



2023 NHFS FOOTBALL RULES BRIEFING

National Federation of State
High School Associations



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2023 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 the respective 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.





2023 NJSIAA RULES INTERPRETATION TEAM

- NJFOA North- Bob Masucci



- NJFOA Central- Vic Simon



- NJFOA Shore- Bill Surdovel



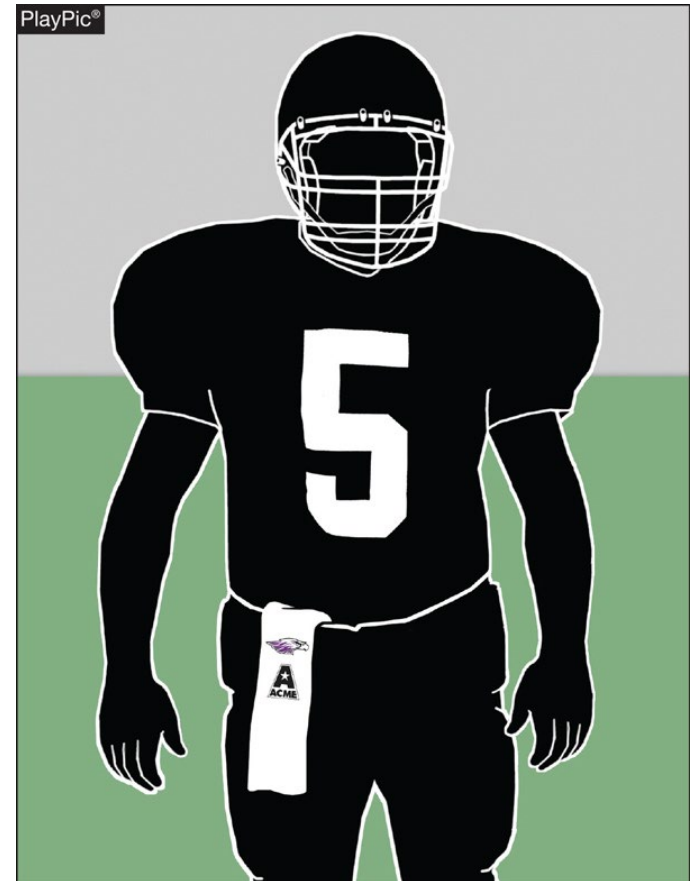
- NJSIAA/NJFOA South- Mike Bartram



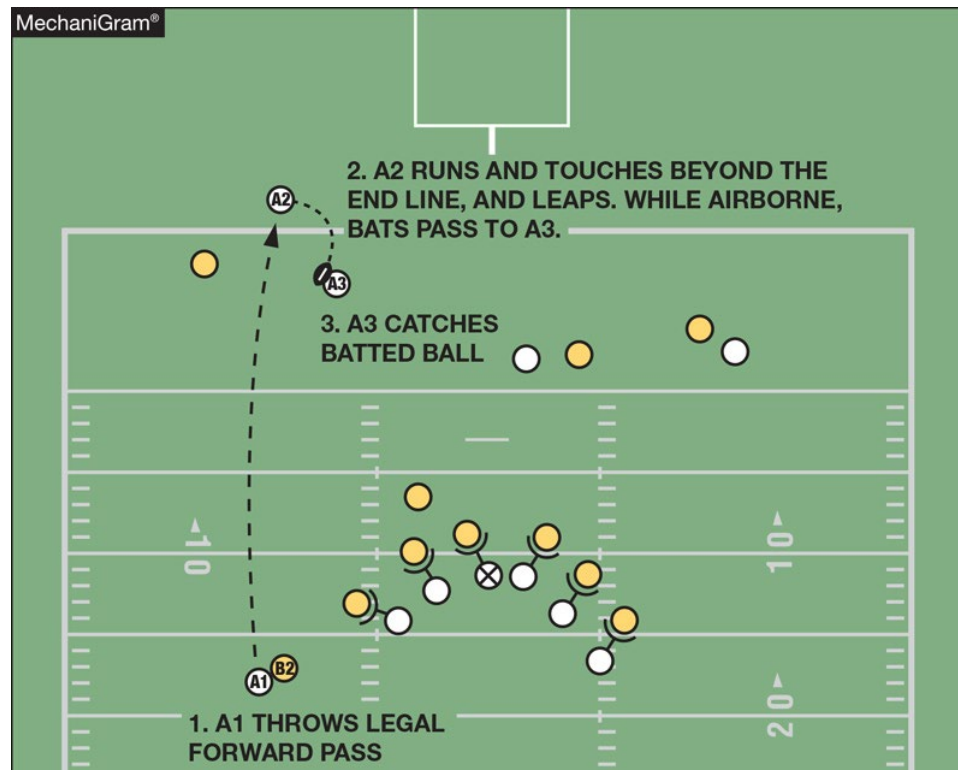
RULE 1-5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW) UNIFORM ADORNMENTS - TOWELS

It is legal for a player to have one moisture-absorbing solid-colored towel that has no more than one visible manufacturer's logo/trademark reference that does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches and does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in any dimension; and has no more than one school logo/trademark reference that does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches and does not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in any dimension.

Towels do **not** have to be the same solid color for each player.



RULE 2-29-1 PLAYER OUT OF BOUNDS



ART. 1 . . . A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the Person is touching anything, other than another player or game official that is on or outside the sideline or end line, and that player remains out of bounds until returning to the field with any body part touching the field and no body part touching out of bounds.

A2 is out of bounds as he has not had any body part touch inbounds. Therefore, when A2 intentionally touches the ball after being out of bounds, he has caused the ball to become dead. The pass is incomplete and A2 is guilty of illegal participation.

RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS

The receiver is not defenseless because of the incidental contact as a result of the defender making a play on the ball.

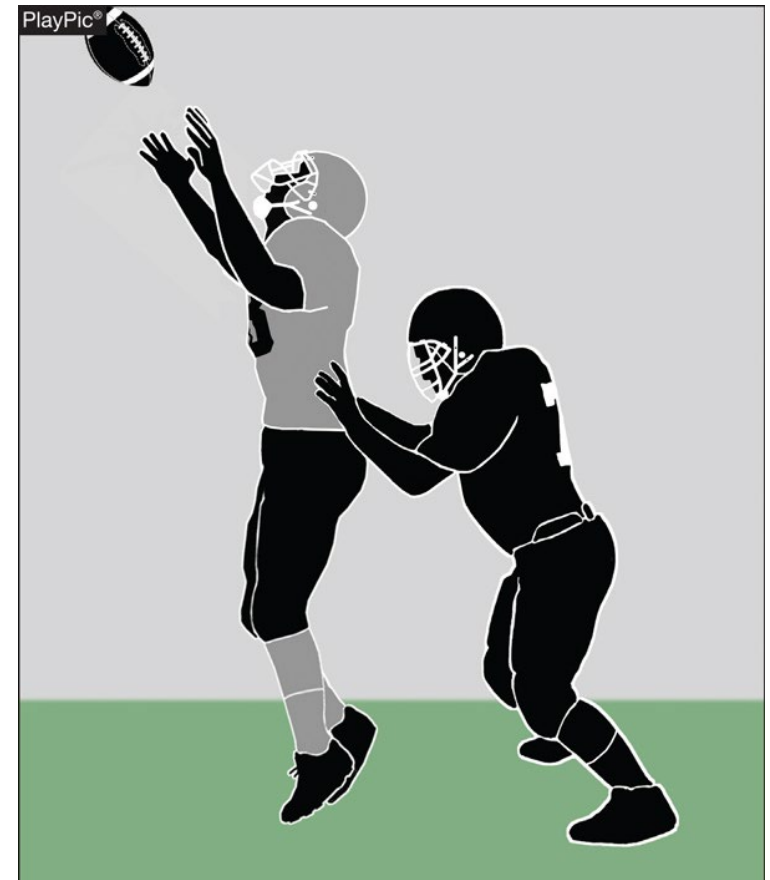
- b. A receiver attempting to catch a pass who has not had time to clearly become a runner;
- c. The intended receiver of a pass in the action during and immediately following an interception or potential interception;
- d. A receiver in (b) and (c) above, including the person intercepting the pass, who is forcefully contacted by an opponent and that contact 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.





RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS

The receiver is not defenseless even if the contact by the opponent is forceful because the contact is initiated with open hands. The contact could be pass interference, however.





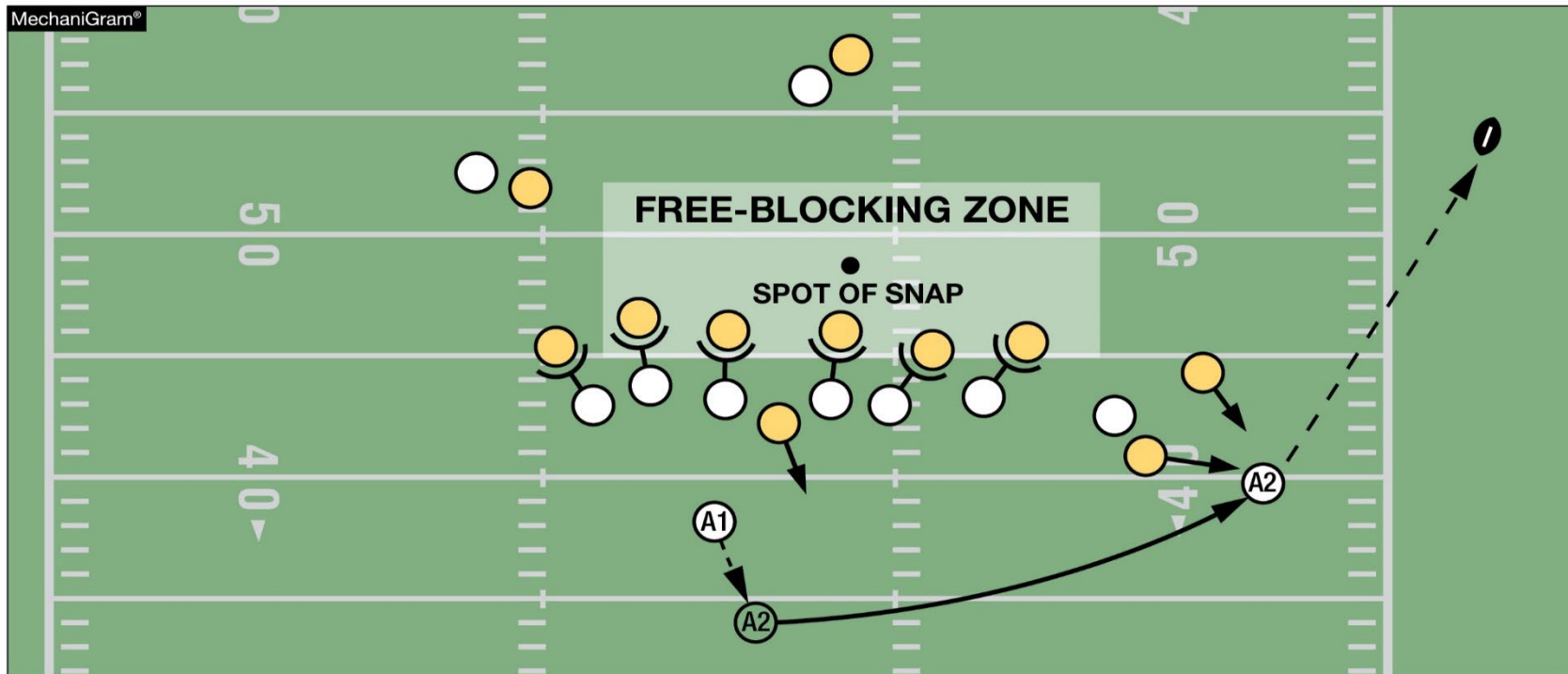
RULE 2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g DEFENSELESS RECEIVERS

The receiver is not defenseless because the opponent is attempting to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver.



**RULE 7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5-2 d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW),
TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW)**

INTENTIONAL GROUNDING EXCEPTION



This is a foul for intentional grounding since A2 is the second player to possess the ball. Only the player who possessed the ball after the snap ends may take advantage of the intentional grounding exception.



TABLE 7-5 2c (DELETED), 7-5 PENALTY INTENTIONAL PASS INTERFERENCE



The additional penalty for intentional pass interference as illustrated in PlayPic A has been deleted. The Team B player in the gray jersey will be penalized 15 yards for the pass interference foul committed in PlayPic B.



RULE 10-4, TABLE 10-4 (NEW), 10-6 (DELETED)

BASIC SPOT

SUMMARY OF MANY FOULS THAT CAN OCCUR DURING RUNNING PLAYS AND THEIR PENALTIES AND BASIC SPOTS UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED BY RULE

FOUL BY	SPOT OF FOUL	END OF PLAY	BASIC SPOT	REFERENCE
A	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
A	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2e
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2f
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Foul Behind End of Run or Related Run – Spot of Foul	10-4-4d
A	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Foul Advance of End of Run or Related Run – Succeeding Spot	10-4-5e
B	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
B	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Previous Spot	10-4-2d
B	Behind Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Succeeding Spot* (End of Run)	10-4-5f
B	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Beyond Line of Scrimmage	Succeeding Spot* (End of Run)	10-4-5f

NOTE: The basic spot is the spot of the foul when A commits any foul in his end zone for which the penalty is accepted (8-5-2c).

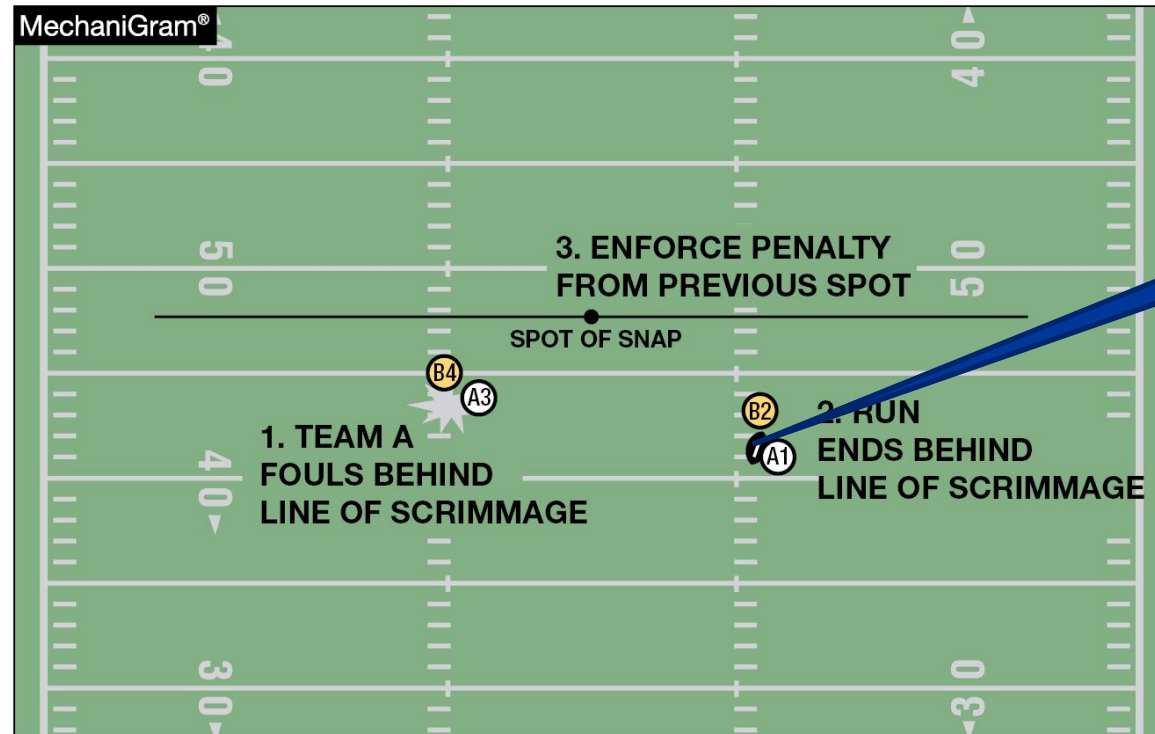




RULE 10-4-2d

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

A



2022: 1st & 27
2023: 1st & 20



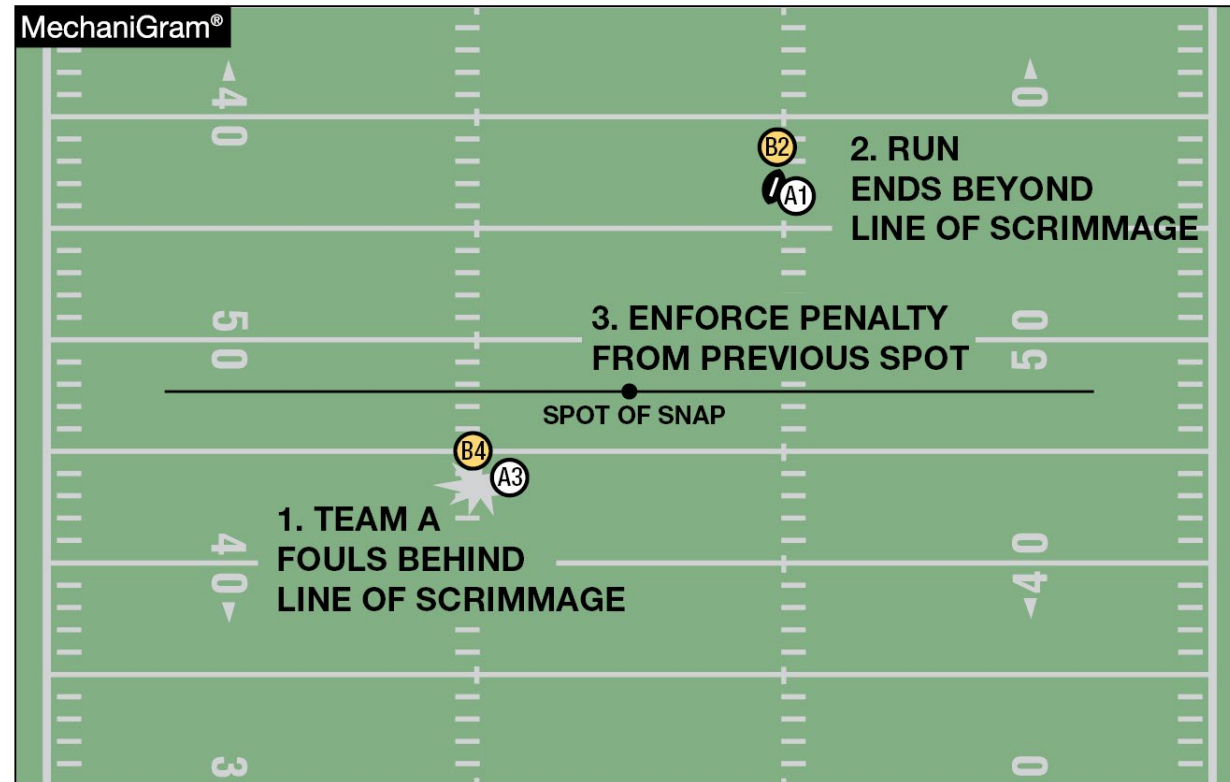
The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by A when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.



RULE 10-4-2e

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

A

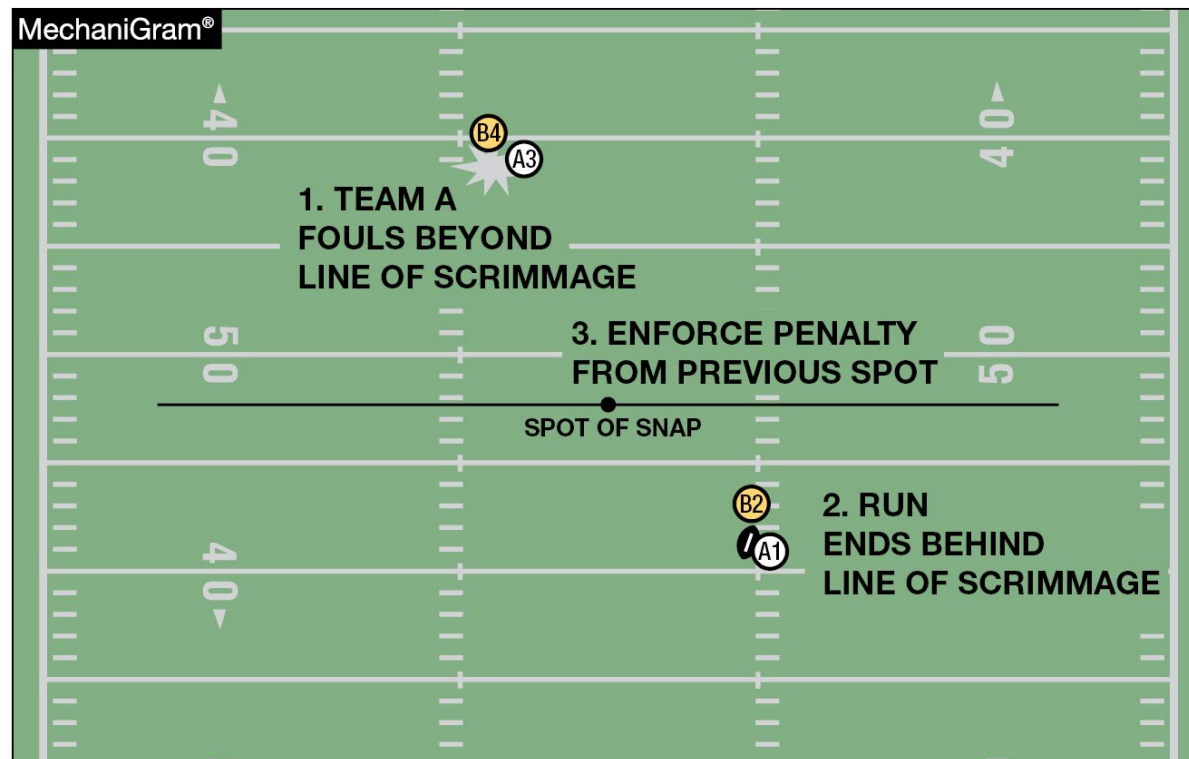


The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by A that occurs behind the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage.

RULE 10-4-2f

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

A



The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage.

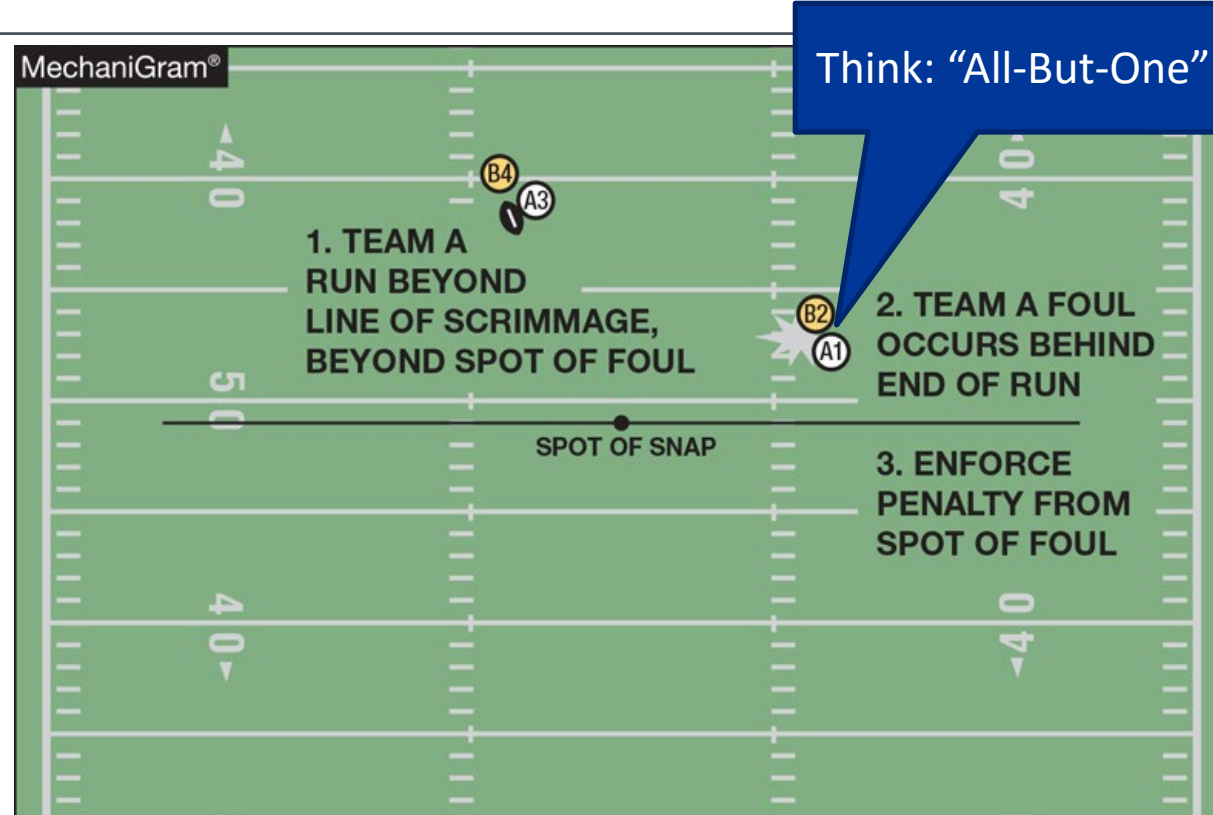


RULE 10-4-4d

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

A

NO CHANGE



The basic spot is the spot of the foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs behind the end of the run or related run.

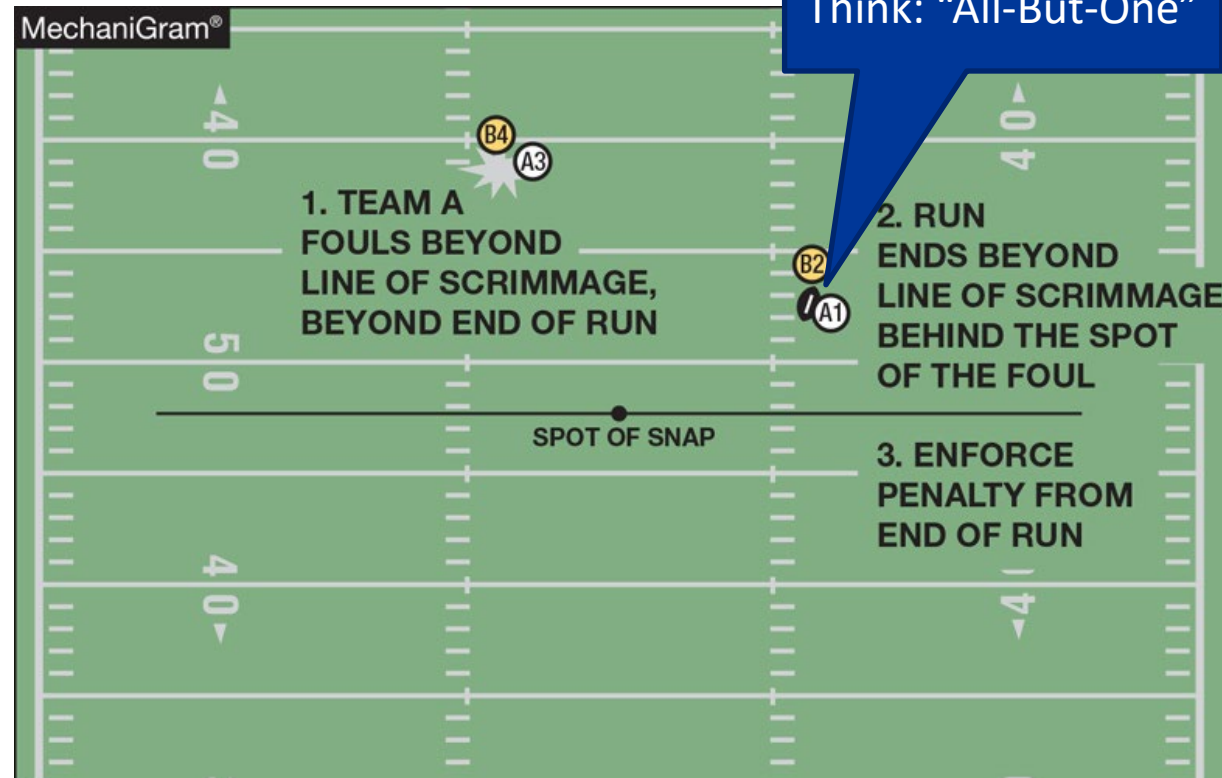


RULE 10-4-5e

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

A

NO CHANGE



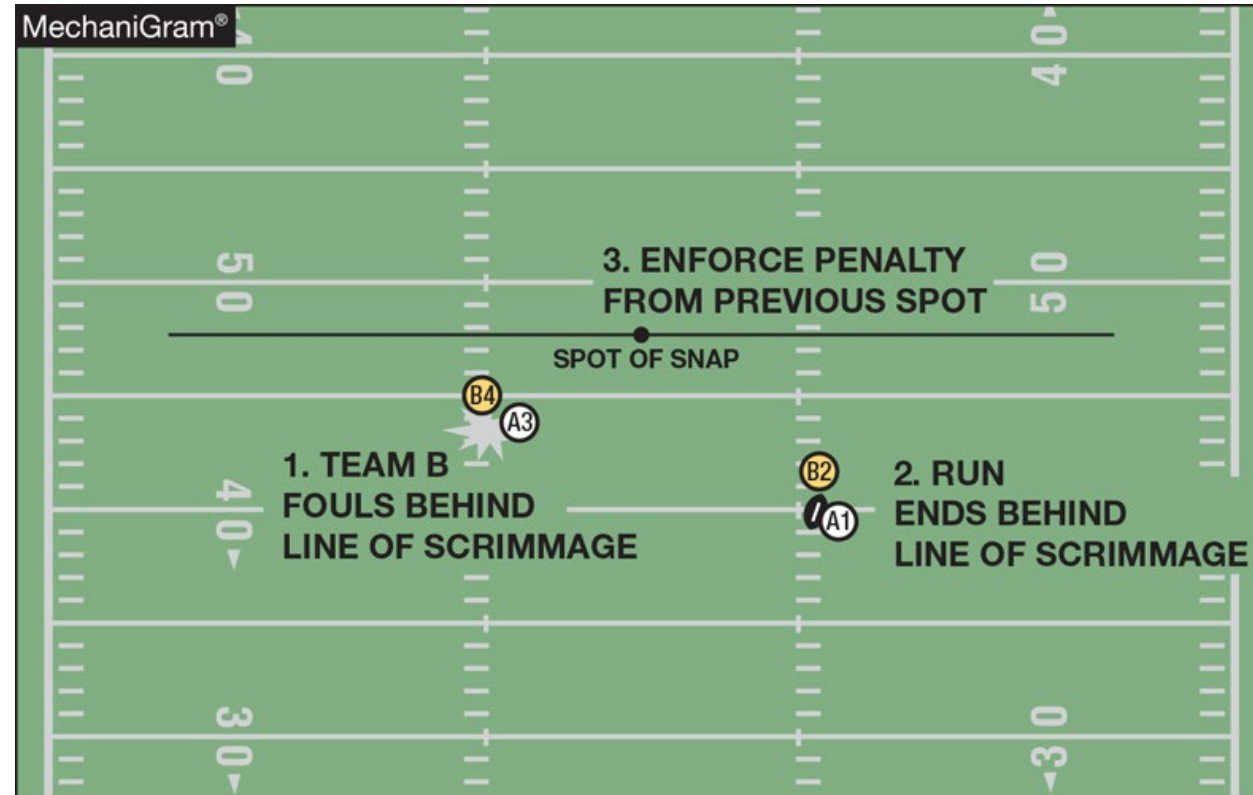
The basic spot is the spot of the foul for a foul by A that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage during a running play as defined in 10-3-2 when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs in advance of the end of the run or related run. www.nfhs.org



RULE 10-4-2d

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

B



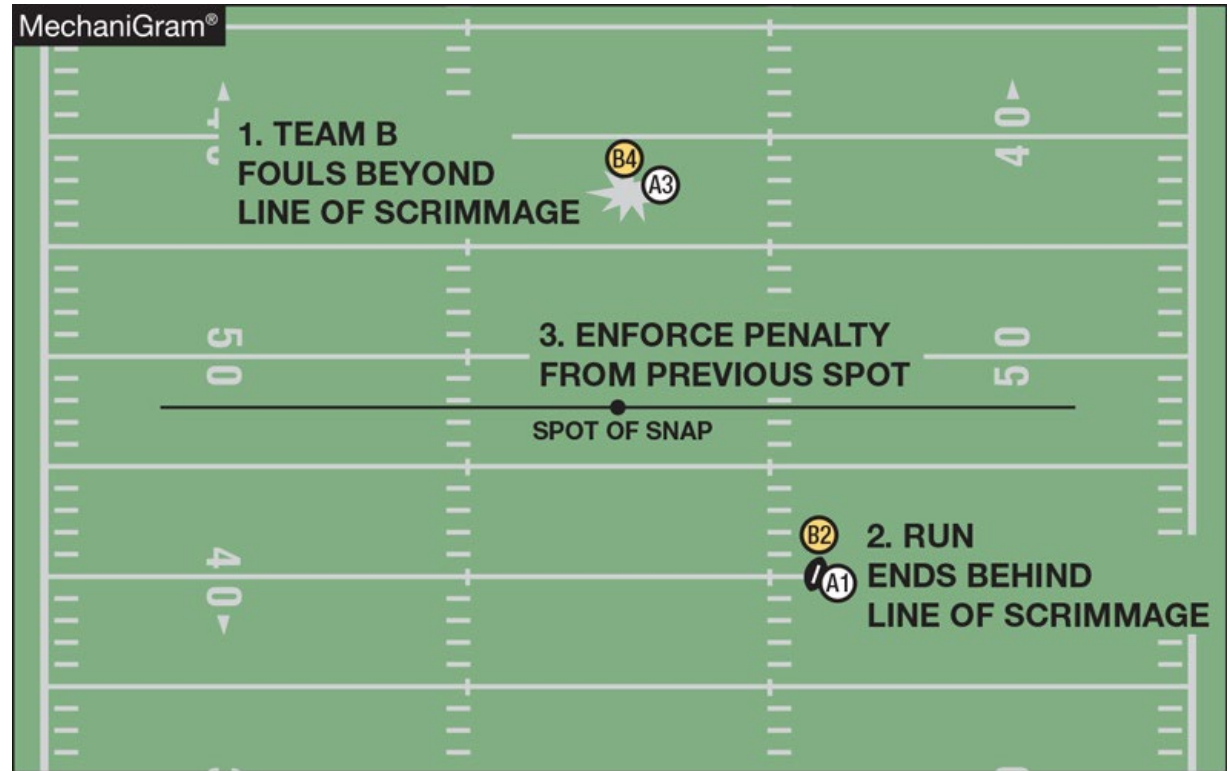
The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.



RULE 10-4-2d

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

B



The basic spot is the previous spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends behind the line of scrimmage where there is no change of possession.

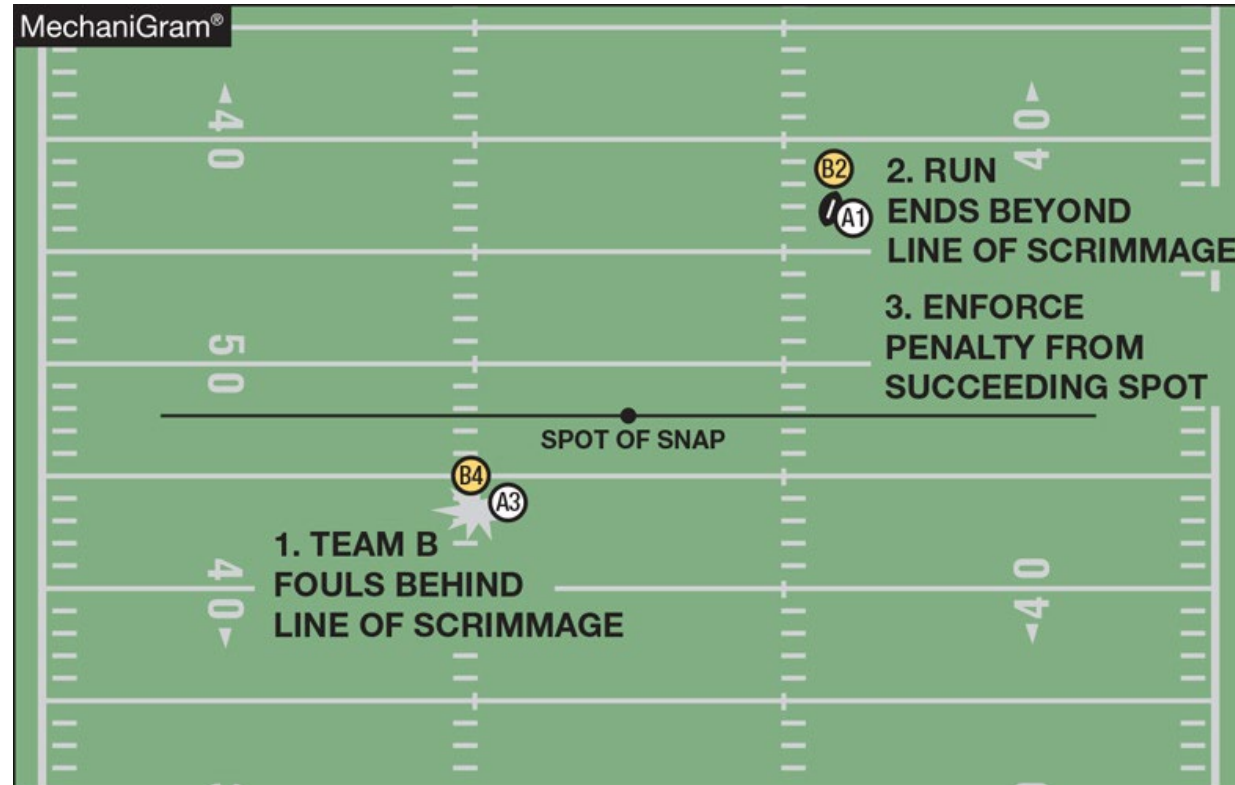


RULE 10-4-5f

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

B

NO CHANGE*



The basic spot is the succeeding spot* for a foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage.

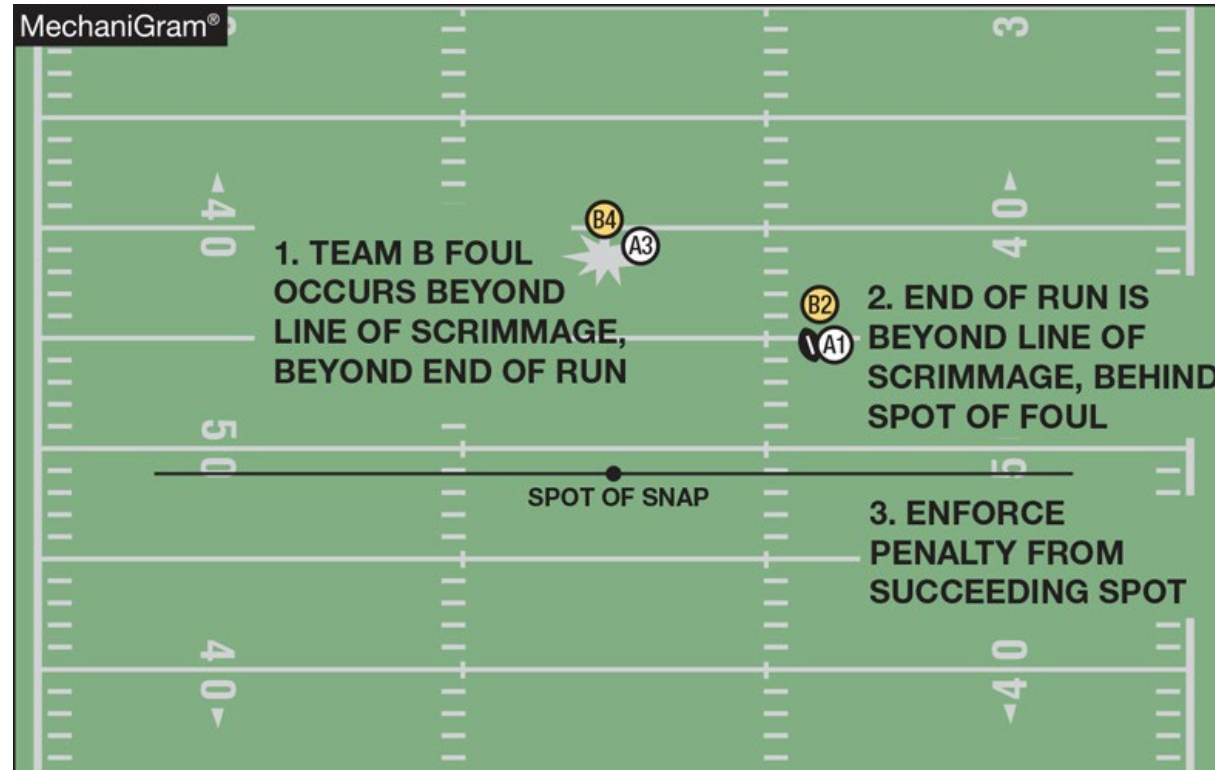


RULE 10-4-5f

BASIC SPOT FOR RUNNING PLAY PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

B

NO CHANGE*



The basic spot is the succeeding spot for a foul by B when the run or related run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and the foul occurs beyond the end of the run.

RULE 10-4 AND TABLE 10-4 CLARIFICATION

In compiling the multitude of changes to Rule 10 necessitated by the discussion around the proposed 2023 NFHS football rules change that was approved unanimously, there remains two additional clarifications to be made for coaches, administrators and game officials for the upcoming 2023 high school football season.

To summarize, if on-field game situations involving a loss of possession create a conflict between the end of the run or related run and the succeeding spot, game officials should apply the standard related to the end of the run as intended by the cleanup in Rule 10-4-8. This does not apply to fouls as detailed in Rule 10-4-5a through 10-4-5d which explicitly call for succeeding spot enforcement (the spot where the ball will next be put in play per Rule 2-41-10). Rule 2-41-9b will help clarify those situations in which conflict might exist.





RULE 10-4 AND TABLE 10-4 CLARIFICATION – (PLAY SITUATIONS)

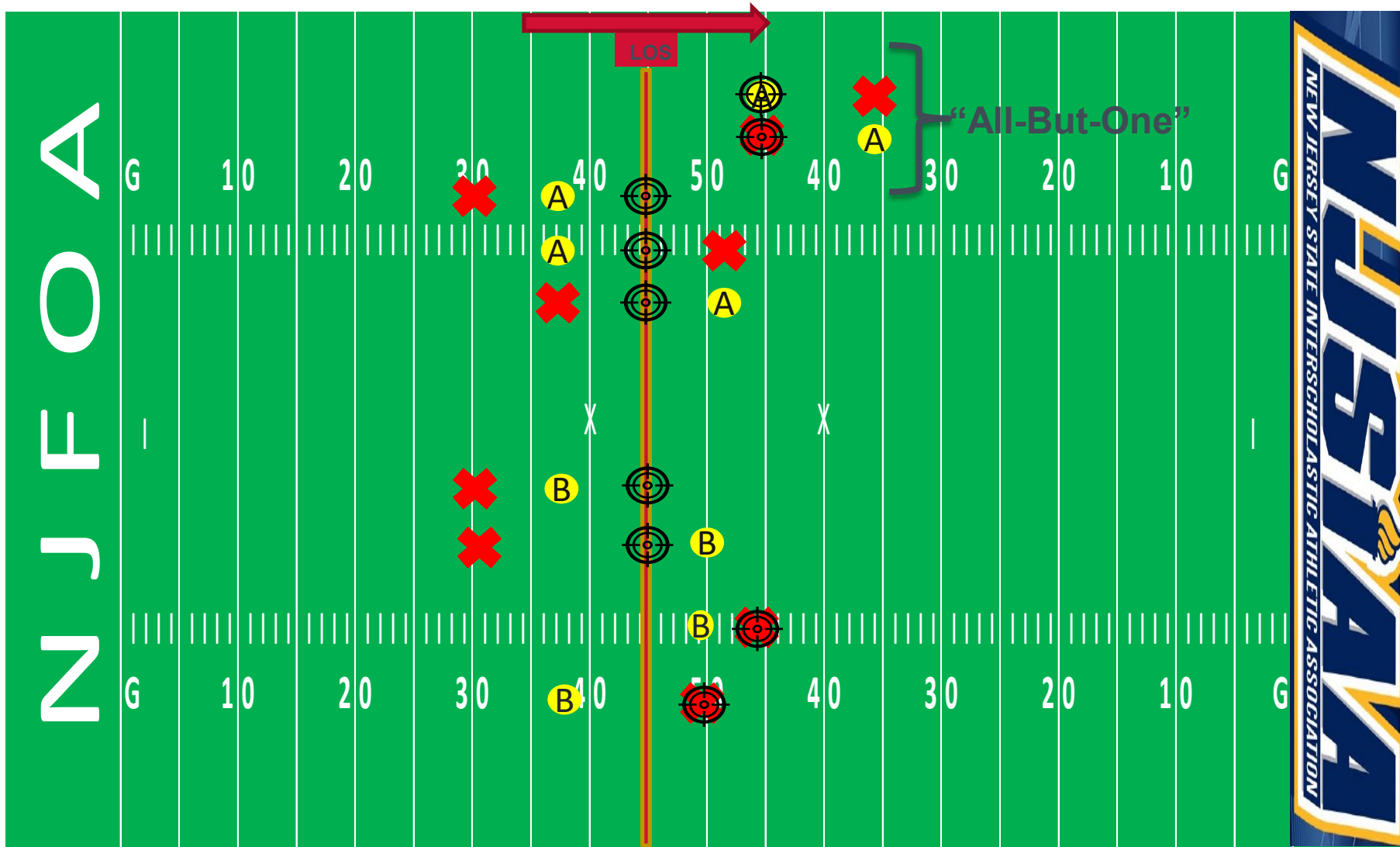
PLAY 1: A first and ten on A's 40. The runner runs to B's 40 where he fumbles the ball forward and out of bounds at B's 30. During the run (before the fumble), A11 commits a holding foul at B's 38. **RULING:** The holding penalty is enforced from the end of the run (B's 40 - the fumble spot). A first and ten at the 50.

PLAY 2: A first and ten on A's 40. The runner runs to B's 40 where he fumbles the ball forward and out of bounds at B's 30. During the run, B18 commits a face mask foul anywhere on the field. **RULING:** The penalty for illegal face mask is enforced from the end of the run (B's 40 - fumble spot). A first and ten on B's 25.

PLAY 3: A first and ten on A's 40. The runner runs to B's 40 where he fumbles the ball forward and **B RECOVERS** at B's 30. During the run, B11 commits a face mask foul anywhere on the field. **RULING:** The penalty for illegal face mask is enforced from the end of the run (B's 40 - fumble spot). A first and ten on B's 25.



TABLE SUMMARY (IN A PICTURE)



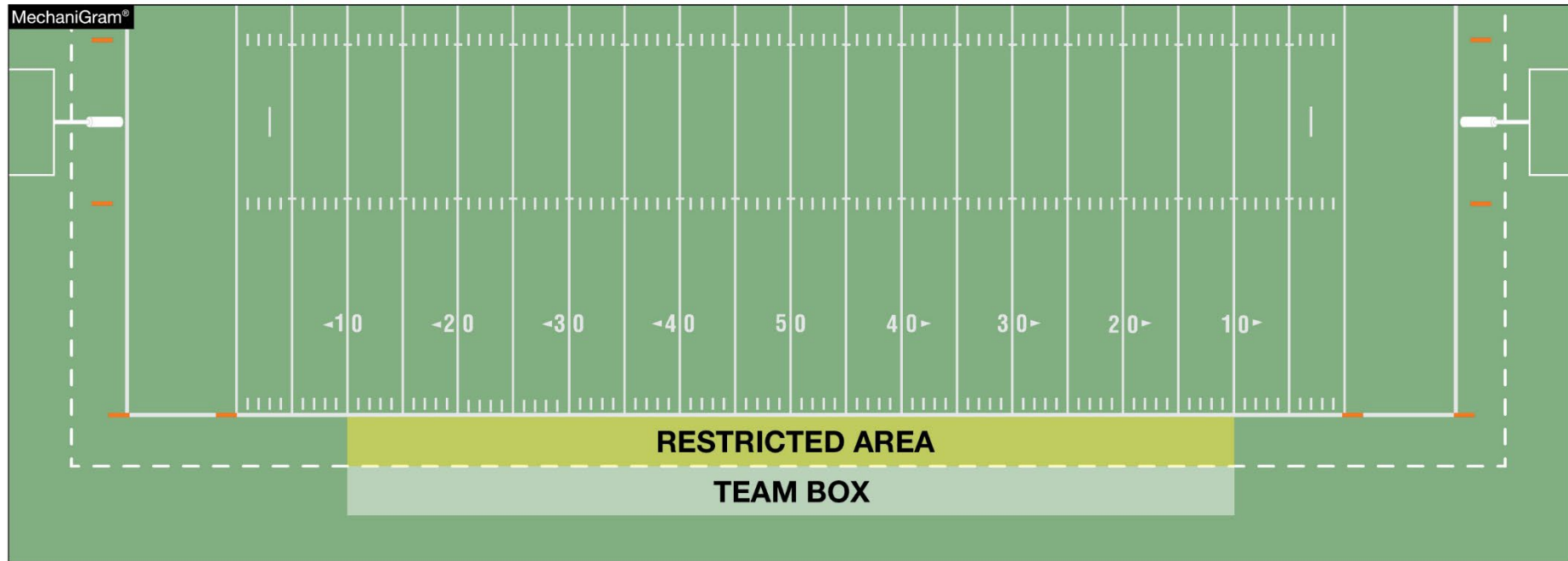


2023 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES REMINDERS



TEAM BOXES

RULE 1-2-3g NOTES 3. (NEW), TABLE 1-7 (3.) (NEW)

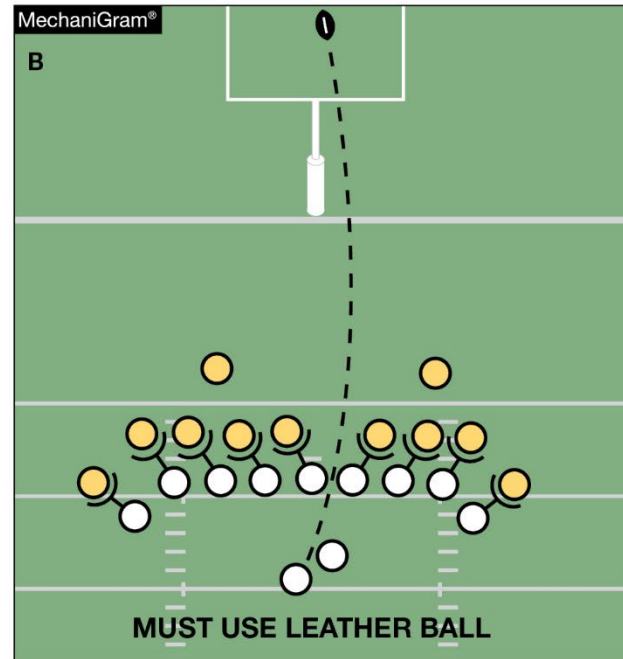
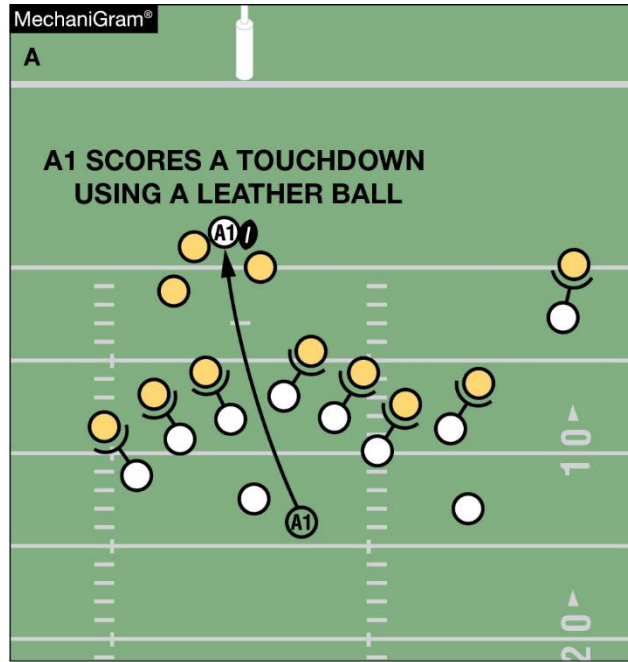


It is permissible for state associations to approve an extension of the team box and to determine the individuals who may be in the extended area, provided such extension is the same for both teams.



GAME BALLS

RULE 1-3-3

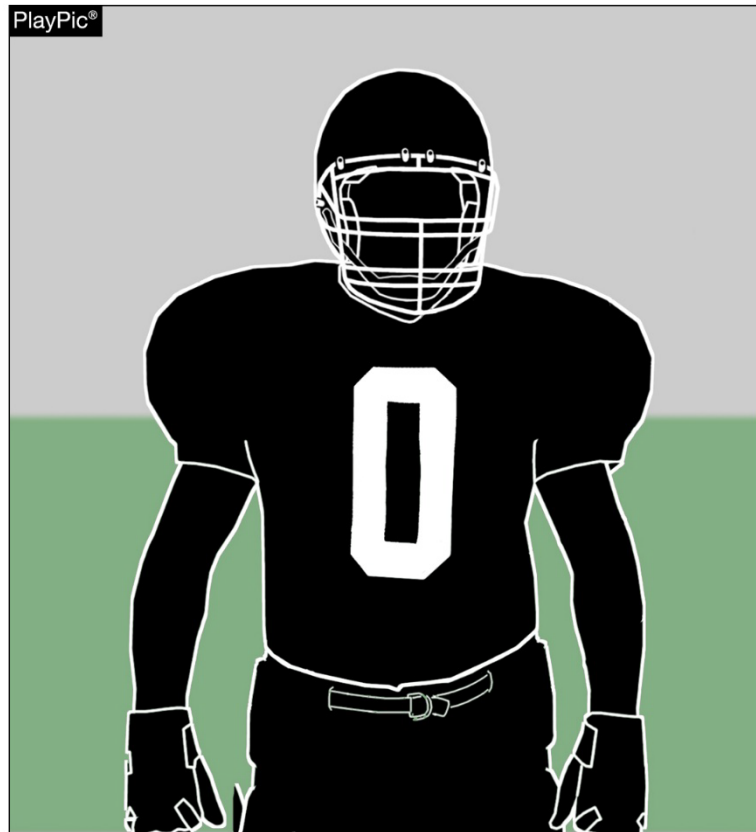


Any game official may order the ball changed between downs. Unless the ball is ordered changed by the Referee or another game official, Team A scoring a touchdown with one ball (MechaniGram A) may not request a different ball for the try (MechaniGram B) but may use a different approved ball for the ensuing free kick (PlayPic C).

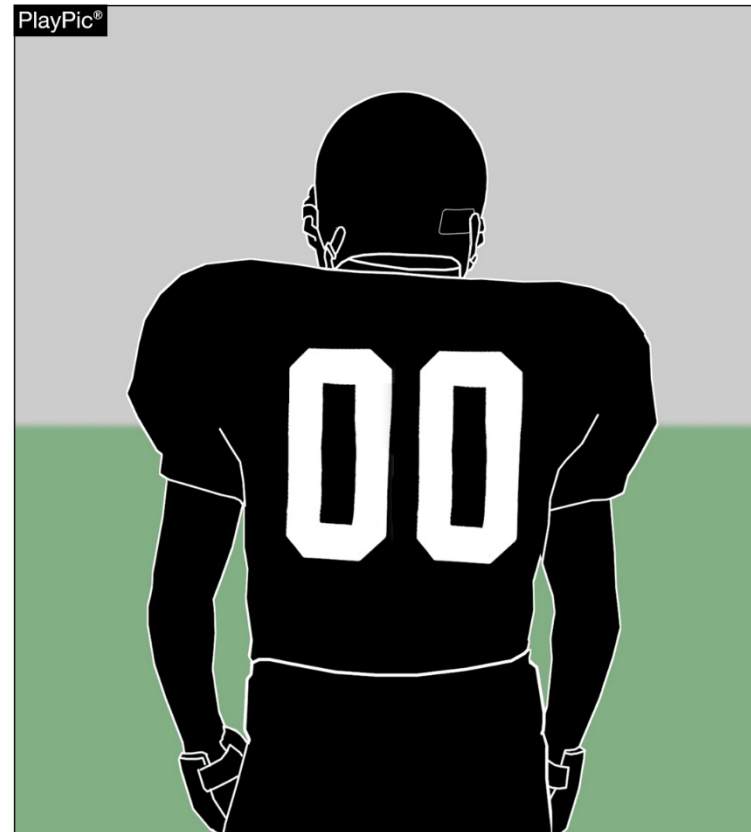
JERSEY NUMBERS



**RULE 1-4-3, FIGURE 1-4-2, RULE 1-5-1c(1),
RULE 7-2-5b EXCEPTIONS, RULE 7-5-6a**



Legal

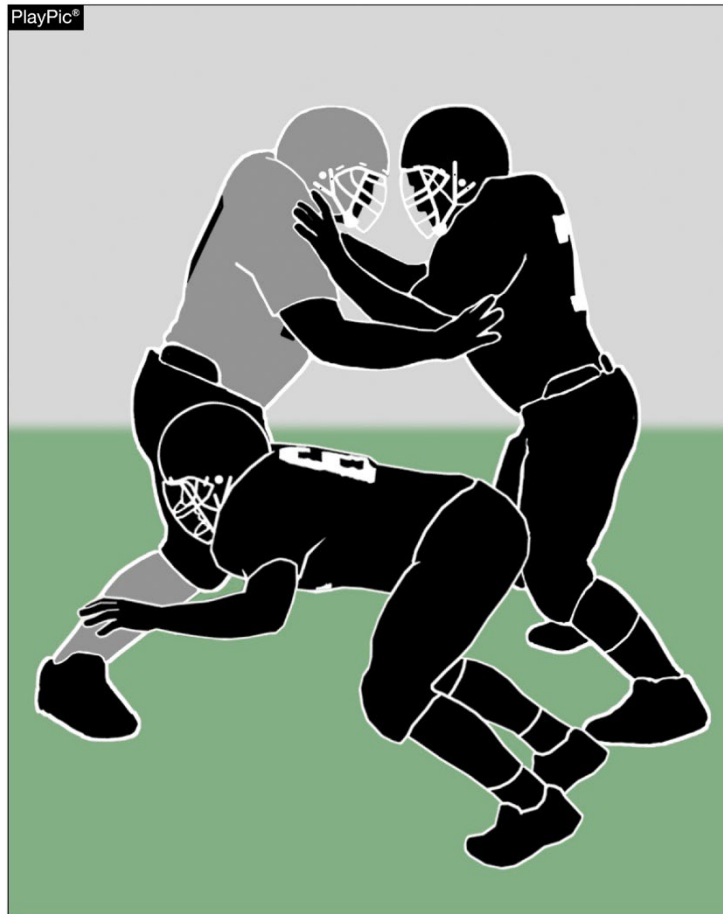


Illegal

Each player shall be numbered **0 through 99 inclusive**. Any number preceded by the digit zero such as “00” is illegal.

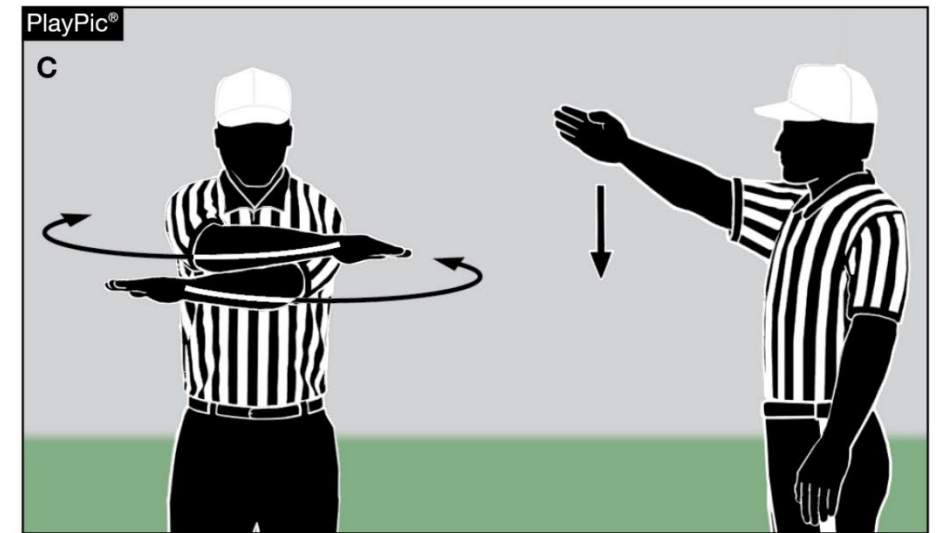
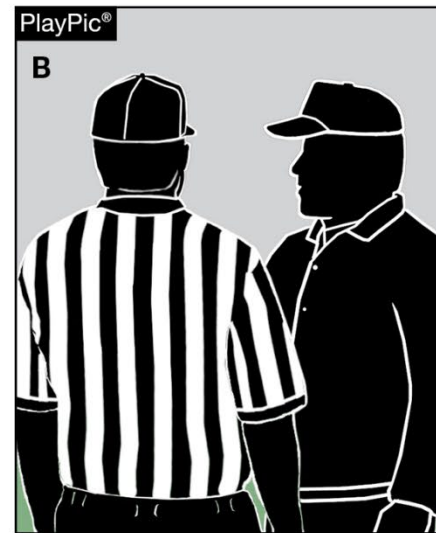
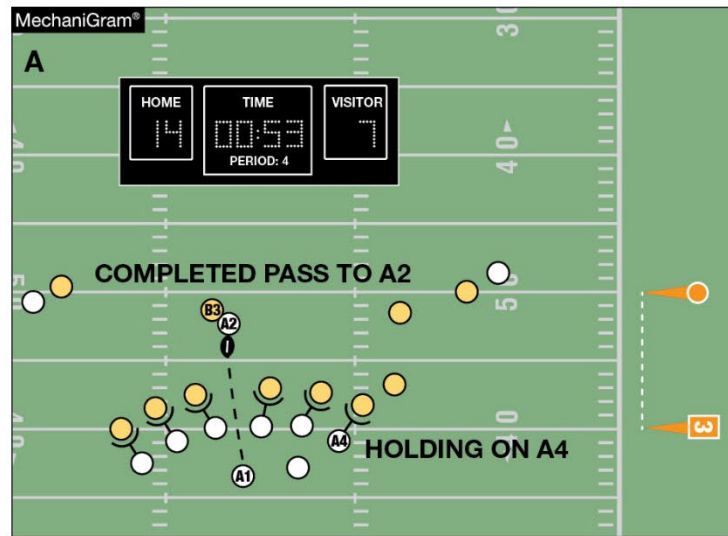


CHOP BLOCK RULE 2-3-8



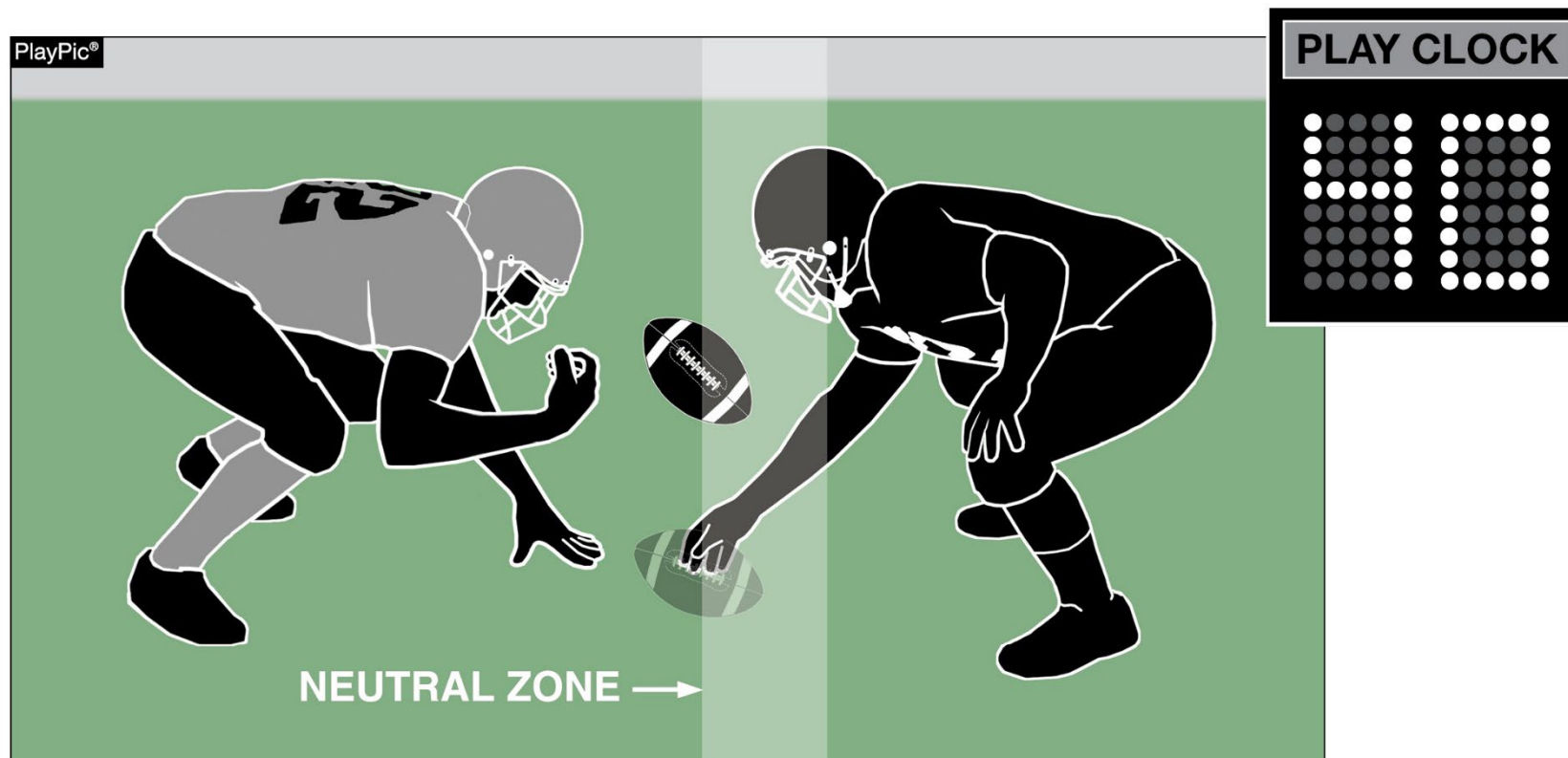
A chop block is combination block by two or more teammates against an opponent other than the runner, with or without delay, where one of the blocks is **below the waist** and one of the blocks is **above the waist**.

GAME CLOCK OPTION RULE 3-4-7



When a foul is committed with less than two minutes remaining in either half, the offended team has the option to start the game clock on the snap. In MechaniGram A, Team B trails when Team A fouls. Team B's coach is consulted (PlayPic B), choosing to decline the penalty and have the clock started on the snap (PlayPic C).

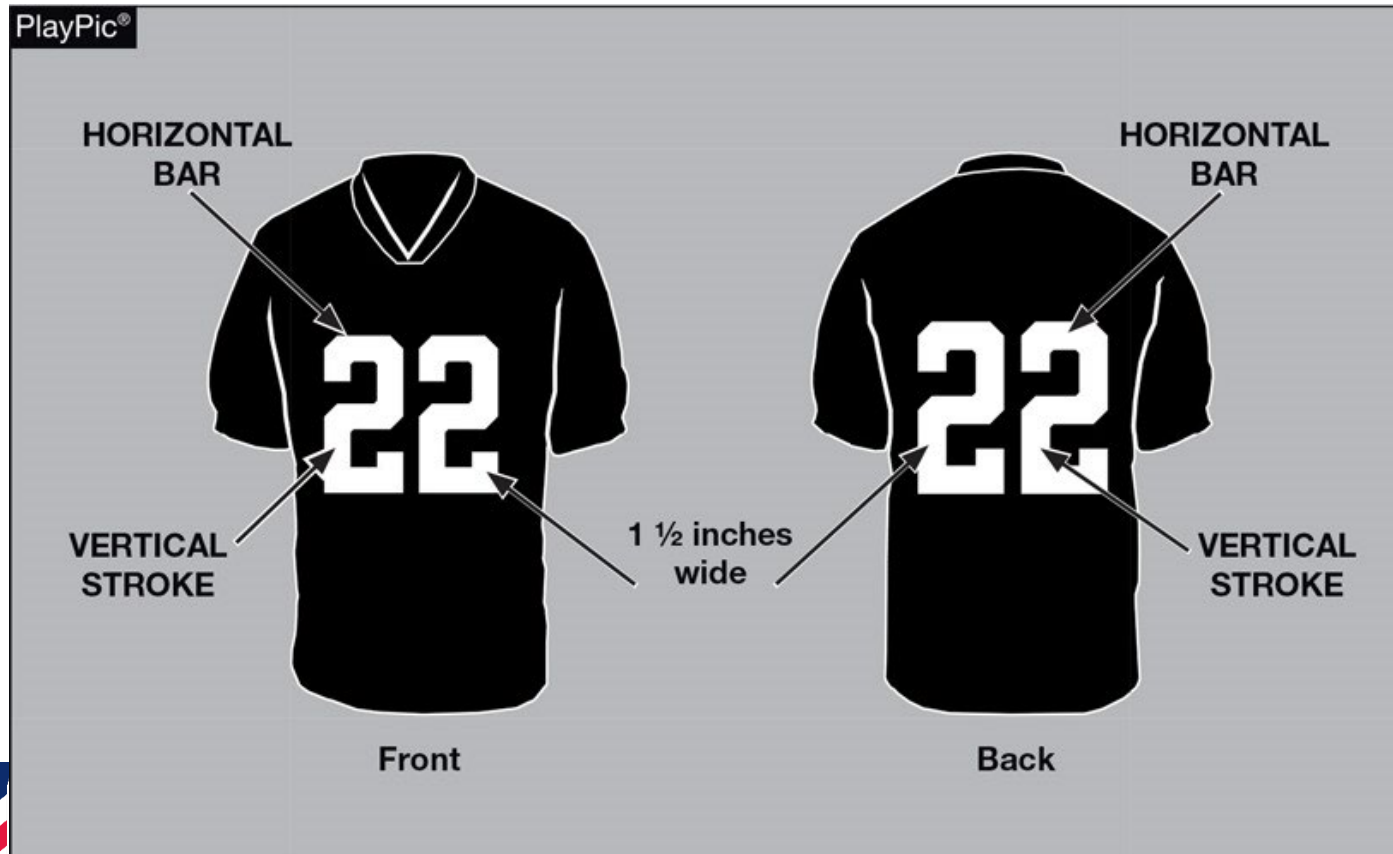
PLAY CLOCK RULE 3-6-1a(1)e EXCEPTION 2. (NEW)



When the clock is stopped due to Rule 3-5-7i (after a foul, to administer a penalty) and Team B is the only team to foul, the play clock will be set to 40 seconds.

FOOTBALL JERSEY NUMBERS

RULE 1-5-1c(3)



The entire body of the number (the continuous horizontal bars and vertical strokes) exclusive of any border(s) shall be approximately 1 1/2 – inches wide.

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 four of these jerseys are legal now and will be in 2024 too. *Clearly Contrast and are Solid. The Number is what matters, not the border.*



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.**



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 dark number without the border do not clearly contrast with the jersey and thus will not be legal come 2024.



2023 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS



2023 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Helping the Runner
2. Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials
3. Game Management



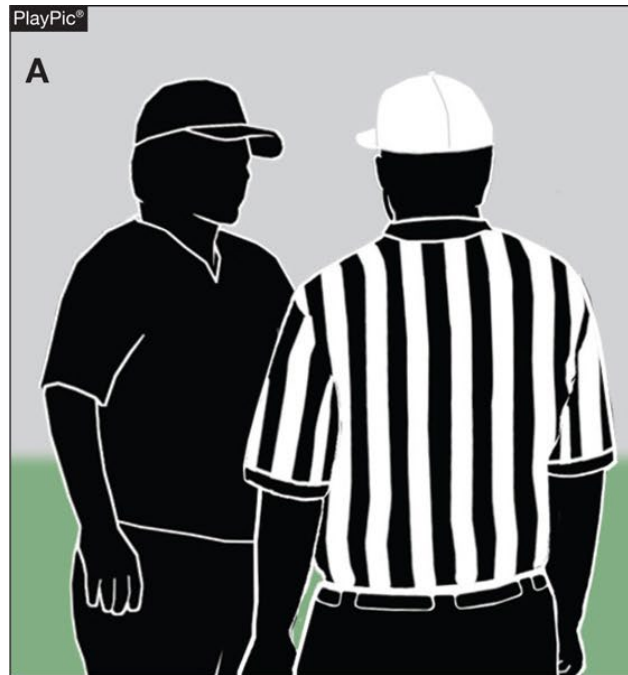
HELPING THE RUNNER

- Rule changes have been made at higher levels allowing offensive teams to pile in behind and directly push the runner.
- Similar plays are trickling down to the high school level. Allowing teams to help the runner by illegal techniques swings the balance heavily in favor of the offense.
- **Pushing the pile is legal; direct contact and pushing, pulling, lifting of the runner is not.**





COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COACHES AND GAME OFFICIALS



Game officials must actively listen to what a coach is saying, then respond factually and unemotionally (PlayPic A). If coaches show little respect for game officials and make derogatory comments, their players will likely treat game officials similarly (PlayPic B).



GAME MANAGEMENT

Each school community must take pride in hosting an athletic contest or event. Beginning with the arrival of players, game officials and spectators, each school must have a purposeful plan to address any and all expected issues, as well as the unforeseen. Meeting and greeting the visiting team is certainly the beginning of good sportsmanship. Clearly communicated information, such as parking information, location of ticket booths and entry gates, when given to the visitors is another step in assuring a great experience for all participants.





2023 OVERTIME REMINDER



A dark blue arrow graphic pointing to the right is positioned to the left of the section header.

OVERTIME PROCEDURES REFRESHER

- At the start of OT, R will hold a coin toss in the presence of the Field Captains
 - There is only ONE toss for the entire OT
 - Options are: Offense, Defense, or End of Field
 - These options are to be given at the start of EVERY OT Period (Yes, we can switch ends of the field!!!)
 - The Offensive Team will start 1st &10 at the B 25-yard line unless a penalty shall cause the ball to placed elsewhere
 - Defense may score during OT
 - ONE Time-Out per period
 - There is a maximum of 3 OT Periods
 - In the 3rd OT Period, teams must go for 2-point try.
 - There must be a winner in the playoffs



2023 FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT ITEMS





2023 NEW FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT ORDERED 2023 FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT RECONDITIONING

- May once again be some delays on football equipment being reconditioned and returned to the schools in a timely manner for Fall 2023 because of supply chain issues.
- New 2023 football equipment that was ordered by schools may be delayed because supply chain issues also.



FOOTBALL HELMET COVERS

- Permissible by current NFHS football rules



GUARDIAN CAPS



SAFR PRO TECH

Q-COLLAR

- The FDA has authorized marketing of a new device intended to be worn around the neck of athletes aged 13 years and older during sports activities to aid in the protection of the brain from the potential effects associated with repetitive sub-concussive head impacts. The non-invasive device is called the Q-Collar.
- From a medical perspective, the NFHS SMAC consents to this device being worn by interscholastic athletes.
- The respective NFHS Rules Committees will determine if the Q-Collar will be permissible based on sport-by-sport risk assessments.



HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT ISSUES





2023 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES



2023 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES

- **2023 NFHS Football Rules Book Clarification:**
 - (Underlining shows additions; strikethrough shows deletions.)
 - **Page 82, Rule 10-5-2:**
 - ~~ART. 2 . . . The enforcement spot for any foul by the defense is the goal line when the run ends in the end zone and would result in a safety.~~



2023 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-1-7, 1-1-9, 1-3-2, 1-3-7 NOTE, TABLE 1-7 (6), 9-5-1, 9-8-1, RESOLVING TIED GAMES – 3-1	Changed the words “contest(s)” to “games(s)”.
TABLE 1-7	Removed the state association accommodation reference.
1-8	Created a new SECTION 8 for State Association Accommodations.
3-6-1b(1)	Added further clarification that game officials need to be in position when the ball is marked ready for play.
TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2	Corrected a misspelling.
FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – II-2	Grammar correction.
FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – X-3	Clarified basic spot per Rule 10-4.





2023 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES

FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – X-5	Updated the total number of illegal passes.
NINE-, Eight- AND SIX- PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES – RULES 2 and 7	Revised the rules differences based off of 2023 NFHS Football Rules Changes.
PENALTY SUMMARY	Updated the rules references for “Delay of Game” and removed the penalty reference for “Intentional Pass Interference.”
INDEX	Updated the Index with new rules references.





2023-24 NFHS FOOTBALL INFORMATION





2024 NFHS FOOTBALL RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL ONLINE FORM

Due:

November 1, 2023

**Must be submitted to
your state association
office for approval.**

