



**NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL  
ASSOCIATIONS**

## **2023 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES**

**Clarified That Towels Do Not Have To Be The Same Solid Color For Each Player [1- 5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW)]** — Player towels may contain one manufacturer’s logo and/or one school logo neither exceeding 2¼ square inches. Towels must be a solid color but now do not have to be the same solid color for each player. Towels may not be ball- or penalty-flag colored.

**Clarified When a Player Is Inbounds After Being Out of Bounds [2-29-1]** — This change clarifies when a player is inbounds after being out of bounds. There is no change to any foul or subsequent penalty provisions, or any rules related to illegal participation or the provisions regarding eligibility to catch a pass.

**Added A List of Criteria to Help Identify Players Who Should Be Defined as Defenseless Receivers [2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g]** — This change adds to the list of criteria to help identify players who should be defined as defenseless receivers related to application of unnecessary or excessive contact. This clarification should help game officials and coaches by defining allowable contact against defenseless receivers.

**Intentional Grounding Exception Changed [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)]** — This change permits the exception for intentional grounding to the first and only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.

**Removed “Intentional” From Pass Interference in TABLE 7-5 [TABLE 7-5 2c (DELETED), 7-5 PENALTY]** — By removing “intentional” from pass interference, this change puts the rule in line with how it is already enforced which is a 15-yard penalty.

**Changes In Basic Spot Penalty Enforcement [10-4, TABLE 10-4 (NEW), 10-6 (DELETED)]** — This change restructures and clarifies the amendments to Rule 10 to eliminate the excessive penalty enforcements for offensive fouls that occur behind the line of scrimmage. This revision stipulates the basic spot for enforcement of fouls behind the line of scrimmage is the previous spot rather than the spot of the foul unless otherwise specified by rule. Current penalties for illegal kicking, batting and participation fouls, and provisions for offensive fouls occurring in the end zone that may result in a safety remain intact.

**Clarification On The Ball Being Handed Forward On A Running Play [Six-Player – Rule 7g (NEW)]** — The change allows the ball to be handed forward on a running play, including to the guards/ends, while prohibiting handing the ball to the snapper provided both players are behind the neutral zone.

## **2023 EDITORIAL CHANGES**

1-1-7; 1-1-9; 1-3-2; 1-3-7 NOTE; TABLE 1-7; 1-8 (NEW); 3-6-1b(1); TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2; 9-5-1; 9-8-1; FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – II-5, X-3, X-5; RESOLVING TIED GAMES – 3-1; NINE-, EIGHT- AND SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES – RULES 2 and 7; PENALTY SUMMARY; INDEX.

## 2023 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

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

**\*\*FINAL as of May 2023**