

## OVERVIEW

- **Team Size:** 7 players on the field (minimum of 5 required to play a legal game).
- **Game Duration:** Two 20-minute halves.
- **First Downs:** Achieved when the ball reaches the second cone from where it was originally spotted on first down.
- **Scoring:**
  - Touchdowns: 6 points.
  - Extra Points (PATs):
    - 1 point from 3 yards.
    - 2 points from 10 yards.
- **Gameplay Rules:**
  - The quarterback cannot snap the ball to themselves.
  - Running clock except for the final two minutes of the second half.
  - Regular season games ending in a tie remain a tie.
  - In the playoffs, a four-downs-and-out format is used to break ties.
- **Turnovers & Possession:**
  - 2-point conversion attempts can be intercepted and returned for 2 points.
  - Laterals may be intercepted and returned for a touchdown or yardage.
  - All fumbles are ruled dead balls, with the offense retaining possession at the spot of the fumble.
- **Catching & In-Bounds Rules:**
  - Receivers need only one foot in bounds with possession of the ball for a completed catch.
- **Rule Clarifications:**
  - The clock does not stop for a two-minute warning unless there is a dead ball when the clock hits two minutes.
  - A defensive offsides penalty results in a free play for the offense.

**SUBSTITUTIONS** Teams must substitute players from the same sideline for the entire game. Eligible receivers must be on the field before the cadence begins.

## TIME

- Games consist of two 20-minute halves.
- Teams switch directions at halftime.
- The team that started on defense will begin the second half on offense.
- Each team has two timeouts per game.
- A running clock is used until the final two minutes of the second half, managed by the referee.
- The clock stops in the last two minutes for:

- Incomplete passes
  - Out-of-bounds plays
  - Scoring plays (resumes after the opposing team snaps the ball following the PAT attempt)
  - Change of possession
  - Marked penalties
  - Timeouts
- No clock stoppage for a "two-minute warning" unless there is a dead-ball situation.
  - The clock does **not** stop for first downs or fumbles.
  - If a team leads by 17 or more points, the clock runs continuously in the last two minutes.
  - The offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball after it is spotted. Delays will result in a five-yard penalty.

**STANDINGS** Standings will be posted online a few days after the games.

### **GAME EQUIPMENT**

- Game ball must meet NFHS and NCAA specifications:
  - Length: 10 7/8" - 11 7/16"
  - Width Circumference: 20 3/4" - 21 1/4"
  - Length Circumference: 27 3/4" - 28 1/2"
  - Weight: 14-15 oz.
  - Inflation: 12 1/2 - 13 1/2 psi

### **TIE GAMES/SCORING**

- Regular season games ending in a tie remain a tie.
- Playoff ties follow the OVERTIME section.
- Touchdowns: 6 points
- Extra Points:
  - 3 yards = 1 point

- 10 yards = 2 points
- New Rule: Two-point conversion attempts may be intercepted and returned for 2 points. One-point attempts cannot be returned.

### **FIRST DOWNS**

- Each team has four downs to score or gain a first down.
- First downs occur when the ball reaches the second cone from the original spot.
- If the team fails, possession changes.
- Teams may elect to punt on fourth down.

### **PUNTS**

- Declared punts only, no fakes.
- Punts are "free" (no snap required), and a dropped snap is not a fumble.
- Kicking only—no throwing.
- No downfield blocking or blocking at the line of scrimmage.
- Kicking team cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
- Receiving team cannot raise hands or jump to block a punt.
- "Shanked" punts caught in the air are live and returnable.
- Punts touching the ground are dead at the spot.
- Punts through the end zone return to the 10-yard line.
- Dropped punts in the end zone return to the 10-yard line (not a safety).

### **CONTINUANCE OF PLAY** Play stops when:

- The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- The ball carrier scores.
- A fumble, punt, or incomplete pass causes the ball to touch the ground.
- The ball carrier's knee touches the ground.

## **SPOT OF THE BALL**

- The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
- If the ball crosses the goal line before the flag is pulled, it is a touchdown.

## **TURNOVERS**

- Change of possession only occurs on an interception or lateral pickoff.
- Fumbles are dead at the spot, and possession remains with the offense.
- New Rule: Laterals can be intercepted and returned for a touchdown (except in playoff overtime, where it is simply a turnover).

## **BLOCKING**

- Blocking is allowed behind the line of scrimmage with open hands within the shoulders and waist in a "pass protection manner."
- Illegal blocks include:
  - Cut blocks, drive blocks, blocking in the back, piling on, and crack-back blocks (all result in unnecessary roughness penalties).
- No downfield blocking.
- "Picking" a defensive player is illegal and can result in ejection.

## **RUSH**

- Immediate rush is allowed.

## **PENALTIES**

- Standard NCAA penalties apply, except as modified here.
- Common penalties:
  - **Illegal Contact (Downfield):** 5 yards from spot or line of scrimmage.
  - **Offsides/Early Rush (Defense):** Free play; 5-yard penalty if accepted.
  - **Offsides/Early Rush (Offense):** 5-yard penalty, play is dead.
  - **Illegal Motion:** 5-yard penalty, play is dead.
  - **Offensive Picking/Interference:** 5-yard penalty.

- **Offensive Holding:** 10-yard penalty from spot; in the end zone, results in a safety.
- **Unnecessary Roughness (Offense/Defense):** 10 yards, automatic first down.
- **Defensive Pass Interference:** Ball spotted at the foul, automatic first down.
- **Defensive Holding:** 10 yards, replay down.
- **Defensive Checking:** Allowed once within 5 yards; excessive contact is a 5-yard penalty.
- **Safeties:** Results in 2 points for defense and a "free" punt from the 10-yard line.
- **Intentional Grounding:** Loss of down, ball spotted at infraction.
- **Fighting:** Immediate ejection from game; possible league ban.

### **FLAG SPECIFICS**

- No flag guarding (5-yard penalty from the spot).
- Shirts must be tucked in, and flags securely attached.
- If a ball carrier's flags are not accessible, they are down at first contact.
- If a ball carrier loses flags before reception, they are down at first contact.
- Players may leave their feet to pull a flag.
- Spin moves are allowed.
- Belt grabbing is a 5-yard penalty.

### **MISCELLANEOUS RULES**

- One person must call cadence and receive the snap.
- Silent snaps are not allowed.
- The QB cannot be in motion before receiving the snap.
- If the ball hits the ground on a snap, the play is dead, and it is a loss of down.
- The QB cannot snap to themselves.
- Loss-of-down penalties on 4th down result in a turnover.
- Receivers need one foot in bounds for a legal catch.

- Intentional pushing out of bounds is a 5-yard penalty.
- Diving is allowed but cannot initiate contact.
- A receiver landing in the end zone but having their flag pulled before crossing the plane is down at the flag-pull location.
- Only the ball needs to cross the goal line for a touchdown.
- Excessive ball carrier contact results in a 5-yard penalty.