I hope you have had an enjoyable summer vacation and that you are ready to start the new school year. In this booklet please find important and necessary materials for the ensuing football season.

**Please Note:**
- High School football teams may start practice on **Monday, August 10, 2020.**
- Junior High football teams may start practice on **Monday, August 17, 2020.**
- Again, the one-year cycle for district assignments and classification breaks will be used. Classification breaks and district assignments will be finalized and posted on the MSHSAA website on **August 21, 2020**
- This is the eighth year of the football playoff format. Each team can track their regular season progress and standings weekly on the MSHSAA website from your school’s football schedule page at ([www.mshsaa.org](http://www.mshsaa.org)). Please read the Football Manual found on the MSHSAA website ([www.mshsaa.org](http://www.mshsaa.org)).

The 2020-2021 MSHSAA Football Manual is available for viewing and/or printing via the Football page on the MSHSAA website ([www.mshsaa.org](http://www.mshsaa.org)). The manual will be titled “**2020-2021 MSHSAA Football Manual**”.

If I can be of any additional assistance, please don't hesitate to email or call. I look forward to working with you and your students this school year.

Best wishes for an enjoyable school year and good luck during the 2020 football season!

Greg Stahl,  
MSHSAA Assistant Executive Director

GS/ml
**2020 MSHSAA FOOTBALL RULES MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS – COACHES**

### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

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1. **ONLINE RULES MEETINGS REQUIREMENT – AUGUST 3 - AUGUST 21**

   **COACHES:** All Coaches are required to complete the Football Online Rules Meeting. The online rules meeting may be completed through the MSHSAA website from (August 3 - August 21, 2020). The online rules meeting for coaches can be located by logging on to your school’s homepage of the MSHSAA website and selecting the “Online Rules Reviews” link located under the Education category.

2. **MSHSAA FOOTBALL MANUAL** - Coaches are reminded that the MSHSAA Football Manual is located on the MSHSAA web site on the Football Page. The MSHSAA Football Manual contains information you will need to be familiar with for both the regular season and postseason. There is no acceptable excuse for not knowing the information contained in the MSHSAA Football Manual. The MSHSAA Football Manual and NFHS Football Rules Book are the two publications that provide the rules and regulation presiding over high school football in the state of Missouri.

3. **RULES INTERPRETERS** – Football Rules Interpreters are available to coaches and officials for game rule interpretations – Emry Dilday (Southwest), Jim Rosen (St. Louis), George Bays (Southeast), Durante’ Davis (Kansas City), Bob Lade (Northwest), Chuck Snow (Central). Please contact your local rules interpreter with questions prior to contacting the MSHSAA office.

4. **APPROVAL OF OFFICIALS** - MSHSAA By-Law 6.1.1 - officials shall be agreed upon by both schools at least 30 days before each contest. The host school is responsible for making certain game officials are registered with the MSHSAA and to initiate the agreement on officials with the visiting school. However, if the visiting school has not been provided the opportunity to approve the game officials, contact should be made with the host school to arrange for approval. Approval by both schools is to be obtained prior to employing officials. Officials shall be engaged by a written contract.

   **OFFICIALS - REGULAR SEASON AND POSTSEASON** – Officials for football contests taking place during weeks 1-9 will be contracted by the host school and should have approval from the visiting school. **Week 10 (districts) officials thru the state championship games will be selected and assigned through the MSHSAA office.** It is important that each school completes the officials recommendation form on the MSHSAA Website under district entries for football by October 14, 2020. **Please recommend or not recommend officials by name of the Referee/Crew Chief.** Each school may choose to “not recommend” up to three (3) crews of which they do not have assigned to a post season game.

5. **COACHES RECRUITING OFFICIALS** - We need your continued help in recruiting new officials and providing them with opportunities to work so they can improve their skills. Coaches can help by encouraging graduating seniors to become officials. Officials should be encouraging all young officials to continue to study, develop and remain patient for varsity level experiences.

6. **COACHES’ AND OFFICIALS’ RESPONSIBILITIES** – The Referee and another official are to conduct a pre-game meeting with each head coach at the locker room of each team prior to taking the field for warm-up. Coaches have a responsibility to make themselves available for this meeting 1 hour before game time.

7. **OFFICIALS EVALUATIONS PROCEDURES** - Each head coach shall submit a rating for each official working his/her VARSITY REGULAR SEASON CONTESTS (home and away). Officials are not rated for the post season contests. Schools are required to submit their ratings to renew their membership for the succeeding year. It is **recommended that coaches wait 24 hours after the game, but no longer than 72 hours to rate officials.** Officials ratings are completed through the MSHSAA Web Site. **Coaches, please submit your official’s ratings online throughout the season (week by week) and not wait until the season has concluded.** Rate each official every time he/she officiates for you. If you play a nine game schedule you are responsible for evaluations of 45 officials (5man crew per game). Officials must give coaches their correct registration number and coaches must request this information from the officials. The MSHSAA Board of Directors requires the High School Athletic Director to verify that his/her school's fall sports officials ratings have been completed accurately by the respective head coach. If a 5 rating has been given to an official, the head coach shall provide an explanation in writing as to why that rating was necessary. Failure to submit ratings for a sport shall result in the school's program, for that sport(s), being placed on probation and could lead to a team not being assigned to participate in the MSHSAA district and state playoff series. Deadline for the submission of ratings is **November 15.** Schools that fail to submit the required official’s ratings by the established deadline shall be issued a **$25.00 late penalty fee and sent a reminder letter to the principal, giving the school until the end of the month to submit the required official’s ratings.** Schools that fail to submit the required official’s ratings by the end of the month shall be placed on probation in the sport concerned by the MSHSAA Board of Directors and assessed a penalty fee of **$100.00. (Total Fine $125.00)**

8. **MSHSAA RULES ADOPTIONS:**

   **A. LENGTH OF QUARTERS FOR JUNIOR HIGH and HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAMES:** 7th grade only - 8 minutes; 8th grade only - 8 minutes; 9th grade and/or JV – 12 minutes (or less if mutually agreed upon); Varsity - 12 minutes; teams of mixed grades(7th, 8th, 9th) - the limit for the lower grade shall apply (MSHSAA By-Law 3.29.9).
B. **RUNNING CLOCK:** After the first half, any time the score differential reaches 35 points or more, for 11-man and 45 points or more, for 8-man, the following changes, and only these changes, will be made regarding rules determining when the clock will be stopped. The point differential applies to ALL levels. The clock will be stopped when:

1. An official’s time-out is called, except:
   a) when a first down is declared
   b) following a change of team possession
   c) to dry or change the game ball
2. A charged time-out is called;
3. At the end of a period;
4. A score occurs.

**NOTE:** The clock will continue to run in all other situations.

**NOTE:** The use of this rule does not preclude the use of NFHS Rule 3-1-3 which reads: "A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, any remaining periods may be shortened at any time or the game terminated."

C. **TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURE (Regular Season, Including District Games, and State Playoff Series):** For ALL varsity high school games (regular season and playoff contests) that end in a tie, at the end of regulation, play shall follow a “25-yard Overtime Procedure” to determine the winner. The procedure, as outlined in the National Federation Football Rules Book, will be followed with the following exceptions:

1. The ball will be placed on the 25-yard line.
2. First and tens may be obtained to maintain possession. Once the line-to-gain has not been achieved the ball will be turned over to the defense.
3. Lower Level Contests: Games contested below the senior high school varsity level (Junior Varsity, Freshman) that end in a tie at the end of regulation play, may utilize one (1) overtime period to break the tie if both coaches agree before the game. If a tie remains at the end of the one overtime period, then the contest will remain a tie. Combined 8th and 9th grade contests that end in a tie, at the end of regulation play, will remain a tie.
4. **TRY DURING REGULAR SEASON GAMES (Week 1-9):** NFHS Rule 8-3-1 EXCEPTION states “If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the 4th period, the try shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.” During games for Week 1 through 9 the TRY **shall** be attempted if the score-difference is 12 or less points when the winning team scores. It shall also be attempted if the score-difference is 14 or less points when the losing team scores.

**NOTE:** This applies only to the 4th quarter, not to any overtime periods.

D. **SUSPENDED GAME:** If a game is interrupted because of events beyond the control of the responsible authority (weather, lights, etc.), the game by rule shall be continued from the point of interruption unless the teams mutually agree to terminate the game with the existing score (a winner must be determined under this option).

E. **ANY PLAYER OR COACH DISQUALIFIED (ejected) from an interscholastic football contest under NFHS Football Rule 9-4, 9-5 & 9-8:** A player who is ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct shall at a minimum be prohibited from playing in the next interscholastic contest at that same level. A coach who is ejected during a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct shall at a minimum be prohibited from coaching and attending the next interscholastic contest at the same level of which the ejection occurred, as well as complete the NFHS Online Sportsmanship Course.

F. **COIN TOSS - All games:** The head coach and captain(s) (NO MORE THAN 4 PLAYERS IN GAME UNIFORM) shall attend the actual or simulated coin toss at the three minute mark at midfield. Honorary captains as approved by school administration are permitted at the coin toss. Honorary captains shall be dismissed from the coin toss at the same time as the coaches. All other team personnel must remain outside the field of play (NFHS Rule 3-2-2). This does not preclude having an early toss off the field followed by a simulation on the field three minutes prior to kickoff.

H. **RECOGNITION AND EVALUATION OF THE ATHLETE WITH A CONCUSSION:**

1. Recognition of the signs and symptoms of a concussion is important. Every member of the team-athlete, teammates, coaches, parents or guardians, officials, athletic trainers, and team physicians have a duty to report a suspected concussion. Not all school districts have medical personnel available to cover every practice and competition; therefore, the coach is the person in the best position to protect the player and must be aware that not all student athletes will be forthcoming about their injury.

2. An official shall not be responsible for making the diagnosis of a concussion. The official can assist coaches and medical staff by recognizing signs and symptoms of a concussion and informing the coach and medical staff of their concerns.

I. **HEAT/HYDRATION-MANDATORY OFFICIALS TIMEOUTS:** Per NFHS Football Rule 3-5-7g, additional official’s timeouts may be taken due to excessive heat/humidity which may create a health risk to players. It is a MSHSAA Rules Adoption that a mandatory additional official’s timeout must be issued at the half-way point of each quarter during ALL football games for the first four weeks of the season. These additional official’s timeouts shall be taken at the most natural break in play as possible. The mandated additional official’s timeouts shall be taken during ALL football games beginning with AUGUST 20 and ending SEPTEMBER 18.
BOARD POLICY FOR ON-SITE PROTESTS OF ATHLETIC CONTESTS

The Board of Directors adopted the following Policy, March, 1997, to address protests. The Board acknowledges that mistakes are made by officials in judgment and even sometimes in misapplication of game rules. However, the decisions rendered by officials at the contest site are to be final and any further process other than the one outlined below would not truly serve a useful purpose in the overall scope of high school athletics.

1. Within the procedures established within each individual sport rule code, the head coach must request a review of an official’s application of a rule through appropriate channels.
2. If, after the review is complete, the coach still believes there has been a misapplication of a rule by a contest official(s), the coach shall then file a formal verbal protest with the game officials who will then notify the opposing coach immediately of the protest. A coach shall not protest a decision of judgment.
3. Following this notification of protest, the head coach shall be allowed approximately ten minutes to use his/her National Federation Rules Book, National Federation Case Book, MSHSAA Rules Meeting Announcements and/or MSHSAA Sport Manual to locate and show the game official(s) the appropriate rule reference which clarifies a misapplication of the game rule. If the head coach does not have personal copies of the above mentioned materials at the game site or the specific rule reference(s) or case book play(s) cannot be located within the maximum allowable ten minutes, the protest shall automatically be disallowed and the game shall continue from the point of interruption. If a rule reference(s) or case book play(s) is found that indicates a misapplication of a rule has occurred, the official’s decision shall be corrected at that time before any further action occurs, and the contest shall be resumed from the point of interruption after the correction as provided in the contest rules. When appropriate, the game officials may assist the head coach in locating appropriate rule and case book references.
4. All protests shall be resolved at the contest site before any further game action occurs.
5. Protests that are not filed in a timely manner by that sport rule code shall be automatically disallowed.
6. The MSHSAA Board of Directors and/or Staff shall not review contest protests.

APPLICATION OF PROTEST PROCEDURE

A. Introduction: Protests rarely occur and the new protest procedure policy is not intended to increase the frequency of protests. It is however, intended to resolve the protest on site. For this to occur the following must take place:

1. Coaches and Officials must be professional with each other. This should be a non-confrontational conference.
2. As stated above, protests involve application of rules only -- not judgment calls. (Examples of items which could be protested: Football -- penalizing 5 yards instead of 15 yards; Wrestling -- allowing 1 minute for injury time instead of 2 minutes; Softball -- allowing only two charged defensive conferences instead of three.) (Examples of items that could not be protested: Football -- pass interference; Wrestling -- stalling; Softball -- out or safe calls.)

3. GET IT RIGHT! If the official has made a mistake; admit it, correct it and move on.
Contest officials and the head coach filing the official protest shall notify the MSHSAA Office in writing of any contest in which an official protest has occurred and the resolution of that protest. The MSHSAA Special Report Forms shall be used for this purpose.

B. Process.

1. Once a head coach has filed a formal verbal protest with the game officials, they shall then notify the opposing head coach of the protest and the playing field, court, mat, etc. shall be cleared of all participants and they shall report to their respective team bench areas.
2. The head coach shall then be allowed approximately ten minutes to locate specific rule references from the National Federation Rules Book, National Federation Case Book, MSHSAA Rules Meeting Announcements and/or MSHSAA Sport Manual to substantiate the claim that a misapplication of a game rule has occurred. The game officials shall also confer among themselves during the period to address the claim of the coach as to the potential rule misapplication.
3. If the head coach is able to produce rule evidence from the above mentioned sources to support the claim of a misapplication of a game rule, the officials shall correct the error as provided in the contest rules and the contest shall proceed from the point of interruption. If the head coach cannot produce the evidence, the protest shall be disallowed and the contest shall continue from the point of interruption. The previously mentioned materials must be immediately available for review at the playing field sideline, court-side, mat-side etc. (Time shall not be provided to go to a locker room, team bus, coach’s office, etc.)
4. Once the final decision regarding the protest has been rendered, the game officials shall provide the participants sufficient opportunity to warm-up before the contest is resumed.
2020 FOOTBALL MECHANICS AND PROCEDURES

This section is to clarify areas of football mechanics and procedures where vague or no specific direction is presented by the NFHS.

1. MEETING WITH HEAD COACHES – The Referee and another game official, dressed in game uniform, should visit each head coach in their team’s dressing room. Visit with the home team coach one hour prior to game time and then visit with the visiting coach thereafter.

2. WIRELESS CREW COMMUNICATION DEVICES: Wireless Communication Devices are for “VARSITY” football games ONLY. The wireless crew communication devices are not permitted for use by officials who are officiating lower level games. (Restricted Contests: JV, freshmen, 8th and 7th grade contests). SEE GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT INCLUDED IN YOUR RULES BOOK MAILING FOR OFFICIALS.

3. WIRELESS COMMUNICATION-INTERACTIVE TRAINING DEVICE (CITD); Purpose: To permit an educational and training experience for beginning officials in which timely and immediate feedback can be received in regards to position and mechanics during a contest. For purposes of the MSHSAA Wireless Communication-Interactive Training Device, the CITD is defined as a two way radio with an attached earpiece and push to talk microphone. Other communication devices are prohibited. The CITD may only be used at 7th, 8th and 9th grade contests. Furthermore, trainers and officials may use CITD’s at any school’s practice/inter squad scrimmage in which an official(s) are invited to participate. SEE GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT INCLUDED IN YOUR RULES BOOK MAILING FOR OFFICIALS.

4. 2nd Half Choice Procedure-MSHSAA 2nd Half Mechanic Adoption: After completing the “Entering The Field” procedure after halftime, the crew will be located in their same positions as they were located for the coin toss to start the game. Communication regarding the second half choice will be done by the Referee and Umpire at the fifty yard line from their sidelines. The Referee or Umpire, depending on which team has the second half choice, will confer with the “Head Coach” of the second half choosing team as to their choice to begin the second half. After securing the second half choice from the head coach, the Referee/Umpire will give a subtle signal of the choice selected to the Referee/Umpire on the opposite sideline. The Referee/Umpire will then relay to the opposing coach the choice selected by the second half choosing coach, at this time the opposing coach will decide on his choice that remains. The Referee/Umpire will then relay back to the Referee/Umpire a subtle signal of the option selected by the opposing coach. Begin second half. Note: “Varsity” football crews officiating “varsity” contests that choose to use the approved Wireless Crew Communication Devices are permitted to use the devices to forego the subtle signaling of 2nd half choices.

5. GAME BALL/BALL BOYS/MANAGERS – After the game balls from each team are approved by the Referee, the Line Judge is to secure the ball with the ball boys. It is preferred that ball boys from both teams are placed on the line judge’s sideline; however, it is permissible to use a ball boy(s) on each team’s respective sideline. Ball boys and managers should never be on the field of play. Managers or ball boys shall not be allowed to retrieve the kicking tee.

6. COIN TOSS – The coin toss or simulated coin toss will take place in the center of the field 3 minutes prior to game time, with not more than four team members in game uniform (captains) from each team. The walk to centerfield is part of the coin toss; therefore, the walk begins at 3 minutes prior to game time. Honorary personnel, approved by the school administration, may be present at the start of the coin toss procedures but must leave the field at the same time the coaches are dismissed. If both teams agree to an early coin toss it shall not take place on the playing field but will be simulated in the center of the field 3 minutes prior to game time. The Referee, Umpire, Line Judge, and Back Judge shall escort the team captains and head coaches toward the center of the field starting from the sideline at 3 minutes prior to game time, with Line Judge and Back Judge stopping at the hash marks and facing the sidelines. The Referee should have his back to the clock during the coin toss. The captains should be closest to the Referee with the head coaches closest to the Umpire. The coin should be tossed, caught and displayed without turning the coin over onto the top of the wrist/ hand. The coin shall not be allowed to hit the ground. If the winner of the toss defers, signal #10 is given prior to asking the other captain his “choice”. Since “defer” is an option and not a choice, if the captain winning the toss defers, the other team’s captain becomes the “first choosing captain”. The Referee concludes the coin toss by signaling only the choice of the first choosing captain.

2020 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES
DEFINING TEAM DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE FOR PENALTY DECISIONS [1-4-1, 1-4-4 (NEW), 2-32-5, 3-5-2, 10-1-1, 10-1-2, 10-2-4]
Rationale: Prior to the game, the Head Coach will notify the referee of the designatied representative (Coach or Player) who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination.
HALFTIME INTERMISSION OPTION FOLLOWING WEATHER DELAY [Table 3-1 NOTES 2 (NEW)]

**Rationale:** The halftime intermission may be shortened by mutual agreement of opposing coaches if a weather delay occurs during the last three minutes of the second period.

**40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK CLARIFICATION [3-6-1a(1)e EXCEPTIONS 2 and 3 (NEW)]**

**Rationale:** To eliminate a potential timing advantage gained by the defensive team, the rules committee approved the play clock being set to 40 seconds when an Officials’ time-out is taken for an injury to a defensive player or a defensive player has an equipment issue.

**25-SECOND PLAY CLOCK CLARIFICATION [3-6-1a(1)f (NEW)]**

**Rationale:** Following a legal kick when either team is awarded a new series, the play clock will be set to 25 seconds.

**DISCONCERTING ACT PENALTY RECLASSIFIED [7-1-9 (NEW), 7-1-9 PENALTY (NEW), 9-5-1d]**

**Rationale:** Disconcerting acts or words by the defense has been reclassified from a 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul to a 5-yard foul.

**SPIKING THE BALL TO CONSERVE TIME (7-5-2 EXCEPTION)**

**Rationale:** The exception to allow a player to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap, has been expanded to include any player positioned directly behind the center. This exception now includes snaps that are NOT hand-to-hand.

**2020 NFHS FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

Sportsmanship
Intentional Grounding
Ineligible Downfield and Line of Scrimmage Formation

**2020-2022 NFHS FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

**NOTE:** Mechanics Manuals for Officials are published on a two year print cycle

**Clock Management Communication**

Accurate and effective communication during the game is critically important for the game officials, coaches, players and the press box personnel. Recent NFHS football rules change(s) that impact clock management issues call for careful consideration of the necessary changes for game officials to correctly communicate important information throughout the contest – especially during critical game situations when the clock issues are very important. Game officials must utilize sound and effective mechanics throughout the entire game to ensure that they are adequately prepared when the game situations call for critical decisions to be made by the coaches and players. One very important change that is a result of the new 40-, 25-second play clock is that the covering official(s) must utilize a physical signal that is clearly visible at the end of every down. The most common signals that are necessary when the ball becomes dead include Signal No. 7 (dead ball with one arm straight up) or Signal No. 3 (stops the game clock) or Signal No. 10 (incomplete forward pass). A down that involves a score would involve another appropriate signal as well. Please note that the result of any down only calls for one signal to be used. Coaches, players, clock operators and the other game officials depend on this important information to make critical decisions that sometimes must be made very quickly. A game officials crew that has developed effective and consistent habits to clearly communicate this important information throughout the contest is thoroughly prepared when critical game situations call for quick decisions. Effective clock management becomes a shared crew responsibility when each member of the crew learns the correct signals and is prepared to utilize them in an accurate and consistent manner. Game official crews that are assigned to work a game where visible play clocks are not available on occasion or all of the time are likely to be familiar with the local association/ state mechanic that is recommended for use when the play clock has reached the 10-second mark and then the 5-second mark. It is the recommendation of the NFHS Football Game Officials Manual Committee that a clearly visible physical signal must occur when the play clock reaches 10 seconds and that an additional signal is necessary at the 5-second mark to count down the final seconds prior to the possibility of a delay of game foul. The game official who is responsible for this signal might choose to visit with both quarterbacks prior to the game to allow them to clarify any questions or information they may have concerning this mechanic.

**Respectful Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials**

If the primary mission of high school football was to win state championships then, by design, 99 percent of all teams would never fulfill the goal. If winning games was the primary goal then, for sure, 50 percent of teams would never be fulfilling the goal. All NFHS sports rules books include a “Mission Statement” (Appendix A in the NFHS Football Rules Book) that clearly states the primary goals as promoting “leadership, respect, integrity and sportsmanship.” To that end, coaches and game officials should always be communicating with each other in a manner that models such behaviors for the student-athletes. Guidelines to model such communication is always included as Appendix F (for Coaches) and Appendix G (for Officials) in the NFHS Football Rules Book.
NFHS Football Rule 9-8-1 states that it is unsportsmanlike conduct and thereby clearly illegal for any non-player (coach) to “attempt to influence a decision by a game official”

I” such as screaming for holding by a defensive coach over and over, or consistently asking for a pass interference call by an offensive coach. The rule further defines that it is unsportsmanlike conduct to “indicate an objection to a game official’s decision.”

While it is likely not appropriate to be calling such a foul unless it is an extreme case, game officials and coaches need to keep in mind that young student-athletes are watching their every move. If a coach disagrees with a decision, he or she should be requesting a “conference time-out” and respectfully presenting his or her case. Note that this procedure calls for both coach and game officials to discuss any disagreement specifically “in front of the team bench” (as a learning opportunity for players to see how adults respectfully speak with other adults) as opposed to some secret screaming session in the middle of the field. If they are not sure enough about their position to risk a time-out, then they need to abide by NFHS Football Rule 9-8-1.

Preventing Inequities Due to Illegal Substitution and/or Illegal Formation

After the ready-for-play, each A player who participated in the previous down and each A substitute must have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks before the snap. (Rule 7-2-1) With the newly revised definition for the “ready-for-play,” a “wide out” type substitute can gain the advantage of being unnoticed and uncovered or even in illegal position if game officials do not consistently recognize whether or not the players are all abiding by this NFHS football rule. The ready-for-play may be a signal given by the referee. However, with the new rule it may also be initiated by the umpire placing the ball on the ground and moving into position. It only takes one instance for a receiver to go uncovered for A to gain the advantage of a long reception or even a score. Game officials need to be especially conscious of the position of outside substitutes when either type ready for play occurs. Wing officials should be especially alert for substitution issues.

Responsibility for Minimizing Risk in the Game

It is so very important to understand that the school administrators, coaches, players and non-players, and game officials are equally responsible for minimizing the risk in the game of football!! It is quite clear that there have been many NFHS football rules changes recently that directly address risk minimization of the participants. The purpose of this Point of Emphasis is to encourage all game officials to carefully study these NFHS rules of the game for football and prepare themselves to make appropriate decisions throughout the game that address this area of concern. It is very important to always remember that a decision to not throw a flag for a risk minimization-related foul sends a very clear message that the game official approves of the action by the player(s) and is likely to see the same foul repeated. Game officials should take the time to carefully study the items listed below and prepare to react appropriately in each and every game. Every game official must take responsibility for minimizing the risk of all participants in high school football.

NFHS Football Rule 9 clearly addresses the conduct of all participants, and Sections 3 and 4 specifically deal with physical contact between players that may result in these risk concerns. Let’s look at several specific examples. Please note that this list is not all-inclusive:

**Targeting** is defined as “an act by any player who takes aim and initiates contact against an opponent above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulder(s).” Any player who is in complete control of himself (not fighting off a block) must be held to a very high standard when making this contact against an opponent. We simply cannot miss or pass on this type of foul in an effort to protect both players. Remember that a targeting foul does not result in automatic disqualification, but that certainly can be a consideration.

**Blindsided Block** is defined as “a block against an opponent other than the runner, who is not able to see the blocker approaching.” This action that includes forceful contact clearly results in a foul unless the block outside of the free-blocking zone is initiated with open hands (open palms to the opponent).

**Tripping** is defined as “the intentional use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knee.” It must be noted here that a player may not trip any opponent (includes the runner). It is also important to note here that an injury to both players is certainly possible.

**Defenseless Player** is defined as “a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury.” It must be noted here that physical contact against a defenseless player may very well be perfectly legal, but any player must take extreme care to make certain that the contact is legal by rule to avoid a foul. Game officials must carefully observe any defenseless player to determine that the contact by an opponent is legal. It is also necessary to note here that unnecessary or excessive contact may very well occur.

**Illegal Helmet Contact** is defined as “an act of initiating contact with the helmet against any opponent.” It is important to note here that a helmet is to be used for protection and not to be used as a weapon.

**Spear** is “an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent at the shoulders or below with the crown (top portion) of his helmet,” and is likely to be the most common example of illegal helmet contact.

**Roughing** an opponent may include action against a passer, a kicker, a holder or a snapper. Each of these players are certainly in a vulnerable position at a critical moment and clearly must be protected.
2020 FOOTBALL SEASON REGULATIONS

Rules in this section are specific for football. Refer to MSHSAA Constitution, By-laws and Board of Directors Policies for regulations related to age, residence, scholarship, amateur status, etc.

1. **PRESEASON**
   a. An organizational meeting may be conducted prior to the season opening provided no instruction or practice is included.
   b. Issuing of equipment may take place prior to the earliest day for practice (**August 10, 2020**).

2. **LENGTH OF SEASON**
   a. High School - the earliest day practice may begin is **Monday, August 10, 2020**. The season ends on **Saturday, December 5, 2020**.
   b. Junior High School sports seasons shall be twelve consecutive calendar weeks in length beginning with the first organized practice with any part of a sports squad and ending with the last interscholastic contest. The earliest day practice may begin for any middle school sport is **Monday, August 17, 2020**.
   c. The sports seasons for the seventh and eighth grade teams may be scheduled at any time during the period beginning with **Monday August 17, 2020**, and ending with the last day of school in the spring.

3. **FALL SEASON PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

   Research has supported the findings, which indicate an increase in heat-related injuries resulting from inadequate pre-season acclimatization practices (1-12). Similarly, the incidence in stress-related injuries (i.e., Stress fractures, tendonitis) has been found to be directly proportional to the work-rest ratio of the athlete (6, 7, 13 – 15). For these reasons, it is the recommendation of the National Federation of High School Association’s (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and the National Athletic Trainers’ Association’s (NATA) Secondary School Committee that all fall sports use acclimatization and recovery principles to develop their fall pre-season practice schedules for the purpose of enhancing the student-athlete well-being. The primary focus of the pre-season period should be to provide an adjustment period to the intensity and duration of exercise and environmental conditions. The guidelines outline a fourteen-day period based on the science of acclimatization that also differentiates sports with equipment due to the unique stress on the body’s heat dissipation capabilities. The foundation for this model was based upon the NCAA version adopted by the NCAA Committee on competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports.

**WET BULB GLOBE THERMOMETERS (WBGT)**

- The use of a Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer (WBGT) is now the recommended practice for determining whether a practice or contest must be postponed or suspended due to heat/humidity conditions. A recommended practice is one of which the state association expects member schools to use and follow.

- WBGT Recommendations and Guidelines, Background and Rationale and a resource list of websites to secure a WBGT are posted on the Sports Medicine page at [www.mshsaa.org](http://www.mshsaa.org).
SUMMARY OF THE 16-DAY ACCLIMATIZATION PERIOD

Days 1-5
1. Days 1 through 5 of the acclimatization period consist of the first 5 days of formal practice. During this time, athletes are not allowed to participate in more than 1 practice per day.
2. If a practice is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions, the practice may recommence once conditions are deemed safe. Total practice time should not exceed 3 hours in any 1 day.
3. A 1-hour maximum walk-through is permitted during Days 1-5 of the acclimatization period. A 1-hour recovery period is required between the practice and walk-through (or vice-versa).
4. During Days 1-2 of the acclimatization period in sports requiring helmets or shoulder pads, a helmet is the only protective equipment permitted (goalies, as in the case of field hockey and related sports, may not wear full protective gear or perform activities that would require protective equipment. During Days 3-5, only helmets and shoulder pads may be worn. Beginning on Day 6, all protective equipment may be worn and full contact may begin.
   a. Football Only: On Days 3-5 contact with blocking sleds and tackling dummies may be initiated.
   b. Full-Contact Sports: 100% live contact drills may begin no earlier than Day 6.

Days 6-16:
1. Beginning no earlier than Day 6 and continuing through Day 14, double-practice days must be followed by a single-practice day. On single-practice days, 1 walk-through is permitted, separated from the practice by at least 1 hour continuous rest. When a double practice day is followed by a rest day, another double-practice day is permitted after the rest day.
2. On a double-practice day neither practice may exceed 3 hours in duration nor may student-athletes participate in more than 5 total hours of practice. Warm-up, stretching, cool-down, walk-through, conditioning, and weight-room activities must be included as part of the total practice time. The 2 practices must be separated by at least 3 continuous hours in a cool environment.
3. Because the risk of exertional heat illnesses during the preseason heat-acclimatization period is high, it is recommended that an athletic trainer be on site before, during and after all practices. This is not required.

16 DAY ACCLIMATIZATION PERIOD – FOOTBALL SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Level of Contact</th>
<th>Heat Acclimatization Practice Plan</th>
<th>Sports Equipment/Helmets/Pads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>One Practice per day (3 hours Total) 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest</td>
<td>helmet only spandex girdle or pants without pads allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>One Practice per day (3 hours Total) 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest</td>
<td>helmet only spandex girdle or pants without pads allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Air/Bag/Control</td>
<td>One Practice per day (3 hours Total) 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest</td>
<td>helmet shoulder pads blocking sleds tackling dummies only spandex girdle or pants without pads allowed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4  Air/Bag/Control
One Practice per day (3 hours Total)
1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest
helmet
shoulder pads
blocking sleds
tackling dummies only
spandex girdle or pants
without pads allowed

5  Air/Bag/Control
One Practice per day (3 hours Total)
1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour of rest
helmet
shoulder pads
blocking sleds
tackling dummies only
spandex girdle or pants
without pads allowed

6-16  Air/Bag/Control
Thud/Live
- Alternate double practice days with a single practice day or a rest day.
- Single Day - 1 walk through is permitted, separated from the practice by at least 1 hour continuous rest. When a double practice day is followed by a rest day, another double-practice day is permitted after the rest day.
- Double Day - 3 hour max per practice. 5 hour max total with 3 hour minimum rest between the 2 single practice day - 3 hour max; Warm-up, stretching, cool-down, walkthrough, conditioning, and weight-room activities must be included as part of the total practice time.
- 1 hour walkthrough after 1 hour rest
all equipment
full contact
spandex girdle allowed
WITH Football pants and required pads included.

Definitions: Air, Bag, Control, Thud and Live are levels of contact as defined by USA Football. For detailed definitions of these levels of contact use the following internet link.
https://usafootball.com/health-safety/levels-of-contact

Special Notes:
- During the preseason heat acclimatization period, if practice occurs on six consecutive days, participants shall have one day of complete rest (no conditioning, walk-throughs, practices, etc.) Therefore, 16 days are needed to complete the mandatory 14-conditioning practice requirement prior to participation in a contest.
- On-site Athletic Trainer for the heat acclimatization period (days 1-16) if possible, but not required.
- In football the preseason jamboree is a practice and the time spent for this scrimmage counts towards the total hours of practice in a day.
- Days 1-5: Spandex Girdle may be worn but not covered with football pants.
- Football will have a 5 day acclimatization period before full contact with pads during the fall sports season and during the defined summer time. 2 days-helmets only and 3-days helmets/shoulder pads only prior to any full pad contact.

Section 1: School Essential By-Laws:
1.7  Heat Acclimatization
1.7.1  Heat Acclimatization Period: For the health and safety of participants, member schools shall follow the Heat Acclimatization Schedule as described below and as summarized in Diagram 1.7 (1) and (2) for all fall sports. The Heat Acclimatization Schedule sets forth a
progressive system of early practices along with periods of rest. The goal of the Heat Acclimatization Period is to increase exercise heat tolerance and enhance the ability to exercise safely and effectively in warm and hot conditions. This period shall begin on the first day of practice or conditioning.

1.7.2 Heat Acclimatization Definitions: Some definitions of terms used in the Heat Acclimatization system can be found in other sections of the MSHSAA Handbook, and are listed below:

a. A “day” is defined as a calendar day (12:00 a.m. through 11:59 p.m.).

b. Recovery Period: A recovery period is defined as the time between the end of one practice or walk-through and the beginning of the next practice or walk-through. During this time, students should rest in a cool environment, with no sport-related or conditioning-related activity permitted (e.g., speed or agility drills, strength training, conditioning, or walk-through). Treatment with the athletic trainer is permissible.

c. Fall Sports:
   1. Definition of Practice: See By-Law 3.16.1
   2. Definition of Conditioning Practice: See By-Law 3.16.2
   3. Definition of Walk-Through: See By-Law 3.16.3

1.7.3 Limits and Requirements within Heat Acclimatization Period:

a. First Five Days: Only one practice may be held on each of the first five days of the Heat Acclimatization Period. Further, one walk-through may be held after a rest period of one or more hours.

b. Practice Duration: Each individual practice shall last no more than three hours. Warm-up, stretching, and cool-down activities are included as part of the three-hour practice time. Regardless of ambient temperature conditions, all conditioning and weight-room activities must be considered part of practice. Note: Days on which athletes do not practice due to a scheduled rest day, injury, or illness do not count toward the heat-acclimatization period, nor do they count as a “conditioning practice.”

c. Walk-Through Limits: A walk-through is not part of the three-hour practice period, can last no more than one hour per day, and does not include conditioning or weight-room activities.

d. Double Practice Days: Two double practice days may not be held back-to-back; a double practice day must alternate with a single practice day or a rest day. On a double practice day, a single practice may not exceed three hours, and total hours of practice may not exceed five hours. A minimum of three hours of rest must be provided between the two practices.

e. Required Rest Day: If practice occurs on six consecutive days, participants shall have one day of complete rest (no conditioning, no practice, and no walk-throughs). Therefore, sixteen dates are required to complete the fourteen-day Heat Acclimatization Period.

Athletic Activity By-Laws:

3.16.1 Practice: Any attempt of a coach at a given school to provide instruction in any phase of a game or athletic activity to any team or part of a team at that school or to have any team or part of a team engage in drills under the supervision of a coach, or from directions provided by the coach, involving what has already been taught. Try-outs, so-called “skull sessions,” “chalk talks,” “walk-throughs,” etc., are considered practices but do not qualify as “conditioning practices” (See 3.16.2). General Informational Meetings, where no attempt is made to teach any phase of a game or activity, are permitted before the first allowable practice date of the specific sport season. Except as provided for in By-Laws 3.5.3, 3.10.3, 1.4.1, and 1.4.2 a junior high or high school student shall be permitted to participate in school practices only with teams of the school where he/she is properly enrolled.
3.16.2 **Conditioning Practice**: Any attempt by the coach to engage the student in specific physical activity, drills, and/or instruction involving physical activity designed to elevate the student’s level of physical condition for a specific sport. (See also By-Law 3.9, Conditioning Requirements)

3.16.3 **Walk-through**: A walk-through is defined as a teaching opportunity with the athletes not wearing protective equipment (e.g., helmets, shoulder pads, catcher’s gear, shin guards) or using other sport-related equipment (e.g., footballs, blocking sleds, pitching machines, soccer balls).

6. **PRESEASON JAMBOREE**
   a. Senior high schools only may participate in the preseason jamboree.
   b. The preseason jamboree shall consist of three or four schools. **Note**: There may be more than 4 total schools at the site of a jamboree; however, each school at the site of the jamboree is only permitted to scrimmage against 3 or 4 of the other schools in attendance.
   c. The preseason jamboree must be under contract with participating schools.
   d. The preseason jamboree shall be officiated by MSHSAA registered officials.
   e. Each participant shall have at least 9 individual days of physical conditioning practice prior to participating in the preseason inter-school scrimmage. The 9th day of conditioning practice must occur on a day preceding the day of the event.
   f. No kicking game shall be permitted.
   g. When there are four schools participating, a maximum of 3 quarters per team with a maximum of 12 offensive plays per quarter shall be allowed. When there are three schools participating, a maximum of 2 quarters per team with a maximum of 18 offensive plays per quarter shall be allowed.
   h. All game rules shall apply with the exception that coaches may be on the field to provide instruction.
   i. The jamboree may only be conducted on the Friday or Saturday of Week 7 (August 21 or August 22).
   j. The host school shall determine the admission charge.

7. **DATE OF FIRST GAME**
   The first game may not be played before **Friday, August 28, 2020**.

8. **MAXIMUM ALLOWED GAMES**
   a. The maximum number of games is 10 for senior high schools.
   b. The maximum number of games is 6 for grades 7 and 8.
   c. The MSHSAA first round district game is part of the maximum allowed games for high school teams.
   d. The MSHSAA district semi-final, district final, quarterfinal, semifinal and final games are not part of the maximum allowed games.

9. **INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION LIMITATIONS**
   a. No player may play in more than four quarters on one calendar date.
   b. **No player may play in more than six quarters in a football week. Note**: For the purposes of tracking player quarters, a football week is defined as beginning on a Thursday and ending on the following Wednesday. This applies to both high school and middle school football.
   c. No player may play in a total number of quarters for the season that exceeds six times the number of games played by the higher team on which he plays.
d. Each school shall be responsible for keeping a record of the participation of players of both teams.

10. **FLAGRANT OR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**
   a. The Board of Directors is vested with the power to suspend schools from membership for the unsportsmanlike conduct of teams, coaches, students or fans.
   b. Each school is responsible for the conduct of its teams, coaches, students and fans at games both at home and away.
   c. The Board may delegate to the Executive Director power to take immediate action when a situation demands such.
   d. The party or parties concerned shall have the privilege of requesting a hearing before the Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting for a review of the case and the action taken by the MSHSAA Office.
   e. The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, substitute a fine not to exceed the sum of $25 for each offense in lieu of suspension from the Association or may take any action that it deems advisable, that does not exceed the maximum penalty of 365 days suspension from the association.
   f. A player who is ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct shall at a minimum be prohibited from playing in the next interscholastic contest at that same level.
   g. A coach who is ejected during a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct shall at a minimum be prohibited from coaching and attending the next interscholastic contest for that team. **Furthermore, it is mandatory that the coach complete the NFHS Online Sportsmanship course prior to returning to coaching a contest/game.**
   h. A player or coach who is ejected from the Preseason Inter-School Scrimmage for unsportsmanlike conduct shall at a minimum be prohibited from playing or coaching in the remainder of the Preseason Inter-School Scrimmage and in the next interscholastic varsity contest.

11. **PROHIBITION OF PRACTICE AT POSTSEASON SITES**
   a. Practice at districts through semifinals contests.
      1. There shall be no practice held on the field except for the home team on their home field unless the game is moved to a neutral site with an artificial surface.
      2. In the event that the game is moved to a neutral site with an artificial surface, if the field is available to both teams, one practice would be permitted for each team.
      3. Warm-up prior to game time shall be limited to a maximum of 75 minutes.
   b. Practice at state championships site.
      1. There shall be no practice held on the field of the state championship site.
      2. Warm-up prior to game time shall be limited to a minimum of 25 minutes at the state championship venue.

12. **CONTEST CONTROL**
   a. **All schools are responsible before, during and after a contest for the proper conduct of their coaches, athletes, students and other spectators.**
   b. Schools are expected to prohibit and/or eliminate pranks, mischief or any other activity involving destruction, theft, etc., of athletic facilities, equipment and material.
   c. Schools will be held responsible for seeing that no damage to property, tearing down of goal posts, etc., is done by their students or fans.
   d. Students engaging in vandalism will be considered ineligible.
   e. School administrators are to be present, **both home and away**, and responsible for supervising and controlling coaches, players, cheerleaders, band members, other student
groups, and all of their fans; and to take steps to prevent vandalism, violence and other acts of unsportsmanlike conduct.

f. There have been instances where fans have been permitted to gather and stand along the sidelines or end lines of playing fields and a number of instances have been reported in which fans have approached the sidelines near the end of the game.

1. Generally, this is for the purpose of rushing onto the field to express jubilation over winning.
2. In other instances, fans have cast disparaging remarks toward opposing players and officials.
3. In either case, it creates a situation conducive to crowd control problems.
4. All schools should take steps to educate their students and fans to refrain from moving onto the court or playing field following games.
5. The practice of entering these areas following games does not contribute anything toward the most worthwhile objectives of interscholastic competition and can contribute toward misconduct.
6. Under these conditions, the Board of Directors has adopted a policy authorizing and urging game officials to stop the game when this occurs, send the teams to the benches, and requests the host school administration to have the fans return to their seats or leave the field before play is continued.
7. The game shall not continue until the fans comply.
8. The primary responsibility for compliance with the game officials request falls on the host school, but the visiting school is also responsible for seeing that their fans remain in their seats.
40/25 Game Clock / Play Clock Procedures

Please have both clock operators go meet with the Referee prior to each varsity contest.

This document includes a set of instructions for the clock operators to assist with the recent rule change to the play clock that now involves a 40 / 25 second possibility for a delay of game. This 2-page document includes the instructions for the 40 second and the 25 second play clock to be used if and when visible play clocks are available to be used.

NOTE to the play clock operator: starting the 40 second play clock “immediately” is to be interpreted as starting the 40 seconds as quickly as the covering official signals the end of the down using signal #3 (time-out) or signal #7 (dead ball with one arm straight up) or signal #10 (incomplete pass). These are the only 3 signals you should expect at the end of a down prior to the 40 second play clock starting.

The following addresses the play situations that require the 40 second option.

1. The team A (offense) runner is stopped in bounds short of a first down. The game clock continues to run and the 40 second play clock is started immediately except at the end of a 4th down.
2. The team A (offense) runner is stopped in bounds beyond the line-to-gain (first down). The game clock is stopped for the first down and the 40 second play clock is started immediately. The Referee will then restart (wind) the game clock (no whistle involved) as quickly as the football is placed on the ground and ready for play.
3. The team A (offense) runner OR a team A fumble OR a team A backward pass goes out of bounds. The game clock is stopped and the 40 second play clock is started immediately. The game clock will not start again until the next legal snap.
4. A team A (offense) legal, forward pass is incomplete. The game clock is stopped and the 40 second play clock is started immediately. The game clock will not start again until the next legal snap.
5. A double change of possession during the down occurs resulting in team A in possession at the end of the down (very, very rare but a possibility). The game clock is stopped for a first down and the 40 second play clock is started immediately. The game clock may then be restarted (wind with no whistle) or not depending on whether out-of-bounds was a factor. (Example: team A’s forward pass is intercepted and team B then fumbles during their return and team A recovers – again, this is extremely rare but a possibility.)

There is no signal/whistle from the Referee during the 40 seconds except to restart the game clock following a first down inbounds. It is important to note that none of the situations listed above involve an administrative stop / interruption in play. All of those possibilities are addressed on page 2 of this document.
Administrative Stoppages / Interruptions

It is always possible for the situations that are listed below to occur during the game that are administrative issues / interruptions to the normal flow of play. Please understand that this list does not necessarily include absolutely every possibility.

NOTE to the play clock operator: Every situation listed below will result in a 25 second play clock that is not started immediately at any time, but you will wait until the situation has been addressed and the Referee will then utilize signal #1 which is the very common ready-for-play signal (with his whistle sounded) or signal #2 (wind) which restarts both clocks (with his whistle sounded).

**Game Situations:**

*any foul occurs
*either team is granted a timeout
*play is stopped for an injured player
*any down that involves a score
*a player’s helmet has come completely off
*any down that includes a legal kick
*a measurement for a first down
*team possession changes during or after a down
*the beginning of any period
*an untimed down

This list includes most every 25 second play clock situation, but an extremely rare situation is also a possibility (a dog runs across the field; the lights go out; weather conditions).

**General Statements:**

1. Always set the play clock back to 40 during a down in progress to be ready. You will have plenty of time to change it back to 25 at the end of the down if that is necessary.
2. The common ready-for-play whistle/signal is not used for a 40 second play clock.
3. It is very important that the same individual in the press box is not responsible for both clocks!!! **An official on the field with be responsible for the play clock if and when visible play clocks are not available to be used.**
4. The game clock operator must always be ready for the Referee to wind/start the game clock when it is stopped. The game clock will always start on a legal snap if it is not already started/running prior to the legal snap.
5. **Always** turn off any scoreboard horn. There is absolutely no need for a horn at any time!
6. Make certain that we always run the 25 second play clock prior to an extra point try, prior to a kickoff, and prior to the kick following a safety.

FINALLY, the play clock operator must always be ready for the Referee to reset the 40 second clock to 25 seconds if and when the 40 seconds has run down past and below 25 seconds and the football is still not yet on the ground ready for the next down. The Referee’s signal for this is a pumping motion with one hand up and down near his head.
PLAYER LIMITATIONS AND QUARTER COUNTING

3.23 FOOTBALL REGULATIONS

3.23.1 Individual Player Limits:

a. Daily: No player may play in more than four quarters on one calendar date.
b. Weekly: No player may play in more than six quarters in a football week. Note: For the purposes of tracking player quarters, a football week is defined as beginning on a Thursday and ending on the following Wednesday.
c. Season: No player may play in a total number of quarters for the season that exceeds six times the number of games played by the higher team on which the student plays.
d. Kicking Downs: Participation in kicking downs only (downs in which one team initially lines up in either a scrimmage kick or a free kick formation as per NFHS Rules) during a game would count as a maximum of one quarter of participation.
e. Other Downs: Participation in downs other than kicking downs would count as one quarter of participation for each quarter the player participates up to a maximum of four quarters per game and six quarters in a football week.
f. Tracking: Each school shall be responsible for keeping a record of the participation of players of both teams utilizing the MSHSAA standardized “Football Player Participation Form.”

The official “Football Quarters – MSHSAA Participation Record” form must be used for tracking quarters. A copy of this form is provided in the fall mailing for head football coaches.

- One sheet should be filled out for each game played at all levels.
- There is enough room on one sheet for 45 players.
- If you play more than 45 players in any particular game fill out a second sheet for that game.
- You may copy the enclosed sheet as often as necessary.
- Only the enclosed sheet will be accepted if a question is raised as to how many quarters a player has played.
- A sheet for each game should be filled out after the completion of the game and prior to the next scheduled game.

DEFINITION OF KICKING DOWN: Any down in which a team initially lines up in a free kick or scrimmage kick formation as defined by NFHS Rules.

- Example 1: A player participates as a member of the kickoff team in all four quarters but does not participate in any other downs. In this situation the quarters of participation equal 1.
- Example 2: A player participates as a wide receiver in the 2nd and 3rd quarters and is the punter in all 4 quarters. In this situation the quarters of participation equal 3.
## FOOTBALL QUARTERS
**MSHSSAA PARTICIPATION RECORD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;ST&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;ND&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;RD&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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How to Maintain and Protect Your High School Eligibility 2020-21

Introduction
The Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) is comprised of approximately 750 member schools, both public and private, across the state of Missouri. MSHSAA’s eligibility requirements have been voted on by the member schools and were adopted by your school when it became a MSHSAA member. Your school will also have local school requirements that you must comply with in order to be eligible.

Information contained on this page will acquaint you with the essential rules and regulations students and schools must follow in order to maintain and protect high school eligibility. No one requirement is more important than another. Any questions you have concerning these essential requirements or eligibility should be discussed with the school principal or athletic director. The MSHSAA Handbook is also available on the MSHSAA website.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Bona Fide Student
   • In order to represent your school, you must be a bona fide student and meet all eligibility requirements. You must be regularly attending classes and you must meet the academic requirements in MSHSAA By-Law 2.3 and those of your school.

2. Citizenship
   • You must be a creditable citizen. Creditable citizens are those students whose conduct - both in school and out of school - will not reflect discredit upon themselves or their school.

NOTE: Conduct involving law enforcement must be reported to your principal or athletic director immediately as your conduct may affect eligibility or contest outcomes. Failure to immediately report issues to your school will result in an automatic 365 days of ineligibility.

3. Sportsmanship
   • If you commit an unsportsmanlike act while participating in an event, you could become ineligible.
   • If your conduct as a spectator is found to be unsportsmanlike, you could be barred from attending any further high school contests.
   • The unsportsmanlike conduct of any spectator, regardless of age, could cause that spectator to be barred from attending school contests.

4. Academics
   • You must have earned, the preceding semester of attendance, a minimum of 3.0 units of credit or have earned credit in 80% of the maximum allowable classes in which any student can be enrolled in the semester, whichever is GREATER, at your school.
   • For your current semester, you must be enrolled in and regularly attending courses that offer 3.0 units of credit or 80% of the maximum allowable credits which may be earned at your school, whichever is GREATER.
   • Credits earned or completed after the close of the semester will not fulfill this requirement. Summer high school courses for FALL academic eligibility may count provided the course is necessary for graduation or promotion or is a core subject course, and credit is placed on the school transcript. No more than one unit of credit in summer school shall be counted toward fall eligibility.
   • Students promoted for the first time into 9th grade are considered academically eligible for the first semester after promotion.
   • Do not drop courses without first consulting with your school principal, athletic director or counselor to determine whether doing so will affect your eligibility.

   Grades 7-8
   • You must be enrolled in a normal course load for your grade at the member school.
   • You will be ineligible if you failed more than one class the previous grading period.
   • You must have been promoted to a higher grade prior to the first day of classes for the new school year.
   • Students promoted for the first time into 7th grade are considered academically eligible for the first grading period after promotion.

5. Semesters of Participation
   • Grades 9-12
   • You are eligible to participate in any sport for a maximum of four seasons. Any part of a contest played during a season counts as a season of participation.
   • Your eligibility to participate in high school activities begins when you first enter the 9th grade and lasts for the next eight consecutive semesters (four consecutive years).

   Grades 7-8
   • You are eligible for only your first two semesters of attendance in the 7th grade and for only your first two semesters in the 8th grade.
   • You are not eligible to compete with or against students enrolled in the 10th grade or above when you are enrolled in either the 7th or 8th grade.

6. Age Limits
   • Grades 9-12
   • If you reach 19 years of age prior to July 1, you will be ineligible the next school year.
   • Over-aged 8th graders should be moved up to the senior high team to have eight semesters of eligibility.
   • Over-aged 6th graders should be moved up to the 7th grade team to participate, because they will be ineligible as seniors.

   Grades 7-8
   • In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 7th-graders, you must not have reached 14 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
   • In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 8th-graders, you must not have reached 15 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
   • In order to participate on or against teams made up of only 9th-graders (freshmen teams), you must not have reached 16 years of age prior to July 1 preceding the opening of school.
   • Students may participate with the next higher grade team if they no longer meet the age limit for their grade.
7. Entering School
- You must enter school within the first 11 days of the semester in order to be eligible that semester.

8. Recruiting of Athletes
- You will be ineligible for your career at a school if you are influenced by a person to attend that school for athletic or activities purposes. You may, however, return to your original school and be ineligible for no more than 365 days.

9. Playing Under A False Name
- If you compete under an assumed or false name, you immediately become ineligible for up to 365 days.

10. Amateur and Awards Standards
- An athlete must maintain “amateur standing” 365 days a year in the sport concerned in order to participate in interscholastic athletics – the following restrictions govern the receipt of awards in both interscholastic play AND non-school competition/participation.
- After entering a member school, you will become ineligible in the sport concerned if you receive any of the following PROHIBITED awards for participating in an athletic contest or being an athlete:
  - An award of cash, a gift-certificate/gift-card or an award that is the equivalent of cash is PROHIBITED for amateurs.
  - Merchandise which exceeds a manufacturer’s suggested retail price (MSRP) of $250 is PROHIBITED for amateurs. However, there is no value limit in regard to awards which are symbolic in nature, such as medals, ribbons, trophies, plaques, etc.
- Awards should be approved in advance by your school.
- Commemorative jewelry may be presented by the school (i.e. championship ring or necklace) (no value limit).

11. Non-School Competition
- You must receive approval in advance from your school principal or athletic director in order to miss school time to practice for, travel to or compete in organized non-school athletic competition.
- You will become ineligible in any sport in which you play as a member of a junior college, university or college team.
- Before you join a non-school team or enter any non-school competitive athletic event, your school principal or athletic director should be consulted to make certain your participation will not jeopardize your interscholastic eligibility.

12. Contact with Coaches
- **No-Contact Periods**
  - All Sports: The seven days prior to the first allowable practice date for each season is a no-contact period in which no “contact” takes place between school coaches and students enrolled in the member school, or who will be enrolled in the member school during the upcoming school year.
- **Sport-Specific Instruction**
  - Before attending any specialized athletic sport instruction, you should consult with your school principal or athletic director to make sure it meets the criteria published in the MSHSAA Official Handbook.

13. College Auditions and Tryouts
- You may participate in an event conducted by a college or university during the school year under certain conditions. Consult your athletic director.
- You may participate in a college tryout, audition or evaluation event conducted by a private organizer for a specific sport outside the school season of the sport concerned.
- You may not miss school time to travel to or participate in the event unless your absence is approved in advance by the school administrator.

14. Residence Requirements
- A student may be eligible at the public or nonpublic school located in the district in which the student’s parents reside. In the case of a public multiple-school district, a student may be eligible at the school designated for the student to attend, based on parents’ residence, by the board of education.

15. Transferring Schools
- If you transfer schools, you will be ineligible for 365 days, unless your circumstances meet one of the exceptions listed in the MSHSAA Residence and Transfer Rules (By-Law 3.10). Make an appointment with the school’s athletic director to review these exceptions. Several, but not all, are described below.
  - Exception 1: If you move with your entire family across a boundary line into your new school district, you will be eligible at your new school provided you were eligible in all other respects at your former school and provided there are no other issues with the transfer. You and your entire family must move to the new residence at the same time prior to attending classes.
  - Exception 2: A student may be eligible immediately at the school of his or her choice upon first being promoted from the 8th grade into the 9th grade, provided the student is eligible in all other respects.
  - Exception 10: Foreign Exchange Students are eligible for varsity competition for one year and only if they are seniors (semester 7 or 8), provided they are participating in an exchange program listed by CSIET. However, no member of the school's coaching staff for the sport concerned may serve as a host family, or eligibility of the student will be affected.
    - Always check with your school principal or athletic director before you transfer to determine whether it will affect your eligibility.
    - School discipline follows a student to a new school. Being expelled, or being forced to withdraw, from a school also causes 365 days of ineligibility for a student.
    - You shall become ineligible for 365 days if you transfer to another school for athletic reasons.

16. Graduated Students
- You will be ineligible to participate after graduation from a senior high school or its equivalent. Students who are granted an early release after their junior year are ineligible for further participation. **(NOTE: You are eligible to participate in state-series events which extend beyond the date of your school’s graduation at the end of the spring semester of your senior year.)**