

NJSIAA
NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

NFHS
PLAY. PERFORM. COMPETE. TOGETHER.

2026 NJSIAA FLAG FOOTBALL COACHES WORKSHOP

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2025-26 NFHS FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

THE GAME
RULE 1-1-3

ART. 3 . . . The game is played with seven players on each team, but if a team has no substitutes to replace injured or disqualified players, it may play with no fewer than five.

SECTION 7 STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS

TABLE 1-7
TABLE OF STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS

1. Designate the field dimensions as official. (Flag Football Field Diagrams #1, 2 or 3)	**11.** Authorize the use of a drum for rhythmic cadence for deaf or partially deaf teams. (1-6-1 NOTE)
2. Determine the number of game officials. (1-1-4 NOTE)	**12.** Authorize the use of hash marks. (2-35-3 NOTE)
3. Determine the time for game officials to assume authority if greater than 30 minutes. (1-1-7)	**13.** Establish a procedure to resolve games tied following the fourth period. (3-1-1 NOTE)
4. Approve alteration of the team box if the same for both teams. (1-2-3e NOTE 3)	**14.** Establish a point differential to terminate games or to use a running game clock when the point differential is reached. (3-1-2)
5. Authorize the use of goals. (1-2-5)	**15.** Establish rules regarding continuation of interrupted games. (3-1-4)
6. Mandate the use of a specific ball for postseason or playoff competition. (1-3-2 NOTE)	**16.** Determine the length of halftime intermission. (3-1-6)
7. Authorize the use of a kicking tee. (1-3-4)	**17.** Determine when the coin toss is to be held. (3-2-1)
8. Authorize the use of supplementary equipment to aid in game administration. (1-3-7)	**18.** Authorize the use of TV/radio time-out. (3-5-7j)
9. Authorize the wearing of a commemorative/memorial patch. (1-5-1a(2) NOTE, 1-5-1a(3) NOTE)	**19.** Establish rules regarding place kicking for field goals and trys. (2-19-5, 8-3-3 NOTE, 8-4-1)
10. Determine the style of flag used and flag measurements (may not be below minimum). (1-5-1f NOTE)	

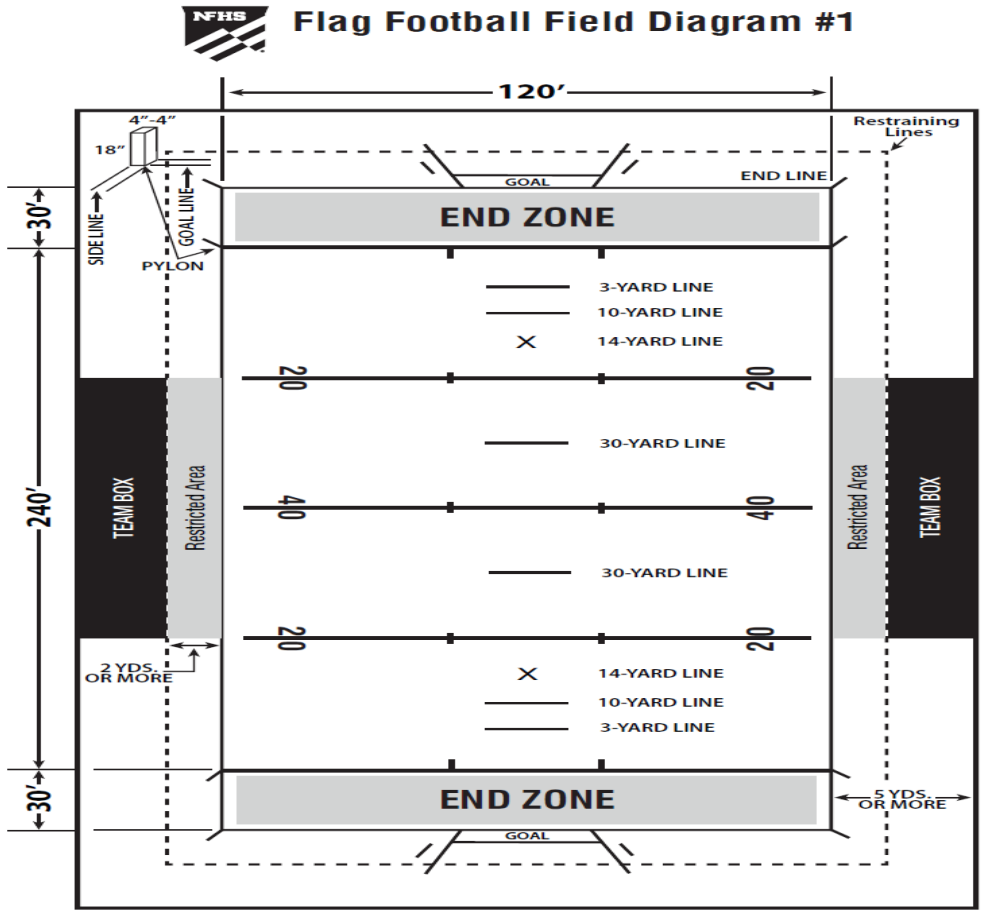
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2025-26 NFHS FLAG FOOTBALL STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS

2025-26 NFHS FLAG FOOTBALL NJSIAA ADOPTIONS

Table 1-7	NJSIAA Adoption
1. Designate the field dimensions as official	Diagram #1
2. Determine the number of game officials	Regular Season- 3 or 4; Playoffs- 4
5. Authorize the use of goals	No
7. Authorize the use of a kicking tee	No
10. Determine the style of flag used and flag measurements (may not be below the minimum).	• One-piece quick release belt • 3 flags – 1 on each side and 1 in the center of the back • Must be 1 ½" wide by 14" long • Must be solid color that is contrasting to the player's shorts • Must be solid color that is contrasting to the opponent's flags • Excess flag belt must be tucked into the shorts and must not be visible Effective in 2027
12. Authorize the use of hash marks.	No
13. Establish a procedure to resolve games tied after the 4th quarter	See Slide 29
14. Establish a point differential to terminate games or to use a running game clock when the point differential is reached.	See slide 23
15. Establish the rules regarding continuation of interrupted games.	Games interrupted/suspended due to reasons beyond anyone's control (i.e., electrical storms, torrential rains, etc.) shall be continued at the site of the interrupted game unless otherwise agreed upon by the competing schools.
16. Determine the length of halftime intermission.	• 5 minutes* • *May increase to a maximum of 10 minutes upon mutual agreement of both schools prior to the start of the game and upon communication to all officials prior to the start of the game

NJ FLAG FOOTBALL FIELD DIAGRAM



BALL SPECIFICATIONS FOR FLAG FOOTBALL TABLE 1-3-1

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TABLE 1-3-1 – BALL SPECIFICATIONS FOR FLAG FOOTBALL

	GIRLS	BOYS
Weight	12 to 14 ounces	14 to 15 ounces
Long Circumference	26 to 27 inches	$27\frac{3}{4}$ to $28\frac{1}{2}$ inches
Long Axis	10 to 11 inches	$10\frac{7}{8}$ to $11\frac{7}{16}$ inches
Short Circumference	19 to 20 inches	$20\frac{3}{4}$ to $21\frac{1}{4}$ inches
Inflation Pressure	10 to 13 psi	$12\frac{1}{2}$ to $13\frac{1}{2}$ psi

FLAG FOOTBALL
NFHS AUTHENTICATING MARK



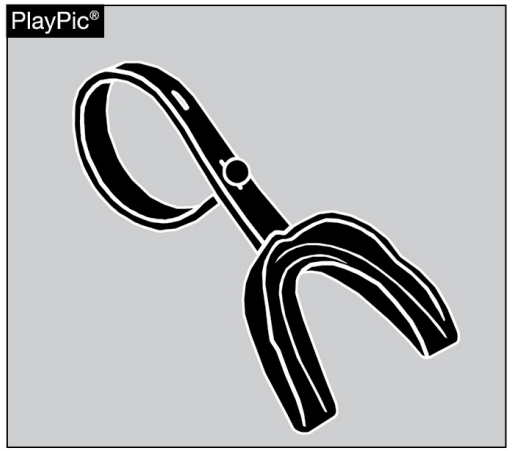
Effective 2028, the ball for girls and boys flag football competitions for 9th grade and above shall include the NFHS Authenticating Mark.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

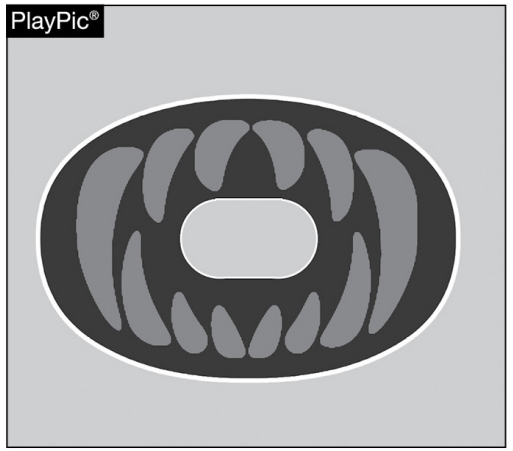
- *Players of the visiting team shall wear **white** jerseys.
- *Players of the home team shall wear **same dark color(s)** jerseys that clearly contrasts to white.
- Each player shall be numbered 0 through 99 inclusive.
- A single tooth and mouth protector is required.

*Effective in 2027

TOOTH & MOUTH PROTECTOR RULE 1-5-1c(1)b



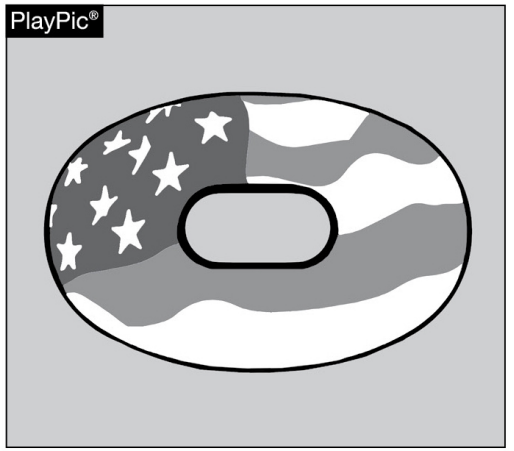
LEGAL



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 all legal as shown.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- Pants, shorts or skirts which shall not have pockets of any type, exposed drawstrings, belts and/or belt loops. The color of the pants, shorts or skirts shall be the same single solid color that clearly contrast that with the color of the flag and flag belt.

- An unaltered flag belt of the same single solid color, with **three flags** of the **same single solid color** and a minimum flag dimension of 1½ inch by 14 inches. No article of clothing may cover the flag or belt. The belt must be worn in such a way that one flag is located on each hip and **one flag is located on the tailbone**.
  NOTE: *State associations may determine the style of flag used and flag measurements (may not be below minimum).*

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- Arm sleeves are permissive. 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.

- Soft headwear not made from abrasive or hard material is allowed to be worn but is not required by rule.

- Rubber, cloth or elastic bands to control hair. Hard items, including, but not limited to, beads, barrettes, bobby pins and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened to the head and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates or opponents are allowed.

- Football gloves are permissive. Gloves, which may be anchored with athletic tape, and even though modified, must meet the NOCSAE standard or the SFIA specification at the time of manufacture.

FOOTBALL GLOVES







PATELLAR TENDON STRAPS

- **Patellar tendon straps are permissible by current 2025-26 NFHS Flag Football Rules and is not considered an illegal equipment adornment.**





ILLEGAL PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- Uniform adornments, with the exception of: (a) Moisture-absorbing sweatbands.
- Ball-colored headwear, jerseys, patches, exterior arm covers/pads, undershirts or gloves.
- Any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device worn by a player during a game.
- **Eye shade (grease or no-glare strips or stickers) that includes words, numbers, logos or other symbols within the eye shade.**
- Jewelry. Religious medals and a medical-alert indicator are not considered jewelry. Religious medals or other religious items must be taped to the body and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert indicator must be taped to the body and may be visible.

FLAG AND FLAG BELT
RULE 2-10

ART. 1… A flag belt is a required piece of player equipment as outlined in 1-5-1f.

ART. 2… A flag or flag belt is considered removed when:
a. the coupling of the belt is detached; or
b. a flag is separated from the flag belt.

ART. 3 . . . A flag inspection is the act of a teammate removing the flag or flag belt from a scoring player in order to show that a flag or flag belt has not been altered.

TIMING

TABLE 3-1
TABLE OF GAME CLOCK TIMES

PERIOD OF TIMING	CLOCK TIME
First Half:	
First period	12 minutes
Intermission between periods	1 minute
Second period	12 minutes
Halftime Intermission:	
When teams leave the field	5 to 20 minutes
Second Half:	
Third period	12 minutes
Intermission between periods	1 minute
Fourth period	12 minutes
Charged Time-outs	1 minute

- Timeouts: 2 per Half
- Sub-varsity Quarters: 10 minutes

TIMING

- Clock stoppages:
  - Down following a Foul
  - Official's timeout
  - Charged timeouts
  - Period ends
  - 2 minute timeout
  - Legal or illegal fwd pass is incomplete with <2 minutes remaining in the half
  - Runner goes OOB with <2 minutes remaining in the half
  - Score or touchback
  - New series for B
  - Inadvertent whistle
  - 1st down is declared under 2 minutes in either half
  - Player in need of equipment repair
  - Dry or change the ball

THE ZONE TO GAIN AND MEASUREMENTS
RULE 5-3

ART. 1 . . . The zone to gain is the next 20- or 40-yard line in advance of the ball's foremost point when a new series of downs is awarded. When a new series of downs is awarded, the penalties for all fouls (including nonplayer and unsportsmanlike) committed prior to the ready-for-play shall be administered before the zone to gain is established. The zone to gain then remains fixed until the series ends and a new zone to gain is established.

Formations/Positioning, Numbering and Action at the Snap
Rule 7-2

ART. 1 . . . After the RFP and before the snap, each player of A must have been , momentarily, 5 yards inbounds

ART.2 . . . Player formation and numbering requirements:

b. At the snap, A must be in a legal scrimmage formation as in 2-12-1*

c. B players may be anywhere on or behind their LOS (Team B's LOS is 1 yard beyond the vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest that team's goal line.)

*A scrimmage formation requires a snapper on the LOS and another offensive player in position to receive the snap. The player in position to receive the snap must be a minimum of 2 yards behind the snapper

Scrimmage Kicks
Rule 6-1

ART. 1 . . . K may punt from at least 2 yards behind the neutral zone if declared prior to the RFP. If a scrimmage kick is declared R must be given adequate time to substitute. If a scrimmage kick is declared, K must kick. K may declare kick or run a play from scrimmage following: a charged TO, official's TO, period ends, or penalty enforced

ART.2 . . . Any receiver may catch or recover a scrimmage kick in the field of play **and advance.**

ART.5 . . . When a punt, that has crossed the neutral zone touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, it is dead and belongs to R at that spot

ART. 6 . . . When a punt that has crossed the neutral zone and not yet touched the ground touches a player from R and then is caught by K, it is dead and belongs to K at the spot

SCORING

TABLE 8-1
POINT VALUES

Touchdown		6 points
Field Goal	(if approved by State Association Adoption)	3 points
Safety	Points awarded to the opponent	2 points
Successful Try a. Touchdown - 10 yd b. Touchdown - 3 yd c. Field Goal - 3 yd	 (if approved by State Association Adoption)	 2 points 1 point 1 point
Forfeited Game	Game score is: Offended Team: 1, Opponent: 0 But if offended team is ahead, the score stands.	

N/A

N/A

ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS
RULE 9-2

ART. 2 . . . The runner shall not:

c. Use hands, arms or the ball where **contact** occurs between the runner and an opponent that denies the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag or flag belt.

PENALTY: Art. 2 – *Flag Guarding – (S38) – 10 yards.

ART. 3 . . . A defensive player shall not:

a. Initiate contact with an opponent.

d. Initiate contact with an eligible receiver.

e. Intentionally remove a flag or flag belt from an opponent who does not have possession of the ball.

* If an offensive player uses their own hand/arm to hold a flag in the popper or were to pin the flag against their body, this can also be considered Flag Guarding

BLOCKING
RULE 9-3

ART. 1 . . . Blocking by any player is illegal unless it is a screen block*.

ART. 2 . . . After assuming a legal position, a screen blocker may move to maintain legal position by moving in the same direction or path as the opponent. Screen blocking shall take place without initiating contact during the process of the block. A screen blocker shall not extend the arms, or use hands, arms, elbows or legs to initiate contact.

PENALTY: Art. 1 – Illegal Blocking – (S34) – 10 yards.

*Screen blocking is taking position to obstruct the path of an opponent without contacting the opponent with any part of the blocker's body.

Overtime

- Coin toss is held before overtime – visiting team calls the toss
- Winner of the coin toss chooses:
  - Offense or defense first, or
  - Which end the overtime is played
- First overtime period:
  - Each team gets one possession consisting of a series of 4 downs (unless a new series is awarded by rule) starting on the 20-yard line
- Second overtime period:
  - Each team will be allowed to run one play from the 3-yard line or 10-yard line
    - 1 point from the 3-yard line
    - 2 points from the 10-yard line
- During the regular season, a maximum of 3 overtime periods will be played.
- During the state tournament, the second overtime period procedure will continue until a winner is declared
- The order of offense and defense flips with each overtime period
- Each team gets 1 timeout per overtime period (non-cumulative)
- During each overtime period, when the defensive teams secures possession, the ball is dead, and the possession is over

Running Clock

- When the score differential reaches **19 points or more**, the clock shall only be stopped for:
  - Time-Outs
  - Injuries
  - Penalties
  - Scores
- Once a game reaches a running clock status, it will not revert to a regular clock