



2020 Football Rules Considerations

NHIAA Football Committee Adopted for 2020 Season

In support of the NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Football Editorial Committee offers this document for state associations to consider whether any possible rules could be altered for the 2020 football season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

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1. FOOTBALL RULES CONSIDERATIONS

- **TEAM BOX (Rule 1-2-3g)**
 - The team box may be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines (for players only) in order for more social-distancing space for the teams.
 - Maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all times while in the team box.
 - Do not share uniforms, towels and other apparel and equipment.
- **BALL (Rule 1-3-2)**
 - The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
 - The ball holders should maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all times during the contest.
- **FACE MASKS [Rules 1-5-1a, 1-5-3c(4)]**
 - Cloth face coverings are permissible.
 - Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to the helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.
- **TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS [Rule 1-5-1d(5)]**
 - The best evidence to date shows us that the coronavirus is spread through respiratory droplets. Saliva from mouthguards is unlikely to be a significant source of infection transmission. However, we recognize that parents and others may find the prospect of athletes frequently placing and removing a mouthguard concerning. Given this reality, the NFHS SMAC suggests that state associations develop statements instructing athletes to refrain from the removal of mouthguards while on the playing field, court, rink or mat. If mouthguards are removed on the sidelines or bench area, the athlete should use hand sanitizer each time after touching the mouthguard. A properly fitted mouthguard is required by rule in football.
- **GLOVES (Rule 1-5-2b)**
 - Gloves are permissible but still must comply with Rule 1-5-2b by meeting either the NOCSAE Standard or the SFIA Specification.

- **STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS (Rule 1-7)**
 - Each state association may adopt other playing/administrative rules for football for the 2020 season that would decrease exposure to respiratory droplets and COVID-19.
- **CHARGED TIME-OUTS AND AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES (Rules 2-6-2, 3-5-3, 3-5-8)**
 - A single charged time-out may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length.
 - The authorized conference for the charged time-out should take place between the 9-yard marks and not at the sideline for social-distancing purposes. (It would be permissible for more than one coach to be involved in this conference and for technology to be used.)
 - Each game official and player should have their own beverage container brought out to them on the field.
- **INTERMISSION BETWEEN PERIODS AND AFTER SCORING (Rule 3-5-7I)**
 - The intermission may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick.

2. FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **GAME OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT**
 - Electronic whistles are permissible (supplies are limited).
 - Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside.
 - Fox 40 Mini -
 - Fox 40 Unisex Electronic – (3 tone) -
 - Ergo-Guard - (3 tone) - orange
 - Windsor - (3 tone)
 - Check the market for other choices
 - Cloth face coverings are permissible.
 - Gloves are permissible.
 - Do not share uniforms, towels and other apparel and equipment.
- **PREGAME CONFERENCE, COIN TOSS AND OVERTIME PROCEDURES**
 - For the coin toss, limit attendees to the referee, umpire and one designated representative from each team.
 - Coin toss should take place in the center of the field with designated individuals maintaining social distancing of 6 feet.
 - No handshakes prior to and following the coin toss.
 - Maintain social distancing of 6 feet while performing all pregame responsibilities with all officiating crew members, game administration staff, line-to-gain crew, clock operators, individuals handling the balls during the game and team personnel.
 - For the overtime procedure, please use the same procedure as used at the start of the contest for the coin toss.

3. PRE AND POST GAME CONSIDERATIONS

- Suspend pregame protocol of shaking hands during introductions.
- Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOTBALL

- Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, game officials, team personnel and game administration officials should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all times while on the sidelines and on the field of play when possible.
- Everyone should have their own beverage container that is not shared.
- Cloth face coverings are permissible for all coaches and team staff and for all game administration officials.
- Gloves are permissible for all coaches and team staff and for all game administration officials.
- Try and limit the number of non-essential personnel who are on the field level throughout the contest.
- If available, dressing facilities for game officials and teams should be large enough for them to use social-distancing protocols and should be properly cleaned and sanitized prior to their arrival.

*****Final as of June 19, 2020***