

March 2022 Study Guide

Although new rule books are not yet available, rule changes for 2022 have been released by the NFHS. There are rule changes that impact our mechanics, interpretation of previously legal- now illegal blocks- and timing. Let's begin as we have in the past with Rules 1 and 2.

Rule 1

1-4-3: The number 0 is now legal. Many of you have seen players with this number in games during previous years. This is one less uniform headache for us to monitor. Be advised 0 preceding another digit such as 07 or 007 are NOT LEGAL.

1-2-3g: State associations may expand team boxes to between the 10 yard lines AND may designate which team members may be outside the traditional 25 yard line limit. This has the potential for creating crowding, especially at the goal line- something we have seen on film. Expect emphasis from the GHSA on allowable team members who may be between the ten yard lines and where medical personnel, press and cheer squads may be located.

1-3-3: Any official may now order the ball changed between downs- not just the Referee. Frankly, this has been the procedure for many crews for years- during inclement weather, heavy moisture early in the season.

There are no other changes to Rule 1. Crew challenges remain equipment worn properly including knee pads, spine pads, sweat bands on inappropriate places and illegal jerseys. Concerning the last item correct action would be to inform the GHSA with a picture if possible. I assure you this is a global problem and uniform requirements that go into effect nationwide in 2024 are creating challenges for athletic directors.

Crew Discussion:

1. What is our responsibility pregame to correct, if possible, illegal equipment, legal equipment worn illegally or absent required equipment?
2. What would be appropriate action, particularly by wing officials, who observe crowded pylon or goal line extended areas that may keep them from officiating a play?

Rule 2

As older officials are aware this is a critical rule for younger officials to master. For 2022 there is a major change that will affect line play hence affecting multiple official's positions.

2-3-8: The definition of a **chop block** has been revised. For our purposes:

- A. Remains a **combination block** by two or more teammates against an opponent
- B. With or without delay
- C. One block is **below the waist** and the other is above
- D. This does not change the free blocking zone single blocker legal contact below the waist established in 2021 and outlined in Rule 2-17-2
- E. **Key Points**
 - 1. **Both offensive and defensive player may be guilty of chop blocks**
 - 2. **Two high blocks (above the waist) are legal in situations where blocking is allowed**
 - 3. **Two low blocks (below the waist) are legal in situations where low blocks are legal**
 - 4. **High- low or low-high blocks are chop blocks and illegal**

2-28-2: Clarified that the neutral zone can be expanded into the end zone on any play from scrimmage EXCEPT a scrimmage kick. This will allow legal offensive line play into the end zone on pass plays. It is not relevant for running plays.

Crew Discussion:

- 1. What type of offenses will be most impacted by the chop block rule change?
- 2. Emphasis on run mechanics and responsibility for observing chop blocks in the pregame?
- 3. Does this change the free blocking zone and what is currently allowed?

March 7, 2022

