

25-26 NFHS Flag Football Best Practices

Field and Equipment Guidelines

Spot Discs and Down Markers

- The host school/home team is required to provide a down box and operator.
- A additional down box, without changing the down number, can be used as an option to note the zone to gain.

Play Clock

- If a site does not provide a clock operator:
- The referee will keep the game and play clock.
- The referee may defer clock duties to another official on the crew.

Officials

- Officials and coaches are allowed to use headsets on the field.

Jewelry

- Not allowed under any circumstances.

Hair

- A helmet is a hair control device. Do not be over officious with athletes securing hair.
- It is the coach's responsibility to monitor their players and make sure their hair is "controlled" and doesn't interfere with the waistline/flags.

Protective Equipment

- Mouthguards are required.
- Must be simple and standard.
- Mouthguards with adornments (e.g., Battle, Shock Doctor) are not permitted.

Major Rule Changes from IL Rules in 2024 Fall

Running and Rush Rules

- The "No Run" zone has been eliminated.
- Defensive players line up on the 1-yard line and may rush at any time – no 7-yard rush rule.
- Offense lines up on the line of scrimmage with no requirement on the number of players on the line (offensive or defensive).

Snap Rules

- Snap can be between the legs or a side snap.
- Quarterback must be 2 yards behind the center.

- The snap must originate from the ground.

Extra Point Attempts

- Teams may attempt a 1-point try from the 3-yard line or a 2-point try from the 10-yard line.
- Teams may run or pass on either attempt.
- If the defense commits a penalty, the offense receives half the distance to the goal and may change the point value.

Safety

- After a safety, the ball is placed at the offense's 30-yard line.

Blocking and Contact

Screening and Blocking

- Screen blocking is allowed.
- Physical blocking is not allowed.
- The 'Jalen Hurts push' is now considered charging if screen blocking turns into forceful movement.

Flag Guarding

- Jumping is now allowed and is no longer considered flag guarding.
- Hurdling over a player is not allowed. (working on a definition of a hurdle)
- Lifting another player is not allowed.

Diving and Spinning

- Both are allowed, including diving for a catch, into the end zone, or to capture a flag.

Batting

- Allowed only when blocking a punt or a backward pass.

Tackling

- Wrap-up tackles result in disqualification.

Possession & Flag Pull

- After gaining possession, a flag pull or touch is required to end the play.
- If a flag is inadvertently pulled early, a touch is required.

Encroachment

- Now categorized as an unfair act.

Kickoff and Special Teams

Onside Kicks

- Not allowed under current rules.
- May be experimented with and subject to future committee review.