

KSHSAA Flag Football Manual

2026

The official manual for high school football with information concerning football regulations and management of playoff games. This 2026 KSHSAA Flag Football Manual is prepared and designed to provide general information for the administration of KSHSAA flag football games. Numerous questions arise prior to and during playoffs, and we believe that many of your questions will be answered by a thorough review of the contents of this document. We are aware of the increased responsibilities each of you will assume during the championship series and we are committed to assisting in any way possible. We take this opportunity to thank all personnel, including managers, school administrators, coaches, players and officials for their efforts and interest during the contests.

Included in this manual are some but not all [KSHSAA Handbook](#) related rules. Schools are expected to be familiar with and follow all KSHSAA Handbook rules. Additionally, policies and best practices are included below but are not exhaustive.

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Key Dates

First playing date available: September 2, 2026

Postseason Seeding date: October 7 (pm)

Regionals: Round of 32 and 16: October 10, 2026

Quarterfinals: October 13, 2026

Semifinals, consolation and finals (four games): October 17, 2026

Site: Wichita-SCHEELS Stryker Sports Complex

2999 N. Greenwich Rd., Wichita, 67226

Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation (PPE)

No student is eligible to represent any school team (in practice and games) until there is on file with the superintendent or principal a statement (physical form) certifying that the student has passed an adequate physical examination and is physically fit to participate. The form must be signed by any of the following licensed health care providers: a physician, a chiropractor, a physician assistant (PA) or an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) . The statement (form) must also be signed by a parent or legal guardian, stating the student

has permission to participate. The physical examination shall not be taken earlier than April 1 preceding the school year for which it is applicable.

KSHSAA Concussion and Head Injury Information Release Form

This form must be signed by all student-athletes and parent/guardians before the student participates in any athletic or spirit practice or contest each school year.

Concussion Management / Kansas Law

Below is a summary of our recommendations to our member schools to comply with the state law and the NFHS playing rule. A complete and detailed version can be found on the KSHSAA website in the sports medicine and safety section.

1. If concussion consistent signs or symptoms are observed in an athlete, the athlete should be immediately removed from the practice or contest.
2. The athlete should not be allowed to return to any practice or contest until written clearance is obtained from a health care provider (MD or DO).
3. The KSHSAA and the NFHS strongly recommends the athlete not be allowed to return to the practice or contest the same day the concussion consistent signs or symptoms were observed.
4. A gradual return-to-play protocol should be followed before the athlete is allowed to return to unrestricted participation in their sport.
5. The signed concussion and head injury information release form must be on file with the school.
6. Be sure all of your coaches view the free online course from the NFHS: Concussions in Sports, What You Need to Know. This course can be accessed through the sports medicine and safety section of our website or directly through www.nfhslearn.com. Schools may choose to use this course in group settings with parents, students or with school staff at in-service meetings.

NFHS Guidelines on Handling Practices and Contests during Lightning or Thunder Disturbances

Proactive Planning

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safe areas.

3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:

- a. When thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for 30 minutes and take shelter immediately.
 - b. Thirty-minute rule: Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed before resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin. At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.
4. Review annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel.
5. Inform student-athletes of the lightning policy at the start of the season.
6. No matter how weather is monitored, hearing thunder or seeing lightning should always take precedence in decision making over information obtained from other sources.

KSHSAA Coach/Sponsor CPR/AED Training Requirement

Per KSHSAA Handbook Rule 10-1-9: Any person serving in the role of a head or assistant sport coach/aide or a head or assistant activity sponsor/aide in a KSHSAA member school shall be certified or trained in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) administration.

Components of the rule are as follows:

1. Following an initial 30-day grace period from the start of the season, personnel are not eligible to work as a coach or sponsor for their school until proof of completion of CPR/AED training is on file with their school.
2. Every coach/sponsor must complete CPR/AED training every two (2) years.
3. The training shall be coordinated by a certified CPR instructor.
4. Online only training courses are not accepted.
5. There must be a hands-on educational component to the training process.
6. On an annual basis by activity, a school administrator must acknowledge through the KSHSAA website that each coach/sponsor is currently trained in CPR/AED administration.

To acknowledge rule compliance, a school administrator should login to the KSHSAA website and go to the Coach/Sponsor Requirements page. Select the activity and enter the date of CPR/AED training next to each coach/sponsor name. If you do not see the coach/sponsor listed, add that person through the Update Directory process online. All head and assistant coaches/sponsors should be listed for every activity! Training could be obtained from the following organizations:

- American Heart Association
- American Red Cross
- American Safety & Health Institute / Medic First Aid
- National Safety Council

Potential sources for locating a certified CPR instructor:

- School nurse
- School/community athletic trainer
- Local emergency personnel: EMTs, firefighters, police officers
- Community hospital
- Contacting the organizations listed above

KSHSAA High School Flag Football Preseason Jamboree

A preseason jamboree is an opportunity for member high schools to participate in a controlled scrimmage per the following conditions:

1. A jamboree consists of three (3) or four (4) member school teams. Two (2) teams are not permitted. In addition, five (5) or more schools are not permitted.
2. Only KSHSAA member high schools may participate in a preseason jamboree.
3. A member school is limited to one preseason jamboree date.
4. A preseason jamboree can be held no earlier than August 27. The prescribed dates for the flag jamborees are August 27, 28 or 29.
5. Participating in a preseason jamboree is optional for member high schools.
6. NFHS Rules will be followed and must use KSHSAA registered official.
7. Each school may only play a maximum of 60 minutes as described below:

3-Team Format

A vs. B = 30 minutes

B vs. C = 30 minutes

A vs. C = 30 minutes

(Each school will play a maximum of two 30-minute periods.)

4-Team Format

A vs. B = 20 minutes

C vs. D = 20 minutes

A vs. C = 20 minutes

B vs. D = 20 minutes

A vs. D = 20 minutes

B vs. C = 20 minutes

(Each school will play a maximum of three 20-minute periods.)

KSHSAA Pre-Activity Timeout

Purpose: As a proactive communication measure, schools are expected to designate a time prior to the start of any interscholastic contest to share event critical information with stakeholders. The following information should be shared/reviewed prior to the first contest at each location:

1. Introduction of home and visiting administration on duty (identify primary point of contact).
2. Identify the location of athletic trainer(s) or other qualified medical professionals.
3. Identify the location of the AED(s).
4. Identify emergency entrance/exits for the facility.
5. Identify the storm shelter location and communication plan for evacuation.
6. Identify the rapid body cooling plan (location of cold water immersion tub).
7. Identify the communication plan for leadership.
8. Identify the communication plan for respective groups (students, coaches, fans).
9. Identify any special events or concerns relative to the event.

These nine items are to be reviewed prior to the event by the ranking school leader of every school involved in the contest. Each participating school is to be represented in this pregame meeting. If an administrative representative is not in attendance, this responsibility belongs to the head coach.

HAVE A PLAN. COMMUNICATE YOUR PLAN.

KSHSAA FLAG FOOTBALL HANDBOOK RULE

Section 1: General Regulations (apply to grades 7-12)

Art. 1: Competition shall not begin prior to Wednesday of Standardized Calendar Week #9. (See Rule 30-1-8(a-g), Seasons of Activities).

- a. Credit shall be given for a day's practice whether or not it is on a school day.
- b. Each individual player shall participate in at least nine (9) days of practice with the team prior to participating in a game taking place prior to Monday of Standard Calendar Week 13 of the current school year. Each athlete shall participate in a minimum of five (5) days of practice with the team prior to participating in any game taking place on or after Monday of Standard Calendar Week 13 of the current school year.
- c. Dual sport fall season student-athletes competing prior to Monday of SCW 13, may use up to three (3) cross country or volleyball practices to count towards the Flag Football minimum practice requirement.
- d. The majority of the squad members shall participate in each practice session before it is considered a day of training.
- e. The opening date for flag football practice shall not begin prior to Monday of Standardized Calendar Week #7. The players must have a minimum of one day of rest/recovery during any week (Sunday-Saturday), beginning Monday of SCW #7 through SCW #21. Only injury treatments are permitted on a rest/recovery day.

Art. 2: From the first Tuesday following Labor Day through the last Friday preceding Memorial Day, no more than four players from a flag football squad from the same school may practice or participate together on the same outside team. Participation by more than four players from a flag football squad on the same outside team shall make them ineligible for the remainder of the school year and any further middle/junior or senior high flag football, unless reinstated by the Executive Board.

Art. 3: No games shall be played except those scheduled by, and entirely under the control of the principals of the competing schools or the Executive Board.

Section 2: Senior High Regulations (apply to grades 9-12)

Art. 1: All practices and competitions shall be held between the opening and closing of the regular season, unless approved by the Executive Board. No senior high school shall participate in more than one scrimmage. No scrimmage shall be conducted except the one scheduled by, and entirely under the control of the principals of the participating schools or the Executive Board.

The flag football season shall close with the KSHSAA tournament series culminating with Standardized Calendar Week #15, providing at least 24 schools are participating in postseason flag football.

Art. 2: A team shall not participate in less than 6 games and no more than 10 games of interschool competition during a season, exclusive of the state championship series.

Section 3: Middle/Junior High School Regulations (apply to grades 7-8)

Art. 1: Each middle/junior high school team is limited to a maximum of six (6) games during one season.

Subvarsity Game Limits

A max of 10 subvarsity contests may be scheduled. On those dates when the varsity and subvarsity play on the same day, a student may participate in a total of six quarters amongst two levels of play. Overtime periods are considered part of the second half.

KSHSAA HANDBOOK Rule 22 - OUTSIDE COMPETITION

Violation of this rule shall make a student ineligible for the remainder of that sport, scholars bowl or debate season, unless he or she is reinstated by the Executive Board.

Section 1: General Regulations (apply to grades 7-12)

Art. 1: A student who is a member of a school athletic, scholars bowl or debate squad effective Monday SCW #7 through Friday preceding Memorial Day may not participate as a member of an outside team or as an independent competitor in the same sport, scholars bowl or debate activity. (Exception: See Rule 4, United States Olympic Committee-Sponsored National Trials and Competitions.

Regular Season Forfeiture Policy

1. If a regular season game (including invitational tournaments) is not played due to a team/school not having enough players to field a legal team, and both schools agree that a make-up date cannot be determined, the game will count as a forfeit and a win in postseason seeding for the team who was willing and able to play. The game would count as a loss for postseason seeding for the team lacking players.
2. After a school starts the season with a team but is unable to finish the season due to lack of players, all games scheduled will count as a forfeit win unless the school losing a contest can find another opponent. The school with a discontinued team must notify the KSHSAA that they are no longer participating and the KSHSAA will make updates to the win/loss record form.
3. If a team forfeits and marginal points are used as seeding criteria, the maximum marginal points allowed will be awarded.
4. The team forfeiting must pay officials fees unless officials are re-assigned.

Regular Season Games Not Played Policy

1. Games not played because of weather or other unforeseen circumstances do not count as a win or a loss for either team when seeding postseason tournaments. Reasonable efforts should be made between school administrators to reschedule all contests, but if schools are unable to reschedule the game it does not count as a forfeit win or loss and will be recorded as “no game played”. When determining seeding for postseason tournaments the number of wins is divided by the number of games played to determine the winning percentage.
2. This policy applies to both regular season and invitational tournament games. If a tournament is played and a team does not participate due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, the tournament manager will advance a team in the bracket but neither the team advanced nor the team going to the back side of the bracket will count the game as a win or loss. It simply counts as no game played.
3. Only when the originally scheduled opponent agrees that no reschedule is possible, a school may seek a different opponent to complete the schedule.

GAME PLAY

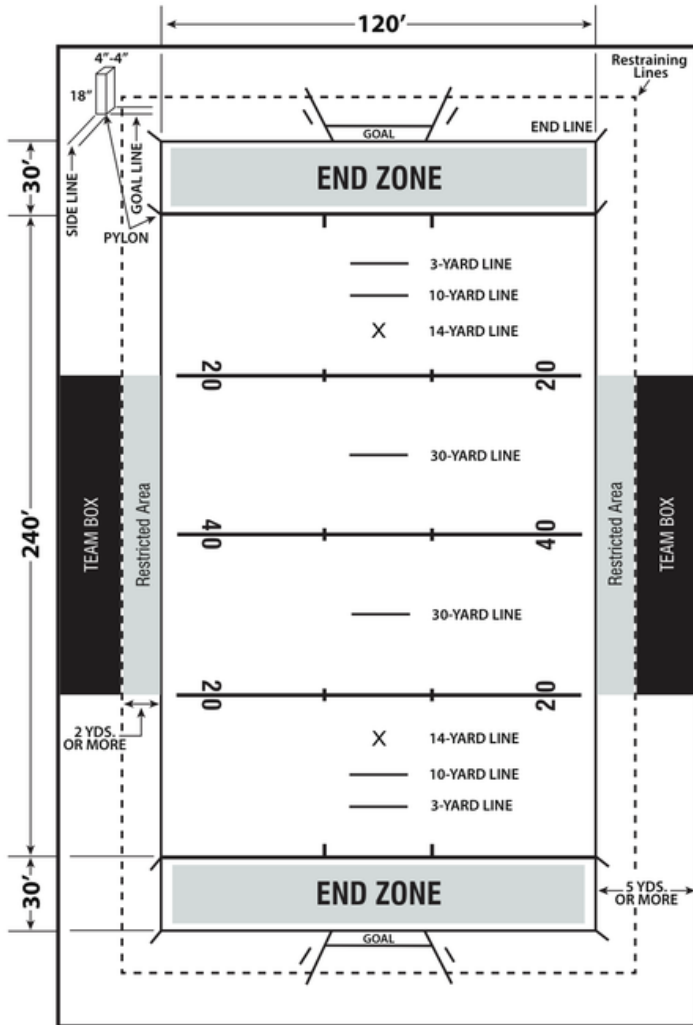
All contests will be competed under the rules of the NFHS Flag Football Rules Book. The KSHSAA will waive any uniform requirements requiring two jersey's year one to help with expenses. The home school will have penny's ready for visiting teams if both teams have the same colored jerseys.

By state association adoption, the state can opt out/in of using field goals and PAT's. It was determined for this year KSHSAA will not use field goals or PAT's (via field goal) for play this first season. We realize based on some facilities being used, field goal posts may not be present, so it makes sense to have a common rule all can play under this first year.

KSHSAA will use *Flag Football Field Diagram #1* as the official field.



Flag Football Field Diagram #1



Game ball for the postseason: GST SpeedSkin Heir & GRT – (NFHS Approved) Leather Football. All hosts will be sent the above ball for use. Wilson balls must be used for the postseason. During the regular season schools may use a ball of their choice.

***KSHSAA will snap each play from the center of the field. See NFHS Rule 2-35-3.

GAME DAY – FIELD SET UP AND GAME OPERATIONS

Preferred (Will be required for hosting postseason)

1. A down marker to show which down is taking place on the spot of the ball.
2. A marker to show the line to gain.

3. Numbered pylons to show the: 20s, 40, 10s. There will also need to be markers for the 14s and 3s.
4. Out of bounds marked with paint or tape.
5. Goal line one solid line.
6. Team box marked a minimum five yards outside the out of bounds line.
7. PA announcer.
8. Scoreboard, with time keeper.

Minimum

1. A down marker to show which down is taking place on the spot of the ball.
2. Markers to help distinguish the 20s, 40s, 14s, 10s and 3s.
3. Out of bounds marked with cones.
4. Goal line one solid line.
5. Team box marked a minimum five yards outside the out of bounds line.
6. Scoreboard, with time keeper.

In both cases the officials will spot the ball where the next play shall begin. It is the responsibility of the players to gather the ball and be ready to play that spot.

In both cases we will treat the play clock like football. If you have it on the field that is preferred but if not, the referee will keep the play clock.

OVERTIME PROCEDURES

Overtime Regulations:

1. The overtime will begin with a coin toss. The designated home team will make the call. The winner of the toss will have the option of taking offense, defense, or playing towards a certain goal. The loser of the toss will have the second option. If additional overtime periods are needed, the teams will play the alternate possession from which they started.
2. All overtime periods will be played toward the same goal. Both teams will have one opportunity on offense. The offense may choose to attempt a 1-point try from the 3-yard line or a 2-point try from the 10-yard line. After the try, the opposing team will have the same option. If the game is still tied, the process will be repeated until there is a winner declared.
3. There will be no time outs during overtime. There will be a 1 minute timeout between additional overtime periods.

POSTSEASON INFORMATION

For the first season there will be one classification playing for one championship. The participating schools will be divided into two regional (east/west) and compete in a 16-team bracket on each side. The top 16 teams on each side will make the bracket. The postseason will progress as follows:

Postseason Seeding date: October 7 (seeding will take place when all games are complete)

Regionals - Round of 32 and 16: October 10, 2026

16 schools on the east;

16 schools on the west;

Top 4 seeds will host (three games)

(1-8-9-16, 2-7-10-15, 3-6-11-14, 4-5-12-13)

Quarterfinals: October 13, 2026 – the eight teams will be seeded.

One game hosted at highest seed (one game)

Semifinals, consolation and finals (four games): October 17, 2026

Site: Stryker Sports Complex, Wichita.

PLAYOFF BRACKET SEEDING CRITERIA:

The regular season record will be used for seeding. If a team does not play six games they will not be permitted in the bracket by handbook rule.

- a. Win-loss percentage in all games played.

If two teams have an identical percentage, the tie will be broken as follows:

- a. If the teams played each other, the one defeating the other a larger number of times will receive the higher seed. If after they have played each other and each has defeated the other team under consideration an identical number of times, the team with the most wins will receive the higher seed.
- b. If the teams did not play each other, the team with the most wins will receive the higher seed.
- c. If the tie still remains, the team with the best marginal points (+/- 13 points max) will be the higher seed
- d. If the tie still remains, then a coin will be tossed to determine the team receiving the higher seed.

If three teams are tied with an identical percentage, the tie will be broken as follows:

- a. If one team won over all the other tied teams or has a winning record over all the other tied teams, it shall receive the higher seed. The two remaining tied teams will revert to the procedure used for two tied teams.
- b. If one team has lost to each of the other teams, that team shall be dropped from the tiebreaking procedure. The two remaining teams will revert to the procedure used for two tied teams.
- c. If the above procedure did not break the tie, the teams with the most wins shall receive the higher seeds.
- d. If the tie still remains, the teams with the marginal points during the regular season will receive the higher seeds.
- e. If the tie still remains, a drawing by lot will determine the teams receiving the higher seeds.

If four teams are tied with an identical percentage, the tie will be broken as follows:

- a. If one team won over all the other tied teams, or has a winning record over all tied teams, it shall receive the higher seed. The three remaining tied teams will revert to the procedure used for three tied teams.
- b. If the above procedure did not break the tie, the teams with the most wins will receive the higher seeds.
- c. If the tie still remains, the teams with the best marginal points during the regular season will receive the higher seeds. (=/- 13 points max).
- d. If the tie still remains, a drawing by lot will determine the teams receiving the higher seeds.

Roster Size

Each competing team may have 20 players suited up for competition.

Awards

A regional championship plaque will be given to the regional winner.

State Champions = trophy and 21 medals

State runner up = trophy and 21 medals

Third place = trophy and 21 medals

Fourth place = 21 medals

Ticket Prices

Regionals, Sectionals and Sub-State - K-12 \$6; Adults \$8 (PreK and under are free.)

State: K-12 and Adults - \$10 (PreK and under are free.)



NFHS Flag Football Rules Book: Game Clock Format

General Clock Format:

- The Game length will be four 12-minute periods.
- There will be a 1-minute intermission between the 1st and 2nd periods and between the 3rd and 4th periods. Teams change goals following these intermissions.
- There will be a 10-minute halftime, unless coaches have mutually agreed to shorten the halftime period.

Clock Stoppages:

- *The clock will only be stopped during play in the 1st and 3rd periods and the first 10 minutes of the 2nd and 4th periods for the following:*
 - A charged team timeout (restart on the snap)
 - Change of possession (restart on the snap)
 - Following a safety (restart on the snap)
 - A touchdown (the clock will NOT run on the extra point attempt and will be started again at the change of possession snap)
 - Penalties (restart on the ready-for-play signal)
 - An official's timeout ex. injury (restart on the ready-for-play signal)
- *Two-Minute Timeout* - During the first dead ball with two minutes or less remaining in either half, the referee shall stop the clock and notify the field captains and their coaches of the time remaining and that the last two minute timing rules are in effect. This is not a timeout for coaches to confer with players. The clock starts on the snap following this two-minute timeout.
- *During the final 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th periods, the clock will stop for the following:*
 - A charged team timeout (restart on the snap)
 - Change of possession (restart on the snap)
 - Following a safety (restart on the snap)
 - A touchdown (the clock will NOT run on the extra point attempt and will be started again at the change of possession snap)
 - **Out of bounds** (restart on the snap)
 - **Dead ball** (restart on the snap)
 - **Incomplete pass** (restart on the snap)
 - Penalties (restart at request of the offended team)
 - An official's timeout ex. injury (restart on the ready-for-play signal)
 - **First down** (restart on the ready-for-play signal)

Play Clock:

If play clock is operational and handled by the press box, it shall be 25 seconds and starts once the referee signals and whistles ready for play.

Putting the Ball in Play:

New series start each half and after scoring at A's 14-yd line.

Following a safety, the team whose goal line was involved shall scrimmage kick from their own 20 yard line.

Team Timeouts:

Each team gets three charged timeouts per half. Timeouts are one minute each and do NOT rollover from the first half to the second half.

First Downs:

1st downs are accomplished at 20-yard intervals at designated spots:

- A's 20 yd line
- A's 40 yd line
- B's 40 yd line
- B's 20 yd line

Scoring:

- TD: 6 points
- Successful extra point from 3 yd line: 1 point
- Successful extra point from 10 yd line: 2 points
- Safety: 2 points

Mercy Rule Regulations:

1. If a team is ahead by 19 points or more at the two-minute timeout of the 4th quarter, the game clock will continue to run.
2. Team coaches can mutually agree to end a game early.

Overtime Regulations:

1. The overtime will begin with a coin toss. The designated home team will make the call. The winner of the toss will have the option of taking offense, defense, or playing towards a certain goal. The loser of the toss will have the second option. If additional overtime periods are needed, the teams will play the alternate possession from which they started.
2. All overtime periods will be played toward the same goal. Both teams will have one opportunity on offense. The offense may choose to attempt a 1-point try from the 3-yard line or a 2-point try from the 10-yard line. After the try, the opposing team will have the same option. If the game is still tied, the process will be repeated until there is a winner declared.
3. There will be no time outs during overtime. There will be a 1 minute timeout between additional overtime periods.

2026-27 NFHS Flag Football Rules Book

Table 1-7

Table of State Association Adoptions



Options	TSSAA Adoption
1. Designate the field dimensions as official. (Flag Football Field Diagrams #1, 2, 3 or 4)	Diagram #1: 80 yards by 40 yards
2. Determine the number of game officials. (1-1-4 NOTE)	3
3. Determine the time for game officials to assume authority if greater than 30 minutes. (1-1-7)	n/a
4. Approve alterations of the team box if the same for both teams. (1-2-3e NOTE 3)	n/a
5. Authorize the use of goals. (1-2-5)	Will not be used.
6. Mandate the use of a specific ball for postseason or playoff competition. (1-3-2 NOTE)	Wilson WTF1003B GST SpeedSkin Heir & GRT
7. Authorize the use of a kicking tee. (1-3-4)	n/a
8. Authorize the use of supplementary equipment to aid in game administration. (1-3-7)	School must submit request to state office
9. Authorize the use of instant replay during state postseason games. (1-3-7 NOTE)	n/a (instant replay will not be used)
10. Authorize the wearing of a commemorative/memorial patch (1-5-1a(2) NOTE, 1-5-1a(3) NOTE)	School must submit request to state office
11. Determine the style of flag used and flag measurements (may not be below minimum). (1-5-1f NOTE)	3 flags attached to belt.
12. Authorize the use of a drum for rhythmic cadence for deaf or partially deaf teams. (1-6-1 NOTE)	School must submit request to state office
13. Authorize the use of hash marks. (2-36-3 NOTE)	n/a (will snap from center of field)
14. Establish a procedure to resolve games tied following the fourth period. (3-1-1 NOTE)	See Page 9 for OT regulations
15. Establish a point differential to terminate games or to use a running game clock when the point differential is reached. (3-1-2)	See Page 12 for mercy rule regulations
16. Establish rules regarding continuation of interrupted games. (3-1-4)	n/a (continued from point of interruption unless mutual agreement)
17. Determine the length of halftime intermission. (3-1-6)	10 minutes, unless coaches agree to shorten. To be extended, must request special permission from the state office.
18. Determine when the coin toss is to be held. (3-2-1)	n/a (3 minutes prior to scheduled start time)
19. Authorize the use of TV/radio time-out. (3-5-7j)	n/a (may be altered for state championship)
20. Establish rules regarding place kicking for field goals and tries. (2-20-3, 2-20-5, 8-3-3 NOTE, 8-4-1)	n/a