

Approved Changes / Adoptions in 2026:

- **Team boxes:**
 - When using the standard field layout which utilizes two fields on a standard tackle football field (field diagram B) team boxes shall be on opposite sides of the field and run from 10 yard line to 10 yard line.
 - When using a field layout which utilizes 3 or more fields on a standard tackle football field (field diagram c) team boxes shall be on the same sideline, opposite the administrative zone and shall run from the 5 yard line to the 20 yard line.
- **Jersey Similarities:**
 - The visiting team is responsible for avoidance of similarity of colors, but if there is doubt, the referee may require players of the designated visiting team to wear contrasting jersey pinnies or change into a contrasting jersey color. Note: pinnies cannot be yellow and must clearly contrast jersey and flag color.
- **Emphasis on player safety standards:**
 - Mouthguards are required
 - Athletes may not have pockets, exposed drawstrings, zippers, or belt loops on their bottoms
 - No jewelry
- **No Run Zone**
 - Team A may only advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage via a legal forward pass that either: First touches any player beyond the line of scrimmage or, first touches a team B player behind the line of scrimmage and the officials rule that the pass would have crossed the line of scrimmage if not touched by the team B player.
- **Snap:**
 - The snap may be made from between a players legs or a side snap.
 - Other rules regarding a legal snap remain the same.
- **Play clock:**
 - The play clock shall be 25 seconds and begin with the referee's ready for play whistle.
- **5 Second Clock**
 - From the time the ball is snapped a 5-second count begins and continues until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage.
 - If the clock runs out before the ball gets across the line of scrimmage, Team A cannot throw a forward pass but play continues and they may advance the ball by other means.
 - Once the 5-second clock has expired, all team B players are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage, even if they are not a legal blitzer.
 - Once the 5-second clock has expired, the QB may legally run the ball even if they did not previously do something with the ball (hand off, pitch, throw the ball, etc.).
- **Spotting the Ball:**
 - The ball will be spotted using the foremost point of ball rather than front foot. Key elements of this rule:
 - Ball carriers cannot dive while in possession of the ball
 - Defenders can dive to pull flag
 - Anyone can dive to catch pass
- **Legal Blitzing:**
 - To be a legal blitzer, players aligned completely behind the rush line must clearly raise one hand above their head for at least one second prior to the snap.
- **Backward passes:**
 - Backward passes behind the line of scrimmage or now legal. Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, no backward passes or handoffs are legal.
- **Penalty Enforcement on Try Downs after Scores:**
 - There are now rules allowing for penalties by the non-scoring team during a score to be enforced on the try down. The spot of the snap may be changed due to the enforcement of penalties; however, the value of the try remains unchanged. Under this new rule, this provides a penalty for the foul and gives the scoring team an advantage on the try down.
- **General penalty enforcement:**
 - The number of loss of down and automatic first own fouls were adjusted down from 2025. They are in alignment with the NFHS flag football rulebook.
- **Running in the No Run Zone Penalty**
 - A penalty was added if a team runs when in the no-run zone. This is a 5 yard penalty and loss of down on a regular play. On a try, the try is over.



MN HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL

Approved Changes / Adoptions in 2026:	1
Rule 1: The Game, Field, Players, and Equipment	3
Rule 1 Field Setup Diagrams (adopted from USA Football)	7
Rule 2: Definition of Playing Terms	9
Rule 3: Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions	13
Rule 4: Ball in Play, Dead Ball and Out of Bounds	17
Rule 5: Series of Downs, Number of Down of Team Possessions after Penalty	18
Rule 6: Snapping, Handing and Passing the Ball	18
Rule 7: Scoring Plays and Touchbacks	21
Rule 8: Conduct of Players and Others	22
Rule 9: Enforcement of Penalties	25
Penalty Summary	27
Penalty Signal Chart	29

Special thanks to the 2025-2026 Rules Committee:

School Representatives

Andrew Boman, Pine Island High School
 Terry Donovan, La Crescent-Hokah High School
 Alicia Ekegren, St. Paul Central High School
 Jeff Erdmann, Rosemount High School
 Allie Happel, Eden Prairie High School
 Kayla Ross, St. Louis Park High School
 Kimber Scott, Two Rivers High School

Officials Representatives

Tyler Livingston, North St. Paul
 David Neilitz, St. Cloud
 Marty Pekarna, Jordan
 Jeron Schmidt, New Brighton, Coordinator of Officials
 Ryan Townzen, Burnsville
 MJ Wagenson, Rochester



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

Section 1 The Game (adopted from NFHS and USA FB)

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 of flag football is played with an inflated ball by two teams on a rectangular field that is 25 X 70 yards in total with two 10-yard end zones and a 50-yard field of play. However, some locations may use smaller fields due to available field space for non-varsity contests. No-run zones exist before the goal line only. While the ball is live, an interval called a down is in progress and the team in possession attempts to advance the ball by carrying or passing it. If a foul occurs, the penalty loss, if not declined, is enforced during the interval between downs. The team in possession has a series of four downs numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 to advance the ball to the line to gain, which is the midpoint of a standard field. After the midpoint, teams have four downs to score. Points are scored by touchdown, successful try or safety.

ART. 3 . . . The game is played with five players on each team. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four.

ART. 4 . . . The game is administered by 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 or as soon thereafter as they are able to be present.

ART. 8 . . . The game officials' authority extends through the referee's declaration of the end of the fourth period or overtime. The game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the game officials had jurisdiction. League leadership 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 (adopted from NFHS)

ART. 1 . . . The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and markers as shown on the accompanying Flag Football Field Diagrams (#1-3). There shall be two sidelines running the length of the field along each side that serve as boundary lines for play. It is recommended there be a slope of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch per foot from the center of the field to each sideline on a natural grass field. There shall be two goal lines, running parallel to each other and perpendicular to the sidelines. The field of play is the area within the boundary lines, and the goal lines. There shall be two end lines, running parallel to each other, parallel to the goal lines that serve as a boundary line for play. **NOTE:** The rise from each sideline to the center of a natural grass field is 20 inches when the recommended slope is used.

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

ART. 3 . . . Lines and other markings:

- 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 5 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 5 yards. A solid or shadow-bordered 4-inch-wide line is permissible. A shadow line is a line that designates the required 4-inch width by use of a border or outline lines, at least $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide which shall lie within the 4-inch width. Shadow lines that are the natural color of the field of play are permissible. The area within these lines need not be one color, but the continuous 4-inch-wide outline must be clearly visible to the game officials.
- 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 disc-style cones may be utilized in place of painted end lines and/or sidelines.
- d. A 4-inch-wide restraining line is recommended to be placed around the outside of the field, at least two yards from the sidelines and end lines, as an extension of the line limiting the team box area, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit the restraining line. It is recommended that the restraining line be marked by placing 12-inch-long lines, separated at 24-inch intervals.
- e. Team boxes shall be marked on the field outside the coaches' area.
 - i. When two fields are used on one standard tackle football field (field diagram b) the team boxes shall be on opposite sides of the field. Each team box shall be between the 10-yard line and the 10-yard line. The team box is 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.
 - ii. When one field is used on one standard tackle football field (field diagram a) the team boxes shall be on each side of the field and between the 10-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.

- iii. When three or four fields are used on one standard tackle football field (field diagram c) the team boxes shall be on the side of the field opposite the administrative zone. Each team box shall be between the 5-yard line and the 20-yard line. The team box is 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: It is recommended goal lines and the team box boundaries be marked in a color that contrasts with other field markings and the area between the sidelines and the team box boundaries be solid white or marked with diagonal lines.

- 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 (adopted from NFHS and USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . The ball shall be made of four panels of pebble-grained leather in natural tan color with eight equally spaced lacings and new or nearly new with no alterations. The ball shall be an ellipsoid spheroid of regulation dimensions and inflated to a pressure of between 12.5 and 13.5 psi (0.85 – 0.95 bar).

- a. For women's games, use USA Football Youth Ball dimensions of a length of 10.25 to 10.75 inches (26.0 – 27.3 cm), length circumference of 25.00 to 26.00 inches (63.5 – 66.0 cm), diameter of 5.75 to 6.25 inches (14.6 – 15.9 cm), cross circumference of 18.00 to 19.00 inches (45.7 – 48.3 cm), and weight of 11 to 12 ounces (310 – 340 g). League preference for the game ball is the Wilson TDY.

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.

ART. 4 . . . A down indicator(s) shall be provided by game management.

- a. The down indicator or spot disc shall be used to mark the spot of the ball and indicate the number of the down in a series. A down indicator or flat or disc style cone may also be placed to identify the line to gain.
- b. The official down indicator shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline opposite the pressbox except in a stadium where the total playing enclosure does not permit. If there is no press box, the location will be specified by game management.
- c. All down-indicator rods shall have flat lower ends covered by protective caps.

ART. 5 . . . A timing device referred to as the "game clock" shall be provided by the game management. If a game clock is not available, game officials will be responsible for game timing.

ART. 6 . . . 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 (adopted from NFHS)

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 (adopted from NFHS and USA FB)

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 into the uniform bottom.
 2. Players 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 yellow, except as stated below.
 - b. The jerseys of the team shall all be the same solid color(s) that clearly contrasts to yellow. If yellow or gold appears in the body of the jersey, it may only appear:
 - i. as the jersey number(s) or as the school's nickname, school logo, school mascot, school name and/or player name within the body and/or on the shoulders,
 - ii. 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,
- iii. within the collar, a maximum of 1 inch in width, and/or
 - iv. 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 designated visiting team to wear contrasting jersey pinnies or change into a contrasting jersey color.
3. Numbers
 - a. 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.
 - b. The numbers, inclusive of any border(s), shall be centered horizontally at least 6 inches and 8 inches high on front and back, respectively.
 - c. The entire body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) exclusive of any border(s) shall be approximately 1½-inches wide.
 - d. 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.
 - b. Protective equipment - the following protective equipment is required of all players:
 1. A single tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) which shall:
 - a. (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 service a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth; and
 - (5) not include anything on it that is a health risk issue and can pose a danger to themselves or other players.
 - 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 teeth; or
 - (2) Constructed and fitted to the individual by impressing the teeth into the tooth and mouth protector itself
 - c. 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 primarily the same single solid color that clearly contrasts that with the color of the flag and flag belt. A single vertical strip down the side is permissible, if it clearly contrasts that with the color of the flag and flag belt.
 - d. **Note:** Beginning in 2030 the color of the pants, shorts or skirts shall be the same single solid color that clearly contrasts that with the color of the flag and flag belt.
 - 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 $\frac{3}{16}$ inch in diameter.
 - (j) The sides of the cleat shall taper uniformly from a minimum base of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter to a minimum tip of $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter.
2. Nonremovable cleats are limited to studs or projections that do not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length measured from the sole of the shoe to the tip of the cleat and which are made with nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material that does not have or develop a cutting edge.
- e. An unaltered tightly fixed flag belt with pop-sockets of the same single solid color, with two flags of the same single solid color. The flags and sockets each shall be made of the same material in the same color without sharp edges. Any player who deliberately manipulates their flags shall be disqualified.
- 1. The belt must be worn:
 - a. In such a way that one flag is located on each hip
 - b. The sockets shall be placed facing outwards and downwards
 - c. The flags shall be clearly visible and hang down freely
 - d. No article of clothing may cover the flag or belt
 - e. The flags and sockets may not be greased, glued or altered in any way
 - f. All colors must be contrasting with colors on the pants
 - g. Any excess portion of a belt must be worn in the front and should be looped or tucked in order to prevent it from being mistaken as a flag
 - 2. Measurements:
 - a. Flags shall measure a minimum of: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch x 14 inches
 - b. Flag length from socket: 15 to 16 inches (38.1 – 0.6 cm)
 - c. Flag width: 1.9 to 2.1 inches (4.8 – 5.3 cm)
 - d. Flag thickness: maximum 0.03 inches (0.75 mm)
 - e. Flag weight: minimum 3.5 ounces (100 g)
 - f. Each flag is allowed one single color brand or logo in the upper quarter with a maximum size of 2x3 inches (5 x 7.5 cm)

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 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick or $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick if made of shock absorbing material
- d. Thigh guards which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production
- e. Soft headwear not made from abrasive or hard material
- f. Rubber, cloth or elastic bands to control hair. Hard items, including but not limited to beads, barrettes, bobbypins 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.
- g. 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.
- h. Gloves, which may be anchored with athletic tape.
- i. Tape, bandage or support wrap on the hand or forearm to protect an existing injury.

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. Pockets or belt loops.
 - b. Exposed drawstrings
 - 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. Uniform adornments, with the exception of 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ " 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 equap to half the thickness of the plastic
 - 4. Rib pads and back protectors unless fully covered by a jersey
 - 5. Shin guards
 - 6. Should pads
- c. The following other Illegal Equipment:
 - 1. Ball-colored headwear, jersey, 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



4. Eye shade (grease or no-glare strips or stickers) that includes words, numbers, logos, or other symbols within the eye shade
5. Jerseys, undershirts, or exterior arm covers/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.

- a. Prior to the start of the game officials shall perform an equipment check to ensure that all players are legally equipped in compliance with the rules.

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 30 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 AND COACHES FIELD EQUIPMENT (adopted from NFHS and USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . The recommended coaching staff is 2-3 coaches. Coaches shall not be:

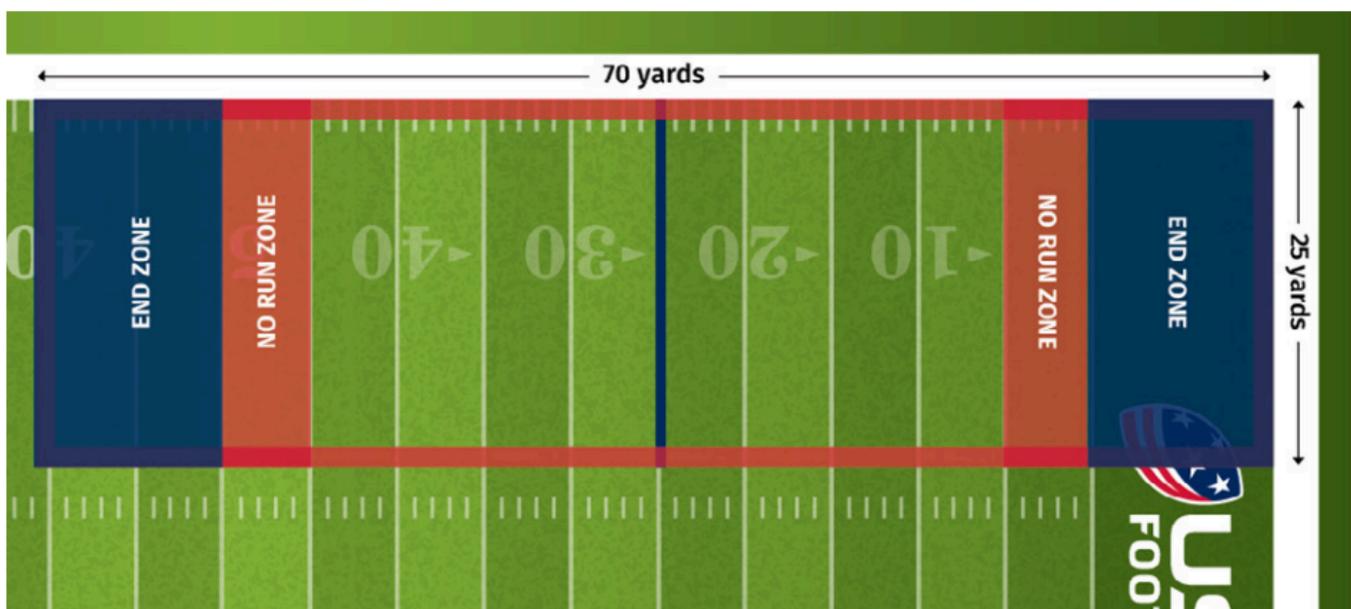
- a. Students
- b. Under 18 years old

ART. 2 . . . Coaches will not be allowed on the field during game play during varsity contests to call plays or instruct their players. Coaches may be on the field for the first week of game play for junior varsity contests only, unless otherwise agreed upon by both head coaches.

Rule 1 Field Setup Diagrams (adopted from USA Football)

MN HS Girls Flag Football Possible Field Configurations:

- a. One field on one tackle football field, with preference that the field is towards the press box and spectator seating:

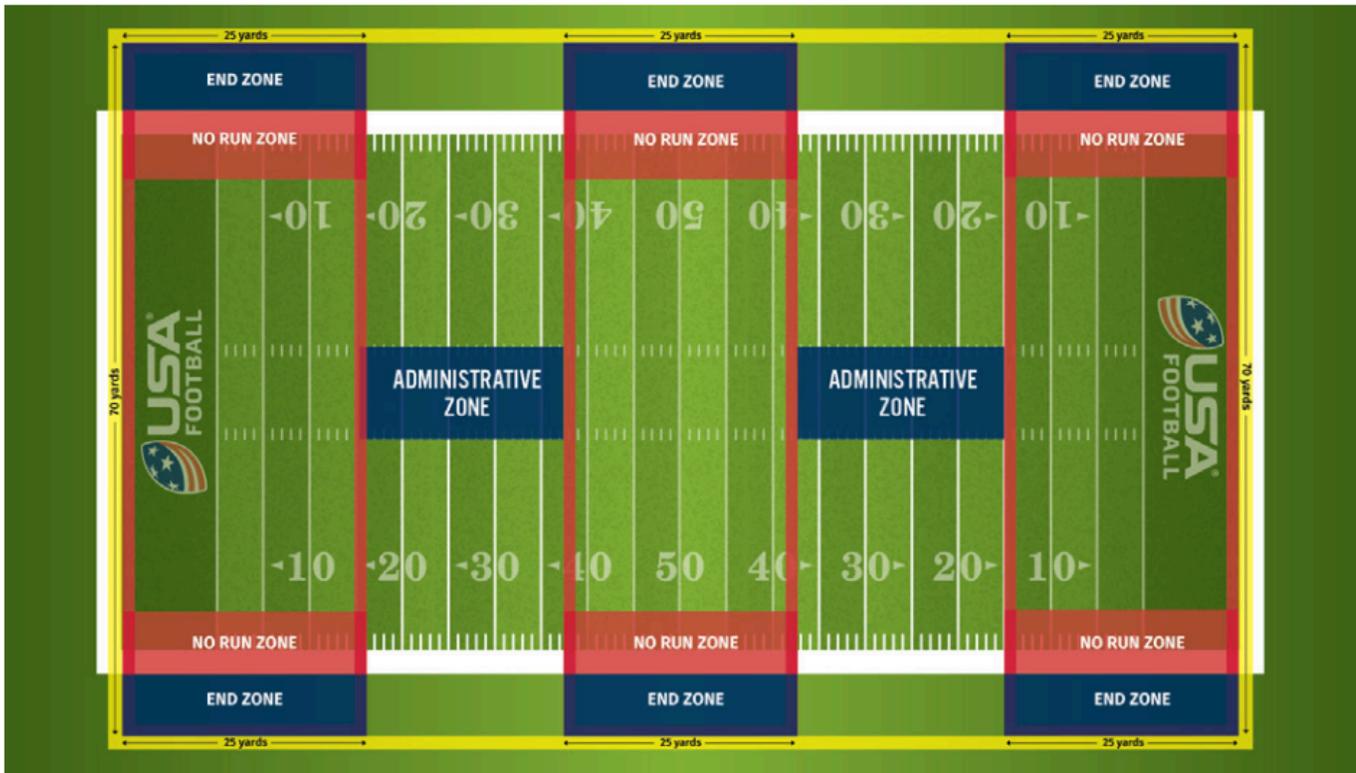


- b. Two fields on one tackle football field configuration (most common configuration)



**Administration zones should be 3 yards wide.*

- c. If absolutely necessary three fields may be placed on one tackle football field. This is the least preferred option of the league.



**Yellow line indicates lines of a soccer field*



Rule 2: Definition of Playing Terms

SECTION 1 AIMING (FROM USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . Aiming is to target and initiate contact with an opponent even with right of way. It is any deliberate or avoidable contact with excessive force, even in an attempted flag pull or while playing the ball during a pass and attacking a ball in possession or taking away the ball from the runner.

SECTION 2 BALL STATUS - DEAD, LIVE, LOOSE (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

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. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

ART. 3 . . . A loose ball is a pass or fumble. The terms "pass" and "fumble" are sometimes used as abbreviations when the ball is loose following the acts of passing or fumbling 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 3 BLOCKING (adopted from NFHS)

Blocking is obstructing an opponent by contacting them with any part of the blocker's body

SECTION 4 CATCH (adopted from NFHS)

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 in bounds. In the case of a simultaneous catch, the ball belongs to the team currently in team possession.

SECTION 5 CHARGING (adopted from USA FB)

An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established a position on the field. This includes, but is not limited to, lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest

SECTION 6 CONFERENCES (adopted from NFHS)

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 five players.

SECTION 7 DOWN — LOSS OF DOWN (adopted from NFHS)

ART. 1 . . . A down is an 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 8 ENCROACHMENT (adopted from NFHS)

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 9 FIELD AREAS (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

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

ART. 2 . . . The boundary lines are the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end lines. (Modified USA FB)

ART. 3 . . . The field of play is the area within the sidelines and the goal lines.

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

ART. 5 . . . The No-run zones exists only for Team A and only between their opponent's 5-yard line and goal line. When the ball is snapped within the no-run zone, Team A may only advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage via a legal forward pass that either:

- a. First touches any player beyond the line of scrimmage or,
- b. First touches a team B player behind the line of scrimmage and the officials rule that the pass would have cross the line of scrimmage if not touched by the team B player.

SECTION 10 FIGHTING (adopted from NFHS)

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 11 FLAG, FLAG BELT, AND FLAG GUARDING (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

ART. 1... A flag belt is a required piece of player equipment as outlined in 1-5-1e.

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... Flag Guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flags. Examples of flag guarding include, but are not limited to: stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm or ball. (USA FB)

SECTION 12 FORMATIONS (USA FB)

A scrimmage formation requires a snapper on the line of scrimmage and any number of players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

SECTION 13 FORWARD PROGRESS (adopted from NFHS)

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.

SECTION 14 FOULS AND PENALTIES (adopted from NFHS)

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 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 where 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 (adopted from NFHS)

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

SECTION 16 HANDING (adopted from NFHS)

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 an 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 (adopted from NFHS)

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

SECTION 18 INTERCEPTION (adopted from NFHS)

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

SECTION 19 LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (adopted from NFHS)

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 20 LINES (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

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 line to gain is the yard line when a new series (first down) is awarded.

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.

ART. 8 . . . The rush line ("Blitz Line") is an imaginary line running across the width of the field located seven yards from the line of scrimmage on the defensive side of the ball. (USA FB)

SECTION 21 MUFF (adopted from NFHS)

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

SECTION 22 NEUTRAL ZONE (adopted from NFHS)

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 23 No Run Zone (adopted from USA FB)

No-run zones are located five yards before the end zone in the direction the offense is headed. They are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in this zone, including the quarterback if they are blitzed.

SECTION 24 OUT OF BOUNDS (adopted from NFHS)

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 25 PARTICIPATION (adopted from NFHS)

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

SECTION 26 PASSING (adopted from NFHS)

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.

ART. 6 . . . Backward passes, other than the snap, is an illegal pass that causes the ball to become dead.

SECTION 27 PLAYER DESIGNATIONS (adopted from NFHS)

ART. 1 . . . A player is one of the 10 team members (5 per team) 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 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. 4 . . . A disqualified player is a player barred from further participation in the game.

ART. 5 . . . 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 8-6 for illegal participation.

ART. 6 . . . 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. 7 . . . 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. 8 . . . A runner is a player who is in possession of a live ball or is simulating possession of a live ball.

ART. 9 . . . A snapper is the player who snaps the ball.

ART. 10 . . . A substitute is a team member who may replace a player or fill a player vacancy. A substitute becomes a player when the player legally 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 28 PLAYS — FOR PENALTY ENFORCEMENT (adopted from NFHS)

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

- a. A legal forward pass.
- b. A backward pass (including the snap) 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 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 2-36-7.

SECTION 29 POSSESSION (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

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 or recovered it.

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

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

ART. 3 . . . A player attempting to gain possession of a pass near the boundary must have a foot inbounds. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

**SECTION 30 READY-FOR-PLAY (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)**

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

SECTION 31 RIGHT OF PLACE & RIGHT OF WAY (adopted from USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . Right of place is given to any stationary player who maintains a normal player posture and makes no movements in any horizontal direction to change their position. A purely vertical movement, including a lift from the ground, in order to throw or catch a pass does not mean that a previously established right of place has been lost. Right of place supersedes right of way when determining who is guilty of a foul.

ART. 2 . . . Right of way is given to a player who has established a direction of movement in a regular manner and does not alter that direction. A player with right of way has a higher privilege when determining who is guilty of a foul than all other players except those with right of place.

SECTION 32 RULE (adopted from NFHS)

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 (adopted from NFHS)

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

SECTION 34 SHIFT (adopted from NFHS)

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 SHIELDING (adopted from USA FOOTBALL)

Shielding is obstructing an opponent without contact by moving into their path.

SECTION 36 SNAP (adopted from NFHS)

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 37 SPOTS (adopted from NFHS)

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 center 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.

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 down is ended due to a grounded fumble; or
- c. The spot of the catch or recovery when the momentum exception, as in 8-5-2(c) 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 7-2-2, 7-2-3, 7-2-4 and 7-2-5, 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 score.

SECTION 38 TEAM & PLAYER DESIGNATIONS (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

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

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

ART. 3 . . . Team designations (A and B) are retained until the ball is next ready for play.

ART. 4 . . . Any defensive player with their entire body more than 7 yards away from the scrimmage line at the snap can establish themselves as a blitzer with a legal signal by raising one hand clearly above the head. A legal blitzer:

- a. is granted the right of way.
- b. shall immediately rush after the snap in a quick manner, which is straight towards the point where the quarterback receives the snap in order to retain the right of way.
- c. rushing late, slowly, towards a different spot, changing directly during the rush, or not rushing the quarterback, then loses the right of way but still can participate as any other defender.
- a. who does not give a signal and legally crosses the scrimmage line is a rusher. (USA FB with some IFAF)

ART. 5 . . . Any defensive player who is not established as a blitzer in Article 4 above is permitted to be a rusher. They may not blitz the quarterback until the 5-second pass clock has ended, but they may legally cross the line of scrimmage to pursue a potential



receiver or runner, who is not the quarterback. (USA FB)

SECTION 39 TOUCHING (adopted from NFHS)

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 40 TRIPPING (adopted from NFHS)

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

SECTION 41 QUARTERBACK (USA FB)

The quarterback is the player who initially controls the snap. They may or may not become a passer during the down. They remain the quarterback until they relinquish possession to another player. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the line of scrimmage without first:

- a. Handing the ball off to a teammate and then receiving a second handoff or;
- b. Receiving a pass or;
- c. A legal blitzing defender crosses the line of scrimmage after starting from behind the 7 yard rush line.

EXCEPTION: The five second clock has expired.

Rule 3: Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

SECTION 1 LENGTH OF PERIODS – HALFTIME INTERMISSION (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . The clock running time for a game shall be 40 minutes for high schools with periods and intermissions as indicated in Table 3-1.

ART. 2 . . . A half or halves 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 half may be shortened at any time or the game terminated.

ART. 3 . . . 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.

ART. 4 . . . 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. 5 . . .** A Mercy Rule will be in effect when one team is leading by 30 points or more. When this occurs, the following happens:
- a. A mercy rule is declared by the referee
 - b. The score, and statistics, are no longer kept, but the game may continue by mutual agreement of both head coaches.
 - c. The team ahead at the time of the mercy rule being declared:
 - i. Only has 3 downs to gain a first down on offense
 - ii. Can no longer blitz the quarterback on defense
 - iii. May no longer attempt a 1-point or 2-point try after a touchdown
 - d. The game clock will only stop for team timeouts and injury timeouts throughout the rest of the game; regardless of any change in point differential.
 - i. If the mercy rule is declared in the first half of a game the second half of the game may be shortened by mutual agreement by both coaches.

**TABLE 3-1
TABLE OF GAME CLOCK TIMES**

PERIOD OF TIMING CLOCK TIME
First Half: 20 minutes
Halftime Intermission: 5 minutes
Second Half: 20 minutes Intermission between second half and overtime (if necessary) 2 minutes
Charged Team Time-outs 1 minute



SECTION 2 STARTING A PERIOD — HALF (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . Each half of the game shall be started by a play from scrimmage from A's 5-yard line (starting spot). 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 five minutes prior to the scheduled game starting time.

ART. 2 . . . At the coin toss or simulated coin toss conducted five 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. The options 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 shall exercise the remaining option.

ART. 4 . . . Between the first and second halves, the teams shall change goals. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.

SECTION 3 ENDING A PERIOD — HALF (adopted from NFHS & primarily USA FB)

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). **NOTE:** This is not a stoppage in play where an authorized team conference may take place. This is simply to notify teams of the time remaining and gameplay continues.

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 3-3-4.
- 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 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, or
 4. 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 half the referee shall hold the ball in one hand overhead to indicate the half 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 the first half, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot unless 7-2-5 applies.

SECTION 4 STARTING AND STOPPING THE GAME CLOCK (adopted from NFHS & primarily USA FB)

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

- a. When the ball is legally snapped.

ART. 2 . . . At any point in the game the clock shall stop when:

- a. Either team is granted a charged timeout
- b. The referee declares an official's timeout for injury, equipment, or coach's conference.

ART. 3 . . . In the last two minutes of either half the game clock shall stop:

- a. To award a first down to either team
- b. To complete a penalty
- c. When the ball or runner goes out of bounds
- d. When a forward pass is ruled incomplete
- e. After a touchdown, try, or safety.
- f. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.



ART. 4 . . . The game clock shall start on the snap:

- a. A team is granted a charged timeout
- b. A forward pass is ruled incomplete
- c. Following a team A runner being ruled out of bounds
- d. Team B is awarded a first down and will next snap the ball
- e. When the penalty for a delay of game foul is accepted
- f. When Team A attempts to illegally consume time

ART. 5 . . . The game clock shall start with the official's ready for play signal:

- a. An injury timeout is allowed for one or more players or an official.
- b. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.
- c. Following an officials timeout for successful coach referee conference by a coach
- d. Following necessary repair to player equipment as in 3-4-5-b
- e. Team A is awarded a first down
- f. After completion of a penalty, except for delay of game
- g. When Team A attempts to illegally conserve time
- h. Any other situations not mentioned in Art. 4 above.

ART. 6 . . . Whenever one or more incidents that cause the game clock to be started on the referee's signal (3-4-5) occur in conjunction with any that cause it to be started on the snap (3-4-4), it shall be started on the snap.

SECTION 5 CHARGED AND OFFICIAL'S TIME-OUTS — INTERMISSIONS (adopted from NFHS & USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . Each team is entitled to two 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 which requires the assistance of a team attendant(s), or without the assistance of a team attendant delays the ready-for-play for more than 25 seconds and the coach elects to take a time out, if they have any remaining, rather than substitute a player.
- 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. If the rule is deemed to be misapplied or misinterpreted by game officials, no timeout is charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. **NOTE:** A team with no time-out remaining cannot challenge a rule interpretation, though officials can come together independently and reverse a call by unanimous decision. Reviews of rule applications must be done immediately following the play in question. Once the ball has been snapped for the next down, that play can no longer be reviewed. Decisions by game officials are final.

ART. 3 . . . A single charged time-out shall not exceed 30 seconds. The referee shall notify the teams within five seconds before 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 1-5-3.

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 with less than two minutes remaining in either half.
- c. When the game clock first reaches a reason to stop the clock as in Rule 3-4-3 with 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 their ruling. (3-5-9)
- h. After a foul, to administer the penalty with less than two minutes remaining in either half.
- i. For any unusual delay in getting the ball ready for play.



ART. 8 . . . 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 healthcare professional. (NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports, in Appendix B.)
- c. A game official discovers any player who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on 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, in Appendix D.)

ART. 9 . . . 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 (USA FB and NFHS)

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

- a. Play clock:
 - i. 25 seconds will be on the play clock and start on the ready-for-play signal:
 1. Following a down;
 2. Prior to a try following a score;
 3. To start a period or overtime series;
 4. Following an inadvertent whistle;
 5. Following a charged time-out;
 6. (f) Following an official's time-out and
 7. Following the stoppage of the play clock by the referee for any other reason.
- b. The ball is ready for play:
 - i. 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 3-6-1 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 OVERTIME (USA FOOTBALL)

ART. 1 . . . If at the conclusion of regulation the score is tied the following overtime procedure will occur:

- a. A coin toss will occur.
- b. At the coin toss 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. 2 . . . The winner of the toss shall have first choice of options for the overtime. The options 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 shall exercise the remaining option.

ART. 3 . . . The goal selected in 3-7-2 shall be used for the entire overtime until the conclusion of the game unless conditions become unplayable.

ART. 4 . . . Each team shall have an offensive possession series in an overtime period.

EXCEPTION: The defense intercepts the ball during the first possession series of an overtime period and scores.

ART. 5 . . . In the first overtime period:

- a. The offense will begin their possession series at the 25 yard line (midfield)
- b. They will have four downs to score
- c. They may only gain a first-down if a penalty statement includes an automatic first-down
- d. If the offense scores a touchdown, they have the choice to go for a one point (5-yard line) try or two point (10-yard line) try.
- e. The team scoring the greater number of points during overtime shall be declared the winner.
- f. If the defense intercepts the ball during the first overtime period and scores then the game is over.
- g. No charged team timeouts shall be granted.



ART. 6 . . . If after one overtime period the score remains tied, the team that lost the coin toss will have their choice of options to start the second overtime period. The options shall be:

- a. To choose whether their team will begin on offense or defense.

Note: This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start each overtime period.

ART. 7 . . . Beginning in the second and subsequent overtime period(s) possession series shall consist of teams alternating 1-point try attempts from the 5-yard line. Overtime ends when the score after a period is no longer tied or the defense scores during the first possession series of an overtime period.

SECTION 8 SUBSTITUTIONS (NFHS)

ART. 1 . . . Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players. Upon meeting the criteria of 2-26-10, 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, live ball foul; Art. 6 – Illegal substitution (S22) – 5 yards, nonplayer foul.

SECTION 9 FIVE SECOND CLOCK (USA FOOTBALL)

ART. 1 . . . A five-second clock begins when the ball is legally snapped and play continues once the five second clock has expired.

ART. 2 . . . No forward passes may be made after the five second clock has expired.

ART. 3 . . . All team B players are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage once the five-second clock expires.

ART. 4 . . . The team A quarterback is eligible to run the ball once the five second clock has expired and is **not required** to first

- a. Hand the ball off to a teammate and then receive a second handoff or;
- d. Receive a pass or;
- e. A legal blitzing defender crosses the line of scrimmage after starting from behind the 7 yard rush line.
EXCEPTION: The quarterback may not run if the ball is snapped on or inside the team B 5-yard line (No Run Zone)

PENALTY: Art. 2 – Illegal Forward Pass – (S30-9) – 5 yards plus loss of down;

SECTION 10 TIME BETWEEN GAMES & WARM UP PERIOD (LEAGUE SPECIFIC RULE)

ART. 1 . . . When double headers are played back to back a minimum of a 10 minute break/warm up period is required between games.

ART. 2 . . . If available, teams may warm up while games are being played, as long as it is in a separate area and does not interfere with gameplay.

ART. 3 . . . By agreement by both head coaches and referee the break between double header games may be shortened.

Rule 4: Ball in Play, Dead Ball and Out of Bounds

SECTION 1 PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY (NFHS and USA Football)

ART. 1 . . . To start each half the ball shall be put in play by a snap from scrimmage from A's 5-yard line. Following a safety, the team whose goal line was not involved shall put the ball in play by a snap from scrimmage from its own 5-yard line.

ART. 2 . . . A snap shall always be made from the inbounds spot

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 (USA FOOTBALL AND NFHS)

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 2-11-2.
- c. If the flag(s) or flag belt of the player in possession of the ball inadvertently falls to the ground.
- d. If the jersey of the player in possession of the ball covers any part of the flag(s).
- e. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s)
- f. When a live ball goes out of bounds.
- g. When any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete or is simultaneously caught by opposing players.
- h. A backward pass is thrown
- i. When any loose ball:
 - i. Is simultaneously caught
 - ii. That is a fumble, or snap that touches the ground.
 1. When a legal snap touches the ground, uncontrolled by a Team A player, the down counts, and the ball shall next be put in play at the previous spot.
 - iii. 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.

- j. When any score occurs.
- k. When a game official sounds a whistle inadvertently.
- l. When a prosthetic limb comes completely off the runner.

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

- a. The down shall be replayed if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while a legal forward pass or snap is in flight..
- 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 (NFHS AND USA FOOTBALL)

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 crosses 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 incompleteness, 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 of Team Possessions after Penalty

SECTION 1 SERIES OF DOWNS (NFHS AND USA FOOTBALL)

ART. 1 . . . The team which next puts the ball in play by scrimmage to start the game or half, following a try is awarded a series of four consecutively numbered downs in which to advance the ball to the line 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 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 line to gain.
- b. A, if a live-ball penalty statement includes an automatic first down
- c. B, if the ball belongs to B at the end of any down.
- d. B, if at the end of the fourth down, the ball belongs to A behind the line to gain. B shall put the ball in play at the dead ball spot.
- e. Prior to the ready for play before fourth down team A declares "punt," team B shall put the ball in play at their own 5-yard line. **Note:** Team A coach must quickly inform officials of their decision to "play" or "punt" prior to 4th down to maintain pace of play. In order to change their decision, a team timeout must be taken.
- f. 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 (NFHS & USA FOOTBALL)

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. 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.
- b. The loss-of-down aspect of a penalty has no significance following a change of possession or if the line to gain is reached after enforcement.



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

ART. 4 . . . 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. 5 . . . After a series of downs ends, a new series is awarded unless one of the following is involved: a try. 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 LINE TO GAIN (USA FOOTBALL)

ART. 1 . . . The line to gain is the 25-yard line (midfield) 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 new series of downs shall start..

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: Snapping, Handing and Passing the Ball

SECTION 1 BEFORE THE SNAP (NFHS & USA FB)

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 or fail to keep the long axis of the ball at right angles to the line of scrimmage.

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

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

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

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

ART. 6 . . . Following the ready-for-play and after the snapper has placed 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, 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, 7 – Encroachment – (S7-18) – 5 yards; Arts. 2, 3 – snap infraction (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 7,8, – false start – (S19) – 5 yards; Art. 9 – disconcerting act – (S7-23) – 5 yards

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

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.
- c. Non-blitzer B players may be anywhere on or behind their line of scrimmage:
 - i. B players whose initial position is not beyond the yard rush line can legally cross the line of scrimmage on hand-off action.
 - ii. If the ball is handed off, the B player may continue their action to pull the ball carrier's flag.
 - iii. If the ball is not handed off, the Team B player must retreat back across the LOS and may not rush the Quarterback. Following a legal handoff, any member of the defense may cross the line of scrimmage.
- d. Any number of B players may be lined up as a blitzer:
 - i. To be a legal blitzer Team B players must meet the following requirements:
 1. All parts of their body must be completely behind the rush line at the snap
 2. A legal blitzer must have at least one hand raised clearly above their head to identify themselves as a potential blitzer for at least one second prior to the snap. Any number of B players may identify themselves as a potential blitzer and are not required to blitz.



- a. No more than two B players may legally blitz during a down.
3. If a blitzer leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - a. It is a foul if the blitzer leaves the rush line before the snap and does not return to the rush line before blitzing the quarterback.
4. If a blitzer leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the second receiver.

ART. 3 . . . Legal blitzers are granted right of way. Right of way:

- a. Supersedes the general right of way for the offense, because the B player is pursuing the quarterback.
- b. To retain the right of way the rush of a blitzer shall be immediately after the snap, quick, and straight towards the point where the quarterback receives the snap.
- c. A blitzer who is rushing late, slowly, towards a different spot, changing direction during the rush or rushing a player other than the quarterback loses the right of way but still can participate as any other defender.
- d. If a blitzer is forced to change direction due to an offensive foul, the blitzer will not lose their right of way for a further direct rush to the point where the quarterback received the snap.

ART. 4 . . . 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. 5 . . . After a huddle or shift, all A players shall come to an absolute stop and remain stationary simultaneously without movement of hands, feet, head or body for at least one second before the snap.

ART. 6 . . . 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.

ART. 7 . . . No member of team A may run the ball across the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped from on or inside the Team B 5 yardline (Exception: 2-point try plays following a Team B penalty).

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 2b, c – Illegal formation – (S19) – 5 yards; Art. 4 – Illegal snap – (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 2a – Illegal numbering – (S19) – 5 yards; Art. 5 – Illegal shift – (S20) – 5 yards; Art. 6 – Illegal motion – (S20) – 5 yards; Art. 2d.i.2, 2d.i.3.a, 3c – Illegal blitz - 5 yards; Art. 2c.iii. – Illegal rush – 5 yards; Art. 7 – Illegal run in the no run zone (SX) - 5 yards and loss of down.

SECTION 3 HANDING THE BALL (NFHS & USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . Any player may hand the ball behind the line of scrimmage.

- a. Handoffs beyond the line of scrimmage are illegal.
- b. The snapper is ineligible to receive a handoff
- c. Any player who receives a handoff may throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage as long as it meets the requirements of a legal forward pass, rule 6-5.

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 to a teammate.

PENALTY: Arts. 1a, 1b, 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 (NFHS & USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . Once the ball is or has been beyond the line of scrimmage, no player may make a backward pass.

ART. 2 . . . During a down in which a change of team possession has occurred, no player may make a backward pass.

ART. 3 . . . During any down, any player in possession may lose player possession through a fumble

ART. 4 . . . If a fumble, prior to touching the ground, is caught by any player, the player may advance.

ART. 5 . . . If a fumble hits the ground, the play is dead.

ART. 6 . . . The ball belongs to the passing or fumbling team (unless lost after fourth down) if a fumble:

- a. Goes out of bounds between the goal lines; or
- b. Becomes dead inbounds while opponents are in joint possession.

ART. 7 . . . If a fumble is declared dead behind a goal line, the ball belongs to the team defending that goal and the result is a safety.

PENALTY: Art. 1, 2 – Illegal backwards pass – (S30-9) – 5 yards and loss of down.

SECTION 5 FORWARD-PASS CLASSIFICATION (NFHS & USA FB)

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.

- a. Any team A player who has received a legal handoff or backward pass behind the line of scrimmage may throw a legal forward pass under the following restrictions:
 - i. They are behind the line of scrimmage as defined in this section
 - ii. The ball is released within the original 5-second pass count.

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. If the player who throws the pass touches it before it touches a team B player.
- d. A second and subsequent forward pass(es) thrown during a down.
- e. A pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver to save loss of yardage or to conserve time. **EXCEPTION:** In the last two minutes of either half 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.
- f. A forward pass is thrown after the 5-second pass count has expired.



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 lands 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 incompleteness occurs the down counts unless the pass is after a change of possession. If the pass is legal, the passing team next snaps the ball at the previous spot, unless lost after fourth down.

ART. 6 . . . All players 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. Team A with the snap.
- b. Team 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, d – Illegal forward pass – (S30-9) – 5 yards plus loss of down; Art. 2e – intentional grounding – (S31-9) – 5 yards plus loss of down; Art. 10 – Pass interference – (S28) – 10 yards.

Rule 7: Scoring Plays and Touchbacks

SECTION 1 POINT VALUES (USA FB)

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

Touchdown 6 points
Safety Points awarded to the opponent 2 points
Successful Try <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2 point try (10 yard line) b. 1 point try (5 yard line)
Team B Score on Try: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2 points
Forfeited Game
Game Score: Offended Team: 30, Opponent: 0 But if offended team is ahead, the score stands

SECTION 2 TOUCHDOWN (NFHS & USA FB)

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.

ART. 2 . . . If team B commits a foul during a down in which a touchdown is scored, and there was not a change in possession during the down, team A may accept the result of the play and choose to enforce the penalty on the Try.

ART. 3 . . . If an opponent of the scoring team commits a foul during a down in which a touchdown is scored and there was a change of possession during the down, and such foul occurs after the change of possession, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and choose enforcement of the penalty on the Try.



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. The scoring team must enforce the penalty on the Try.
- b. The non-scoring team may enforce the penalty
 - i. On the Try
 - ii. On the succeeding spot after the Try

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:

- c. The scoring team must enforce the penalty on the Try.
- d. The non-scoring team may enforce the penalty
 - i. On the Try
 - ii. On the succeeding spot after the Try

SECTION 3 TRY (NFHS & USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . After a touchdown, the scoring team shall attempt a try. This involves a scrimmage down which is not numbered. It is not timed during the last two minutes of either half.

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

ART. 2 . . . During the try, team A may score two points from what would be a touchdown from B's 10-yard line. Team A may score one point for what would be a touchdown from B's 5-yard line, under rules governing play at other times during the game.

- a. The spot of the snap may be changed due to the enforcement of penalties; however, the value of the try remains unchanged.
- b. On 1-point try attempts, Team A's restrictions related to the no-run zone remain in place.
- c. On 2-point try attempts, the no-run zone is not in effect, even if the snap occurs on or inside the 5-yard line.

ART. 3 . . . The try begins when the ball is ready for play. It ends when:

- a. The try is successful.
- b. The ball becomes dead for any other reason.

ART. 4 . . . During a try, B may score two points if they gain possession of the ball and return it across team A's goal line.

ART. 5 . . . If both teams foul during the try down and Team B fouls before any change of possession, the fouls offset and the down is repeated, even if additional fouls occur after the change of possession. Any repeat of the down after offsetting fouls must be from the previous spot.

ART. 6 . . . For fouls that occur during the try and before a change of possession:

- a. For Team A fouls during the try down:
 - i. If the try is successful, the try shall be repeated from the spot the penalty leaves it.
 - ii. If the penalty includes a loss of down, the try is over and the score is canceled. No yardage penalty will be enforced at the succeeding spot.
 - iii. If there is a change of team possession after the foul and there is not a score, the penalty is declined by rule
- b. For Team B fouls during the try down:
 - i. Team A has the option of repeating the try after enforcement of the penalty, or declining the penalty and accepting the result of the play.
 - ii. If the try is repeated due to enforcement of a penalty, the value of the try may not be changed.

ART. 7 . . . For fouls that occur during the try and after a change of possession:

- a. Penalties against either team are declined by rule.
- b. A score by the team committing the foul during the down is canceled.
- c. If both teams foul and Team B had not before the change of possession, the fouls cancel, the down is not repeated, and the try is over.

ART. 8 . . . If either team commits an unsportsmanlike conduct or a nonplayer foul during or immediately following a try down, the foul shall be enforced at the succeeding spot from the 5-yard line.

ART. 9 . . . After a try, Team B shall be awarded a 1st down at their 5-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

SECTION 4 FORCE AND SAFETY (NFHS & USA FB)

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 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 or intercepts an opponent's fumble; between R'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 is declared dead prior to being caught by another player. (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 by pass, or fumble, 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 or a legal snap.

- c. A player on offense commits any foul in their own end zone and the penalty is accepted.

Rule 8: Conduct of Players and Others

SECTION 1 HELPING THE RUNNER (NFHS)

ART. 1 . . . 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 (USA FB & NFHS)

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

- Grasp or encircle any teammate to form interlocked blocking.
- 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:

- Grasp a teammate.
- Extend hands or arms to ward off an opponent.
- 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.
- Spin in an uncontrolled manner in a way that is dangerous to themselves or others.
- Initiate contact with an opponent.

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

- Initiate contact with an opponent.
- Use hands to add momentum to the charge of a teammate.
- Use hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent.
- Initiate contact with an eligible receiver.
- Intentionally remove a flag or flag belt from an opponent who does not have possession of the ball.
- Attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession.

EXCEPTIONS:

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

PENALTY: Arts. 1a, 3a, b, d, e – Illegal use of hands or arms – (S34) – 10 yards; Art. 1a – interlocked blocking – (S35) – 10 yards; Arts. 1b, 3c – holding – (S33) – 10 yards; Art. 2a-d – flag guarding – (S38) – 10 yards; Art. 2e – charging – (SX) – 10 yards and loss of down

SECTION 3 BLOCKING, SHIELDING, IMPEDING, DIVING (NFHS & USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . Blocking by any player is illegal.

ART. 2 . . . Impeding the blitz is a foul committed by a team A player when:

- The player impedes the path or line of a legal team B blitz with right of way
- Any disruption to the blitz's path and/or contact is impeding **Exception:** If a team A player does not move after the snap, then it is the Team B blitz's responsibility to go around the Team A player to avoid contact.

ART. 3 . . . Shielding is a foul by either a team A or team B player who impedes an opponent from running a pass route, or getting to the runner. A player standing still (with right of place) is not shielding, even if the player is obstructing an opponent.

ART. 4 . . . Team A players without the ball may not run with, block, shield, screen or obstruct opponents for the ball carrier.

ART. 5 . . . Ball carriers are not permitted to dive while in possession of the football.

PENALTY: Arts. 1, 4 – Illegal Blocking – (S34) – 10 yards, Art. 2 – Impeding the Blitz – (SX) – 5 yards, Art. 3 – Shielding – (S34) – 5 yards, Art. 5 – Illegal Diving – (SX) – 5 yards.

SECTION 4 ILLEGAL PERSONAL CONTACT (NFHS & USA FB)

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

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

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

- Swing the foot, shin or knee into an opponent, nor extend the knee to meet an opponent.
- Charge into or throw an opponent to the ground.
- Hurdle an opponent
- Position themselves on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- Lift a teammate to gain an advantage.
- Throw a piece of equipment to trip an opponent.
- Make any other contact with an opponent, which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness.
- Strike an opponent with fist, locked hands, forearm or elbow, nor kick or knee them.
- Trip an opponent.
- Aim at an opponent
- Intentionally and excessively contact an opponent, including ball carriers in possession of the ball and defenders attempting to pull flags

ART. 4 . . . Roughing the passer. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into the passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown. They may not contact the head, neck, passing arm, or hand nor may they bat a ball from the passer's arm before, during, or immediately after the pass. Blocking the pass, or attempting to block the pass and subsequently making contact with the passer is roughing the passer. 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 kneeling – (S32-37) – 10 yards, automatic first down, and disqualification. Also, a first down if by the defense. 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 (NFHS)

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

- Baiting or taunting acts or words or insignia worn which engenders ill will. **NOTE:** The MNHSGFBL disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances.
- Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
- Any delayed, excessive, or prolonged act by which a player attempts to focus attention upon themselves.
- Kicking at the ball.
- Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or unless with permission of a game official.
- Refusing to comply with a game official's request.
- Using 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:

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

PENALTY: Arts. 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 (NFHS)

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 avoiding contact with an opponent and end up out of bounds. If this is the case, and the player 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:

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

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

ART. 4 . . . It is illegal participation:

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

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

SECTION 7 NONCONTACT UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT BY NONPLAYERS (USA FB & NFHS)

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

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



- f. Holding an unauthorized conference.
- g. The failure of a team to:
 - i. Comply with the restrictions of 3-2-2 at the coin toss or simulated coin toss; or
 - ii. Be ready to start the first half; or
 - iii. Be on the field following the conclusion of the halftime intermission; or
 - iv. Be ready to start the second half at the conclusion of the warm-up period.
- h. Following pregame verification as in 1-5-4, a coach allowing their players to use illegal equipment. (1-5-3)
- i. Being on the field except as a substitute or replaced player. (3-7-2, 9-6-3)
- 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. (9-8-11)

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; 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 9-8-2, 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.

Note: MHSGL condones poor sportsmanship from parents and spectators and will not tolerate abuse toward opponents, coaches, or officials. Spectators may positively support their team with clean and profanity free language. Language which is intended or designed to harass, embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances will not be tolerated and may be cause for ejection from the playing area. Game officials and site management have the authority to enforce a safe and respectful playing area for all individuals.

PENALTY: Art. 1a through j – Nonplayer foul – (S24), (S7-24 if dead ball) – 10 yards, and first down if by defense. 10 yards, and loss of down if by offense. 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. 10 yards, and loss of down if by offense. Disqualification of the Head Coach if 1g 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. 10 yards, and loss of down if by offense. Arts. 1j, 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 10 yards, and loss of down if by offense; Art. 1l – Nonplayer foul – (S24-37) – 10 yards and disqualification, and first down if by defense. 10 yards, and loss of down if by offense. 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.

SECTION 8 UNFAIR ACTS (NFHS)

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 they consider 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 8-9-3 and 8-9-4 are not charged to the coach or player for the purpose of unsportsmanlike conduct disqualifications.

SECTION 9 FLAG PULLING (USA FB)

ART. 1 . . . A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.

- a. A Team B player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball. **Exception:** A Team B player pulling the flag(s) of a receiver who has muffed the ball in the act of catching a pass has not committed an illegal flag pull. The ball is down at that spot if possession is gained by that receiver.

ART. 2 . . . Team B players may dive to pull flags so long as they meet the requirements of 8-2, 8-3, 8-4.

PENALTY: Arts. 1a– Illegal Flag Pull – (SX) – 5 yards

Rule 9: Enforcement of Penalties

SECTION 1 PROCEDURE AFTER A FOUL (NFHS & USA FB)

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.
- a. Illegal forward pass.
- b. Intentional grounding
- c. Illegal backward pass
- d. Noncontact unsportsmanlike conduct by players as in 8-5.
- e. Noncontact unsportsmanlike conduct by nonplayers as in 8-8-1.
- f. Team box and restricted area violations (third and subsequent) as in 8-8-2 and 8-8-3.

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

- a. Pass interference
- a. Roughing the Passer
- b. Noncontact unsportsmanlike conduct by players as in 8-5.
- c. Noncontact unsportsmanlike conduct by nonplayers as in 8-8-1.
- d. Team box and restricted area violations (third and subsequent) as in 8-8-2 and 8-8-3.

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; or
- b. There is a change of team possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession; or
- c. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul at any time during the down. In (a), (b) or (c), the penalties cancel and the down is replayed.

ART. 2 . . . If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession 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 . . . 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. 4 . . . Enforcement of penalties for unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead ball fouls:

- a. Penalties for dead-ball fouls, other than when both teams commit unsportsmanlike, nonplayer, or dead-ball personal fouls prior to the completion of penalty administration for those fouls, are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. A dead-ball foul is not coupled with a live-ball foul or another dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.
- b. If both teams commit unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls prior to the completion of penalty administration for those fouls, the distance penalty for an equal number of 10-yard unsportsmanlike, nonplayer, or dead-ball personal fouls will offset. Any remaining penalties will be enforced separately and in the order of occurrence.

ART. 5 . . . A foul during a try is not paired with a dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

SECTION 3 TYPES OF PLAY

ART. 1 . . . A loose-ball play is action as defined in 2-27-1.

ART. 2 . . . A running play is any action as defined in 2-27-2

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 or recovery when the momentum exception as in 8-5-2 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 7-4-2c 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 8-4-4 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. 4 . . . The enforcement spot is the spot of the foul for:

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

ART. 5 . . . 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 7-2-2, 7-2-3, 7-2-4 and 7-2-5.

ART. 6 . . . 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 9-3-2 when:
 - i. The run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage; and
 - ii. The foul occurs in advance of the end of the run or related run.

ART. 7 . . . 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. 8 . . . 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. 9 . . . The enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends for a foul which occurs during a running play as defined in 9-3-2 unless the provisions of 9-4 or 9-5 apply.

SECTION 5 SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT RULES

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

- a. Unfair acts. (8-9)
- b. A foul by the opponent of the scoring team on a successful try. (7-3-8)
- c. Fouls that occur during or after a touchdown scoring play. (7-2-2, 7-2-3, 7-2-4 and 7-2-5)
- d. Roughing the passer. (8-4-4)

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.



Penalty Summary

LOSS OF 5 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Delay of game	3-6-2, 3-6-4	7-21
Illegal substitution	3-8	7-22
Encroachment	6-1-1, 6-1-5, 6-1-6, 6-1-7	18
Snap infraction	6-1-2, 6-1-3, 6-2-4	19
False start	6-1-7, 6-1-8	19
Disconcerting act	6-1-9	7-23
Illegal formation	6-2-1; 6-2-2b, c	19
Numbering violation	6-2-2a	19
Illegal shift or illegal motion	6-2-5, 6-2-6	20
Illegally handing ball forward (also loss of down)	6-3-1a, 1b, 2 and 3	30-9
Illegal forward pass (by A; also loss of down)	6-5-2	30-9
Illegal forward pass (by B)	6-5-2	30
Intentional grounding (also loss of down)	6-5-2d	31-9
Helping runner	8-1	35
Sideline interference	8-7-3	7-26
Attendant illegally on field	8-7-2	19
Nonplayer outside of the team box, but not on field	8-7-3	7-26
LOSS OF 10 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Forward-pass interference	6-5-10	28
Illegal blocking technique	8-3-1	34
Interlocked blocking	8-2-1a	35
Holding	8-2-1b; 8-2-3c	33
Runner grasping a teammate	8-2-2a	34
Illegal use of hands or arms	8 - 1a, 3a, b, d, e	34
Flag guarding	8-2-2a-d	38
Charging into an opponent obviously out of the play	8-4-3b	32
Hurdle an opponent	8-4-3c	32
Tripping	8-4-3i	36
Roughing passer (also first down)	8-4-4	32-29-8
Illegal personal contact in restricted area (also first down if by defense)	8-4-5	32-26
Unsportsmanlike conduct by player or nonplayer (also first down if by defense)	8-5, 8-8-1	24



Illegal participation	8-6	25
Illegal kicking or batting the ball	8-7	27
Sideline interference (third and subsequent) (also first down if by defense)	8-8-3	26
Nonplayer illegally on field	8-8-3	24
Unfair acts	8-9	24
DISQUALIFICATION ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN 10-YARD PENALTIES		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Fighting by player or nonplayer (also first down if by defense)	8-4-1	32-37
Intentionally contacting a game official (also first down if by defense)	8-4-2	32-37
Striking, kicking, kneeing (also first down if by defense)	8-4-3h	32-37
Any act if unduly rough or flagrant (give proper signal and fol low with 37) (also first down if by defense)	8-4	37
A second unsportsmanlike foul by player or nonplayer (also first down if by defense)	8-5, 9-8	24-37
A substitute leaving team box during a fight (also first down if by defense)	8-8-11	24-37
Illegally tampering with flag belt	8-8-1h	24-37

Penalty Signal Chart

NFHS OFFICIAL FLAG FOOTBALL SIGNALS

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



NFHS
NFHS OFFICIAL
FLAG FOOTBALL SIGNALS

<p>22 Substitution infraction</p>	<p>23 Disconcerting act</p>	<p>24 Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul</p>	<p>25 Illegal participation</p>	
<p>26 Sideline interference (Face press box)</p>	<p>27 Illegal batting/kicking (Followed by pointing toward toe for kicking)</p>	<p>28 Forward pass interference Kick catching interference</p>	<p>29 Roughing passer</p>	<p>30 Illegal pass/forward handing (Face press box)</p>
<p>31 Intentional grounding</p>	<p>32 Personal foul</p>	<p>33 Holding</p>	<p>34 Illegal block Illegal use of hands/arms</p>	<p>35 Helping runner Interlocked blocking</p>
<p>36 Tripping</p>	<p>37 Disqualification</p>	<p>38 Flag guarding</p>		

All images copyright Referee (www.referee.com)