

WISCONSIN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

2025-26 NFHS Football Rules Book

(PLEASE KEEP WITH YOUR RULES BOOK)

NATIONAL FEDERATION ALLOWED ADAPTATIONS

- a. The WIAA's adaptation of the 25 yard line tie breaker must be used to resolve all senior high contests (varsity, junior varsity, sophomore, and freshman/sophomore) which are tied at the end of regulation play. (Note: There is no overtime provision for teams with only Grade 9 students.)
- b. The following rule regarding the use of running time must be used:
 - (1) After the first quarter, when the score differential reaches 35 points or more, a mandatory running clock will be used.
 - (2) Normal clock operating procedures resume if the score differential goes back under 35 in the second or third quarters.

Beginning with the ensuing kickoff, the clock will run continuously except for the following situations when it will be stopped:

 - (a) Time outs charged to a team.
 - (b) After a score.
 - (c) Intermission between 3rd and 4th quarters.
 - (d) Extended injury time outs.
 - (e) Any time officials determine it is necessary for safety reasons.

Note: 1) Normal clock operating procedures resume when a team scores to make the differential less than 35 points in the second and third quarters. The running clock will be maintained in the fourth quarter even if the score differential goes below 35 points.

2) The use of this rule does not preclude the use of 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 may be terminated."
- c. NFHS rules allow state associations and their member schools to place corporate advertising and/or commercial markings on the field of play. The logos must conform with NFHS rules and the WIAA may reject a host with any sponsorships or advertising for businesses whose primary business is the selling of products (tobacco, alcoholic beverages, lottery, gambling, mood-altering substances and lewd subject matter) prohibited by WIAA advertising policies.

REQUIRED NUMBER OF OFFICIALS

- a. Four WIAA licensed officials are required for all varsity interscholastic competition.
 - b. Four WIAA licensed officials are recommended for all non-varsity contests, but only three are required.
- NOTE: Five WIAA licensed officials will be used in all playoff games.

STATE ASSOCIATION REGULATIONS

- a. It is the responsibility of the host school to have the playing field and immediate sidelines completely enclosed by a permanent or temporary fencing, or by a rope, for purposes of crowd control.
- b. Nonvarsity teams shall be allowed to wear old varsity uniforms which are now unapproved provided participant safety is not jeopardized.
- c. Coaches must report to their school administration within 48 hours following a contest any player or coach ejection. School administrators must then report the ejection to the WIAA via written communication within three (3) school days following the contest. This written communication must also include a plan of action to prevent future ejections. Officials will continue to provide electronic reports to the WIAA.
- d. **If a team forfeits a game for any reason, they are not eligible to play a game for the remainder of that week.**

STATE ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. It is recommended that a licensed official be used on the timepiece if the field clock is official.

NON-VARSITY TEAMS WITH ONLY GRADE 9 STUDENTS

All preceding rules apply with these additional provisions:

- a. The season ends on Monday of Week 16 (October 20).
- b. The maximum number of games is eight. In addition, the team may have one scrimmage under the condition outlined under Number 4. Scrimmages.
- c. Quarters may be 12 minutes in length.
- d. Games must be terminated at the conclusion of regulation (four quarters) play. (There is no overtime provision)
- e. Four WIAA licensed officials are recommended and three are required.

CONCUSSION AND/OR UNCONSCIOUS PARTICIPANT

No athlete shall return to play or practice on the same day of being diagnosed with a concussion. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion must be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional that day. Any athlete with a concussion must be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition. Return to play must follow a step-wise protocol which includes provisions for delaying return to play based upon the return of any signs or symptoms. Any athlete deemed unconscious must have medical evaluation and clearance before being allowed to return to participation.

COACHES MUST REPORT EJECTIONS – See Football Season Regulations, Page 13.

ACCLIMATIZATION RULES

Football must follow the WIAA fall acclimatization policy. The acclimatization period must be satisfied by all athletes individual. See Football Season Regulations Page 10-11.

CONTACT RULES – See Football Season Regulations Page 11.