



**SUMMER HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS
7v7 RULEBOOK
2026 SEASON EDITION**



NFHS-based league rules with adaptations for US National & Club Competition with league-specific modifications for rush distance, player safety, and punting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

This handbook reorganizes the league rules into a coach-, parent-, and player-friendly format while preserving the core rules of the 2026 NC Fusion / Gridiron Girlz HS 7v7 season and the league-specific modifications adopted for this competition.

How to Use This Rulebook	3
League Definitions	4
Rule 1: League Administration and Eligibility	5
Section 1: Season Structure	5
Section 2: Rosters and Participation	5
Rule 2: Field, Equipment, and Uniforms	6
Section 1: Field Layout	6
Section 2: Required Equipment	6
Rule 3: Timing, Game Format, and Overtime	7
Rule 4: Starting Play, Ball Placement, and Dead Ball	8
Rule 5: Offensive Rules	9
Rule 6: Defensive Rules	10
Rule 7: Punting and Scrimmage Kicks	11
Rule 8: Scoring	11
Rule 9: Penalties and Enforcement	12
Rule 10: Conduct, Safety, and Discipline	13
Rule 11: Game Day Operations and Protests	14
Quick Reference One-Pager	15

RULE —: HOW TO USE THIS RULEBOOK

PURPOSE

This handbook is written to be understandable at the sideline and authoritative enough for officials and coaches.

- Coaches should use it as the working competition document for planning, substitutions, game management, and player instruction.
- Parents should use it to understand how games are structured, what safety expectations apply, and how conduct is handled.
- Players should use it to learn what is legal, what is unsafe, and what will get a penalty.

LEAGUE-SPECIFIC OVERRIDES

These three rules override the baseline NFHS-based handbook language for this league.

- Rushers must start 3 yards from the line of scrimmage, not 1 yard.
- No diving or jumping is allowed by a ball carrier or by a player attempting to pull a flag.
- Punting is allowed. On the kick, if the ball is dropped and contacts the ground before being legally kicked, the play is dead at the spot where the ball first hit the ground.

Interpretation Standard

- When a wording conflict exists, this restructured rulebook controls for league play.
- Officials retain authority to interpret and enforce rules in real time, subject to league protest procedures.

KEY TERMS	LEAGUE DEFINITION
Line of scrimmage	The imaginary line through the ball extending sideline to sideline.
Line to gain	The next first-down marker the offense must reach to earn a new series.
Rush line	The line 3 yards from the line of scrimmage from which defenders may begin an immediate rush.
Live ball	The period after a legal snap when the down is in progress.
Dead ball	The period before the snap or immediately after a play ends.
Flag guarding	Any action by the runner that blocks access to the flags, including stiff-arm, swatting, covering flags, or lowering the arm into the pull path.
Legal flag pull	A clean pull of the flag itself; not grabbing shorts, shirt, belt, or body.
Screening	Positioning the body without extending arms or initiating contact in order to obstruct a defender legally.
Touchback / start spot	For this league, drives begin at the offense's own 7-yard line to start the game, begin the second half, and restart after a score. Following a touchback, the ball is placed at the offense's own 10-yard line unless another rule assigns a different spot.

RULE 1: LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY

SECTION 1: SEASON STRUCTURE

Program format

- The league is a high school girls 7-on-7 flag football competition with varsity and, when numbers permit, JV divisions.
- Teams generally play 6-8 games.
- Games are scheduled in 60-minute slots on designated league nights.

SECTION 2: ROSTERS AND PARTICIPATION

Roster limits

- Teams may register with a minimum of 7 players and a maximum of 15 players.
- A team fields 7 players. A minimum of 5 players is required to avoid forfeit at the scheduled start window.
- Players must be eligible high school athletes for the league season designated by the program.

Team representative

- Each team must identify a coach, parent, or representative as the official point of contact.
- That representative is responsible for roster accuracy, sideline behavior, and all official communications.

RULE 2: FIELD, EQUIPMENT, AND UNIFORMS

SECTION 1: FIELD LAYOUT

Field dimensions

- The league field is 75 total yards long: 10-yard end zones on each side with 55 yards of playing field between the goal lines.
- First-down lines are set every 20 yards across the field of play. Standard lines to gain are the offense's 20-yard line, the 40-yard line, and then the goal line.
- No-running zones extend 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards before each first-down line. Within a no-running zone, the offense may not advance the ball by a running play.

SECTION 2: REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

Player equipment

- **Standard pop-flag belts will be used. Flags must be worn at the waist with all flags visible and outside the uniform at all times.**
- Shorts may not have pockets. Mouthpieces are required for all players.
- No jewelry is allowed during play. Approved sunglasses may be worn on the face but not perched on the head.
- Game balls must be league-approved footballs & prepared for girls HS flag competition.

Uniform expectations

- Teams should have clearly contrasting jerseys when possible.
- Officials may require a player to correct unsafe or noncompliant equipment before participating.

RULE 3: TIMING, GAME FORMAT, AND OVERTIME

SECTION 1: REGULATION GAME

Game length

- A regulation game consists of four 10-minute quarters.
- The clock runs continuously except during the final 2 minutes of the 4th quarter, when the clock stops on all dead balls.
- Halftime is 5 minutes.

SECTION 2: OVERTIME

Overtime format

- If a game is tied, each team receives 4 downs from the same hash to attempt to score.
- After each touchdown in overtime, the scoring team may choose a 1-point or 2-point try under normal try rules.
- If still tied after both teams possess the ball, additional overtime rounds continue until a winner is determined.

RULE 4: STARTING PLAY, BALL PLACEMENT, AND DEAD BALL

SECTION 1: COIN TOSS, START OF GAME, AND SECOND HALF

Opening procedures

- Captains meet for the coin toss before the game.
- The winner chooses offense, defense, or direction according to league game management procedures.
- Second-half possession follows the league's standard alternating-possession procedure.

SECTION 2: BALL PLACEMENT

Standard start spots

- **To begin the game, begin the second half, and restart after a score, the ball is placed at the offense's own 7-yard line in the middle of the field.**
- **Following a safety, the team awarded the ball begins at its own 30-yard line.**
- Following a touchback, the ball is placed at the offense's own 10-yard line in the middle of the field.

SECTION 3: WHEN THE BALL BECOMES DEAD

Dead-ball conditions

- A play ends when a flag is legally pulled.
- A play ends when the ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- A play ends when the ball carrier's knee touches the ground.
- **A play ends when a punted ball is dropped to the ground after the kick is completed; the ball is dead where it first touched the ground.**
- Any official whistle ending the down makes the ball dead.

RULE 5: OFFENSIVE RULES

SECTION 1: DOWNS AND ADVANCEMENT

Series of downs

- **The offense has 4 downs to reach the next line to gain.**
- Once the offense reaches the next line to gain, it is awarded a new series of 4 downs.
- Failure to reach the line to gain results in a turnover on downs unless a legal punt is declared and executed.

SECTION 2: SNAP, ALIGNMENT, AND PASSING

Snap requirements

- **A minimum of 3 offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage for the formation to be legal at the snap.**
- All offensive players must be legally positioned prior to the snap and must avoid false starts or illegal motion.

Passing and laterals

- A forward pass is legal only if thrown from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Unlimited laterals are allowed and may occur behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Any eligible player may run the ball at any time unless restricted by league formation or procedural rules.

SECTION 3: BLOCKING AND RUNNER RESTRICTIONS

Screening only

- No contact blocking is permitted. Screening must occur without extending the hands or initiating contact.
- Offensive players may not hold, push, or illegally obstruct defenders.

No diving / no jumping rule

- A ball carrier may not dive forward, launch, hurdle, or jump to avoid a flag pull or gain extra yardage.
- Any such act is illegal and may be ruled dead at the spot with an associated penalty if the action creates an unfair advantage or safety issue.

RULE 6: DEFENSIVE RULES

SECTION 1: FLAG PULLING AND GENERAL CONTACT

Legal defense

- Defenders must attempt to pull the flag, not tackle the runner.
- Holding, pushing, tripping, or diving at the runner is a foul.
- Grabbing clothing instead of the flag is illegal flag removal.

SECTION 2: RUSH MECHANICS

3-yard rush modification

- Defenders who rush the passer must begin from a position at or behind the 3-yard rush line.
- There is no restriction on the number of rushers, provided each rusher begins legally.

No diving / no jumping by flag pullers

- A defensive player attempting a flag pull may not dive, launch, or leave the feet in a reckless attempt to make the play.
- Players must stay under control and make legal pull attempts with balance and body control.

RULE 7: PUNTING AND SCRIMMAGE KICKS

SECTION 1: DECLARED PUNTS

Punt procedure

- On 4th down, a team must clearly declare whether it will punt or attempt to gain the line to gain.
- After declaration, teams are allowed time to substitute. To change from punt to go-for-it, the team must use a timeout.

SECTION 2: PUNT EXECUTION

Live-kick administration

- **The snap must occur for a legal punt. The kicker must be positioned legally behind the line of scrimmage to execute the kick.**
- Neither team may cross the neutral zone until the ball is kicked.
- **If the kick is completed and the punted ball then touches the ground, the play is dead at the spot where the ball first touched the ground.**
- If the kick is completed legally, the ball remains governed by the league's scrimmage-kick rules and dead-ball procedures.

RULE 8: SCORING

SECTION 1: POINT VALUES

Scoring summary

- Touchdown = 6 points.
- Try from the 3-yard line = 1 point.
- Try from the 10-yard line = 2 points.
- Safety = 2 points to the defense.

Post-score check

- Following every touchdown, the scoring player's flag belt should be checked to confirm it was worn legally and remained attached before the score.

RULE 9: PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT

SECTION 1: COMMON FOULS

FOUL	ENFORCEMENT
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Flag guarding	10 yards from the spot; loss of down when applicable
Illegal contact / blocking	10 yards
Holding or illegal restriction by defense	10 yards + automatic first down
Offsides / false start / illegal motion	5 yards
Delay of game	5 yards
Offensive pass interference	10 yards + loss of down
Defensive pass interference	Ball at spot of foul + automatic first down
Illegal flag removal / grabbing clothing	10 yards
Unsportsmanlike conduct	10 yards + possible ejection / suspension

SECTION 2: ENFORCEMENT PHILOSOPHY

General enforcement

- Spot fouls are enforced from the spot when the rule specifically requires it.
- Other fouls are enforced according to standard distance penalties and the result of the play.
- Multiple or severe safety fouls may also trigger warnings, ejections, or suspensions.

RULE 10: CONDUCT, SAFETY, AND DISCIPLINE

SECTION 1: PLAYER SAFETY EXPECTATIONS

Safety standards

- Play under control. Reckless contact, diving, launching, and unsafe equipment are not allowed.
- Players must report injuries promptly and follow official and coach direction in medical situations.

SECTION 2: CONDUCT STANDARDS

Sportsmanship

- Players, coaches, and spectators must respect officials, opponents, teammates, and venue staff.
- Foul, abusive, racial, discriminatory, or threatening language is prohibited.
- Teams are expected to show sportsmanship after games regardless of outcome.

Discipline ladder

- Minor issues may be handled with a verbal warning.
- On-field misconduct may result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- Serious violations may result in ejection, suspension, or season ban according to league leadership review.

RULE 11: GAME DAY OPERATIONS AND PROTESTS

SECTION 1: FORFEIT AND START-TIME RULES

Start-time administration

- Teams should be checked in before kickoff and ready to play at the scheduled start time.
- A team that cannot field the minimum number of players by 10 minutes after the scheduled start time may forfeit.

SECTION 2: WEATHER, EMERGENCY, AND PROTEST PROCESS

Operations

- Lightning within the league safety radius stops play immediately and restarts only after the required delay from the last strike or thunder event, consistent with site policy.
- If 2 or more complete quarters have been played when a game is suspended, the game may be declared official. Otherwise, it may be replayed or resumed according to league administration.
- Formal protests must be submitted in writing by the team representative within 24 hours of game conclusion.
- The league coordinator or designated administrator reviews the protest and issues the final ruling unless escalated by policy.

QUICK REFERENCE ONE-PAGER

MOST IMPORTANT GAME RULES

ITEM	QUICK RULE
Players on field	7 v 7; minimum 5 to avoid forfeit

Game length	4 x 10-minute quarters; running clock; final 2 minutes of 4th stop on dead balls
Start spot	Own 7-yard line to start / after scores; own 10 after touchback
Rush distance	Rushers must start 3 yards off the ball
Formation	Minimum 3 players must be on the line of scrimmage
Blocking	Screening only; no contact blocking, no extended hands; minimum 3 players on LOS
Forward pass	Must be thrown from behind LOS
No-running zones	5 yards before each end zone and first-down line
Flag-pulling safety rule	No diving or launching by the flag puller
Punting	Allowed on declared 4th down; dropped punt is dead where it first hits the ground after the kick
Scoring	TD 6; try from 3 = 1; try from 10 = 2; safety = 2
Key fouls	Flag guarding, illegal contact, illegal flag removal, PI, unsportsmanlike

Sideline reminder: play under control, pull the flag cleanly, and ask the nearest official before assuming a special-case ruling.