



To: Out Of State Football Teams  
From: Mike Bartram, NJSIAA Football Rules Interpreter  
RE: New Jersey Football Rule Adoptions and Officiating Mechanics for the 2023 Season

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For games played in the state of New Jersey, National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) Football Rules along with any New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) Football rule modifications will govern all play. This memo provides out of state opponents a summary of any New Jersey specific adoptions as allowed in NFHS Rule 1-7 and officiating mechanics to be used during the contest.

**1. Number of Game Officials and Mechanics (NFHS Rule 1-1-4 Note)**

- a. The on-field officials will consist of a 6 or 7 person crew:
  - i. 6 Officials will consist of: Referee (R), Umpire (U), Head Linesman (HL), Line Judge (LJ), Field Judge (FJ), and Side Judge (SJ).
  - ii. 7 Officials will consist of: Referee (R), Umpire (U), Head Linesman (HL), Line Judge (LJ), Field Judge (FJ), Side Judge (SJ), and Back Judge (BJ).
- b. In the first half of each game, the HL and SJ will operate on the press box side of the field; the LJ and FJ will operate on the side of the field opposite the press box.
  - i. For the second half of the game (and overtime, if required), these four officials will switch sides of the field.
  - ii. The line-to-gain equipment and the box will NOT switch sides and will remain opposite the press box for the entire contest as required by NFHS rules.

**2. Play Clock (NFHS Rule 1-3-7)**

- a. With 6 officials, if there is no visible play clock, the Field Judge (regardless of sideline) shall be responsible for running the play clock and shall raise his/her hand overhead when there are 5 seconds remaining in the count and begin the countdown chop so that it is clear to the QB and coaches.
- b. With 7 officials, if there is no visible play clock, the Back Judge (Center of Field) shall be responsible for running the play clock and shall raise his/her hand overhead when there are 5 seconds remaining in the count and begin the countdown chop so that it is clear to the QB and coaches.

### 3. Game Management – Running Clock Rule (NFHS Rule 3-1-2)

- a. If the score differential reaches 33 points or more in the 2nd half, the clock will stop only for a score, time out, penalty or injury. If the score differential drops below 25 points, normal timing rules will again be in effect.

### 4. Overtime Procedures (NFHS Rule 3-1-1 Note)

- a. The NJSIAA has adopted a 25-yard line procedure to determine a winner in regular season games which end regulation play in a tie. The 25-yard line procedure will utilize the National Federation OVERTIME PROCEDURE in the NFHS Football Rule Book with the following modifications:
  - i. At the end of regulation playing time, the referee, in the presence of the field captains, shall toss a coin which the visiting team shall call. The winner of the coin toss will be given the option of offense or defense first, or of designating the end of field in which the ball will be put in play. The loser will have their choice of the other options. If the game is still tied after both teams have had one series of downs, the next OT will begin with the loser of the coin toss being given the choice. There will be only one coin toss. All other regulations as detailed in the National Federation Football Rules then prevail.
  - ii. **To start the overtime, the offensive team shall put the ball in play, 1st and 10, from the 25-yard line of their opponents unless a penalty shall cause the ball to be placed elsewhere.**
  - iii. It is possible for a team to earn or be awarded a first down during a team's possession; thus, giving them an additional four (4) downs during their possession to move the ball ten (10) yards for a new series or to score. Since it is possible to earn a first down, the line to gain equipment must be used during the 25-yard line procedure.
  - iv. The defense may score during the OVERTIME PROCEDURE. The ball remains alive if there is a change of possession. Any foul, which occurs after a change of team possession, is automatically refused. If there is a change of possession and the team in possession fouls and subsequently scores, the score is canceled, and A's series has ended. If neither team scores after a change of possession, A's series has ended. If B scores, they are the winners, and the game is over. If a foul occurs before the change of possession, it will be treated as any foul is treated in regulation. If there is an inadvertent whistle after a change of possession, the team with the ball will have the option of accepting the play or to replay the down. This will also be the end of A's series.

- v. Each team will be permitted only one (1) time-out during each overtime period. Any unused time-outs from regulation or a previous overtime period WILL NOT be transferred over.
- vi. Except as specifically provided above, the NFHS Football Rule Book Rules and Regulations, as adopted by the NJSIAA, shall prevail. There is no need to use the scoreboard time during the 25-yard line procedure.
- vii. A maximum of 3 series will be played. In the 3rd series, teams must utilize the 2-point try.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Bartram", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Bartram  
NJSIAA Football Rules Interpreter