



2026 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

Committee Approves an Additional Option for Wearing Play Cards [1-5-3c(9)] — The committee has approved the wearing of play cards on both the forearm/wrist and belt areas of the body. The committee feels that the wearing of play cards on the belt poses no health risk issue to the player and poses no danger to the opponent.

Committee Gives Clarity to Illegal Personal Contact Actions Related to All Players (9-4-7) — In a concerted effort to clarify illegal personal contact actions as they relate to all players, the committee approved language to include the prohibition to apply equally to the offense and defense. By eliminating the words “defensive” and “blocker's” from the rule prohibiting slapping an opponent's head, the prohibition now applies to all players.

2026 EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-1-8; 1-3-5b; 1-5-1d(5)a - 4, 5; 1-5-3a(2); 2-15-1; 2-32-6; 3-5-7g; 4-1-3; 5-3-1; 5-3-2; 8-2-2; 8-2-3; 8-2-4; 8-2-5; 9-4-3p; 9-8 PENALTY; 10-4-2; 10-4-2b; 10-4-4a; 10-5-3; FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – PENALTY MEASUREMENT (4); RESOLVING TIED GAMES – (3-1); SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES; NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS – (21).

2026 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Flagrant and Unsportsmanlike Fouls
2. Helping the Runner
3. Sideline Management and Control
4. Identification of the NFHS Authenticating Mark on Game Balls