

TSSAA KICKOFF CARRYOVER EXCEPTIONS

As outlined in the NFHS Rules Book, certain fouls during a free kick are considered dead ball fouls, and the related penalty results in a re-kick. However, TSSAA has been approved by NFHS to experiment in 2026 with considering certain of these fouls during a free kick as live ball fouls, which gives options to the receiving team as discussed below.

The following fouls outlined in Rule 6, Section 1 are currently penalized as dead ball fouls, and play is stopped when they occur:

ART. 3 ... After the ball is marked ready for play, and until the ball is kicked, the following formation requirements must be met:

- a. No player, other than the kicker or holder for a place kick, may be beyond his free-kick line; and
- b. No kicking team players, other than the kicker, may be more than 5 yards behind the kicking team's free-kick line. ... If one kicking team player is more than 5 yards behind this restraining line and any other player kicks the ball, it is a foul.

ART. 4 ... At the time the ball is kicked, at least 4 kicking team players must be on each side of the kicker.

During the 2026 football season for TSSAA games, each of these infractions (on both a kickoff and after a safety) will be considered live ball fouls, meaning play will not be stopped when they occur.

Also, the following penalty options will then be available to the receiving team:

1. 5 yards and re-kick.
2. 5 yards from the succeeding spot (where the subsequent dead ball belongs to the receiving team or where the ball is placed after a touchback).

Option 2 will not be available if the kicking team is in possession of the ball at the end of the play.