

Football Rules Changes - 2018

By NFHS on February 08, 2018 [football](#)

1-5-4, 1-5-5, 3-5-10e (NEW) 3-6-2, 9-9: Improperly equipped player shall be replaced for at least one down.

Rationale: Prior to the game, the head coach is responsible for verifying that the players are legally equipped and will not use illegal equipment. The penalty for a player who is not properly equipped has changed from a distance penalty against the team to removal of that player for at least one down. The penalty provisions for any use of illegal equipment remain unchanged and result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul charged to the head coach.

2-32-16a: Defenseless player provisions for passer clarified.

Rationale: The committee clarified that defenseless player provisions do not apply to a passer until a legal forward pass is thrown. The passer continues to be a defenseless player until the pass ends or the passer moves to participate in the play.

6-1-3b PENALTY, 6-1-4 PENALTY: Signal change for free kick infractions.

Rationale: The signal for free kick infractions, other than encroachment of the neutral zone, has been changed from signal 18 to signal 19.

6-1-9b (NEW), 6-1-9b PENALTY (NEW), 10-4-2 NOTE (NEW), 10-5-1j (NEW): New penalty option adopted for fouls by kicking team.

Rationale: In an effort to reduce re-kicks, further minimize risk and ensure that appropriate penalties are in place for all fouls, the committee has added an option for fouls committed by the kicking team during free and scrimmage kicks. The change would allow the receiving team all of the previous options as well as accepting the distance penalty at the end of the down.

SIX-PLAYER FOOTBALL (RULE 3): Length of time between periods revised.

Rationale: The timing rule between periods and intermission for six player football has been standardized to match the current NFHS 8-, 9- and 11-player football rules.

2018 EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-3-7; 3-4-2c; 7-2-5b(1) EXCEPTION; 9-5-1h; 10-4-7; PENALTY SUMMARY;
NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS; INDEX.

2018 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Proper Wearing and Use of Required Equipment
2. Blindside Blocks and Defenseless Player
3. Application of Personal Fouls and Unsportsmanlike Conduct
4. Time Management