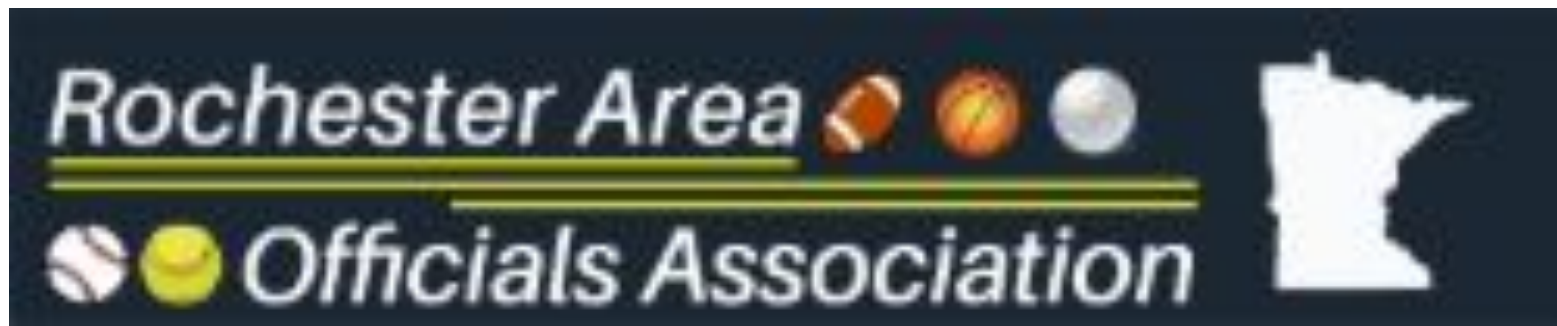




MSHSL Football Charter Clinician Presentation - 2026

Rochester Area Officials Association - August 24th, 2026

Royce L. Ruter



Pre-Contest Timeout

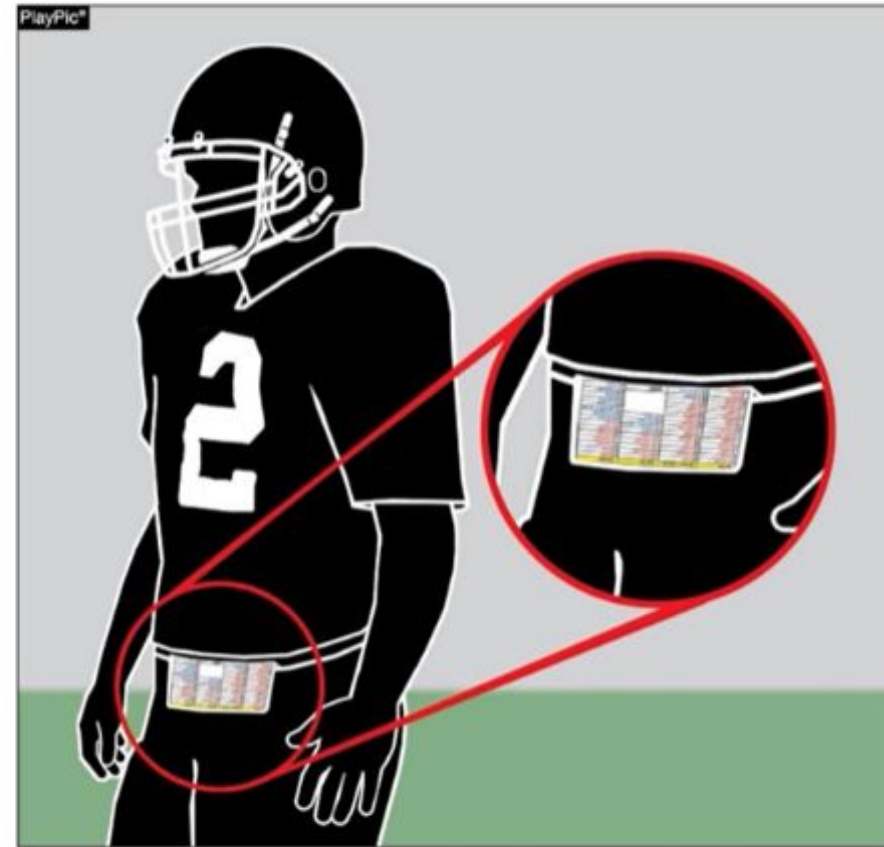
- Will be continued this year
- Goal – each contest will have a Pre-contest TO
- Facilitated by a site administrator or possibly, a coach
- Administrative and Risk Minimization; Logistics

RULES CHANGES

PLAY CARDS

RULE 1-5-3c(9)

- “Illegal equipment shall always include but is not limited to:
9. Play cards not worn on the wrist, arm or belt.”



LEGAL

HEAD SLAP

RULE 9-4-7

- “No player may use the hand(s) to slap the opponent’s head.”



ILLEGAL



2026 NFHS EDITORIAL CHANGES

GAME ENDING PROCEDURE

RULE 1-1-8

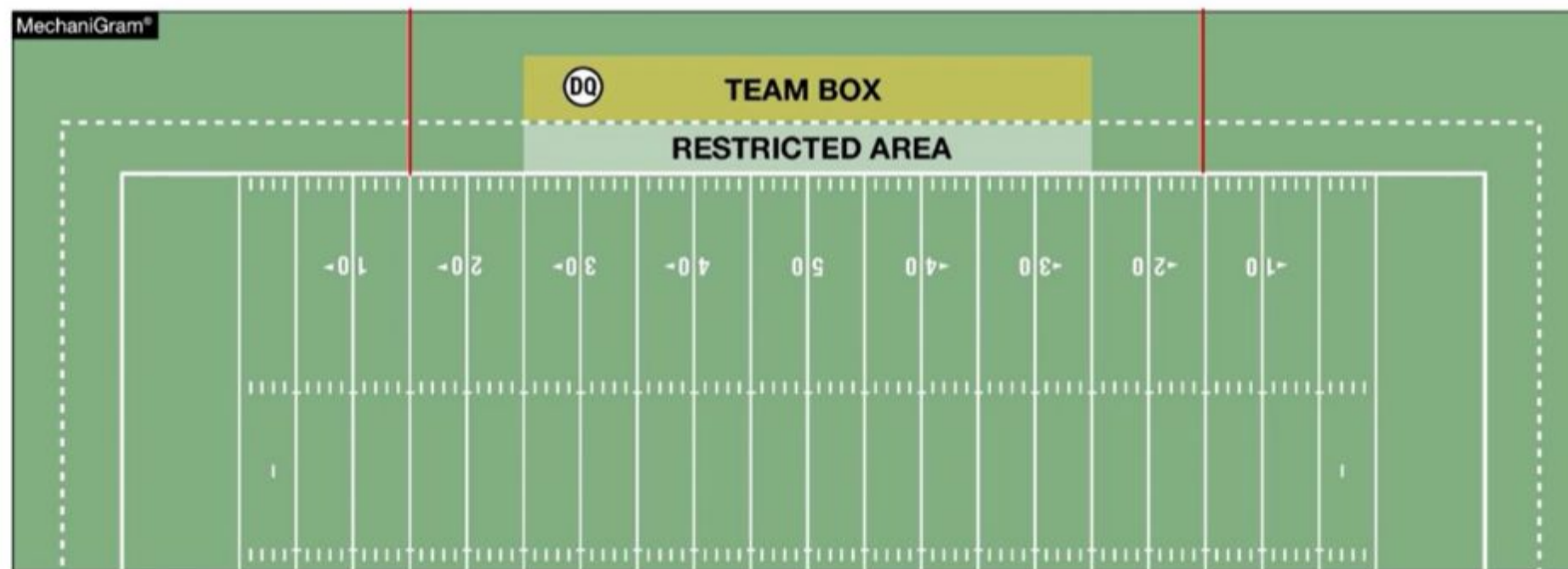


- The game officials' authority extends through the referee's declaration of the end of the fourth period or overtime. The jurisdiction of the game officials is terminated and the final score has been approved when all game officials leave the visual confines of the playing area. The game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the game officials had jurisdiction. State Associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents that occur before, during or after the game official's jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a game is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play.

DISQUALIFIED PLAYER

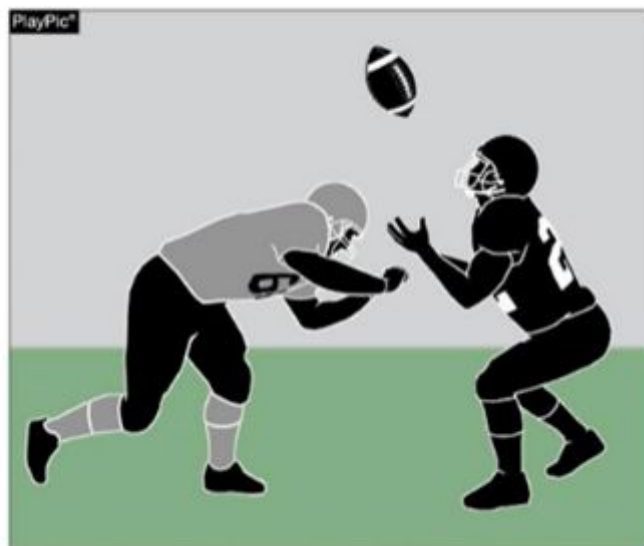
RULE 2-32-6

- A disqualified player is a player barred from further participation in a game. A disqualified player is permitted to remain in the team box area.



ILLEGAL PERSONAL CONTACT/ DEFENSELESS PLAYER, RULE 9-4-3p

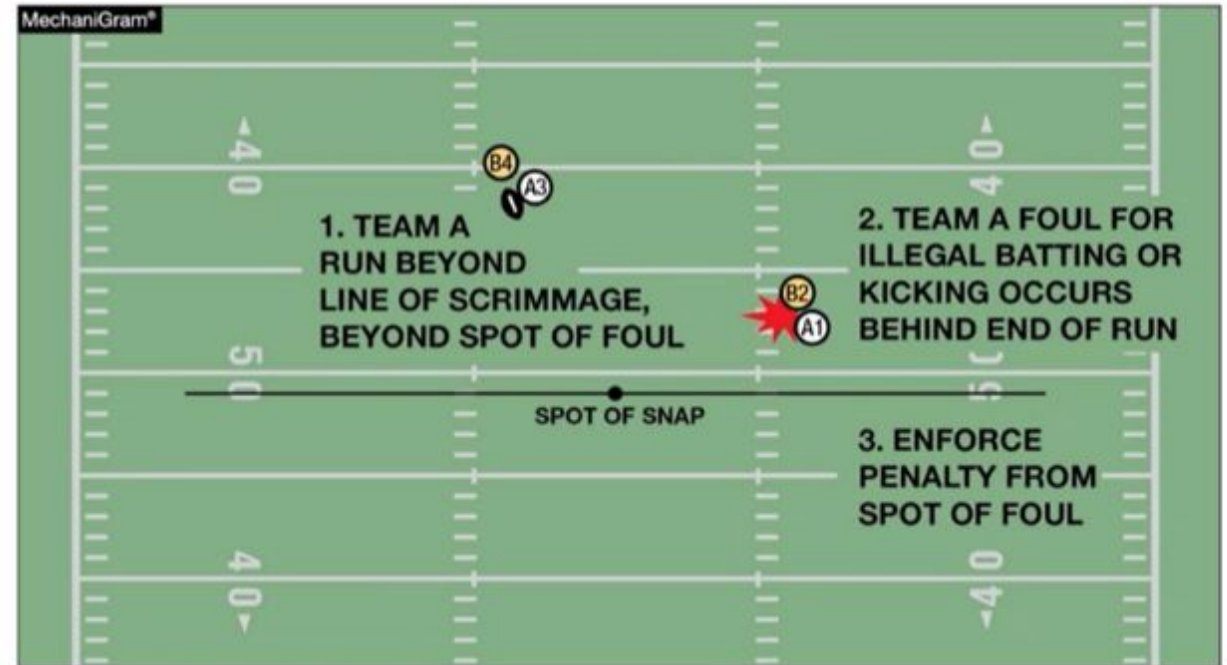
- No player or nonplayer shall:
 - p. Initiate forceful contact against a defenseless receiver as in 2-32-16b, 2-32-16c and 2-32-16e that is not:
 1. Incidental contact as a result of making a play on the ball;
 2. Initiated with open hands; or
 3. An attempt to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver.



BASIC SPOT

RULE 10-4-4a

- The basic spot is the spot of the foul for:
 - a. Illegal batting or illegal kicking by A that occurs behind the basic spot.



NEW DELAY OF GAME SIGNAL



PREVIOUS
DELAY OF GAME SIGNAL



NEW
DELAY OF GAME SIGNAL

2026 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES



1-3-5b	Changed “Head Linesman” to “Head Line Judge.
1-5-3a(2)	Deleted the reference to “opponent.”
2-15-1	Further clarified to make definition more consistent with forward fumble rule that was approved in 2025.
3-5-7g	Replaced “heat and humidity” with “circumstances and conditions” better covers a variety of situations that may create a health risk to players.
4-1-3	Deleted “if elected” from the rule as it was not needed.
5-3-1	Added “ball being” before ready-for-play for clarification.
5-3-2	Changed “Head Linesman” to “Head Line Judge.
8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4, 8-2-5	Changed “subsequent kickoff” to “succeeding spot” for clarification.



OT Procedure

- We will now use chains in OT if penalty enforcement would call for 1st and 10 outside of the 10 yd line.

2026 NFHS FOOTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES



9-8 PENALTY	Added 'basic spot' to the PENALTY section to give better clarity that unsportsmanlike and nonplayer unsportsmanlike fouls are enforced from the basic spot.
10-4-2	Revised the rules references in the rule.
10-4-2b	Deleted "behind the line of scrimmage" from the rule to eliminate redundancy.
10-5-3	Deleted "and enforcement is from behind its goal line" to eliminate conflicts with recent rules changes to Rule 10-4.
FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTAL – Penalty Measurement (4)	Removed all of the rules references and replaced with "otherwise specified by rule."
RESOLVING TIED GAMES – (3-1)	Changed "Head Linesman" to "Head Line Judge."
6-Player Rules Differences – Rule 7	Further clarified when a passer becomes eligible if the pass was touched by B.



2026 NFHS RULES REMINDERS

TOOTH & MOUTH PROTECTOR

RULE 1-5-1d(5)a – 4



ILLEGAL



ILLEGAL

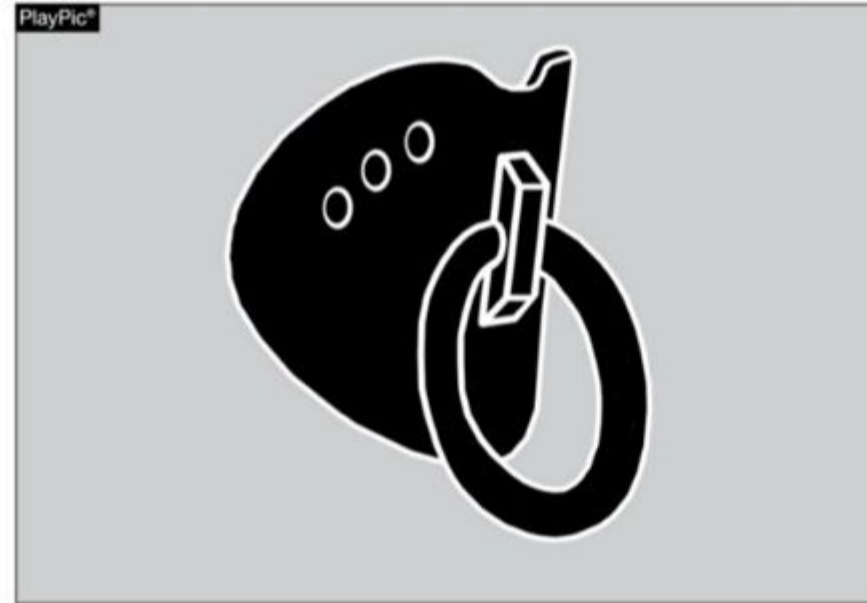
Effective 2026: Tooth and mouth protectors may not include any attachment(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth.

TOOTH & MOUTH PROTECTOR

RULE 1-5-1d(5)a – 5



ILLEGAL



ILLEGAL

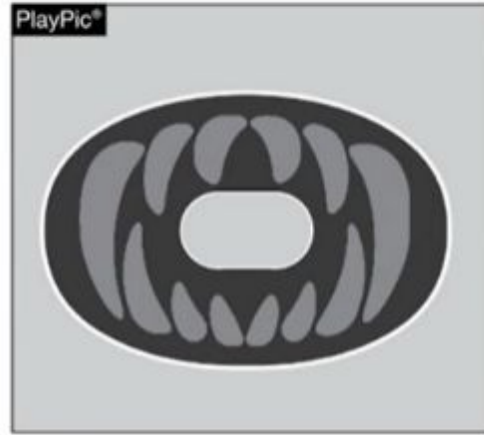
Effective 2026: Tooth and mouth protectors may not include anything on them that is a health or risk issue and can pose a danger to themselves or other players.

TOOTH & MOUTH PROTECTOR

RULES 1-5-1d(5)a – 4, 5



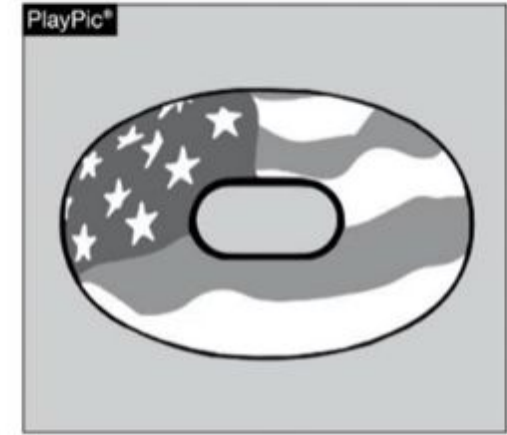
LEGAL



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, 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, 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)

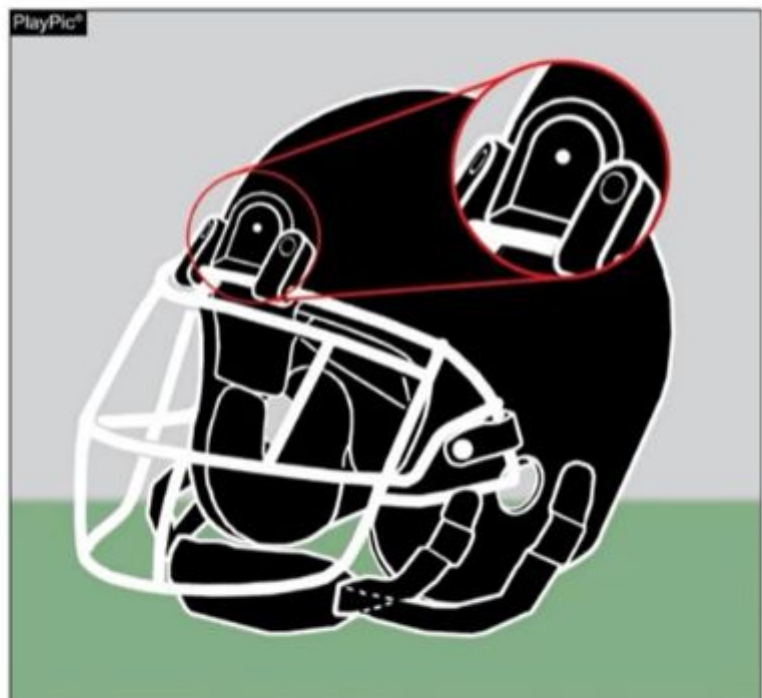


LEGAL

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

ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT

RULE 1-5-3c(3)



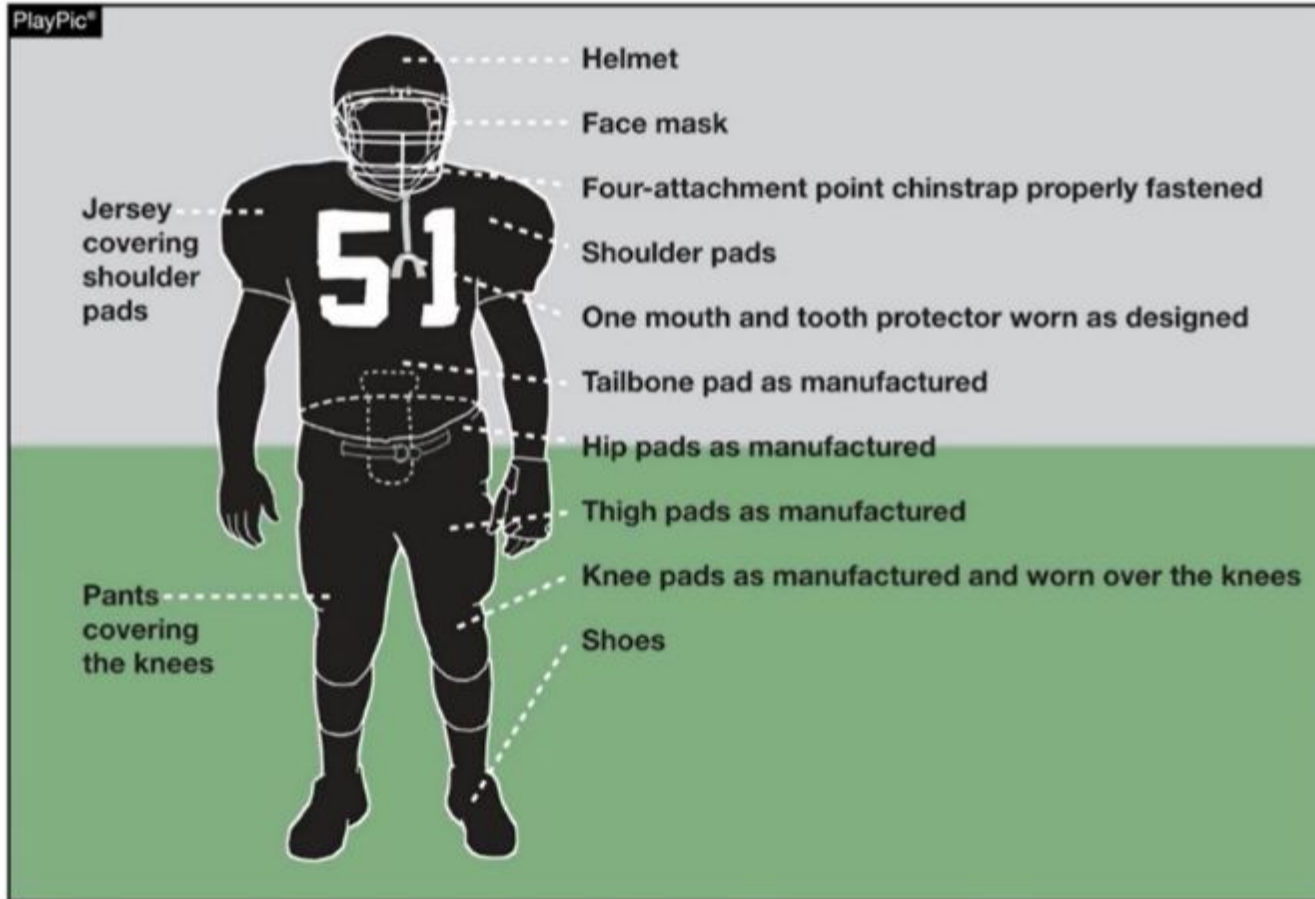
ILLEGAL



ILLEGAL

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

ILLEGAL AND IMPROPERLY WORN PLAYER EQUIPMENT



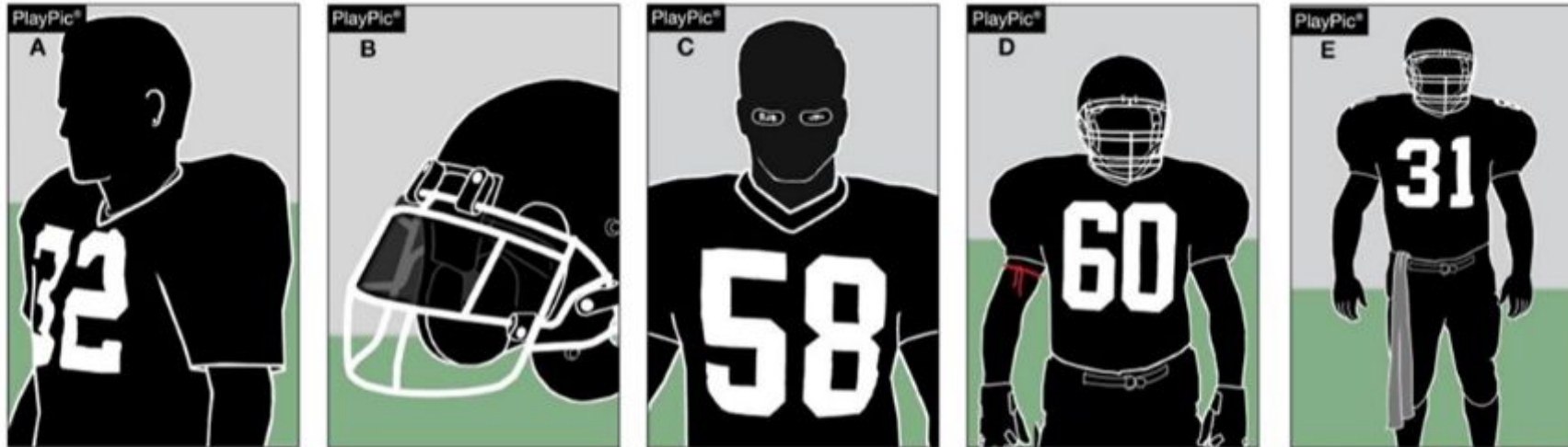
To support the safety of all participants, players must wear equipment and uniforms that are properly fitted and worn as intended by the manufacturer. Before starting each game, the head coach must verify that all players are properly and legally equipped. Allowing players to use illegal equipment or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

ILLEGAL AND IMPROPERLY WORN PLAYER EQUIPMENT



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.

ILLEGAL AND IMPROPERLY WORN PLAYER EQUIPMENT



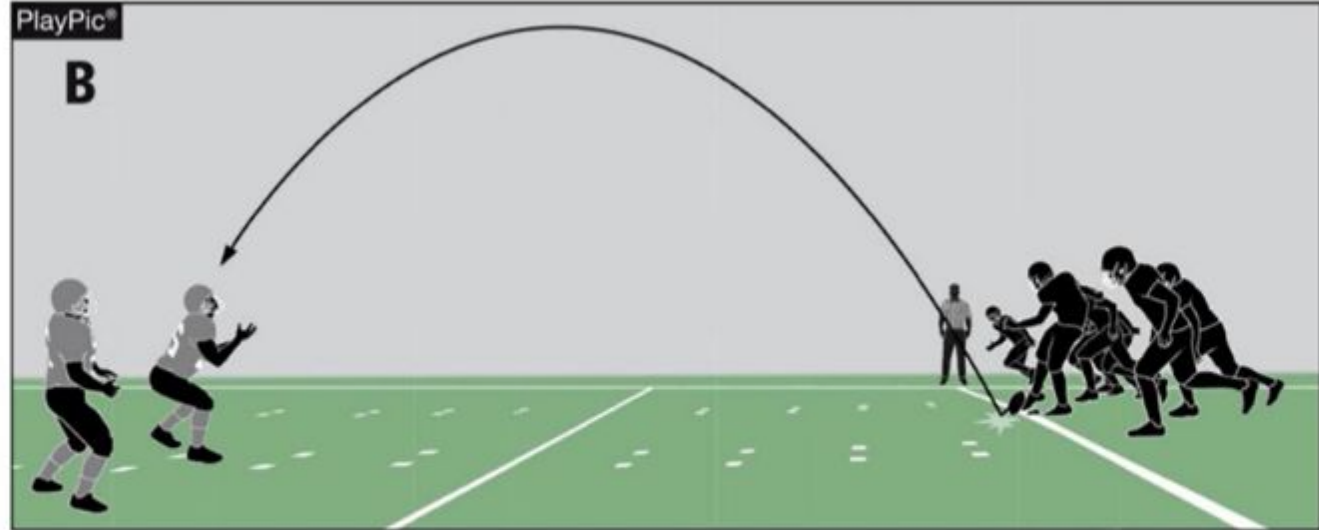
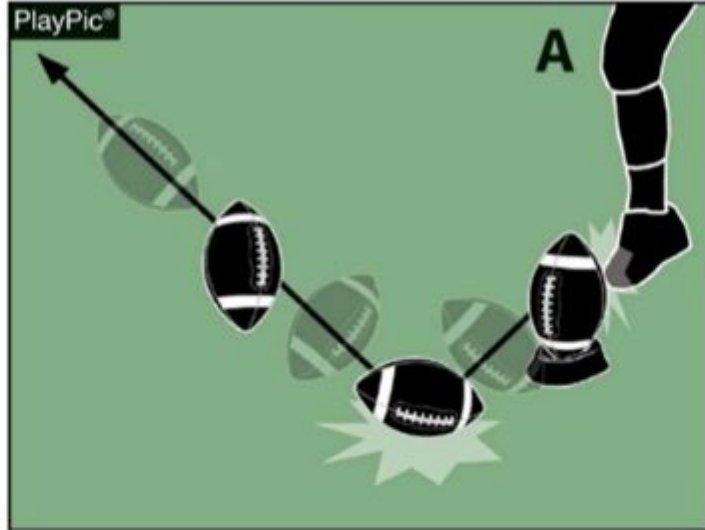
Illegal (prohibited) equipment includes jewelry (A), tinted visors (B), non-compliant eye shade (C), bands worn around the upper arm, neck or legs (D), and uniform adornments like towels that do not conform to rules (E).

POP-UP KICK

RULES 2-24-10; 6-1-11; 6-1 PENALTY



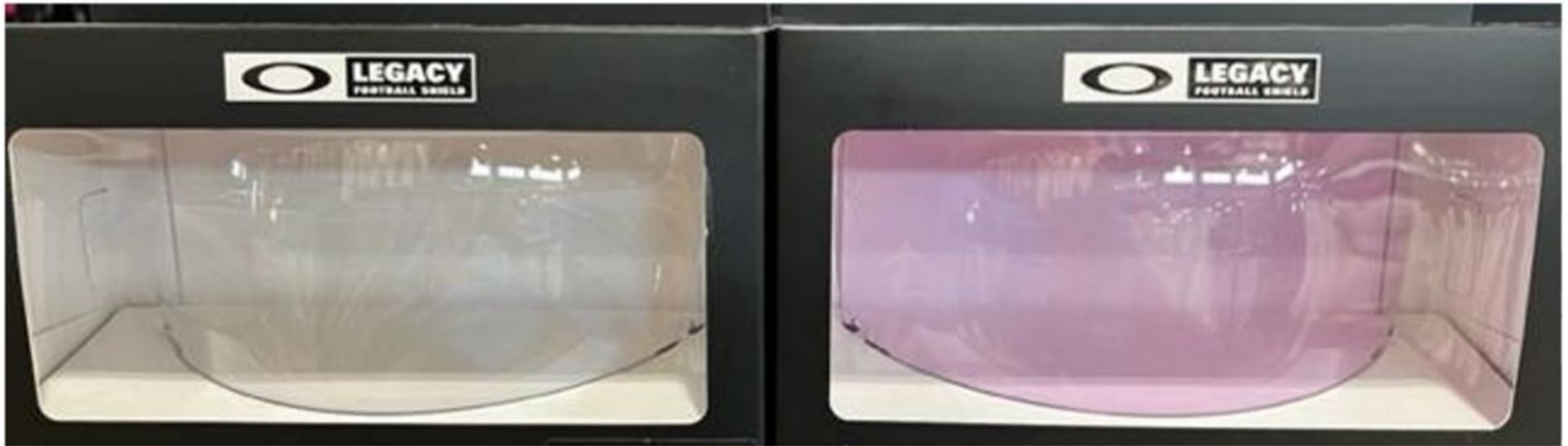
- A pop-up kick is a free kick in which the kicker drives the ball immediately to the ground, the ball strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of a ball kicked directly off the tee. Such kicks are penalized as a dead-ball foul.



OAKLEY FOOTBALL VISOR (PRIZM CLEAR)



PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.
TOGETHER.



LEGAL

ILLEGAL

FOOTBALL HELMET COVERS



- **Permissible by 2026 current NFHS Football Rules**



GUARDIAN CAPS



SAFR PRO TECH



Q-COLLAR



- Permissible by current 2026 NFHS Football Rules



NEUROGUARD+ MOUTHGUARD



- **Permissible by current 2026 NFHS Football Rules**





2026 NFHS POINTS OF EMPHASIS

2026 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

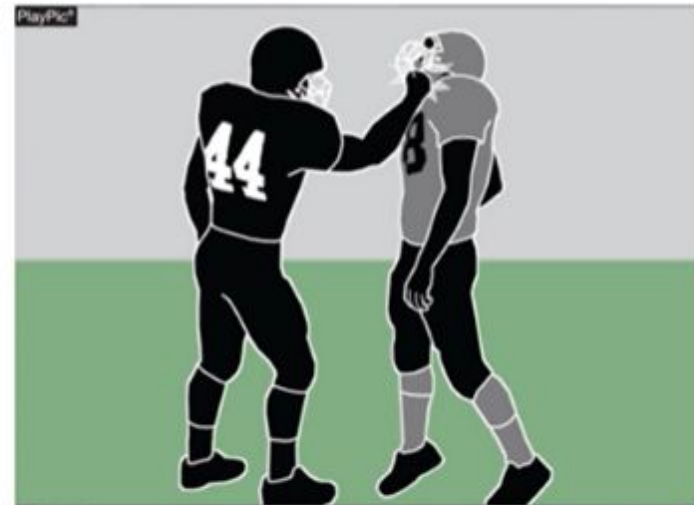


- 1. Flagrant and Unsportsmanlike Fouls**
- 2. Helping the Runner**
- 3. Sideline Management and Control**
- 4. Identification of the NFHS Authenticating Mark on Game Balls**

FLAGRANT AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOULS



- In high school football, flagrant fouls and unsportsmanlike fouls are serious rule violations that threaten player safety and the integrity of the game.
- Game officials must consistently penalize both flagrant and unsportsmanlike fouls to maintain control of the game.



FLAGRANT AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOULS



- Flagrant fouls are the most severe type of personal foul in high school football.
- A foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury, and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.
- These actions involve intentional, reckless or excessively violent behavior that shows a clear disregard for the safety of others. Examples include fighting, maliciously targeting the head or neck area, striking an opponent, or delivering a violent illegal blindside block or late hit.
- Disqualification if any foul is judged by the game official to be flagrant.

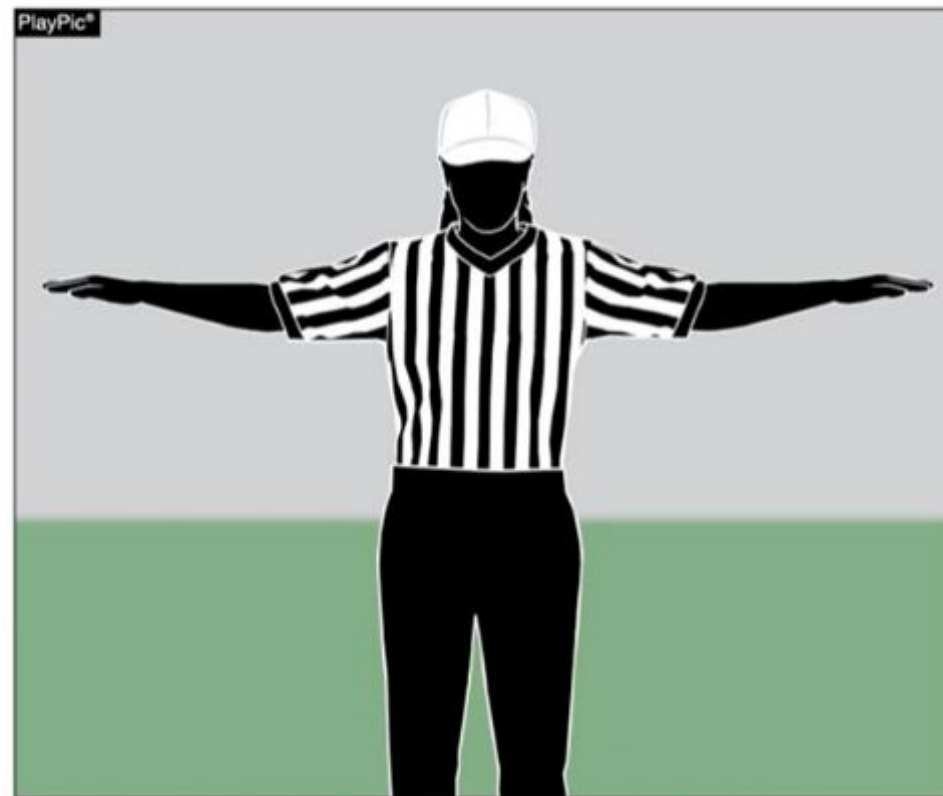


PERSONAL FOUL

FLAGRANT AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOULS



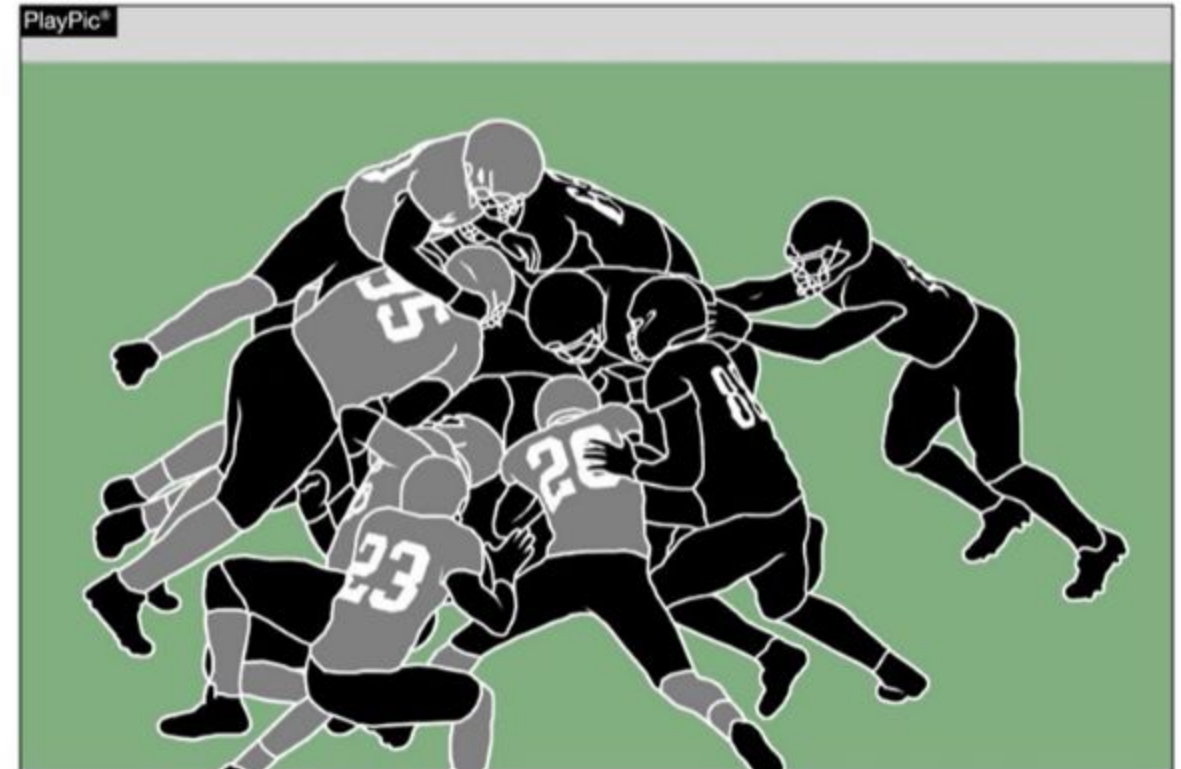
- Unsportsmanlike fouls are non-contact fouls that violate standards of fair play, respect and sportsmanship.
- Common examples include taunting, threatening gestures or posturing, racist comments, trash talking, excessive or choreographed celebrations, aggressively spiking, spinning or throwing the ball high into the air, using profanity, spitting, arguing with game officials, or throwing equipment.



UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT
NONCONTACT FOUL

HELPING THE RUNNER

- Illegally helping the runner to assist forward progress presents a risk of injury to the runner and others.
- The additional momentum to a particular offensive player, as opposed to the pile, swings the competitive balance toward the offense.





HELPING THE RUNNER

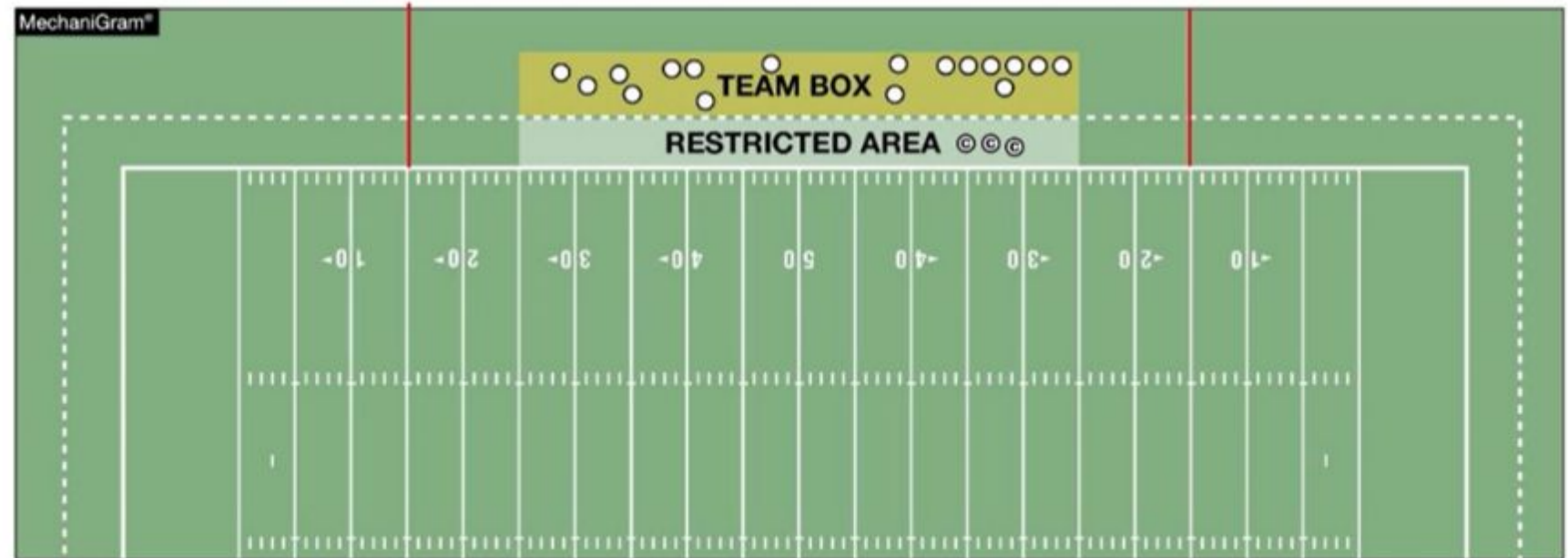
- Although a foul can occur on any play, game officials should especially be alert for this type of action on short-yardage plays near the goal line and line to gain. Remember, pushing the pile is legal; direct contact while pushing, pulling, lifting of the runner to assist forward progress is not.

SIDELINE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

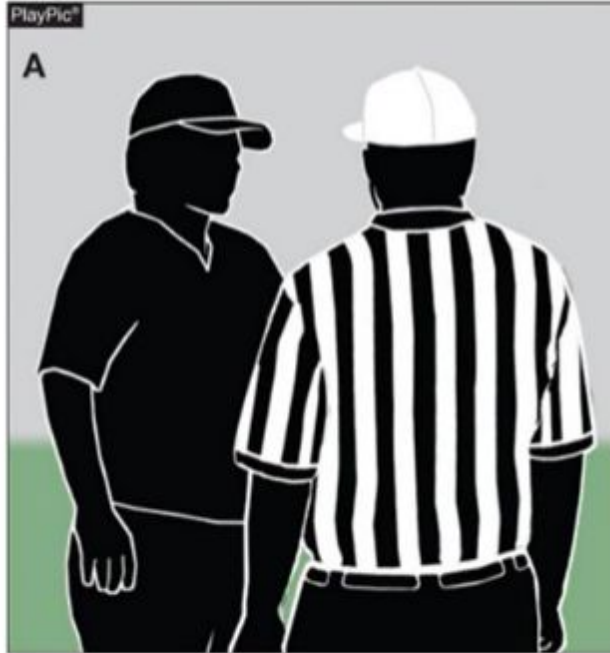


PLAY.
PERFORM.
COMPETE.
TOGETHER.

- Sideline management has become a recurring “point of emphasis” because it improves game safety. To minimize the risk of all involved, non-players must remain in their team box and out of any restricted areas, especially while the ball is live. The coaches’ area is a minimum of a 2-yard belt between the front of the team box and the sideline, and becomes the restricted area when the ball is live. A maximum of three coaches – and only coaches – may be in this area when the ball is dead between plays.



SIDELINE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL



- Game officials are instructed to strictly enforce NFHS Football Rules when coaches or team personnel enter the field of play to dispute rulings or address game officials outside the coaching area.

SIDELINE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

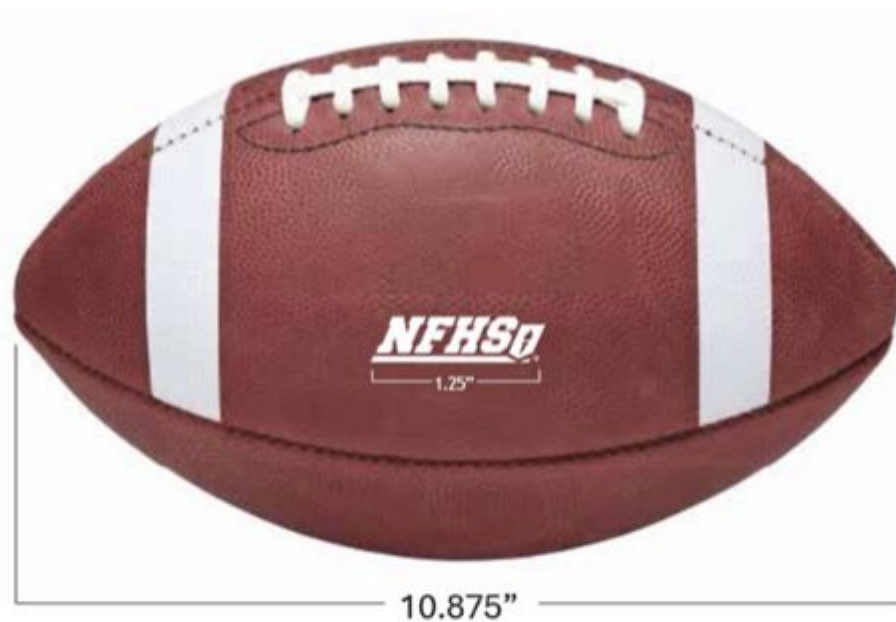


- Sideline management and control promotes good sportsmanship and professionalism across all levels of play, and also prevents unnecessary delays and confrontations that can impact game flow and fairness.

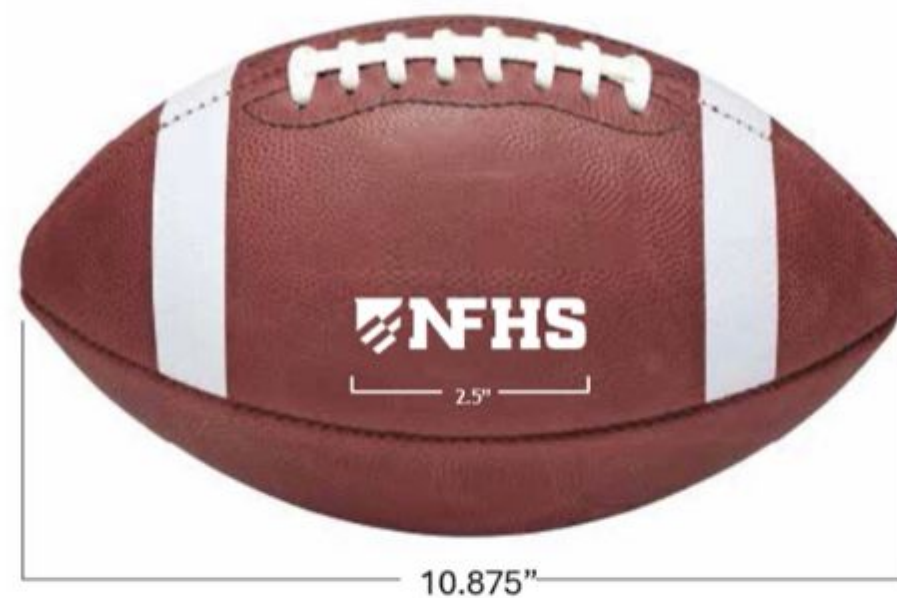
Football



Old Size



Current Size





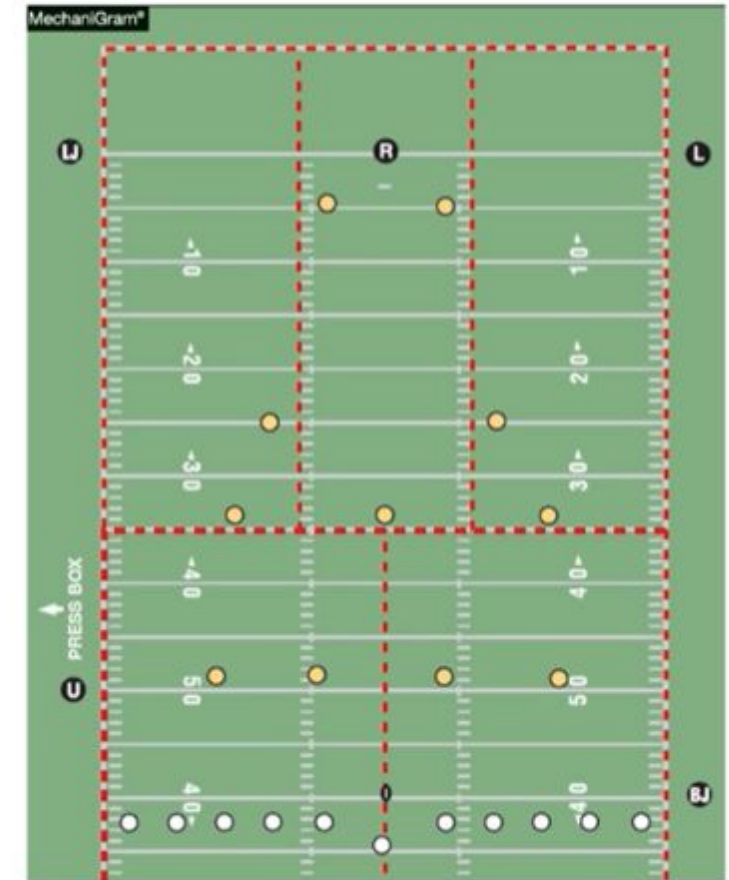
2026 AND 2027 NFHS FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

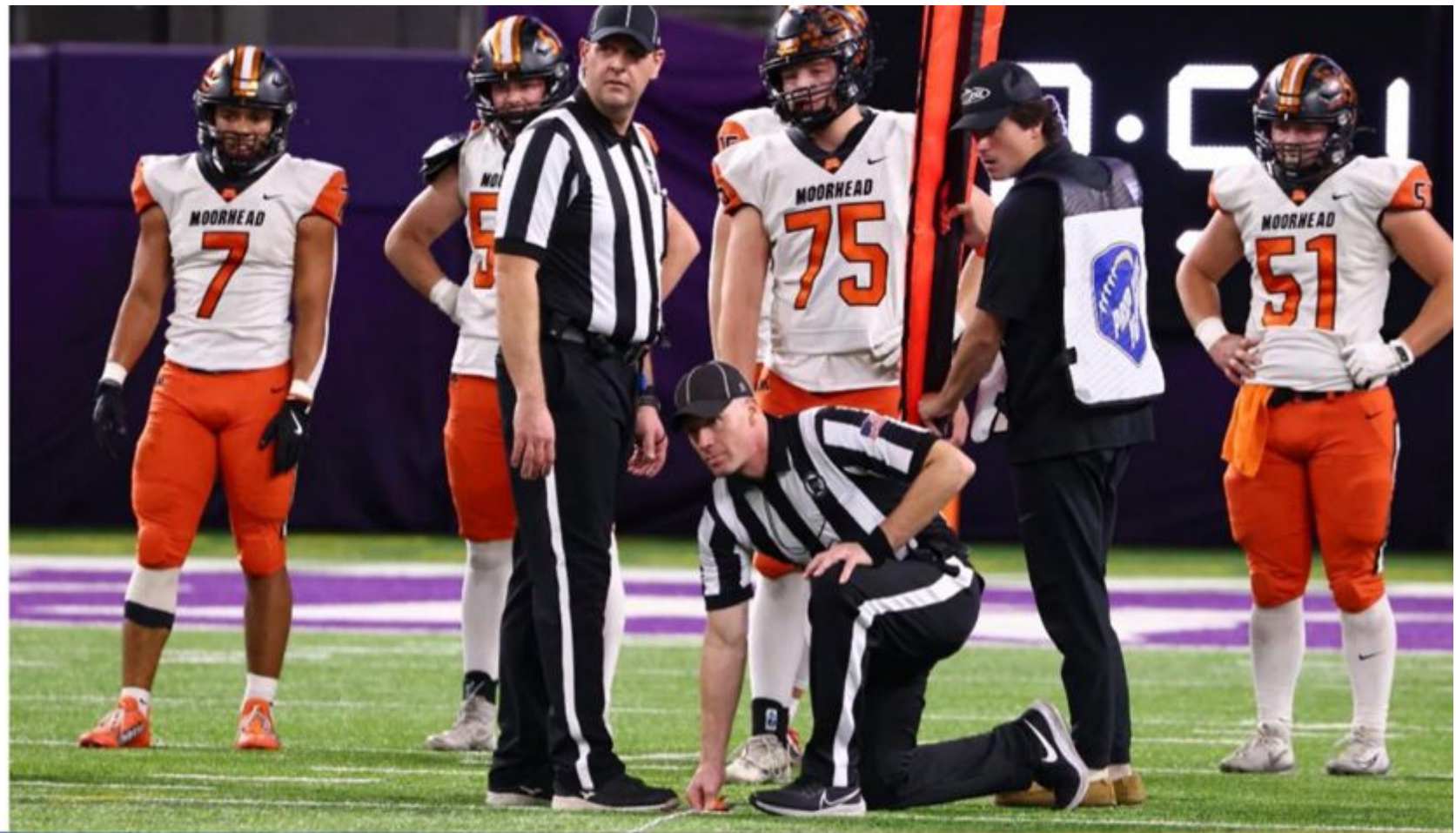
- 1. Penalty Communication**
- 2. Forward Progress**
- 3. Free-Kick Coverage**

FREE-KICK MECHANICS



Successful coverage of free kicks depends on game officials observing players in their assigned coverage zones.





2026 MINNESOTA OFFICIALS MECHANIC UPDATES



Minnesota Mechanics Manual

Reminders:

- Communicate with timers prior to the game (dead ball clocks written down)
- All officials will meet with the Head Coach prior to the game
- LOS officials will switch sidelines at halftime
- Umpire in the offensive backfield except FG/Try
- Coin Toss Mechanics
- 7-Person Mechanics



Coin Toss Mechanics

Conduct coin toss on home team sideline at the 50 yard line 30 minutes prior to kickoff.

Rationale:

- *Safety--teams are still in warm-up mode at both ends of the field with captains and officials vulnerable to injury.
- *Consistent with procedure for state quarterfinal games



Ref Masters University

- All officials placed on the free app
- Private space made available for MSHSL football officials
- Daily clips, quiz questions and mechanics discussions
- Premium content available to those that are interested



Pregame Administration

- Game administration doesn't just start at kickoff
- Pregame starts earlier in the week
- On field at least 35 minutes before kick
- Several tasks and responsibilities in that 35-minute period that need to be completed – don't stand around!

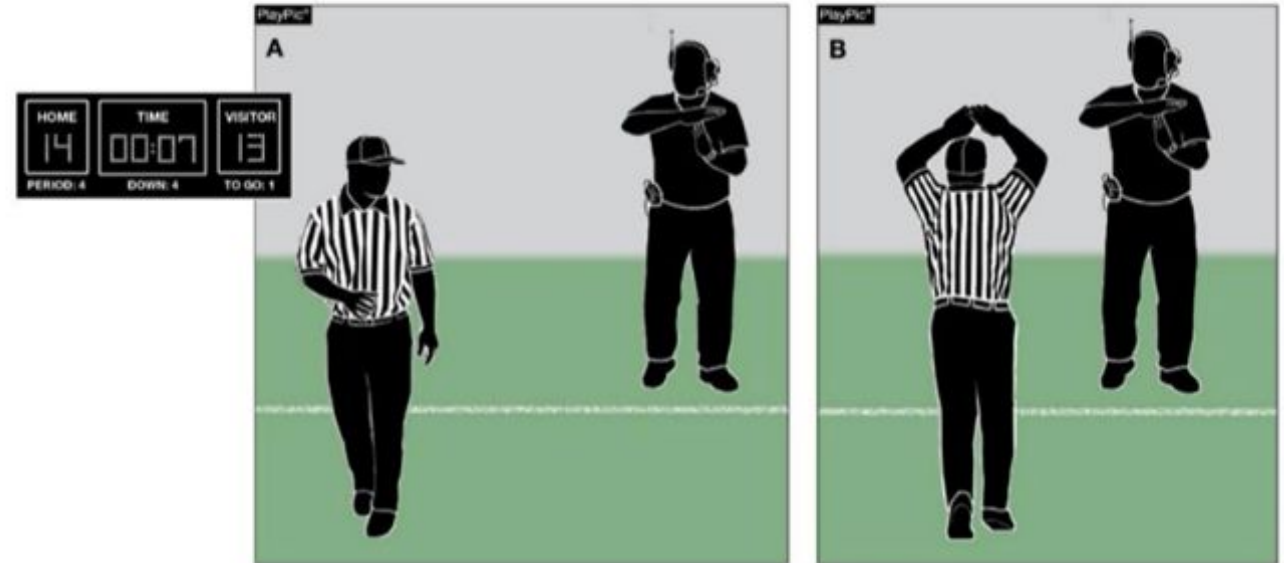


Time-Sensitive Situations and General Clock Awareness

Factors impacting the time remaining in a game include score, field position, available timeouts, injury and penalty timing.

Be aware of situations where the play clock shall be 25 seconds or 40 seconds

Efficiently placing the ball on the ground and starting the game clock on first downs on the field of play





Dead-Ball Officiating

- Dead-ball periods are not a break
- Diligently observe players in dead-ball periods
- Use your voice, have a physical presence and penalize as necessary
- Two unsportsmanlike fouls or one flagrant foul results in ejection



MINNESOTA POINTS OF EMPHASIS



Targeting

There **DOES NOT** have to be a “launch” for there to be Targeting and the contact above the shoulders does not have to be made with the helmet.

The rule states: “no player or non-player shall target an opponent.”

Targeting is NOT an automatic ejection in High School football – only eject if the contact is flagrant.

- 15-yard penalty

If contact is high – could be either targeting or excessive contact – same penalty for both.



Risk Minimization

Officials must be aware of situations where this illegal contact may occur.

- Blind-side blocks
- Peel-back blocks
- Receivers, including defenders and punt receivers

Launching and initiating contact vs. defenseless opponents is unnecessary and excessive contact - **Illegal.**

When in doubt – make this call!!

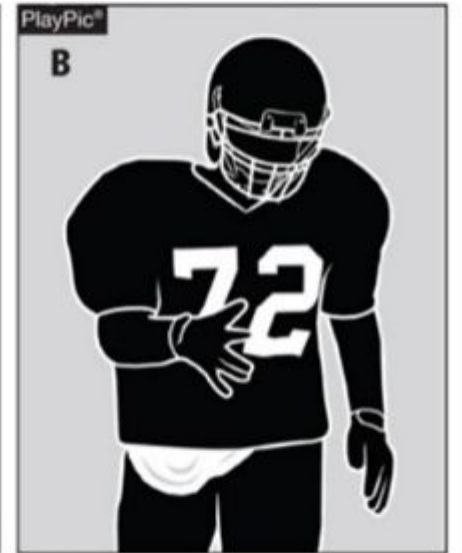
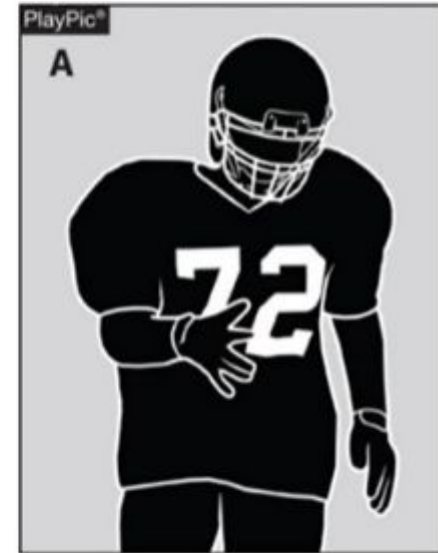
Player Equipment

Rule 1-5-1b(1)



These jerseys are illegal.

- PlayPic A, the jersey is longer than the top of the pants. Thus, it must be tucked in.
- PlayPic B, the shirt beneath the jersey and jersey must be tucked in.





Illegal Equipment

Rule 1-5-3-c

Other illegal equipment:

- Eyeshields that:
 - are not constructed of a molded rigid material; or
 - are not clear without the presence of any tint.
 - Can not use even with a doctor's note.
- Playcards not worn on the wrist, arm or belt.
- If required equipment is not worn properly or illegal equipment is detected, the player shall be replaced for one down.
- Coaches- please address these items before the game!



ILLEGAL FOOTBALL JERSEY and PANT (BACK PAD and KNEES NOT COVERED)



MSHSL UNIFORM RULES FOR FOOTBALL



- Home Jerseys must use a dark color
 - Use the darkest color of your school's colors for the home jersey
- Body of the number for the home team must be light and highly recommended that they are white. The number cannot be darker than the jersey itself.
- Visiting jerseys must be white and the body of the number must be dark
 - Use the darkest color of your school's colors for the body of the number on visiting jerseys
- Trim/outline of numbers is an optional feature that does not impact legality.
- Use the following tool to determine if the chosen colors contrast:
<https://projects.tssaa.org/nfhs/contrast/index.html?min=3>



Running Time

- Running Time Rule:
 - Only stop the clock for TIPS
 - Timeouts
 - Injuries
 - Penalties
 - Scores
- At 35-point differential in the fourth quarter
 - Cannot be implemented earlier
 - Coaches can agree to shorten quarters, but not alter clock rules



Official Warning

When coaches continue to show disregard for the team box or disrespect for officials, officials shall:

- **STOP PLAY**
- Tell the coach: "You have been warned."
- Have the warning recorded on the Official's game card
- Include the time of the warning and team coach.

NO further warnings

Next issue = UNS/Flag -- warnings are not necessary before a coach is flagged

Have a great season – reach out with any questions, suggestions, or plays!

