

NFHS Rules Differences

The purpose of these presentations is to highlight the differences between NFHS and NCAA rules. It is not intended to be a comprehensive review of all the rules. Many of the NFHS rules definitions in Rule 2 are similar to the relevant rules in the NCAA code. These include: blocking definitions, scrimmage formation and free kick formation. The net effect is that for these definitions, they are administered and/or officiated the same in both codes unless noted below. Also, there are terms that are different but are the same description. These include: restraining line in NFHS is akin to the limit line in NCAA; face tackling/butt blocking are terms akin to using the crown of helmet/facemask to tackle/block, first touching versus illegal touching, boundary lines versus sidelines, free kick lines versus restraining lines. There are others that are defined in only one of the codes, but have no bearing: offensive blocker, captain, non-player, rule, belongs to, deliberate dead ball advance, between downs, forward, beyond, blocking a scrimmage kick, field goal attempt. We are not going to get hung up on the terminology differences and will use the terms interchangeably.

Each rule is broken down into three segments: 1) Low importance – defined as items we don't need to focus on, and will administer as before, 2) Minor importance – items you need to be aware of, but they involve situations that are rare or are not germane to the playing of the game, 3) Major importance – these are the items we need to focus on, especially if they relate to safety. Items in this category also have an impact on how the game is played or administered and need to be a focus of our efforts. NFHS does not have when in doubt/question statements. Their guidelines generally follow NCAA interpretations and we will continue to use the existing when in doubt/question statements.

Rule 1 - Equipment

Low importance

- 1) Ball – allows more stitches, panels, stripe differences (composite allowed – be aware)
- 2) Gloves – don't worry about labels, continue to enforce no ball colored gloves
- 3) Jerseys – differences in length, color combos, etc. enforce as before
- 4) NFHS does not have a definition of personnel subject to rules, enforce as before
- 5) Mouthpiece can be clear

Minor importance

- 1) Pregame equipment certification adds statement that they will not use illegal equipment
- 2) Illegal equipment/failure to wear mandatory equipment is 15 yds/UNS on coach (in Rule 9)
- 3) Must wear two shoes (no barefoot kickers)
- 4) Colored towels okay (all worn must match) and can be up to 18"x36"
- 5) NCAA/NFL field marking okay (no problem with hashes and goalposts)
- 6) Restricted area (Coach's box) is the official's box in NCAA; team area is old coaches' box. Coaches cannot be in this area when the ball is live. If a field is marked for NCAA use, use the NCAA team box for the team

Major importance

- 1) Overbuilt facemask okay
- 2) Player can wear two jerseys, one over the other, can change on field so long as it does not delay
- 3) Officials jurisdiction is 30 minutes prior to kick off, allow enough time to get from locker room
- 4) Electronics allowed on sideline, but not to communicate with players on field or to show them during on field conference (outside 9 yard mark conference)

Rule 2 – Definitions

- 1) Expanded neutral zone in NFHS is similar to neutral zone within 3 yards in NCAA. NFHS is only 2 yards versus 3 yards. Pertains to touching a scrimmage kick and blocking by offensive lineman
- 2) Blocking with cupped or closed hands requires that the arms are extended no more than 45 degrees from the body
- 3) A chop block in NFHS is at the knee or below for the low portion
- 4) Blindside block is a block against an opponent other than the runner who does not see the blocker coming
- 5) Simultaneous catch: in NFHS both players only have to return inbounds. Ball belongs to offense
Play - A1 and B2 possess the ball simultaneously while both are airborne. Both return to the ground inbounds with B2 touching the ground first after which the ball is declared dead. A's ball at the dead ball spot
- 6) Conferences: Conferences with coaches can only be held during a charged timeout, a timeout due to heat/humidity, between periods, after a safety/field goal/try before the following KO (not after a TD). Only one of the two types of conferences is allowed: any number of players and one or more coaches can meet in front of the team box outside the nines, or one coach can enter the huddle to confer with 11 players inside the nines. It is legal in any case other than a coach coming on the field, for players to come to the sideline as long as coaching box restrictions are followed, the players remain on the field, and the game is not delayed.
Interpretation: the only real change is that coaches are allowed in the huddle for a conference. Also, to start, we will not impose a timeout on coaches for an official's conference to discuss a NEW rule. If this courtesy is abused, the coach will be informed timeouts will start to be charged.
- 7) There is no offside in NFHS. Everything is encroachment and is a dead ball foul
- 8) Awarded fair catch occurs when the offended team chooses to take the ball after enforcement of a foul for KCI
- 9) Illegal fair catch signal is a signal after the ball is caught or recovered. This is a foul
- 10) Invalid signal definition is the same, except it is also a foul
- 11) Defenseless Player Differences:
 - a. Intended receiver after interception or potential interception is defenseless
 - b. Player receiving blindside block with open hands is not defenseless
 - c. Kicker is not defenseless (could be player out of the play)
 - d. Passer not defenseless after change of possession (could be player out of the play)
- 12) Hitting with the crown of the helmet is not defined as targeting, but it is spearing and a foul

- 13) Scrimmage kick formation does not require that a kick is obvious and if there is no kick, the action is not deemed to have occurred during a scrimmage kick down. **Play** – 1st and 10 with A1 10 yards behind the snapper in shotgun formation. At the snap B55 charges and upends the snapper. Result – B55 is guilty of roughing the snapper as Team A was in scrimmage kick formation.
- 14) Forward progress includes the spot where a forward fumble goes out of bounds (no forward fumble rule)
- 15) NCAA offsetting fouls = Double fouls in NFHS
- 16) There are some definitions for types of fouls that are not defined in NCAA or are defined in the NCAA rule but all follow the NCAA guidelines
- 17) Handing the ball forward: Only requires lineman to be 1 yard behind the line versus 2 yards, also Team A lineman on the end of the line who is neither the snapper nor next to the snapper can receive a forward handoff without complying with the requirements for forwarding handing
- 18) Hurdling: Applies to the runner
- 19) Defensive line of scrimmage includes players within 1 yard of his scrimmage line
- 20) Motion by lineman: Player must be at least five yards behind LOS (does not have to stop). Player can be less than 5 yards behind his line if he stops (similar to NCAA)
- 21) Neutral zone: Also applies to the space between free kick lines on free kicks
- 22) Player out of bounds: A player who is airborne is considered to be inbounds, even if he jumps from out of bounds. **Play** – A88 in inadvertently steps on the sideline then leaps and controls the ball, landing inbounds. The ball remains live and the catch is legal. A88 is guilty of illegal participation, however. If A88 deflected the ball to a teammate and then landed out of bounds, the play continues and there is no foul.
- 23) Plays: 2 types of plays in NFHS-loose ball plays 1) (kicks/legal forward pass/backward pass (including snap)/fumble-illegal kick by Team A in or behind neutral zone/run or runs that precede legal pass-kick-fumble and running plays, 2) running play not included in loose ball play
- 24) Spot - End of the run: Handing the ball does not result in the end of the run. **Play** - Snap from A40. A1 runs to his 45 yard line where he hands the ball backwards to A2 who advances and is downed. During A1's run, B fouls. Enforcement from the end of A2's run.
- 25) Zones and boxes: Free blocking zone is 6x8 centered on the snapper versus 6x10. It disintegrates when the ball has left the free blocking zone versus the ball being touched outside the blocking zone or the ball is outside the zone after a fumble or muff inside the zone. There is no tackle box
- 26) Return kicks and scrimmage kicks beyond the line do not kill the clock and are treated as fumbles. Foul is 15 yards
- 27) A pop up kick is defined as a free kick driven immediately into the ground and goes 6' or higher off the ground (interpretation). This is illegal and a dead ball foul
- 28) A forward pass is defined as a pass thrown with its initial direction towards the opponent's goal line versus where it touches. It has also gone beyond the neutral zone if at any time during the pass it has been entirely beyond the neutral zone. (Think
- 29) the wind blowing a ball back. If it passes the neutral zone or is thrown forward and lands behind the passer, it is a forward pass and has crossed the neutral zone in the former.)

- 30) A shift is defined as movement by one or more players versus two
- 31) The snap ends in NFHS when the ball touches the ground or any player versus leaving the snapper's hands
- 32) A down in NFHS starts with the snap on a try versus at the ready
- 33) NFHS does not have catchable forward pass (all contact will be DPI)
- 34) There are no special cases for PSK on unsuccessful field goals (previous spot). If the ball breaks the plane of the goal line, it is the 20 yard line, if declared dead in the field of play, untouched by B, it is at the dead ball spot
- 35) Runner in NFHS is the same as ball carrier and runner in NCAA
- 36) Fighting does not include a UNS that causes a reaction from an opponent

Rule 3 - Timing

Low importance

- 1) 15 minute halftime stipulated (not less than 10 or more than 20)
- 2) Shortening games procedure is different, but not enough to change. Use common sense
- 3) No coaches conference allowed after period ends (if they want to discuss the last play of the period, deny the request)
- 4) A substitute can call time out as soon as he steps on the field, as opposed to inside the nines
- 5) Head coach can designate who can call timeout, once set, it cannot change

Minor importance

- 1) Teams must stay on the sidelines at the toss
- 2) A delay to start half due to home team management is a 5 yard penalty, team delay is 15 with a UNS to the coach
- 3) It is an official's timeout for an equipment repair if it can be repaired by the player and does not delay the ready for more than 25 seconds. Otherwise it is a charged team timeout. If no timeouts remain, player must be replaced for one down. End of a period buys a player back in
- 4) If no visible clock – 4 minute warning and then wind on the ready
- 5) A timing error can only be corrected if discovered before the snap of the 2nd play after the error
- 6) Clock starts on the ready in all situations involving an inadvertent whistle
- 7) 5 yard penalty if a substitute withdraws during/after an official's timeout during a dead ball
- 8) If a change of possession occurs during the down, but A regains possession, the clock starts on the ready

Major importance

- 1) 3 minute warm up for 2nd half post on clock after halftime ends (must be ready for warm up to play after halftime)
- 2) If K is in possession after a legal scrimmage kick (not on 4th down), and there is no first down, the clock continues to run, or winds on the ready if stopped for some other reason not requiring

it to start on the snap. **Play** – K's quick kick is blocked and recovered by K behind the line. Clock should not stop for the kick

- 3) The offended team has the option of snap/wind in the last two minutes of the half. It could be the team ahead
- 4) If a penalty is accepted on a scrimmage kick at the previous spot, wind on the ready
- 5) After a delay clock starts on the snap only if the penalty is accepted
- 6) If the penalty for a delay in a scrimmage kick formation is not accepted, wind on the ready
- 7) Forward fumble out of bounds is on the snap
- 8) No extension of the period if an accepted penalty results in a safety
- 9) It is legal to substitute from outside the team area
- 10) Delayed substitution, unless deception, is legal (no B chance to substitute)
- 11) Substitution during play results in a 5 yd penalty from succeeding spot (previous spot in NCAA)
- 12) Breaking huddle with 12 is okay so long as 3 seconds have not elapsed since sub has entered
- 13) 12 minute periods (including sub varsity). 9th game games can be 10 minutes if played with a mixed roster of 7th/8th/9th graders. 7th and 8th grade games are 8 minutes
- 14) New for 2019 – 40 second clock, mechanics to be determined

Rule 4 - Ball in Play, Dead Ball

Low Importance

- 1) There is no provision for an illegal ball during play (use inadvertent whistle provision as in NCAA)
- 2) No formal when in question for forward progress (use NCAA philosophy)

Minor Importance

- 1) Snap location
 - a. If a down is replayed or a dead ball foul occurs after the snap location is chosen, A may have it relocated. **Play** – On an unsuccessful try there are offsetting fouls. Team A may have the snap location changed
 - b. A may choose the snap location after a made or awarded fair catch
 - c. No relocation after a Team A time out
- 2) A return kick or a kick beyond the line of scrimmage does not kill the clock

Major Importance

- 1) Ball is dead if
 - a. B gains possession on a try or it is apparent a kick is no good
 - b. Non-scoring/grounded scoring kick breaks plane of the goal line
 - c. Scoring kick touches K in EZ or has failed after breaking the plane of goal line
 - d. K does not have to "ground" a ball touched in the field of play. It is dead when touched
 - e. Fair catch signal is given behind the neutral zone
 - f. Prosthetic limb comes completely off a player in possession
- 2) Inadvertent signal does not stop the clock

- 3) Simulating a knee is okay
- 4) No whistle at start of slide, must ground himself
- 5) In order to run or pass a holder must rise from his knee. May rise to catch an errant snap and then immediately go back to a knee to hold for a kick or rise to run/pass. Dead ball if holder muffs the snap or fumbles and recovers after his knees have been off the ground and he then goes back to a knee.
- 6) No fourth down/try fumble rule, ball remains in play
- 7) An airborne catch in the end zone is a touchdown, even if the player is contacted by a defender and comes to the ground in the field of play. He does not have to be downed. It is a touchdown due to forward progress

Rule 5 – Series of Downs

Major importance

- 1) No automatic first down except for roughing: passer, holder, kicker, snapper
- 2) If a down error is made, and the period ends, a correction cannot be made

Rule 6 – Kicks

Minor importance

- 1) Team A does not have to be within the 9 yard marks on a free kick
- 2) Free kick line can be the yard line of a fair catch or an awarded fair catch. A free kick may be made from this spot and may score a field goal
- 3) A free kick after a safety made by punt or drop kick must be made within 1 yard of line
- 4) If a scoring kick in flight strikes an official in the end zone, the ball is dead
- 5) Illegal kicks (return kicks, punts beyond the line, kick off a toe or mound of dirt) remain live (treated as a fumble) and are a 15 yard penalty
- 6) After a fair catch or awarded fair catch, the new Team A can put the ball into play via snap or free kick for a field goal. This option remains if: 1) a dead ball foul occurs before the ball becomes live for the first down play, 2) a foul occurs during the down following the fair catch and the penalty is accepted, 3) an inadvertent whistle results in first down being replayed. **Play** – 15 seconds remain in the 4th period and Home team K leads by 1 point. Taking a safety is not an option, and Team K's coach is unwilling to risk running around to kill 15 seconds. Team K punts from their own end zone and the high, long kick is fair caught by R at the 50 yard line. Team R decides to put the ball into play via a snap and attempts a Hail Mary with little time left on the clock. Team R's (now Team A) QB drops back and is forced to run and gains 10 yards as time expires. Team B commits a personal foul on the play. Enforcement brings the ball to B's 25. Team A now elects to put the ball into play via free kick from the 25 yard line. The kick splits the uprights for a successful field goal and the visitors win.
- 7) Forced touching by R includes muffing the ball into R by K

Major importance

- 1) An illegal block on a kicker on a free kick is 15 yards. This also applies to a holder
- 2) Fair catch (awarded fair catch): A free kick in flight may not be touched by K (before R touching) and K may not touch R (except to ward off a block), nor may K obstruct R's path to the ball whether or not a fair catch signal is given. 15 yards, previous spot, awarded fair catch at the spot of the foul, or an awarded fair catch after a 15 yard penalty from the spot of the foul. No specific amount of room is stated. Receiver can be contacted immediately after a muff. Scrimmage kick rules are the same except no foul for touching R with a kick in flight unless the R player is in a position to make the catch
- 3) Dead ball fouls on free kicks: encroachment (offside), pop up kick, illegal formation (4 per side or not all Team K (except kicker) downfield of 35 yard line)
- 4) Free kick out of bounds, 25 yards in advance of the spot of the kick (R-35 on a normal kickoff) is one option, others the same as NCAA
- 5) Forced touching by R on a free kick only applies in the neutral zone. **Play** – Team K kicks off and as the ball is rolling at the R-35, K1 blocks R1 into the ball and the ball goes out of bounds. Not a free kick out of bounds. R's ball at the out of bounds spot
- 6) K is eligible to block if the ball breaks the plane of R's free kick line and touches the ground (may happen in any order). Restrictions end when Team R initiates a block in the neutral zone. 10 yard penalty
- 7) K is eligible to touch a free kick after it touches a Team R player or after it has both touched the ground and gone beyond the plane of Team R's free kick line
- 8) A wedge is allowed
- 9) A scrimmage kick at rest is declared dead when K touches it (does not have to possess it)
- 10) K cannot bat a scrimmage kick behind the neutral zone in any direction. 10 yard penalty
- 11) Beyond the neutral zone a bat by K of a scrimmage kick in flight is kick catch interference if there is an R player in position to make a catch. 15 yard penalty at previous spot or an awarded fair catch.
- 12) Batting in the end zone is ignored as the ball is dead (touchback) as soon as the ball breaks the plane of the goal line. If it is a scoring kick, the ball remains live if touched by R if the kick still has a chance to score. If the kick does not score, it is a touchback
- 13) Legal to have three R linemen over a K lineman on a scrimmage kick
- 14) K may advance a kick that has gone beyond and returns behind the neutral zone (except try). **Play** – K's scrimmage kick lands beyond the line of scrimmage and rebounds behind the line. K recovers and advances beyond the line to gain. First down for K. Clock on the ready
- 15) On a scrimmage kick, touching by R has to occur beyond the neutral zone in order for K to recover and be awarded a new series. If the ball rebounds behind the line untouched by R and then R subsequently touches it, the touching is essentially ignored. **Play** – K's short kick lands beyond the line of scrimmage and rebounds behind the line where R touches it. K recovers and advances but is downed short of the line to gain. Since R's touching was behind the line and K was short of the line to gain, it is R's ball.

- 16) A fair catch can be completed by a player who made a signal even if the ball is touched beyond the neutral zone. **Play** - R4 signals for a fair catch. R10, standing 5 yards in front of R4 attempts to catch the kick. He deflects it and R4 catches it. Legal fair catch. Any contact is therefore a personal foul
- 17) A fair catch given by a Team R player cannot be completed after a muff. Contact is legal
- 18) Fair caught kicks are put in play anywhere on the yard line of the fair catch, awarded fair catch, or succeeding yard line after enforcement of interference penalty
- 19) A fair catch signal given by a runner after a kick has been caught or recovered is an illegal fair catch signal and a 5 yard penalty. The ball remains live until the down ends by rule. **Play** – R catches K's scrimmage kick and runs for 5 yards before giving a fair catch signal. Play continues and B fumbles. K recovers and runs for a touchdown. The signal is illegal. K will likely decline the penalty and take the result of the play, TD
- 20) An invalid fair catch signal is: one that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal, one made after the ball touches a receiver or one made after the kick hits the ground. 5 yard penalty for an invalid signal. Get away signals, halfhearted waves, and a hand straight up but not waving will result in a five yard penalty.
- 21) A Team R player who has given a valid or invalid fair catch signal may not block until the kick has ended. **Play** – R1 gives a fair catch signal and muffs the kick. While the kick is rolling, R1 blocks K10. Foul on R1, 15 yards
- 22) First touching is touching beyond the expanded neutral zone (2 yards downfield). Team R may take the ball at the spot of first touching unless R touches the ball and then commits a foul (whether accepted or not) or if a penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down. **Play** – K first touches a scrimmage kick at R's 40. R2 subsequently touches the ball and while the ball is loose, R10 fouls. K recovers the loose ball. K can decline R's penalty and keep the ball as B's option to take first touching is canceled since R fouled after touching the ball.

Rule 7 – Snapping and passing the ball

Low importance

- 1) The guards and the center are the only linemen who can interlock legs.
- 2) Fumblers (planned loose ball) rules only apply to Team A linemen. Penalty is 5 yards.

Minor importance

- 1) Team A must have at least five players on the line of scrimmage with no more than 4 backs during a scrimmage down. When a team snaps from a scrimmage kick formation (either set or after a shift):
 - a) On 4th down or a try, any Team K player numbered 0-49 or 80-99 may take the position of a lineman numbered 50-79 (numbering exception). An exception to the numbering rule is not penalized for illegal formation if a shift leaves him in an eligible position. He is still an ineligible receiver. **Play 1** – A88 is lined up

as a tackle on a try. A34 is outside of him as a tight end. A34 steps back leaving A88 on the end of the line. Legal formation.

- b) On any other down, only the snapper can be a numbering exception. **Play 2** – On third down with 2 seconds left in the half, Team A lines up for a field goal attempt with their normal kicking team. There are only 3 players numbered 50-79 on the line. Illegal formation.
- 2) At some time between the ready for play signal and the snap, each Team A player must be between the nine yard marks. Penalty is live ball, 5 yards. Note: the exact mechanic will likely change due to no ready for play signal with the adoption of a 40 second clock.
 - 3) The snap ends when the ball touches the ground or any player. It must touch a back before touching a lineman – dead ball foul, five yards.
 - 4) After the snapper has placed one or both hands on the ball he must keep at least one hand on the ball. Also, the snapper may put his hand over the foremost point of the ball
 - 5) Defensive pass interference can occur on a simulated scrimmage kick.
 - 6) A quick, “non-football” move (clapping, stomping, feigning a charge) by a Team B player who is stationary within a yard of the line of scrimmage, obviously intended to draw a Team A foul is a dead ball foul, 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct.

High Importance

- 1) It is legal to intentionally throw a backwards pass out of bounds. Ball belongs to the passing team at the out of bounds spot. Clock starts on the snap
- 2) If a Team B player enters the neutral zone before the snap, even if no contact occurs, encroachment is called. Penalty is dead ball, 5 yards. For encroachment by either team use the “offside” signal.
- 3) The expanded neutral zone is akin to the NCAA vicinity of the neutral zone except it is 2 yards down field instead of three. This affects blocking downfield by Team A linemen. Also, touching by R is ignored in the expanded neutral zone and first touching by K is ignored also
- 4) Players on the end of the line even those numbered 50-79, after the center has touched the ball, can pick up and move, assuming it is not a false start.
- 5) If either of the passer’s feet is beyond the neutral zone (on the ground or in the air), it is an illegal forward pass.
- 6) Whether a pass is catchable has no bearing on pass interference calls.
- 7) If the ball is thrown away from the area where contact occurs, pass interference should not be called but other fouls could occur.
- 8) The penalty for defensive pass interference is 15 yards previous spot, replay the down, no automatic first down. If the play started inside the Team B 30 yard line, the penalty is half the distance to the goal, replay the down, no automatic first down. If pass interference by either team is deemed intentional, and additional 15 yard penalty is added to the original 15 yard penalty.
- 9) If a defender has position, but does not make a play on the ball, and Team A initiates contact, it is offensive pass interference.

- 10) It is not offensive pass interference if a Team A player immediately contacts a Team B lineman and the contact does not continue beyond the expanded neutral zone (two yards downfield). Team A ineligible receivers may only go 2 yards downfield. **Play** – A51 initiates contact with linebacker B55 2 yards downfield and remains stationary. Foul on A51 for offensive pass interference. The contact was not on a Team B lineman.
- 11) A forward pass has crossed the neutral zone when the entire ball is beyond the neutral zone. A pass touched by A before crossing the neutral zone is considered to have crossed the neutral zone if it continues past the neutral zone. **Play** – A12's pass is tipped two yards behind the neutral zone by A22 and then continues in the air to A38 who catches it 5 yards beyond the neutral zone and runs for a TD. A55 was five yards downfield before the pass. Result – ineligible downfield. No TD, 5 yard penalty at the previous spot.
- 12) The penalty for illegal touching of a forward pass by an originally ineligible Team A player is five yards from the spot, (if the pass is complete from the spot of the touch, if the pass is incomplete from the previous spot) and loss of down. If the touching is inadvertent, there is no penalty.
- 13) The penalty for intentional grounding is five yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down. The penalty for intentional grounding from the end zone is a safety (no choice). There is no exception for the quarterback throwing the ball away outside the tackles.
- 14) The quarterback may spike the ball to conserve time if he spikes it immediately after taking a hand to hand snap, and he does not muff it (for instance the ball rolls up his arm first). An illegal pass to conserve time/yardage is a five yard penalty plus loss of down.
- 15) Pass interference restrictions end for Team B when pass is touched by any player (no change except officials exempted), for Team A when Team B touches the pass (no change), and for eligible Team A players when Team touches the pass (no change). Once Team A touches the pass, ineligible Team A players may not touch the pass, but they may use hands/arms to legally block to ward off an opponent. **Play** – A88 tips a pass 5 yards downfield. B12 attempting to leap and catch the pass is blocked legally by A55 and the pass falls incomplete. Offensive pass interference on A55 as he was not warding off a block by B12.
- 16) Team B is not exempted if blocked, legally or illegally into the passer. If there is an illegal block, the fouls will offset. There is no penalty for forcible contact at the knee or below for a player in a passing posture unless it is a late hit. A late hit of any kind is roughing the passer. The penalty is administered, from the dead ball spot if Team A ends up with the ball beyond the neutral zone. The penalty is 15 yards and an automatic first down. **Play 1** – B77 is blocked in the back by A66 and the force pushes him into QBA12 after he has released the pass. Two fouls: block in the back and roughing the passer. The fouls cancel each other. **Play 2** – passer A12 is roughed on A40's run. A40 fumbles at the B-5 and the ball rolls out of the end zone. Since there is no realistic dead ball spot, the foul is enforced from the previous spot.
- 17) Team A may throw a pass from behind the neutral zone even if the ball had previously crossed the neutral zone. Officials must still be aware of fouls like illegal players downfield. **Play** – A25 takes a handoff and runs around right end, stops three yards downfield and pitches back to A12 who throws a forward pass for a TD. Legal play

- 18) There is no fourth down/try fumble rule. Any player can catch, recover or advance the ball.
Play - On a try, A3 fumbles at the B-3 and the fumble is recovered by A55 in the end zone.
 Successful try
- 19) A forward fumble out of bounds belongs to the fumbling team at the out of bounds spot. The clock starts on the snap. **Play** - On fourth down, A35 fumbles as he is being tackled two yards short of the line to gain. The fumble goes forward out of bounds beyond the line to gain. Result – 1st down for Team A.
- 20) The direction of a pass is determined by the direction in which the ball is thrown, not where it is first touched or where it hits the ground.
- 21) A shift is a movement by one or more Team A players who move to new positions after the huddle or being set. When the quarterback moves toward the line after players are set, or he lowers his body to get in position to receive a snap or puts his hands under center, he has shifted. As before, it is a live ball foul for Team not being set for 1 second. **Play 1** - All players are set, then back A1 moves to another position and is not set for at least one second before the snap – illegal shift. **Play 2** – While A2 is legally in motion, QB A12 puts his hand under center and the ball is snapped. Illegal shift, A12's movements are considered a shift

Rule 8 – Scoring

Low importance

- 1) NFHS still has the rule that the scored upon team shall designate which team shall kick off. As with the old NCAA rule, we won't ask

Minor importance

- 1) A scoring kick that hits a Team A player in or behind the expanded neutral zone is good
- 2) On a try, Team A retains the right to choose the spot of the snap if a try is replayed or a dead ball foul occurs, even for an A foul. Snap is from the 3 yard line (no option for behind the three yard line)

Major importance

- 1) Unsuccessful field goals are treated as regular scrimmage kicks - if the kick breaks the plane of the goal line: touchback at R's 20 yard line, if the ball is dead in the field of play, R's ball at the dead ball spot (assuming no R touching, etc.), if the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play: R's ball at the OOB spot. **Play** – Team A's field goal attempt from B's 35 is short and rolls dead at the three yard line. R's ball 1st and 10 at the R-3
- 2) Force (NFHS) = Impetus (NCAA), differences: new force can be attributed to a grounded muff, but cannot be attributed to a grounded ball that is batted or intentionally kicked (may still be a foul). **Play 1** - A2 fumbles at the three yard line and B5 muffs it into the end zone where it is recovered by B8. Ruling – Safety, as new force is imparted by the muff. If the covering official rules that the ball would have made it the end zone even without the muff/touch, then the muff/touch is deemed not to have imparted new force. If in doubt, rule original force not

expended. **Play 2** – Team A’s fumble at the B-3 is batted backwards by B12 into the end zone and recovered by B25. Ruling – The bat is a foul. Result of the play is a safety, or Team A could accept the penalty giving them a replay at the 1 ½ yard line. If the covering official rules that the ball would have gone into the end zone without the bat, the result is a touchback, but the bat is still a foul.

- 3) Momentum exception: with no forward fumble rule, if Team B has the ball in the end zone due to a momentum exception and fumbles from the end zone and it goes out of bounds in the field of play, the ball is marked at the OOB spot, not the momentum exception spot.
- 4) On scoring kicks, the cross bar is a plane, not a line. A kick is good even if it passes back over the cross bar
- 5) All touchbacks are at the 20 yard line
- 6) The goal line is extended so that a ball that breaks the plane while in possession of an inbounds runner is a touchdown. **Play 1** - A runner with the ball in his outside hand breaks the goal line extended just before his foot hits the sideline. Ruling TD. **Play 2** - Runner dives from the 2 yard line where the ball crosses the sideline and the ball crosses the goal line extended and the runner touches the pylon. Ruling, Team A’s ball at the spot the ball crossed the sideline. **Play 3** – After the ball in the runner’s outside hand crosses the runner hits the sideline inches short of the goal line. Ruling - touchdown
- 7) Trys are over if Team B gains possession or if it is apparent that a kick will not score
- 8) All B fouls on a try carry over to the subsequent kick off or succeeding spot in overtime

Rule 9 – Conduct

Low importance

- 1) During timeouts, attendants on the field are limited to three, unless otherwise allowed by referee – 5 yard penalty. We will continue to allow attendants and coaches as conditions allow

Minor importance

- 1) There is no foul for blocking out of bounds
- 2) Illegal substitution from the sideline is a 15 illegal participation foul. If the player is on the wrong side of the neutral zone and does not participate, it is a 5 yard foul. If the player is on offense, it is a live ball foul
- 3) Only 3 coaches are allowed in the coaches’ area (white area on an NCAA field, if marked for NCAA play, we will use the NCAA markings, still with only 3 coaches). If more than 3 coaches, or a coach is in or beyond the area during a live ball: warning for 1st offense, 5 yard penalty for 2nd offense, 15 yard penalty (UNS) for subsequent offenses. If the violator cannot be identified, UNS is charged to the head coach
- 4) Personal contact foul (NCAA sideline interference) is a 15 yd. personal foul and here must be contact, otherwise it reverts to number 3 above
- 5) There is no clipping allowed at all
- 6) Disconcerting signals is a 15 yard UNS

- 7) Disqualified coaches must leave the playing enclosure, but disqualified players and other team attendants may remain in the team area

Major importance

- 1) A fumble in flight may be batted in any direction (even forward), but a grounded fumble may not be batted in any direction. **Play 1** – A12 fumbles behind the line and while the ball is in the air, bats the ball forward beyond the line the gain where it is caught by A88 who is downed. Ruling – 1st down for Team A. **Play 2** - A2's grounded fumble is batted backwards by A15 and recovered by A55. Illegal bat, 10 yard penalty
- 2) Blocking below the waist is legal only in the free blocking zone (8x6 centered on the snapper), provided the players involved were in the free blocking zone and on the line of scrimmage at the snap, the contact is in the free blocking zone and the ball is in the free blocking zone. It is legal to block below the waist on kick plays if the above criteria are met. General criteria are that if the move to block is made immediately after the snap, it is okay. **Play** – On third down Team A quick kicks from shotgun formation. B9 blocks guard A55 below the waist. Legal play
- 3) Blindside blocks are illegal outside the free blocking zone unless made with open hands – 15 yds.
- 4) A chop block's low component is at the knee or below. It is a chop block even if the defense initiates contact
- 5) To be legal, a blocker's hands/contact must be inside BOTH the blocker's and opponent's frame. **Play** - While pass blocking, A58's hands are within B88's frame, but outside A58's frame. Illegal block
- 6) It is legal to pull an opponent out of the way in an actual effort to get to a loose ball. It is still not okay to do that to allow a team mate to get to the ball
- 7) No automatic first down for DPI or illegal contact/holding etc.
- 8) Leaping and leaping the punt shield are legal
- 9) Defensive players may not push a teammate to add to his momentum 15 yard foul
- 10) Dead ball contact fouls previously flagged as UNS are personal fouls in NFHS
- 11) Grasping the helmet, openings, etc. is a 5 yard foul
- 12) A UNS that leads to a fighting retaliation is not considered fighting, but penalized as a UNS
- 13) Horse collar tackles are illegal anywhere on the field
- 14) Playing without a helmet is illegal participation, not a personal foul. A player may remove his helmet anytime, anywhere during a dead ball
- 15) A team cannot buy back with a timeout a player who loses his helmet
- 16) A Team A player may not return in bounds if he goes out of bounds on his own. This also applies to a Team B/Team R player who intentionally goes out of bounds. 15 yards illegal participation at the spot the player returns inbounds
- 17) In general, illegal substitution (NCAA w/participation), is illegal participation 15 yards

- 18) Pushing the runner is once again, aiding the runner, but the contact must be directly with the runner as opposed to the pile
- 19) If a scrimmage kick is blocked, any defensive player is exempt from roughing the kicker (does not exempt him from other personal fouls). On K's scrimmage kick, R25 and R2 dive to block the kick and R2 partially blocks the kick which travels downfield. R25 then contacts the kicker. No foul as the contact was not avoidable
- 20) There is roughing protection for a kicker outside the what was called the tackle box if the contact is deemed avoidable
- 21) Targeting does not include using the crown of the head (this is spearing). Targeting is a disqualification only if it is considered flagrant
- 22) Snapper protection exists until the snapper has had a chance to protect himself, defined as chance to regain his balance and look up. Keeping his head down for a long period does not extend the protection however. The 1 second interval is a good guide
- 23) Tripping does not need to be intentional

Rule 10 – Penalty Enforcement

The all but one principal for penalty enforcement is similar to the 3 and 1 in NCAA. The primary difference is there are no exceptions for offensive fouls behind the previous spot. All such fouls are spot fouls. Additionally, basic spots can depend on the play type. Recall there are two play types: loose ball plays and running plays. The basic spot for running plays is the end of the run. The basic spot for loose ball plays is the previous spot. There are some “special enforcement spots”; the differences from NCAA are listed below.

Low importance

- 1) Captains are to be consulted on all penalties. Captain's choice cannot be revoked. We will handle this as we always have, enforcing the obvious choice and checking with coaches on down versus yardage

Minor Importance

- 1) For enforcements on running plays, there is only one running play beyond the line of scrimmage. (loose ball plays versus running plays). **Play** – A1 hands off to A2 10 yards downfield. This does not constitute a new running plays and any fouls during a1's run are penalized at the dead ball spot as the basic spot.
- 2) KCI can result in a 15 yard penalty at the previous spot, an awarded fair catch at the spot of the foul, or an awarded fair catch plus a 15 yard penalty from the spot of the foul. Not sure why the second option would be accepted
- 3) Fouls on free kicks can push the restraining line inside K's 5 yard line
- 4) The distance portion of a penalty may be declined. **Play** - on a try, B is offside. A may decline the yardage portion of the penalty and replay the try from the 3 yard line

Major importance

- 1) The only automatic first downs are roughing the kicker, holder, snapper and passer
- 2) Dead ball fouls are administered in order of occurrence and do not cancel unless there are an equal amount of 15 yard penalties. **Play** – After the play is over A12 pushes B76, who pushes back. B76 then pushes A12. Ruling – all fouls are enforced as personal fouls. Net result is 15 yards against Team B. It would be a first down only if the enforcement end sup beyond the line to gain
- 3) End Zone enforcement – most enforcement are similar to NCAA with different wording we will not get hung up on. Some examples of differences: **Play 1** – B2 intercepts a pass in the end zone and fumbles after A5 twists his facemask. A7 recovers at the two yard line. Ruling: The play is neither a touchback nor a safety. Since the opponent of the team in possession is responsible for the force, the basic spot is the 20. B 1 and 10 from the B35. **Play 2** – A1’s facemask is twisted in his own end zone where he is downed. Enforcement is from the goal line (end of the run is in the end zone). If A1 had fumbled after the facemask, and the ball went out of bounds in the end zone, enforcement would be from the previous spot. This would have been a loose ball play.
- 4) There is no provision for the “tack on” for Team B personal fouls other than roughing the passer. Roughing the passer is enforced from the dead ball spot, which in essence is the same as NCAA. One difference: **Play** - A12 completes a pass to A88 who runs to the B-5 and fumbles through the end zone. A12 was roughed after releasing the pass. Since there is no reasonable dead ball spot, the penalty is enforced from the previous spot as opposed to the end of the last run.
- 5) If a penalty for a foul by K on a scrimmage kick is enforced at the previous spot, clock starts on the ready
- 6) Fouls by K on scrimmage kicks may be enforced from the succeeding spot as the basic spot. **Play** – K is in an illegal formation on a field goal attempt from the R-18. The kick is no good and goes over the end line. The result of the play is a touchback and the basic spot is the R -20. R may elect to have the penalty enforced from the R -20, 1st and 10 for R
- 7) Illegal touching of a forward pass results in loss of down in addition to the 5 yard penalty
- 8) Illegal scrimmage kick and illegal batting/kicking are not loss of downs
- 9) Offensive fouls behind the line of scrimmage are enforced from the spot of the foul
- 10) UNS fouls are penalized at the succeeding spot (no live ball spot fouls)
- 11) On a successful FG, any foul by R may be enforced on the succeeding kick off or subsequent spot in OT.
- 12) Any foul by the opponent of the scoring team on a TD play may be carried over to the try or succeeding kickoff except if the foul occurred prior to a change of possession, unless if on a kick play, and then penalties can only carry over to the try. Non-player and UNS fouls carry over regardless of time of occurrence. **Play 1** – B1 is offside on A1’s TD run. 5 yard foul may be enforced on the try or subsequent kick off or spot in OT. **Play 2** – A1 clips during A2’s run. A2 fumbles and B2 recovers and scores. The clip does not carry over as the foul occurred prior to the change of possession. **Play 3** – During a scrimmage kick, K1 commits a foul. R scores on the return. The foul can only carry over to the try. There is no provision for a carry over to the kick off for a foul prior to a change of possession on a scoring play
- 13) Any R foul on a successful try may carry over to the kick off or subsequent spot in OT.