

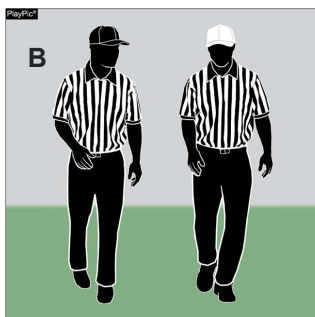
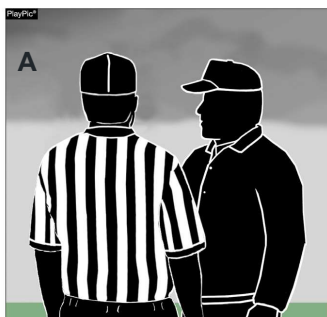
2020 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES



Rule Change

DESIGNATING TEAM REPRESENTATIVE

RULES 1-4-1, 1-4-4 (NEW), 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).



www.nfhs.org

❖ Rule Change:

RULE 1 – SECTION 4 – PLAYER DESIGNATIONS

ART. 1 . . . Each team shall designate a player as field captain, and he is the only player who may communicate with game officials.

ART. 4 . . . Each head coach shall designate a representative who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination. His first choice of any offered decision is final. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted either team. The head coach's designee shall remain in place for the entire game except in case of emergency.

RULE 2 – SECTION 32 – PLAYER DESIGNATIONS

ART. 5 . . . A captain of a team is a player designated to represent his team during:

- The pregame and overtime coin toss. (Limit of four captains in game uniform.)
- Penalty decisions following a foul (if designated by the head coach, as in 1-4-4).
- Ball placement on a try, a kickoff, after a safety, after a fair catch or awarded fair catch, after a touchback and to start an overtime.

RULE 3 – SECTION 5 – CHARGED AND OFFICIAL'S TIME-OUTS — INTERMISSIONS

ART. 2 . . . A charged team time-out occurs when the ball is dead and:

- The request of either a player or the head coach (or head coach's designee) is legally granted. When a decision on a penalty is pending, a time-out shall not be granted to either team until the designated representative makes his choice. ...

RULE 10 – SECTION 1 – PROCEDURE AFTER A FOUL

ART. 1 . . . When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both teams. He shall inform the designated representative of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. In case of a double foul, the designated representative is not consulted since the penalties offset. The choice of options may not be revoked. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted either team.

ART. 2 . . . When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free kick or snap, the covering official shall not permit the ball to become alive. The referee shall notify both teams, and the designated representative of the offended team will be presented with the options and the effect of acceptance or declination on the down and distance to be gained. The designated representative may accept or decline the penalty.

RULE 10 – SECTION 2 – DOUBLE AND MULTIPLE FOULS

ART. 4 . . . When two or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team (multiple fouls), only one penalty may be enforced. The designated representative of the offended team may choose which one shall be administered, or all penalties may be declined. When a team commits a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul during that same down, it is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for the other foul.

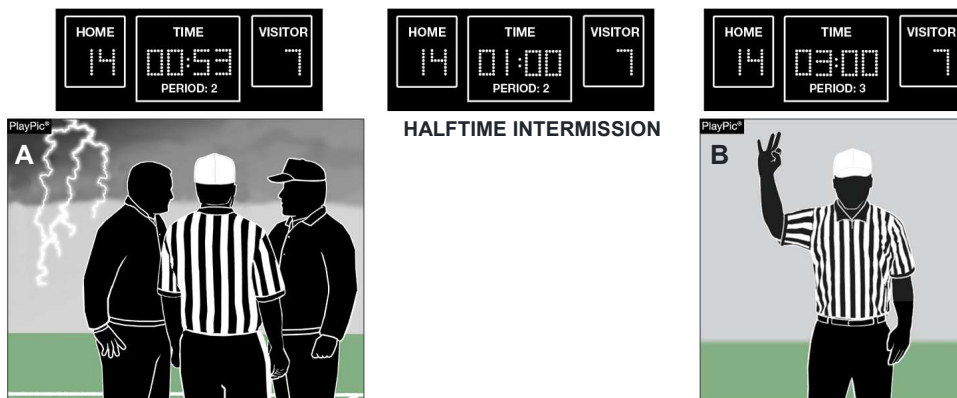
❖ Rationale for Change:

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.

Case Book: See SITUATIONS 1.4.1, 3.7.3D, 4.2.3B, 8.2.2F, 9.4.4D, 10.1.1B, 10.2.2A, 10.2.2B, 10.2.2C, 10.2.4, 10.4.5E

Rule Change

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



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).

www.nfhs.org

❖ Rule Change:

RULE 3 – SECTION 1 – LENGTH OF PERIODS – HALFTIME INTERMISSION

ART. 6 . . . State high school associations may determine the length of halftime intermission, provided it is not less than 10 minutes and not more than 20 minutes.

- a. 15 minutes is normal for halftime intermission.
- b. Halftime intermission may be increased to a maximum of 20 minutes, provided opponents have been notified no later than five minutes prior to the game.
- c. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches, the halftime intermission may be reduced to a minimum of 10 minutes (not including the mandatory warm-up period).

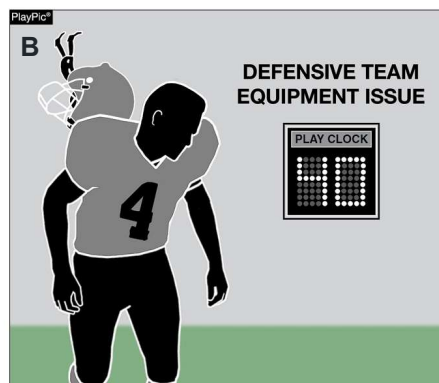
EXCEPTION: If the game is interrupted due to weather during the last three minutes of the second period, and the delay is at least 30 minutes, the opposing coaches can mutually agree to shorten halftime intermission, provided there is at least a one-minute intermission (not including the three-minute warm-up period).

❖ Rationale for Change:

The halftime intermission may be shortened by mutual agreement of opposing coaches if a weather delay occurs during the last three minutes of the second period.

❖ **Case Book:** See SITUATIONS 3.1.1A, 3.1.1B

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



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).

www.nfhs.org

❖ Rule Change:

RULE 3 – SECTION 6 – PLAY CLOCK, BALL READY FOR PLAY AND DELAY

ART. 1 . . . Play clock and ready-for-play:

a. Play clock:

1. 25 seconds will be on the play clock and start on the ready-for-play signal:

- (a) Prior to a try following a score;
- (b) To start a period or overtime series;
- (c) Following administration of an inadvertent whistle;
- (d) Following a charged time-out;
- (e) Following an official's time-out as in 3-5-7 or 3-5-10.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. 3-5-7b;

2. 3-5-7e if initially related to a defensive player; and

3. 3-5-10 if initially related to a defensive player.

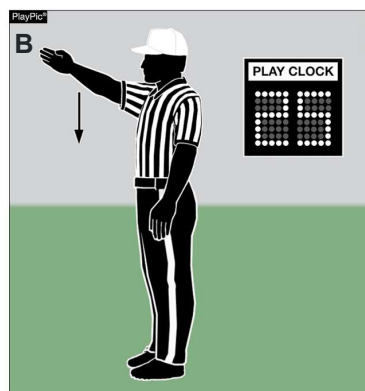
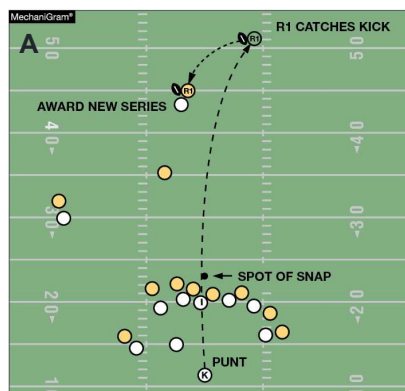
(f) Following a legal kick, when either team is awarded a new series; and

(g) Following the stoppage of the play clock by the referee for any other reason. ...

❖ Rationale for Change:

To eliminate a potential timing advantage gained by the defensive team, the rules committee approved the play clock being set to 40 seconds when an officials' time-out is taken for an injury to a defensive player or a defensive player has an equipment issue.

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



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).

www.nfhs.org

❖ Rule Change:

RULE 3 – SECTION 6 – PLAY CLOCK, BALL READY FOR PLAY AND DELAY

ART. 1 . . . Play clock and ready-for-play:

a. Play clock:

1. 25 seconds will be on the play clock and start on the ready-for-play signal:

- (a) Prior to a try following a score;
- (b) To start a period or overtime series;
- (c) Following administration of an inadvertent whistle;
- (d) Following a charged time-out;
- (e) Following an official's time-out as in 3-5-7 or 3-5-10.

EXCEPTIONS:

- 1. 3-5-7b;
- 2. 3-5-7e if initially related to a defensive player; and
- 3. 3-5-10 if initially related to a defensive player.

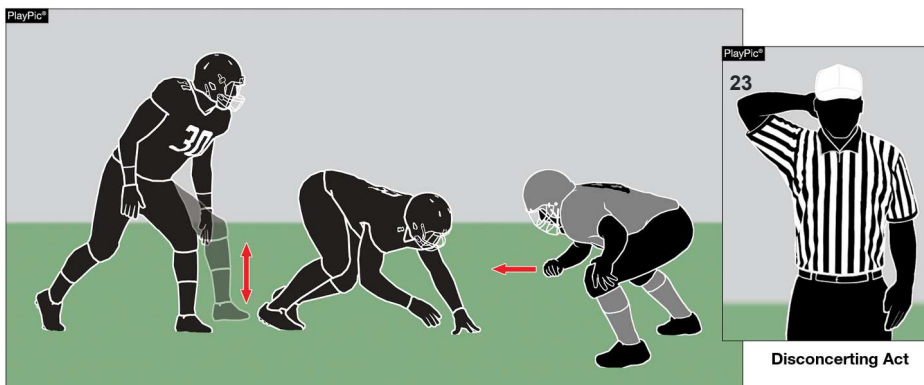
(f) Following a legal kick, when either team is awarded a new series; and

(g) Following the stoppage of the play clock by the referee for any other reason. ...

❖ Rationale for Change:

Following a legal kick when either team is awarded a new series, the play clock will be set to 25 seconds.

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



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.

www.nfhs.org

❖ Rule Change:

RULE 7 – SECTION 1 – BEFORE THE SNAP

ART. 9 . . . No defensive player shall use disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A's signals or movements.

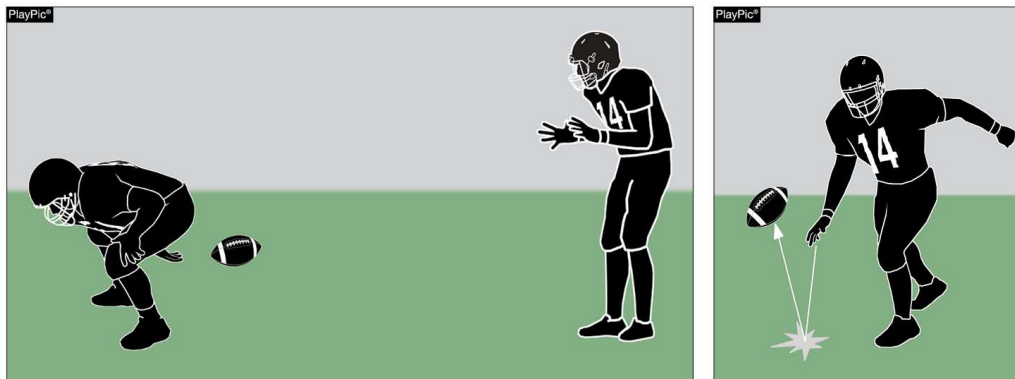
PENALTY: Arts. 1, 5, 6 – Encroachment – (S7-18) – 5 yards; Arts. 2, 3 – snap infraction (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 7 – false start – (S7-19) – 5 yards; Art. 9 – disconcerting act – (S7-23) – 5 yards.

❖ Rationale for Change:

Disconcerting acts or words by the defense has been reclassified from a unsportsmanlike foul to a disconcerting act foul, and the penalty changed from 15 yards to 5 yards.

❖ Case Book: See SITUATIONS 7.1.7C, 7.1.9

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.

www.nfhs.org

❖ Rule Change:

RULE 7 – SECTION 5 – FORWARD-PASS CLASSIFICATION ...

ART. 2 . . . An illegal forward pass is a foul. Illegal forward passes include:

- a. A pass after team possession has changed during the down.
- b. A pass from beyond the neutral zone.
- c. A second and subsequent forward pass(es) thrown during a down.
- d. A pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver.
- e. A pass intentionally thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or to conserve time.

EXCEPTION: It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.

TABLE 7-5-2e EXCEPTION, TABLE 7-5e EXCEPTION ...

- e. Pass intentionally thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or conserve time.

EXCEPTION: It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.

❖ Rationale for Change:

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 to include any player positioned directly behind the center. This exception now includes snaps that are not hand-to-hand.

❖ **Case Book:** See SITUATIONS 7.5.2B, 7.5.2G