



# 2025 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

# TOOTH & MOUTH PROTECTOR

## RULE 1-5-1d(5)a – 4 (NEW)



ILLEGAL

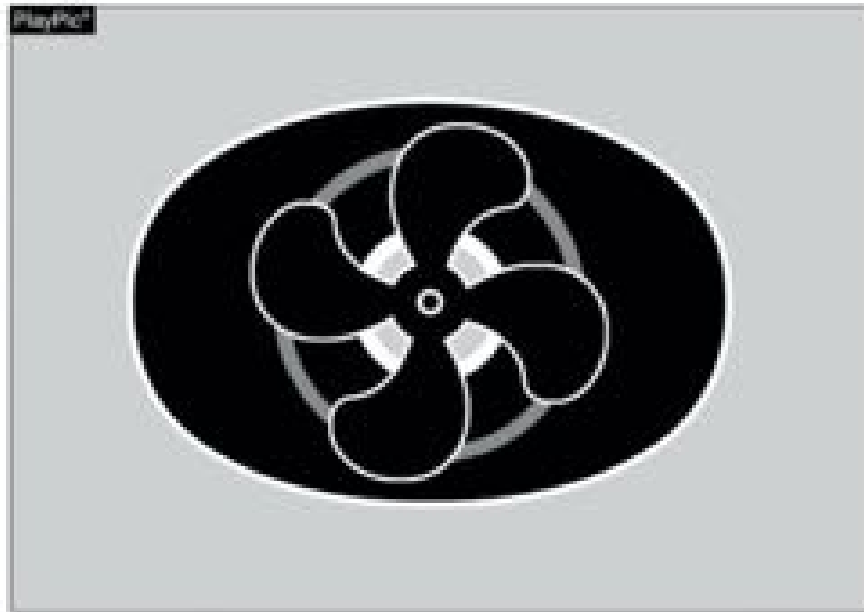


ILLEGAL

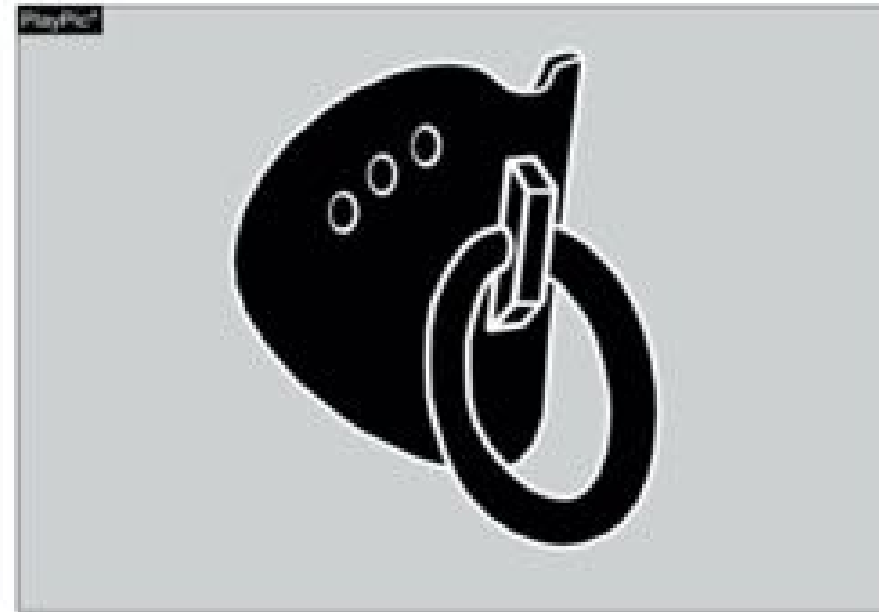
Effective 2026: Tooth and mouth protectors may not include any attachment(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth.

# TOOTH & MOUTH PROTECTOR

## RULE 1-5-1d(5)a – 5 (NEW)



ILLEGAL



ILLEGAL

Effective 2026: Tooth and mouth protectors may not include anything on them that is a health or risk issue and can pose a danger to themselves or other players.

# TOOTH & MOUTH PROTECTOR RULES 1-5-1d(5)a – 4, 5 (NEW)



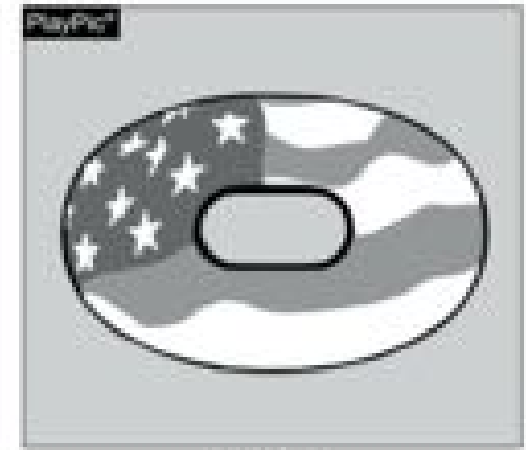
LEGAL



LEGAL



LEGAL



LEGAL

These tooth and mouth protectors neither include any attachment(s) that does not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth, nor anything that is a health or risk issue posing a danger and are not impacted by this rule change.

# ARM SLEEVES

## RULES 1-5-2d (NEW), 1-5-3c(6)



Effective 2027: Arm sleeves, whether attached to a shirt or unattached, manufactured to enhance contact with the football or opponent must meet the SFIA Specification at the time of manufacture.

# ARM SLEEVES

## RULES 1-5-2d (NEW), 1-5-3c(6)



Effective 2027: Arm sleeves must have a permanent, exact replica of the SFIA arm sleeve seal (meets SFIA Specification), that must be visible and appear legibly on the exterior of the arm sleeve.

# ELECTRONIC SIGNS

## RULE 1-5-3c(2)



LEGAL

Fixed electronic signs (non-audio) with play signals are allowed to communicate from the sideline.



# ELECTRONIC SIGNS

## RULE 1-5-3c(2)



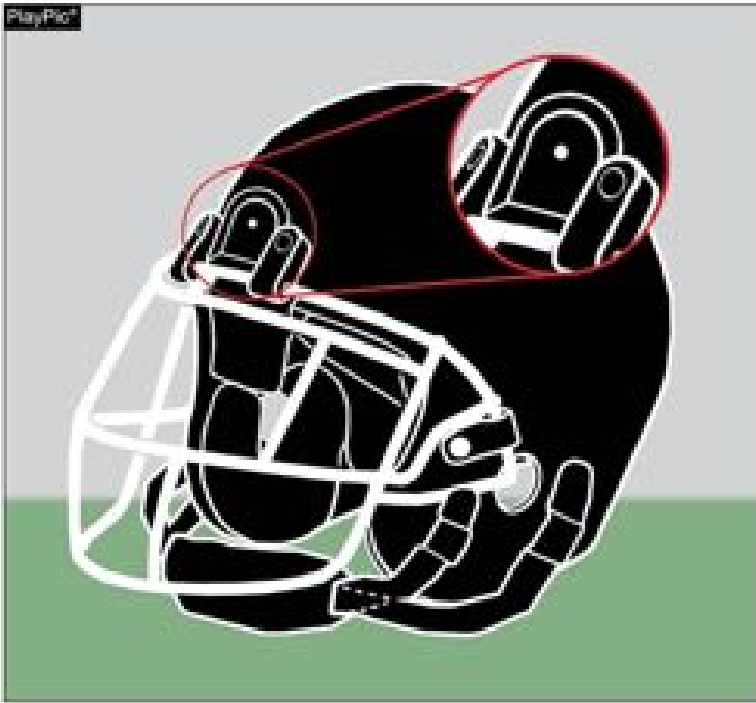
ILLEGAL DURING A BETWEEN THE NINE-YARD MARK CONFERENCE

Scrolling graphics, video footage, connected audio communication are all examples of the use of illegal equipment if this were a between the nine-yard mark conference.

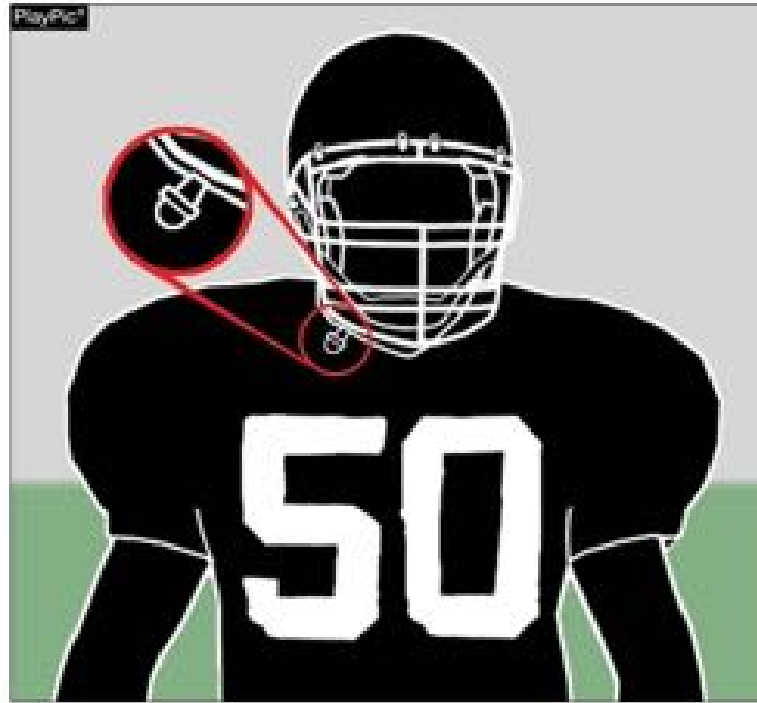


# ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT

## RULE 1-5-3c(3) (NEW)



ILLEGAL



ILLEGAL

Any video  
(camera) device or  
audio  
(microphone) worn  
by a player during  
the game is illegal.

# ILLEGAL COACH-TO-PLAYER TECHNOLOGY (FOOTBALL)

RULES 1-5-3c(2), 1-6-1



GoRout



Armilla Tech

# ILLEGAL COACH-TO-PLAYER TECHNOLOGY (FOOTBALL)

RULES 1-5-3c(2), 1-6-1



Qubit



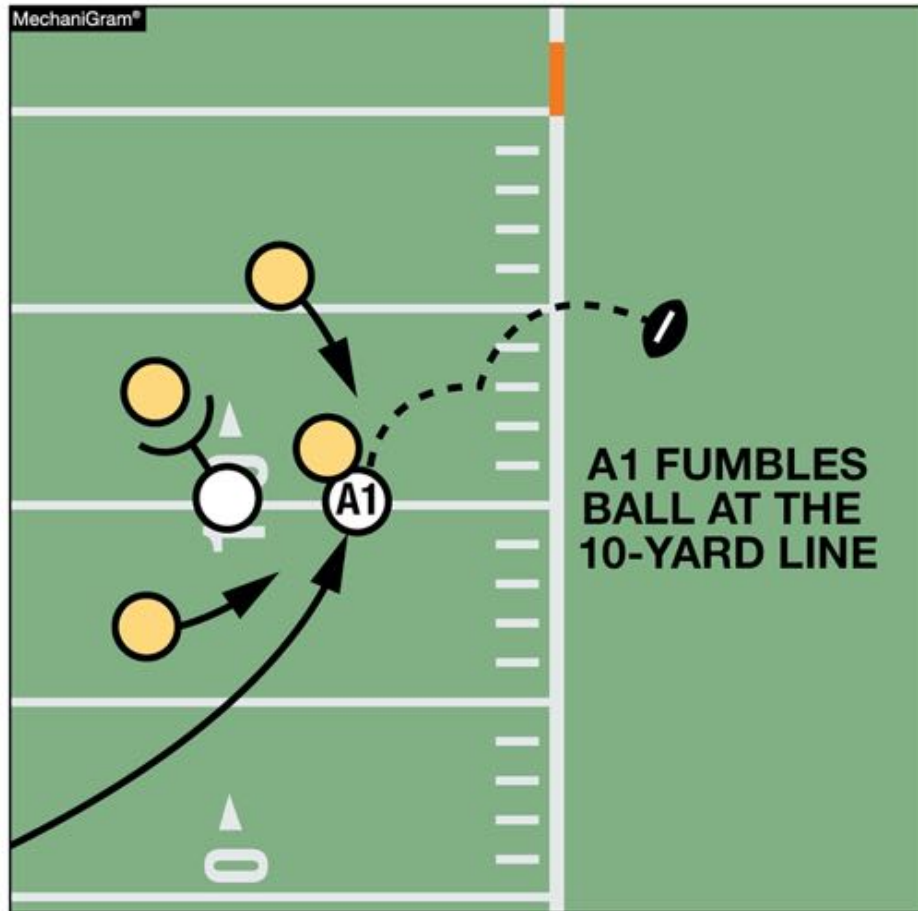
PROCOM



CoachComm

## FORWARD FUMBLE

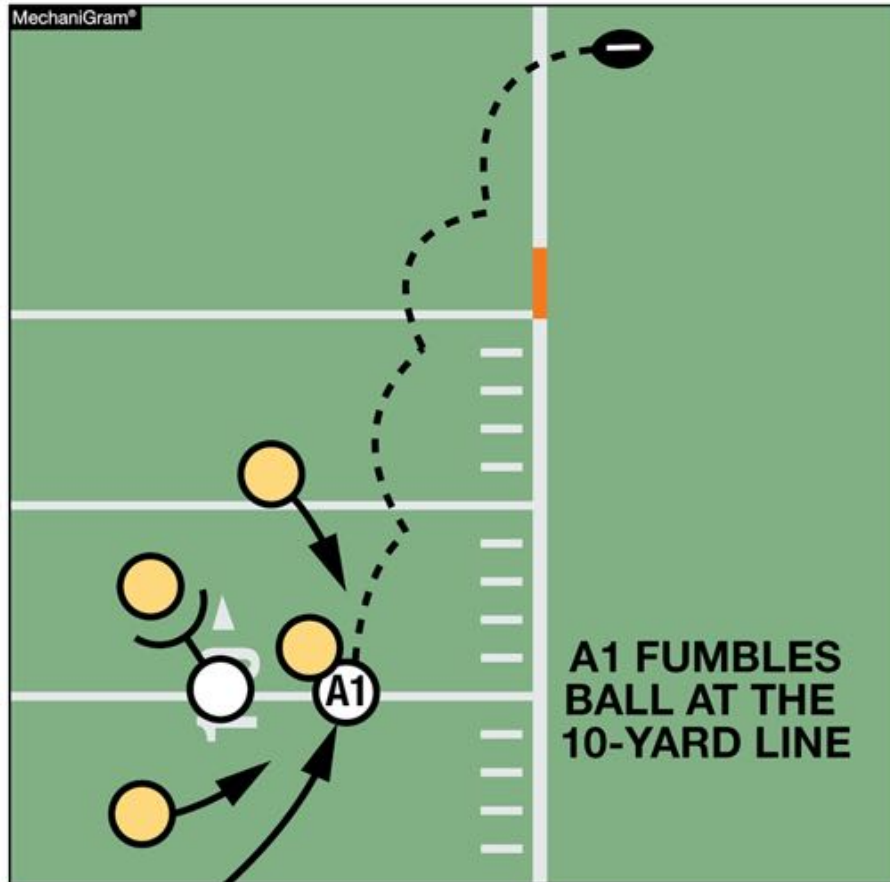
RULES 3-4-2d, 3-4-3a, 4-3-1 EXCEPTION (NEW)



When a forward fumble in the field of play goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball shall be returned to the spot of the fumble and the game clock is started on the ready-for-play.

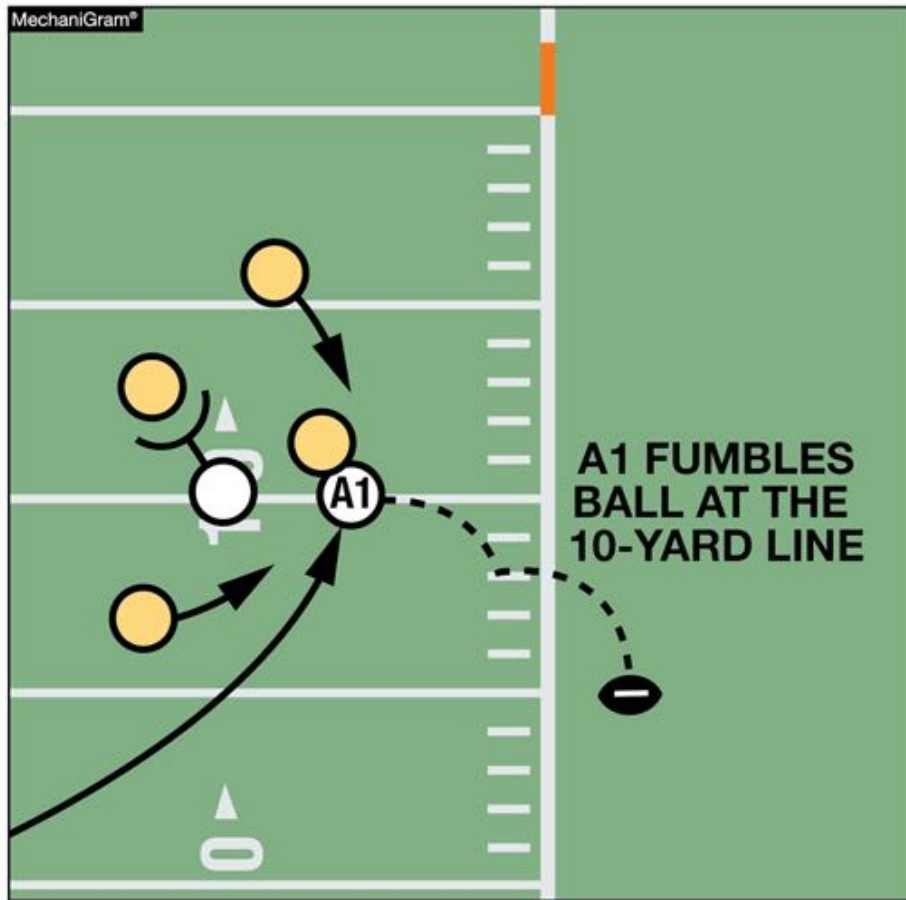
# FORWARD FUMBLE

## RULE 4-3-1 EXCEPTION (NEW)



When a forward fumble in the field of play goes into team B's end zone and is ruled out of bounds, the ball is not returned to the spot of the fumble because it did not go out of bounds between the goal lines. This play continues to result in a touchback.

# FORWARD FUMBLE RULES 3-4-3a, 4-3-1 EXCEPTION (NEW)

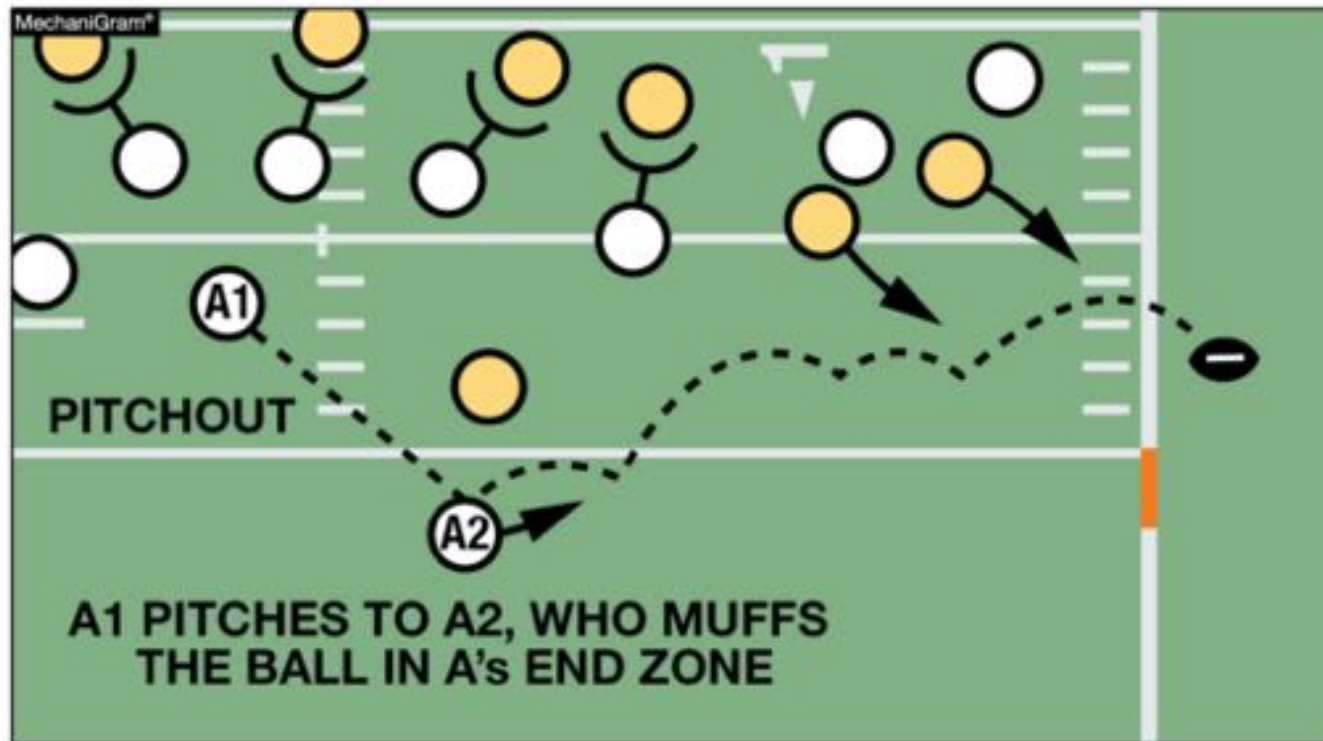


When a backward fumble in the field of play goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball shall be spotted where it is ruled out of bounds and the game clock is started on the snap.



# FORWARD FUMBLE

## RULES 3-4-3a, 4-3-1 EXCEPTION (NEW)

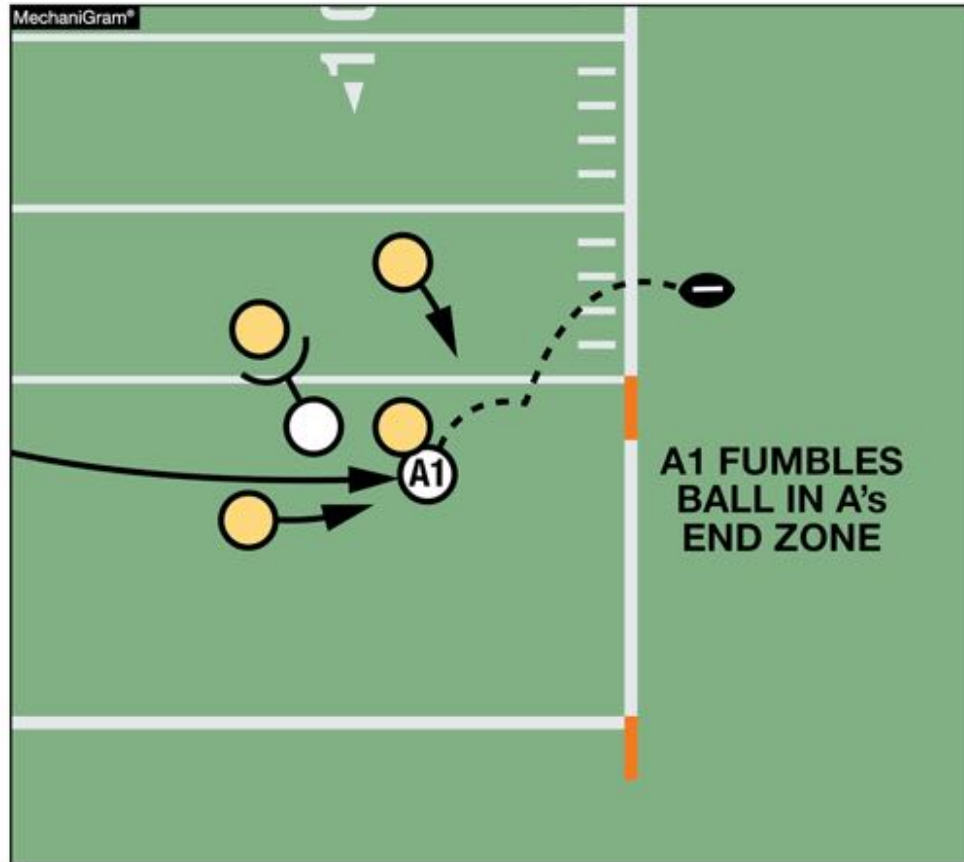


A muff going forward does NOT qualify for the EXCEPTION and would be placed at the out of bounds spot and the clock started on the snap.



# FORWARD FUMBLE

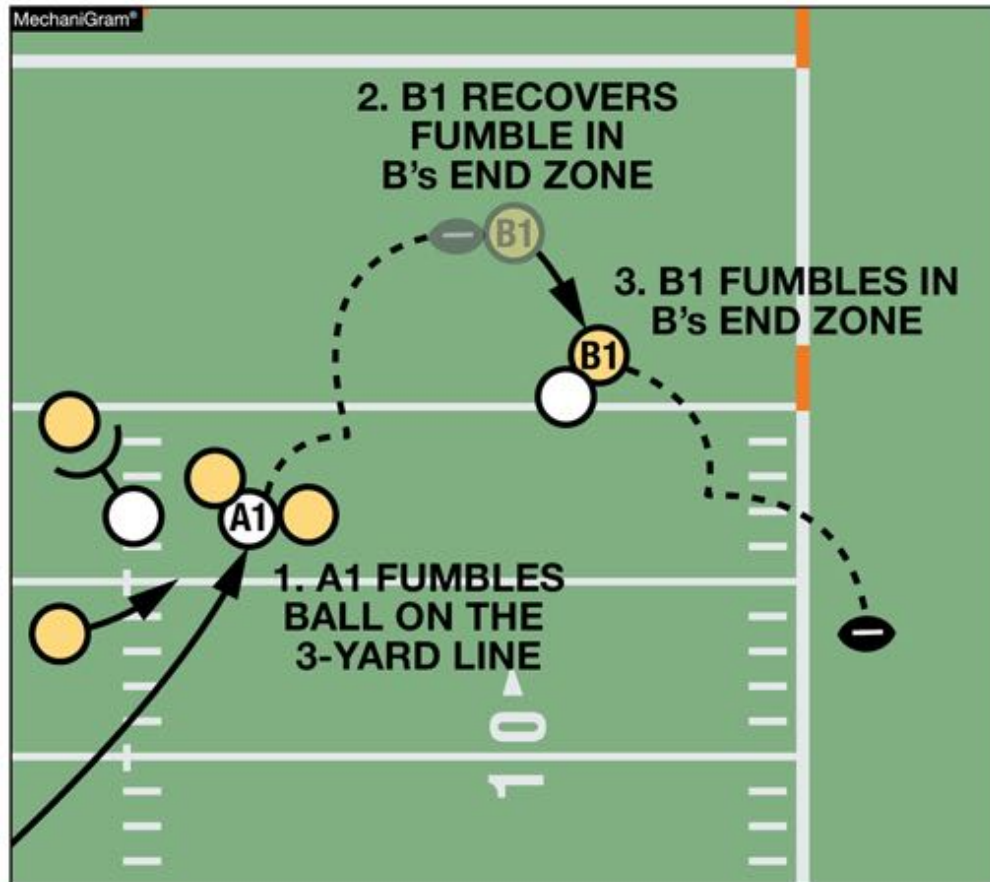
## RULES 4-3-1 EXCEPTION (NEW), 8-5-2a EXCEPTION



When a forward fumble by team A from team A's end zone goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the end of the run is in the end zone and the result of the play depends on who caused the ball to be in the end zone. If the momentum exception applies, the forward fumble exception would not apply and a safety would not be awarded.

# FORWARD FUMBLE

## RULES 4-3-1 EXCEPTION (NEW), 8-5-2a EXCEPTION



When a forward fumble by team B from team B's end zone goes out of bounds between the goal lines following a change of possession, the end of the related run is where possession was lost by B and the result of the play depends on who caused the ball to be in the end zone. If the momentum exception applies, the forward fumble exception would not apply and a safety would not be awarded.



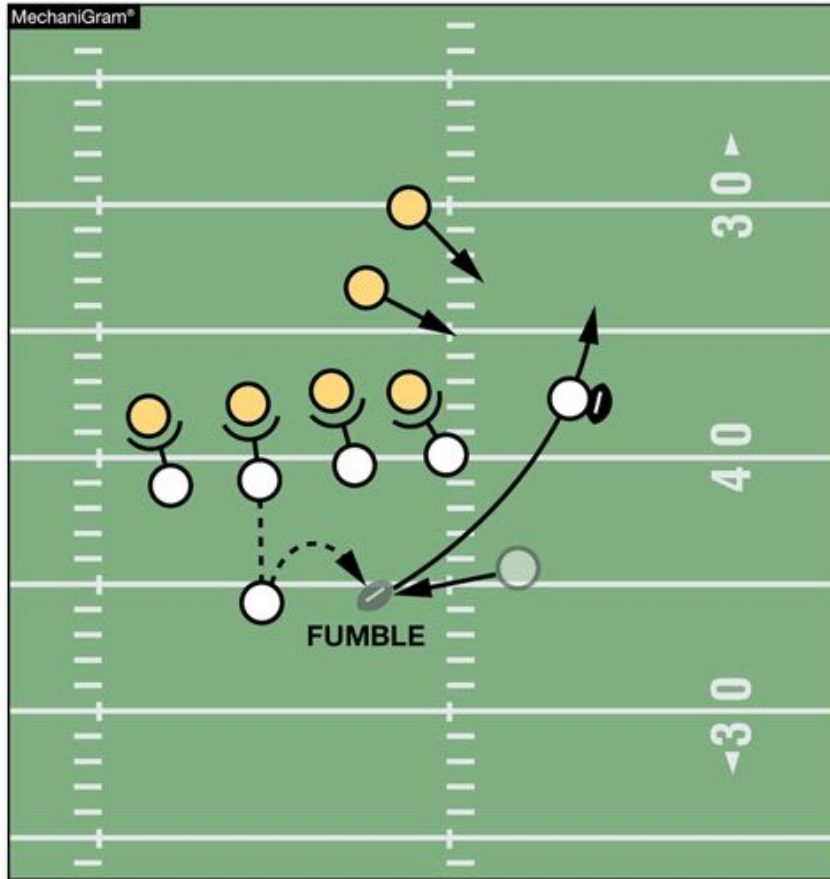
# ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION PENALTY ENFORCEMENT REVISED

## RULES 9-6 PENALTY, 10-4-4b (DELETED)

- Revisions to 9-6 PENALTY and the elimination of 10-4-4b have clarified and standardized penalty enforcement, specifically with regards to illegal participation fouls.
- The penalty for all illegal participation fouls has been standardized as “15 yards, live ball, basic spot” enforcement.
- This rule change does not allow a team to gain an advantage by entering and participating during a play.

# SIX-PLAYER

## Rule 2 & 7



As long as there is a change of possession from the snap receiver to another player of team A, the ball can be advanced beyond the line of scrimmage.

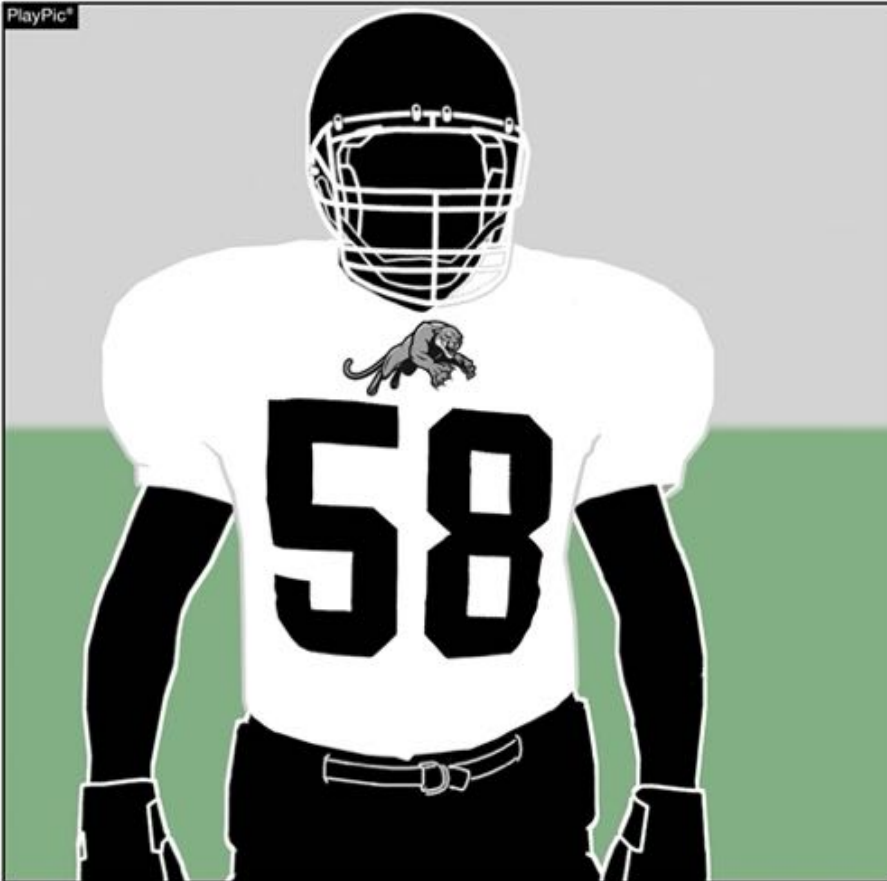


# 2025 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES



# JERSEY MARKINGS

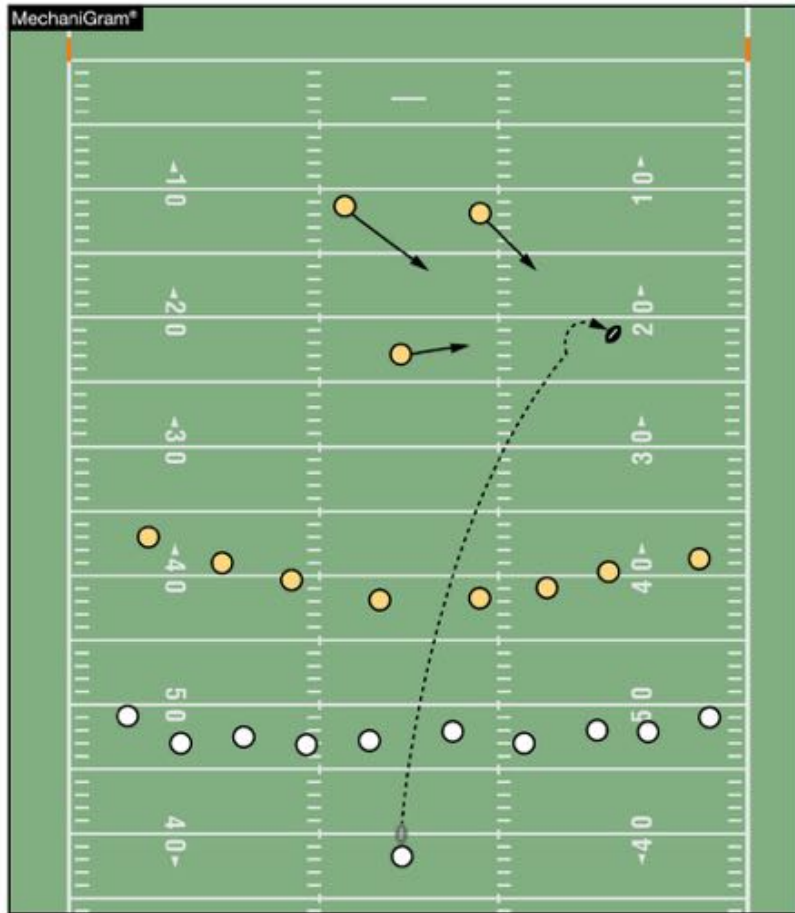
RULES 1-5-1b(2)b(1), 1-5-1b(3)b(1)



A school mascot is considered an allowable adornment to a jersey, in addition to the number, school's nickname, school logo, school name and player name.

# PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

## RULE 2-33-1a

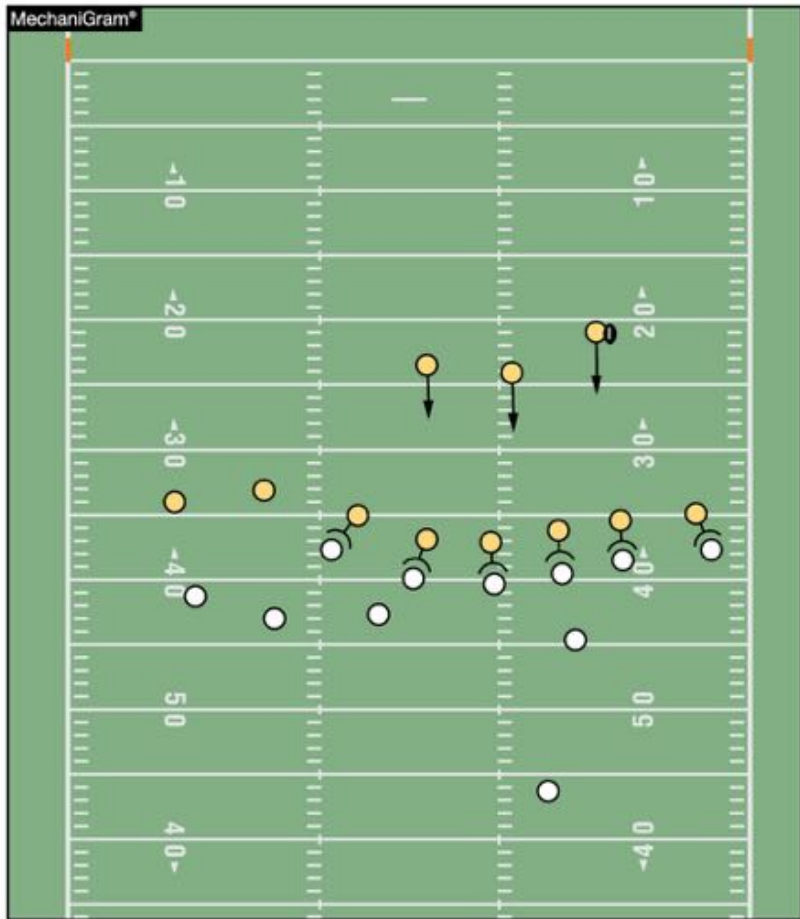


A loose-ball play is action during a free kick or scrimmage kick other than post-scrimmage kick fouls as defined in 2-16-2h.



# TYPES OF PLAYS

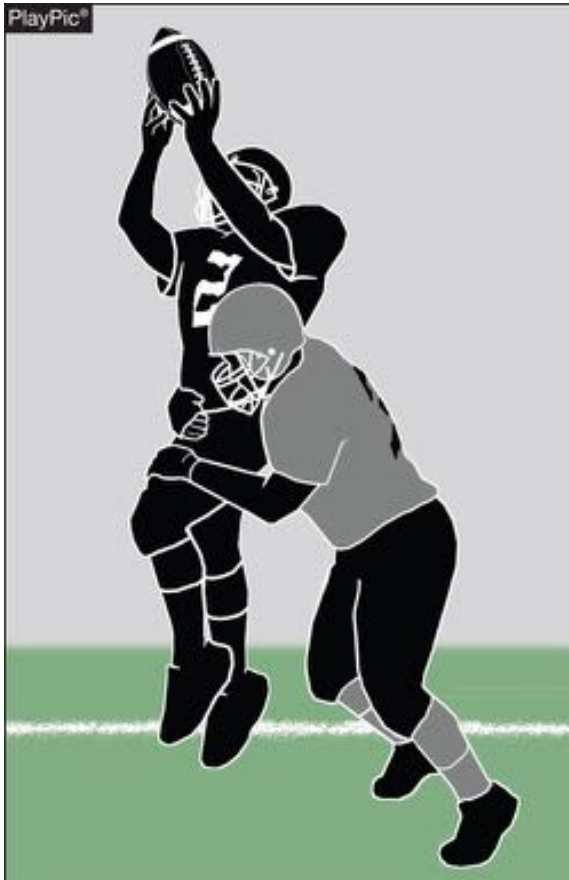
## RULES 10-3-1, 2



A loose-ball play is action defined in 2-33-1a, b, c, and d. A running play is any action as defined in 2-33-2.

# DEFENSELESS RECEIVER

## RULE 9-4-3p (NEW)



ART. 3 . . . No player or nonplayer shall: ...

p. Initiate forceful contact against a defenseless receiver as in 2-32-16b and 2-32-16c that is not:

1. Incidental contact as a result of making a play on the ball;
2. Initiated with open hands; or
3. An attempt to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver.

**PENALTY:** 15 Yards (Personal Foul)

# 2025 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES



|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 2-32-16d           | Removed 2-32-16d and placed it under a new 9-4-3p.                          |
| 2-41-9b            | Removed the term “related running play.”                                    |
| 2-41-9c, 10-3-3c   | Added in reference to “8-5-2a EXCEPTION” to the rule.                       |
| 6-1-9              | Simplified the existing rules language dealing with a free kick.            |
| 7-2-5b EXCEPTION 2 | Clarified the existing rule dealing with the snapper.                       |
| 9-4 PENALTY        | Added a new PENALTY for the new 9-4-3p dealing with a defenseless receiver. |
| 9-5-1g, 9-8-1j     | Changed “contest” to “game.”  |
| 9-8-1g             | Clarified the existing rule dealing with the team.                          |

# 2025 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES



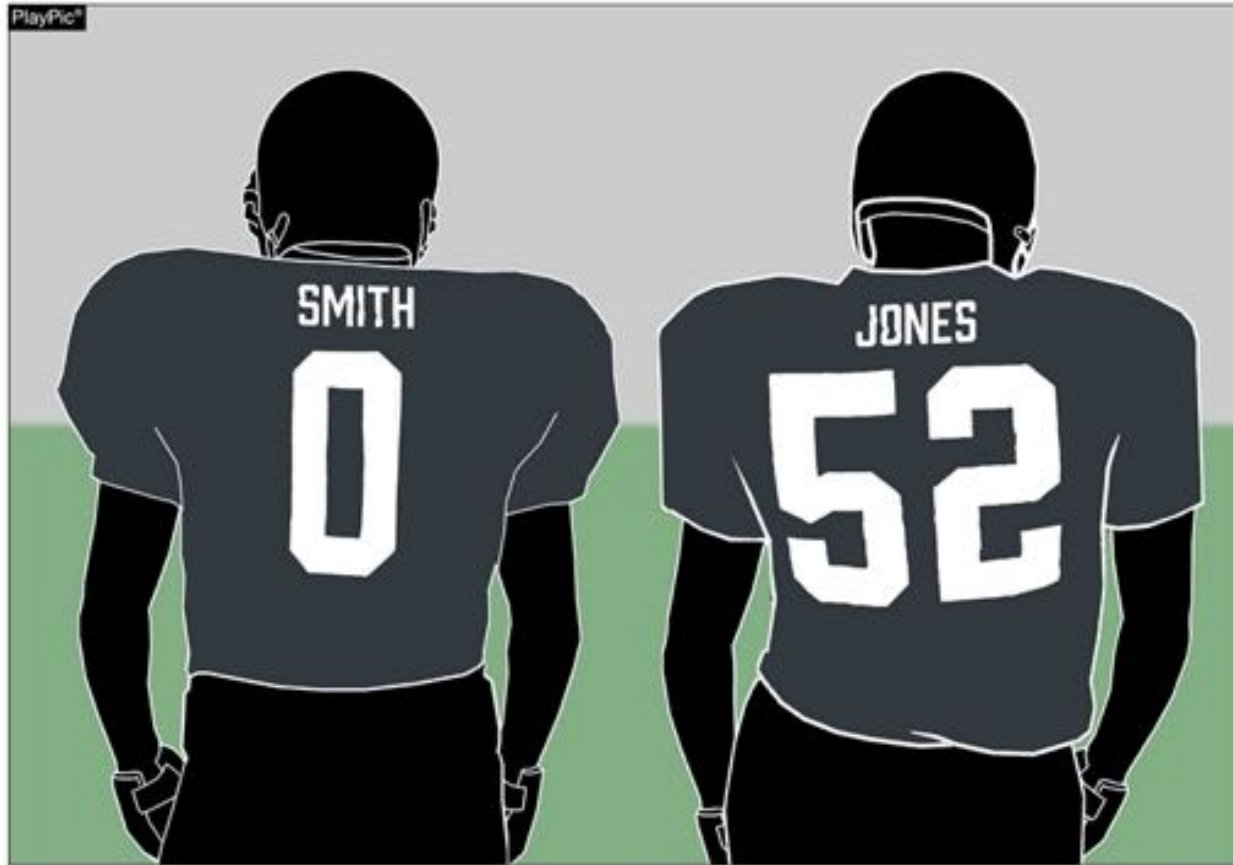
|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 10-4-2b                            | Changed the penalty reference for special enforcement on roughing the passer to 9-4-4 PENALTY. |
| 10-4-2d                            | Grammar changes within the rules language.   |
| 10-4-4a                            | Correct an omission when the rule was reorganized.   |
| 10-5-3                             | Further clarified enforcement with regards to a safety.  |
| 9-, 8-, 6-Player Rules Differences | Updated rules references.  |
| PENALTY SUMMARY                    | Added 9-4-3p to the list under loss of 15 yards.   |
| INDEX                              | Updated the index with revised rules references.   |



# 2025 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES REMINDER

# HOME JERSEYS

## RULE 1-5-1b(3)

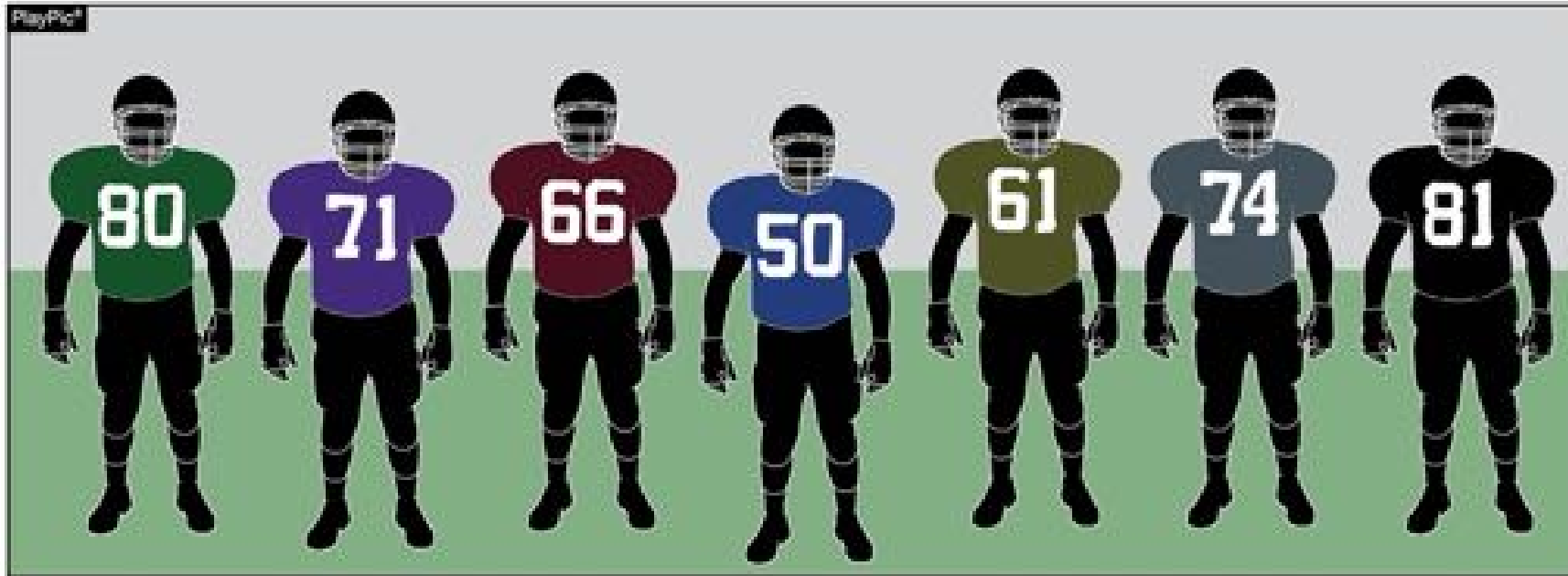


LEGAL

Jerseys of the home team shall all be the same dark color(s) that clearly contrasts to white.

# HOME JERSEYS

## RULE 1-5-1b(3)



These jerseys of the home team are illegal because all members of the home team must wear the same dark color(s) that clearly contrasts to white.





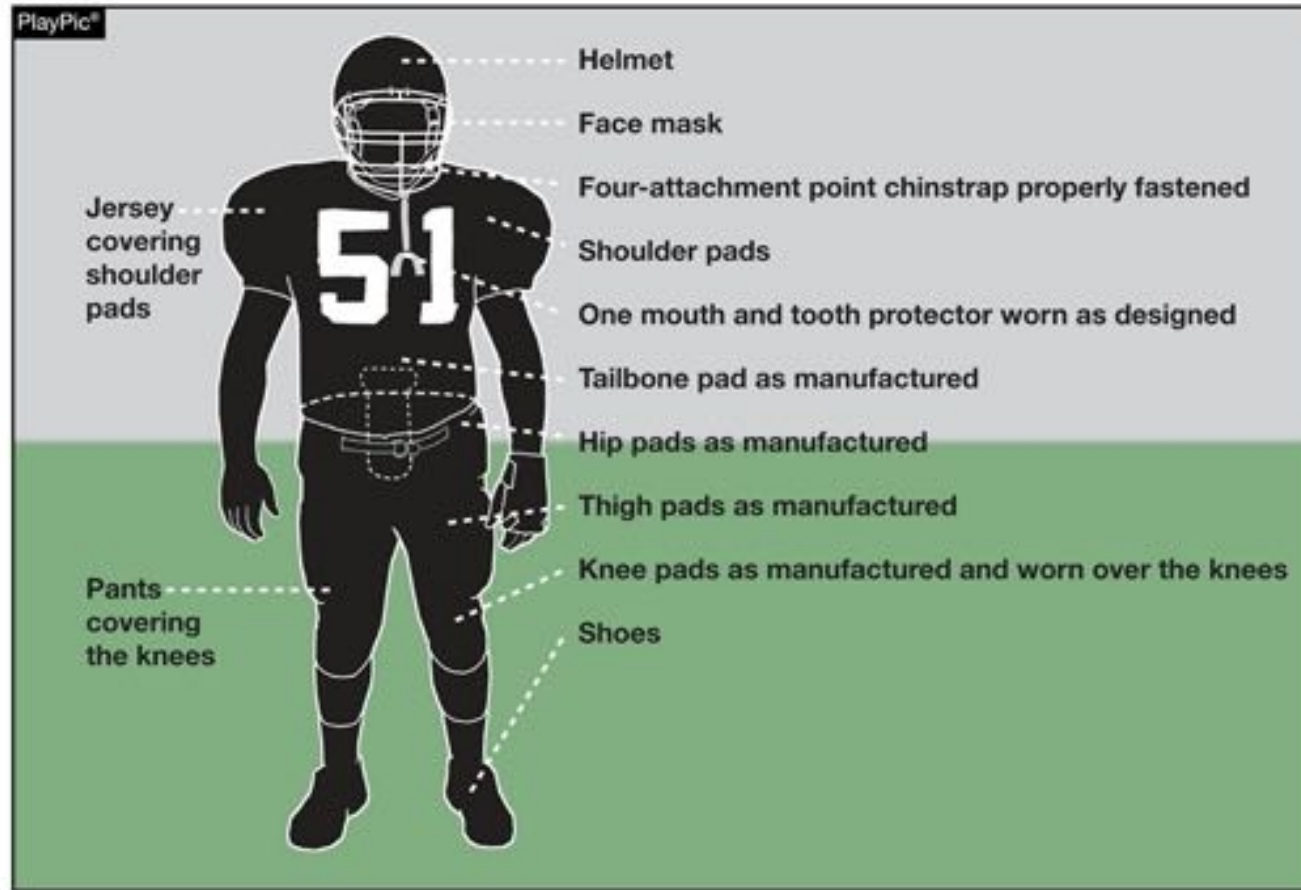
# 2025 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

# 2025 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS



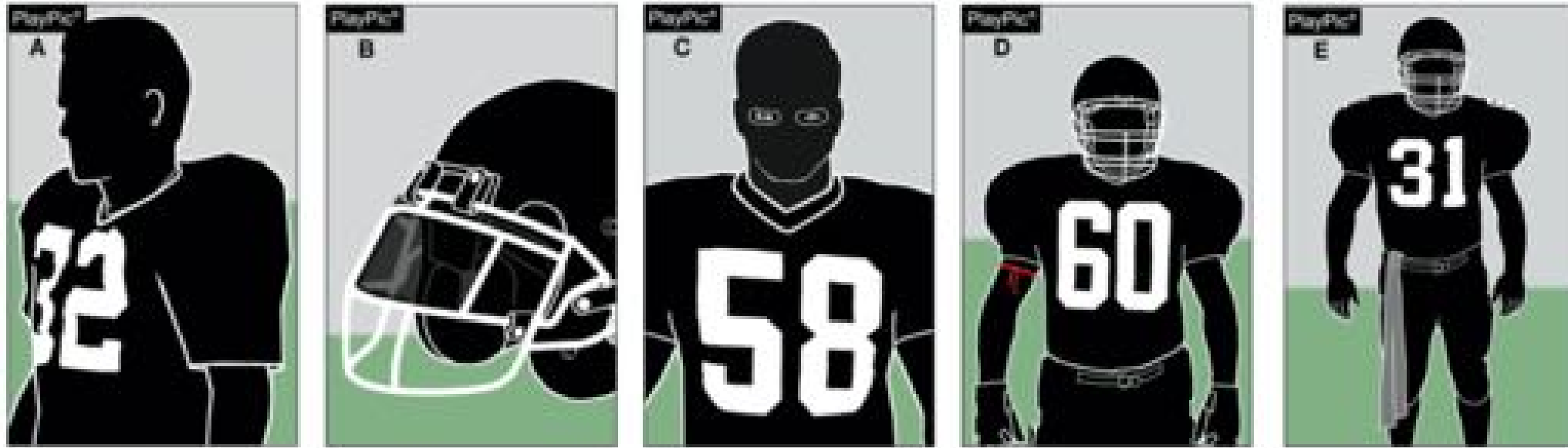
1. Illegal and Improperly Worn Player Equipment
2. Sportsmanship
3. Defenseless Player / Targeting

# ILLEGAL AND IMPROPERLY WORN PLAYER EQUIPMENT



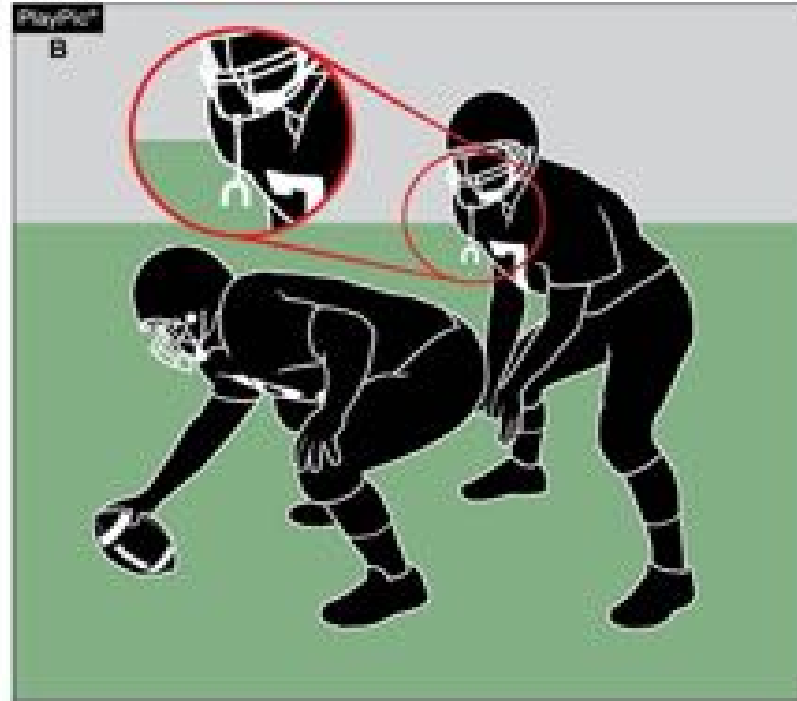
To support the safety of all participants, players must wear equipment and uniforms that are properly fitted and worn as intended by the manufacturer. Before starting each game, the head coach must verify that all players are properly and legally equipped. Allowing players to use illegal equipment or to wear required equipment improperly could subject the coach to a penalty.

# ILLEGAL AND IMPROPERLY WORN PLAYER EQUIPMENT



Illegal (prohibited) equipment includes jewelry (A), tinted visors (B), non-compliant eye shade (C), bands worn around the upper arm, neck or legs (D), and uniform adornments like towels that do not conform to rules (E).

# ILLEGAL AND IMPROPERLY WORN PLAYER EQUIPMENT



Improperly worn equipment pertains to all equipment that is otherwise legal but not worn as intended. Examples include pants not covering the knees, tooth and mouth protectors not being worn as play starts and shoulder pads not properly covered by the jersey.

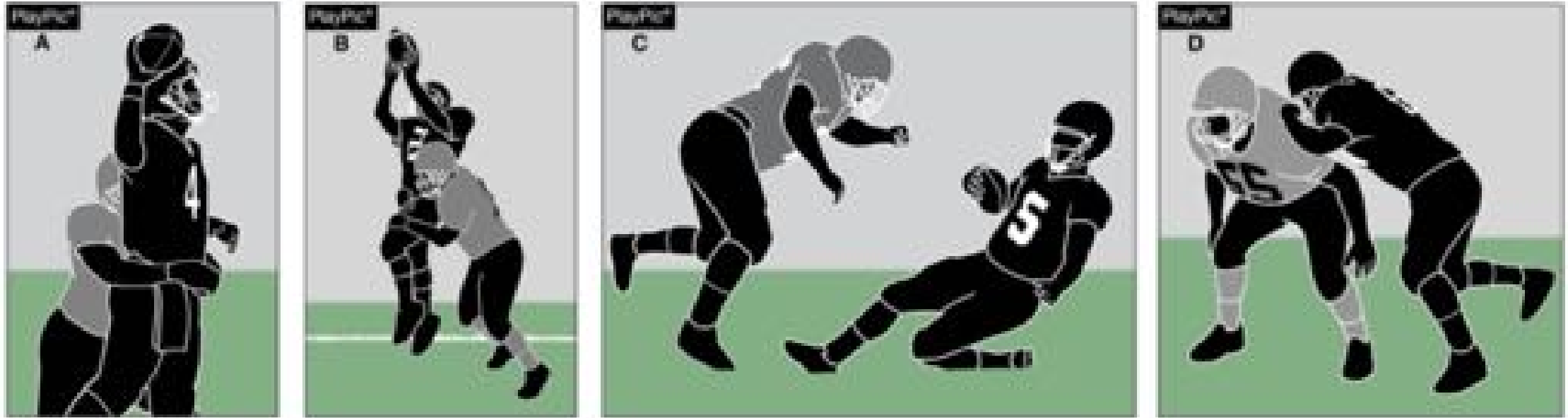
# SPORTSMANSHIP



In determining whether an action rises to the level of an unsportsmanlike conduct foul, game officials should allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of a play. However, game officials should penalize acts that are prolonged, choreographed or directed at an opponent.



# DEFENSELESS PLAYER/TARGETING



A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury. The player remains defenseless until the player's physical position and focus of concentration allows the player to have a chance to protect himself. Defenseless players include (A) passers, (B) receivers, (C) sliding runners, and (D) those illegally blocked from the backside.





# 2025 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES