . . . The neutral zone is the space between the two free-kick lines during a free-kick down and between the two scrimmage lines during a scrimmage down. For a free-kick down, the neutral zone is 10 yards wide and for a scrimmage down it is as wide as the length of the football. It is established when the ball is ready for play.

ART. 2 . . . The neutral zone may be expanded following the snap up to a maximum of 2 yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage, inside the boundary lines, during any scrimmage down. If a scrimmage kick occurs, the neutral zone shall not be expanded into the end zone.

SECTION 29 OUT OF BOUNDS

ART. 1 . . . A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official that is on or outside the sideline or end line, ~~and that player remains out of bounds until returning to the field with any body part touching the field and no body part touching out of bounds.~~

ART. 2 . . . A ball in player possession is out of bounds when the runner or the ball touches anything, other than another player or game official that is on or outside a sideline or end line.

ART. 3 . . . A loose ball is out of bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official that is out of bounds.

SECTION 30 PARTICIPATION

Participation is any act or action by a player or nonplayer that has an influence on play.

SECTION 31 PASSING

ART. 1 . . . Passing the ball is throwing a ball that is in player possession. In a pass, the ball travels in flight.

ART. 2 . . . A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line.

NOTE: Prior to releasing the ball on a pass, if the potential passer is contacted, and the ball is released, it is a forward pass if his arm was moving forward on contact.

ART. 3 . . . A forward pass has gone beyond the neutral zone if at any time during the pass, the entire ball is beyond the neutral zone.

ART. 4 . . . A forward pass ends when it is caught, touches the ground or is out of bounds.

ART. 5 . . . A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the runner's end line.

ART. 6 . . . A backward pass ends when it is caught or recovered or is out of bounds.

SECTION 32 PLAYER DESIGNATIONS

ART. 1 . . . A player is one of the 22 team members who is designated to start either half of the game or who subsequently replaces another player. A player continues to be a player until a substitute enters the field and indicates to the player that he is replaced, or when the substitute otherwise becomes a player.

ART. 2 . . . A player of A is A1 and teammates are A2 and A3. Other abbreviations are B1 for a player of B, K1 for a player of the kickers and R1 for one of the receivers.

ART. 3 . . . A back is any A player who has no part of his body breaking the plane of an imaginary line drawn parallel to the line of scrimmage through the waist of the nearest teammate who is legally on the line, except for the player under the snapper, who is also considered a back.

ART. 4 . . . An offensive blocker is a player who is blocking or in position to block by being between the potential tackler and the runner.

ART. 5 . . . A captain of a team is a player designated to represent his team during:

- The pregame and overtime coin toss. (Limit of four captains in game uniform.)
- Penalty decisions following a foul (if designated by the head coach, as in 1-4-4).
- Ball placement on a try, a kickoff, after a safety, after a fair catch or awarded fair catch, after a touchback and to start an overtime.

ART. 6 . . . A disqualified player is a player barred from further participation in a game.

ART. 7 . . . A holder is a player who controls the ball on the ground or on a kicking tee.

ART. 8 . . . A kicker is any player who legally punts, drop kicks or place kicks. A player becomes a kicker when his knee, lower leg or foot makes contact with the ball. He continues to be the kicker until he has had reasonable opportunity to regain his balance or until after a free kick, he has advanced 5 yards beyond his free-kick line or the kick has touched the ground or any other player.

ART. 9 . . . A lineman is any A player who is facing his opponent's goal line with the line of his shoulders approximately parallel thereto and with his head or foot breaking an imaginary plane drawn parallel to the line of scrimmage through the waist of the snapper when the ball is snapped.

ART. 10 . . . A nonplayer is a coach, athletic trainer, other attendant, a substitute or a replaced player who does not participate by touching the ball, hindering an opponent or influencing the play. See 9-6 for illegal participation.

ART. 11 . . . A passer is a player who throws a legal forward pass. He continues to be a passer until the legal forward pass ends or until he moves to participate in the play.

ART. 12 . . . A replaced player is one who has been notified by a substitute that he is to leave the field. A player is also replaced when the entering substitute becomes a player.

ART. 13 . . . A runner is a player who is in possession of a live ball or is simulating possession of a live ball.

ART. 14 . . . A snapper is the player who is facing his opponent's goal line with his shoulders approximately parallel thereto and who snaps the ball. In a scrimmage-kick formation, the snapper remains a snapper until he has had a reasonable opportunity to regain his balance and protect himself or until he blocks or moves to otherwise participate in the play.

ART. 15 . . . A substitute is a team member who may replace a player or fill a player vacancy. A substitute becomes a player when he enters the field and communicates with a teammate or a game official, enters the huddle, is positioned in a formation or participates in the play. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone. A team member entering the field to fill a player vacancy remains a substitute until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone.

ART. 16 . . . A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury. A player who initiates contact against a defenseless player is responsible for making legal contact. When in question, a player is defenseless.

Examples of defenseless players include, but are not limited to:

- a. A passer;
- b. A receiver attempting to catch a pass who has not had time to clearly become a runner;
- c. The intended receiver of a pass in the action during and immediately following an interception or potential interception;
- d. A receiver in (b) and (c) above, including the person intercepting the pass, who is forcefully contacted by an opponent and that contact is not:
 1. Incidental contact as a result of making a play on the ball;
 2. Initiated with open hands; or
 3. An attempt to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver.
- e. A runner already in the grasp of a tackler and whose forward progress has been stopped;
- f. A kickoff or punt returner attempting to catch or recover a kick, or one who has completed a catch or recovery and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a runner;
- g. A player on the ground including a runner who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet-first;
- h. A player obviously out of the play or not in the immediate vicinity of the runner; and
- i. A player who receives a blindside block with forceful contact not initiated with open hands.

SECTION 33 PLAYS — FOR PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

ART. 1 . . . A loose-ball play is action during:

- a. A free kick or scrimmage kick other than post-scrimmage kick fouls.
- b. A legal forward pass.
- c. A backward pass (including the snap), an illegal kick or fumble made by A from in or behind the neutral zone prior to a change of team possession.
- d. The run or runs which precedes such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble.

ART. 2 . . . A running play is any action not included in Article 1, including the related run as in 2-41-9b.

SECTION 34 POSSESSION

ART. 1 . . . A ball in player possession is a live ball held or controlled by a player after it has been handed or snapped to him, or after he has caught or recovered it.

ART. 2 . . . A ball in team possession is a live ball which is in player possession or one which is loose following loss of such player possession. A live ball is always in the possession of a team.

ART. 3 . . . A change of possession occurs when the opponent gains player possession during the down.

SECTION 35 READY-FOR-PLAY

Ready-for-play signifies that the ball may be put in play by a snap or a free kick with 25 seconds or 40 seconds on the play clock.

SECTION 36 RECOVERY

ART. 1 . . . A recovery is gaining possession of a live ball after it strikes the ground. An airborne player has completed a recovery when he first contacts the ground inbounds with the ball in his possession.

ART. 2 . . . A simultaneous recovery is a recovery where there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing inbounds players.

SECTION 37 RULE

A rule is one of the groups of regulations which govern the game. A rule sometimes states what a player may do, but if there is no such statement for a given act (such as faking a kick), it is assumed that he may do what is not prohibited. In like manner, a rule sometimes states or implies that the ball is dead or that a foul is involved. If it does not, it is assumed that the ball is live and that no foul has occurred. If a foul is mentioned, it is assumed that it is not part of a double or multiple foul unless so stated or implied.

SECTION 38 SCRIMMAGE

Scrimmage is the action of the two teams during a down which begins with a legal snap.

SECTION 39 SHIFT

A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

SECTION 40 SNAP

ART. 1 . . . A snap is the legal act of passing or handing the ball backward from its position on the ground.

ART. 2 . . . The snap begins when the snapper first moves the ball legally other than in adjustment. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the ball during which the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches a back or the ground before it touches an A lineman.

ART. 3 . . . The snap ends when the ball touches the ground or any player.

SECTION 41 SPOTS

ART. 1 . . . The basic spot is a point of reference for penalty enforcement. (10-4)

ART. 2 . . . The enforcement spot is the point from which a penalty is enforced.

ART. 3 . . . The dead-ball spot is the spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule.

EXCEPTION: Rule 5-3-4.

ART. 4 . . . The inbounds spot is the intersection of the hash marks and the yard line:

- Through the foremost point of the ball when the ball becomes dead in a side zone.
- Through the foremost point of the ball on the sideline between the goal lines when a loose ball goes out of bounds.
- Through the spot under the foremost point of the ball in possession of a runner when he crosses the plane of the sideline and goes out of bounds.

NOTE: If a penalty measurement leaves the ball in a side zone, the new inbounds spot is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the ball after measurement.

ART. 5 . . . The out-of-bounds spot is where the ball becomes dead because of going out of bounds, as in 4-3-1, 4-3-2, 4-3-3.

ART. 6 . . . The post-scrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. R retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the post-scrimmage kick spot when a post-scrimmage foul occurs. Fouls by R behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

ART. 7 . . . The previous spot is where the ball was last snapped or free kicked.

ART. 8 . . . The spot of a foul is where the foul occurs. If a foul occurs out of bounds, the spot of the foul is at the intersection of the nearer hash mark and the yard line extended on which the foul occurs.

ART. 9 . . . The spot where a run ends is:

- Where the ball becomes dead in the runner's possession;
- Where the runner loses player possession if his run is followed by a loose ball, but the related run (related running play) continues until the ball becomes dead or any player gains possession; or
- The spot of the catch or recovery when the momentum rule is in effect.

ART. 10 . . . The succeeding spot is where the ball would next be snapped or free kicked if a foul had not occurred. When a foul occurs during a down in which a touchdown is scored, as in Rules 8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 and 8-2-5, the succeeding spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the subsequent kickoff.

SECTION 42 TACKLING

Tackling is the use of hands, arms, legs or body by a defensive player in his attempt to hold a runner or to bring him to the ground.

SECTION 43 TEAM DESIGNATIONS

ART. 1 . . . The offense is the team which is in possession of the ball. The opponent is the defense.

ART. 2 . . . A is the team which puts the ball in play. The opponent is B.

ART. 3 . . . K is the team which legally kicks the ball during the down. The opponent is R.

ART. 4 . . . Team designations (A and B, K and R) are retained until the ball is next ready for play.

SECTION 44 TOUCHING

Touching refers to any contact with the ball, i.e., either by touching or being touched by it. Touching by a game official in the field of play or end zone is ignored.

SECTION 45 TRIPPING

Tripping is the intentional use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knee.

Rule 3 **Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions**

SECTION 1 LENGTH OF PERIODS – HALFTIME INTERMISSION

ART. 1 . . . The clock running time for a game shall be 48 minutes for high schools with periods and intermissions as indicated in Table 3-1.

NOTE: By state association adoption, if, at the end of the fourth period, the teams have identical scores, the tie may be resolved if a method has been approved by the state high school association. This may include extending playing time. The overtime is considered part of the fourth period. An example of an overtime procedure is located in a supplementary section following the rules.

ART. 2 . . . By state association adoption, a point differential may be established whereby if one team has gained the established point differential, the game shall be terminated. A state association may also establish guidelines to use a running game clock when the point differential is reached.

ART. 3 . . . A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, any remaining period may be shortened at any time or the game terminated.

ART. 4 . . . Games interrupted because of events beyond the control of the responsible administrative authority shall be continued from the point of interruption, unless the teams agree to terminate the game with the existing score, or as otherwise provided for by state association adoption.

ART. 5 . . . When weather conditions are construed to be hazardous to life or limb of the participants, the crew of game officials is authorized to delay or suspend the game.

ART. 6 . . . State high school associations may determine the length of halftime intermission, provided it is not less than 10 minutes and not more than 20 minutes.

- a. 15 minutes is normal for halftime intermission.
- b. Halftime intermission may be increased to a maximum of 20 minutes, provided opponents have been notified no later than five minutes prior to the game.
- c. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches, the halftime intermission may be reduced to a minimum of 10 minutes (not including the mandatory warm-up period).

EXCEPTION: If the game is interrupted due to weather during the last three minutes of the second period, and the delay is at least 30 minutes, the opposing coaches can mutually agree to shorten halftime intermission, provided there is at least a one-minute intermission (not including the three-minute warm-up period).

ART. 7 . . . The game officials are responsible for ensuring that there is a three-minute warm-up period posted on the game clock and the game clock immediately started for use by the coaches immediately after the halftime intermission expires. The head coach is responsible for his team being on the field for mandatory warm-up time at the end of the scheduled halftime intermission.

TABLE 3-1
TABLE OF GAME CLOCK TIMES

PERIOD OF TIMING	CLOCK TIME
First Half:	
First period	12 minutes
Intermission between periods	1 minute
Second period	12 minutes
Halftime Intermission:	
When teams leave the field	10 to 20 minutes
Mandatory Warm-up Period:	
Following halftime intermission	3 minutes
Second Half:	
Third period	12 minutes
Intermission between periods	1 minute
Fourth period	12 minutes
Charged Time-outs	1 minute

SECTION 2 STARTING A PERIOD — HALF

ART. 1 . . . Each half of the game shall be started by a kickoff. Before the scheduled game starting time, the referee, in the presence of the field captains, shall instruct the visiting captain to give a "heads" or "tails" choice before the coin toss. If the coin toss, or simulated coin toss, is held on the playing field, it shall be held three minutes prior to the scheduled game starting time, or as otherwise specified by individual state associations.

ART. 2 . . . At the coin toss or simulated coin toss conducted three minutes prior to the scheduled starting time on the field of play as in 3-2-1, not more than four team members in game uniform (captains) from each team may be present at the coin toss and only one from each team shall be designated as its spokesperson. All other team members in game uniform must remain outside the field of play.

ART. 3 . . . The winner of the toss shall have first choice of options for the first half or to defer and have first choice for the second half. The loser shall have the first choice of options for the half the winner of the toss did not select. The options for each half shall be:

- a. To choose whether his team will kick or receive.
- b. To choose the goal his team will defend.

The team not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option.

ART. 4 . . . Between the first and second and between the third and fourth periods, the teams shall change goals. Team possession, number of the next down, the relative position of the ball and the line to gain remain unchanged.

SECTION 3 ENDING A PERIOD — HALF

ART. 1 . . . Approximately four minutes before the end of each half, the referee shall notify the field captains and their coaches of the time remaining. If time is not out, the referee shall order the game clock stopped while he does this. If an electric field clock is the official timepiece, no notification nor stoppage of the game clock is required.

ART. 2 . . . If time for any period expires during a down (clock indicates 0:00), play shall continue until the down ends, even if a mechanical signal is allowed to sound.

ART. 3 . . . A period shall be extended by an untimed down if one of the following occurred during a down in which time expires:

- a. There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted, except for those fouls listed in 3-3-4b.
- b. There was a double foul.
- c. There was an inadvertent whistle.
- d. If a touchdown was scored, the try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

If (a), (b), (c) or (d) occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated.

ART. 4 . . . A period shall not be extended by an untimed down if one of the following occurred during a down in which time expires:

- a. When the defense fouls during a successful try/field goal and the offended team accepts the results of the play with enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.
- b. There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted for:
 1. unsportsmanlike fouls,
 2. nonplayer fouls,
 3. fouls that specify a loss of down,
 4. fouls that are enforced on the subsequent kickoff as in Rule 8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 or 8-2-5; or
 5. fouls for which enforcement, by rule, result in a safety.

NOTE: The score is canceled in the event of an accepted penalty that specifies a loss of down.

ART. 5 . . . At the end of each period the referee shall hold the ball in one hand overhead to indicate the period has officially ended, after delaying momentarily to ensure that:

- a. No foul has occurred.
- b. No obvious timing error has occurred.
- c. No request for a coach-referee conference has occurred.
- d. No other irregularity has occurred.

ART. 6 . . . If a dead-ball foul occurs after time expires for any period, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot unless 8-2-5 applies.

SECTION 4 STARTING AND STOPPING THE GAME CLOCK

ART. 1 . . . The game clock shall start for a period:

- a. If a period begins with a free kick when the kick is touched, other than first touching by K.
- b. If a period begins with a snap, when the ball is legally snapped.

ART. 2 . . . The game clock shall start with the ready-for-play on a down beginning with a snap if the game clock was stopped for any reason other than specified in Rule 3-4-3 or an untimed down:

- a. For an official's time-out, other than when B is awarded a new series or either team is awarded a new series following a legal kick.
- b. Because the ball has become dead following any foul provided:
 1. There has been no charged time-out during the dead-ball interval.
 2. The down is not an extension of a period or a try.
 3. The action which caused the down to end did not also cause the game clock to be stopped.
- c. Because of an inadvertent whistle, unless B or R is in possession at the time of the inadvertent whistle during a running play and chooses to accept the result of the play.

ART. 3 . . . The game clock shall start with the snap or when any free kick is touched, other than first touching by K, if the game clock was stopped because:

- a. The ball goes out of bounds.
- b. B or R is awarded a new series.
- c. Either team is awarded a new series following a legal kick.
- d. The ball becomes dead behind the goal line.
- e. A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete.
- f. A request for a charged or TV/radio time-out is granted.
- g. A period ends.
- h. A team attempts to consume time illegally.
- i. The penalty for a delay of game foul is accepted.
- j. A fair catch is made.

ART. 4 . . . The game clock shall be stopped when:

- a. The down ends following a foul.
- b. An official's time-out is taken.
- c. A charged or TV/radio time-out is granted.
- d. The period ends.
- e. The ball is out of bounds.
- f. A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete.
- g. A score or touchback occurs.
- h. A fair catch is made.
- i. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.
- j. An airborne receiver is carried out of bounds, unless the receiver is carried backwards and his forward progress was stopped inbounds.

ART. 5 . . . The game clock shall not start on first touching by K.

ART. 6 . . . When a team attempts to conserve or consume time illegally, the referee shall order the game or play clock started or stopped.

ART. 7 . . . When a foul is committed with less than two minutes remaining in either half, the offended team will have the option to start the game clock on the snap.

ART. 8 . . . The referee shall have the authority to correct obvious errors in timing by the game clock if discovery is prior to the second live ball following the error, unless the period has officially ended as in 3-3-5.

ART. 9 . . . The referee shall have the authority to correct obvious errors in timing by the play clock if discovery is prior to the snap.

SECTION 5 CHARGED AND OFFICIAL'S TIME-OUTS — INTERMISSIONS

ART. 1 . . . Each team is entitled to three charged team time-outs during each half. Unused first half time-outs cannot be used in the second half. Unused second half time-outs cannot be used in overtime.

ART. 2 . . . A charged team time-out occurs when the ball is dead and:

- a. The request of either a player or the head coach (or head coach's designee) is legally granted. When a decision on a penalty is pending, a time-out shall not be granted to either team until the designated representative makes his choice.

- b. The repair of faulty player equipment requires the assistance of a team attendant or attendants, or which, without the assistance of a team attendant delays the ready-for-play for more than 25 seconds other than as in 3-5-10d or 3-5-10e.
- c. A time-out is requested and granted for the purpose of reviewing a game official's application of a rule which may have been misapplied or misinterpreted. The time-out remains charged to the requesting team, if no change in the ruling results.

ART. 3 . . . A single charged time-out shall not exceed one minute. The referee shall notify the teams within five seconds after the time-out expires and shall mark the ball ready for play. Charged time-outs shall be reduced in length only if both teams are ready to play prior to the ready-for-play by the referee.

ART. 4 . . . Successive charged time-outs may be granted during the same dead-ball period. An official's time-out may follow a charged time-out if it is for the continuance of a coach-referee conference, or if safety is involved. When a team's permissible charged time-outs for the half have been used, its captain and coach should be notified.

ART. 5 . . . After a team has used its permissible charged time-outs for the half, any subsequent request shall be denied unless it is for:

- a. An apparently injured player who is so designated when the request is made.
- b. Necessary repair to player equipment except as in 3-5-10d or 3-5-10e.
- c. The review of a possible misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule.

ART. 6 . . . If repair of equipment without the assistance of a team attendant delays the ready-for-play for more than 25 seconds, or requires the assistance of a team attendant(s) and the player's team has used all permissible time-outs, the player shall be replaced for at least one down.

ART. 7 . . . An official's time-out (which is not charged to either team) occurs during a dead ball:

- a. For measurement of a possible first down.
- b. When a first down is declared.
- c. Following a change of team possession.
- d. When captains and coaches are notified of the time remaining.
- e. For a player in need of equipment repair.
- f. To dry or change the ball.
- g. For unusual heat or humidity which may create a health risk to the players.
- h. When a coach-referee conference concerning the misapplication of a rule results in the referee altering his ruling. (3-5-11)
- i. After a foul, to administer the penalty.
- j. For any unusual delay in getting the ball ready for play.
- k. For a TV/radio time-out that is permitted and granted as authorized by state association policy.
- l. For a one-minute intermission between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety and prior to the succeeding free kick.

ART. 8 . . . Authorized conferences

- a. An authorized conference may be held during:
 1. a charged time-out;
 2. an official's time-out (3-5-7g, 3-5-7k and 3-5-7l); or
 3. if granted by the referee in 3-5-10.
- b. Only one type of authorized team conference may be used during:
 1. any charged time-out; or
 2. official's time-out (3-5-7g, 3-5-7k and 3-5-7l)
- c. Only an Outside 9-Yard Mark Conference may be held in 3-5-8a(3).

ART. 9 . . . Unless the game clock is already stopped, an official's time-out shall be taken as soon as the ball becomes dead following a change of team possession or whenever the covering official declares the ball dead, and it appears to the game official the ball has reached the line to gain.

ART. 10 . . . An official's time-out (which is not charged to either team) occurs, and the player shall be replaced for at least one down, unless halftime intermission or an overtime intermission occurs when:

- a. An apparently injured player is discovered by a game official while the ball is dead and the game clock is stopped and for whom the ready-for-play is delayed, or for whom the game or play clock is stopped.
- b. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports, in Appendix B.)
- c. A game official discovers any player who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person. The player shall be directed to leave the game until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to competition. (NFHS Communicable Disease Procedures, in Appendix D.)
- d. The helmet comes completely off during the down or subsequent dead-ball action related to the down without being directly attributable to a foul by an opponent.
- e. Any required player equipment is missing or improperly worn.

ART. 11 . . . A player, directed by his coach or the head coach, may request and be granted a time-out for the purpose of the coach and the referee reviewing a decision which may have resulted from misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule, provided the request is made prior to the time the ball becomes live following the play to be reviewed, unless the period has officially ended. When a time-out is so granted, the referee will confer with the coach at the sideline in front of his team box in the field of play. If the conference results in the referee altering the ruling, the opposing coach will be notified, the revision made, and the time-out shall be an official's time-out. If the referee's ruling prevails, the time-out remains charged to the team requesting the time-out for the conference.

SECTION 6 PLAY CLOCK, BALL READY FOR PLAY AND DELAY

ART. 1 . . . Play clock and ready-for-play:

a. Play clock:

1. 25 seconds will be on the play clock and start on the ready-for-play signal:

- Prior to a try following a score;
- To start a period or overtime series;
- Following administration of an inadvertent whistle;
- Following a charged time-out;
- Following an official's time-out as in 3-5-7 or 3-5-10.

EXCEPTIONS:

- 3-5-7b;
- 3-5-7e, 3-5-7i or 3-5-10 if related to a defensive player.
- Following a legal kick, when either team is awarded a new series; and
- Following the stoppage of the play clock by the referee for any other reason.

2. 40 seconds will be on the play clock after a down other than specified in 3-6-1a(1), and start when the ball is declared dead by a game official.

b. The ball is ready for play:

- When the ball has been placed for a down and the referee marks the ball ready for play after giving the ready-for-play signal as in 3-6-1a(1) **with the game officials in position;**
- Starting immediately after the ball has been ruled dead by a game official after a down, the ball has been placed on the ground by the game official and the game official has stepped away to position as in 3-6-1a(2).

ART. 2 . . . Action or inaction which prevents promptness in putting the ball in play is delay of game. This includes:

- Failure to snap or free kick prior to the expiration of the 25- or 40-second play clock.
- Unnecessarily carrying the ball after it has become dead.
- A coach-referee conference after all the permissible charged time-outs for the coach's team have been used, and during which the referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule and no change in the ruling results.
- Snapping or free kicking the ball before it is ready for play.
- Any other conduct which unduly prolongs the game.
- Failure to unpile from an opponent in a timely manner.

ART. 3 . . . A team shall play within two minutes after being ordered to do so by the referee.

ART. 4 . . . Game management is responsible for clearing the field of play and the end zones at the beginning of each half so play may begin at the scheduled time.

PENALTY: Arts. 2a-f, 4 – Delay of game – (S7-21) – 5 yards; Art. 3 – Failure to play following order of referee – forfeiture of game.

SECTION 7 SUBSTITUTIONS

ART. 1 . . . Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players. Upon meeting the criteria of 2-32-12, replaced players shall begin to leave the field within three seconds.

ART. 2 . . . A player, replaced player or a substitute is required to leave the field at the side on which his team box is located and go directly to his team box.

ART. 3 . . . During the same dead-ball interval, no substitute shall become a player and then withdraw and no player shall withdraw and re-enter as a substitute unless a penalty is accepted, a dead-ball foul occurs, there is a charged time-out or the period ends.

ART. 4 . . . During a down a replaced player or substitute who attempts unsuccessfully to leave the field and who does not participate in or affect the play, constitutes an illegal substitution.

NOTE: Participation by a replaced player or substitute is illegal participation as in 9-6.

ART. 5 . . . An entering substitute shall be on his team's side of the neutral zone when the ball is snapped or free kicked.

ART. 6 . . . During a down, a replaced player or substitute who enters the field, but does not participate, constitutes illegal substitution.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 3 – **Illegal substitution – (\$7-22) – 5 yards, dead-ball foul;** Arts. 4, 5 – **Illegal substitution (\$22) – 5 yards, live ball foul;** Art. 6 – **Illegal substitution (\$22) – 5 yards, nonplayer foul.**

Rule**4****Ball in Play, Dead Ball
and Out of Bounds****SECTION 1 PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY**

ART. 1 . . . To start each half and to resume play after a field goal or after a try, the ball shall be put in play by a kickoff.

ART. 2 . . . A free kick shall also put the ball in play:

- After a safety.
- When a free-kick down is replayed.
- When a free kick is chosen following a fair catch, an awarded fair catch, the replay of a down which follows a fair catch or an awarded fair catch.

ART. 3 . . . A snap shall, if elected, put the ball in play when a free kick is not specified.

ART. 4 . . . A snap or free kick shall be made between the hash marks.

ART. 5 . . . After being put in play, the ball remains live until the down ends.

ART. 6 . . . The ball remains dead and a down is not begun if a snap or free kick is attempted before the ball is ready for play, or there is an illegal snap, other snap infraction or a dead-ball foul occurs.

SECTION 2 DEAD BALL AND END OF THE DOWN

ART. 1 . . . A game official shall indicate the ball remains dead by sounding his whistle immediately when a foul occurs before a snap or free kick.

ART. 2 . . . The ball becomes dead and the down is ended:

- a. When a runner goes out of bounds, is held so his forward progress is stopped or allows any part of his person other than hand or foot to touch the ground.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. The ball remains live if, at the snap, a place-kick holder with his knee(s) on the ground and with a teammate in kicking position catches or recovers the snap while his knee(s) is on the ground and places the ball for a kick, or if he rises to advance, hand, kick or pass; or
2. The ball remains live if, at the snap, a place-kick holder with his knee(s) on the ground and with a teammate in kicking position rises and catches or recovers an errant snap and immediately returns his knee(s) to the ground and places the ball for a kick or again rises to advance, hand, kick or pass.

NOTE: The ball becomes dead if the place-kick holder muffs the snap or fumbles and recovers after his knees have been off the ground, and he then touches the ground with other than hand or foot while in possession of the ball.

- b. When a live ball goes out of bounds.
- c. When any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete or is simultaneously caught by opposing players.
- d. When any legal free kick or scrimmage kick:
1. Which is not a scoring attempt or which is a grounded scoring attempt, breaks the plane of R's goal line.
 2. Which is a scoring attempt, while in flight touches a K player in R's end zone, or after breaking the plane of R's goal line has apparently failed.

EXCEPTION: If a scoring attempt kick touches an upright, crossbar, a game official or R player in the end zone and caroms through the goal, the touching is ignored and the attempt is successful.

- e. When any loose ball:
1. Is simultaneously caught or recovered by opposing players.
 2. Is on the ground motionless and no player attempts to secure possession.
 3. Touches, or is touched by, anything inbounds other than a player, substitute, replaced player, a game official, the ground or authorized equipment. In this case the ball will be put in play in accordance with the procedure for an inadvertent whistle as in 4-2-3b.
- f. When the kickers catch or recover any free kick anywhere, and when the kickers catch or recover a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone and when the kickers are first (i.e., before any touching by the receivers) to touch a scrimmage kick after it has come to rest beyond the neutral zone and between the goal lines.
- g. Following a valid or invalid fair-catch signal given by any R player when a scrimmage kick or free kick is caught or recovered by any R player beyond, in or behind the neutral zone.

- h. When any score occurs.
- i. During a try if B secures possession or as soon as it is apparent that a kick has failed to score.
- j. When a game official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently.
- k. When the helmet comes completely off the runner.
- l. When a prosthetic limb comes completely off the runner.

ART. 3 . . . An inadvertent whistle ends the down. Inadvertent whistles are administered as follows:

- a. The down shall be replayed if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while a legal forward pass or snap is in flight, or during a legal kick.
- b. The team last in possession may choose to either put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while the ball is loose following a backward pass, fumble, illegal forward pass or illegal kick.
- c. The team in possession may choose to either accept the results of the play at the dead-ball spot or replay the down if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while the ball is in player possession.
- d. The penalty shall be administered as determined by the basic spot and takes precedence over inadvertent whistle administration if, during a down, a live-ball foul occurs prior to the inadvertent whistle and the penalty is accepted.

SECTION 3 OUT-OF-BOUNDS AND INBOUNDS SPOTS

ART. 1 . . . When a loose ball goes out of bounds, the out-of-bounds spot is fixed by the yard line where the foremost point of the ball crossed the sideline. When the ball becomes dead in the field of play because of touching a person who is out of bounds, the out-of-bounds spot is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the ball.

ART. 2 . . . When the out-of-bounds spot is between the goal lines, the ball shall be put in play at the nearest inbounds spot unless a forward pass is involved. If the out-of-bounds spot is behind a goal line, it is a safety, field goal or touchback. If the ball touches a pylon, it is out of bounds behind the goal line.

ART. 3 . . . When a runner goes out of bounds, the nearest hash mark is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the ball at the time the runner crosses the plane of the sideline.

ART. 4 . . . When the ball becomes dead between the hash marks, play is resumed at the dead-ball spot, unless it is a legal forward-pass incompleteness in which case the ball is returned to the previous spot.

ART. 5 . . . When the ball becomes dead in a side zone or is awarded to a team there or is left there by a penalty, play is resumed at the nearest hash mark. This does not apply to:

- A legal forward-pass incompleteness.
- A replay due to an inadvertent whistle.
- A replayed try.
- A free kick or snap which follows a fair catch or awarded fair catch in a side zone.

In (a) and (b), the ball is returned to the previous spot.

ART. 6 . . . Before the ready-for-play, A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the hash marks:

- For a try.
- For a kickoff.
- Following a safety.
- Following a fair catch.
- Following an awarded fair catch.
- Following a touchback.
- For the start of each series using an overtime procedure.

ART. 7 . . . When a team may designate the spot along the proper yard line from which the ball is to be put in play, it shall have the same privilege if the down is to be replayed or a dead-ball foul occurs.

Rule **5** Series of Downs, Number of Down and Team Possessions After Penalty

SECTION 1 SERIES OF DOWNS

ART. 1 . . . The team which next puts the ball in play by scrimmage following a free kick, touchback or fair catch is awarded a series of four consecutively numbered downs in which to advance the ball to the line to gain.

- Each awarded first down starts a new series of four consecutively numbered downs.
- The referee shall correct the number of the next down prior to the ball becoming live after a new series of downs is awarded and prior to the declaration of the end of any period.

ART. 2 . . . A new series of downs is awarded:

- After a first, second or third down, a new series of downs shall be awarded only after considering the effect of any act during the down other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike conduct fouls by A, and any dead-ball foul by B.

- b. After a fourth down, a new series of downs shall be awarded only after considering the effect of any act during the down, except a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul.

ART. 3 . . . When a scrimmage down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to:

- A, if the ball belongs to A on or beyond the line to gain.
- B, if the ball belongs to B at the end of any down.
- B, if at the end of the fourth down, the ball belongs to A behind the line to gain.
- The team in possession at the end of the down, if there is a change of team possession during the down, unless the penalty is accepted for a non post-scrimmage kick foul which occurred before the change of possession.
- R, if K legally kicks during any scrimmage down and the ball is recovered by R, is in joint possession of opponents, goes out of bounds or becomes dead with no player in possession.
- The team in possession at the end of the down, if R is the first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the expanded neutral zone, unless the penalty is accepted for a non post-scrimmage kick foul which occurred before the kick ended or unless 6-2-7 applies.
- R at the spot of first touching by K, if K is first to touch the kicked ball beyond the expanded neutral zone before it is touched beyond this zone by R and before it has come to rest.

ART. 4 . . . Unless first touched by R beyond the neutral zone, if the kickers recover a scrimmage kick in or behind the neutral zone, the ball remains live and belongs to K and the down counts.

ART. 5 . . . When a free-kick down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to:

- R at the inbounds spot if R touches the kicked ball before it goes out of bounds.
- The team in possession of the ball when the down ends if the ball is recovered beyond R's free-kick line with no first touching by K.
- R at the spot of recovery if K recovers the kicked ball before it travels the 10 yards to R's free-kick line and before R has touched the ball.
- R if there is joint possession by R and K of a recovered kick.
- R at the spot of first touching by K if K is the first to touch the kicked ball before it has gone 10 yards.

ART. 6 . . . In Articles 3g and 5e, the right of R to take the ball at the spot of the first touching by K is canceled if R touches the kick and thereafter during the down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

SECTION 2 DOWN AND POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

ART. 1 . . . When a penalty is declined, the number of the next down is the same as if the foul had not occurred. If a double foul occurs during a down, the number of the next down is the same as that of the down in which the foul occurred. After a distance penalty, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the time of the foul unless it is a 2-16-2h (post-scrimmage kick) foul or kick-catching interference. Team possession may then change if a new series is awarded.

ART. 2 . . . Foul during a scrimmage down and before any change of possession:

- a. When a foul occurs during a scrimmage down and before any change of team possession, and before a receiver is first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the neutral zone, the ball belongs to A or K after enforcement unless:
 1. It is a 2-16-2h (post-scrimmage kick) foul;
 2. The foul is kick-catching interference; or
 3. K fouls and R selects succeeding spot enforcement, per 10-4-2 EXCEPTION.
- b. The number of the next down is the same as that of the down during which the foul occurred unless penalty acceptance includes a first down or loss of down, or the enforcement or the advance results in a first down.
- c. The loss-of-down aspect of a penalty has no significance following a change of possession or if the line to gain is reached after enforcement.

ART. 3 . . . When a foul occurs prior to a scrimmage down, or simultaneously with the snap, the number of the next down after enforcement is the same as the number established before the foul occurred, unless enforcement for a foul by B results in a first down.

ART. 4 . . . When a foul occurs prior to or during a free-kick down and before any change of team possession, the down which follows enforcement is a free-kick down, unless:

- a. R selects succeeding spot enforcement, per 10-2-4 EXCEPTION, or
- b. Following a fair catch or an awarded fair catch, a scrimmage down is chosen for the replay.

ART. 5 . . . Following a foul, a series of downs ends when:

- a. The acceptance of the penalty includes the award of a first down.
- b. Acceptance or declination of any penalty leaves A in possession beyond the line-to-gain.
- c. Declination of any penalty leaves A in possession behind the line to gain after fourth down.
- d. Declination of any penalty leaves B in possession.
- e. There is acceptance or declination of the penalty for any foul which occurs after team possession changes during the down.
- f. R is first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the neutral zone, unless a non-post-scrimmage kick foul occurs before the kick ends and the penalty is accepted.
- g. Acceptance of a penalty on fourth down which carries a loss of down leaves A in possession behind the line to gain.

ART. 6 . . . After a series of downs ends, a new series with first and 10 yards to gain is awarded unless one of the following is involved: a try; a field goal; or a free kick after a safety, fair catch or awarded fair catch. The first down is awarded to the team in possession when the foul occurs unless, declining the penalty leaves the other team in possession, or as in (c) and (f), accepting or declining the penalty leaves the other team in possession after fourth down. (5-2-5c, f)

SECTION 3 THE LINE TO GAIN AND MEASUREMENTS

ART. 1 . . . The line to gain is 10 yards in advance of the ball's foremost point when a new series of downs is awarded. When a new series of downs is awarded, the penalties for all fouls (including nonplayer and unsportsmanlike) committed prior to the ready-for-play shall be administered before the line to gain is established. The line to gain then remains fixed until the series ends and a new line to gain is established.

ART. 2 . . . The referee may call for the head linesman to bring the official line-to-gain equipment on the field for a measurement. Measurement shall be parallel with the sideline and from a convenient yard line to the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when it became dead. The ball shall be placed with its long axis parallel with the sideline before measurement. The inside edge of the foremost rod marks the line to gain when the traditional yardage chain is used.

NOTE: A measurement may be requested by the captain prior to the ball being ready for play, but it may be denied if, in the referee's opinion, it is obvious the line to gain has or has not been reached.

ART. 3 . . . To start a new series of downs, the inside edge of the rod nearest the goal of the team which is to snap the ball is set on the yard line through the ball's foremost point. To start a new series of downs after:

- A change of team possession, which does not involve a fourth-down incomplete forward pass, a safety or touchback, the foremost point of the ball at the time it became dead becomes the rear point when the direction of the offense is changed.
- A fourth-down incomplete forward pass, the ball is placed at the previous spot so the rear point becomes the foremost point.
- A safety or touchback, the foremost point of the ball is placed on the 20-yard line.

ART. 4 . . . A ball touching the goal-line plane, when it becomes dead is in the end zone, even though it is moving away from the nearer end line and has its foremost point in the field of play.

Rule **6** Kicking the Ball and Fair Catch

SECTION 1 THE KICKOFF AND OTHER FREE KICKS

ART. 1 . . . For any free kick, a free-kick line, corresponding to a scrimmage line, is established for each team. These lines are always 10 yards apart. Unless moved by a penalty, K's free-kick line is:

- Its 40-yard line for a kickoff.
- Its 20-yard line after a safety.
- The yard line through the spot of the catch after a fair catch.
- The yard line through the spot of an awarded fair catch.

ART. 2 . . . A free kick shall be made from any point between the hash marks and on K's free-kick line. A punt may not be used for a free kick other than after a safety. Once designated, K must kick from that spot. When a punt is used following a safety, the ball must be kicked within one step behind K's free-kick line. In an emergency, such as a pool of water on K's free-kick line, the referee has authority to move the ball to a playable line, in which case, both free-kick lines are moved to compensate.

ART. 3 . . . After the ball is marked ready for play, and until the ball is kicked, the following formation requirements must be met:

- a. No player, other than the kicker and the holder for a place kick, may be beyond his free-kick line; and
- b. No K players, other than the kicker, may be more than 5 yards behind the kicking team's free-kick line. A player satisfies this rule when no foot is on or beyond the line 5 yards behind K's free-kick line. If one K player is more than 5 yards behind this restraining line and any other player kicks the ball, it is a foul.

ART. 4 . . . At the time the ball is kicked, at least four K players must be on each side of the kicker.

ART. 5 . . . Any receiver may catch or recover a free kick in the field of play and advance, unless any R player has given a valid or invalid fair-catch signal. R may catch or recover a free kick in K's end zone.

ART. 6 . . . If any K player recovers or catches a free kick, the ball becomes dead. It belongs to him unless it is kick-catching interference and R chooses an awarded fair catch or unless it is first touching. Any K player may recover the ball before it goes beyond R's free-kick line if it is touched first by any receiver. Such touching in the neutral zone by R is ignored if it is caused by K pushing or blocking R into contact with the ball or if K muffs the ball into contact with R. Any K player may recover a free kick if it has both touched the ground and goes beyond the plane of R's free-kick line. The two requirements may occur in any order. If a free kick becomes dead inbounds between the goal lines while no player is in possession, or inbounds anywhere while opponents are in joint possession, the ball is awarded to R.

ART. 7 . . . If any K player touches a free kick before it crosses R's free-kick line and before it is touched there by any R player, it is referred to as "first touching of the kick." R may take the ball at the spot of first touching, or any spot if there is more than one spot of first touching, or they may choose to have the ball put in play as determined by the action which follows first touching. Such touching is ignored if it is caused by R pushing or blocking K into contact with the ball. The right of R to take the ball at the spot of first touching by K is canceled if R touches the kick and thereafter during the down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

ART. 8 . . . A free kick is not repeated unless:

- A foul occurs prior to a change of possession and the penalty acceptance requires a replay of the down.
- There is a double foul.
- There is an inadvertent whistle during the kick.

ART. 9 . . . A free kick shall not be kicked out of bounds between the goal lines untouched inbounds by R. If it is kicked out of bounds and R does not accept a penalty for kick-catch interference on the same kick as in 6-5-4, R has the following choices:

- Accept a 5-yard penalty from the previous spot and have K rekick;
- Accept a 5-yard penalty from the succeeding spot;
- Put the ball in play at the inbounds spot 25 yards beyond the previous spot; or
- Decline the penalty and put the ball in play at the inbounds spot.

ART. 10 . . . If a free kick goes out of bounds between the goal lines touched inbounds by R, the ball is put in play by R at the inbounds spot.

ART. 11 . . . A pop-up kick is illegal.

PENALTY: Arts. 2, 11 – Free-kick infraction – (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 3a – encroachment – (S7-18) – 5 yards; Arts. 3b, 4 – free kick infraction – (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 9 – free kick out of bounds – (S19) – 5 yards and re-kick, 5 yards from the succeeding spot, or put it in play at the inbounds spot 25 yards beyond the previous spot if previous spot on midfield side of R25.

SECTION 2 SCRIMMAGE KICKS

ART. 1 . . . K may punt, drop kick or place kick from in or behind the neutral zone before team possession has changed. It is not necessary to be in a scrimmage kick formation to execute a legal scrimmage kick. K may not punt, drop kick or place kick from beyond the neutral zone. R may not punt, drop kick or place kick.

ART. 2 . . . Any receiver may catch or recover a scrimmage kick in the field of play and advance, unless it is during a try, or unless any R player has given a valid or invalid fair-catch signal. R may catch or recover a scrimmage kick in K's end zone.

ART. 3 . . . Any K player may catch or recover a scrimmage kick while it is in or behind the neutral zone and advance, unless it is during a try.

ART. 4 . . . Any K player may catch or recover a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the neutral zone or the expanded neutral zone, provided such kick has been touched by a receiver who was clearly beyond the neutral zone at the time of touching. Such touching is ignored if it is caused by K pushing or blocking R into contact with the ball or it is caused by K legally batting or muffing the ball into R. Such catch or recovery by K beyond the neutral zone causes the ball to become dead. (6-5-6 EXCEPTION)

ART. 5 . . . When any K player touches a scrimmage kick beyond the expanded neutral zone to R's goal line before it is touched beyond the neutral zone by R and before the ball has come to rest, it is referred to as "first touching of the kick" and the place is the "spot of first touching." Such touching is ignored if it is caused by R pushing or blocking K into contact with the ball.

If any K player touches a scrimmage kick in this manner, R may take the ball at the spot of first touching, or any spot if there is more than one spot of first touching, or they may choose to have the ball put in play as determined by the action which follows first touching. The right of R to take the ball at spot of first touching by K is canceled if R touches the kick and thereafter during the down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

ART. 6 . . . The touching of a low scrimmage kick by any player is ignored if the touching is in or behind the expanded neutral zone. If a scrimmage kick occurs, the neutral zone shall not be expanded into the end zone.

ART. 7 . . . When any scrimmage kick is out of bounds between the goal lines or becomes dead inbounds between the goal lines while no player is in possession, or inbounds anywhere while opponents are in joint possession, the ball is awarded to R. Following an out-of-bounds kick, the ball is put in play at the inbounds spot unless R chooses a spot of first touching.

PENALTY: Art. 1 – Illegal kick – (S31) – 10 yards.

SECTION 3 TOUCHBACK

ART. 1 . . . It is a touchback if any free kick or scrimmage kick:

- Which is not a scoring attempt or which is a grounded three-point field-goal attempt, breaks the plane of R's goal line, unless R chooses a spot of first touching by K.
- Which is a three-point field-goal attempt, in flight touches a K player in R's end zone, or after breaking the plane of R's goal line is unsuccessful.

ART. 2 . . . If any free kick or scrimmage kick becomes dead in the kicker's end zone while no player has possession, it is a safety or touchback, as in 8-5-2 and 3.

SECTION 4 SUMMARY OF SCRIMMAGE KICK AND FREE-KICK ACTIVITIES

TABLE 6-4
RESULT OF ACTIVITIES DURING SCRIMMAGE KICKS AND FREE KICKS

Scrimmage Kick	Free Kick
1. Kick recovered beyond the neutral zone may be advanced only by R.	1. A kickoff, including the kick following a safety, cannot score a field goal.
2. Kick recovered in or behind the neutral zone may be advanced by either team.	2. Kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch may score a field goal.
3. Kick not recovered by either team belongs to R.	3. Kick may not be advanced by K.
4. Kick jointly recovered by R and K belongs to R.	4. Kick not recovered by either team belongs to R.

	5. Kick jointly recovered by R and K belongs to R.
NOTE: K is in team possession during a kick. A kick ends when a player gains possession or when the ball becomes dead by rule. R gains possession of the ball when a player of R catches or recovers the live ball.	
IF THE KICK BECOMES DEAD IN R'S END ZONE	
Touchback in all cases unless a field goal is scored.	
IF THE KICK BECOMES DEAD IN K'S END ZONE	
If the force is:	Then the ruling is:
1. The kick or any other new force by K.	1. Safety, if the kick is out of bounds or K has possession, including when the ball is loose, or Touchdown if R is in possession.
2. A new force by R.	2. Touchback, if the kick is out of bounds, or K has possession, including when the ball is loose, or Touchdown if R is in possession.

SECTION 5 FAIR CATCH

ART. 1 . . . Any receiver may signal for a fair catch while any legal kick is in flight. Any receiver who has given a valid or invalid fair-catch signal is prohibited from blocking until the kick has ended.

ART. 2 . . . It is a fair catch and the ball is dead if any receiver gives a valid fair-catch signal, as in Article 1, and he catches a free kick in or beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line, or a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line.

ART. 3 . . . Only the receiver who gives a valid signal is afforded protection. If, after a receiver signals, the catch is made by a teammate, it is not a fair catch but the ball becomes dead.

ART. 4 . . . The captain may choose to free kick or snap anywhere between the hash marks:

- on the yard line through the spot of the catch when a fair catch is made;
- through the spot of interference, when a fair catch is awarded; or
- at the succeeding spot when the distance penalty for kick-catch interference is accepted following an awarded fair catch and the down is not replayed.

These choices remain if a dead-ball foul occurs prior to the next down, or a foul or an inadvertent whistle occurs during the next down and the down is replayed.

ART. 5 . . . No receiver may advance the ball after a valid or invalid fair-catch signal has been given by any R player.

ART. 6 . . . While any free kick is in flight in or beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line or any scrimmage kick is in flight beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, K shall not:

- Touch the ball or R, unless blocked into the ball or R, or to ward off a blocker; or
- Obstruct R's path to the ball.

This prohibition applies even when no fair-catch signal is given, but it does not apply after a free kick has been touched by a receiver, or after a scrimmage kick has been touched by a receiver who was clearly beyond the neutral zone at the time of touching.

EXCEPTION: K may catch, touch, muff or bat a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone if no player of R is in position to catch the ball.

ART. 7 . . . A receiver shall not give an invalid fair-catch signal.

ART. 8 . . . The runner shall not give an illegal fair-catch signal.

PENALTY: Art. 1 – Blocking after giving a valid or invalid signal – (S43) – 15 yards; Art. 5 – delay of game – (S7-21) – 5 yards; Art. 6 – kick-catching interference – (S33) – R may accept the results of the play, an awarded fair catch after enforcement of a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul, or a 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and a replay of the down; Art. 7 – Invalid fair catch signal (S32) – 5 yards; Art. 8 – Illegal fair catch signal (S32) – 5 yards.

Rule **7** Snapping, Handling and Passing the Ball

SECTION 1 BEFORE THE SNAP

ART. 1 . . . The snapper may be over the ball but his feet must be behind the neutral zone and no part of his person, other than a hand(s) on the ball, may be beyond the foremost point of the ball.

ART. 2 . . . The snapper may lift the ball for lateral rotation but may not rotate end-for-end or change the location or fail to keep the long axis of the ball at right angles to the line of scrimmage.

ART. 3 . . . Following the ready-for-play and after touching the ball, the snapper shall not:

- Remove both hands from the ball.
- Make any movement that simulates a snap.
- Fail to clearly pause before the snap.
- Following adjustment, lift or move the ball other than in a legal snap.

ART. 4 . . . An illegal snap or other snap infraction causes the ball to remain dead.

ART. 5 . . . No player, other than the snapper, shall encroach on the neutral zone after the ball is ready for play by touching the ball or an opponent or by being in the neutral zone to give defensive signals.

ART. 6 . . . Following the ready for play and after the snapper has placed his hand(s) on the ball, encroachment occurs if:

- Any other player breaks the plane of the neutral zone;
- A defensive player makes contact with the ball prior to the end of the snap; or
- A defensive player makes contact with the hand(s) or arm(s) of the snapper prior to the snapper releasing the ball.

ART. 7 . . . After the ball is ready for play and before the snap begins, no false start shall be made by any A player. It is a false start if:

- A shift or feigned charge simulates action at the snap.
- Any act is clearly intended to cause B to encroach.
- Any A player on his line between the snapper and the player on the end of his line, after having placed a hand(s) on or near the ground, moves his hand(s) or makes any quick movement.

ART. 8 . . . If a false start causes B to encroach, only the false start is penalized.

ART. 9 . . . No defensive player shall use disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A's signals or movements.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 5, 6 – Encroachment – (S7-18) – 5 yards; Arts. 2, 3 – snap infraction (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 7 – false start – (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 9 – disconcerting act – (S7-23) – 5 yards.

SECTION 2 FORMATION/POSITION, NUMBERING AND ACTION AT THE SNAP

ART. 1 . . . After the ready-for-play, each player of A who participated in the previous down and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks, before the snap.

ART. 2 . . . The players on each side of and next to the snapper may lock legs with the snapper, but any other A lineman must have each foot outside the closest foot of the player next to him at the snap. A's players may stand, crouch or kneel.

ART. 3 . . . Of the players of A who are not on their line at the snap only one may penetrate the vertical plane through the waistline of his nearest teammate who is on his line. He must have his hands in position to receive the ball if it is snapped between the snapper's legs but he is not required to receive the snap. Any other player(s) must be in legal position as a back. (2-32-3)

ART. 4 . . . A snap shall be such that the ball immediately leaves the hand or hands of the snapper and touches a back or the ground before it touches an A lineman. A scrimmage down must start with a legal snap. An illegal snap causes the ball to remain dead.

ART. 5 . . . Player formation and numbering requirements include:

- No more than four A players may be backs and only one A player may penetrate the vertical plane through the waistline of his nearest teammate who is on his line as in 7-2-3; and
- At the snap, at least five A players on their line of scrimmage must be numbered 50-79.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. On first, second or third down, when A sets or shifts into a scrimmage-kick formation as in 2-14-2a, the snapper may be a player numbered 0 to 49 or 80 to 99. If Team A has the snapper in the game under this exception, Team A shall have four players wearing numbers 50-79 on its line of scrimmage. The snapper in the game under this exception must be between the ends and is an ineligible forward-pass receiver during that down unless the pass is touched by B (7-5-6b).
2. On fourth down or during a kick try, when A sets or shifts into a scrimmage-kick formation, any A player numbered 0 to 49 or 80 to 99 may take the position of any A player numbered 50 to 79. A player in the game under this exception must assume an initial position on his line of scrimmage between the ends and he remains an ineligible forward-pass receiver during that down unless the pass is touched by B (7-5-6b).
- c. Players of the same team shall not participate during the same down while wearing identical numbers.
- d. B players may be anywhere on or behind their line of scrimmage.

ART. 6 . . . After a huddle or shift, all players of A shall come to an absolute stop and shall remain stationary simultaneously without movement of hands, feet, head or body for at least one second before the snap.

ART. 7 . . . Only one A player may be in motion at the snap and then only if such motion is not toward his opponent's goal line. Except for the player "under the snapper," as outlined in Article 3, the player in motion shall be at least 5 yards behind his line of scrimmage at the snap if he started from any position not clearly behind the line and did not establish himself as a back by stopping for at least one full second while no part of his body is breaking the vertical plane through the waistline of his nearest teammate who is on the line of scrimmage.

ART. 8 . . . Any A player on his line of scrimmage may not advance a planned loose ball in the vicinity of the snapper.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 3, 5a – Illegal formation – (\$19) – 5 yards; Art. 4 – illegal snap – (\$7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 5b, c, d – illegal numbering – (\$19) – 5 yards; Art. 6 – illegal shift – (\$20) – 5 yards; Art. 7 – illegal motion – (\$20) – 5 yards; Art. 8 – planned loose-ball infraction – (\$19) – 5 yards.

SECTION 3 HANDING THE BALL

ART. 1 . . . Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.

ART. 2 . . . No player may hand the ball forward except during a scrimmage down before a change of possession, provided both players are in or behind the neutral zone and it is to:

- a. A lineman who has clearly faced his end line by moving both feet in a half-turn and is at least 1 yard behind his line when he receives the ball.
- b. A back or a teammate who, at the snap, was on an end of his line and was not the snapper nor adjacent to the snapper.

ART. 3 . . . During a scrimmage down after a change of team possession, no player may hand the ball forward to a teammate.

PENALTY: Arts. 2, 3 – Illegal handing – (S35-9) – 5 yards and loss of down. The loss-of-down penalty does not apply when there has been a change of team possession.

SECTION 4 FUMBLE AND BACKWARD PASS

ART. 1 . . . During any down, any player in possession may make a backward pass or may lose player possession through a fumble.

ART. 2 . . . If a fumble or a backward pass is caught or recovered by any player, he may advance.

ART. 3 . . . The ball belongs to the passing or fumbling team unless lost after fourth down if a fumble or a backward pass:

- Goes out of bounds between the goal lines; or
- Becomes dead inbounds while no player is in possession; or
- Becomes dead inbounds while opponents are in joint possession.

ART. 4 . . . If a fumble or a backward pass is out of bounds behind a goal line, the ball belongs to the team defending that goal and the result is either a touch-back or a safety.

SECTION 5 FORWARD-PASS CLASSIFICATION

ART. 1 . . . It is a legal forward pass, if during a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a player of A throws the ball with both feet of the passer in or behind the neutral zone when the ball is released. Only one forward pass may be thrown during the down.

ART. 2 . . . An illegal forward pass is a foul. Illegal forward passes include:

- A pass after team possession has changed during the down.
- A pass from beyond the neutral zone.
- A second and subsequent forward pass(es) thrown during a down.
- A pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver, or thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or to conserve time.

EXCEPTIONS:

- It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.
- It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass if all of the following conditions are met:
 - The passer has possessed the ball beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap;
 - The pass reaches the neutral zone, including the extension beyond the sideline; and
 - The passer is the only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.

TABLE 7-5-2
SUMMARY OF LEGAL AND ILLEGAL FORWARD PASSES

LEGAL FORWARD PASSES	ILLEGAL FORWARD PASSES
From in or behind the neutral zone.	a. After team possession has changed during the down.
	b. A pass from beyond the neutral zone.
	c. A second and subsequent forward pass(es) thrown during a down.
	d. A pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver, or thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or to conserve time. EXCEPTION 1: It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground. EXCEPTION 2: It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass if all of the following conditions are met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The passer has possessed the ball beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap; b. The pass reaches the neutral zone, including the extension beyond the sideline; and c. The passer is the only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.

ART. 3 . . . If the penalty for an illegal forward pass is accepted, measurement is from the spot of such forward pass. If the offended team declines the distance penalty, it has the choice of having the down counted at the spot of the illegal incomplete forward pass or (if the illegal forward pass is caught or intercepted) of having the ball put in play as determined by the action which followed the catch.

ART. 4 . . . A forward pass, legal or illegal, is complete and the ball may be advanced when caught by any player of A or B. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by two opponents, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team.

ART. 5 . . . A forward pass, legal or illegal, is incomplete and the ball becomes dead when the pass touches the ground or goes out of bounds. It is also incomplete when a player in the air possesses the pass and alights so that his first contact with the ground or with anything other than a player or game official is on or outside a boundary. When an incompleteness occurs the down counts unless the pass is after a change of possession. If the pass is legal, the passing team next snaps the ball at the previous spot, unless lost after fourth down.

TABLE 7-5-4, 5
SUMMARY OF COMPLETED AND INCOMPLETED FORWARD PASSES

COMPLETED FORWARD PASS	INCOMPLETE FORWARD PASS
a. Pass caught by the passer's eligible receiver; ball remains live.	a. Pass which touches the ground.
b. Pass caught by the passer's ineligible receiver; ball remains live.	b. Pass which goes out of bounds.
c. Any intercepted pass; ball remains live.	c. Pass possessed by a player who is in the air but first touches the ground out of bounds (Ball becomes dead in all of these cases).
d. Pass simultaneously caught by opponents; ball becomes dead.	

ART. 6 . . . Pass eligibility rules apply only to a legal forward pass. The following players are eligible pass receivers:

- a. All A players eligible by position and number including those who, at the time of the snap, are on the ends of their scrimmage line or legally behind the line (possible total of six) and are numbered 0-49 or 80-99. (7-2-5b EXCEPTION 2)
- b. All A players become eligible when B touches a legal forward pass.
- c. All B players are eligible.
- d. A player who is eligible at the start of the down remains eligible throughout the down.

ART. 7 . . . Pass interference restrictions only apply beyond the neutral zone and only if the legal forward pass, untouched by B in or behind the neutral zone, crosses the neutral zone. Pass interference restrictions are in effect for all A and B players until the ball is touched or the pass is incomplete.

ART. 8 . . . Pass interference restrictions on a legal forward pass begin for:

- a. A with the snap.
- b. B when the ball leaves the passer's hand.

ART. 9 . . . Pass interference restrictions on a legal forward pass end for:

- a. All eligible A players when the pass has been touched by any player.
- b. All ineligible A players when B touches the pass, however it is not pass interference for ineligible A players to use hands and arms in a legal block to ward off an opponent.
- c. All B players when the pass has been touched by any player.
- d. All players when the pass is incomplete.

ART. 10 . . . It is forward-pass interference if any player of A or B who is beyond the neutral zone interferes with an eligible opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch or bat the pass.

ART. 11 . . . It is not forward-pass interference if:

- a. Unavoidable contact occurs when two or more eligibles are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch or bat the pass.
- b. Contact by A is immediately made on a B lineman and the contact does not continue beyond the expanded neutral zone.
- c. Contact by B is obviously away from the direction of the pass.

ART. 12 . . . Ineligible A players may not advance beyond the expanded neutral zone on a legal forward pass play before a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone is in flight. If B touches the pass in or behind the neutral zone, this restriction is terminated.

ART. 13 . . . An ineligible A player has illegally touched a forward pass if he bats, muffs or catches a legal forward pass, unless the pass has first been touched by B.

PENALTY: Art. 2a – Illegal forward pass – (S35) – 5 yards; Arts. 2b, c – Illegal forward pass – (S35-9) – 5 yards plus loss of down; Art. 2d – intentional grounding – (S36-9) – 5 yards plus loss of down; Art. 10 – Pass interference – (S33) – 15 yards. Art. 12 – Ineligible downfield – (S37) – 5 yards. Art. 13 – Illegal touching – (S16-9) – 5 yards plus loss of down.

TABLE 7-5**SUMMARY OF FOULS THAT CAN OCCUR DURING FORWARD PASS PLAYS AND THEIR PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT SPOTS**

FOUL	PENALTY	ENFORCEMENT SPOT
<p>1. Illegal Forward Pass (7-5-2)</p> <p>a. Pass after team possession has changed during the down.</p> <p>b. Pass from beyond the neutral zone.</p> <p>c. A second or subsequent forward pass during the down.</p> <p>d. Pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by eligible offensive receiver, or intentionally thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or conserve time.</p> <p>EXCEPTION 1: It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.</p> <p>EXCEPTION 2: It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass if all of the following conditions are met:</p> <p>a. The passer has possessed the ball beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap;</p> <p>b. The pass reaches the neutral zone including the extension beyond the sideline; and</p> <p>c. The passer is the only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.</p>	<p>a: Loss of 5 yards</p> <p>b, c and d: Loss of 5 yards and loss of down</p>	<p><i>End of Run</i></p>
<p>2. Forward Pass Interference (7-5-10)</p> <p>Restrictions apply only to a legal pass, untouched by B in or behind the neutral zone which crosses the neutral zone and interference may occur only beyond the neutral zone.</p> <p>a. A hinders B. (Restriction begins with the snap.)</p> <p>b. B hinders A. (Restriction begins when the pass is thrown.)</p>	<p>a: Loss of 15 yards</p> <p>b: Loss of 15 yards</p>	<p><i>Previous Spot</i></p> <p><i>Previous Spot</i></p>

<p>3. Ineligible Receiver Downfield (7-5-12)</p> <p>Ineligible A players may not advance across the expanded neutral zone before a legal forward pass which crosses the neutral zone is in flight unless touched by B in or behind the neutral zone.</p>	Loss of 5 yards	<i>Previous Spot</i>
<p>4. Illegal Touching by Ineligible (7-5-13)</p> <p>A forward pass, batted, muffed or caught by an ineligible A player who is behind, in or beyond the neutral zone.</p>	Loss of 5 yards and loss of down	<i>Basic Spot</i>

Rule **8** Scoring Plays and Touchbacks

SECTION 1 POINT VALUES

The game is won by the team which accumulates the most points. Points are scored as follows for:

TABLE 8-1
POINT VALUES

Touchdown		6 points
Field Goal		3 points
Safety	Points awarded to the opponent	2 points
Successful Try		
a. Touchdown		2 points
b. Field Goal or Safety		1 point
Forfeited Game	Game score is: Offended Team: 1, Opponent: 0 But if offended team is ahead, the score stands.	

SECTION 2 TOUCHDOWN

ART. 1 . . . Possession of a live ball in the opponent's end zone is always a touchdown.

- It is a touchdown when a runner advances from the field of play so that the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the opponent's goal line.
- It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught or recovered by a player while the ball is on or behind his opponent's goal line.

- c. It is a touchdown when a backward pass or fumble is declared dead in the end zone of the opponent of the player who threw the backward pass or fumbled while no player is in possession (other than because of an inadvertent whistle).

ART. 2 . . . If an opponent of the scoring team commits a foul (other than unsportsmanlike conduct or a nonplayer foul) during a down in which a touchdown is scored and there was not a change in possession during the down, A may accept the results of the play and choose enforcement of the PENALTY:

- On the try; or
- On the subsequent kickoff.

ART. 3 . . . If an opponent of the scoring team commits a foul (other than unsportsmanlike conduct or a nonplayer foul) during a down in which a touchdown is scored and there was a change of possession during the down, and such foul occurs after the change of possession, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and choose enforcement of the PENALTY:

- On the try; or
- On the subsequent kickoff.

ART. 4 . . . If either team commits an unsportsmanlike conduct or a nonplayer foul during a down in which a touchdown is scored, the opponent may accept the penalty and choose enforcement of the PENALTY:

- On the try; or
- On the subsequent kickoff.

ART. 5 . . . If after a down in which a touchdown is scored, and prior to the initial ready-for-play signal for the try, either team commits any foul for which the basic spot is the succeeding spot, the offended team may accept the penalty and choose enforcement of the PENALTY:

- On the try; or
- On the subsequent kickoff.

SECTION 3 TRY

ART. 1 . . . After a touchdown, the scoring team shall attempt a try during which the ball is snapped from a spot designated by A anywhere between the hash marks on B's 3-yard line, unless moved by penalty. This involves a scrimmage down which is neither numbered nor timed.

EXCEPTION: If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period, the try shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

ART. 2 . . . The try begins when the ball is ready for play. It ends when:

- B secures possession.
- It is apparent a drop kick or place kick will not score.
- The try is successful.
- The ball becomes dead for any other reason.

ART. 3 . . . During a try, A may score two points from what would be a touchdown or one point for a field goal or safety by B under rules governing play at other times during the game. Only A may score during a try.

ART. 4 . . . If during a successful try, a loss of down foul by A occurs, there is no score and no replay.

- ART. 5 . . .** If during a successful try, a foul by B occurs, A is given the choice of:
- Accepting the penalty and replaying the down following enforcement; or
 - Accepting the result of the play and enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.

ART. 6 . . . If during an unsuccessful try:

- A foul by A/K occurs, the penalty is obviously declined, the results of the play stand and there is no replay.
- A foul by B/R occurs, and the penalty is accepted, the down is replayed after enforcement.

ART. 7 . . . If a double foul occurs, the down shall be replayed.

ART. 8 . . . When a try is replayed, the snap may be from any point between the hash marks on the yard line through the spot of the ball.

ART. 9 . . . After a try, the opponent of the scoring team shall designate which team will kick off.

SECTION 4 FIELD GOAL

ART. 1 . . . A field goal is scored as follows:

- The field-goal attempt shall be a place kick or a drop kick from scrimmage, or from a free kick following a fair catch, or an awarded fair catch.
- The kicked ball shall not touch any player of K beyond the expanded neutral zone or the ground before passing through the goal.
- The kicked ball shall pass between the vertical uprights or the inside of the uprights extended and above the crossbar of the opponent's goal.

ART. 2 . . . After a field goal, the opponent of the scoring team shall designate which team will kick off.

ART. 3 . . . If during a successful field goal, a foul by R occurs, K is given the choice of:

- Accepting the penalty and replaying the down following enforcement; or
- Accepting the result of the play and enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.

SECTION 5 FORCE, SAFETY AND TOUCHBACK

ART. 1 . . . Responsibility for forcing the ball from the field of play across a goal line is attributed to the player who carries, snaps, passes, fumbles or kicks the ball, unless a new force is applied to a grounded backward pass, kick or fumble.

- The muffing or batting of a pass, kick or fumble in flight is not considered a new force; and
- The accidental touching of a loose ball by a player who was blocked into the ball is ignored and does not constitute a new force.

ART. 2 . . . It is a safety when:

- a. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his team's possession.

EXCEPTION: When a defensive player intercepts an opponent's forward pass; intercepts or recovers an opponent's fumble or backward pass; or an R player catches or recovers a scrimmage kick or free kick between his 5-yard line and the goal line, and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where the ball remains in the end zone and is declared dead in the end zone in his team's possession or it goes out of bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered or the kick was caught or recovered.

- b. A player who is either in the field of play or in his end zone, forces a loose ball from the field of play to or across his goal line by his kick, pass, fumble, snap or by a new force to a grounded loose ball with his muff or bat or illegal kick (when the penalty is declined), provided the ball becomes dead there in his team's possession (including when the ball is declared dead with no player in possession), or the ball is out of bounds when it becomes dead on or behind their goal line. This does not apply to a legal forward pass which becomes incomplete.
- c. A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and enforcement is from a spot in his end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from his end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves him in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.

ART. 3 . . . It is a touchback when:

- a. Any free kick or scrimmage kick:
1. Which is not a scoring attempt or which is a grounded three-point field-goal attempt, breaks the plane of R's goal line unless R chooses a spot of first touching by K.
 2. Which is a three-point field-goal attempt, in flight touches a K player in R's end zone, or after breaking the plane of R's goal line is unsuccessful.
- b. Any scrimmage kick or free kick becomes dead on or behind K's goal line with the ball in possession of K (including when the ball is declared dead with no player in possession) and the new force is R's muff or bat of the kick after it has touched the ground.
- c. A fumble is the force, or a muff or bat of a backward pass or a fumble after either has touched the ground is the new force, which sends the ball to or across the opponent's goal line and provided such opponent is in team possession or the ball is out of bounds when it becomes dead on or behind its goal line.
- d. A forward pass is intercepted in B's end zone and becomes dead there in B's possession.

ART. 4 . . . The team whose goal line is involved shall put the ball in play anywhere between the hash marks on its 20-yard line by a snap after a touchback and by a free kick after a safety.

Rule **9** Conduct of Players and Others

SECTION 1 HELPING THE RUNNER

An offensive player shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist his forward progress.

PENALTY: Helping the runner (S44) – 5 yards.

SECTION 2 ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS AND HOLDING

ART. 1 . . . An offensive player (except the runner) shall not:

- Use a blocking technique which is not permissible by rule. (2-3-2, 2-3-3)
- Grasp or encircle any teammate to form interlocked blocking.
- Use his hands, arms or legs to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent.

ART. 2 . . . The runner may not grasp a teammate.

ART. 3 . . . A defensive player shall not:

- Use a technique that is not permissible by rule. (2-3-2, 2-3-5)
- Use his hands to add momentum to the charge of a teammate who is on the line of scrimmage.
- Use his hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent other than the runner.
- Contact an eligible receiver who is no longer a potential blocker.

PENALTY: Arts. 1a, 2, 3a, b, d – Illegal use of hands or arms – (S42) – 10 yards; Art. 1b – interlocked blocking – (S44) – 10 yards; Arts. 1c, 3c – holding – (S42) – 10 yards.

SECTION 3 ILLEGAL BLOCKING

ART. 1 . . . Blocking by a player either on offense or defense is illegal when it is:

- Kick-catching interference as in 6-5-6.
- Forward-pass interference as in 7-5-10.
- A personal foul as in 9-4.

ART. 2 . . . A player shall not block an opponent below the waist except:

- In the free-blocking zone when the contact meets the requirements of 2-17.
- To tackle a runner or player pretending to be a runner.

ART. 3 . . . A receiver who has given a valid or invalid fair-catch signal shall not block an opponent until the kick has ended.

ART. 4 . . . The kicker or place-kick holder of a free kick may not be blocked before:

- He has advanced 5 yards beyond his free-kick line; or
- The kick has touched the ground or any other player.

ART. 5 . . . A player shall not block an opponent in the back except:

- In the free-blocking zone when the contact meets the requirements of 2-17.
- Using hands and arms to contact an opponent above the waist in warding off a blocker, or when attempting to reach a runner, or catch or recover a loose ball which he may legally touch or possess.
- To tackle a runner or player pretending to be a runner.

ART. 6 . . . A player shall not chop block or clip.

ART. 7 . . . No member of the kicking team shall initiate contact to (block) an opponent on a free kick until:

- The legal kick has traveled 10 yards;
- The kicking team is eligible to recover a free-kicked ball; or
- The receiving team initiates a block within the neutral zone.

PENALTY: Art. 2 – Blocking Below the Waist – (S40) – 15 yards; Art. 3 – Blocking After Signal – (S43) – 15 yards; Art. 4 – Blocking Kicker or Place-Kick Holder – (S30) – 15 yards; Art. 5 – Blocking in the Back – (S43) – 10 yards; Art. 6 – Chop Block (S41) – 15 yards; Art. 6 – Clipping – (S39) – 15 yards; Art. 7 – Illegal Block – (S43), live ball foul, 10 yards.

SECTION 4 ILLEGAL PERSONAL CONTACT

ART. 1 . . . No player or nonplayer shall fight.

ART. 2 . . . No player or nonplayer shall intentionally contact a game official.

ART. 3 . . . No player or nonplayer shall:

- Swing the foot, shin or knee into an opponent, nor extend the knee to meet a blocker.
- Charge into or throw an opponent to the ground after he is obviously out of the play, or after the ball is clearly dead either in or out of bounds.
- Pile on any player who is lying on the ground.
- Hurdle an opponent.
- Position himself on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- Throw a helmet to trip an opponent.
- Make any other contact with an opponent, including a defenseless player (as in 2-32-16), which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness.
- Grasp an opponent's face mask, any edge of a helmet opening, chin strap, or a tooth and mouth protector attached to the face mask and twist, turn or pull the face mask, helmet opening, chin strap or a tooth and mouth protector attached to the face mask; or incidentally grasp an opponent's face mask, helmet opening, chin strap or a tooth and mouth protector attached to the face mask.
- Initiate illegal helmet contact. (butt block, face tackle or spear)

NOTE: Illegal helmet contact may be judged by the game official a flagrant act. Acts that may be judged to be flagrant include, but are not limited to:

- Illegal helmet contact against an opponent lying on the ground,
- Illegal helmet contact against an opponent being held up by other players, and/or
- Illegal helmet-to-helmet contact against a defenseless opponent.

- j. Strike an opponent with his fist, locked hands, forearm or elbow, nor kick or knee him.
- k. Grab the inside back or side collar, or the name plate area (directly below the back collar), of either the shoulder pads or the jersey of the runner and subsequently pull (backward or sideward) that opponent to the ground (Horse-collar), even if possession is lost. The horse-collar foul is enforced as a live-ball foul.
- l. Initiate contact with an opposing player whose helmet has come completely off.
- m. Target an opponent.
- n. Execute a blindside block outside of the free-blocking zone with forceful contact unless initiated with open hands.
- o. Trip an opponent.

ART. 4 . . . Roughing the passer. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer, who has thrown the ball from in or behind the neutral zone, after it is clear the ball has been thrown. No defensive player shall commit any illegal personal contact foul listed in 9-4-3 against the passer.

ART. 5 . . . Running into or roughing the kicker or holder. A defensive player shall neither run into the kicker nor holder, which is contact that displaces the kicker or holder without roughing; nor block, tackle or charge into the kicker of a scrimmage kick, or the place-kick holder, other than when:

- a. Contact is unavoidable because it is not reasonably certain that a kick will be made.
- b. The defense touches the kick near the kicker and contact is unavoidable.
- c. Contact is slight and is partially caused by movement of the kicker.
- d. Contact is caused by R being blocked into the kicker or holder by K.

ART. 6 . . . Roughing the snapper. A defensive player shall not charge directly into the snapper when the offensive team is in a scrimmage-kick formation.

ART. 7 . . . No defensive player may use the hand(s) to slap the blocker's head.

ART. 8 . . . Unintentional contact between a nonplayer and a game official in the restricted area while the ball is live.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 3j – Fighting, intentionally contacting a game official, striking, kicking or kneeling – (S38-47) – 15 yards and disqualification. If a coach is the offender in Article 2, see 9-8 Penalty for disqualification procedure; Arts. 3a through g, l – Other personal fouls – (S38) – 15 yards; Art. 3h – incidental grasping the face mask, helmet opening, chin strap or tooth and mouth protector – (S45) – 5 yards; Art. 3h – grasping and twisting, turning or pulling the face mask, helmet opening, chin strap or tooth and mouth protector – (S38-45) – 15 yards; Art. 3i – illegal helmet contact – (S38-24) – 15 yards; Art. 3k – illegal horse-collar – (S38-25) – 15 yards; Art. 3m – targeting an opponent – (S38-24) – 15 yards; Art. 3n – illegal blindside block – (S38-26) – 15 yards; Art. 3o – illegal tripping – (S38-46) – 15 yards; Art. 4 – roughing the passer – (S38-34-8) – 15 yards and a first down from the dead ball spot when the dead ball spot is beyond the neutral zone and A has possession of the ball at the end of the down and there has been

no change of team possession and the foul is not for an incidental face mask as in 9-4-3h, or otherwise 15 yards and first down from previous spot; Art. 5 – running into kicker/holder – (S30) – 5 yards from the previous spot; Art. 5 – roughing kicker or holder – (S38-30-8) – 15 yards and first down from the previous spot; Art. 6 – roughing snapper – (S38-8) – 15 yards and first down from the previous spot; Art. 7 – Slap to the head – (S38) – 15 yards; Art. 8 – Unintentional contact with a game official in the restricted area – (S38-29) – 15 yards – Nonplayer foul. For the first offense, 15 yards from the succeeding spot. For the second offense (S38-29-47) – 15 yards from the succeeding spot and disqualification of the head coach. Arts. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 – Disqualification also if any fouls under these articles are judged by the game official to be flagrant – (S47).

SECTION 5 NONCONTACT UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT BY PLAYERS

ART. 1 . . . No player shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner once the game officials assume authority for the game. Examples are, but not limited to:

- Baiting or taunting acts or words or insignia worn which engenders ill will.
NOTE: The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances.
- Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
- Any delayed, excessive or prolonged act by which a player attempts to focus attention upon himself.
- Kicking at the ball, other than during a legal kick.
- Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or unless with permission of a game official.
- Refusing to comply with a game official's request.
- Using alcohol or any form of tobacco product (e-cigarette or similar items).

ART. 2 . . . When the ball becomes dead in possession of a player, he shall not:

- Intentionally kick the ball.
- Spike the ball into the ground.
- Throw the ball high into the air or from the field of play or end zone.
- Intentionally fail to place the ball on the ground or immediately return it to a nearby game official.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2 – Unsportsmanlike conduct – (S27) 15 yards. If dead ball, (S7-27) – 15 yards. Also disqualification if judged by the game official to be flagrant – (S47). In Article 1a, the player must remove the offending item before he is allowed to participate. The second unsportsmanlike foul results in disqualification.

SECTION 6 ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION

ART. 1 . . . Prior to a change of possession, or when there is no change of possession, no player of A or K shall go out of bounds and return to the field during the down unless blocked out of bounds by an opponent. If a player is blocked out of bounds by an opponent and returns to the field during the down, he shall return at the first opportunity.

ART. 2 . . . No player shall intentionally go out of bounds during the down and:

- Return to the field;
- Intentionally touch the ball;
- Influence the play; or
- Otherwise participate.

ART. 3 . . . No replaced player, substitute, coach, athletic trainer or other attendant shall hinder an opponent, touch the ball, influence the play or otherwise participate.

ART. 4 . . . It is illegal participation:

- When any player, replaced player, substitute, coach, athletic trainer or other attendant enters and participates during a down.
- If an injured player is not replaced for at least one down; unless the halftime intermission or overtime intermission occurs.
- To have 12 or more players participating at the snap or free kick.
- To use a player, replaced player, substitute, coach, athletic trainer or other attendant in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap or free kick.
- For a player to be lying on the ground to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap or free kick.
- For a disqualified player to re-enter the game.
- For a player whose helmet comes completely off during a down to continue to participate beyond the immediate action in which the player is engaged.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 3, 4a, g – Illegal participation – (S28) – 15 yards, live-ball, basic spot; Arts. 4b-f – Illegal participation (S28) – 15 yards, live-ball, previous spot.

SECTION 7 ILLEGAL KICKING AND BATTING

ART. 1 . . . No player shall intentionally kick the ball other than as a free or scrimmage kick.

ART. 2 . . . No player shall bat a loose ball other than a pass or a fumble in flight, or a low scrimmage kick in flight which he is attempting to block in or behind the expanded neutral zone.

EXCEPTION: A K player may bat toward his own goal line a grounded scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone and may also bat toward his own goal line a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone, if no R player is in position to catch the ball.

ART. 3 . . . Any pass in flight may be batted in any direction, by an eligible receiver unless it is a backward pass batted forward by the passing team.

ART. 4 . . . A ball in player possession shall not be batted forward by a player of the team in possession.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 3, 4 – Illegal kicking or batting – (S31) – 10 yards.

SECTION 8 NONCONTACT UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT BY NONPLAYERS

ART. 1 . . . No coach, substitute, athletic trainer or other team attendant shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner once the game officials assume authority for the game. Examples are, but not limited to:

- Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
NOTE: The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances.
- Attempting to influence a decision by a game official.
- Disrespectfully addressing a game official.
- Indicating objections to a game official's decision.
- Using any illegal communication equipment as outlined in 1-5-3c(2) and 1-6.
- Holding an unauthorized conference.

NOTE: Between downs, communications between players and coaches near the sideline are not considered conferences, as defined in 2-6.

- The failure of a team to:
 - Comply with the restrictions of 3-2-2 at the coin toss or simulated coin toss;
 - Be ready to start the first half;
 - Be on the field following the conclusion of the halftime intermission or be ready to start the second half at the conclusion of the mandatory warm-up period.
- Following pregame verification as in 1-5-4, a coach allowing his/her players to use illegal equipment. (1-5-3)
- Being on the field except as a substitute or replaced player. (3-7-6, 9-6-4a)
- Using alcohol or any form of tobacco product (e-cigarette or similar items).
- Being outside the team box, but not on the field. (9-8-3)
- A substitute leaving the team box during a fight.

ART. 2 . . . Three attendants, none of whom is a coach, may enter the field to attend their team during a charged time-out or a TV/radio time-out, during the one-minute following a try, a successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick, between periods and during an official's time-out for unusual heat and humidity. During a time-out for injury, the coach and/or such attendants as may be deemed necessary by the referee may, with permission, enter to attend the injured player(s). In no other case, except as in 2-6, shall any nonplayer other than an entering substitute enter without the referee's permission.

ART. 3 . . . A nonplayer shall not be outside his team box unless to become a player or to return as a replaced player. A maximum of three coaches may be in the restricted area. No player, nonplayer or coach shall be in the restricted area when the ball is live.

PENALTY: Art. 1a through j – Nonplayer foul – (\$27), (\$7-27 if dead ball) – 15 yards. Arts. 1g and 1h – Nonplayer foul charged to the Head Coach – (\$27), (\$7-27 if dead ball) – 15 yards. Art. 2 – Nonplayer foul – (\$19) – 5 yards, unless repeated – or unsportsmanlike (\$27) – 15 yards. Arts. 1k, 3 – Nonplayer foul – First offense – (\$15) – warning, Second offense – (\$7-29) – 5 yards, Each subsequent offense – (\$7-29-27) – 15 yards; Art. 1l – Nonplayer foul – (\$27-

47) – 15 yards and disqualification. Arts. 1, 2, 3 – Any single foul judged by the game official to be flagrant is disqualification. A second unsportsmanlike foul with a 15-yard penalty results in disqualification. A disqualified member of the coaching staff shall be removed from the stadium area and be prohibited from any further contact, with his team, direct or indirect, during the remainder of the game. For failure to comply, the referee may forfeit the game.

SECTION 9 UNFAIR ACTS

ART. 1 . . . A player or nonplayer or person(s) not subject to the rules shall not hinder play by an unfair act which has no specific rule coverage.

ART. 2 . . . No team shall repeatedly commit fouls which halve the distance to the goal line.

ART. 3 . . . No player shall hide the ball under a jersey.

ART. 4 . . . No player shall use a kicking tee in violation of Rule 1-3-4.

ART. 5 . . . Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 5 – Unfair act – (S27) – the referee enforces any penalty he/she considers equitable, including the award of a score; Art. 2 – Repeated fouls – the game may be forfeited; Art. 3 – Hiding the ball under a jersey – (S27) – 15 yards basic spot; Art. 4 – Using illegal kicking tee (S27) – 15 yards basic spot.

NOTE: The penalties in Rules 9-9-3 and 9-9-4 are not charged to the coach or player for the purpose of unsportsmanlike conduct disqualifications.

Rule 10 Enforcement of Penalties

SECTION 1 PROCEDURE AFTER A FOUL

ART. 1 . . . When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both teams. He shall inform the designated representative of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. In case of a double foul, the designated representative is not consulted since the penalties offset. The choice of options may not be revoked. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted either team.

ART. 2 . . . When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free kick or snap, the covering official shall not permit the ball to become alive. The referee shall notify both teams, and the designated representative of the

offended team will be presented with the options and the effect of acceptance or declination on the down and distance to be gained. The designated representative may accept or decline the penalty.

ART. 3 . . . When a live-ball foul by one team is followed by a dead-ball foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

ART. 4 . . . When the same team commits a live-ball foul followed by one or more dead-ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

ART. 5 . . . Enforcement of a penalty cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the prescribed penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the spot of enforcement to the goal line.

ART. 6 . . . The following fouls by A include loss of the right to replay a down:

- a. Illegally handing the ball forward.
- b. Illegal forward pass.
- c. Illegal touching of forward pass by an ineligible.

ART. 7 . . . The following fouls by B give A an automatic first down:

- a. Roughing the kicker or holder.
- b. Roughing the passer.
- c. Roughing the snapper.

SECTION 2 DOUBLE AND MULTIPLE FOULS

ART. 1 . . . It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, during the same live-ball period in which:

- a. There is no change of team possession, unless all fouls committed by R are post-scrimmage kick fouls; or
- b. There is a change of team possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession unless all fouls committed by R are post-scrimmage kick fouls; or
- c. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul at any time during the down.

In (a), (b) or (c), the penalties cancel and the down is replayed.

ART. 2 . . . If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession and the play does not have a post-scrimmage kick foul, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided:

- a. The foul by the team last gaining possession is not prior to the final change of possession, and
- b. The team last gaining possession declines the penalty for its opponent's foul(s), other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul.

In this case, the team that was not last in possession has no penalty options until the team last in possession has made its penalty decision on the fouls prior to the change of possession. After that decision by the team last in possession, the team not last in possession may decline or accept the penalty for the foul by the team last in possession or choose which penalty to have enforced in the case that the team last in possession committed more than one foul following the change.

ART. 3 . . . If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession and all R fouls are post-scrimmage kick fouls, then R may retain the ball, provided R declines the penalty for K's foul(s), other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In this case, K has no penalty options until R has made its penalty decision. After that decision by R, K may decline or accept the penalty for the foul by R or choose which penalty to have enforced in the case that R committed more than one foul following the change.

ART. 4 . . . When two or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team (multiple fouls), only one penalty may be enforced. The designated representative of the offended team may choose which one shall be administered, or all penalties may be declined. When a team commits a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul during that same down, it is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for the other foul.

ART. 5 . . . Enforcement of penalties for unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball fouls:

- a. Penalties for dead-ball fouls, other than when both teams commit unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls prior to the completion of penalty administration for those fouls, are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. A dead-ball foul is not coupled with a live-ball foul or another dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.
- b. If both teams commit unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls prior to the completion of penalty administration for those fouls, the distance penalty for an equal number of 15-yard unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls will offset. Any remaining penalties will be enforced separately and in the order of occurrence.
- c. A disqualified player or nonplayer shall be removed.

ART. 6 . . . A foul during a try is not paired with a dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

SECTION 3 TYPES OF PLAY

ART. 1 . . . A loose-ball play is action during:

- a. A free kick or scrimmage kick, other than those defined in 2-33-1a.
- b. A legal forward pass.
- c. A backward pass (including the snap), illegal kick or fumble made by A from in or behind the neutral zone and prior to a change of team possession.

NOTE: The run(s) which precedes such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble is (are) considered part of the action during a loose-ball play.

ART. 2 . . . A running play is any action not included under Article 1, other than those defined in 2-33-1a.

ART. 3 . . . The end of the run is:

- a. Where the ball becomes dead in the runner's possession.
- b. Where the runner loses possession if his run is followed by a loose ball.
- c. The spot of the catch or recovery when the momentum rule is in effect.

SECTION 4 BASIC SPOTS

ART. 1 . . . If a foul occurs during a down, the basic spot is determined by the action that occurs during the down. This is the basic spot for penalty enforcement.

ART. 2 . . . The basic spot is the previous spot ~~unless 9-5-2a applies for:~~

- A foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick.
- A foul which occurs during a loose ball play, as defined in 10-3-1. See 10-5-5 for special enforcement on roughing the passer. See 10-5-1b for special enforcement on kick-catching interference.
- A foul which occurs during a down in which a legal kick occurs and an inadvertent whistle ends the down prior to possession by either team.
- A foul by A or B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession;
- A foul by A that occurs behind the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage;
- A foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage; and
- A foul by A or B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage before a change of possession.

EXCEPTION: The basic spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the succeeding spot for fouls by K during a legal free or scrimmage kick down (other than kick catch interference) prior to the end of the kick when K will not be next to put the ball in play.

ART. 3 . . . The basic spot is the spot where the kick ends when R commits a post-scrimmage kick foul (2-16-2h). R fouls behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

ART. 4 . . . The basic spot is the spot of the foul for:

- Illegal batting or illegal kicking when the foul occurs behind the end of the run or related run;
- Illegal participation as in 9-6-4a and 9-6-4g;
- An illegal forward pass as in 7-5-2c and intentional grounding as in 7-5-2d;
- A foul by the team in possession that occurs behind the end of the run or related run following a change of possession;
- When A commits any foul in his end zone for which the penalty is accepted (8-5-2c); and
- A foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when:
 - The run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage; and
 - The foul occurs behind the end of the run or related run.

ART. 5 . . . The basic spot is the succeeding spot for:

- An unsportsmanlike foul.
- A dead-ball foul.
- A nonplayer foul.
- When the final result is a touchback.
- A foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage;
- A foul that occurs beyond the end of the run or related run following a change of possession; and

g. A foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when:

1. The run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage; and
2. The foul occurs in advance of the end of the run or related run.

NOTE: The succeeding spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the subsequent kickoff as in 8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 and 8-2-5.

ART. 6 . . . The basic spot is the 20-yard line for fouls by either team when the opponent of the team in possession at the time of the foul is responsible for forcing the ball across the goal line of the team in possession, and the related run ends in the end zone and is followed by a loose ball, regardless of where the loose ball becomes dead.

ART. 7 . . . The basic spot is the goal line for fouls, which are committed during running plays by the opponent of the team in possession at the time of the foul when the team in possession is responsible for forcing the ball across its own goal line, and the related run ends in the end zone.

ART. 8 . . . The basic spot is the spot where the related run ends for a foul which occurs during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 unless the provisions of 10-4-2 through 10-4-7, or 10-5 apply.

SECTION 5 SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT RULES

ART. 1 . . . The following fouls have special enforcement provisions and options for the offended team:

- a. Free kick out of bounds untouched by R. (6-1-9)
- b. Kick-catching interference. (6-5-6)
- c. Unfair acts. (9-9)
- d. A foul by the opponent of the scoring team on a successful try. (8-3-5)
- e. A foul by the opponents of the scoring team on a successful field goal. (8-4-3)
- f. Fouls that occur during or after a touchdown scoring play. (8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 and 8-2-5)
- g. Roughing the passer. (9-4-4)
- h. Roughing the kicker or holder. (9-4-5)
- i. Roughing the snapper. (9-4-6)
- j. Fouls by K during a free or scrimmage kick down prior to the end of the legal kick. (10-4-2 EXCEPTION)

ART. 2 . . . The enforcement spot for any foul by the defense is the goal line when the run ends in the end zone and would result in a safety.

ART. 3 . . . The score is nullified if the penalty is accepted for a foul, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, by A which occurs during a down resulting in a successful try, field goal or touchdown.

ART. 4 . . . If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind its goal line, it is a safety.

ART. 5 . . . The enforcement spot is the dead ball spot for roughing the passer when the dead ball spot is beyond the neutral zone and there has been no change of team possession.

ART. 6 . . . A disqualified player shall be removed.

TABLE 10-4**SUMMARY OF MANY FOULS THAT CAN OCCUR DURING RUNNING PLAYS AND THEIR PENALTIES AND BASIC SPOTS UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED BY RULE**

Enforcement provisions apply to all player fouls, and the committee philosophy is based on the fact that a team is given the advantage of the distance which is gained without the assistance of a foul. All fouls are penalized from the basic spot unless the spot is otherwise specified by rule.

The type of play has significance if a foul occurs. If a foul does occur, the game officials must know the type of play as defined in 2-33, as this will aid in determining the basic spot of enforcement when the spot is otherwise specified by rule. Recent changes to 10-4 specify the data needed by the game official regarding the spot of the foul and the result of the play to help guide penalty enforcement.

FOUL BY	SPOT OF FOUL	END OF PLAY	BASIC SPOT	REFERENCE
A	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
A	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2e
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2f
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Foul Behind End of Run or Related Run – Spot of Foul	10-4-4d
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Foul Advance of End of Run or Related Run – Succeeding Spot	10-4-5e
B	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
B	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Succeeding Spot	10-4-5f
B	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
B	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Succeeding Spot	10-4-5f

FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS

I. POSSESSION

1. A live ball is always in possession of a team.
2. A live ball is in player possession or is loose.
3. A loose ball is in possession of the team whose player was last in possession.
4. A player in possession of a live ball is a runner.
5. A player cannot fumble before gaining possession.
6. No foul causes loss of the ball.
7. After a distance penalty, the ball belongs to the team which was in possession at the time of the foul according to applicable rules. Team possession may then change if a new series is awarded.
8. Possession of a live ball in the opponent's end zone is always a touchdown.

II. DOWNS

1. A down begins when the ball becomes live and ends when it becomes dead.
2. Whether the next down will be first is determined at the time the ball becomes dead and after considering the effect of any act, except a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul, which occurred during the down.
3. If R is first to touch a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone, a new series will be awarded the team in possession at end of the down, unless there was a foul before the kick and the penalty was accepted, or there was a double foul or there was an inadvertent whistle during the kick following the touching by R.
4. The only defensive fouls which automatically cause a first down are roughing the kicker or placekick holder, roughing the passer and roughing the snapper.
5. If the penalty is accepted for any live ball foul by either team during a down in which time expires, the period must be extended by an untimed down, except for unsportsmanlike fouls, nonplayer fouls, fouls that specify a loss of down, or fouls as specified in 3-3-4.
6. No series can ever start on a down other than first.

III. DEAD BALL

1. A game official's whistle seldom kills the ball. It is already dead by rule.
2. No live-ball foul causes the ball to become dead.
3. A dead ball may become live only by a legal snap or free kick.
4. Catching is always preceded by touching of the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance.

IV. KICKS – GENERAL

1. A kick always ends as soon as any player secures possession.
2. Any R player may catch or recover a kick and advance unless a valid or invalid fair-catch signal has been given by any R player.
3. If a legal kick is caught in or beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line on a free kick and beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line on a scrimmage kick by a receiver after he has signaled for a fair catch, it is a fair catch and the ball becomes dead as soon as it is caught.
4. A fair catch may be made of any free kick which is in or beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line or a scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone to R's goal.

5. Any kick which is not a scoring attempt becomes dead when it breaks the plane of R's goal line.
6. No kick may legally be batted unless it is an attempt to block the kick in or behind the neutral zone, or if a grounded scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone is batted by K toward his own goal line, or if a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone is batted by K toward his own goal line or caught by K when no player of R is in position to catch the ball.
7. First touching of a kick by K is always ignored if the penalty is accepted for a foul during the down.

V. FREE KICKS

1. The rules for the three free kicks are the same. Exception: a kickoff or a free kick following a safety cannot score a field goal.
2. Free-kick lines are always 10 yards apart.
3. A free kick is not repeated unless a foul occurs and the penalty acceptance requires a replay of the down or there was a double foul.

VI. SCRIMMAGE KICKS

1. Touching of a low scrimmage kick by any player is ignored if it occurs in or behind the expanded neutral zone. Such touching may cause the ball to go out of bounds.
2. A scrimmage kick recovered in or behind the neutral zone may be advanced by K or R, unless it is during a try.

VII. PASSES

1. A player who is eligible at the start of the down remains eligible throughout the down.
2. Ineligible A players may not advance beyond the expanded neutral zone on a legal forward pass play before a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone is in flight. If B touches the pass in or behind the neutral zone, this restriction is terminated.
3. A handed ball is not a pass.
4. Any pass in flight may be batted in any direction by an eligible receiver unless it is a backward pass batted forward by the passing team.
5. A forward-pass interference foul can occur only beyond the neutral zone.

VIII. BLOCKING

1. Blocking by either team is permissible, unless it is kick-catching interference or pass interference, a personal foul or an illegal block.

IX. FOULS

1. No live-ball foul causes the covering official to sound his whistle immediately.
2. A live-ball foul followed by a foul by the opponents after the ball becomes dead is not paired as a double foul.
3. It is a foul to bat any loose ball which has touched the ground, except K may bat a grounded scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone toward his own goal line and may bat a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone toward his own goal line when no player of R is in position to catch the ball.
4. A foul during a try is not paired with a dead-ball foul to make a double or multiple foul.
5. A double foul results only when both teams commit fouls, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, during the same live-ball period or if team possession changed

during the down and the foul by the team in final possession was prior to the change or if there were a change of possession and the team in final possession accepted the penalty for its opponent's foul.

6. While it is possible to have several running plays during a down, with each one having its own basic spot for penalty enforcement, there can only be one loose-ball play during a down.

X. PENALTY MEASUREMENT

1. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined.
2. Penalties are either 5, 10 or 15 yards.
3. ~~Any live-ball foul is penalized from the basic spot per 10-4 unless otherwise specified by rule.~~
4. Penalty enforcement for any dead ball, nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul is from the succeeding spot unless the foul occurs on a scoring play and the scoring team chooses enforcement on the kickoff per 8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 or 8-2-5.
5. The penalty for any one of the four illegal passes is a loss of 5 yards and the down is counted except for a forward pass following change of team possession.
6. No penalty directly results in a safety, but if a distance penalty is enforced from behind the offender's goal line toward his end line, it is a safety.
7. The penalty for a live-ball foul by the defensive team is administered from the basic spot, except when that spot is in the end zone.
8. The loss of down aspect of a penalty has no significance following a change of possession or if the line to gain is reached after enforcement.

RESOLVING TIED GAMES

Each state association, in accordance with Rule 3-1-1, may adopt a procedure by which it allows games tied after the fourth period to be resolved. The following is one possible procedure which would allow for ties to be broken. This procedure may be accepted as written, amended, or rejected, in whole or part, by each member state association.

An overtime period is untimed play after a regulation game has ended with the score tied. During an overtime period each team has an opportunity for an offensive series of downs. However, an overtime period may include only one offensive series of downs if the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown.

3-1: When the score is tied at the end of the fourth period, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a three-minute intermission during which both teams may confer with their coaches. All game officials will assemble at the 50-yard line, review the overtime procedure, and discuss how penalties, if any, including any carry-over penalties from the regulation game will be assessed to start the overtime procedure. (8-3-5, 8-3-6) At the end of the three-minute intermission, the head linesman will go to the team on the side of the field where the line to gain equipment is located and the line judge will go to the other team. They will inform the coaches of any special penalty enforcements that apply.

3-2-1: At the coin toss in the center of the field the visiting-team's captain shall be given the privilege of choosing "heads" or "tails" before the coin is tossed. The winner of the toss shall be given his choice of defense or offense first, or of designating the end of the field at which the ball will be put in play for this set of downs. The loser will have his choice of the other options. The referee will indicate the winner of the toss by placing a hand on his shoulder. To indicate which team will go on offense, the referee will have that captain face the goal toward which his team will advance and indicate this with the first-down signal. The other team captain will face the offensive captain with his back toward the goal he will defend.

3-5-1: Each team shall be permitted one time-out during each overtime period (a series for A and a series for B). The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime shall be declared the winner. The final score shall be determined by totaling all points scored by each team during both regulation time and overtime periods.

5-1-1: To start the overtime, the offensive team shall put the ball in play, first and goal, on the defensive team's 10-yard line or succeeding spot if carry-over penalty has been administered (15-yard line for six-player football) anywhere between the hash marks. The first offensive team shall have a series of four downs. That series shall be terminated by any score by the offensive team or if the defensive team has possession of the ball.

A field-goal attempt is permitted during any down.

If the defensive team gains possession, the ball becomes dead immediately and the offensive team's series of downs is ended.

After the first team on offense has completed its series of downs, the first team on defense will become the offensive team with the ball in its possession at the same 10-yard line anywhere between the hash marks.

The same end of the field will be used for possessions by both teams during the two sets of downs to ensure equal game conditions and conserve time.

If the score remains tied after each team has been given one series of downs in an overtime period, then the procedure shall be repeated with other overtime periods until a game winner is determined. In this case, there shall be an intermission of two minutes. At the

subsequent meeting of team captains, the loser of the overtime coin toss will be given first choice of the options. If additional overtime periods are required, then first options will be alternated with no coin toss.

5-1-3: If a safety is scored by the offensive team, the succeeding spot will be the 10-yard line in possession of the team that was on defense, provided the defensive team has not had its series of downs (the temporary overtime score is: Team A-2; Team B-0).

When the defensive team gains possession of the ball, the down and series immediately end for the offensive team.

5-2-1: The offensive team shall be awarded a new series of downs when any one of the following occurs:

a. Offensive team recovers a scrimmage kick (field-goal attempt) between the goal lines after it has been touched first by the defensive team beyond the neutral zone.

b. Defensive team is guilty of roughing the kicker, place-kick holder, snapper or passer.

5-3-1: The line to gain is always the goal line regardless of whether or not a penalty enforcement places the ball more than 10 yards from the goal line to start a new series.

8-1: If the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown, the game is ended.

8-3: If the team on offense scores a touchdown, it is entitled to the opportunity for a try unless the points would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

10-4-3: Post scrimmage kick enforcement is not applicable in this procedure.

RESOLVING TIED GAMES INTERPRETATIONS

(For those state associations utilizing the procedure as written)

3.1.1 SITUATION A: On fourth down in overtime play, A scores a touchdown. After the score, but before the try, B1 commits an unsportsmanlike foul. **RULING:** The penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot on the try. Nonplayer fouls, nonplayer unsportsmanlike fouls and dead-ball fouls are penalized on the succeeding spot.

3.1.1 SITUATION B: During the down in which time expires for the fourth period, A1 advances for a touchdown making the score B-22 and A-20. On the try A2 passes complete to A3 in the end zone. Following the try B1 commits an unsportsmanlike foul. **RULING:** The penalty for the foul by B1 after the successful try will be administered from the succeeding spot to begin overtime play. **COMMENT:** In this situation the referee should explain to the captains at the time of the coin toss the fact the penalty will be administered on the first series of downs in the overtime. The place from which the ball will be put in play for each team could have an effect on the choice made by the winner of the toss.

3.1.1 SITUATION C: When the regulation game ends in a tie, the teams use the recommended tie-breaking procedure. A wins the toss and elects to take the ball. A1 scores on the third down. After A1 crosses the goal line: (a) A2 clips B1; or (b) B1 strikes A2. **RULING:** Dead-ball fouls in both (a) and (b). The score counts and the penalties in both (a) and (b) are enforced on the try, because that is the succeeding spot.

3.1.1 SITUATION D: On third and 4 in overtime play, B recovers a fumble or intercepts a pass. **RULING:** The down ends as soon as B1 recovers or intercepts. In both cases the series of downs is ended for A.

3.1.1 SITUATION E: On third and 6 in overtime play Team A attempts a field goal. The attempt is not successful and B recovers on the 1-yard line. **RULING:** The down ends when B1 recovers. The series is ended for A.

3.1.1 SITUATION F: The fourth period ends during a scoring play. During the successful 2-point try, B9 is called for pass interference. A accepts the result of the play, which ties the score and chooses to have the penalty assessed at the succeeding spot. **RULING:** This is correct. Since A, by rule, can choose succeeding spot enforcement, and the try was successful, A will likely take enforcement at the succeeding spot to begin overtime. Game officials must be certain to explain the options clearly, not only during penalty administration, but also during the overtime coin toss.

3.1.1 SITUATION G: In overtime play with third and goal from B's 4-yard line, B1 interferes during a forward pass. **RULING:** If the penalty is accepted it will be third and goal for A on B's 2-yard line.

3.1.1 SITUATION H: In overtime play on second down from the 8-yard line, B1 commits pass interference. **RULING:** Second down for A on the 4-yard line if the penalty is accepted.

3.1.1 SITUATION I: In overtime play, (a) On second; or (b) fourth down from the 9-yard line, A1 interferes on an incomplete forward pass. **RULING:** In (a) it is A's ball second down from its 24-yard line. In (b) B will decline the penalty and take the ball on the 10-yard line.

3.1.1 SITUATION J: At the end of the regulation game the score is tied, 7-7. It was previously announced that the recommended tie-breaking procedure would be followed. Immediately after the last down of the fourth period A1 strikes B1. **RULING:** A1 will be disqualified and may not participate during the overtime period. The penalty for A1's foul will be administered from the succeeding spot. If B is the first to put the ball in play it will be from the 5-yard line. If A is the first to put the ball in play it will be from the 25-yard line.

3.1.1 SITUATION K: At the beginning of the overtime, A wins the toss and elects to go on offense. On first down, B1 intercepts a pass, but then fumbles and A1 recovers. **RULING:** The ball became dead and A's series ended immediately when B1 intercepted. A1 recovered a dead ball. B will put the ball in play to start its series of four downs, first and goal from anywhere between the inbound lines on the 10-yard line.

3.1.1 SITUATION L: During the down in which time expires for the fourth period, A scores a touchdown to make the score 14-13. During the successful kick try, B1 roughs the kicker/holder. **RULING:** If A accepts the score, the penalty is enforced to start the overtime, if an overtime is played. If A accepts the penalty, the try will be replayed from the 1½-yard line. (2-41-10, 8-3-5)

3.1.1 SITUATION M: During an overtime period, it is fourth and goal from the 6-yard line. During A's unsuccessful field-goal attempt, B1 charges into the place-kick holder. **RULING:** It will be first and goal for A at the 3-yard line following enforcement of the roughing penalty which also includes an automatic first down.

3.1.1 SITUATION N: Following a scoreless first overtime period, the captain of B chooses to play the second overtime period at the opposite end of the field. **RULING:** This is permissible, as it is one of the options to begin each overtime period.

3.1.1 SITUATION O: During the first overtime period, A chooses to go on offense first and scores a touchdown on the third play of the series. During the successful kick try, the holder is roughed by B1. A accepts the successful kick try. **RULING:** Since A accepted the result of the play, B will be penalized from the succeeding spot. B will start its overtime series from the 25-yard line after the penalty for roughing the holder is enforced. (10-5-2)

3.1.1 SITUATION P: In overtime play with fourth and goal from B's 24-yard line, B1 interferes during a legal forward pass. **RULING:** Fourth down and goal for A on the 12-yard line if the penalty is accepted.

3.1.1 SITUATION Q: During the first overtime period, Team A: (a) scores on its first series; or (b) is stopped short of the goal line on its first series. Following the first series, Team A huddles near its sideline with all players from the previous play remaining inbounds. Team B reports to the 10-yard line of scrimmage ready to begin its series. Team A remains at the sideline when the ready-for-play signal is given by the referee. **RULING:** In (a), because there was a score, there is a one-minute intermission after the try. In (b), the series begins immediately following the change of A and B to respective sides of the line of scrimmage without a break. The covering official should not allow the ball to be put in play, and should assess a delay of game foul on Team A to prevent a travesty. (3-5-7f, 3-6-2f)

NINE-, EIGHT- AND SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES

PREFACE: When "11 players" is used in the rules book it should be understood 11 would be replaced with the number of players participating (nine, eight, six).

NINE-PLAYER

GENERAL: Eleven-player rules are used for nine-player football with these listed modifications.

RULE 1: Each team has nine players. The field is 80 yards between goal lines and 40 yards wide with 48 feet 4 inches side zones. 7-yard marks, 12 inches in length and 4 inches in width, shall be located 7 yards from each sideline. The 7-yard marks shall be marked so that at least each 10-yard line bisects the 7-yard marks. These marks shall not be required if the field is visibly numbered. If on-the-field numbers are used, the tops of those numbers shall be 7 yards from the sideline. By state association adoption, the 11-player field may be designated as official, and the dimensions of the field may be altered.

RULE 2: The free-blocking zone is a square area extending laterally 3 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage.

RULE 2: The Outside 9-Yard Mark and Between 9-Yard Mark Conferences shall be held outside or between the 7-yard marks, respectively.

RULE 6: a. K's free-kick line is its 30-yard line and R's free-kick line is the 40.

b. K is required to have at least three players on each side of the kicker.

RULE 7: a. At least three A players shall be on the line at the snap and may have any legal jersey number.

b. After the ball is ready for play, each player of A who participated in the previous down, and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, between the 7-yard marks, before the snap.

c. Each A player (regardless of jersey number) who at the snap was on the end of the scrimmage line (total of two) and each A player who was at the snap was legally behind the scrimmage line (maximum of four) is eligible. There are no numbering requirements.

RULE 10: The basic spot for a foul as in 10-4-6 shall be the 15-yard line.

EIGHT-PLAYER

GENERAL: Eleven-player rules are used for eight-player football with these listed modifications.

RULE 1: Each team has 8 players. The field is 80 yards between goal lines and 40 yards wide with 15-yard side zones. 7-yard marks, 12 inches in length and 4 inches in width, shall be located 7 yards from each sideline. The 7-yard marks shall be marked so that at least each 10-yard line bisects the 7-yard marks. These marks shall not be required if the field is visibly numbered. If on-the-field numbers are used, the tops of those numbers shall be 7 yards from the sideline. By state association adoption, the 11-player field may be designated as official, and the dimensions of the field may be altered.

RULE 2: The free-blocking zone is a square area extending laterally 3 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage.

RULE 2: The Outside 9-Yard Mark and Between 9-Yard Mark Conferences shall be held outside or between the 7-yard marks, respectively.

RULE 6: a. K's free-kick line is its 30-yard line and R's free-kick line is the 40.

b. K is required to have at least three players on each side of the kicker.

RULE 7: a. At least three A players shall be on their line at the snap and may have any legal jersey number.

b. After the ball is ready for play, each player of A who participated in the previous down, and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, between the 7-yard marks, before the snap.

c. Each A player (regardless of jersey number) who at the snap was on an end of the scrimmage line (total of two) and each A player who at the snap was legally behind the scrimmage line (maximum of three) is eligible.

RULE 8: On the eight-player field, the ball is snapped after a touchback and is free kicked after a safety from the 15-yard line.

RULE 10: The basic spot for a foul as in 10-4-6 shall be the 15-yard line.

SIX-PLAYER

GENERAL: Eleven-player rules are used for six-player football with these listed modifications.

RULE 1 and 2: Offense must advance 15 yards instead of 10 in four downs.

RULE 1: Each team has 6 players. The field is 80 yards between goal lines and 40 yards wide with 15-yard side zones. 7-yard marks, 12 inches in length and 4 inches in width, shall be located 7 yards from each sideline. The 7-yard marks shall be marked so that at least each 10-yard line bisects the 7-yard marks. These marks shall not be required if the field is visibly numbered. If on-the-field numbers are used, the tops of those numbers shall be 7 yards from the sideline. By state association adoption, the 11-player field may be designated as official, and the dimensions of the field may be altered.

RULE 2: The free-blocking zone is a square area extending laterally 3 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage.

RULE 2: The Outside 9-Yard Mark and Between 9-Yard Mark Conferences shall be held outside or between the 7-yard marks, respectively.

RULE 2 and 7: While in player possession, unless the ball is kicked or forward passed, it may not be advanced across the line of scrimmage until after a direct handoff or pass has been made by the snap receiver. If this occurs, the ball remains live and the penalty is a loss of down at the previous spot. If a forward pass is thrown to the snapper, it must travel at least 1 yard in flight.

RULE 3: Length of periods – 10 minutes.

- RULE 6:**
- K's free-kick line is its 30-yard line and R's free-kick line is the 40.
 - K is required to have at least two players on each side of the kicker.

RULE 7: At least three A players shall be on their line of scrimmage at the snap and may have any legal jersey number.

- RULE 7:**
- After the ball is ready for play, each player of A who participated in the previous down, and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, between the 7-yard marks, before the snap.
 - Ball may be handed in any direction during a kickoff down and during a scrimmage down after a direct handoff, clear pass, a legal forward pass or kick has been made.
 - If a fumble occurs before there has been a direct handoff or clear pass and if a player of A recovers it, he may not carry it beyond the line.
 - When a passer catches his own pass it is ruled as incomplete unless it was touched by any B player.
 - All players are eligible to catch a forward pass, except that a pass is ruled incomplete when caught by the passer (7-5-4).
 - It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass if:
 - The passer has been beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap; and
 - The pass reaches the neutral zone including the extension beyond the sideline.
 - A direct forward handoff may be made during a scrimmage down before a change of possession, provided both players are in or behind the neutral zone unless it is to the snapper.

- RULE 8:**
- Field goal counts 4 points. Try for point 2 points if successful through place or drop kick and 1 point if successful by pass or scrimmage.
 - On the six-player field, the ball is snapped after a touchback and is free kicked after a safety from the 15-yard line. Overtime: To start an overtime the ball will be put in play first and goal on B's 15-yard line.

- RULE 10:**
- If B fouls during a successful kick try, the penalty is automatically enforced from the succeeding spot.
 - The basic spot for a foul as in 10-4-6 shall be the 15-yard line.

COMMENTS ON THE 2023 RULES CHANGES

Clarified That Towels Do Not Have To Be The Same Solid Color For Each Player [1-5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW)] — Player towels may contain one manufacturer's logo and/or one school logo neither exceeding 2¼ square inches. Towels must be a solid color but now do not have to be the same solid color for each player. Towels may not be ball- or penalty-flag colored.

Clarified When A Player Is Inbounds After Being Out of Bounds [2-29-1] — This change clarifies when a player is inbounds after being out of bounds. There is no change to any foul or subsequent penalty provisions, or any rules related to illegal participation or the provisions regarding eligibility to catch a pass.

Added A List Of Criteria To Help Identify Players Who Should Be Defined As Defenseless Receivers [2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g] — This change adds to the list of criteria to help identify players who should be defined as defenseless receivers related to application of unnecessary or excessive contact. This clarification should help game officials and coaches by defining allowable contact against defenseless receivers.

Intentional Grounding Exception Changed [7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5-2 d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5 (1)d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW)] — This change permits the exception for intentional grounding to the first and only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.

Removed "Intentional" From Pass Interference in TABLE 7-5 [TABLE 7-5 2c (DELETED), 7-5 PENALTY] — By removing "intentional" from pass interference, this change puts the rule in line with how it is already enforced which is a 15-yard penalty.

Changes In Basic Spot Penalty Enforcement [10-4, TABLE 10-4 (NEW), 10-6 (DELETED)] — This change restructures and clarifies the amendments to Rule 10 to eliminate the excessive penalty enforcements for offensive fouls that occur behind the line of scrimmage. This revision stipulates the basic spot for enforcement of fouls behind the line of scrimmage is the previous spot rather than the spot of the foul unless otherwise specified by rule. Current penalties for illegal kicking, batting and participation fouls, and provisions for offensive fouls occurring in the end zone that may result in a safety remain intact.

Clarification On The Ball Being Handed Forward On A Running Play [Six-Player – Rule 7g (NEW)] — The change allows the ball to be handed forward on a running play, including to the guards/ends, while prohibiting handing the ball to the snapper provided both players are behind the neutral zone.
























PENALTY SUMMARY

LOSS OF 5 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Delay of game	3-6-2, 3-6-4, 6-5-5	7-21
Illegal substitution	3-7	22
Free-kick infraction	6-1-2, 6-1-3b, 6-1-4, 6-1-11	7-19
Encroachment	6-1-3a, 7-1-1, 7-1-5, 7-1-6	7-18
Free kick out of bounds	6-1-9	19
Invalid or illegal fair-catch signal	6-5-7, 6-5-8	32
Snap infraction	7-1-2, 7-1-3	7-19
False start	7-1-7	7-19
Disconcerting act	7-1-9	7-23
Illegal formation	7-2-1, 7-2-2, 7-2-3	19
Less than five players on A's line or numbering violation	7-2-5	19
Illegal shift or illegal motion	7-2-6, 7-2-7	20
Planned loose-ball infraction	7-2-8	19
Illegally handing ball forward (also loss of down)	7-3-2, 7-3-3	35-9
Illegal forward pass (by A; also loss of down)	7-5-2	35-9
Illegal forward pass (by B)	7-5-2	35
Intentional grounding (also loss of down)	7-5-2d	36-9
Ineligible receiver illegally downfield	7-5-12	37
Illegal touching (also loss of down)	7-5-13	16-9
Helping runner	9-1	44
Incidental grasping of an opponent's face mask (or any helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector)	9-4-3	45
Running into kicker/holder	9-4-5	30
Sideline interference	9-8-1k	7-29
Attendant illegally on field	9-8-2	19
Nonplayer outside of the team box, but not on field	9-8-3	7-29
LOSS OF 10 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Illegal kicking or batting the ball	6-2-1, 9-7	31
Illegal blocking technique	9-2-1a, 9-2-3a	42
Interlocked blocking	9-2-1b	44
Holding	9-2-1c; 9-2-3c, e	42
Runner grasping a teammate	9-2-2	42
Illegal use of hands or arms	9-2-1a; 9-2-2; 9-2-3a, b, d	42
Illegal block in the back	9-3-5	43
Illegal block on free kicks	9-3-7	43

LOSS OF 15 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Unsportsmanlike conduct by player or nonplayer	9-5, 9-8-1	27
Illegal helmet contact against a defenseless player	2-32-16, 9-4-3i(3)	38-24
Illegal block after valid or invalid fair-catch signal	6-5-1, 9-3-3	43
Kick-catching interference	6-5-6	33
Forward-pass interference	7-5-10	33
Illegal block below the waist	9-3-2	40
Illegal block on free-kicker or holder	9-3-4	30
Clipping	9-3-6	39
Chop block	9-3-6	41
Tripping	9-4-3o	38-46
Illegal personal contact outside restricted area	9-4-3	38
Charging into an opponent obviously out of the play	9-4-3	38
Grasping an opponent's face mask (or any helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector)	9-4-3	38-45
Hurdle an opponent	9-4-3d	38
Butt block, face tackle or spear (Illegal Helmet Contact)	9-4-3i	38-24
Horse-collar	9-4-3	38-25
Initiate contact with a helmet-less opponent	9-4-3	38
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Roughing kicker or holder (also first down)	9-4-5	38-30-8
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DISQUALIFICATION ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN 15-YARD PENALTIES		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Fighting by player or nonplayer	9-4-1	38-47
Intentionally contacting a game official	9-4-2	38-47
Striking, kicking, kneeling	9-4-3j	38-47
Any act if unduly rough or flagrant (give proper signal and follow with 47)	9-4	47
A second unsportsmanlike foul by player or nonplayer	9-5, 9-8	27-47
A substitute leaving team box during a fight	9-8-1l	27-47









NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS

<p>1 Ball ready for play *Untimed down</p>  	<p>2 Start clock</p> 	<p>3 Time-out Discretionary or injury time-out (followed by tapping hands on chest)</p> 		
<p>4 TV/radio time-out</p> 	<p>5 Touchdown, Field goal, Point(s) after touchdown</p> 	<p>6 Safety</p> 	<p>7 Dead ball foul, Touchback (move side to side)</p> 	
<p>8 First down</p> 	<p>9 Loss of down</p> 	<p>10 Incomplete forward pass Penalty declined No play, no score Toss option deferred</p> 	<p>11 Legal touching of forward pass or scrimmage kick</p> 	<p>12 Inadvertent whistle</p> 
<p>13 Disregard flag</p> 	<p>14 End of period</p> 	<p>15 Sideline warning</p> 	<p>16 First touching Illegal touching</p> 	<p>17 Reset play clock to 25 seconds (Use both hands to have play clock reset to 40 seconds)</p> 
<p>18 Encroachment</p> 	<p>19 False start Illegal formation Free kick infraction</p> 	<p>20 Illegal shift (2 hands) Illegal motion (1 hand)</p> 	<p>21 Delay of game</p> 	<p>22 Substitution infraction</p> 



NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS

23 Disconcerting act 	24 Illegal helmet contact Targeting 	25 Illegal horse-collar tackle 	26 Illegal blindside block 	27 Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul 
28 Illegal participation 	29 Sideline interference (Face press box) 	30 Running into or knocking kicker or holder 	31 Illegal batting/kicking (Followed by pointing toward toe for kicking) 	32 Invalid fair catch Illegal fair catch signal 
33 Forward pass interference Kick catching interference 	34 Roughing passer 	35 Illegal pass/forward handing (Face press box) 	36 Intentional grounding 	37 Ineligible downfield on pass 
38 Personal foul 	39 Clipping 	40 Blocking below waist 	41 Chop block 	42 Holding/obstruction Illegal use of hands/arms 
43 Illegal block 	44 Helping runner interlocking blocking 	45 Grasping face mask or helmet opening 	46 	47 Disqualification 



National Federation of State High School Associations

MISSION STATEMENT

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) serves its members by providing leadership for the administration of education-based high school athletics and activities through the writing of playing rules that emphasize health and safety, educational programs that develop leaders, and administrative support to increase participation opportunities and promote sportsmanship.

CORE BELIEFS AND VALUES

WE BELIEVE

Student participation in education-based high school athletics and activities:

- Is a privilege.
- Enriches the educational experience.
- Encourages academic achievement.
- Promotes respect, integrity and sportsmanship.
- Prepares for the future in a global community.
- Develops leadership and life skills.
- Fosters the inclusion of diverse populations.
- Promotes healthy lifestyles and safe competition.
- Encourages positive school/community culture.
- Should be fun.

THE NFHS:

- Serves as the national authority that promotes and protects the defining values of education-based high school athletics and activities in collaboration with its member state associations.
- Serves as the national authority on competition rules while promoting fair play and seeking to minimize risk of injury for student participants in education-based high school athletics and activities.
- Promotes lifelong health and safety values through participation.
- Develops and delivers impactful, innovative and engaging educational programs to serve the changing needs of state associations, administrators, coaches, directors, officials, students and parents.
- Provides professional development opportunities for member state association staffs.
- Promotes cooperation, collaboration and communication with and among state associations.
- Collects and provides data analysis in order to allow its membership to make informed decisions.



National Federation of State High School Associations

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION IN SPORTS

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION INCLUDE:

- Dazed or stunned appearance;
- Confusion about assignment or position;
- Forgetfulness;
- Uncertainty of game, score, or opponent;
- Clumsy movements;
- Slow response to questions;
- Mood, behavior or personality changes;
- Can't recall events prior to or after hit or fall;
- Headache or "pressure" in head;
- Nausea;
- Balance problems or dizziness;
- Double or blurry vision;
- Sensitivity to light or noise;
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy;
- Concentration or memory problems;
- Emotions of "not feeling right" or "feeling down."

Activate the Emergency Medical System or Call 9-1-1 if, after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, an athlete has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other;
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up;
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away;
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination;
- Repeated vomiting or nausea;
- Convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching);
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation;
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously.

SUGGESTED CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT:

1. No athlete should return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional as soon as possible.
3. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
4. After medical clearance, RTP should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based upon return of any signs or symptoms at rest, while doing school work or with physical activity.

For further details, please see the "NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports" at www.nfhs.org.



National Federation of State High School Associations

EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

1. Each NFHS sports rules committee is responsible for recommending the official playing rules to the NFHS Board of Directors for adoption. The committee is NOT responsible for testing or approving playing equipment for use in interscholastic sports. Equipment manufacturers are responsible for the development of playing equipment that meets the specifications established by the committee, and that is otherwise of good design and quality. The NFHS urges manufacturers to work with the various independent testing agencies to ensure the production of safe products. Neither the NFHS nor the applicable NFHS sport rules committee certifies the safety of any sport equipment. Non-compliant equipment is inappropriate for use in competition under NFHS sports rules. While the committee does not regulate the development of new equipment and does not set technical or scientific standards for testing equipment, the committee may, from time to time, provide manufacturers with guidance as to the equipment-performance levels it considers consistent with the integrity of the game. The committee reserves the right to intercede to protect and maintain that integrity.
2. Each NFHS sport rules committee suggests that manufacturers planning innovative changes in sports equipment submit the equipment to the applicable NFHS sport rules editor and/or rules committee for review before production.
3. Protective headgear is required by NFHS rules in some sports and is permissive in others. Hard helmets can decrease the incidence of certain head trauma, such as skull fractures and subdural hematomas. Soft headgear may protect against cuts and bruises to the scalp and forehead. Coaches, athletes and parents/guardians should review the manufacturers' warnings about proper usage and performance limits of such products. **No helmet or headgear can eliminate the risk of concussion and all sports should be played, coached and officiated in recognition of that fact.**



National Federation of State High School Associations

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS HYGIENE, SKIN INFECTIONS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Proper precautions are needed to minimize the potential risk of the spread of communicable disease and skin infections during athletic competition. These conditions include skin infections that occur due to skin contact with competitors and equipment. The transmission of infections such as Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and Herpes Gladiatorum, blood-borne pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B, and other infectious diseases such as Influenza and COVID-19 can often be greatly reduced through proper hygiene. The NFHS SMAC has outlined and listed below some general guidelines for the prevention of the spread of these diseases.

UNIVERSAL HYGIENE PROTOCOL FOR ALL SPORTS:

- Shower immediately after every competition and practice, using liquid soap and not a shared bar soap;
- Wash all workout clothing after each practice, washing in hot water and drying on a high heat setting;
- Clean and/or wash all personal gear (knee pads, head gear, braces, etc.) and gym bags at least weekly;
- Do not share towels or personal hygiene products (razors) with others;
- Refrain from full body and/or cosmetic shaving of head, chest, arms, legs, abdomen, and groin;
- Students should clean hands with an alcohol-based gel or soap and water before and after every practice and contest to decrease bacterial load on the hands;
- Covering up coughs and sneezes in the bend of the elbow instead of the hand;
- Stay home from school and athletic participation if frequent cough, diarrhea, vomiting or fever.

INFECTIOUS SKIN DISEASES

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these infectious agents include:

- Students must notify a parent/guardian and coach of any skin lesion prior to any competition or practice. An appropriate health-care professional must evaluate all concerning skin lesions before returning to practices or competition;
- If an outbreak occurs on a team, especially in a contact sport, all team members should be evaluated to help prevent the potential spread of the infection. All shared equipment shall be properly cleaned/disinfected prior to use;
- Coaches, officials, and appropriate health-care professionals must follow NFHS or state/local guidelines on "time until return to competition." Participation with a covered lesion may be considered if in accordance with NFHS, state or local guidelines and the lesion is no longer contagious.

BLOOD-BORNE INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these agents include following Universal Precautions such as:

- A student who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on a uniform, or has blood on their body, shall be directed to leave the activity (game or practice) until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to activity;
- Athletic trainers or other caregivers must wear gloves and use Universal Precautions to prevent blood or body fluid-splash from contaminating themselves or others;
- In the event of a blood or body fluid-splash, immediately wash contaminated skin or mucous membranes with soap and water. Skin antiseptics (e.g., isopropyl alcohol) or moist towelettes may be used if soap and water not available;
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with disinfectant before returning to competition. Be sure to use gloves when cleaning;
- Blood on an opponent's uniform during competition or teammate's uniform during practice should be cleaned at that time by wiping with a disinfectant such as isopropyl alcohol;
- Any blood exposure or bites to the skin that break the surface must be reported and immediately evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Means of reducing the potential exposure to these agents include:

- Make certain that students, coaching staff, and medical staff are current on all required vaccinations (MMR, Hepatitis B, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Hepatitis A). COVID-19 vaccine and yearly influenza vaccine are strongly encouraged;
- During times of outbreaks, follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC as well as State and local Health Departments.

For more detailed information, refer to the "Blood-Borne Pathogens," "Infectious Mononucleosis" and "Skin Conditions and Infections" sections contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

Revised and Approved in January 2022



National Federation of State High School Associations

GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:
 - a. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
 - b. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - d. When independently validated lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.

* – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

4. Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
5. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season.



National Federation of State High School Associations

COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect and the student's welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the NFHS Board of Directors:

- **Coaches** shall be aware that they have a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- **Coaches** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators and staff, the state high school athletic association, the media, parents, and the public, coaches shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct. Communication with all parties should be wholesome, appropriate and positive.
- **Coaches** shall respect and support contest officials. Coaches shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical and inappropriate.
- **Coaches** shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol, tobacco and other substance abuse.
- **Coaches** shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.
- **Coaches** shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct the program in harmony with the total school program.
- **Coaches** shall master the contest rules and shall teach the rules to their team members.
- **Coaches** shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- **Coaches** shall utilize their positive influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, other school club sponsors, booster clubs and administrators.
- **Coaches** shall promote a culture that encourages diversity and inclusion.
- **Coaches** shall ensure they familiarize themselves and their teams with their schools' emergency action plans and, where applicable, with concussion and heat illness prevention plans.
- **Coaches** should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the positive example and correct tone for the event before and after the contest.
- **Coaches** shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give students special consideration.
- **Coaches** shall not scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school association.



National Federation of State High School Associations

OFFICIALS CODE OF ETHICS

Officials at an interscholastic athletic event are participants in the educational development of high school students. As such, they must exercise a high level of self-discipline, independence and responsibility. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all interscholastic officials.

- **Officials** shall master both the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
- **Officials** shall work with each other and their state associations in a constructive and cooperative manner.
- **Officials** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interaction with student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public. This includes, but is not limited to, positive verbal and nonverbal communication with coaches, bench personnel and players.
- **Officials** shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products beginning with the arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the contest.
- **Officials** shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately, and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
- **Officials** shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
- **Officials** shall remain mindful that their conduct influences the respect that student-athletes, coaches and the public hold for the profession.
- **Officials** shall, while enforcing the rules of play, remain aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to student-athletes. Where appropriate, officials shall inform event management of conditions or situations that appear unreasonably hazardous.
- **Officials** shall take reasonable steps to educate themselves in the recognition of emergency conditions that might arise during the course of competition.
- **Officials** shall maintain an ethical approach while participating in forums, chat rooms and all forms of social media.



National Federation of State High School Associations

MODIFICATIONS FOR COMPETITION BELOW NINTH GRADE

Interscholastic competition at the middle school/junior high level can make valuable contributions to educational programming, provided the sport is properly organized, supervised and regulated. Students in this particular age group have unique physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs. In order to minimize risk of injury, it may be necessary to modify regulations to offer meaningful competition for different groups.

These recommended modifications are for middle school/junior high competition. State associations may adopt additional modifications and/or use other rules codes for middle school/junior high competition.

Rule 1-3-1: By state high school association adoption, the ball to be used in games involving only players below the 9th grade may have dimensions as found in the following table.

TABLE 1-3-1 – BALL SPECIFICATIONS

	9th grade and above	8th grade and below
Weight	14 to 15 ounces	12 to 14 ounces
Long circumference	27 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches	26 to 27 inches
Long Axis	10 $\frac{7}{8}$ to 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches	10 to 11 inches
Short circumference	20 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches	19 to 20 inches
Inflation pressure	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ psi	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ psi

Table 3-1 – Game Clock Times: Games involving only students below the 9th grade shall be played in eight-minute periods. By state high school association adoption, games involving combinations of 9th grade students with students in the 8th and/or 7th grades may be played in 10-minute periods.

INDEX

REFERENCES ARE TO RULE, SECTION AND ARTICLE

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