

2018-19 Football Rules Changes

1-5-4, 1-5-5, 3-5-10e (NEW), 3-6-2, 9-8-1h, 9-9 — Improperly equipped player shall be replaced for at least one down.

2-32-16a — Defenseless player provisions for passer clarified.

2018 Football Points of Emphasis

1. Proper Wearing and Use of Required Equipment
2. Blindside Blocks and Defenseless Player

ART. 10 . . . A blindside block is a block against an opponent other than the runner, who does not see the blocker approaching

3. Enforcement of Penalties for Personal Fouls and Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls
4. Pace of Play and Timing Issues

Ready for play signifies the referee has signaled the ball may be put in play by a snap or free kick and the 25-second count is to begin

5. There will no longer be called for face guarding. The defensive player does not have to turn his or her head around to see the ball.
6. Horse collar rule change

BLOCKING

ART. 1 . . . The free-blocking zone is a rectangular area extending laterally 4 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage. A player is in the free-blocking zone when any part of his body is in the zone at the snap.

ART. 2 . . . Blocking below the waist is permitted in the free-blocking zone when the following conditions are met:

- a. All players involved in the blocking are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap.
- b. The contact is in the zone.

ART. 3 . . . Blocking in the back is permitted in the free-blocking zone when the following conditions are met:

- a. By offensive linemen who are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap.
- b. Against defensive players who are in the zone at the snap.
- c. The contact is in the zone.

ART. 4 . . . The free-blocking zone disintegrates and the exception for a player to block below the waist and/or the exception for an offensive lineman to block in the back is not to continue after the ball has left the zone.

ASSISTING/AIDING THE RUNNER

An offensive player shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist his forward progress.

ART. 1 . . . Illegal helmet contact is an act of initiating contact with the helmet against an opponent. There are several types of illegal helmet contact:

- a. Butt Blocking is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent who is not a runner with the front of his helmet.
- b. Face Tackling is an act by a defensive player who initiates contact against a runner with the front of his helmet.
- c. Spearing is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent at the shoulders or below with the crown (top portion) of his helmet.

ART. 2 . . . Targeting is an act by any player who takes aim and initiates contact against an opponent above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulders.

KICKING/PUNTING

ART. 10 . . . A pop-up kick is a free kick in which the kicker drives the ball immediately into the ground, the ball strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of a ball kicked directly off the tee.

ART. 8 . . . No member of the kicking team shall initiate contact to (block) an opponent on a free kick until:

- a. The legal kick has traveled 10 yards;
- b. The kicking team is eligible to recover a free-kicked ball; or
- c. The receiving team initiates a block within the neutral zone.

ART. 6 . . . Roughing the snapper. A defensive player shall not charge directly into the snapper when the offensive team is in a scrimmage-kick formation.

CONDUCT ON FIELD

ART. 1 . . . No player shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner once the game officials assume authority for the contest. Examples are, but not limited to:

- a. Baiting or taunting acts or words or insignia worn which engenders ill will.

NOTE: The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances.

- b. Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
- c. Any delayed, excessive or prolonged act by which a player attempts to focus attention upon himself.

- d. Using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A's signals or movements.
- e. Kicking at the ball, other than during a legal kick.
- f. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or unless with permission of a game official.
- g. Refusing to comply with a game official's request.
- h. Using alcohol or any form of tobacco product (e-cigarette or similar items).