

NHSOA Newsletter



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NSAA REMINDERS

Defenseless Player - Clarification

2-32-16: Expands the definition of a defenseless player by incorporating specific examples.

Rationale: The committee adopted specific examples of a defenseless player. By adding these examples, the committee continues to focus on risk minimization and responded to requests on the annual NFHS football rules

questionnaire from participating coaches, game officials and state association representatives.

It's not technically a rule change. Rule 2.32.16 simply expanded the definition of a defenseless player by incorporating specific examples of who is considered defenseless. The online rules meeting a year ago provided these same examples. The committee choose to include those definitions in the actual rule language this year. The rule states that a player who initiates contact against a defenseless must do so legally. The contact cannot be excessive or incite roughness.

Rule 2.32.16 ... A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury. A player who initiates contact against a defenseless player is responsible for making legal contact.

The rule reference regarding Illegal Personal Contact is 9.4.3g - No player or non-player shall:
Make any other contact with an opponent, including a defenseless player, which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness.

For example, if a defender is approaching the quarterback that is in the act of throwing or has just thrown the ball, the defender cannot deliver a hit that is excessive in nature. The defender is still permitted to tackle (make legal contact) the quarterback. The defender can't take advantage of the defenseless player by making contact that is unnecessary or excessive or incites roughness.

It is important to note that there have been no changes to Rule 9.4.3 regarding ROUGHING THE PASSER.

OFFICIALS CLASSIFICATION

To officiate varsity contests you must be classified as either "Registered", "Approved" or "Certified". You can confirm your classification on your login page under the header "Your Account Information". Below are examples of what should appear on your login page:

- Football – Registered for 2017-2018, Classification: R
- Football – Registered for 2017-2018, Classification: A
- Football – Registered for 2017-2018, Classification: C

If your information does not include one of the classifications as shown above, you are not permitted to officiate any varsity contests and you need to contact the NSAA immediately.

***NOTE TO CREW CHIEF – YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STATUS OF YOUR CREW AS WELL AS ANY OTHER OFFICIAL THAT MAY SUB ON YOUR CREW.
YOU MUST CHECK THE OFFICIALS' ROSTERS VIA YOUR LOGIN PAGE BEFORE ALLOWING ANY OFFICIAL TO WORK A VARSITY CONTEST.**

FIRST TOUCHING

Remember to “bag” the location of first touching on all free kicks and scrimmage kicks. It is also important to use the appropriate signal (S16) when communicating that a first touching situation has occurred.

16



**First touching (NFHS)
Illegal touching**

NFHS & NSAA POINT OF EMPHASIS

LEGAL JERSEYS, PANTS AND PADS (RULE REFERENCE 1.5.1b(1), 1.5.1d(2), 1.5.1d(3), 1.5.1e, 1.5.4, 1.5.5, 1.5.6)

In order to provide for the safety and protection of all participants, players are required to wear equipment and uniforms which are properly fitted and worn in the manner intended by the manufacturer. **Jerseys are required to completely cover the shoulder pads and any auxiliary pads, such as rib pads or back pads. Pants must completely cover the knees and knee pads, and knee pads must be worn over the knee.** It is becoming more common to see the sleeves of jerseys slide up over the top of the shoulder pad, thus exposing a portion of the pad or untucked jerseys that do not cover the back pads. Additionally, many players wear pants that slide up during use, thus exposing the knee pad or the knee. **Due to the potential for injury to either the player wearing such jersey, pants or pads, or to an opponent, it is essential that players not be permitted to participate unless their jerseys and pants fully comply with the rules.** A player whose jersey or pants slide up during game action must immediately make an adjustment to the garment to ensure that it covers all pads and protective equipment or, in the case of pants, fully covers the knees and knee pads. **If adjustment to the jersey or pants during a dead-ball period cannot be made, the player should not be permitted to continue as a participant on the field of play. Game officials should not permit the ball to become live when they observe any player whose jersey or pants fail to comply with the rules.**

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

Each player shall participate while wearing the following pieces of properly fitted equipment, which shall be professionally manufactured and not altered from the manufacturer’s original design/production to decrease protection:

1. A helmet which met the NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture and has the visible exterior warning label regarding the risk of injury.

2. A face mask which met the NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture.
3. The helmet must be secured by a properly fastened chin strap with at least four attachment points.
4. A legal jersey with Arabic numbers 1-99 inclusive on front and back which must reach the top of the pants and shall be tucked in if longer.
5. Hip pads with a tail bone protector.
6. **Knee pads worn over the knees.**
7. **Shoulder pads and any hard surface attachments fully covered by a legal jersey.**
8. Thigh guards
9. A tooth and mouth protector which includes an occlusal and labial portion covering the posterior teeth with adequate thickness.
10. **Pants which cover the knees and knee pads.**
11. Shoes, and if with cleats, they must meet specifications.

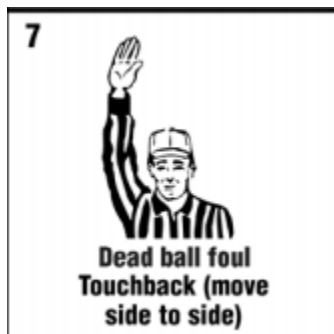
A game official will not permit a player to participate if he/she is not equipped with all mandatory items.

Dead Ball Violations

NFHS Rule 3.6.2d – Failure to wear legal or required equipment when the ball is about to become live.

PENALTY – Delay of Game – (S7-21-23) – 5 yards, succeeding spot

THE PLAYER SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE UNTIL THE CORRECTION HAS BEEN MADE.



Live Ball Violations

NFHS Rule 1.5.6 – Each player shall properly wear the mandatory equipment while the ball is live.

NFHS Rule 9.9 – No player shall fail to properly wear required equipment during a down. See 3.2.6d for failure to wear equipment when the ball is about to become live.

PENALTY – Failure to wear mandatory equipment during the down – (S27-23) – 5 yards, succeeding spot

THE PLAYER SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE UNTIL THE CORRECTION HAS BEEN MADE.

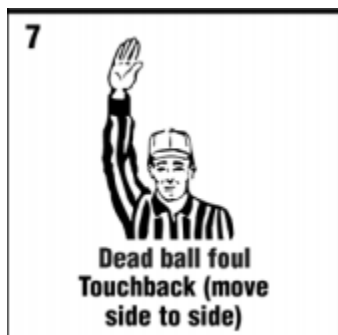


Subsequent Violations

NFHS Rule 9.8.1h – Failure of the head coach, following verification, to have his/her player(s) wear or use legal and/or required equipment.

PENALTY – Nonplayer foul charged to Head Coach – (S27) or (S7-27, if dead ball) – 15 yards, succeeding spot

THE PLAYER SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE UNTIL THE CORRECTION HAS BEEN MADE.



We must continue to focus on and enforce the 2017 POEs every time we take the field.

Please address these points each week with the head coach in your pre-game meeting.

2017 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Responsibility on Players to Avoid Illegal Contact
2. Illegal Helmet Contact
3. Sideline Management and Control, Professional Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials
4. Proper Enforcement of Penalties for Violations of the Equipment Rules

NFHS RULE 9.8.3

A non-player shall not be outside his team box unless to become a player or to return as a replaced player. A maximum of three coaches may be in the restricted area (between plays). No player, non-player or coach shall be in the restricted area when the ball is live.

PENALTY: Nonplayer foul – First offense – (S15) – warning
Second offense – (S7-29) – 5 yards
Each subsequent offense – (S7-29-27) – 15 yards

NFHS RULE 9.9

No player shall fail to properly wear required equipment during a down. See 3.6.2d for failure to properly wear required equipment when the ball is about to become live.

PENALTY: Failure to properly wear mandatory equipment during the down – (S27-23) – 5 yards, succeeding spot.

NFHS RULE 3.6.2

Action or inaction which prevents promptness in putting the ball in play is delay of game. This includes:

- d. Failure to properly wear legal or required player equipment when the ball is about to become live.

PENALTY: Delay of game – (S7-21-23) – 5 yards



Helpful Pointers/Tips for Crews and Positions

Referee (R) = Communicate balls away on pass plays, scrimmage kicks, FG attempts. Sound whistle immediately on PAT attempts when ball is kicked.

Umpire (U) = Back out after RFP is blown (do not have to stay over ball until offense gets up to LOS)

Linesman(HL)-LineJudge (LJ) = Hold your position on the LOS until receiver(s) on your sideline have gone downfield 10-12 yards. Don't be in a hurry to get downfield when you read pass.

BackJudge (BJ) = New mechanic (2016)....get arm raised above head to start the 5 second count. When arm is raised over head that starts your count.

General Coverage

Always try to be in your proper position to provide the best look and coverage. Hustle, but never, ever get in a hurry. Each official has a responsibility and the others are counting on you to be where you're supposed to be, and when you're supposed to be there. Please follow the 5-man mechanics as outlined in the official's manual. Spend time reviewing everyone's responsibilities. It is not enough that you only know the mechanics for your position. In order to do your job effectively, you must also know what the other official's mechanics and responsibilities are. Study the entire mechanic book, there is lots of good information in the manual, and the NSAA is expecting us to comply with the mechanics.

Always be able to box every play in with at least three angles. That does not mean the whole crew should be ball watching, but that's where most of the action is, and the officials must be sure they have all angles covered. Wings must use outside in coverage. R, Ump and BJ must use inside out coverage.

Running Plays

Initially, R has the runner until he gets to the line. R watches for blocks on line at the snap. Wings, watch for blocks in front of the runner. Be ready to spot progress. Ump, watch blocks along the line in front of the runner. BJ, cover all players deep. Opponents can never be behind you. Take wide angle for cleanup coverage. Use accordion affect to help after plays.

As runner gets to the line and beyond, R has clean up. Wings pick up runner and cover him. Ump, watch blocks around runner. BJ, still keep deep coverage, and blocks in front of runner.

Wings, as you move along the sideline begin with a slide and glide technique. Keep your back parallel to the sideline, let the play come to you, slide with the play downfield your back is still parallel with the sideline, then trail the play if it breaks by turning and running. Long runs will require a lot of help from BJ and Ump.

Passes

Initially, R watches for blocks on line then focus on the QB. Therefore, R oftentimes won't know what's happened downfield, so you'll have to let R know whether there is a completion, incomplection or penalty. R will be responsible for passes thrown from beyond the neutral zone. Ump, watch initial blocks, watch for tipped passes, watch for illegals downfield. Wings and BJ, know who your receivers are. Strength is to the side with the most receivers. BJ, favor that side, but never outside the hashes to start. Begin lined up on the upright on strength side. You have the receiver on the end of line. If trips you have the two outside receivers. Wings and BJ, you must know these keys. Remember, these are only initial keys, and you're only watching to be sure your receivers are not being held coming off the line. If the DBs aren't pressing the receivers at the snap, don't get hung up on the coverages.

Wings cover receivers in your area, but you must also know if the QB is scrambling. You must alternate coverage between your receivers and the QB.

BJ, you must always be deeper than all players. Never get beat deep. You have the goal line. Maintain inside out coverage. Keep about 10 yards away from the play, which means you may need to be outside the hashes as the play develops and ends. At the snap, do not make your first move backward.

Intentional grounding calls are difficult for the crew to make, since in most cases R will be covering the quarterback, and won't know if there are eligible receivers in the area. Therefore, if any of you have a ball thrown into an area where there is no eligible receiver anywhere in the area, and you feel the QB is trying to conserve loss of yardage or time, get on your whistle immediately and get R's attention. R will be responsible for throwing the flag at the spot of the pass. This particular penalty requires a lot of crew teamwork and communication.

A ball thrown OB can be grounding. In this case, be sure there is no one close to the area. Remember, the rule says receiver in the area, it does not say anything about the ball being catchable. Also Federation rules make no reference to "the tackle box," or the pass "crossing the neutral zone."



SITUATIONS

Case Book Review

9.4.3 Situation W (Page 81)

9.4.3 Situation X (Page 81)

2.39 Situation (Page 19)

1.51 Situation A-G (Page 9-11)

***9.4.3 SITUATION W:**

A1 is in possession of the ball in the backfield running parallel to the line of scrimmage with B1 trailing attempting to make a tackle. A2 executes a blindside block with forcible contact against B1 that is not otherwise excessive or unnecessary with: (a) open hands; or (b) leading with the forearms and shoulders against B1, while: (c) inside the free-blocking zone; or (d) outside of the free-blocking zone.

RULING: In (a), this is a legal block regardless of where the ball is located. In (b), the block would be legal if executed in (c), inside the free-blocking zone, but illegal if executed in (d), outside of the free-blocking zone. ([2-3-10](#))

***9.4.3 SITUATION X:**

R1 is running downfield with a punt return when R2 executes a blindside block against K1: (a) in the immediate vicinity of R1; or (b) five yards behind R1.

RULING: In (a), the game official must determine if the block is executed with forcible contact and if so, it must be made with open hands and not viewed as excessive or unnecessary. In (b), the block must be executed with open hands and not viewed as excessive or unnecessary in order to be legal. ([2-3-10](#))

2.39 SITUATION:

Is it a shift if before the snap:

- (a) A's guards and tackles go from a hands-on-knees position to a three-point stance; or
- (b) back A1 misses the snap count and takes a half step forward while going from an upright position to a four-point stance; or
- (c) quarterback A1 takes a step forward and puts his hands under the center; or
- (d) quarterback A1 is in an upright position as he looks over the defense, but he then bends his knees and puts his hands under center?

RULING: Yes, in (a), (b), (c) and (d). Each of these movements constitutes a shift. Normal shoulder and head movements by the quarterback are not considered a shift.

1.5.1 SITUATION A:

B10 has (a) a two-attachment points chin strap or (b) a four-attachment points chin strap and the umpire notices that not all attachment points are secured.

RULING: This is a foul in both situations. All available attachment points must be secured and all helmets must be secured with a four-attachment points system. [[1-5-1a\(2\)](#), [1-5-6](#), [3-6-2d](#), [9-8-1h](#)]

***1.5.1 SITUATION B:**

Team A's players are wearing jerseys: (a) just covering the shoulder pads, and their midriffs are exposed; or (b) that extend below the top of their pants, but some players have them tucked in, while others have them outside their pants; or (c) that are waist length, but have tucked them up under the bottom of their shoulder pads; or (d) with an undershirt that extends below the top of the waist line of the pants and is not tucked in.

RULING: The jerseys in (a) and (c) are not legal. In (b) and (d), the jerseys (and undershirts) of all players will have to be tucked inside the pants upon discovery and tucking the jerseys may not delay the ready-for-play signal. [[1-5-1b\(1\)](#), [1-5-6](#), [3-5-2b](#), [3-6-2d](#), [9-8-1h](#)]

1.5.1 SITUATION C:

When the game officials arrive on the field, they notice that both teams are wearing non-white jerseys. The visiting team's coach indicates that he was not informed prior to the game as to the color of the home-team's jerseys.

RULING: It is the responsibility of the visiting team to wear its white jerseys when playing away from home. Whether the home team did or did not notify the visiting team of its school colors, the rules specify that the visiting team is to wear its white jerseys. The referee may require the home team to change to its white jerseys. This incident should be reported to the proper administrative authorities at the visiting-team's school and the state association office.

***1.5.1 SITUATION D:**

During the pregame visits with both teams, the referee and another game official note that the players are wearing brand new "throw back" jerseys with undersized and off-set numbers on the front of the jerseys.

RULING: The referee may require both teams to change to legal jerseys, and should report the incident to the proper administrative authorities of each school and the state association office. ([1-5-1c](#))

1.5.1 SITUATION E:

During the down, A4 is noticed to (a) have a clear tooth and mouth protector; or (b) have a tooth and mouth protector that is only covering the upper, front teeth. The umpire drops a flag for illegal equipment.

RULING: The umpire is incorrect in (a), correct in (b). All tooth and mouth protectors shall cover the posterior teeth but have no color requirement. The game officials should, through normal observations, attempt to verify that each player is legally equipped prior to the ball becoming live, and if illegal equipment is detected, that player must fix the problem or leave the game ([1-5-1d\(5\)](#); [1-5-5](#)). If the game officials are unable to detect the illegal equipment and the player is observed wearing a non-compliant tooth and mouth protector during a down, a foul is to be called. [[1-5-1d\(5\)](#), [1-5-6](#), [3-6-2d](#), [9-8-1h](#)]

*1.5.1 SITUATION F:

During the pregame warm-ups, a game official notices some of the players of Team A wearing (a) sweatbands on their biceps, (b) sweatbands on their calves, or (c) pants which clearly do not cover the knees.

RULING: In (a) and (b), the uniform adornments must be removed prior to the individual becoming a player. In (c), the player may not participate without the pants covering the knees. [[1-5-1e](#), [1-5-3a\(5\)](#)]

1.5.1 SITUATION G:

The umpire notices that a player does not have protrusions indicating that hip pads and tailbone protector are being worn. Upon investigating, it is found that (a) the player is not wearing any padding or (b) the player is wearing a manufactured girdle with closed cell, "bubble type" protective padding that conforms and covers the hips and tailbone.

RULING: (a) Hip pads and tailbone protector are required equipment. If required equipment is noted to be missing between downs, the player must be removed from the game. If the game officials are unable to detect the missing equipment and the player participates without the required equipment, a foul is to be called. In (b), there is no padding criteria listed for hip pads and tailbone protector and, therefore, the pads are legal. [[1-5-1d\(1\)](#), [1-5-5](#), [1-5-6](#), [3-6-2d](#), [9-8-1h](#)]



OBSERVERS Comments

Wings need to get all the way into the restricted area after each play. Remind teams verbally or with hand signals to get back as the snap is eminent. NSAA wants the officials on the sideline before the play when

the ready has been signaled and stay on the sideline when the ball is live. When the play is over, the wing officials move in to the numbers or possibly the hash if the ball is out of bounds on the opposite side of the field to help with the spot and for dead ball officiating. Once the RFP is given by the referee the wing officials should be back on the sideline. If they have to detour on to the playing field to avoid someone in the restricted area, give a sideline warning the first time - period. Keep coaches off the field when giving O or D signals. Linesman need to instruct the chain crew and down marker carrier to get back at least two yards off the sideline - for their protection and to give him the space he needs.

2017 EVALUATION FORM

At the bottom of your NSAA Login Page you will find the heading "Observations". Upon opening that tab you will see the link "View Observations from Previous Years". Please take the time to review your previous observations and make the necessary corrections as you move forward. The observation form is very specific and the feedback that the observers provide is important as you continue to improve as officials. If you do not have an observation on file please study the blank observation form that is available on your login page. I also included the link below.

Football Officials: [Preview the Football Crew Evaluation Form](#) (Observers will use this form to evaluate the work of your crew.)

A

All-Purpose Yardage



Announcements

In this section we just want to get out some additional announcements made by the NSAA. These include links to “Understanding the All but One Principle”, “Penalty Enforcement Options During and After Scoring Plays”, and “2017 NFHS Football Rules Interpretations”

[Understanding the All but One Principle](#)

[Penalty Enforcement Options During and After Scoring Plays](#)

[2017 NFHS Football Rules Interpretations](#)

Crew Communication Devices:

With the progression of technology, communication devices worn by football officials to assist with immediate communication between crew members has become an attraction and gaining popularity. Although many understand that these devices can certainly benefit the communication between members of a football crew, there are still concerns that there are officials who are not prepared to deal with the use of such communication devices.

The use of communication devices has been approved for use by “VARSITY” football crews only. The wireless crew communication devices are not permitted for use by officials who are officiating lower level games.

Restricted contests include: JV, Reserve, Sophomore, Freshmen, 8th and 7th grade.

Please review the attached document thoroughly before using the communicating devices.

Crew Chiefs - Please notify me if your crew so chooses to use the devices. This information will be kept for record keeping purposes only.

[Crew Communication Devices - Guidelines and Requirements](#)

GET IT RIGHT - Training Program:

A couple of weeks ago I attended the NASO (National Association of Sports Officials) Annual Officials Summit. It was a great experience. During one of the sessions I was introduced to a new training program called GET IT RIGHT. The program can be purchased online and then downloaded onto your computer.

GET IT RIGHT brings the rule book to life by providing:

- Key points of the rule
- Variations and comparisons to enhance your understanding
- Each crew members responsibilities as the play evolves
- Detailed presentation of game situations
- 3D animations that can be viewed from any angle and perspective

NSAA intention is to simply provide you with information regarding the program. They endorse the program and see value in it as yet another training resource. They are in no way requiring you to purchase it.

The provided web address below will allow you to take a look at the free demo.

<https://www.getitrighttraining.com/>