

2017 Football Rules changes: *My comments in italics and highlighted.*

- 1) 1-3-1h (NEW) The ball shall meet the following specifications: ... h. Advertising is prohibited on the ball. **EXCEPTIONS:** (1) Ball manufacturer's name or logo, (2) school logo, name or mascot, (3) conference name or logo, (4) state association name and logos, and (5) NFHS name or logo.
- 2) 1-5-1(b)3: Players of the home team shall wear jerseys, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, that meet the following criteria: The body of the jersey (inside the shoulders, inclusive of the yoke of the jersey or the shoulders, below the collar, and to the bottom of the jersey) may not include white, except as stated below. Effective 2021 (*see last sentence of rationale*), the jerseys of the home team shall be a dark color that clearly contrasts to white. If white appears in the body of the jersey of the home team, it may only appear: ... *Home team shall wear DARK jerseys.*
- 3) 1-5-4: 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 his players are legally equipped and in compliance with these rules. Any questions regarding legality of a player's equipment shall be resolved by the umpire. . *Not necessarily the umpire.*
- 4) 2-3-10: (NEW) (ART. 10 . . . A blindside block is a block outside of the free-blocking zone against an opponent other than the runner, who does not see the block coming. 9-4-3n: (NEW) ART. 3 . . . No player or nonplayer shall: ... n. Initiate a blindside block with forcible contact unless made with open hands.
PENALTY: ... ART. 3n - Personal Foul / Illegal Block – (S38-43) – 15 yards; ... *See #11 below.*
- 5) 2-16-2h: ART. 2 . . . Types of fouls are: ... h. Post-scrimmage kick - a foul by R (other than a foul which occurs at the snap) when the foul occurs: ... *Fouls by R can occur at the LOS.*
- 6) 3-4-7: (NEW) ART. 6 . . . When a team attempts to conserve or consume time illegally, the referee shall order the clock started or stopped. Additionally, when there are less than two minutes remaining in the game, the offended team of any foul will have the option to start the game clock on the snap when it would have normally started on the ready. *Offended team can only opt for starting on the snap.*
- 7) 4-2-2l (NEW) ART. 2 . . . The ball becomes dead and the down is ended: ... l. When the prosthetic limb(s) comes completely off a player who is in possession of the ball.
Rationale: Risk minimization for the player in possession of the ball.
- 8) 6-1-3: (NEW) ART. 3 . . . A "pop-up" kick in which the kicker immediately drives the ball directly to the ground once, causing the ball to bounce into the air; is illegal. Penalty will be for free kick infraction, a dead ball foul.. *Makes a problematic technique illegal.*

- 9) 7-1-6: ART. 6 . . . Following the ready-for-play and after the snapper has placed his hand(s) on the ball, encroachment occurs if; a) any other player breaks the plane of the neutral zone; or b) a defensive player makes contact with the football prior to the end of the snap; or c). a defensive player makes contact with the hands(s) or arm(s) of the snapper while the snapper remains in contact with the ball prior to the snapper releasing the ball on the snap. *Just as we have done in the past.*
- 10) 7-5-10: ART. 10 . . . It is forward-pass interference if: Any player of A or B who is beyond the neutral zone and physically contacts and interferes with an eligible opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch or bat the pass. *No faceguarding.*
- 11) 2-32-16: ART. 16...A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury. A player who initiates contact against a defenseless player is responsible for making legal contact. When in question, a player is defenseless.
Examples of defenseless players include, but are not limited to:
- a. A player in the act of or just after throwing a pass;
 - b. A receiver attempting to catch a pass who has not had time to become a runner;
 - c. The intended receiver of a pass in the action during and immediately following an interception or potential interception;
 - d. A runner already in the grasp of a tackler and whose forward progress has been stopped;
 - e. A kickoff or punt returner attempting to catch or recover a kick, or one who has completed a catch or recovery and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a ball carrier;
 - f. A player on the ground including a ball carrier who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet first;
 - g. A player obviously out of the play or not in the immediate vicinity of the runner, and
 - h. A player who receives a "blindside" block with forcible contact not initiated with open hands. *We have lots of videos to explain this new definition and Rule 9-4-3n.*

Submitted by Mike Webb, WVSSAC Football Clinician

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