

the knee' and 'above the knee' is tough to do. I think it's really going to improve the game."

Players will be able to wear the number 0 as a jersey number starting in 2022, as the range of acceptable numbers listed in Rule 1-4-3 was expanded from 1-99 to 0-99. However, any number preceded by the digit zero will be illegal.

State associations now have the option to extend sideline team boxes beyond their traditional 50-yard expanse (between the 25-yard-lines) as long as both teams are allowed to use the same dimensions. This new NOTE attached to Rule 1-2-3g also gives state associations the freedom to decide which individuals can access the extended area.

Two minor changes involving game clock and play clock procedures were made to Rules 3-4-7 and 3-6-1a(1)e EXCEPTIONS, respectively.

In Rule 3-4-7, any foul committed within the last two minutes of either half will automatically result in the offended team's option to start the game clock on the snap. Prior to this change, the offended team was required to accept its opponent's penalty in order to gain control of the game clock.

The committee edited the EXCEPTIONS to Rule 3-6-1a(1)e, which clarify the necessary conditions for an abbreviated 25-second play clock after a stoppage in play. This rule now includes an exception for Rule 3-5-7i, mandating that a 40-second play clock be employed following a foul committed only by the defensive team.

The final rule change for 2022 is an alteration to Rule 1-3-3 regarding game equipment. Any game official – not just the referee – may order the ball changed between downs.

The NFHS Football Rules Committee is composed of one representative from each of the NFHS member state associations that use NFHS football rules, along with a representative from the NFHS Coaches Association, NFHS Officials Association and NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.

A complete listing of the football rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Activities & Sports" at the top of the home page and select "Football."

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, 11-player football is the most popular high school sport for boys with 1,006,013 participants in 14,247 schools nationwide. In addition, there were 31,221 boys who participated in 6-, 8- and 9-player football, along with 2,604 girls in all four versions of the game for a grand total of 1,039,828.