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## NFHS FOOTBALL RULES

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

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



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## Rule Change

## RULE 1-5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW) UNIFORM ADORNMENTS - TOWELS

It is legal for a player to have one moisture-absorbing solid-colored towel that has no more than one visible manufacturer's logo/trademark reference that does not exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  square inches and does not exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in any dimension; and has no more than one school logo/trademark reference that does not exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  square inches and does not exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in any dimension.

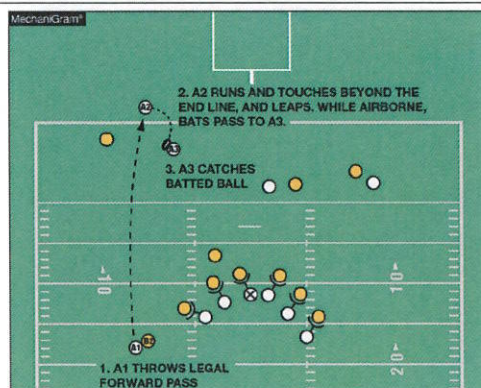
Towels do not have to be the same solid color for each player.


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## Rule Change

## RULE 2-29-1 PLAYER OUT OF BOUNDS



A2 is out of bounds as he has not had any body part touch inbounds. Therefore, when A2 intentionally touches the ball after being out of bounds, he has caused the ball to become dead. The pass is incomplete and A2 is guilty of illegal participation.

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## Rule Change

## **RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS**

The receiver is not defenseless because the opponent is attempting to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver.

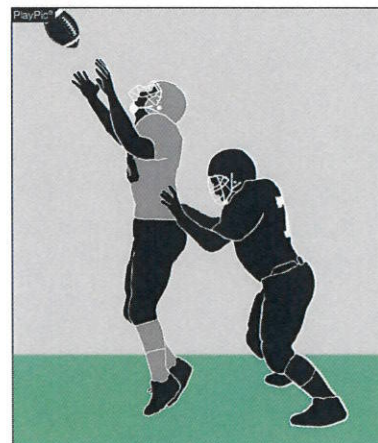

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## Rule Change

## **RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS**

The receiver is not defenseless even if the contact by the opponent is forceful because the contact is initiated with open hands. The contact could be pass interference, however.


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## Rule Change

## RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS

The receiver is not defenseless because of the incidental contact as a result of the defender making a play on the ball.

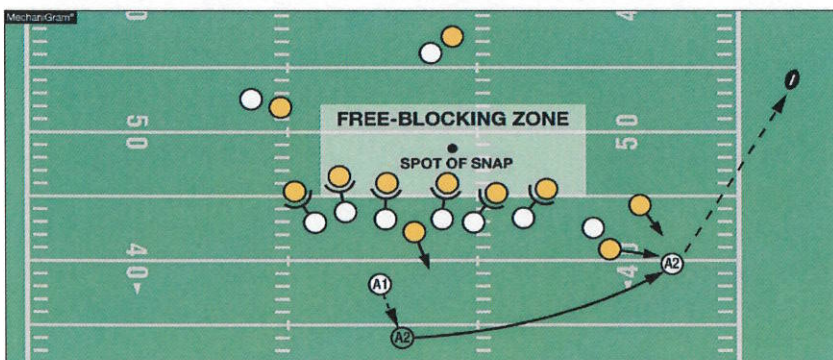


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## Rule Change

## RULE 7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5-2 d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW) INTENTIONAL GROUNDING EXCEPTION



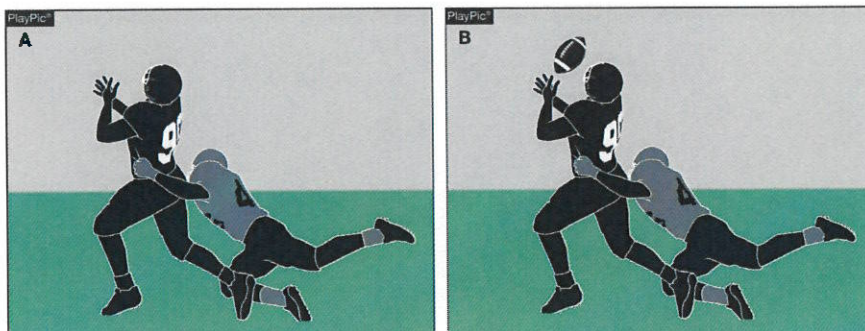
This is a foul for intentional grounding since A2 is the second player to possess the ball. Only the player who possessed the ball after the snap ends may take advantage of the intentional grounding exception.

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## Rule Change

## TABLE 7-5 2c (DELETED), 7-5 PENALTY INTENTIONAL PASS INTERFERENCE



The additional penalty for intentional pass interference as illustrated in PlayPic A has been deleted. The Team B player in the gray jersey will be penalized 15 yards for the pass interference foul committed in PlayPic B.



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## Rule Change

## RULE 10-4, TABLE 10-4 (NEW), 10-6 (DELETED) BASIC SPOT

### SUMMARY OF MANY FOULS THAT CAN OCCUR DURING RUNNING PLAYS AND THEIR PENALTIES AND BASIC SPOTS UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED BY RULE

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

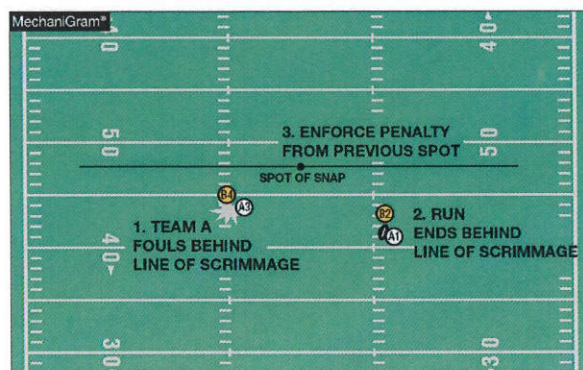


**NOTE:** The basic spot is the spot of the foul when A commits any foul in his end zone for which the penalty is accepted (8-5-2c).

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## Rule Change

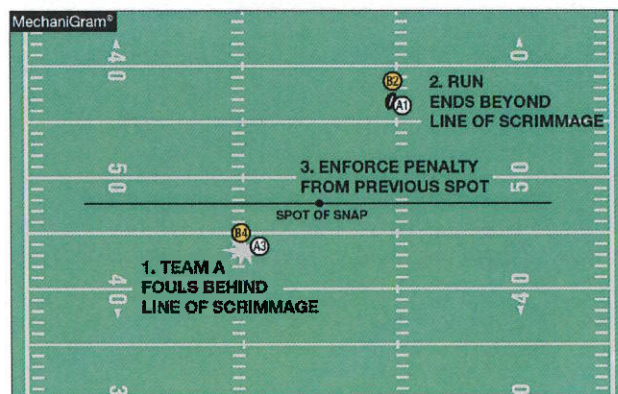
**RULE 10-4-2d****BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by A when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.

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## Rule Change

**RULE 10-4-2e****BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

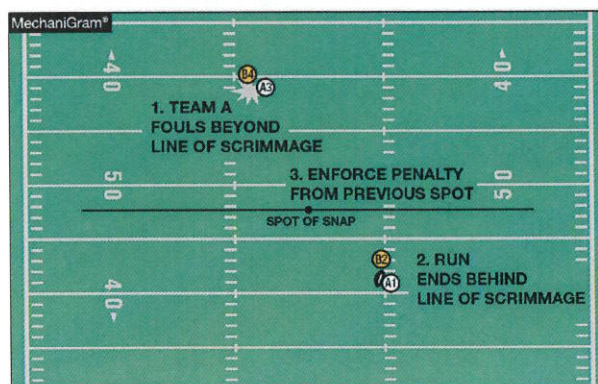
The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by A that occurs behind the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage.

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## Rule Change

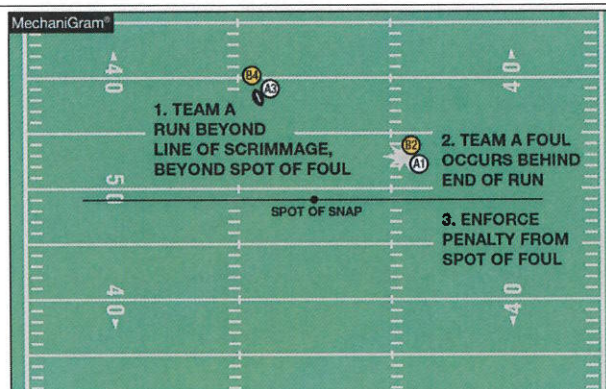
**RULE 10-4-2f****BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage.

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## Rule Change

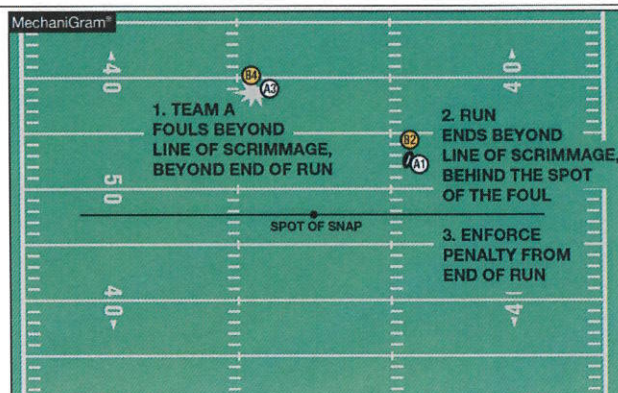
**RULE 10-4-4d****BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

The basic spot is the spot of the foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs behind the end of the run or related run.

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## Rule Change

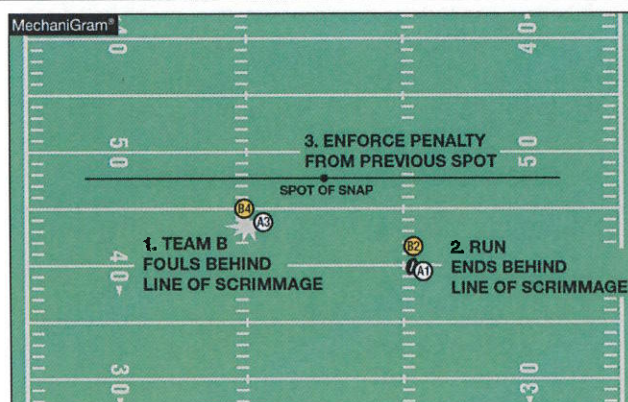
**RULE 10-4-5e****BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

The basic spot is the spot of the foul for a foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs in advance of the end of the run or related run.

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## Rule Change

**RULE 10-4-2d****BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.

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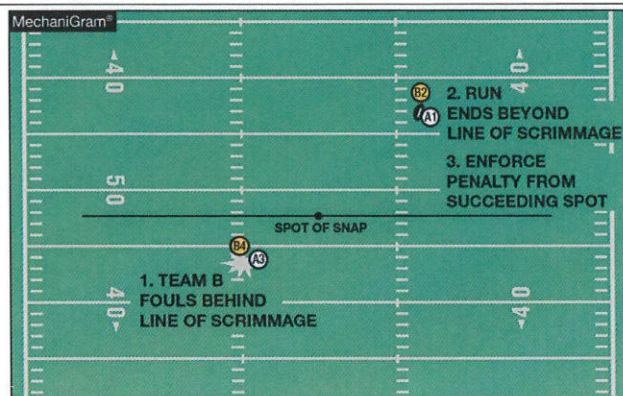
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## Rule Change

## RULE 10-4-5f

### BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT



The basic spot is the succeeding spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage.

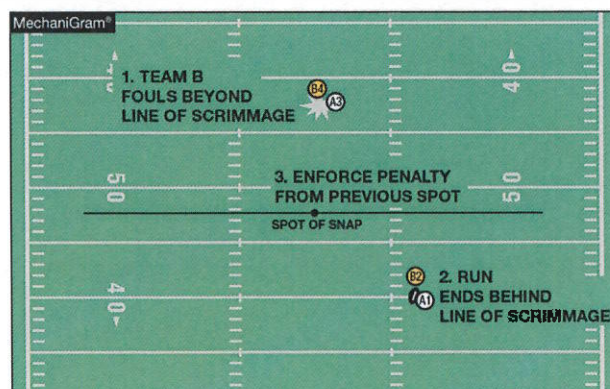
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## Rule Change

## RULE 10-4-2d

### BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

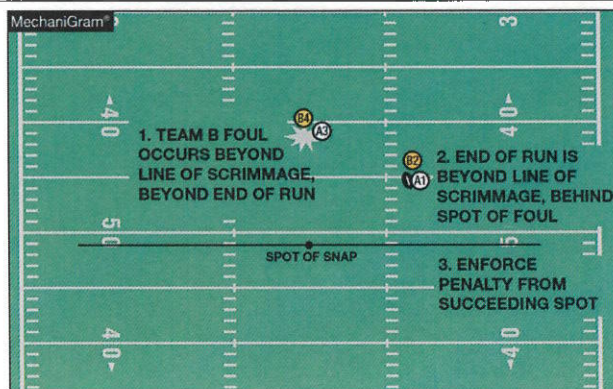


The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.

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## Rule Change

**RULE 10-4-5f****BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

The basic spot is the succeeding spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs beyond the end of the run.

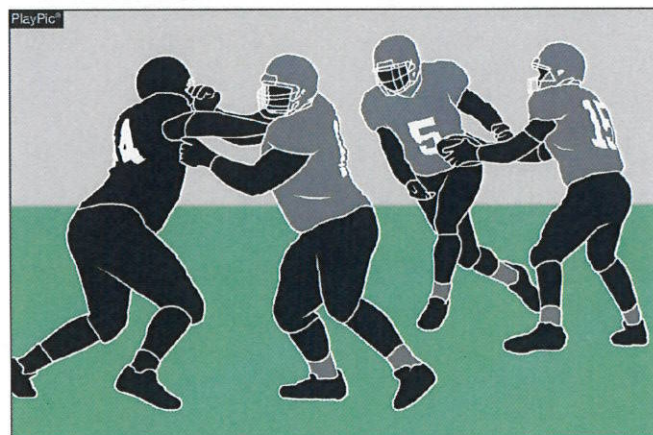
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## Rule Change

**SIX-PLAYER – RULE 7g (NEW)  
HANDING THE BALL FORWARD**

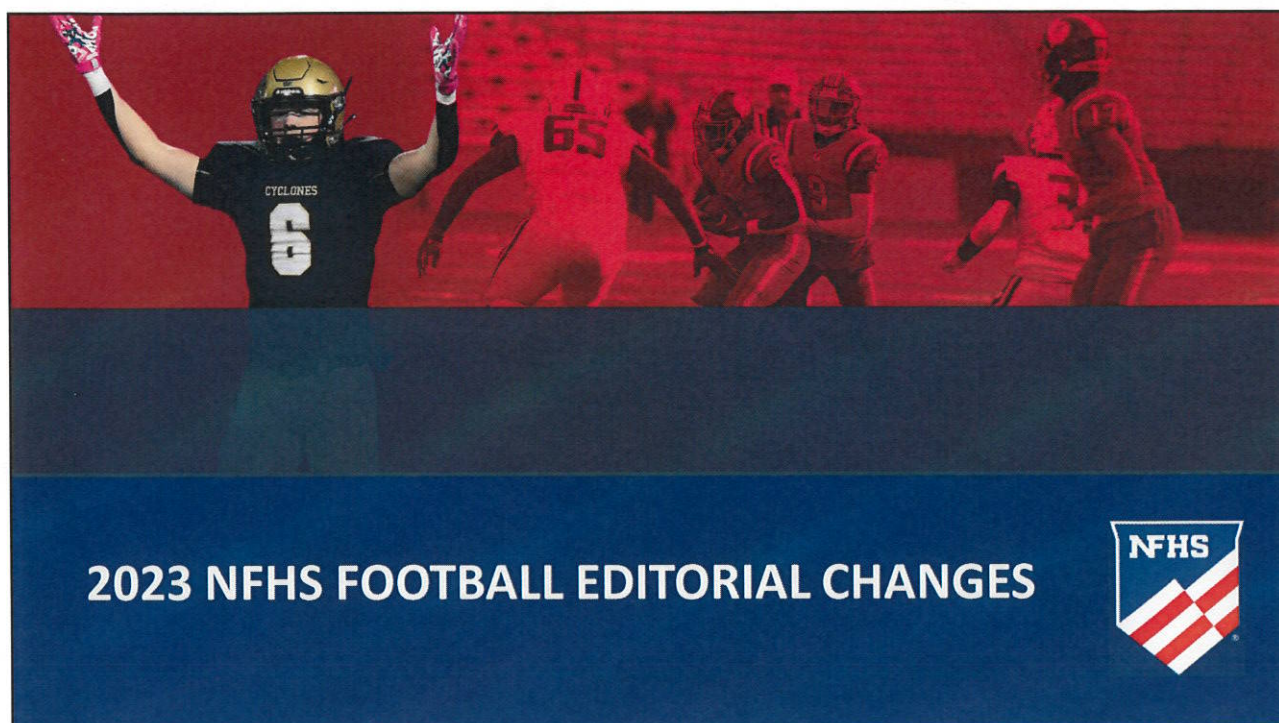
A direct forward handoff may be made during a scrimmage down before a change of possession, provided both players are in or behind the neutral zone unless it is to the snapper.




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Editorial Change	
 <b>2023 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES</b>	
1-1-7, 1-1-9, 1-3-2, 1-3-7 NOTE, TABLE 1-7 (6), 9-5-1, 9-8-1, RESOLVING TIED GAMES – 3-1	Changed the words “contest(s)” to “games(s)”.
TABLE 1-7	Removed the state association accommodation reference.
1-8	Created a new SECTION 8 for State Association Accommodations.
3-6-1b(1)	Added further clarification that game officials need to be in position when the ball is marked ready for play.
TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2	Corrected a misspelling.
FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – II-2	Grammar correction.
FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – X-3	Clarified basic spot per Rule 10-4.



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Editorial Change

## 2023 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES

<b>FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS</b> – X-5	Updated the total number of illegal passes.
<b>NINE-, Eight- AND SIX- PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES</b> – RULES 2 and 7	Revised the rules differences based off of 2023 NFHS Football Rules Changes.
<b>PENALTY SUMMARY</b>	Updated the rules references for “Delay of Game” and removed the penalty reference for “Intentional Pass Interference.”
<b>INDEX</b>	Updated the Index with new rules references.



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 A photograph of a football game in progress, overlaid with a red tint. A player in a black jersey with the number 6 and 'CYCLONES' on the front is in the foreground, arms raised. Other players in white and black jerseys are visible in the background.
 

## 2023 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES REMINDERS

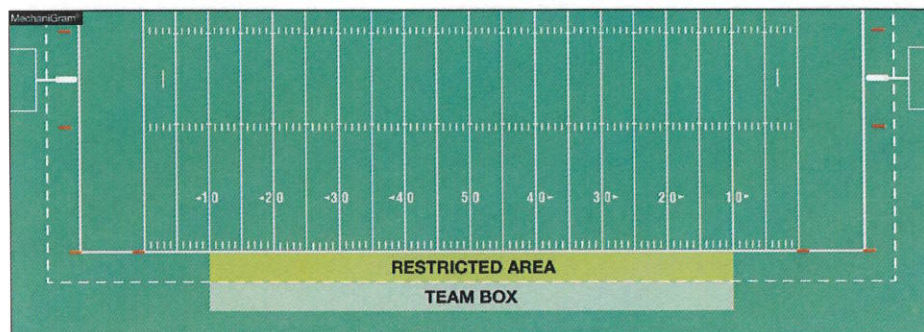

 The NFHS logo, featuring a shield with a red and white checkered pattern and the letters 'NFHS' in blue.

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## Rules Reminder

## TEAM BOXES

### RULE 1-2-3g NOTES 3. (NEW), TABLE 1-7 (3.) (NEW)



It is permissible for state associations to approve an extension of the team box and to determine the individuals who may be in the extended area, provided such extension is the same for both teams.

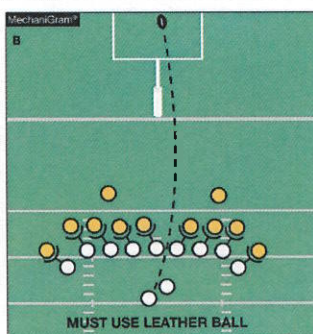
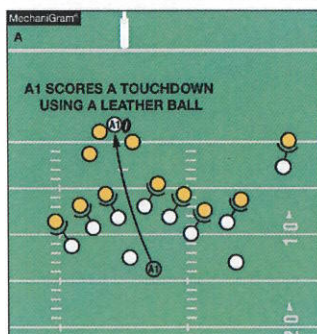
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## Rules Reminder

## GAME BALLS

### RULE 1-3-3



Any game official may order the ball changed between downs. Unless the ball is ordered changed by the Referee or another game official, Team A scoring a touchdown with one ball (MechaniGram A) may not request a different ball for the try (MechaniGram B) but may use a different approved ball for the ensuing free kick (PlayPic C).

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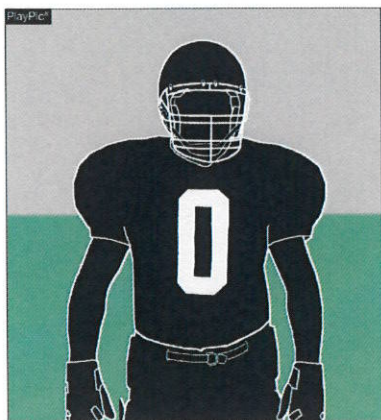
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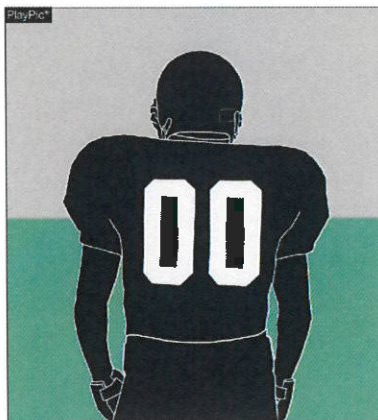
## Rules Reminder

**JERSEY NUMBERS**

**RULE 1-4-3, FIGURE 1-4-2, RULE 1-5-1c(1),  
RULE 7-2-5b EXCEPTIONS, RULE 7-5-6a**



Legal



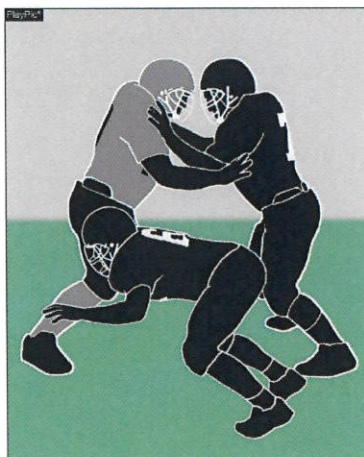
Illegal

Each player shall be numbered 0 through 99 inclusive. Any number preceded by the digit zero such as "00" is illegal.


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## Rules Reminder

**CHOP BLOCK  
RULE 2-3-8**

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

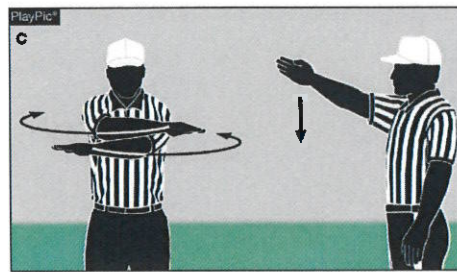
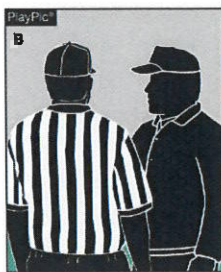
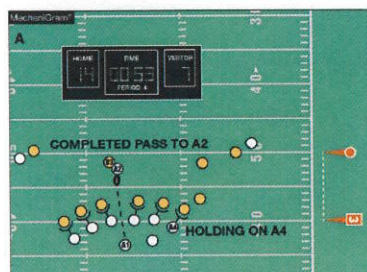

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## Rules Reminder

## GAME CLOCK OPTION RULE 3-4-7



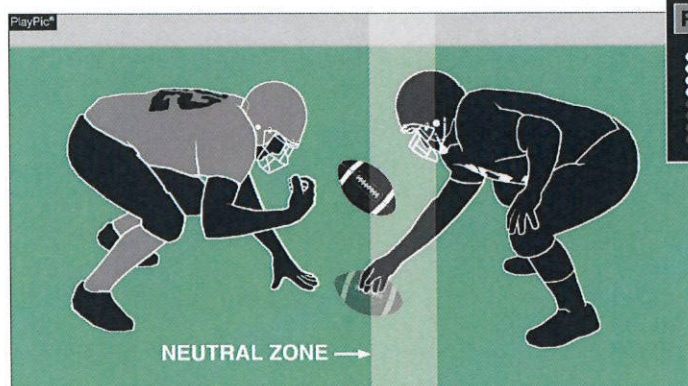
When a foul is committed with less than two minutes remaining in either half, the offended team has the option to start the game clock on the snap. In MechaniGram A, Team B trails when Team A fouls. Team B's coach is consulted (PlayPic B), choosing to decline the penalty and have the clock started on the snap (PlayPic C).


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## Rules Reminder

## PLAY CLOCK RULE 3-6-1a(1)e EXCEPTION 2. (NEW)

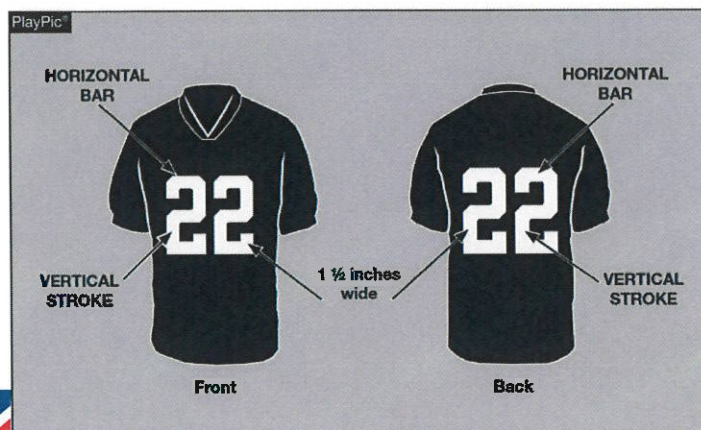


When the clock is stopped due to Rule 3-5-7i and Team B is the only team to foul, the play clock will be set to 40 seconds.


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## FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS RULE 1-5-1c(3)



The entire body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) exclusive of any border(s) shall be approximately 1 1/2 – inches wide.

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## 2024 - FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS RULES 1-5-1c; 1-5-1c(6)



**Effective with the 2024 season**, the entire body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) shall be a single solid color that clearly contrasts with the body color of the jersey.

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## 2024 – FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS RULES 1-5-1c; 1-5-1c(6)



The style of the numbers on all four of these jerseys are legal now and will be in 2024 too.



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## 2024 – FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS RULES 1-5-1c; 1-5-1c(6)



The style of the numbers on these jerseys are legal through the 2023 season. **The following four types of number designs will be illegal in 2024.**



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## Rules Reminder

## 2024 – FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS RULES 1-5-1c, 1-5-1c(6)



- ✓ The style of the numbers on these jerseys are legal through the 2023 season.
- ✓ The dark number without the border do not clearly contrast with the jersey and thus will not be legal come 2024.

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## 2023 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

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## 2023 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Helping the Runner
2. Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials
3. Game Management



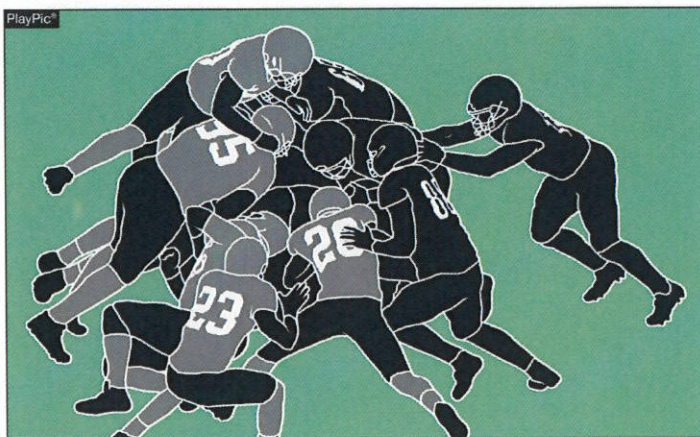
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### Points of Emphasis

## HELPING THE RUNNER

Rule changes have been made at higher levels allowing offensive teams to pile in behind and directly push the runner. Similar plays are trickling down to the high school level. Allowing teams to help the runner by illegal techniques swings the balance heavily in favor of the offense. Pushing the pile is legal; direct contact and pushing, pulling, lifting of the runner is not.



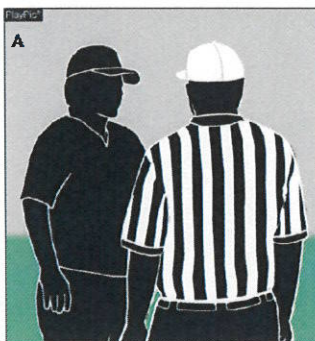
[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)

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## Points of Emphasis

## COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COACHES AND GAME OFFICIALS



Game officials must actively listen to what a coach is saying, then respond factually and unemotionally (PlayPic A). If coaches show little respect for game officials and make derogatory comments, their players will likely treat game officials similarly (PlayPic B).


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## Points of Emphasis

## GAME MANAGEMENT

Each school community must take pride in hosting an athletic contest or event. Beginning with the arrival of players, game officials and spectators, each school must have a purposeful plan to address any and all expected issues, as well as the unforeseen. Meeting and greeting the visiting team is certainly the beginning of good sportsmanship. Clearly communicated information, such as parking information, location of ticket booths and entry gates, when given to the visitors is another step in assuring a great experience for all participants.


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## NFHS SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION IN SPORTS



**In the Appendix  
in all of the  
2023-24 NFHS  
Rules Book**

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