

2021 RULES HIGHLIGHTS

This information is in no way meant to replace the NFHS Football Rules Book

TIMEOUTS

3 charged team timeouts per half. Shall not exceed 1 minute. Ball should be marked ready for play within five seconds of the time-out expiring. Can be reduced in length if both teams are ready to play. Successive charged time-outs may be granted during the same dead-ball period. There are no “extra” timeouts this season, including the interval after TD before kick-off.

SUBSTITUTIONS

Between downs, replaced players shall begin to leave the field within three seconds. You could have more than 11 in the huddle and not be a penalty if the replaced players begin to leave the field within three seconds. 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.

HALFTIME

15 minutes is normal. May be increased to 20 provided opponents have been notified prior to start of the game. By mutual agreement, time may be reduced to 10 minutes. Mandatory three-minute warm-up period. The head coach is responsible for his team being on the field at the time the three-minute period begins.

AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWNS

Roughing the kicker, placekick holder, snapper, and passer are the only automatic first downs.

HURDLING

No player may hurdle an opponent. Hurdling is an attempt to jump with one of both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one of both feet. This is a 15-yard penalty.

FACEMASK

Grasp, twist, turn, pull – face mask; edge of a helmet opening, chin strap, tooth/mouth protector attached to the facemask = 15 yards. Incidental grasp (no twist, turn, pull) = 5 yards

HORSECOLLAR

Grab the inside back or side collar, or name plate area (directly below the back collar), of either the shoulder pads or the jersey of the runner and subsequently pull (backward or sideward) that opponent to the ground. Does not need to be immediate.

CHOP BLOCK

Any high-low, or low-high block at the knees or below

FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS/SCRIMMAGE KICKS

Ball is live if the kick does not break the plane of R's goal line.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS

5 yard penalty from the succeeding spot, 5 yard penalty from previous spot and re-kick, put the ball in play at the inbounds spot 25 yards beyond the previous spot.

FREE KICK FORMATION

After the ball is marked ready for play, and until the ball is kicked, only the kicker may be more than 5 yards behind the kicking team's free-kick line. A player satisfies this rule when no foot is on or beyond the line 5 yards behind the restraining line. At the time ball is kicked, at least four K players must be on each side of the kicker.

POP UP KICKS

Kicked into the ground and on 1st bounce pop-up higher than 6 feet are illegal. This is a kill. 5 yard penalty. Popped up directly without hitting the ground or after the second or third bounce is legal.

FUMBLE OUT OF BOUNDS

Ball is spotted where it becomes dead. Clock starts on the snap.

FUMBLE FORWARD

Can be recovered by anyone, even on 4th down.

HELPING THE RUNNER

Offensive player(s) shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist his forward progress. 5 yard penalty. It is ok to push the pile.

TRIPPING

Illegal to trip an opponent including the runner. 15 yard penalty

DEFENSIVE SCORE ON A TRY

Defense cannot score on a failed try. Cannot return a fumble or blocked kick. On a fumble, ball is dead when recovered by defense, ball goes out of bounds, or offensive recovers and is tackled short of the goal line. On a kick, ball is dead when it crosses the goal line, is blocked, or has no chance of going between the uprights. Whistle after the ball is kicked is recommended.

MIAA RUNNING CLOCK

42 points at any time in the 3rd quarter. 30 points at any time in the 4th quarter. Once the running clock starts, it will not stop except for a team timeout or at the Referee's discretion.

OVERTIME

1st and goal from the 10 yard line (unless a penalty overrides). No chains needed. For all overtime periods, teams must attempt 2- point conversion after any touchdown. Field goal tries are allowed. Multiple overtime periods are permitted.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

INELIGIBLE DOWNFIELD

Neutral zone may be expanded following the snap a maximum of 2 yards. Ineligible A players may not advance beyond the expanded neutral zone on a legal forward pass play before a legal forward pass, that crosses the neutral zone, is in flight. If B touches the pass in or behind the neutral zone, the restriction is terminated.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE FORMATION

After the ready-for-play, each player of A who participated in the previous down and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks, before the snap. Illegal formation, 5 yards, this is not a kill.

Ball is ready for play when it has been placed down and the referee marks it ready to play, or starting immediately after the ball has been ruled dead by an official after a down, the ball has been placed on the ground by an official and the official has stepped away to position.

INTENTIONAL GROUNDING

A pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver. Intentionally thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or to conserve time.

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.

SPORTSMANSHIP/SIDELINE COMMUNICATION

The coaches' area minimum of 2-yard belt between the front of team box and the sideline becomes a restricted area when the ball is live. No player, non-player, or coach shall be in the restricted area when the ball is live.

First offense warning, second 5-yard penalty and subsequent violations result in a 15-yard penalty.

Contact with someone in the restricted area when the ball is live should be a 15-yard penalty. This also counts as the first offense warning.

Player's sportsmanship – need consistency