



Tackle Football Rules

(Revised 1/2025)

CLOCK

Games will consist of 4 quarters of 10 minutes each, with a 5-minute half-time intermission. Intermission might be shorter in order to keep games on schedule. The rules will be governed by the IHSAA football rules unless provided herein.

The offensive team has 40 seconds to snap the ball following the completion of the previous play.

The clock will be a "running clock" with the following exceptions:

1. The clock will stop on incomplete passes and will start when the ball is placed on the ground and marked "ready for play."
2. The clock will stop for injuries and will start when the injured player is clear of the field.
3. The clock will stop for all timeouts.

An official shall signal the start of the clock in these situations.

4. The last 2 minutes of the game will be a regulation clock if the teams are within 16 points.
5. The clock will be stopped following a touchdown, and the extra point try will be an untimed down.
6. The clock will start after change of possessions once the ball is marked "ready for play"
7. "Mercy Rule" will take affect if any teams would go up by 22 points. Clock will not stop but for timeouts only. Once it starts it won't go back to normal clock rules. (2nd half only)

SCORING/KICKING GAME

Touchdown: 6 points

Field goal: 3 points

Extra Points:

1 point - Any score as a run or pass from the **3-yard** line.

2 points - Any score as a run or pass from the **5-yard** line or kick from the 3-yard line. (ball will be spotted at the 10-yard line for extra points)

Extra points/field goals: Standard kicking tees are not allowed for extra points or field goal attempts.

Procedures for Punts, Extra Points and Field Goals:

5th & 6th grade: On punts, extra points and field goals, both teams will line up on their side of the line of scrimmage. The ball can be snapped or the ball can be placed next to the punter/holder while the team is in punt/kicking formation. Gunners are allowed on punts and may release on the snap of the ball or on the whistle if the ball is placed on the ground next to the punter. The play is live when the ball is snapped or when the whistle blows if the ball is placed on the ground. The defense is permitted to rush and attempt to block the kick. **Fake punts, fake extra points and fake field goals are allowed only if the ball is snapped.**

3rd/4th Grade: Will not punt, instead of punting the offense can choose to "punt" and the ball will be moved 25 yards down field. The ball will not be advanced inside of the 20, it would be spotted there. Example, advance from the 40 going in would mean a spot at the 20.

No rush by the defense on field goals or extra points.

All Grades: If the ball is placed on the ground the offensive team may not run, pass or otherwise advance it unless the opposing team possesses it first and then fumbles it (or otherwise loses possession). For example - if the holder, kicker or punter mishandles picking a ball off the ground, it may not be advanced by the kicking team unless the opposing team first gains possession of the ball.

Any player, at any weight, may kick the ball, but may not advance the ball or lateral the ball if he weighs over the **Grade Level Running Limit**.

Safety: A Safety shall result in the defensive team being awarded 2 points. The team that incurred the safety shall punt from their 20-yard line.

Procedures for Kickoffs and Kickoff Returns (all grades): Kickoffs and kickoff returns will not be allowed. A coin toss at the beginning of the game will determine which team gets the ball first (option to defer after winning the flip to the second half is allowed). The offensive team takes possession of the ball on its own 30-yard line at the start of the game. This will also be the starting position for an offensive position following any type of scoring play.

In lieu of an onside kick-off attempt, the following procedure will be allowed in the last 90 seconds of a game that is within 8 pts of being tied. The kicking team may elect to take possession of the ball on its own 30-yard line in a 4th down and 15 yards to go situation. That team may go for it or punt, but fake punts are not allowed.

OVERTIME

GAMES ending in a tie score at the end of regulation shall continue in overtime. The first overtime will begin after a coin-flip between team captains to decide possession. The team winning the toss can decide to begin overtime play on either offense or defense. Each team will receive a first and goal situation from the 10-yard line to attempt to score a touchdown and extra point(s) or a field goal. Offensive fumbles recovered by the defense or an interception shall result in immediate changes of possession.

Second Overtime - At the end of the first overtime period if the teams are tied, the team having offensive possession of the ball second in the first overtime will begin first on offense in the second overtime. Each team will receive a first and goal situation from the 5-yard line to score a touchdown, extra point(s), or field goal. Offensive fumbles recovered by the defense or an interception shall result in immediate changes of possession.

Third Overtime - If, at the end of the second overtime period the teams are tied, the team that had offensive possession of the ball first in the First overtime shall begin on offense and the teams will then **trade** offensive possessions (1 play) from the 5 yard line until both teams have had an equal number of offensive possessions and one team has scored a touchdown only (no extra points will be attempted) or a field goal and out-scored the other team during that possession.

Each team will have (1) time out per overtime. Unused timeouts do not carry over.

TIME-OUTS

Each team is allowed a total of 2 time-outs per half. Uncalled time-outs from the first half will not carry forward to the second half.

GAME TIMES

In the event of a Saturday rain out the games will be played when The League Commissioner is able to rescheduled them.

Games may be postponed or possibly cancelled because of inclement weather. All decisions to postpone or cancel a game will be made by the Director of Football Operation or the CDC

PLAYING TIME

Each player is required to start at either an offensive or a defensive position and must play at least the initial 3 quarters of each game. No exceptions. Coaches may substitute freely in the final quarter of each game and in any subsequent overtime(s). The fourth quarter rule applies only if all players have had equal playing time. The spirit of this rule is for all players to receive adequate playing time to develop their skills. If either team is on offense or defense for an extended period of time, it is anticipated that the coach will substitute all players on their team accordingly. The league commissioner and/or the Director of Football Operation reserves the right to demand playing time should a coach not comply with this rule.

PLAYER CLASSIFICATION

Running Weight Limits:

Weights recorded at the time of the official weigh-in shall apply throughout the season. The official "weigh-in" shall be at the equipment pickup. Players may weigh-in with or without pads. Once this weight is recorded, it is their official weight for the season. There will be no weigh-ins during the season.

3rd/4th grade:

Ball carriers are any player under or equal to 100lbs.

A player weighing between 100.1 - 110 lbs is an orange striper and is eligible to play tight end.

Any Player over 110lbs is considered a black striper and cannot be in a ball carrying position

5th/6th grade:

Ball carriers are any player under or equal to 115lbs.

A player weighing between 115.1 and 125 lbs is an orange striper and is eligible to play tight end.

Ball Carrier Positions include: Quarterback, running back, slot backs, wide receivers, and flankers and TE.

Orange Striper

Is only eligible to play offensive line and tight end on the offensive side of the ball.

Must line up tight to the tackle and cannot split out or line up in the backfield.

May catch a pass, but it must be beyond the line of scrimmage and then can advance the ball until tackled.

May not receive a handoff, a pitch, or catch the ball behind the line of scrimmage. May play any defensive position but may not advance the ball in case of a fumble or interception. In such cases, the ball is whistled dead, and possession belongs to the defensive team.

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN - All players weighing **more than the Grade Level Running Limit** are classified as lineman and can play and line-up at the following offensive positions: Center, guard, and tackle. Such players will receive a 1 x 4 inch black tape marking at the front and the back of their helmets to distinguish their weight classification.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - All players weighing **the Grade Level Running Limit and less** are eligible to play any defensive position. Only players weighing **the Grade Level Running Limit or less** may line-up and play at the following positions: cornerback, and safety.

Corners must be 5 yards off ball and cannot blitz before the snap of the ball, unless it is 4th down or inside the 10-yard line. If there is no wide receiver split out on one side of the field, the corner shall be no closer than 5 yds deep from the line of scrimmage and 5 yards wide of the widest offensive player.

Safeties must be a minimum of 8 yards behind the line of scrimmage. A minimum of one safety must play at all times regardless of defensive formation.

Defensive ends must line up on the frame (head up or outside shoulder) of the offensive tight end or tackle if no tight end is present. They may line up in a 2- point or 3-point stance. Defensive ends can be above the Grade Level Running Limit. **(3rd/4th Grade Defensive Ends must line up heads up in a 3-point stance)**

In the event of an offensive turnover from an interception (or the ball has not touched the ground), only defensive players weighing **the Grade Level Running Limit or less** may advance the ball. A defensive player who weighs **more than the Grade Level Running Limit** (this includes Orange Stripers) is ineligible to advance the ball under any circumstances. The play is to be ruled dead as soon as he recovers the ball.

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN - Defensive linemen are considered to be set when QB is under center or start of cadence in "shotgun" or "pistol". They can move on LOS before either of these take place. Once the quarterback is under center or the cadence starts in shotgun or pistol formations, defensive linemen cannot move. Defensive linemen need to be in 3- or 4-point stances when on the LOS. If an offensive player goes in motion, then either the defensive end or linebacker may adjust (but not both).

LINEBACKERS - All Linebackers can line up inside or outside the tackle box. Players over grade weight limit can play Linebacker. All Linebackers are at a minimum of 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Linebackers are not allowed to stunt or fake blitz. Linebackers must be 3 yards off ball and cannot blitz before the snap of the or unless it is 4th down or inside the 10-yard line

If a player weighing more than the Grade Level Running Limit recovers, intercepts, or otherwise gains possession of the ball, on any play, the play will be blown dead at that spot.

FORMATIONS

OFFENSIVE LINE - All offensive alignments must utilize a balanced line consisting of the center over the ball and three players on each side of the ball on the offensive line including guards, tackles and ends. Ends may be tight or split. (Orange Stripers may not split out) To avoid unbalanced lines, additional split ends (putting 8 or more players on the line of scrimmage) must be split at least 7 yards out from the TE's spot. **"Pulling" a lineman is not permitted.**

OFFENSIVE BACKFIELD AND MOTION - The offensive backfield does NOT have to be balanced. Offensive motion is allowed as per IHSA rules. Shotgun snaps are allowed.

DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS - Allowed formations are: 4-3, 4-4, 5-2, 5-3, 6-2

DEFENSIVE LINE - Each team must play a minimum of 4 lineman (including defensive ends) and no more than 6 linemen (including defensive ends). Interior defensive linemen can line up in the gaps. (5th/6th only, 3rd/4th must line up head up)

GAP EIGHT DEFENSIVE LINE ALIGNMENTS - a gap eight (8 defensive linemen, including the defensive ends) defensive formation may be played on all fourth down and kicking situations and when the offensive team has the ball inside the defense's 10-yard line. Linebackers and defensive backs do not need to be at any particular distance off of the LOS. They can play up on the LOS and allowed to blitz from any position.

TEAM ADMINISTRATION

The CDC can only operate with the volunteer support of all teams. Teams are expected and required to provide defined help in the administration of all games including coaching, assistant coaching, yard line marking, and concessions. From time to time, teams may also be asked to provide assistance in CDC fund-raising activities such as CHS concession stand work; practice equipment and field maintenance and clean-up. It is the obligation of the head coach or his designee to make team-volunteering assignments. If a team parent or volunteer does not arrive to carry-out their assigned duties, the game will be delayed until a replacement from that team is assigned those duties.

TEAM EQUIPMENT

Each team will be provided with 2 regulation footballs. Individual coaches can purchase kicking blocks, allowed in extra-point and field goal attempts. Each team will be provided with decals appropriate to that team to be put on the helmets.

NOTE: It is recommended that coaches obtain the helmets from their team players and put on the decals uniformly themselves. Taping, numbering or otherwise placing identification stripes on helmets is permitted using only a vinyl (i.e. 3M tape) so as to not obstruct the horizontal black-stripe identification of players over **the Grade Level Running Limit**. Uniform jerseys will be provided by CDC.

The CDC provides sufficient tackling dummies, sleds and other equipment for use by teams during practices. It is the obligation of each head coach to return this equipment to the proper place after every practice.

THERE ARE NO OTHER ALLOWABLE OR PERMITTED PRACTICES outside of normal nights scheduled.

Rainouts or other cancellations will be decided at the time of or before the scheduled practice. Outside practices are NOT permitted and will result in forfeiture of subsequent game and subject coach to review for suspension. Coaches will not be allowed to call practices earlier than league scheduled times and will not be allowed to run practices later than league scheduled times. If a coach is found to be doing this he will be suspended for coaching that week. If infraction reoccurs that coach will be removed from coaching for the rest of the season (including all post season coaching - playoffs/championships/All-Stars).

Practice space - each team will be assigned a certain practice area which will be used though out the year with the exception of teams working with sleds & scrimmages. This area will be assigned at the time the first practice.

COACHING & VOLUNTEERING

COACHES - a maximum of 3 coaches are allowed on the bench-side sidelines during the game and including halftime. This includes a head coach and two assistant coaches. Any other parents or volunteers must remain on the bleacher sidelines unless caring for an injured player. If caring for an injured player, parents and other volunteers must be removed from the immediate playing activity area.

All coaches and assistant coaches must have a current back ground check on file with the CDC office.

3rd/4th Grade will be allowed 1 coach on the field during play. 5th/6th grade will have no coaches on the field during play. **The coach on the field shall not give instructions or call out plays once the QB is under center. 1st time will be a warning, if there is a 2nd time during the game it will be flagged as a delay of game.**

Parents & volunteers working the bleacher side of the field as yard or downs marker keepers are not permitted to communicate to players on the field or to coaches on the sidelines.

Coaches and opposing coaches shall report to the league commissioner immediately following the game any penalties called on any coach during a game or any other coaching misconduct.

GAME VOLUNTEERS

Each team that is designated as home team must provide 2 adults (non coaches) to operate the downs marker; one side of the 10-yard marker, or the clock. The visiting team must provide 2 adults to work the downs marker, one side of the 10-yard marker, or the clock. **Both teams are responsible for clean up of bleachers and bench areas after each game.**

REFEREE COMMUNICATION

Head coaches may inquire to the head referee as to the interpretation of the rule. Excessive communication, verbal abuse or criticism of an official from ANYONE may result in ejection of that person.

The referee will explain the infraction to the player(s) involved and coaches. Once the referee has signaled to continue play, no further discussion will be allowed. If the coach(s) continue a penalty of 15 yards will be assessed. Any discussion following this penalty will result in coach(s) ejection from the game. If ejected from a game the coach or assistant coach will lose the next games coaching privileges. If this happens more than once in a coaches career the coach will no longer be allowed to coach.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE SCHEDULES

Contact during each 90-minute practice will be limited to 30 minutes. All teams are encouraged to utilize the blocking sleds and tackle wheels and other equipment for teaching purposes.

Practice time should be spent with equal parts fundamentals (blocking, tackling, running, and passing and catching techniques) and formation and play development. It is mandatory that scrimmaging with other teams be limited to no more than one night per week and for no more than 20 minutes at a time.

Hound Time is a requirement 30 minutes every week. The entire league will come together once a week to work drills as a whole. This is not optional.

Practice times during the playoffs are allowed on the leagues regularly scheduled designated practice night.

SUSPENSIONS

Any and all suspensions are to be decided by a committee consisting of the Director of Football Operations and the Commissioners from the 3rd through 6th grade leagues along with the Athletic Director.

Coach Misconduct at practice or games or related league events will result in a game suspension; this is not limited to ejection from a game and further suspensions as seen fit by Committee consisting of the Director of Football Operations and the Commissioners from the 3rd through 6th grade leagues and Athletic Director.

Player Misconduct at practice or games or related league events will result in a game suspension; this is not limited to ejection from a game and further suspensions as seen fit by Game Officials and/or Committee consisting of the Director of Football Operations and the Commissioners from the 3rd through 6th grade leagues and Athletic Director.

Parent/Spectator Misconduct at practice or games or related league events will result in a game suspension; this is not limited to ejection from premises and further suspensions as seen fit by Game Officials and/or Committee consisting of the Director of Football Operations and the Commissioners from the 3rd through 6th grade leagues and Athletic Director.