



# FOOTBALL COACHING RULES & CLARIFICATIONS

## SUMMER ACTIVITY

**Monday after Memorial Day → July 31**

- One or more coaches may work with a maximum of 7 players at one time on an unlimited number of dates. Coaching includes, but is not limited to, technique work, on-field demonstrations, classroom instruction, and video review.
- Full team practice is allowed on 15 dates with helmets only. Any football instruction with more than 7 players at one time must count as one of the 15 summer practice dates.
- Seven dates of 7-on-7 competition are allowed against another school(s), counted as part of the 15 practice dates. Only 7 offensive and 7 defensive players allowed on the field at once.
- All MHSAA travel rules apply to 7-on-7 competition during the summer.
- Schools may conduct camps with athletes from multiple schools. Any camp where a coach works with more than 7 players counts toward the 15-day limit.
- 11 players on defense may act as a "demonstration" defense, but must use shields or dummies on the defensive front line during a summer practice.
- 11-on-11 drills between different schools are never allowed during the summer.
- All football activities and strength/conditioning must stop during the one-week (7 consecutive days) Summer Dead Period as determined by each school.

## PRESEASON DOWN TIME

**August 1 → First Allowable Practice Date**

- Four-player football instruction is allowed, along with strength and conditioning, with an unlimited number of students.
- All other allowable summer activities are no longer permitted, including sport-specific activity with more than 4 students at any one time.

## PRESEASON PRACTICE

**First Practice → First Contest**

- No interscholastic scrimmages may take place until Wednesday of the second week of practice.
- Any joint practice with two or more schools is a scrimmage, and it may not occur until the second Wednesday of practice.
- The allowed practice equipment is as follows: Days 1-2, helmets only; Days 3-4, helmets and shoulder pads; and on Day 5, full pads may be worn.
- No single practice may exceed 3 hours. Max 5 hours total of practice per day.
- Collision contact is limited to 6 hours per week (Monday through Sunday). Scrimmages count as half-time (a 2-hour scrimmage = 1 hour of collision).
- Thud contact is unlimited during preseason practice. It is full speed, above the waist, and no players go to the ground.





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## SEASON

**First Contest** → **End of Football Season** (One Day After Football Finals)

- One game in five consecutive calendar days. Max 9 regular season games.
- Player limit: 5 quarters per week, 4 quarters per day. One play, including special teams plays, equals participation in a quarter. Football week runs from Wednesday to Tuesday.
- Collision practice time is limited to 30 minutes per week (Monday-Sunday).
- No practice exceeds 3 hours.

## OFF SEASON

**End of Football Season** → **Start of Summer Activity**

- Coaches may coach 4 students in grades 7-12 from their District at a time. One or more coaches present = maximum of 4 students.
- Coaching includes coordinating, assisting, and instructing. Organizing prohibited activities (e.g., 7-on-7 teams) is not allowed during this period.
- Coaching is defined as instruction in technique, position-specific coaching, classroom instruction, or video review (the use of a football is optional).
- Unlimited coaches may be present, but only 4 players at a time when one or more coaches are present.
- Rotations including strength and conditioning is allowed, with only one station of football instruction.

## DEFINITIONS:

- **Collision:** Live, game-speed, player vs player contact in pads involving any number of players executing full tackles a competitive pace, taking players to the ground.
- **Thud Contact:** Full-speed contact above the waist, no player taken to the ground, no winners/losers, no grading physical domination.
- **Practice Rules:** Apply to both middle school and high school. Warm-up, stretching, agility, and cool down count towards practice time. Strength training and classroom sessions do not count toward the 3/5-hour limits.

*"For more detailed information and interpretations please consult the MHSAA Handbook or your athletic director"*

