

# 2011 RULES REVIEW FOR CAPTAINS OF HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAMS

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Shaded areas indicate new rules for 2011

Gentlemen, you were selected to be team captains by your coaches and teammates not only because of your skills as players but because you have leadership qualities and an excellent knowledge of the rules of football. This rules review was prepared to help you further develop your knowledge of football rules. Best of luck to you, captains, this football season and throughout your lives.

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Coin Toss Preceding Overtime Periods (Innings)  
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### 1. CAPTAINS

■ Captains must be team members in game uniform and are designated to communicate with officials and to represent their teams during

- (1) Pre-game coin toss ceremonies,
- (2) Overtime coin toss ceremonies,
- (3) Selection of second half kickoff options,
- (4) Penalty decisions following fouls, and
- (5) Decisions on ball placements for certain plays. (1-4-1; 2-32-5; 3-2-1; 6-5-4)

### 2. COIN TOSS PRECEDING THE GAME

- The winner of the pre-game coin toss has the first choice of the following for his team:
  - (1) Receive, or
  - (2) Kickoff, or
  - (3) Defend a goal, or
  - (4) Defer his choice to the second half. (3-2-3)
- The loser of the opening coin toss then chooses an option not taken by the coin toss winner. (3-2-3)
- Not more than 4 team members (captains) from each team may be present for the coin toss that precedes the game and, if necessary, for the coin toss that precedes an overtime period. (2-32-5-a) Only one captain from each team is the spokesman. (3-2-2) At the coin toss or simulated coin toss conducted 3 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the game all other team personnel must be outside the field of play. (3-2-2)

**Example 1.** There is a strong wind blowing from the north. The captain of the white-shirted team wins the coin toss and elects to defend the north goal. (That is, the wind will be at "white's" back during the first period.) Captains of the dark-shirted team then elect to receive. Therefore, to start the game "white" will kick from the north with the wind at its back and "dark" will receive at the south goal, moving into the wind. For the second quarter "dark" will defend the north goal. To start the second half the dark-shirted captain will have first choice to receive, kick, or defend a goal.

**Example 2.** There is a strong wind blowing from the north. The captain of the white-shirted team wins the coin toss and elects to defer his choice to the second half. The captain of the dark-shirted team (who lost the coin toss) now has his choice: receive, kick, or defend a goal. Suppose "dark" chooses to receive. This means that "white" is going to kick to start the game but has its choice of goals: north or south. That is, the "white" captain must decide whether his team will kick-off with the wind at its back (defend the north goal in the first period) or have the wind at its back in the second period by kicking into the wind (defend the south goal to start the first period). To start the second half, since "white" deferred its choice to the second half, "white" will have first choice to receive, kick-off, or defend a goal. Suppose, "white" wants the wind at its back in the fourth quarter. Then the white-shirted captain must choose to defend the south goal during the third period. Suppose, further, that "dark," with its choices (receive or kick), elects to receive. Therefore, to start the second half "white" will kick from the south (into the wind) and "dark" will receive at the north goal. Note that "white" is kicking off to start EACH half.

### 3. COIN TOSS PRECEDING OVERTIME PERIODS (INNINGS)

■ If each team has an identical score at the end of the fourth period, state high school associations may choose to have the tie resolved. In a majority of states, each high school team is given an equal opportunity to score. Many states use the 10-yard overtime procedure, some states use a modified version of the NCAA overtime rule, and in Texas the college overtime rule is used. Overtime play is not timed. (3-1-1)

■ In those states where overtime innings are played, a coin toss determines which team goes on offense and which team goes on defense. That is, the winner of the coin toss that precedes an overtime period (inning) has the following choices:

- (1) Go on offense first, or
- (2) Go on defense first, or
- (3) Play this particular overtime period at a particular end of the field.

Note that the captain who wins the "overtime" coin toss cannot defer his choice. Note, also, that both teams will have their offensive plays at the same end of the field for the first overtime period (inning). However, the other end of the field could be used for other overtime periods (innings). (*3-1-1-Note; Rule Book pp 87-89, item 3-2-1; or state rules*)

■ If additional overtime periods (innings) must be played then there are no more coin tosses. For the second overtime period the team captain who lost the first coin toss has his first choice of options for the second overtime period. For the third overtime period (if necessary) the captain who won the initial coin toss that preceded the overtime periods now has his first choice of options. (*NFHS 2011 Football Rules, pp 87-89, item 5-1-1 or state rules*)

**Example.** The game ends tied and an overtime period will be played. There is strong wind from the north. The dark-shirted team does a lot of passing. The white-shirted captain wins the coin toss that precedes the first overtime period and elects to play at the north end of the field so that the dark-shirted team will have to pass into the wind. "Dark" then elects to go on defense first. Therefore, for the first overtime period, which is played at the north end of the field, "white" is on offense first and "dark" goes on offense second. Suppose that the score remains tied after the first overtime period and that "dark" (which now has first choice of overtime options) chooses to play at the south end of the field (wind at its back). The white-shirted captain (who now has second choice of options) must decide whether his team will play on offense first or go on defense first. Options for succeeding overtime periods alternate between opposing captains, with no other coin tosses.

■ When an overtime is to be played, there will be a 3-minute intermission before the start of the first overtime. (*NFHS 2011 Football Rules, p. 87, item 3-1-1*)

■ An overtime period (inning) could begin on the 10-yard line (1st and goal) or on the 25-yard line (1st and 10). (*NFHS 2011 Football Rules, pp 87-89, item 5-1-1 or state rules*)

■ Each team has an offensive series of downs during an overtime unless the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown. (*NFHS 2011 Football Rules, p. 87, item 5-1-1*)

#### **4. FOULS AND PENALTIES**

■ It is usually in your best interests to accept the penalty for a foul. (*5-2-1*)

■ However, the distance aspect of a penalty can be declined. (*10-1-1*)

**Example 1.** After a touchdown the ball is snapped from the 3-yard line for the try-for-point and the attempted place kick for point-after-touchdown (PAT) is not successful. But the defensive team commits a foul (e.g., a contact personal foul). The offensive team wants to replay this PAT down and plans to kick, again, but moving the snap from the 3-yard line to the 1-1/2-yard line means that the ball will now be placed 1-1/2 yards forward and in a puddle of water. The solution, captains, is to accept the replay aspect of the penalty but decline the distance aspect and replay the PAT with the ball to be snapped, again, from the 3-yard line.

**Example 2.** A first down play gains 7 yards. However, the defensive team commits a live ball foul, the penalty for which is 5 yards (e.g., illegal substitution). The captain of the offensive team must now decide whether he wants 1st down and 5 yards to go (by accepting the penalty) or 2nd and 3 (by declining the penalty). The proper decision here is based on capabilities of teams. Therefore, captains, before games you may want to discuss these types of situations with your coaches.

■ If a foul is committed by the receiving team during a scrimmage kick, the receiving team could gain possession of the football if the following post-scrimmage kick enforcement criteria are met:

- (1) A player foul is committed by the receiving team (Team R) other than illegal substitution or illegal participation.
- (2) Foul occurs on a scrimmage kick (punt, unsuccessful field goal attempt), but not on a try for point kick or on a successful field goal attempt.
- (3) Foul is committed by Team R beyond the expanded neutral zone.
- (4) Foul occurs before the end of the kick.
- (5) Ball crosses the expanded neutral zone.
- (6) Team K will not be next to put the ball in play. (*2-16-2-h*)

■ If a foul occurs on a successful field goal attempt, then Team K has the choice of:

- (1) Accepting the penalty and replaying the down or
- (2) Accepting the result of the play with penalty enforcement from the succeeding spot (i.e., the free kick spot). (*2-16-2-h; 8-4-3*)

■ If a foul is committed by Team B on a try for point, Team A is given the choice of:

- (1) Accepting the penalty and replaying the down following enforcement (*8-3-5*) or
- (2) Accepting the result of the play with enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.

■ Penalties for the following fouls by the defensive team include both loss of distance and an automatic first down for the offensive team:

- (1) Defensive forward pass interference,
- (2) Roughing the passer who has thrown from in or behind the neutral zone,
- (3) Roughing the kicker of a scrimmage kick,
- (4) Roughing the place-kick holder of scrimmage place kick,
- (5) Roughing the snapper ("center") in scrimmage kick formation. (*10-1-7; 7-5-10; 9-4-4; 9-4-5*)

■ Penalties for the following fouls by the offensive team include both loss of distance and loss of down:

- (1) Forward pass interference,
- (2) Illegal forward pass,

- (3) Illegally handing the ball forward and (10-1-6; 7-5-10; 7-5-2-b,-c,-d,-,e; 7-3-2; 7-5-13)
- (4) Illegal touching of a forward pass by an ineligible Team A player.

**Example 3.** On fourth down a screen pass is thrown to ineligible pass receiver lineman #57 who catches the ball while in the neutral zone or behind the neutral zone or beyond the neutral zone. He advances 5 yards upfield and fumbles. The defensive team recovers the fumble but does not advance the ball. You, the defensive team captain, must be aware of your options on this play. The foul *ineligible offensive player illegally touching a forward pass in, behind or beyond the neutral zone* carries a distance penalty of 5 yards from the spot of the touching or catch plus loss of down. If you, the defensive team captain, accept the penalty then you get the ball about 10 yards farther upfield than the spot of the fumble recovery. An unwise decision would be to take the result of the play—that is, you would snap the football at the spot of the fumble recovery. (7-5-13)

- Penalties accepted for
  - (1) A non-player foul,
  - (2) An unsportsmanlike conduct foul,
  - (3) A dead ball foul, and
  - (4) A foul when the final result is a touchback

are administered from the succeeding spot. (10-4-5; 2-16-2-a, -f)

- The penalty for roughing the passer is 15 yards from the dead ball spot when the dead ball spot is beyond the neutral zone and there has been no change of team possession, or otherwise 15 yards and a first down from the previous spot. (9-4-4; 9-4-4-Penalty; 10-4-5)

- To start a new series of downs after a change of team possession, it will almost always be 1st and 10 yards to go (rather than, for example 1st and 25 yards to go) even after enforcement of a penalty unless one of the following is involved:

- (1) A try,
- (2) A field goal,
- (3) A free kick after a safety,
- (4) A fair catch, or
- (5) An awarded fair catch. (5-2-6)

## 5. PASSING PLAYS

- A forward pass can be thrown overhand, underhand, sidearm, or pushed forward like a two-handed basketball pass. A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. (2-31-2)

- A legal way to conserve time is for the QB to intentionally throw the ball forward to the ground (spiked) immediately after receiving a direct hand to hand snap from the "center." (7-5-2-e-Exception)

- The only offensive players eligible to receive directly a legally thrown forward pass are those players numbered 1 to 49 and 80 to 99 and only if those properly numbered players are positioned legally in the backfield or on the ends of the line of scrimmage. (7-5-6) Players cannot *report-in* to play eligible or ineligible positions.

- All defensive players are eligible forward pass receivers. (7-5-6)
- "Chucking" rules do not apply in the high school football game.
- Pass eligibility rules apply only to legal forward passes. (7-5-6)

**Example 1.** After a shift by the offensive team, player #81 is in a tackle position and player #75 is in an end position on the line of scrimmage at the snap. Captains, in this situation neither #81 nor #75 is an eligible offensive team pass receiver even if #75 tried to "report-in."

**Example 2.** On fourth down the offensive team is in punt formation. The punter cannot control the snap and, because of defensive pressure, he must run. He then sees an "open" teammate downfield and throws a forward pass to that teammate. Captains, several fouls could happen on this play, including the following three. First, if the teammate who touches the ball is behind, in or beyond the neutral zone and does not have the jersey number of an eligible pass receiver (viz., 1-49 or 80-99) then this is an "illegal touching" foul (5 yard penalty plus loss of down). Second, if the teammate who touches the ball behind, in or beyond the neutral zone is wearing number 1-49 or 80-99 but was positioned as an interior lineman at the snap, then this, too, is "illegal touching." Third, even if the teammate who touches the thrown ball is an "eligible forward pass receiver" (because of his number AND position) then there may have been other teammates who are "ineligible pass receivers downfield" (5 yard penalty but no loss of down). Captains, if fouls occur in these situations listen carefully to the referee's explanation before making any penalty decision.

## 6. FREE KICKS AND SCRIMMAGE KICKS

- Free kicks are kickoffs. Scrimmage kicks are punts, drop kicks, or field goal attempts when the ball is snapped.

(2-24-3, -4)

- The kickoff is called a free kick because either team is free to recover and gain possession of the ball. But only the receiving team may advance a caught or recovered free kick. (6-1-4; 6-1-5)

- On a kickoff (free kick) the kicking team can gain possession of the ball (that is, become the offensive team) if it recovers the ball after either of two things happen; (6-1-5):

- (1) The ball must go at least 10 yards and touch the ground or touch the ground and go at least 10 yards (these can occur in either order), or
- (2) The ball must be touched by a member of the receiving team before it goes 10 yards.

However:

- a. Touching of the free kick in the 10-yard neutral zone by a receiver is ignored if a kicking team member pushes or blocks a receiving team member into contact with the ball or
- b. If Team K muffs the ball into contact with Team R. (6-1-5)

- For free kicks following safeties the free kick lines are usually the 20 (kicker's) and 30 (receiver's) yard lines. For free kicks following fair catches the kicker's free kick line is the yard line through the spot of the catch and the receiver's free kick line is 10 yards from the kicker's free kick line. The free kick lines could be moved if a foul occurs and the penalty is accepted. (6-1-1)

- Free kick lines are always 10 yards apart. The free kick lines are usually the 40-yard line (kickers) and the 50-yard line (receivers) for kickoffs that

- (1) Start the game,
- (2) Start the second half,
- (3) Follow tries-for-points, and
- (4) Follow successful field goals.

**Example 1.** On a free kick following a safety the kicking team punts from its 20-yard line. The kick is high in the air and the receiving team, thinking that this kick is similar to a scrimmage punt, moves to get away from the ball. Captains, you and your receiving team teammates should know that the ball is free to be recovered by the kicking team. The punt following a safety is treated the same as a place kick kick-off following the try after a touchdown. Also, you captains of kicking teams should tell your teammates that this is a free kick and the ball can be recovered and retained by you.

- On scrimmage kicks a ball caught or recovered by the kicking team beyond the neutral zone cannot be retained by the kicking team unless a receiver is the first to touch the ball beyond the expanded neutral zone.

However, touching the ball by Team R is ignored if it is caused by Team K pushing or blocking Team R into contact with the ball or if contact is caused by Team K legally batting or muffing the ball into R. (6-2-4, -5)

- On scrimmage kicks a ball recovered by either team behind the neutral zone remains in play (i.e., can be advanced by the offensive team and by the defensive team) except on a Try. (6-2-2, -3)

- First touching of the kickoff is a violation by the kickers and occurs before the kicked ball goes 10 yards. The receivers can then take the ball at the spot of first touching or take the result of the play. (6-1-6) The clock shall not start on "first touching" by Team K. (3-4-5)

- First touching of a scrimmage kick can occur when a kicking team member touches the ball beyond the neutral zone before a receiver touches it. The receiving team captain can take the ball at the spot of first touching or take the result of the play. There can be more than one spot of first touching. (6-2-5)

- First touching occurs, also, if the kickers catch a kicked ball in flight other than a scrimmage kick caught behind the neutral zone. (6-1-6; 6-2-5)

- A fair catch by the receivers may be made of any

- (1) Free kick which is in flight in or beyond the neutral zone to the goal line or
- (2) A scrimmage kick which is in flight beyond the neutral zone to the goal line. (6-5-1; 2-9-1)

- After a fair catch or awarded fair catch the offensive team can snap the ball for a scrimmage play from the yard line of the catch or the team can place-kick the ball in a field goal attempt from the yard line of the catch. (The free kick lines are 10 yards apart.) The same two options remain if

- (1) A dead ball foul occurs prior to the down,
- (2) A foul occurs during the down and the down is replayed or
- (3) An inadvertent whistle occurs during the down and the down is replayed. (6-5-4)

**Example 2.** On a kickoff the ball is caught or recovered by the receivers anywhere on the field. Captains, it is the receiver's ball. (6-1-4)

**Example 3.** On a kickoff the kicked ball is recovered by the kickers 10 yards or more beyond the kicker's free kick line after it has touched the ground. Captains, it is the kicking team's ball unless first touching occurred before the ball traveled 10-yards. (6-1-6)

**Example 4.** On a kickoff the kicked ball touches the ground and is recovered by the kickers before it goes 10 yards. Captains, it is the receiver's ball because this is first touching. (6-1-6)

**Example 5.** On a kickoff the kicked ball, untouched by anyone, goes out of bounds. In this situation, Captains, the receiving team has three choices: (1) take the ball on the yard line at the nearest hash mark where it went out of bounds, (2) make the kicking team re-kick after a 5-yard penalty, or (3) take the ball 25 yards beyond the kick-off line (that is, take the ball on the 35-yard line if the ball was kicked from the 40-yard line). (6-1-8)

**Example 6.** On a kickoff the kicked ball is caught in flight anywhere on the field by a member of the kicking team. This is kick catch interference by the kicking team and, also, first touching. The captain of the receiving team can choose to have the down replayed after a 15-yard penalty from the kickoff line or take an awarded fair catch at the spot the foul with no penalty yardage marked off. (6-5-6 Penalty)

- On punts it is legal for all members of the kicking team to go downfield immediately after the ball is snapped. (6-2) [Note, here, that the professional football rule is different from the high school rule.]

- A grounded scrimmage kick may be batted backward by the kickers (for example, when the kicked ball is near the goal line) except when the backward batting occurs behind the neutral zone. (9-7-2-Exception)

- A scrimmage kick in flight beyond the expanded neutral zone can be caught, touched, muffed, or batted by a kicking team player if no receiver is in position to catch the ball. This is first touching and the receiving team gets the football. (9-7-2-Exception; 6-2-5; 2-12-2)

## 7. TIME-OUTS

- The clock is stopped every time the field officials declare a first down. The line to gain equipment is then moved. Captains, remember this for activity near the end of a game when your team may want to conserve time. However, the clock may re-start on the Referee's ready whistle. (3-5-7-b)

■ A legal way to conserve time is for the quarterback under center to spike the ball, but this can be done only after a direct hand to hand snap from the center to the quarterback. (7-5-2-d-Exception)

■ Each team may use up to 3 charged time-outs during each half of a game. (3-5-1; 3-5-2)

■ Any player, the head coach, or the head coach's designee may request a time out. (3-5-2-a)

■ During a time-out charged to a team each team can use either of 2 types of authorized team

conferences:

- (1) Outside Nine Yard Mark Conference--one or more team members and one or more coaches can meet directly in front of the team box within 9 yards of the sideline, OR,
- (2) Between Nine Yard Mark Conference--one coach may meet with his team in the team's huddle on the playing field between the hash marks with no more than 11 players.

The deployment chosen for the first of the team time outs does not affect deployment choices for later time outs. (2-6-2; 3-5-8; 9-8-1-f)

■ Either of the 2 types of authorized conferences can be used for a team charged time-out and, also,

- (1) During the one-minute time frame following a Try, successful field goal, or safety and before the succeeding kickoff,
- (2) During the one-minute time frame between the 1st & 2nd and 3rd & 4th periods,
- (3) For TV/radio time outs, and
- (4) For heat-and-humidity time-outs called for player safety. (3-5-8; 3-5-7-h, -l, -m)

■ An official's time-out (which is not charged to either team) can occur for 12 situations, such as when play is stopped

- (1) For measurement of a possible first down,
- (2) When a first down is declared,
- (3) For a player in need of equipment repair,
- (4) After a foul to administer the penalty,
- (5) For a TV/radio time-out. (3-5-7)

■ However, an authorized conference outside the nine yard marks may be held during an injury time-out. (3-5-10; 3-5-8-c) That is, between downs, including stoppages for player injuries, players may, legally, go near sidelines to communicate with coaches. (9-8-1-f Note) Between downs coaches cannot leave the team box or the coaches' areas.

■ When an official's time-out for an injured player (which is not charged to either team) occurs, the player shall be replaced for at least one down, unless halftime or an overtime intermission occurs.

### **8. BALL PLACEMENT FOR CERTAIN PLAYS**

■ There are six situations in which the captain may designate the spot on the field where his team will put the ball in play. (2-32-5-d)

- (1) On a kickoff. (Anywhere between the inbounds lines usually on the 40-yard line for place kick or for a drop kick.)
- (2) On a kickoff after a safety. (Anywhere between the inbounds lines usually on the 20 yard line for a place kick, a drop kick, or a punt.)
- (3) After a fair catch or an awarded fair catch. (Anywhere on the yard line through the spot of the catch or awarded fair catch for a snap or for a free kick. The free kick can be a place kick or a drop kick.)
- (4) After a touchback. (Anywhere on the nearest 20-yard line between the inbounds lines for a snap.)
- (5) On a try for -point. (Anywhere on the 3 yard line between the inbounds lines for a snap.)
- (6) To start an overtime series.

In these six situations, the original spot from which the ball is put in play could be changed if a foul occurs and the penalty for that foul is accepted.

### **9. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

■ For 11-player football, the field is 160 feet (53-1/3 yards) wide, 300 feet (100 yards) long, and has two end zones each 30 feet (10 yards) deep. Hash marks divide the field into three equal areas that are 53-1/3 feet (about 17 yards) in width. (1-2-1 and diagram) The nine-yard marks are used for substitutions and legal positions of offensive players. (2-6-2-a; 7-2-1)

■ For 8- and 6-player football, the field is 120 feet (40 yards) wide, 240 feet (80 yards) long, and has two end zones each 30 feet (10 yards) deep. Hash marks are 45 feet from each sideline and the middle of the field is 30 feet wide. (1-2-1 and diagram)

■ Pylons on goal lines are out of bounds and in the end zones. Therefore a football

- (1) Loose following a kick (punt or place kick) that touches a pylon is out of bounds in the end zone (a touchback); and
- (2) That touches a pylon while held by a runner advancing into the end zone scores a

touchdown.

(1-2-4; 8-1-2-a; Case Book PR 8.2.1)

### **10. FINAL WORDS**

Football is a game for disciplined men, intelligent men, and sportsmen. Your coaches are helping you develop the discipline necessary not only to play the game of football properly but to live productive lives. Captains, be proud of your positions. Use the powers of that position wisely to develop qualities that will be with you throughout your lives.

*NOTE: Italicized numbers in parentheses are rule references to the 2011 National Federation Football Rules Book.*