



2023 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

Clarified That Towels Do Not Have To Be The Same Solid Color For Each Player [1-5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW)]

Player towels may contain one manufacturer's logo and/or one school logo neither exceeding 2¼ square inches. Towels must be a solid color but now do not have to be the same solid color for each player. Towels may not be ball- or penalty-flag colored.

Clarified When A Player Is Inbounds After Being Out of Bounds [2-29-1]

This change clarifies when a player is inbounds after being out of bounds. There is no change to any foul or subsequent penalty provisions, or any rules related to illegal participation or the provisions regarding eligibility to catch a pass.

Added A List Of Criteria To Help Identify Players Who Should Be Defined As Defenseless Receivers [2-32-16d, 9-4-3g]

This change adds to the list of criteria to help identify players who should be defined as defenseless receivers related to application of unnecessary or excessive contact. This clarification should help game officials and coaches by defining allowable contact against defenseless receivers.

Intentional Grounding Exception Changed [7-5-2 EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW)]

This change permits the exception for intentional grounding to the first and only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.

Removed "Intentional" From Pass Interference in TABLE 7-5 [TABLE 7-5(2)c (DELETE), 7-5 PENALTY]

By removing "intentional" from pass interference, this change puts the rule in line with how it is already enforced which is a 15-yard penalty.

Changes In Basic Spot Penalty Enforcement [10-4, 6]

This change restructures and clarifies the amendments to Rule 10 to eliminate the excessive penalty enforcements for offensive fouls that occur behind the line of scrimmage. This revision stipulates the basic spot for enforcement of fouls behind the line of scrimmage is the previous spot rather than the spot of the foul. Current penalties for illegal kicking, batting and participation fouls, and provisions for offensive fouls occurring in the end zone that may result in a safety remain intact.

Clarification On The Ball Being Handed Forward On A Running Play [Six-Player – Rule 7 (NEW)]

The change allows the ball to be handed forward on a running play, including to the guards/ends, while prohibiting handing the ball to the snapper provided both players are behind the neutral zone.

2023 EDITORIAL CHANGES

3-6-1b(1), NINE-, EIGHT- AND SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES – RULES 2 and 7.

2023 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

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

****As of February 2, 2023**



2023 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES INTERPRETATIONS

Publisher's Note: The National Federation of State High School Associations is the only source of official high school interpretations. They do not set aside nor modify any rule. They are made and published by the NFHS in response to situations presented.

Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff, Publisher, NFHS Publications © 2023

2023 NFHS Football Rules Book

Clarification:

(Underlining shows additions; ~~strike-through~~ shows deletions.)

Page 82, Rule 10-5-2: ~~ART. 2 . . . The enforcement spot for any foul by the defense is the goal line when the run ends in the end zone and would result in a safety.~~

Rule 10-4 and TABLE 10-4 are correct as listed in the 2023 NFHS Football Rules Book with the exception of the one item that was previously noted.

In compiling the multitude of changes to Rule 10 necessitated by the discussion around the proposed 2023 NFHS football rules change that was approved unanimously, there remains two additional clarifications to be made for coaches, administrators and game officials for the upcoming 2023 high school football season.

To summarize, if on-field game situations involving a loss of possession create a conflict between the end of the run or related run and the succeeding spot, game officials should apply the standard related to the

end of the run as intended by the cleanup in Rule 10-4-8. This does not apply to fouls as detailed in Rule 10-4-5a through 10-4-5d which explicitly call for succeeding spot enforcement (the spot where the ball will next be put in play per Rule 2-41-10). Rule 2-41-9b will help clarify those situations in which conflict might exist.

Rule 10-4 and TABLE 10-4 Clarification – (Play Situations):

PLAY 1: A first and 10 on A's 40. The runner runs to B's 40, where he fumbles the ball forward and out of bounds at B's 30. During the run (before the fumble), A11 commits a holding foul at B's 38. **RULING:** The holding penalty is enforced from the end of the run (B's 40 - the fumble spot). A first and 10 at the 50.

PLAY 2: A first and 10 on A's 40. The runner runs to B's 40, where he fumbles the ball forward and out of bounds at B's 30. During the run, B18 commits a face mask foul anywhere on the field. **RULING:** The penalty for illegal face mask is enforced from the end of the run (B's 40 - fumble spot). A first and 10 on B's 25.

PLAY 3: A first and 10 on A's 40. The runner runs to B's 40, where he fumbles the ball forward and **B RECOVERS** at B's 30. During the run, B11 commits a face mask foul anywhere on the field. **RULING:** The penalty for illegal face mask is enforced from the end of the run (B's 40 - fumble spot). A first and 10 on B's 25.

2023 NFHS Football Case Book

Clarification:

(Underlining shows additions; ~~strike-through~~ shows deletions.)

Page 75, 9.2.1 SITUATION J: On a successful try for point by kick, the interior linemen of K all reached across and grasped the teammate immediately to their inside after the snap. **RULING:** Interlocked blocking, 10-yard penalty from the previous spot ~~spot of the foul since this spot is probably behind the basic spot.~~ (10-4-2)