

2025-26 NFHS Flag Football Rules

SECTION 7: STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS- ILLINOIS (IHSA)

TABLE 1-7: TABLE OF STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS

1. **Designate the field dimensions as official.**
 - Diagram #3
2. **Determine the number of game officials.**
 - **2-person** – Referee & Field Judge
 - **3-person** – Referee (R), Field Judge (FJ), Side Judge (SJ)
 - **4-person** – Referee (R), Field Judge (FJ), Back Judge (BJ), Side Judge (SJ)
 - **Regionals** – 3 Officials
 - **Sectionals and State** – 4 Officials
3. **Determine the time for game officials to assume authority if greater than 30 minutes.**
 - 30 minutes
4. **Approve alteration of the team box if the same for both teams.**
 - With limited exceptions, nonplayers are not permitted in the restricted area at any time during the game. Nonplayers include coaches, team personnel, spectators, game administrators, and members of the media.
5. **Authorize the use of goals.**
 - No goals
6. **Mandate the use of a specific ball for postseason or playoff competition.**
 - All IHSA State Series games will be played with the **Wilson GST SPEEDSKIN HEIR**
 - For non-state series games, any ball meeting NFHS 1-3-1 is acceptable.
7. **Authorize the use of a kicking tee.**
 - No
8. **Authorize the use of supplementary equipment to aid in game administration.**
 - No
9. **Authorize the wearing of a commemorative/memorial patch.**
 - Yes-Allowed

10. **Determine the style of flag used and flag measurements (may not be below minimum).**
- Pop flag belts must be worn during all contests with two (2) pop-up flags. (*You MUST bring your own belts*)
 - **Flag Dimensions:**
 - All flags must be at least **15.5 inches long** and **1.5 inches wide**
 - Flags **CANNOT match the color** of the players' shorts and must be a single solid color (manufacturer's trademark is allowed)
 - If the shorts have a stripe, the flags **CANNOT** be the same color as the stripe or shorts
 - Excess flag belt must be tucked into the shorts or secured with a manufactured belt loop or tape
 - Flags must be placed one on each hip
11. **Authorize the use of a drum for rhythmic cadence for deaf or partially deaf teams.**
- Yes (1-6-1 NOTE)
12. **Authorize the use of hash marks.**
- CPS plays on a number of grass fields. Clinicians and Advisory believe this adoption could be 1 year away.
13. **Establish a procedure to resolve games tied following the fourth period.**
- **Overtime Procedure:**
 - Overtime will occur if the score is tied at the end of regulation.
 - A coin toss is held before overtime; the visiting team calls the toss.
 - Toss winner chooses either:
 - Offense or defense first
 - Which end zone the OT is played
 - Both teams will get a single extra point attempt:
 - 1 point from the **3-yard line**
 - 2 points from the **10-yard line**
 - Interceptions end the down (no return for points)
 - The order of offense and defense flips with each OT period
 - Each team gets **1 timeout per overtime period** (non-cumulative)
14. **Establish a point differential to terminate games or use a running clock.**
- **Mercy Rule:**
 - **35+ points or more in the 3rd or 4th quarter-** running clock
 - **Once the 35 point spread is reached the clock will run and will not return to the timing in the 1st and 2nd quarter.**
 - Clock only stops on scores, timeouts, quarter changes, and injuries during the Mercy Rule

15. Establish rules regarding continuation of interrupted games.

- **Postseason Games:**
 - If a game is stopped (weather or other reason), it resumes the next day from the point of interruption during the State Series
 - If one team refuses to return, the score and outcome are final at the point of suspension
 - If the clock was running due to the Mercy Rule, the game is considered complete

16. Determine the length of halftime intermission.

- 6 minutes (can be shortened or lengthened by mutual agreement of both coaches and tournament administration)

17. Determine when the coin toss is to be held.

- No less than 5 minutes prior to game time

18. Authorize the use of TV/radio time-out.

- **No** – Only if needed at the State Championships

19. Establish rules regarding place kicking for field goals.

- No

Uniform Implementation Timeline

- **Target Year: for compliance with NFHS 2030**

Jersey Color for Visiting Teams NFHS 1-5-1-2a

- NFHS requires white jerseys
- IHSA allows light colors (gray, off-white, yellow, etc.)
- Encourage new jersey purchases to be white for visitors
- **Required 2030**

Bottoms (Pants, Shorts, Skirts) NFHS 1-5-1-3d

- Must be a **solid color (no stripes)** contrasting with the flag
- Teams with existing striped uniforms may continue using them until **2030 when solid short/pants/skirts will be required**
- Flags must not match shorts or stripe color

Flags 1-5-1-3f

- Currently using two-flag belts
- NFHS testing three-flag belts

- Recommend **waiting at least 3 years** with 2 flag belts before any switch
- Reevaluate after **2028 season**