



Key HS Football Rule Differences from NCAA/NFL Rules

- Most HS games are officiated by five officials: referee (white hat), umpire (behind the defensive front 7), head linesman (sideline with chains), line judge (sideline on press box side) and back judge (deep behind defense). In 2022, all Semifinal and Final games will be worked by 7 officials, adding a side judge and field judge. Some regular season games will also use 7 officials.
- A QB attempting to throw the ball away without an eligible receiver in the area must be outside the “tackle box” and the ball must reach the line of scrimmage extended. This is a new rule in 2022 which now mirrors what is also allowed at the NCAA and NFL levels.
- There is no such thing as an “uncatchable” ball under HS rules in light of pass interference. If there is illegal contact, whether or not the ball was catchable, it is a foul. For pass interference, there must be contact for a foul to occur; face-guarding with no contact is no longer a foul.
- On extra point plays, if the defense gains possession, the try is over. The defense cannot return the ball for 2 points. Also, if the holder is to throw and flip the ball to another player on an extra point play, he must rise so that his knee is off the ground.
- On a free kick (kick off), the kicking team may not gain possession on a “pooch” kick off where the ball is popped up directly into the air and first touched/caught in the air by a member of the kicking team. For the kicking team to recover the ball, it must first be touched by R or must first touch the ground (and travel 10 yards) to be legally recovered by K. An onside one-bounce “pop-up” kick that is driven directly into the ground and bounds high into the air is also illegal.
- The only fouls that result in automatic first downs are as follows: roughing the passer, roughing the kicker, roughing the snapper and roughing the holder. **IN GENERAL, PERSONAL FOULS DO NOT RESULT IN AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWNS UNDER HS RULES!** Remember that defensive pass interference does not result in an automatic first down....only a 15 yard (or half the distance) penalty.
- Punts and field goal attempts are treated the same way under HS rules.....if a long field goal attempt comes up short and goes out of bounds at the 10 yard line, the defense gets possession of the ball, 1st and 10 at the 10 yard line.
- Under HS rules, whenever a kick (kickoff, punt or FG) breaks the plane of the goal line, the ball is dead immediately. No kick of any kind can be returned once the ball breaks the plane of the goal line.
- Like NFL and NCAA rules, the HS game has a “horse collar” foul (15 yard penalty). The runner must be pulled down backwards or to one side for there to be a foul.
- For a completed catch, one foot must be inbounds by a player who is in firm control of the ball. The one foot must physically come down in bounds.....there is no “force out” rule where the officials can award a catch if they believed the receiver would have come down inbounds if they had not been forced out of bounds.

- Know that HS football has a targeting rule. Any player guilty of a targeting foul can also be ejected if the act is judged to be flagrant. Targeting under HS rules does not require an automatic ejection; officials determine whether or not the act was flagrant.

Overtime Procedures:

- Following regulation, a 3:00 minute intermission will take place.
- Each team gets 1 timeout per OT....no carry-over from the 2nd half or previous OT periods.
- Once the 3:00 expires, the coin toss is conducted at midfield. The winner of the toss has three options: offense first, defense first, or end of the field. The loser of the toss has the remaining options.
- To start each OT, the offensive team will ALWAYS start out first and goal to go. The starting point will be the 10 yard line unless moved from a penalty on the previous play in regulation or earlier OT period. If the ball has been moved by penalty, it is still first and GOAL TO GO.
- If the defense gains possession at any time, the ball becomes dead immediately. The defense may not return the ball for a score.
- There will be only 1 coin toss. If additional OT periods are needed, then the loser of the coin toss to start OT will have the three options for all even OT periods (2nd OT, 4th OT, etc).
- If additional OT periods are needed, there is a 2 minute intermission between those periods in which the options are given to the appropriate teams.
- No try for point will be attempted if the winner of the game has been determined.
- A team can get a first down via an automatic first down foul by the defense (roughing fouls, for example).
- At no time is the offense required to go for 2 points.....different than the NCAA rule.

35-Point Running Clock Rule:

- If one team is ahead by 35 points or more (35 during the second half, the clock will run continuously except:
 - 1) During a timeout .
 - 2) During an injury.
 - 3) To administer a penalty.
 - 4) After a score.
- If during the second half the point differential is reduced to less than 35 points, we revert back to normal timing procedures.

50+-Point Running Clock Rule:

- If one team is ahead by 50 points or more during the second half, the clock will run continuously except during an injury timeout. If the point differential is reduced under 50, timing reverts back to the timing rules when the lead is 35-49 points.

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