2026-27

WASHINGTON FLAG FOOTBALL



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WASHINGTON FLAG FOOTBALL

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2026-27 NFHS Flag Football Rules Changes

Standardized the Number of Players to Start a Game (1-1-3) — The committee standardized that all teams must start the game with seven players.

Added a New Definition for Hurdling [2-18 (NEW)] — The committee added a new definition for hurdling as it was not previously defined but yet it was listed as an illegal personal contact foul in 2025-26.

Increased the Total Number of Charged Time-outs Per Half (3-5-1) — The committee increased the total number of charged time-outs per half from two to three so as to give each team an extra opportunity to stop play each half with an additional time-out.

Clarified What Cannot be Done to the Ball That is in Player Possession (9-7-4) — The committee further clarified what cannot be done to the ball that is in player possession.

2026-27 NFHS Flag Football Points of Emphasis

Screen Blocking
Flag Football is a non-contact sport and any intentional contact made by a player, either on offense or defense, is a foul. Screen blocking is a non-contact, position-based technique. The blocker must establish position prior to the defender's arrival and may not lean into or initiate contact. Advantage is gained through anticipation and proper angles, not physical engagement. Once established, the blocker may only move in the same direction and path of the opponent while maintaining their frame. Any movement that initiates contact or takes away the opponent's ability to avoid the screen results in an illegal screen and may lead to an illegal blocking foul. Another key emphasis is the use of hands, arms, knees, legs and body control. Blockers should keep their arms at their sides, across their chest or behind their back and may not extend elbows, forearms, shoulders, knees or legs to impede a defender's progress. Even minimal contact initiated by the blocker should be considered illegal, regardless of intent or force. Coaches should stress discipline and balance, as poor body control often leads to leaning or drifting that results in fouls. Game officials and coaches must also focus on timing and distance. A legal screen requires that the defender be given a reasonable opportunity, generally one (1) to two (2) steps to change direction and avoid the block. Screening from a blindside or stepping into a defender at the last moment removes that opportunity and should be penalized. Game officials should judge whether the blocker was clearly in position before the defender's approach and whether the defender had a viable avoidance path. Finally, there should be consistent emphasis on player safety and responsibility. Once a legal screen is established, defenders are responsible for avoiding contact; however, the burden remains on the blocker to be legal first. Game officials should prioritize safety by penalizing screens that result in contact early in the game to set expectations. Proper enforcement promotes fair competition, reduces collisions, and reinforces the non-contact nature of flag football.

Flag Belts and Flag Pulls

The flags and flag belts are an essential piece of equipment that must be worn properly for safety and fairness. Of note are the following from Rule 1-5-1f:

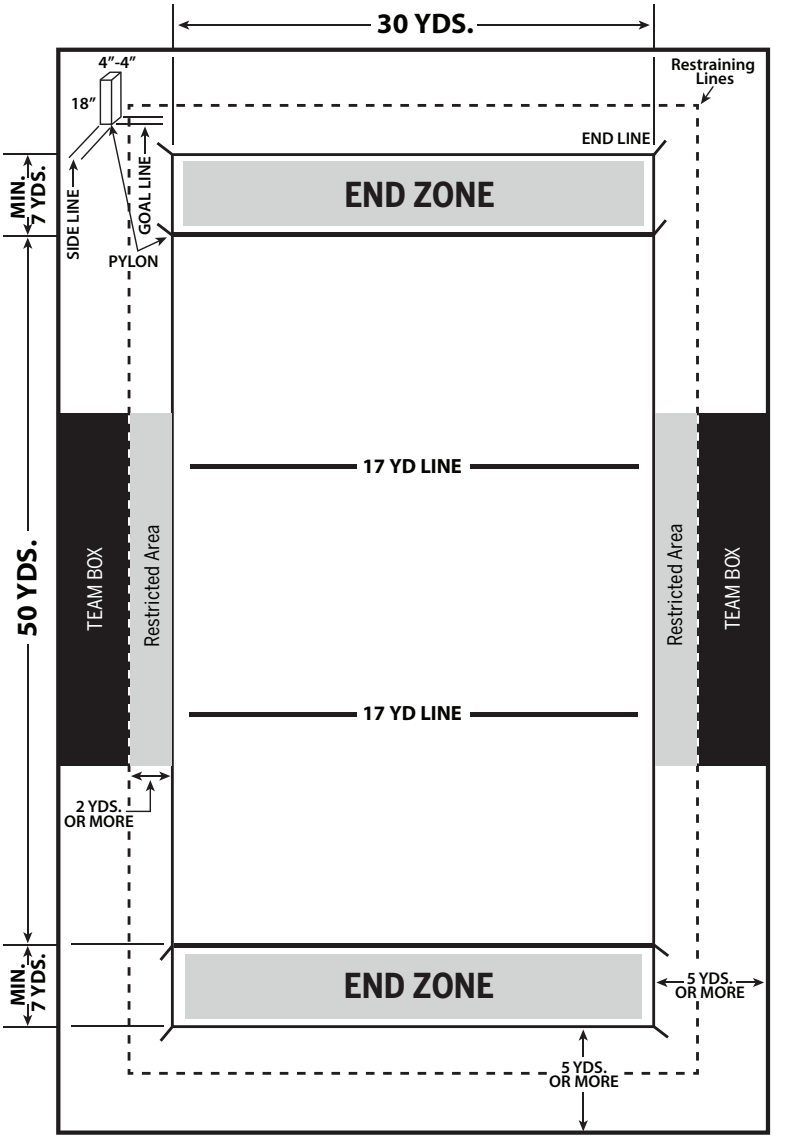
- Flags must be one solid color, and the shorts/pants color must clearly contrast with the color of the flags.
- Belts must contain two flags that must be at least 1.5 inches wide and 14 inches long.
- Sizing of the belt is important so that one flag is located on each hip.
- No article of clothing, nor the athlete's hair, may cover the flag or belt. This is for the safety of all players so that hair or clothing is not pulled when the defender attempts to pull the flag.
- School logos should not be on the flags or flag belt.

When the flag or flag belt of the player in possession of the ball is removed, the ball becomes dead and the down is ended. Points of emphasis regarding the pulling of flags include:

- A defensive player must always make an effort to pull the opponent's flag. Slight contact may occur during a legitimate attempt to pull a flag. Contact without an attempt to pull a flag is a foul and should always be penalized. Contact to the arm of the passer results in a foul for roughing the passer as the rusher must attempt to pull the passer's flag.
- If the flag belt of the player in possession of the ball inadvertently falls to the ground without being removed by the opponent, the opponent must deliver a one-hand touch between the shoulders and knees (including arms and hands) to end the play (Rule 4-2-2c). Similarly, in the rare case that a defender pulls the flag of an offensive player who is bobbling the ball, that offensive player has not yet gained possession and thus must be touched with one hand by a defender once possession has been established.
- The player in possession of the ball cannot use hands, arms or the ball where contact occurs between the runner and an opponent that denies the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag or flag belt. This is considered flag guarding, and it can only occur if there is contact made between the runner and opponent. The penalty for flag guarding is 10 yards (Rule 9-2-2c).

Following a touchdown, a teammate of the scoring player must remove the scorer's flag in view of the game official. This is to prove that the flag could have been pulled and was not tampered with (Rule 8-2-1c). Game officials are encouraged to remind players to do this, and teams are encouraged to incorporate this action prior to any celebration with teammates. If the flag inspection reveals that the flag has been tampered with, the head coach is ejected by the penalty for Rule 9-8-1h, in addition to a 10-yard, previous spot enforcement that negates the touchdown.

Flag Football Field Dimensions



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. The game is won by the team which accumulates the most points.

ART. 2 . . . The game will be played on a rectangular field that is 150 feet (50 yards) by 90 feet (30 yards), plus two endzones of 30 feet (10 yards), no less than 21 feet (7 yards). The team in possession has a series of four downs numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 to advance the ball to two zones to gain, which are located 17 yards from the endzone on either side of midfield.

ART. 3 . . . Each team shall begin the game with seven players, but if a team has no substitutes to replace injured or disqualified players, it may play with no fewer than five.

ART. 4 . . . The game is administered by 3 game officials.

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 second half 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 video monitoring equipment by the game officials in making any decision relating to the game is prohibited.

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

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 Flag Football Field 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 ¼ 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 end lines, running parallel to each other, parallel to the goal lines that serve as a boundary line for play. The field may be marked by cones on the sidelines to indicate 5, 10, 17 yards and midfield.

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:

a. 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.

b. Yard lines shall be marked with a continuous line every 17 yards beginning and ending 4 inches from each sideline.

NOTES:

1. 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.
2. 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 17 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 ¼-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.

c. 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. Flat or discstyle cones may be utilized in place of painted end lines and/or sidelines.

d. A 4-inch-wide restraining line is recommended 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 recom mended 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 20-yard line between the goal lines.

e. Team boxes shall be marked on each side of the field outside the coaches' area between the 5-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 5- and 5-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 adjustment of the team box and to determine the individuals who may be in the area, provided such area is the same for both teams.

f. Decorative markings in the end zones shall be no closer than 2 feet from the boundary and the goal lines.

g. Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the boundary marks, such marks being out of bounds.

h. 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.

i. Advertising and/or commercial markings shall not obstruct the yard lines.

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. When properly placed, the goal line pylon is out of bounds at the intersection of the sideline and the goal line extended.

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, game officials or spectators. Such determinations are the responsibility of equipment manufacturers.

ART. 1 . . . The ball shall meet the following specifications for girls flag football competitions:

TABLE 1-3-1 – BALL SPECIFICATIONS FOR FLAG FOOTBALL

Weight	12 to 14 ounces
Long Circumference	26 to 27 inches
Long Axis	10 to 11 inches
Short Circumference	19 to 20 inches
Inflation Pressure	10 to 13 psi

a. 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.
b. One set of either eight or 12 evenly spaced laces. The length of the lace shall be confined to within 3½ inches measured linearly from each end of the ball and not in the nose indentation. The laces shall extend from the center of the ball to at least the line which shall be 3½ inches measured linearly from each end of the ball and not in the nose indentation.
c. A continuous 1-inch white or yellow stripe centered 2¼ to 3 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. Weighs between 12 and 14 ounces.
e. Inflated to a psi (pounds per square inch) pressure of 10 to 13 psi.
f. Conforms to the shape and dimensions as shown in the following Figure 1-3-1A:
g. Method of measuring the ball:
   1. All measurements shall be made after the ball is inflated to 10 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.

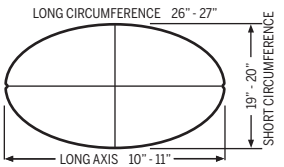


Figure 1-3-1A
Football Dimensions

4. The short circumference should be measured around the ball, over the valve, over the lace, but not over a cross lace.
5. The laces must extend from the center of the ball to at least the line which shall be 3½ inches measured from each end of the ball linearly and not in the nose indentation.

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. Effective 2028, the ball for girls and boys flag football competitions for 9th grade and above shall include the NFHS Authenticating Mark. The mark shall be displayed in the following format:

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

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.

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. Figure 1-3-1A Football Dimensions.

ART. 4 . . . A timing device referred to as the "game clock" shall be provided by the game management.

ART. 5 . . . Other than replay or video monitoring equipment, game officials may use supplementary equipment to aid in game administration as authorized by the state association.

SECTION 4 PLAYER DESIGNATIONS

ART. 1 . . . Each player shall be numbered 0 through 99 inclusive. Any number preceded by the digit zero is illegal. No two players of the same team shall participate in the same down wearing identical numbers.

ART. 2 . . . Each head coach shall designate a representative who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination. The 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.

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, game officials or spectators. Such determinations are the responsibility of equipment manufacturers.

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. Jersey:
   1. A jersey, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, and which shall be tucked in to the uniform bottom.
   2. Players of the visiting team shall wear jerseys, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, that meet the following criteria:
      (a) 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 all be white.
      (b) The body of the jersey shall contain only the listed allowable adornments and accessory patterns in a color(s) that contrasts to white:
         (1) as the jersey number(s) required in 1-5-1b or as the school's nickname, school logo, school mascot, school name and/or player name within the body and/or on the shoulders;
         (2) 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;
         (3) within the collar, a maximum of 1 inch in width; and/or
         (4) 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 (4) would be what is stated in (2) above.

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) 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.

3. Players of the home team shall wear jerseys, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, that meet the following criteria:
   (a) 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.
   (b) The jerseys of the home team shall all be the same dark color(s) that clearly contrasts to white. If white appears in the body of the jersey of the home team, it may only appear:
      (1) as the jersey number(s) required in 1-5-1b or as the school's nickname, school logo, school mascot, school name and/or player name within the body and/or on the shoulders,
      (2) 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 ½ inches,
      (3) within the collar, a maximum of 1 inch in width, and/or
      (4) 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 (4) would be what is stated in (2) above.

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) 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.

b. 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 6 inches and 8 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. 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.

c. Protective Equipment – The following protective equipment is required of all players:
   1. (a) A single 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;
      (3) cover the posterior teeth with adequate thickness;
      (4) not include any attachment(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth (Effective 2026); and
      (5) not include anything on it that is a health risk issue and can pose a danger to themselves or other players (Effective 2026).
   (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.

d. Pants, shorts or skirts which shall not have pockets of any type, exposed drawstrings, belts and/or belt loops. The color of the pants, shorts, or skirts shall be the same single solid color [except for a school and/or manufacturer's logo that complies with 1-5-3a(1)a] that clearly contrasts with the color of the flag. One manufacturer's logo and one school logo is allowed on the front of the shorts, no larger than 4" by 4".

e. 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 flag 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 7/16 inch provided the overall length is not more than ½ 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 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 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 ¼ 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 5/32 inch or less.

(g) The 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 3/16 inch in diameter.

(j) The sides of the cleat shall taper uniformly from a minimum base of ¾ inch in diameter to a minimum tip of 3/8 inch in diameter.

2. Nonremovable cleats are limited to studs or projections that do not exceed ½ 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.

f. An unaltered flag belt of the same single solid color, with two flags of the same single solid color and a minimum flag dimension of 1 ½ inch by 14 inches. No article of clothing may cover the flag or belt. One visible manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference is permitted on each flag. The size shall be limited to 1 1/2 square inches and shall not exceed 1 1/2 inches in any dimension on any flag.

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

a. Forearm pads, which may be anchored on each end with athletic tape.

b. Hip pads and tailbone protector which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production.

c. Knee pads which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production and shall be at least ½ inch thick or 3/8 inch thick if made of shock absorbing material.

d. Effective 2027, arm sleeves, whether attached to a shirt or unattached, manufactured to enhance contact with the football or opponent must meet the SFIA specification at the time of manufacture. Arm sleeves must have a permanent, exact replica of the SFIA arm sleeve seal (meets SFIA Specification) (Figure 1-5-2d), that must be visible and appear legibly on the exterior of the arm sleeve.



Figure 1-5-2d

e. Thigh guards which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production.

f. Soft headwear not made from abrasive or hard material.

g. Rubber, cloth or elastic bands to control hair. Hard items, including, but not limited to, beads, barrettes, bobby pins and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened to the head and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates or opponents are allowed.

h. Head coverings worn for religious reasons shall not be made of abrasive or hard materials and must be attached in such a way that the coverings are highly unlikely to come off during play or interfere with the flag.

i. 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) (Figure 1-5-2i) or SFIA glove seal (Meets SFIA Specification) (Figure 1-5-2i), that must be visible and appear legibly on the exterior wrist opening of the glove.



Figure 1-5-2i



Figure 1-5-2i

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.

j. 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 referee 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, pants, shorts and skirts that have:
      (a) A visible manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference exceeding 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.
      (d) Pockets or belt loops.
   2. 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.
   3. Any transverse stripe on the sleeve below the elbow.
   4. Uniform adornments, with the exception of:
      (a) Moisture-absorbing sweatbands.

b. The following items related to Pads and Padding:
   1. 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 ½" thick.
   2. 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.

3. Plastic material covering protective pads whose edges are not rounded with a radius equal to half the thickness of the plastic.
4. Rib pads and back protectors unless fully covered by a jersey.
5. Shin guards that do not meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. [Figure 1-5-3b(5)]
6. Shoulder pads.



Figure 1-5-3b(5)

c. The following Other Illegal Equipment:
1. Ball-colored headwear, jerseys, patches, exterior arm covers/pads, undershirts or gloves.
2. Except during a legal conference, electronic audio or non-fixed video communication devices used to communicate with a player. 3. Any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device worn by a player during a game.
3. Any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device worn by a player during a game.
4. Eye shade (grease or no-glare strips or stickers) this is not a solid stroke or includes words, numbers, logos or other symbols within the eye shade is illegal.
5. Jerseys, undershirts or exterior arm covers/pads manufactured to enhance contact with the football or opponent (through 2026). Effective 2027, jerseys or pads manufactured to enhance contact with the football or opponent.
6. Jewelry. Religious medals and a medical-alert indicator are not considered jewelry. Religious medals or other religious items must be taped to the body and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert indicator must be taped to the body 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. A face shield that is not molded to the face or has protrusions.
10. Hand warmers or other items worn around the waist.
11. 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 their 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 referee.

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.

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 a legal conference.

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.

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 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. A grounded loose ball immediately becomes dead. 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 them with any part of the blocker's body.

ART. 2 . . . Screen blocking is taking position to obstruct the path of an opponent without contacting the opponent with any part of the blocker's body.

SECTION 4 CATCH

ART. 1 . . . A catch is the act of establishing control of a live ball which is in flight, and first contacting the ground inbounds while maintaining control of the ball.

ART. 2 . . . In order to complete a catch, the player must (after 2-4-1 has been fulfilled) perform an act common to the game or maintain control of the ball long enough to do so.

ART. 3 . . . If a player goes to the ground in the act of catching a pass the player must maintain complete and continuous control of the ball throughout the process of

contacting the ground. If the player loses control of the ball which then touches the ground before the player regains control, it is not a catch.

ART. 4 . . . 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. 5 . . . A simultaneous catch is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds. In the case of a simultaneous catch, the ball belongs to the team currently in team possession.

SECTION 5 CONFERENCES

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

ART. 2 . . . Authorized Team Conference – One or more team members and one or more coaches directly in front of the team box or one coach in the middle of the field to confer with no more than seven players.

SECTION 6 DOWN – LOSS OF DOWN

ART. 1 . . . A down is action which starts with a legal snap. 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 7 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. For the purposes of enforcing encroachment restrictions, an entering substitute is not considered to be a player until the player is on their team's side of the neutral zone.

SECTION 8 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 (minimum 7 yards) 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 9 FIGHTING

Fighting is any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage a player or nonplayer in a combative manner unrelated to the game. 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 10 FLAG AND FLAG BELT

ART. 1... A flag belt is a required piece of player equipment as outlined in 1-5-1f.
ART. 2... A flag or flag belt is considered removed when: a. the coupling of the belt is detached; or b. a flag is separated from the flag belt.
ART. 3 . . . A flag inspection is the act of a teammate removing the flag or flag belt from a scoring player in order to show that a flag or flag belt has not been altered.

SECTION 11 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.
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.
ART. 3 . . . The muffing or batting of a pass, kick or fumble in flight is not considered a new force.

SECTION 12 FORMATIONS

A scrimmage formation requires a snapper on the line of scrimmage and another offensive player in position to receive the snap. The player in position to receive the snap must be a minimum of 2 yards behind the snapper.

SECTION 13 FORWARD PROGRESS

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 unless a forward fumble goes out of bounds or is ruled out of bounds between the goal lines, in which case the ball shall be returned to the spot of the fumble. If a fumble first strikes the ground inbounds, it is dead and belongs to the offense at that spot.

SECTION 14 FOULS AND PENALTIES

ART. 1 . . . A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.
ART. 2 . . . Types of fouls are:
a. Dead ball – a foul which occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before the ball is next snapped.
b. 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.
c. 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.
d. Live ball – a foul which occurs during a down.

e. 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 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. Simultaneous with the snap – an act which becomes a foul when the ball is snapped.

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.

SECTION 15 FUMBLE

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

SECTION 16 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 17 HUDDLE

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

SECTION 18 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 their body except one or both feet.

SECTION 19 INTERCEPTION

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

SECTION 20 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.

SECTION 21 LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

The line of scrimmage for Team A is a vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest that team's goal line. The line of scrimmage for Team B is 1 yard beyond the vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest that team's goal line. It is determined at the ready-for-play and remains until the next ready-for-play.

SECTION 22 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 zone to gain is the yard line established when a new series (first down) is awarded. Unless there is a penalty prior to the ready-for-play, the zone to gain is the next reachable zone when placed for the first down of the series. If the zone to gain extends into the end zone, the goal line is the zone to gain.

ART. 5 . . . 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. 6 . . . 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. 7 . . . 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.

SECTION 23 MUFF

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

SECTION 24 NEUTRAL ZONE

The neutral zone is the space between the two scrimmage lines during a scrimmage down. It is established when the ball is ready for play.

SECTION 25 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 26 PARTICIPATION

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

SECTION 27 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.

ART. 3 . . . A forward pass ends when it is caught, touches the ground or is out of bounds.

ART. 4 . . . A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the runner's end line.

ART. 5 . . . A backward pass ends when it is caught, hits the ground, or is out of bounds.

SECTION 28 PLAYER DESIGNATIONS

ART. 1 . . . A player is one of the 14 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 they are 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.

ART. 3 . . . A blocker is a player who is blocking or in position to block by being between the potential flag puller and the runner.

ART. 4 . . . A captain of a team is a player designated to represent the team during: a. The pregame and overtime coin toss. (Limit of four captains in game uniform.) b. Penalty decisions following a foul (if designated by the head coach, as in 1-4-2).

ART. 5 . . . A disqualified player is a player barred from further participation in a game. A disqualified player can be permitted to remain in the team box area.

ART. 6 . . . 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. 7 . . . A passer is a player who throws a legal forward pass. The player continues to be a passer until the legal forward pass ends or until the player moves to participate in the play.

ART. 8 . . . A replaced player is one who has been notified by a substitute that they are to leave the field. A player is also replaced when the entering substitute becomes a player.

ART. 9 . . . A runner is a player who is in possession of a live ball or is simulating possession of a live ball.

ART. 10 . . . A snapper is the player who snaps the ball.

ART. 11 . . . A substitute is a team member who may replace a player or fill a player vacancy. A substitute becomes a player when the player 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 the player is on their team's side of the neutral zone. A team member entering the field to fill a player vacancy remains a substitute until the person is on their team's side of the neutral zone.

SECTION 29 PLAYS – FOR PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

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

a. A legal forward pass.
b. 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.
c. The run or runs which precedes such 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 2-35-8.

SECTION 30 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 the player, or after the player has caught 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 31 READY-FOR-PLAY

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

SECTION 32 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, it is assumed that they 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 33 SCRIMMAGE

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

SECTION 34 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 35 SNAP

ART. 1 . . . A snap is the legal act of passing the ball backward from its position on the ground and ahead of the snapper's body.

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.

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

SECTION 36 SPOTS

ART. 1 . . . The enforcement spot is the point from which a penalty is enforced.

ART. 2 . . . The dead-ball spot is the spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule. EXCEPTION: Rule 5-3-2.

ART. 3 . . . The inbounds spot is the intersection of the middle 1/3rd of the field and the yard line: a. Through the foremost point of the ball when the ball becomes dead in the field of play. b. Through the foremost point of the ball on the sideline between the goal lines when a loose ball goes out of bounds. c. Through the spot under the foremost point of the ball in possession of a runner when they cross the plane of the sideline and go out of bounds. NOTE: State associations may adopt the use of hash marks to be utilized as inbounds spots.

ART. 4 . . . The out-of-bounds spot is where the ball becomes dead because of going out of bounds.

ART. 5 . . . The previous spot is where the ball was last snapped.

ART. 6 . . . 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 center of the field and the yard line extended on which the foul occurs.

ART. 7 . . . The spot where a run ends is: a. Where the ball becomes dead in the runner's possession; b. Where the runner loses player possession if the run is followed by a loose ball, but the related run continues until the ball becomes dead or any player gains possession; or c. The spot of the catch when the momentum exception as in 8-5- 2a EXCEPTION is in effect.

ART. 8 . . . The succeeding spot is where the ball would next be snapped 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 teams starting spot.

ART. 9 . . . The starting spot is where the offense will snap the ball from to start a half or overtime, or where the defense will next snap the ball from following a try or safety.

SECTION 37 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. 4 . . . Team designations (A and B) are retained until the ball is next ready for play.

SECTION 38 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 39 TRIPPING

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

Rule 3

Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

SECTION 1 LENGTH OF PERIODS - HALFTIME INTERMISSION

ART. 1 . . . The running clock time for a game shall be 60 minutes for high schools. There shall be two thirty-minute halves, with a running clock. The clock will stop after a change of possession or a score and during the last two minutes of each half. If at the end of the second half, teams have identical scores, the following overtime rules will apply: If the clock runs out and teams have identical scores, each team will have a three-try opportunity to score PATs, accumulating as many points as possible. A coin toss, which the home team will call, shall determine which team will attempt these tries first.

Points scored are as follows: 5 yds (pass only) - 1pt, 10 yds - 2pt, 17 yds - 3pt

Officials will determine the endzone to be used by both teams. Penalties on offense will forfeit the attempt, penalties on defense will move offense one section closer, with the opportunity to score the same points on a replayed down. Offsetting penalties will replay the down. If the score is still tied after one overtime period, teams will swap order and have another 3-try opportunity. That will repeat until one team scores more points than the other.

ART. 2 . . . There will be NO point differential rule, games will not be stopped due to point differential.

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 . . . Halftime will last 10 minutes, and by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches, can be reduced to a minimum of 5 minutes.

SECTION 2 STARTING A PERIOD – HALF

ART. 1 . . . Each half of the game shall be started by a play from a team's 5-yard line. 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, no 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 their team will begin on offense or defense. b. To choose the goal their team will defend. The team not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option.

SECTION 3 ENDING A PERIOD – HALF

ART. 1 . . . During the first dead ball with two minutes or less remaining in either half, the referee shall stop the clock and notify the field captains and their coaches of the time remaining (two-minute time-out).

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 second half 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 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 at the succeeding spot 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. 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.
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 is in possession at the time of the inadvertent whistle during a running play and chooses to accept the result of the play.
d. Team A forward fumble out of bounds.

ART. 3 . . . The game clock shall start with the snap if the game clock was stopped with less than two minutes remaining in either half because:

a. The ball goes out of bounds, unless 4-3-1 EXCEPTION for forward fumble applies.
b. Either team is awarded a new series.
c. The ball becomes dead behind the goal line.
d. A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete with less than two minutes remaining in either half.
e. A runner goes out of bounds with less than two minutes remaining in either half.
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. The two-minute time-out has occurred.

ART. 4 . . . The game clock shall be stopped with less than two minutes remaining in either half 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 two-minute time-out occurs as in 3-3-1.
f. A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete with less than two minutes remaining in either half.
g. A runner goes out of bounds with less than two minutes remaining in either half.
h. A score or touchback occurs.
i. A new series is awarded to B.
j. The line to gain is achieved by A.
k. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.

ART. 5 . . . When a team attempts to conserve or consume time illegally, the referee shall order the game or play clock started or stopped.

ART. 6 . . . When a foul is committed after the two-minute time-out in either half, the offended team will have the option to start the game clock on the snap.

ART. 7 . . . 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. 8 . . . 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 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 their choice.

b. The repair of faulty player equipment requires the assistance of a team attendant(s), or which, without the assistance of a team attendant delays the ready-for-play for more than 25 seconds.
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.
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. When a first down is declared with less than two minutes remaining in either half.
b. Following a change of team possession.
c. When the game clock first reaches two minutes or less remaining in either half.
d. For a player in need of equipment repair.
e. To dry or change the ball.
f. For unusual heat or humidity which may create a health risk to the players.
g. When a coach-referee conference concerning the misapplication of a rule results in the referee altering his ruling. (3-5-11)
h. After a foul, to administer the penalty.
i. For any unusual delay in getting the ball ready for play.
j. For a TV/radio time-out that is permitted and granted as authorized by state association policy.

ART. 8 . . . Authorized conferences

a. An authorized conference may be held during:
    1. a charged time-out;
    2. an official's time-out (3-5-7f, 3-5-7j and 3-5-7k); or
    3. if granted by the referee in 3-5-10.

ART. 9 . . . 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.)
c. A game official discovers any player who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on their uniform, or has blood on their 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.)
d. Any required player equipment is missing or improperly worn.

ART. 10 . . . A head coach (or designee) 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 the 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:
      (a) Following a down;
      (b) Prior to a try following a score;
      (c) To start a period or overtime series;
      (d) Following an inadvertent whistle;
      (e) Following a charged time-out;
      (f) Following an official's time-out as in 3-5-7 or 3-5-10;
      (g) Following the stoppage of the play clock by the referee for any other reason.

b. The ball is ready for play:
   1. 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.

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

a. Failure to snap prior to the expiration of the 25-second play clock.
b. Unnecessarily carrying the ball after it has become dead.
c. 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.
d. Snapping the ball before it is ready for play.
e. Any other conduct which unduly prolongs the game.

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. 2, 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 2-27-10, 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 their team box is located and go directly to their 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.

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

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 – (S7-22) – 5 yards, dead-ball foul; Arts. 4, 5 – Illegal substitution (S22) – 5 yards

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 try the ball shall be put in play by a snap from scrimmage from A's 5-yard line.

ART. 2 . . . A snap shall be made from the center of the field. State associations may authorize the use of hash marks as in 2-35-3 NOTE.

ART. 3 . . . After being put in play, the ball remains live until the down ends.

ART. 4 . . . The ball remains dead and a down is not begun if a snap 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 a whistle immediately when a foul occurs before a snap.

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

a. When a runner goes out of bounds or allows any part of their person other than hand or foot to touch the ground.
b. When a player in possession of the ball has their flag or flag belt removed as in 2-10-2.
c. If the flag belt of the player in possession of the ball inadvertently falls to the ground and an opponent delivers a one-hand touch between the shoulders and knees (including arms and hands).
d. When a live ball goes out of bounds.
e. When any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete or is simultaneously caught by opposing players.
f. When any loose ball:
    1. Is simultaneously caught by opposing players.
    2. That is a fumble, muff or backward pass touches the ground.
    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.

g. When any score occurs.

h. When a game official sounds a whistle inadvertently.

i. 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.

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 or illegal forward pass.

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 enforcement 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.

EXCEPTION: When a forward fumble goes out of bounds or is ruled out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball shall be returned to the spot of the fumble.

ART. 2 . . . When the out-of-bounds spot is between the goal lines, the ball shall be put in play at the inbounds spot unless a forward pass is involved. If the out-of-bounds spot is behind a goal line, it is a safety 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 inbounds spot 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, play is resumed at the inbounds spot, unless it is a legal forward-pass incompletion, a replay due to an inadvertent whistle or a replayed try, in which case the ball is returned to the previous spot.

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 to start the game or half, following a try or touchback is awarded a series of four consecutively numbered downs in which to advance the ball to the zone to gain.

a. Each awarded first down starts a new series of four consecutively numbered downs.
b. 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:

a. 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. A, if the ball belongs to A on or beyond the zone to gain.
b. B, if the ball belongs to B at the end of any down.
c. B, if at the end of the fourth down, the ball belongs to A behind the zone to gain.
d. The team in possession at the end of the down, if there is a change of team possession 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.

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, the ball belongs to A after enforcement.
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 zone to gain is reached after enforcement.

ART. 3 . . . 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. Acceptance of a penalty on fourth down which carries a loss of down leaves A in possession behind the line to gain.

ART. 4 . . . After a series of downs ends, a new series is awarded unless a try is involved. 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.

SECTION 3 THE ZONE TO GAIN AND MEASUREMENTS

ART. 1 . . . The zone to gain is the next 17-yard line 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 zone to gain is established. The zone to gain then remains fixed until the series ends and a new zone to gain is established.

ART. 2 . . . 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

SECTION 1 KICKS

ART. 1 . . . Kicking of the ball is not permissible. On fourth down, teams will have the option of "punting" by relinquishing possession to the opponents 5-yard line, or "going for it" and forfeiting the ball on the line of scrimmage to the other team if the line to gain is not crossed on fourth down.

Rule 7

Snapping, Handling and Passing the Ball

SECTION 1 BEFORE THE SNAP

ART. 1 . . . The snapper may be over the ball, but the snapper's feet must be behind the neutral zone and no part of the snapper's 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 of the ball.

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

a. Remove both hands from the ball if it simulates action at the snap.
b. Make any movement that simulates a snap.
c. Fail to clearly pause before the snap.
d. Following adjustment, 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 a hand(s) on the ball, encroachment occurs if:

a. Any other player breaks the plane of the neutral zone;
b. A defensive player makes contact with the ball prior to the end of the snap; or
c. 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. A shift, feigned charge, or quick movement that simulates action at the snap.
b. Any act is clearly intended to cause B to encroach.

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

ART. 9 . . . No B 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, 8 – 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 and before the snap, each player of A who participated in the previous down and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, 5 yards inbounds.

ART. 2 . . . Player formation and numbering requirements include:

a. Players of the same team shall not participate during the same down while wearing identical numbers.

b. At the snap, A must be in a legal scrimmage formation as in 2-12-1.

c. B players may be anywhere on or behind their line of scrimmage.

ART. 3 . . . A snap shall be such that the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches another A player or the ground. A scrimmage down must start with a legal snap. An illegal snap causes the ball to remain dead.

ART. 4 . . . After a huddle or shift, all A players 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. 5 . . . Only one A player may be in motion at the snap and then only if such motion is not toward the opponent's goal line.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2b, c – Illegal formation – (S19) – 5 yards; Art. 3 – illegal snap – (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 2a – illegal numbering – (S19) – 5 yards; Art. 4 – illegal shift – (S20) – 5 yards; Art. 5 – illegal motion – (S20) – 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 behind the neutral zone.

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 – (S30-9) – 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 by any player, the player may advance.

ART. 3 . . . If a fumble or backward pass hits the ground, the play is dead.

ART. 4 . . . The ball belongs to the passing or fumbling team (unless lost after fourth down) if a fumble or a backward pass:

a. Goes out of bounds between the goal lines; or

b. Becomes dead inbounds while opponents are in joint possession.

ART. 5 . . . 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 touchback 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 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. A pass after team possession has changed during the down.
b. A pass from in or 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: 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.

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 their first contact with the ground or with anything other than a player or game official is on or outside a boundary. When an incompletion 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.

ART. 6 . . . All player are eligible pass receivers.

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 players when the pass has been touched by any player.
b. 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 unavoidable contact occurs when two or more players are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch or bat the pass.

PENALTY: Art. 2a – Illegal forward pass – (S30) – 5 yards; Arts. 2b, c – Illegal forward pass – (S30-9) – 5 yards plus loss of down; Art. 2d – intentional grounding – (S31-9) – 5 yards plus loss of down; Art. 10 – Pass interference – (S28) – 5 yards, plus loss of down on offense or automatic first down on defense.

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
Safety	Points awarded to the opponent	2 points
Successful Try a. Touchdown - 17 yds b. Touchdown - 10 yds c. Automatic		 3 points 2 points 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.

a. 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.
b. It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player while the ball is on or behind the opponent's goal line.
c. Following a touchdown, a teammate of the scoring player must remove the scorer's flag in view of the official.

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:

a. On the try; or
b. At the subsequent starting spot.

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:

a. On the try; or
b. At the subsequent starting spot.

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:

a. On the try; or
b. At the subsequent starting spot.

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 enforcement spot is the succeeding spot, the offended team may accept the penalty and choose enforcement of the PENALTY:

a. On the try; or
b. At the subsequent starting spot.

SECTION 3 TRY

ART. 1 . . . After a touchdown is scored, teams will have the option to take an automatic 1pt, or try for a 2pt conversion from the 10 yard line, or 3 pt conversion from the 17 yard line.

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

a. B secures possession.
b. The try is successful.
c. The ball becomes dead for any other reason.

ART. 3 . . . If during a successful try, a loss of down foul by A occurs, there is no score and no replay.

ART. 4 . . . If during a successful try, a foul by B occurs, A is given the choice of:

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

ART. 5 . . . If during an unsuccessful try:

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

ART. 6 . . . If a double foul occurs, the down shall be replayed.

ART. 7 . . . When a try is replayed, A may choose to move to the other try spot (B's 10-yard line or B's 17-yard line). Any penalties previously enforced on the try will be enforced at the new spot.

ART. 8 . . . After a try, the opponent of the scoring team shall gain possession.

SECTION 4 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 or fumbles the ball.

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

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

a. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across their own goal line, and it becomes dead there in that team's possession.
   EXCEPTION: When a defensive player intercepts an opponent's forward pass; intercepts an opponent's fumble or backward pass between B's 5-yard line and the goal line, and their original momentum carries them into the end zone where the ball remains in the end zone and is declared dead in the end zone in that 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. This includes a fumble that goes from the end zone into the field of play and out of bounds. (4-3-1 EXCEPTION)

b. A player who is either in the field of play or in their end zone, forces a loose ball from the field of play to or across their goal line, pass, fumble, or snap, provided the ball becomes dead there in their team's 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 in their own end zone and the penalty is accepted.

ART. 3 . . . It is a touchback when 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 on its 5-yard line by a snap after a touchback.

ART. 5 . . . The team whose goal line was not involved shall put the ball in play on its 5-yard line by a snap after a safety.

Rule 9
Conduct of Players and Others

SECTION 1 HELPING THE RUNNER

An A player shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist the runner's forward progress.

PENALTY: Helping the runner (S35) – 5 yards.

SECTION 2 ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS

ART. 1 . . . An offensive player shall not:

a. Grasp or encircle any teammate to form interlocked blocking.
b. Use hands, arms or legs to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent.

ART. 2 . . . The runner shall not:

a. grasp a teammate.
b. Extend hands or arms to ward off an opponent.
c. Use hands, arms or the ball where contact occurs between the runner and an opponent that denies the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag or flag belt.

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

a. Initiate contact with an opponent.
b. Use hands to add momentum to the charge of a teammate.
c. Use hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent.
d. Initiate contact with an eligible receiver.
e. Intentionally remove a flag or flag belt from an opponent who does not have possession of the ball.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. A player who has been faked to.
2. A player who has muffed a pass or airborne fumble and is attempting to secure possession.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 3a, b, d, e – Illegal use of hands or arms – (S34) – 5 yards; Arts. 1c, 3c – holding – (S33) – 5 yards; Art. 2 – flag guarding – (S38) – 5 yards

SECTION 3 BLOCKING

ART. 1 . . . Screening a defender beyond the line of scrimmage by any offensive player who is not the ball carrier shall be penalized as illegal screening. Screen blocking by the offense is legal only behind the line of scrimmage and must be non-contact.

PENALTY: Art. 1 – Illegal Screening – (S34) – 5 yards and loss of down. Illegal Blocking – (S34) – 10 yards and loss of down.

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:

a. Swing the foot, shin or knee into an opponent, nor extend the knee to meet a blocker.
b. Charge into or throw an opponent to the ground.
c. Hurdle an opponent.
d. Position themselves on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
e. Lift a teammate to gain an advantage.
f. Throw a piece of equipment to trip an opponent.
g. Make any other contact with an opponent, which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness.
h. Strike an opponent with fist, locked hands, forearm or elbow, nor kick or knee them.
i. Trip an opponent.

ART. 4 . . . Roughing the passer. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer or player attempting to pass the ball. Defensive players must make an effort to pull the passer's flag. Defensive players may not contact the passing arm or head of the player attempting to throw a pass. Defensive players may not bat a ball from the attempted passer's arm. No defensive player shall commit any illegal personal contact foul listed in 9-4-3 against the passer.

ART. 5 . . . Unintentional contact between a nonplayer and a game official in the restricted area while the ball is live.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 3h – Fighting, intentionally contacting a game official, striking, kicking or kneeing – (S32-37) – 10 yards and disqualification. Also, a first down if by the defense. If a coach is the offender in Article 2, see 9-8 Penalty for disqualification procedure; Arts. 3a through g– Other personal fouls – (S32) – 10 yards, and first down if by the defense; Art. 3i – illegal tripping – (S32-36) – 10 yards, and first down if by the defense; Art. 4 – roughing the passer – (S32-29-8) – 10 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, or otherwise 10 yards and first down from previous spot; Art. 5 – Unintentional contact with a game official in the restricted area – (S32-26) – 10 yards, and first down if by the defense – Nonplayer foul. For the first offense, 10 yards from the succeeding spot. For the second offense (S32-26-37) – 10 yards from the succeeding spot and disqualification of the head

coach. Arts. 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 – Disqualification also if any fouls under these articles are judged by the game official to be flagrant – (S37).

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:

a. 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.
b. Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
c. Any delayed, excessive or prolonged act by which a player attempts to focus attention upon them self.
d. Kicking at the ball.
e. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or unless with permission of a game official.
f. Refusing to comply with a game official's request.
g. Using any form of alcohol or tobacco, or be under the influence of (i.e., impaired by) a controlled or illicit substance(s) beginning with arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the game.

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

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

PENALTY: Arts. 1a-g, 2 – Unsportsmanlike conduct – (S24) 10 yards, first down if by defense. If dead ball, (S7-24) – 10 yards, first down if by defense. Also disqualification if judged by the game official to be flagrant – (S37). In Article 1a, the player must remove the offending item before they are 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 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, they shall return at the first opportunity.

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

a. Return to the field;
b. Intentionally touch the ball;
c. Influence the play; or
d. 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:

a. When any player, replaced player, substitute, coach, athletic trainer or other attendant enters and participates during a down.
b. If an injured player is not replaced for at least one down; unless the halftime intermission or overtime intermission occurs.
c. To have eight or more players participating at the snap.
d. 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.
e. For a player to be lying on the ground to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap.
f. For a disqualified player to re-enter the game.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 3, 4 – Illegal participation – (S25) – 10 yards.

SECTION 7 ILLEGAL KICKING AND BATTING

ART. 1 . . . No player shall intentionally kick the ball.

ART. 2 . . . No player shall bat a loose ball other than a pass or fumble in flight.

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

ART. 4 . . . A ball in player possession shall not be batted, stripped or attempted to be stripped by punching, striking or grabbing the ball by a player of either team.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2, 3, 4 – Illegal kicking or batting – (S27) – 5 yards.

SECTION 8 NONCONTACT UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT BY NONPLAYER

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:

a. 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.

b. Attempting to influence a decision by a game official.
c. Disrespectfully addressing a game official.
d. Indicating objections to a game official's decision.
e. Using any illegal communication equipment as outlined in 1-5-3c(2) and 1-6.
f. Holding an unauthorized conference.
g. The failure of a team to:
    1. Comply with the restrictions of 3-2-2 at the coin toss or simulated coin toss; or
    2. Be ready to start the first half; or
    3. Be on the field following the conclusion of the halftime intermission; or
    4. Be ready to start the second half at the conclusion of the mandatory warm-up period.
h. Following pregame verification as in 1-5-4, a coach allowing his/her players to use illegal equipment. (1-5-3)
i. Being on the field except as a substitute or replaced player. (3-7-6, 9-6-4a)
j. Using any form of alcohol or tobacco, or be under the influence of (i.e., impaired by)

a controlled or illicit substance(s) beginning with arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the game.

k. Being outside the team box, but not on the field. (9-8-3)

l. 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 time-out following a try, a successful field goal or safety; and 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 2-5, shall any nonplayer other than an entering substitute enter without the referee's permission.

ART. 3 . . . A nonplayer shall not be outside their 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 – (S24), (S7-24 if dead ball) – 10 yards, and first down if by defense. Arts. 1g, 1h and 3 – Each nonplayer foul is charged to the Head Coach – (S24-37), (S7-24 if dead ball) – 10 yards, and first down if by defense. Disqualification of the Head Coach if 1h is related to the illegal alteration of flags. Art. 2 – Nonplayer foul – (S19) – 5 yards, unless repeated – or unsportsmanlike (S24) – 10 yards, and first down if by defense. Arts. 1k, 3 – Nonplayer foul – First offense – (S15) – warning, Second offense – (S7-26) – 5 yards, Each subsequent offense – (S7-26-24) – 10 yards, and first down if by defense; Art. 1l – Nonplayer foul – (S24-37) – 10 yards and disqualification, and first down if by defense. Arts. 1 and 2 – Any single foul judged by the game official to be flagrant is disqualification. A second unsportsmanlike foul with a 10-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. The penalty for an illegal flag or flag belt is 10 yards from the previous spot and disqualifiation of the Head Coach.

SECTION 9 UNFAIR ACTS

ART. 1 . . . No player or nonplayer or person(s) not subject to the rules shall 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 . . . 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, 4 – Unfair act – (S24) – 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 – (S24) – 10 yards.

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. The officials shall inform the designated representative of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to them 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 team time-out is granted.

ART. 2 . . . When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a snap, the covering official shall not permit the ball to become live. 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. Intentional grounding.

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

a. Illegal personal contact as in 9-4.
b. Noncontact unsportsmanlike conduct by players as in 9-5.
c. Noncontact unsportsmanlike conduct by nonplayers as in 9-8-1.
d. Team box and restricted area violations (third and subsequent) as in 9-8-2 and 9-8-3.

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.
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.
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, 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, then B may retain the ball, provided B declines the penalty for A's foul(s), other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In this case, A has no penalty options until B has made its penalty decision. After that decision by B, A may decline or accept the penalty for the foul by B or choose which penalty to have enforced in the case that B 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 deadball 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 10-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 PLAYS

ART. 1 . . . A loose-ball play is action as defined in 2-28-1a-d.

ART. 2 . . . A running play is any action as defined in 2-28-2

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 the run is followed by a loose ball.

c. The spot of the catch when the momentum exception as in 8-5- 2a EXCEPTION is in effect.

SECTION 4 ENFORCEMENT SPOTS

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

ART. 2 . . . The enforcement spot is the previous spot unless 8-5-2c applies for:

a. A foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap;

b. A foul which occurs behind the line of scrimmage during a loose ball play, as defined in 10-3-1. See 10-5-1e for special enforcement on roughing the passer;

c. A foul by A or B when the related run ends behind the line of scrimmage when there is no change of possession;

d. A foul by A that occurs behind the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage;

e. A foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage; and

f. A foul by A or B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage before a change of possession.

ART. 3 . . . The enforcement spot is the spot of the foul for:

a. Illegal batting or illegal kicking;

b. An illegal forward pass as in 7-5-2c and intentional grounding as in 7-5-2d;

c. A foul by the team in possession that occurs behind the end of the run or related run following a change of possession;

d. When A commits any foul in its end zone for which the penalty is accepted (8-5-2c); and

e. 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 behind the end of the run or related run.

ART. 4 . . . The enforcement spot is the succeeding spot for:

a. An unsportsmanlike foul.

b. A dead-ball foul.

c. A nonplayer foul.

d. Following a change of possession, when the final result is a touchback.

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

ART. 5 . . . The enforcement spot is the end of the run or related run for:
a. A foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage;
b. A foul that occurs beyond the end of the run or related run following a change of possession; and
c. 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.

ART. 6 . . . The enforcement spot is the 5-yard line for fouls following a change of possession which are committed 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 enforcement spot is the goal line for fouls following a change of possession, 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 enforcement 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 10-4-8, 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. Unfair acts. (9-9)
b. A foul by the opponent of the scoring team on a successful try. (8-3-5)
c. Fouls that occur during or after a touchdown scoring play. (8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 and 8-2-5)
d. Roughing the passer. (9-4-4)

ART. 2 . . . 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 or touchdown.

ART. 3 . . . If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul in its end zone for which the penalty is accepted and enforcement is from or behind its goal line, it is a safety.

SECTION 6 PENALTY SUMMARY

5-YARD PENALTIES	
Penalty	**Result**
Illegal Rush	5 yards
Shielding - Impeding Blitzer with ROW	5 yards
Stripping Ball or Attempting to Strip Ball	5 yards
Illegal Substitution (non-dead ball, too many players on the field during live play)	5 yards
Holding	5 yards
Early Flag Pull (Defense)	5 yards
Pass Interference	5 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; Automatic First Down on Defense
Helping the Runner	5 yards
Attendant Illegally on Field	5 yards
Nonplayer Outside of the Team Box, but not on field	5 yards
Illegal Batting or Kicking	5 yards
Delay of Game	5 yards
Illegal Substitution	5 yards
Encroachment	5 yards
Snap Infraction	5 yards
False Start	5 yards
Disconcerting Act	5 yards
Illegal Formation	5 yards
Numbering Violation	5 yards
Illegal Shift or Illegal Motion	5 yards
Illegal Screen Behind the Line of Scrimmage	5 yards
Illegal Advancement (QB Run Rule)	5 yards
Intentional Grounding	5 yards
Flag Guarding	5 yards + Loss-of-Down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 yards + Loss-of-Down
Illegal Screen Beyond the Line of Scrimmage	5 yards + Loss-of-Down
Illegal Hand Off (Hand Off Beyond Line of Scrimmage)	5 yards + Loss-of-Down

10-YARD PENALTIES	
Penalty	**Result**
Personal Fouls: Unnecessary Roughness, Pushing out of Bounds, Pushing an Airborne Player out of Bounds, Illegal Contact, Tripping, Charging/Bull Blitz, Illegal Body Check/Leading with Shoulder, Tackling	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Personal Foul: Illegal Blocking Technique (physical contact)	10 yards & Loss of Down
Personal Foul: Roughing the Passer (defense)	10 yards & Automatic First Down, Choice by coach to be administered from previous line of scrimmage or added to end of run
Illegal Participation (too many players AND involved in a live play)	10 yards
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Runner grasping a teammate	10 yards
Hurdling an Opponent	10 yards

DISQUALIFICATION/EJECTION	
Penalty	**Result**
Fighting by player or nonplayer	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Any act if unduly rough or flagrant	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
A second unsportsmanlike foul by player or non player	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Intentionally contacting a game official	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Tampering with Flags	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense
Players leaving the Sidelines during a Fight	10 yards + Loss of Down on Offense; 10 yards + Automatic First Down on Defense

Additional Rules

BLITZING AND RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- One identified (legal signal) Rusher who is at least 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage at the snap may enter the backfield once the ball is snapped and will automatically have Right-of-Way (ROW).
- This rusher must identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap.
- Any other defender at least 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage at the snap may enter the backfield on the snap but will not have ROW.
- Defenders lined up less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage are not eligible to enter the backfield unless the ball makes contact (touches) with any player other than the player who took the snap.
- Penalty: Illegal rush, 5-yard penalty, replay the down.

QUARTERBACK RUN RULE

- The quarterback, by definition, is the offensive player who receives the snap.
- The quarterback may not cross the line of scrimmage with the ball as a runner unless they have transferred the ball to another player and then have had it transferred back.
- If the quarterback advances illegally, the play is dead at the spot and a 5-yard penalty is assessed.

NO-RUN ZONES

- Pass-Only Zones are within 5 yards of the end-zone, facing the end-zone.
- When the ball is spotted in the pass-only zone, a forward pass must be executed that breaks the line of scrimmage in order for the play to stand.
- The penalty for not executing a legal pass in this zone is a loss of down. The ball is placed at the previous spot.

ONSIDE PLAY

- An onside play option will be available to teams only in the final two minutes of the second half immediately after scoring and completing a PAT attempt. The option is only available to a trailing team or if the score is tied.

- Option not available after trailing team scores a safety.
- Option not available to team leading in points.
- To complete a successful onside play, the attempting team must reach midfield in one play.
- They must reach or pass midfield after all live ball penalties have been assessed.
- The onside play is an untimed down.
- The coach of the team attempting an onside play will inform officials they intend to attempt the play.
- The ball will be spotted on the attempting team's 5-yard line, facing the long side of the field.
- The down is a one play down and is treated like a fourth down, which includes the assessment of penalties.
- For the offense to have a successful try, they must advance the ball to or past midfield. This includes any live ball penalties.
- Dead ball penalties will not be used in the determination of the line to gain being reached.
- If there is a defensive penalty that causes an automatic first down, the offense will receive the penalty yards, but will still have to try the onside kick. The offense will not automatically convert the down in this scenario.
- If the offense successfully converts the down, the new line to gain will be established and the clock operations will return to normal.
- If the offense does not convert, the defense will take over the ball at midfield unless an interception occurs. If an interception occurs, the ball will be spotted wherever the ball is downed. An interception during an onside play may be returned for 6 points with an ensuing PAT attempt.

PASS INTERFERENCE

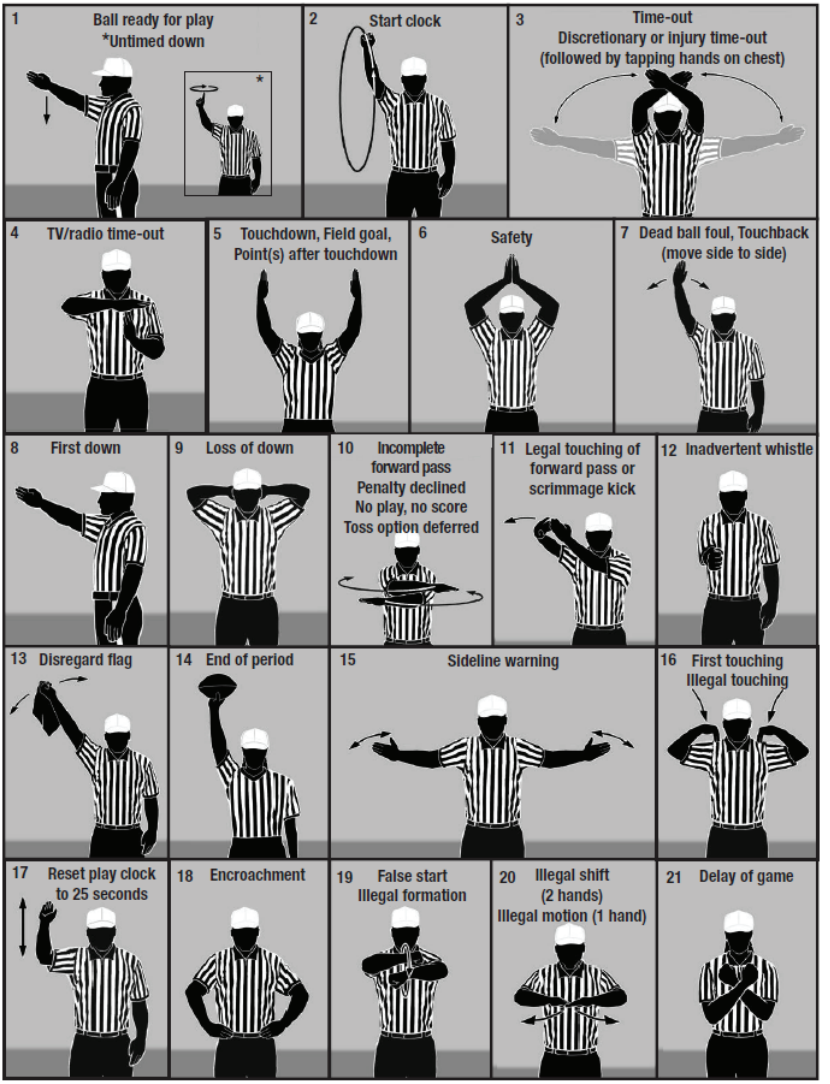
- Pass interference penalties will be enforced for both offensive and defensive infractions.
- **Offensive Pass Interference**
  - An offensive player may not initiate significant contact that impedes a defender's ability to make a play on the ball.
- **Defensive Pass Interference**
  - A defensive player may not initiate significant contact that impedes a receiver's ability to make a play on the ball. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Making contact with the receiver instead of attempting to play the ball
- Hooking or grabbing the receiver
- Repetitive jersey pulls
- Using an arm bar to restrict movement

COVERAGE SACK

- A seven-second count will begin at the snap of the ball. If the quarterback has not released a pass before the count expires, the ball becomes dead and the play is ruled a coverage sack. The ball shall be returned to the previous line of scrimmage, and the down shall count.
- The seven-second count ends when the ball is handed off, pitched backward, or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, or when the defense rushes. Once the count ends, it does not restart during that down.

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