

2022 NFHS RULES REMINDERS

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

BALL

Leather and composition allowed; no panel restrictions; Must have NFHS stamp; No designated kicking ball

DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

If the contact occurs while the pass is in flight. Ability to catch the pass is not a factor. It is not a foul if contact is away from the direction of the pass. 15-yard penalty, no automatic first down.

EXPANDED NEUTRAL ZONE

Neutral zone may be expanded following the snap up to a maximum of 2 yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage

FACE MASK FOULS

Grasping the face mask without pulling, turning, or twisting is a foul with a 5-yard penalty

FAIR CATCH

Ball is spotted where the fair catch is made. After a fair catch, there is the option to free kick or snap

FIELD GOAL

Unsuccessful kick that crosses the goal line results in a touchback regardless of where the ball was snapped from.

If kick does not cross the goal line, the ball is dead where it comes to rest, or goes out of bounds.

If kick does not cross the goal line, it can be returned.

FORWARD PASS – LEGAL/ILLEGAL

Legal if during a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a player of A throws the ball with both feet of the passer in or behind the neutral zone when the ball is released.

FORWARD PASS – SPIKE TO CONSERVE TIME

Hand to hand snap not required. Must be clean and direct to player directly behind snapper.

FREE KICK LINE

K's 40-yard line unless after a safety, then K's 20-yard line

FREE KICK INFRACTIONS

Encroachment inside the 10-yard zone by R; Less than four players on either side of the kicker at the time of the kick;

Only the kicker can be more than five yards behind the free kick line. Players meet this requirement by being inside the 5-yard mark from the free kick line. Cannot be on the 5-yard mark. These are all dead-ball fouls.

FUMBLE OUT OF BOUNDS

Spotted where it becomes dead (OOB). Clock starts on the snap. No fourth down fumble rule.

GAME CLOCK

Starts on the snap when the ball becomes dead out of bounds

Starts on the snap after a legal kick, only when a new series is awarded

Starts on the snap after a delay penalty is accepted

Starts when a free kick touched, other than first touching by K

After a scrimmage down ends in bounds and results in a 1st down, the game clock will stop to move the chains, and will wind again following a silent wind by the R

When a penalty is called with less than two minutes remaining in either half, the offended team has the option to start the game clock on the snap. The penalty does not need to be accepted

QUARTER LENGTH

12-minute quarters

HELMET COMES OFF DURING PLAY

If a player's helmet comes off during play, he must not continue to participate beyond the immediate action in which he is engaged. Prolonged participation is illegal participation. Once a player whose helmet has come off stops participating, he cannot be hit by an opponent. Unless it is lost by penalty, player must leave the field for at least one down unless halftime intermission, or overtime intermission occurs.

HELPING THE RUNNER

An offensive player shall not push, pull, or lift the runner to assist his forward progress. 5-yard penalty.
Also, a defensive player may not use his hands to add momentum to the charge of a teammate who is on the line of scrimmage. 10-yard penalty

HORSE COLLAR TACKLE

All players are prohibited from grabbing the inside back collar of the shoulder pads or jersey, the nameplate area on the back of the jersey or the inside collar of the side of the shoulder pads or jersey of a runner, and subsequently pulling the opponent down. There is no requirement for the tackle to be immediate and there are no exceptions for action inside the free blocking zone or for a quarterback in the pocket.

HURDLING

Illegal to jump (hurdle) an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one or both feet. 15-yard penalty

INTENTIONAL GROUNDING

Loss of down and 5-yard penalty from spot of pass (end of run).

It is legal to throw a forward pass to an area unoccupied by an eligible receiver to save loss of yardage if the pass reaches the neutral zone and the passer is outside the lateral confines of the FBZ as established at the snap.

KICK IN FLIGHT

When any free kick or scrimmage kick is in flight in or beyond the expanded neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, K shall not: Touch the ball or R, unless blocked into the ball or R, or to ward off a blocker; Or obstruct R's path to the ball. This applies even when there is no fair catch signal but does not apply after the kick has been touched by a receiver who was clearly beyond the neutral zone at the time of touching. Exception, K may touch, muff, or bat a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone if no player of R is in position to catch the ball. Penalty is kick-catching interference, R may accept the results of the play, an awarded fair catch spot after enforcement of a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul, or a 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and replay the down.

KICKER PROTECTION

A kicker is protected until he has had reasonable opportunity to regain his balance. There is no foul if a defender is blocked into the kicker or holder.

LEAPING

Defensive players may leap from the ground to block a kick without restriction

NEUTRAL ZONE INFRACTIONS

After the ball is deemed ready for play

Offense – False start and encroachment; Defense – Encroachment

Dead Ball Fouls, blow this when the foul occurs. Do not wait until the snap if someone is lined up in the neutral zone after the ball is deemed ready for play

NINE YARD MARKS

Team A players and substitutes must have been between the nine-yard marks after the ball is deemed ready for play

NUMBERING EXCEPTION

On fourth down or a try whenever K is in a scrimmage-kick formation, having 5 players numbered 50-79 is not required. On 1st, 2nd, or 3rd down, when A sets or shifts into a scrimmage kick formation, the snapper may be a player with number 0 to 49 or 80 to 99. If Team A has the snapper in the game under this exception, team A shall have 4 other players wearing 50 to 79 on its LOS. The snapper in the game under this exception must be between the ends and is an ineligible receiver.

OVERTIME

Equal series from 10-yard line unless a penalty. Always goal to go. If defensive team scores on 1st possession, the game is over. No limit on number of OT's. After a TD, a team must attempt a 2-point conversion by run or pass.

PLAY CLOCK

A 40/25-second play clock is used. After a touchdown and following a kickoff, the play clock will be set at 25 seconds. Play clock is set to 40 seconds when there is a penalty by the defense (accepted or not), injury to the defense, or sending a defensive player off the field for improper equipment.

PLAYER VOLUNTARILY GOES OUT OF BOUNDS

No player shall intentionally go out of bounds during the down and return to the field; intentionally touch the ball; influence the play; or otherwise participate

POP UP KICK

Kicking the ball directly into the ground so that it goes into the air in the manner of a ball kicked directly off the tee (pop-up kick) is illegal and is a dead-ball foul

RUNNING CLOCK

42-point margin at the beginning of or at any time in the 3rd quarter, or 30-point margin at the beginning of or any time in the 4th quarter. It will continue for remainder of the game regardless of score. Only a charged team timeout or official's timeout will stop the clock.

SHIFT

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

SIDELINE INFRACTIONS

Teams whose players and coaches are in the restricted area and do not contact an official while the ball is live are penalized as follows:

- (1) An official sideline warning.
- (2) A five-yard penalty for the next infraction.
- (3) A 15-yard penalty for each additional infraction.

SUBSTITUTION

Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players. Replaced players shall begin to leave the field within three seconds. A player, replaced player, or a substitute are required to leave the field at the side on which his team box is located and go directly to his team box. 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.

TEAM CHARGED TIMEOUTS

Coach may go out to the huddle (1 coach only)

All timeouts are 1 minute, 3 per half. 1 in overtime, no carryover.

1 minute intermission between first and seconds and third and fourth periods.