



2021 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES





NFHS FOOTBALL RULES

Each state high school association adopting these NFHS football rules is the sole and exclusive source of binding rules interpretations for contests involving its member schools. Any person having questions about the interpretation of NFHS football rules should contact the football rules interpreter designated by his or her state high school association.

The NFHS is the sole and exclusive source of model interpretations of NFHS football rules. State rules interpreters may contact the NFHS for model football rules interpretations. No other model football rules interpretations should be considered.

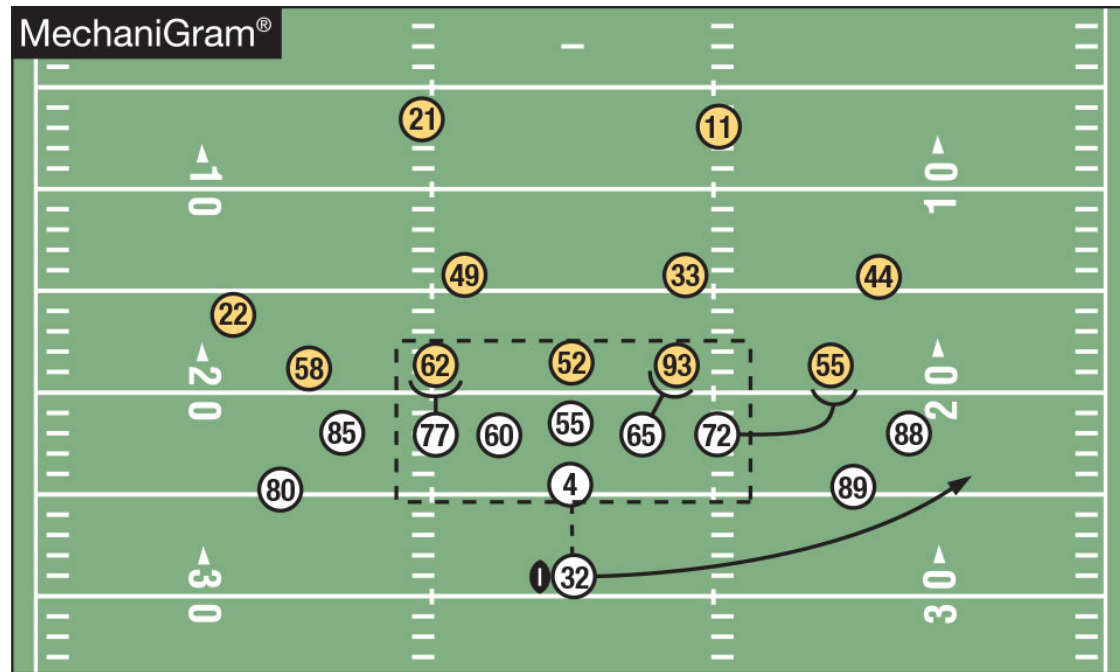


BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST RULE 2-17-2c (NEW)


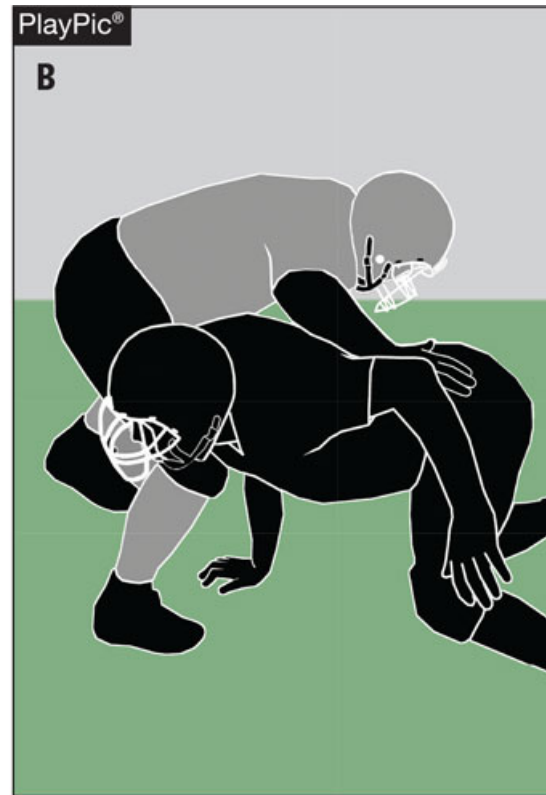
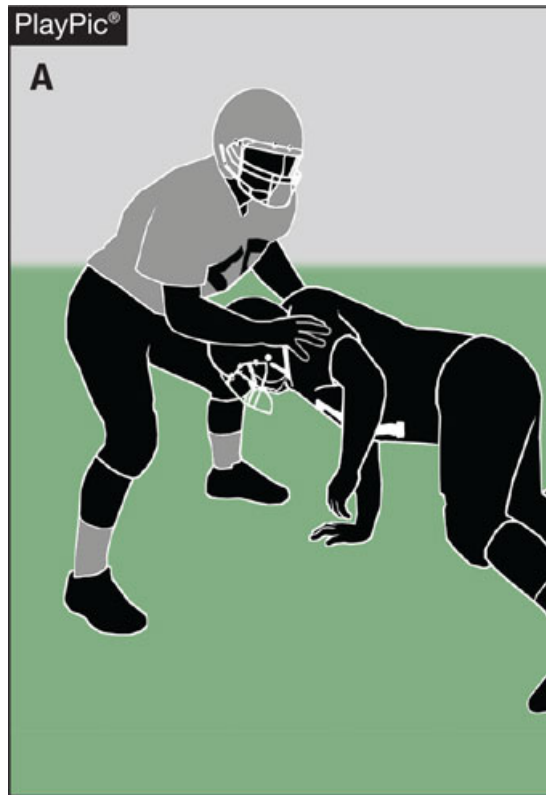


In PlayPic A, both players are in the free-blocking zone and on their lines of scrimmage. In PlayPic B, the block is legal because it is in the zone at the time of the snap, is an immediate, initial action following the snap, and both players began the play on their lines of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone.


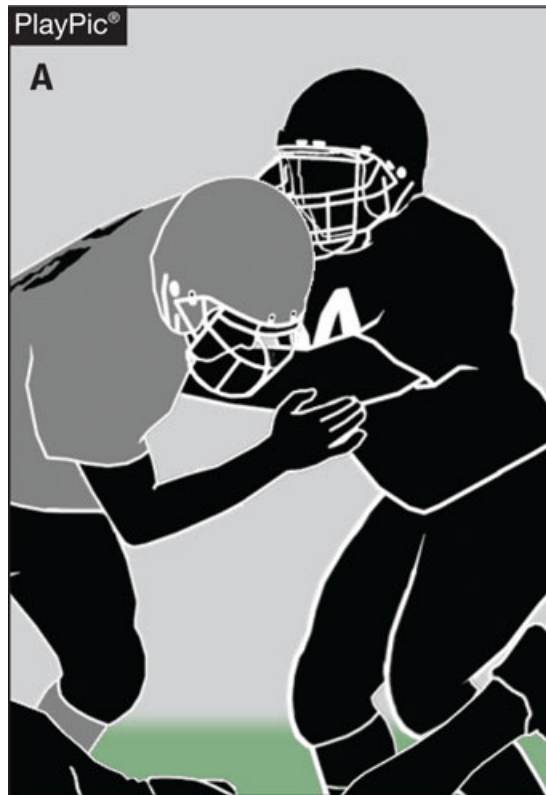
BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST RULES 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 2-17-4



It is legal for offensive linemen to block below the waist in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 77 could only block No. 62 below the waist if the block was immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 65 can block No. 93 below the waist even though No. 93 is playing off his shoulder, if the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 72 could not block No. 55 below the waist at any time during this play.

**BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST**
RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 9-3-2

While in the free-blocking zone, the initial contact in PlayPic A is with the hands below the waist. When the blocker finishes the block below the waist as in PlayPic B, it is not a foul. A block below the waist is legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.

**BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST**
RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 9-3-2

The initial contact in PlayPic A is above the waist. In PlayPic B, the blocker then loses contact and the blocker starts a new block below the waist, this is a foul. A block below the waist is legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.

**BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST
RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-2, 9-3-2**

The rules regarding blocking below the waist apply equally to both teams. In the PlayPic, the defender goes below the waist outside the free-blocking zone to take out the lead blocker. This is an illegal block by the defender. A block below the waist is only legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.



2021 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES



2021 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-5-1b(3)	The jerseys of the home team shall be a dark color that clearly contrasts to white starting with the 2021 season.
2-10-1	Clarified the definition of the field.
2-10-2	Clarified the definition of the field of play.
3-5-1	Grammar edit to the Article.
9-4-4 PENALTY	Added Signal #38 to roughing the passer in the PENALTY for 9-4-4.
Nine-, Eight-, and Six-Player Rules differences - General	Further clarified the listed modifications under General Rules Differences.
Six-Player Rules Differences – Rules 2 and 7	Added under Rule 2 and 7 a clarification that on a loss of down, it will be at the previous spot.



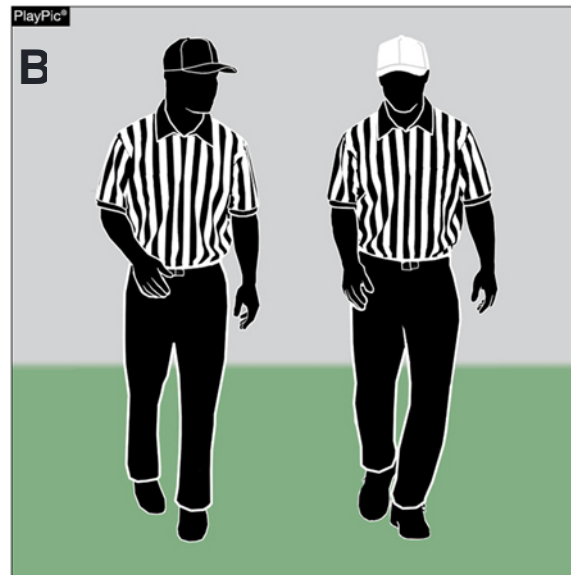


2021 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES REMINDERS



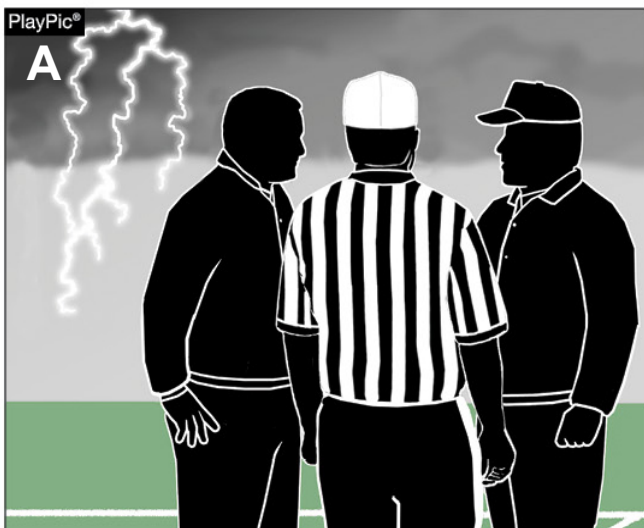
DESIGNATING TEAM REPRESENTATIVE

RULES 1-4-1, 1-4-4, 2-32-5, 3-5-2, 10-1-1, 10-1-2, 10-2-4



Prior to the game the head coach will notify the referee of the designated representative (coach or player) who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination (PlayPic A). When a foul occurs, the linesman or line judge will inform the referee as to the penalty decision if a coach is the decision maker (PlayPic B).

HALFTIME INTERMISSION OPTION FOLLOWING WEATHER DELAY RULE 3-1-6c EXCEPTION



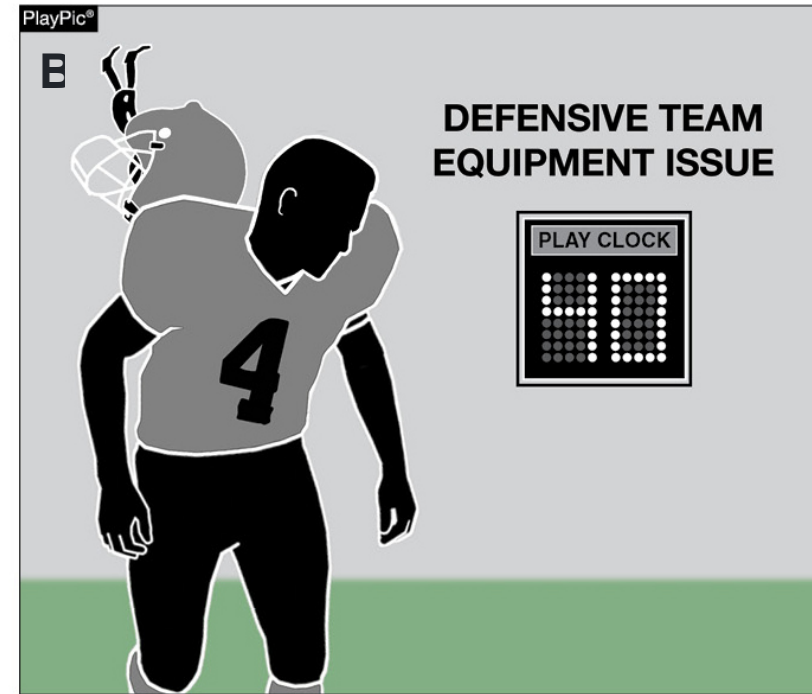
HALFTIME INTERMISSION



If weather causes a delay of at least 30 minutes during the last three minutes of the second period, the opposing coaches may mutually agree to shorten the halftime intermission below the 10-minute minimum (PlayPic A). The mandatory 3-minute warm-up must take place before the third period begins (PlayPic B).



40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK CLARIFICATION RULES 3-6-1a(1)e EXCEPTIONS 2 AND 3

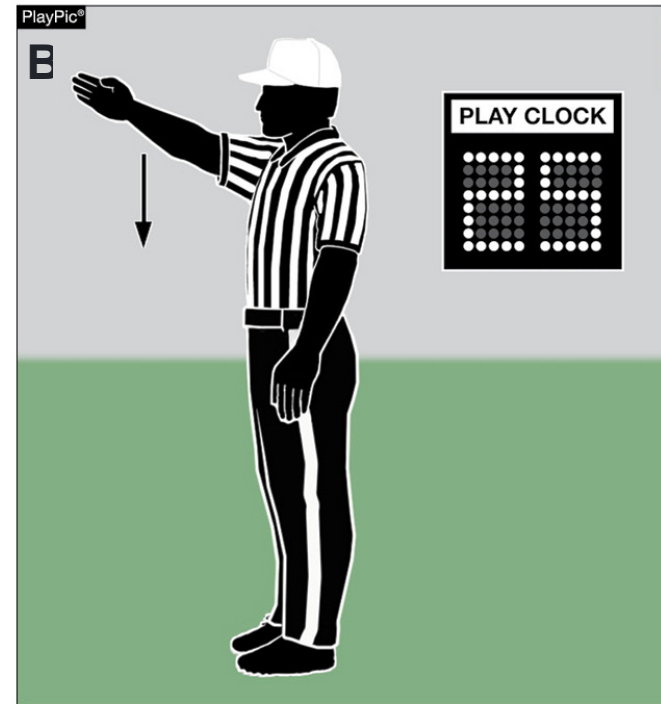
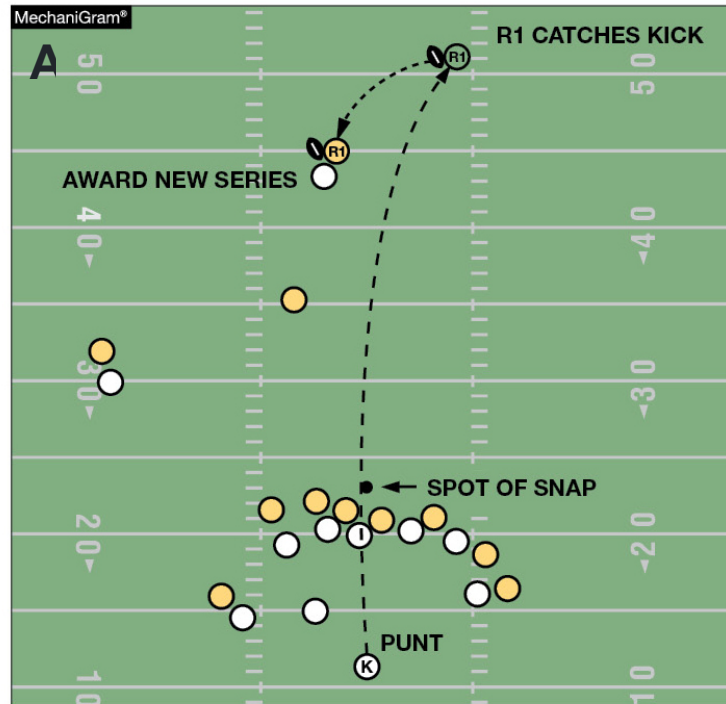


The play clock will be set to 40 seconds when an officials' time-out is initially taken for an injury to a defensive player (PlayPic A) or a defensive player has an equipment issue (PlayPic B).





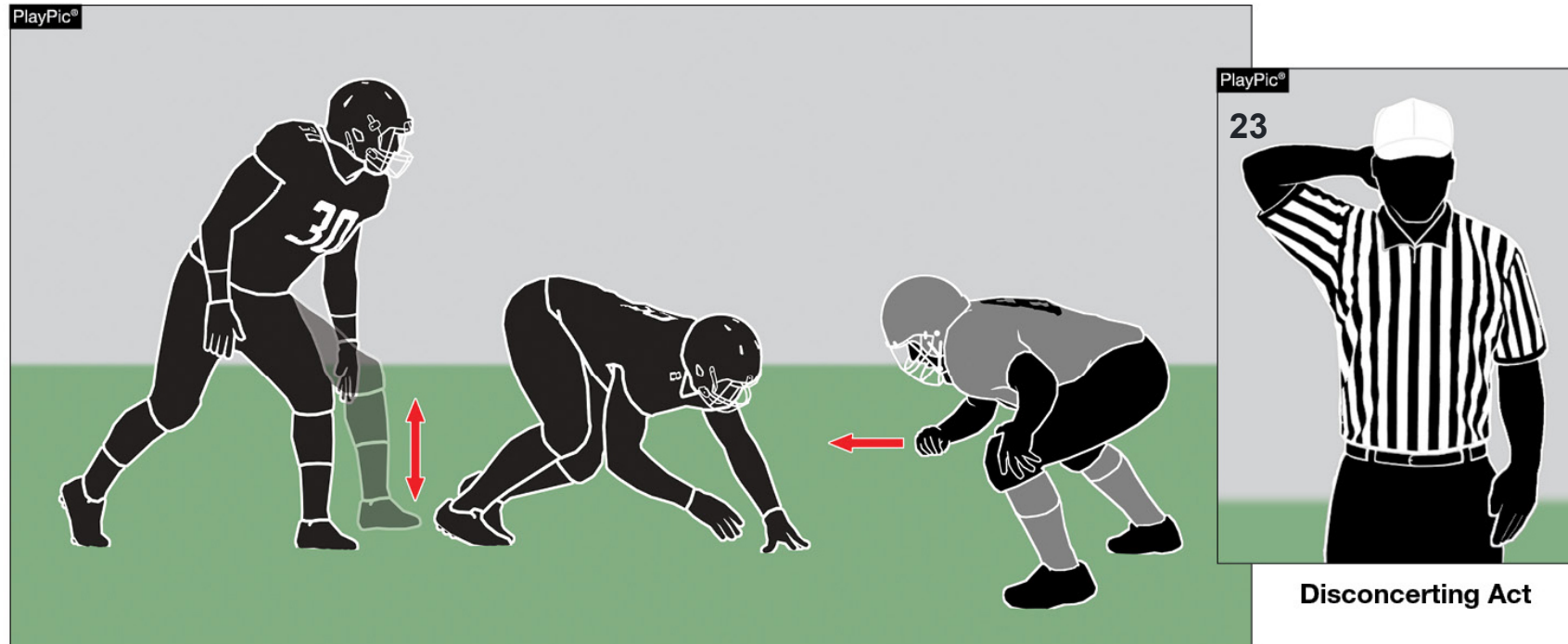
25-SECOND PLAY CLOCK CLARIFICATION RULE 3-6-1a(1)f



When either team is awarded a new series after a legal kick (MechaniGram A), the play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts with the ready-for-play signal (PlayPic B).



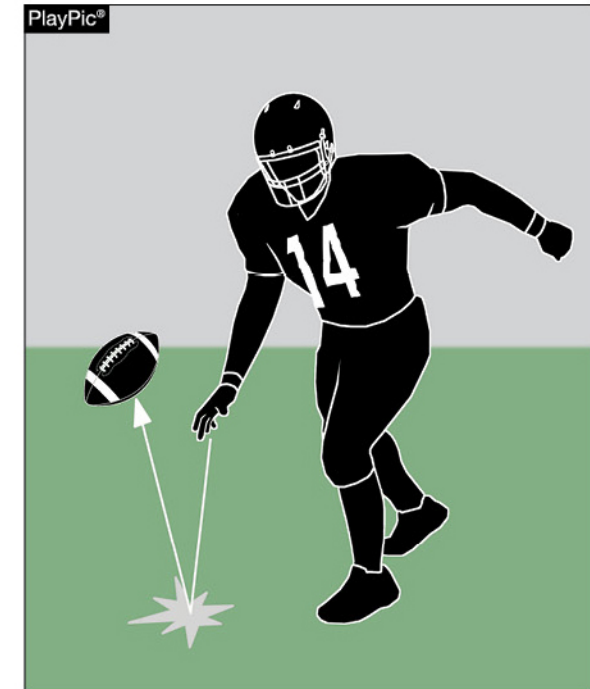
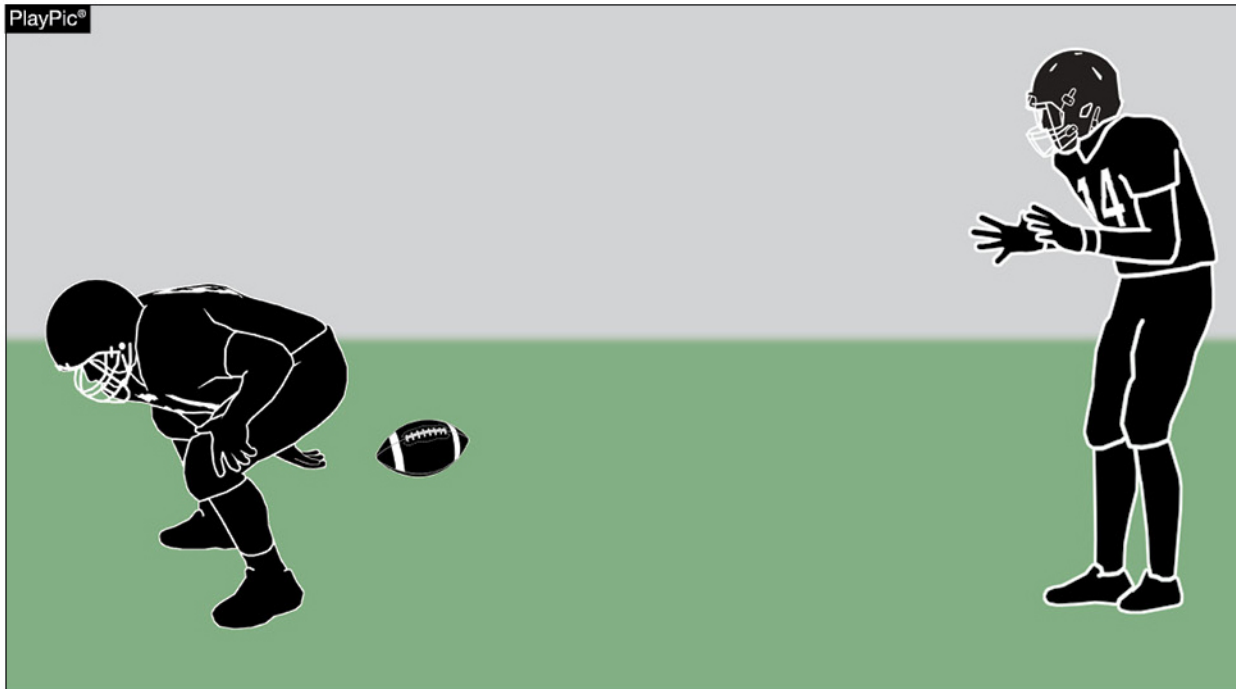
DISCONCERTING ACT FOUL AND PENALTY RECLASSIFIED RULES 7-1-9, 7-1-9 PENALTY



Disconcerting acts or words by the defense has been reclassified from an unsportsmanlike foul to a disconcerting act foul, and the penalty changed from 15 yards to 5 yards. Signal 23 will be used to indicate the foul.



SPIKING THE BALL TO CONSERVE TIME 7-5-2e EXCEPTION, TABLE 7-5-2e EXCEPTION, TABLE 7-5e EXCEPTION



The exception to allow a player to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap has been expanded. This exception now includes snaps that are not hand-to-hand.



2021 – GRAY HOME FOOTBALL JERSEY RULE 1-5-1(b)3



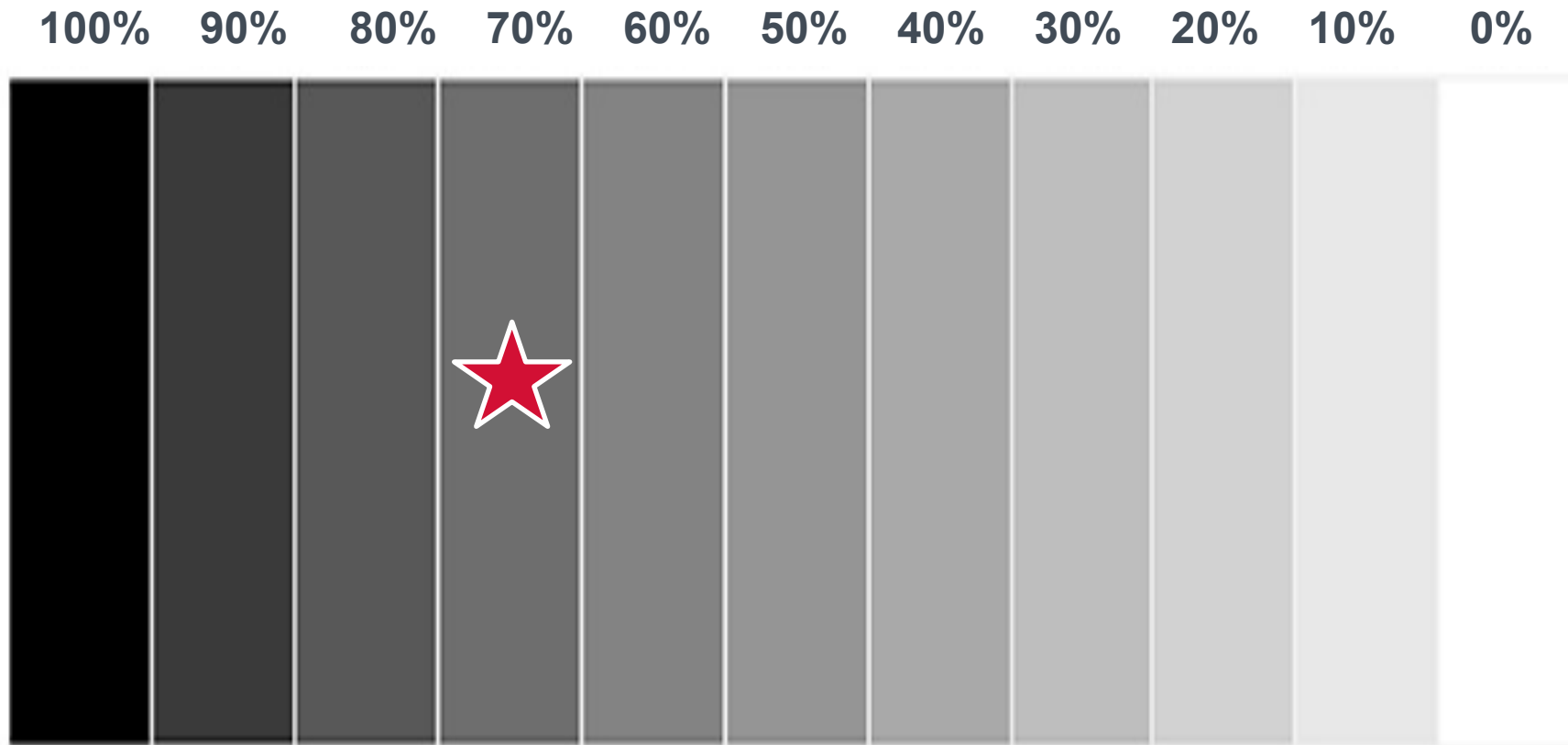


2021 – HOME TEAM JERSEYS RULE 1-5-1(b)3



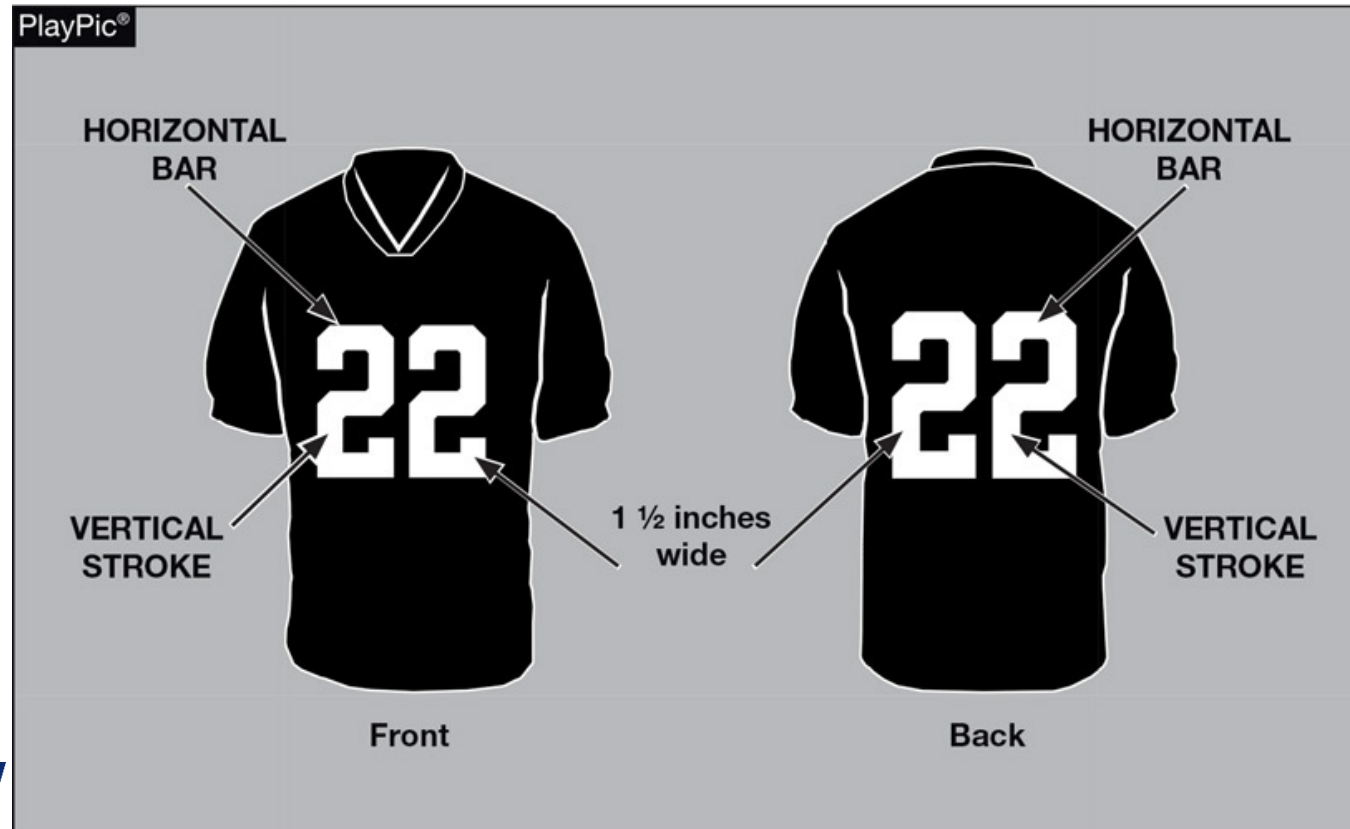


2021 – HOME TEAM JERSEYS GRAY COLOR SPECTRUM CHART



FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS

RULE 1-5-1c, 1-5-1c(6)



The entire body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) exclusive of any border(s) shall be approximately 1½-inches wide, and a single solid color that clearly contrasts with the body color of the jersey starting in 2024.



2024 - FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS RULES 1-5-1c; 1-5-1c(6)



Effective with the 2024 season, the entire body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) shall be a single solid color that clearly contrasts with the body color of the jersey.





2024 – FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS RULES 1-5-1c, 1-5-1c(6)



The style of the numbers on all three of these jerseys are legal now and will be in 2024 as well.

2024 – FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS RULES 1-5-1c, 1-5-1c(6)



The style of the numbers on these jerseys are legal through the 2023 season. The following four types of number designs will be illegal in 2024.



2021 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS



2021 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Sportsmanship
2. Intentional Grounding
3. Ineligible Downfield and Line of Scrimmage Formation

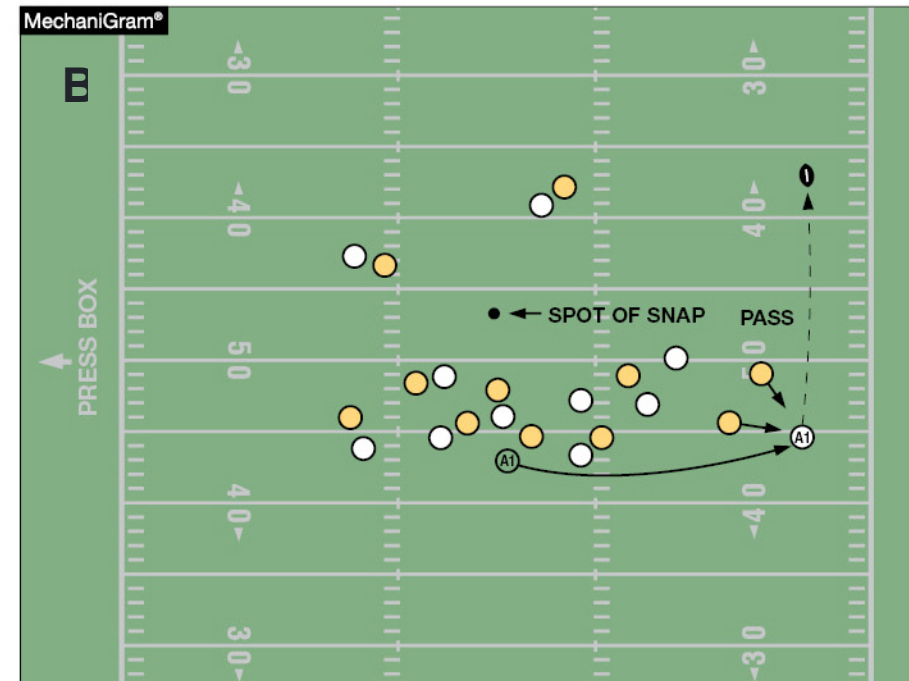
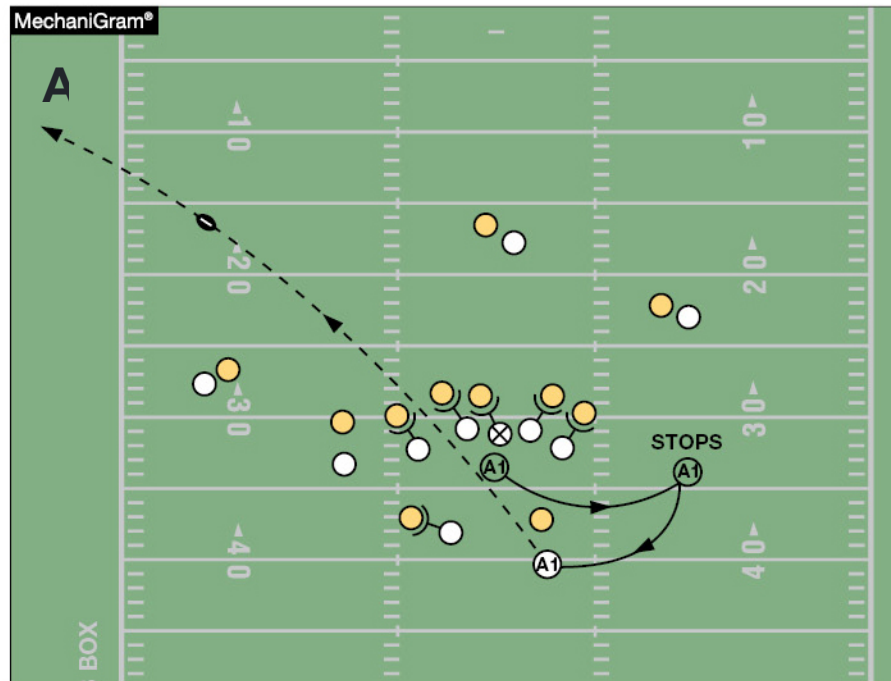


SPORTSMANSHIP



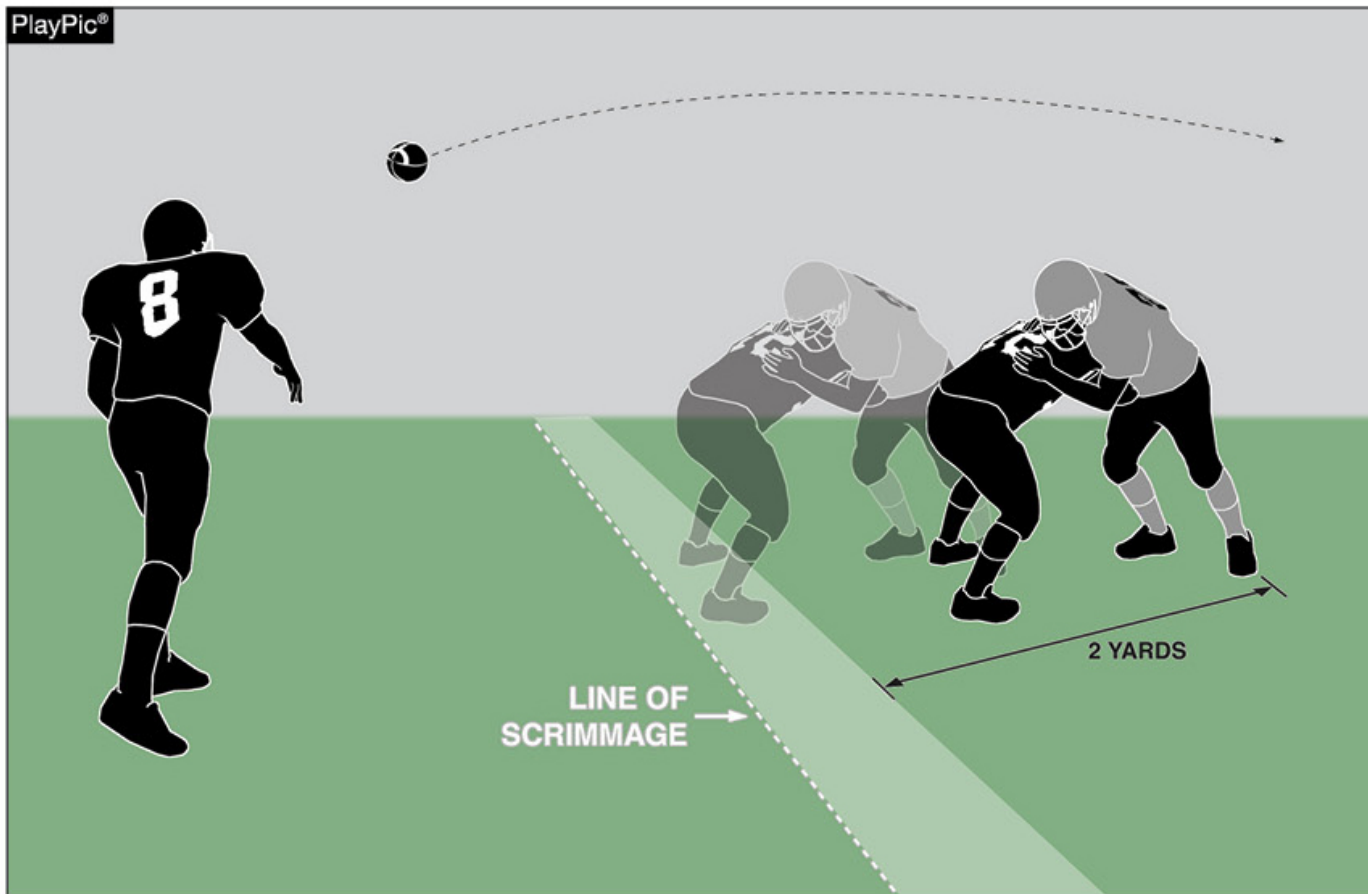
When considering sportsmanship, many may first think only of the game participants (athletes and coaches) within the timeframe of the game. Although players and coaches are the most visible in their displays of sportsmanship, proper sportsmanship also includes public address announcers (PlayPic A), bands (PlayPic B) and spectators (PlayPic C).

INTENTIONAL GROUNDING



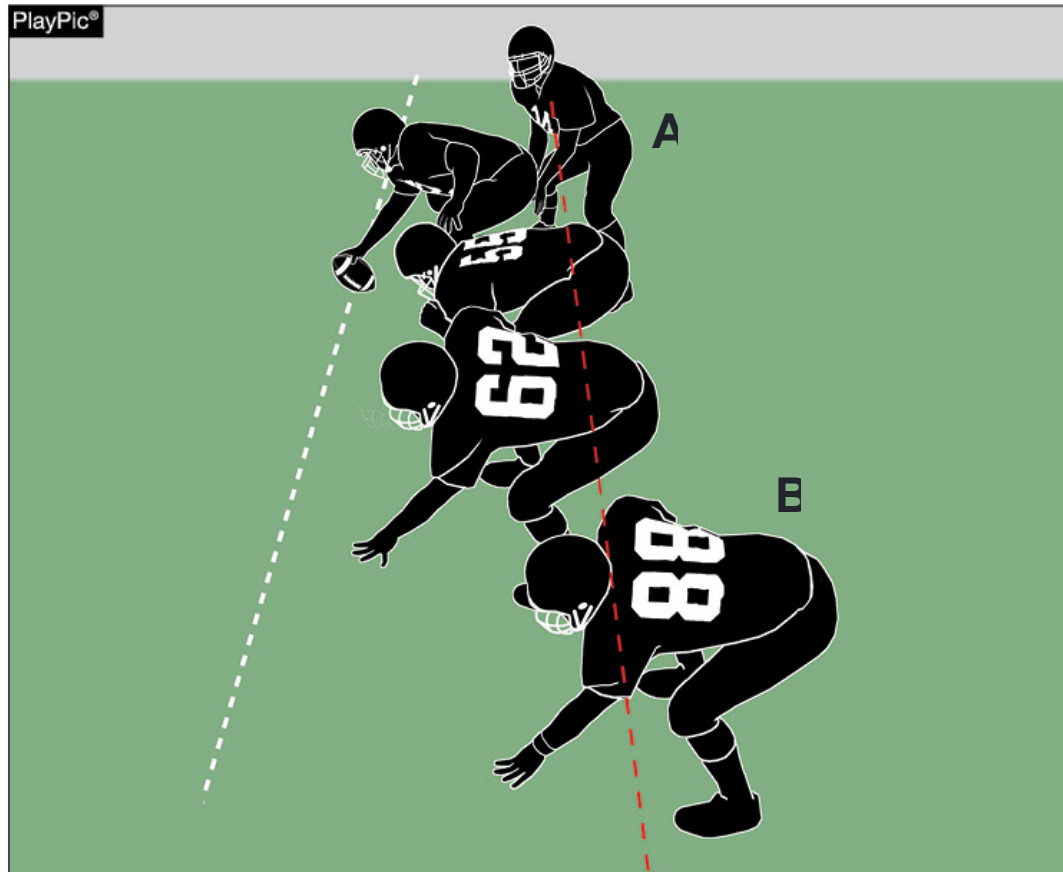
Under NFHS rules, unless using the legal exception in Rule 7-5-2e, intentional grounding is a foul whenever a forward pass is thrown to prevent a loss of yardage or to conserve time (PlayPic A) or to an area not occupied by an eligible receiver (PlayPic B). High school referees need to be aware of these situations and, with the help of the line judge and linesman, make the correct call under NFHS football rules.

INELIGIBLE DOWNFIELD



Ineligible A players may not advance beyond the expanded neutral zone on a legal forward pass play before a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone is in flight. The neutral zone expands two yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage following the snap. When identifying A players who are illegally downfield it is important to make sure that the A player is clearly beyond the expanded neutral zone (2 yards) at the moment that the pass occurs.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE FORMATION



Only one player may not be on the line but still penetrate the vertical plane through the waistline of his nearest teammate who is on the line. This player (A) must be in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap, but does not have to actually receive it. By rule, he is the only player allowed to be positioned in “no man’s land” at the snap. All other players not on the line must be clearly positioned as backs. The player marked (B) is in an illegal position.



2020-2021 NFHS FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL





2020-2021 NFHS FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL REMINDERS

- 2021 is a non-print year for the NFHS Football Game Officials Manual.
- 2020-2021 Game Officials Manual Points of Emphasis (See pages 91-93 of the 2020-2021 NFHS Football Game Officials Manual):
 1. Clock Management Communication
 2. Respectful Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials
 3. Preventing Inequities Due to Illegal Substitution and/or Illegal Formation
 4. Responsibility for Minimizing Risk in the Game





2020-2021 NFHS FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL REMINDERS

- The Game Officials Manual Committee added and/or updated the following items for 2020-2021:
 1. Added new NFHS General Instructions for Football Game and Play Clock Operators.
 2. Changed NFHS Official Signal 23 to Disconcerting Act in the signal chart.
 3. Updated the Pregame Conference Responsibilities for the Crew.
 4. Game officials' uniforms updated.
 5. Strongly recommend that Line-to-Gain Crews be adults.
 6. The referee should have the ball marked ready for play in three to five seconds following the placement of the ball.
 7. In five-person officiating crews, the line judge will now time the game if a visible game clock is not available.





RESET PLAY CLOCK-SIGNAL 17

NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS



Reset play clock to 25 seconds
(Use both hands to have play clock
reset to 40 seconds.)

