



# 2019 NFHS Football Rules Changes

## 2019 FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

### **BY STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTION, USE OF VIDEO REVIEW ALLOWED FOR STATE POST-SEASON CONTESTS [1-3-7 NOTE (NEW), TABLE 1-7 – 1-3-7 NOTE (NEW)]**

**Rationale:** By state association adoption, instant replay may only be used during state postseason contests to review decisions by the on-field game officials. This adoption would allow state associations to develop protocols for use of video replay.

### **IMPROVED VISIBILITY OF NUMBERS [1-5-1c, 1-5-1c(6) (NEW)]**

**Rationale:** The purpose of numbers on jerseys is to provide clear identification of players. In order to enhance the ability to easily identify players, the committee has clarified the size requirements for jersey numbers through the 2023 season. The committee also added a new requirement that, effective in the 2024 season, jersey numbers must be a single solid color that clearly contrasts with the body color of the jersey.

### **REDEFINED REQUIREMENTS FOR A LEGAL SCRIMMAGE FORMATION (2-14-1, 7-2-5a)**

**Rationale:** A legal scrimmage formation now requires at least five offensive players on their line of scrimmage with no more than four backs. This change will make it easier to identify legal and illegal offensive formations.

### **40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK (2-35-1, 3-6-1, 3-6-2a, 7-2-1)**

**Rationale:** To have a more consistent time period between downs, the rules committee approved situations where 40 seconds will be placed on the play clock. The new rule defines when 40 seconds will be placed on the play clock and when 25 seconds will be placed on the play clock.

### **PROHIBITION ON TRIPPING THE RUNNER [2-45, 9-4-3o (NEW), 9-4-3o PENALTY (NEW)]**

**Rationale:** In an effort to decrease risk, tripping the runner is now prohibited. It is now a foul to intentionally use the lower leg or foot to obstruct a runner below the knees.

### **ILLEGAL KICKING AND BATTING PENALTY REDUCED (6-2-1 PENALTY, 9-7 PENALTY)**

**Rationale:** The penalty for illegally kicking or batting the ball was reduced from 15 yards to 10 yards.

### **HORSE-COLLAR TACKLE ADDITION (9-4-3k)**

**Rationale:** Grabbing the name plate area of the jersey of the runner, directly below the back collar, and pulling the runner to the ground is now an illegal personal contact foul.

### **2019 EDITORIAL CHANGES**

1-1-9, 1-3-6, 1-5-5, 1-6-1 NOTE, TABLE 1-7, 2-6-2b, 2-8, 2-24-3, 2-25-1, 2-26-5, 2-28-1, 2-43, 3-1-2, TABLE 3-1, 3-3-1, 3-4, 3-4-1, 3-4-2, 3-4-3, 3-4-4, 3-4-5, 3-4-6, 3-4-8, 3-5-2 NOTE b, 3-5-3, 3-5-6, 3-5-7j, 3-5-9, 3-5-10, 3-5-10a, 3-6-2d, 4-1-6, 4-3-6, 5-2-2, 5-2-4, 5-3-1, 5-3-2 NOTE, 6-5-4, 6-5 PENALTY, 7-1-5, 7-1-7, 7-2-6, 7-2 PENALTY, TABLE 7-5-2, TABLE 7-5, 8-3-2, 8-5-2 EXCEPTION, 9-2-3a, 9-3 PENALTY, 9-4 PENALTY, 9-4-6b, 9-9-5 NOTE, 10-4-2c EXCEPTION, 10-5-1c, 10-5-1j, Resolving Tied Games, Nine-, Eight-, Six-Player Rules Differences, Penalty Summary, Index.

### **2019 POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

Proper Procedures for Weather Delays  
Free-Blocking Zone and Legal Blocking