

6. FOOTBALL

A. GENERAL REGULATIONS

1) Interscholastic Participation

1.1) Practice And Coaching

- 1.11) In accordance with General Sport Regulation 7.5.1, football coaches are permitted 13 contact days beginning May 15, 2024 – July 31, 2024. In addition to these 13 days, football coaches are permitted 5 additional contact days intended to be used between July 15, 2024-July 31, 2024, to complete the acclimatization process. Therefore, football coaches are permitted a total of 18 contact days between May 15, 2024 – July 31, 2024. **These contact days may not be mandatory.**
- 1.12) Mandatory Practice may begin August 1 for all schools.
- 1.13) All schools must respect a five-day acclimatization period. All 5 days of acclimatization may be completed from July 15-July 31. **These days are separate from the 13 contact days in General Sports Regulation 7.5.1. Attendance on these days MAY NOT BE MANDATORY.** Athletes that complete acclimation in July may participate in full contact on August 1. All athletes joining the team for the first time at any point during the season after the first day of mandatory practice must participate in a five-day acclimatization period prior to any contact drills. There must be an adequate recovery period between practice sessions.
- 1.14) During practices within the acclimatization period, players may wear helmets only on the first two days. On days three and four, helmets and shoulder pads are allowed. From day five onward, full pads are allowed. Full contact is NOT permitted until the acclimatization period is completed. During these acclimation days, athletes may engage in conditioning, speed, strength, agility drills and may use “dummies” for drills and walk-through practices.
- 1.15) Any practice or workout including two or more school teams or partial teams is a scrimmage.
- 1.16) Conduct of Practice Sessions. **Know both the temperature and humidity.**
 - 1.16.1) Please reference Sports Medicine Regulation 3 Heat Acclimatization and Exertional Heat Illness Prevention for more, including the full wet bulb temperature chart.

WBGT	Recommendation
<79.7°F	Normal activities Three separate 3 minute breaks per hour
79.8-84.6°F	Three separate 4 minute breaks per hour Helmets and other equipment should be removed when the athlete is not directly involved with the competition, drill or practice and it is not otherwise required
84.7-87.6°F	Maximum practice time of 2 hours Four separate 4 minute breaks per hour FB: Limit to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice Considering postponing practice to later in the day Allow athletes to change to dry shirts and shorts at defined intervals
87.8-89.7°F	Maximum of 1 hour of training with four separate 5 minute breaks in that hour No additional conditioning allowed FB/LAX: No helmets, shoulder pads, or other equipment is permitted Consider postponing practice to later in the day Allow athletes to change to dry shirts and shorts at defined intervals
>89.8°F	No outdoor workouts No indoor workouts unless air conditioned

Reference Sports Medicine Regulation 3 for the full wet bulb temperature chart, heat acclimatization and exertional heat illness prevention guidelines

- 1.17) Preseason Practices: When more than one practice takes place in a day, full contact is permitted only during one of the practice sessions. With the importance of recovery time to help minimize concussion risks, consideration should also be given to the timing of full contact during the next day (i.e. if full contact occurs during session 2 of two-a-days, there should not be full contact in session 1 of two-a-days the following day).
Note: On a day consisting of two practices, it is strongly recommended the two practices be separated by at least three (3) hours of continuous rest in a cool environment.

1.17.1) Contact Definitions

1. Unrestricted Activities

- A. Air – (Coach pre-determined outcome) – Players run a drill unopposed without contact.
- B. Bags – (Coach pre-determined outcome) – Drill is run against a bag or other soft contact surface.
- C. Control – (Coach pre-determined outcome) – Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; one player is pre-determined the “winner” by the coach. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet.

2. Restricted Contact

- A. Thud – (Non coach pre-determined outcome) - Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; no pre-determined “winner”. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill.
- B. Live Action - (Non coach pre-determined outcome) – Games, scrimmages and drills run in game-like conditions. These are the only times that players are taken to the ground.

1.18) In Season Practice

- 1.18.1) Consider limiting full contact on consecutive days.
- 1.18.2) A student-athlete is limited to 30 minutes of full contact in practice per day.
- 1.18.3) A student-athlete is limited to 60 minutes of full contact in practice per week.
- 1.18.4) A student-athlete can be involved in full contact in a maximum of two practices in a seven-day span.

1.2) Scrimmages

- 1.21) Any practice or workout including two or more teams or partial teams is a scrimmage.
- 1.22) Grades 9-12 – Scrimmages may be held after one day of full contact practice and prior to the first game.
- 1.23) Grades 9-12 may participate in a maximum of two scrimmages not to exceed three hours in length. The three-hour time limit begins when the scrimmage begins. High school teams may use a game format in one or both of their scrimmages and they **may charge admission**.
- 1.24) Grades 7 and 8 may participate in two scrimmages after 3 days of full contact practice. A scrimmage is limited to a maximum of two hours with the time being counted continuously once the scrimmage begins.

1.3) Quarters And Game Limitations

- 1.31) 9th-12th grade student is limited to playing:
 - a) A maximum of four quarters in one day.
 - b) A maximum of 50 quarters per season (excluding OHSAA tournaments).
- 1.32) 7th & 8th grade student is limited to playing:
 - a) A maximum of four quarters in one day.
 - b) A maximum of 32 quarters per season
- 1.33) **Any player who participates in two or more consecutive downs in one quarter shall be charged with one quarter of play. A down in which the offensive team is in a scrimmage kick formation or a free kick occurs does not count in the quarter limitation. A down repeated due to penalty does not count.**

Note: This is not the formula for Competitive Balance rostering.

1.4) Length Of Periods

- 1.41) Grades 7 & 8 – Maximum length of each quarter is eight minutes.
- 1.42) Grades 9-12 – Maximum length for each quarter for 9th is 9 minutes, JV and Reserve – 10 minutes. Varsity – Maximum length of each quarter is 12 minutes.
- 1.43) Overtime Procedure: Regular season varsity high school games which are tied at the end of regulation time shall be continued until there is a winner (no ties) by using the 20-yard line overtime procedure. **Overtime is not permitted below the varsity level.**
Note: Use the OHSAA overtime procedure that is posted on the OHSAA website on the football page. Do **NOT** use the overtime procedure listed in the NFHS Rules Book.
- 1.44) Point Differential/Running Clock: After the first half of regular season 7th-8th grade, sub-varsity and varsity contests, any time the score differential reaches 30 points or more, a running clock shall be used. After the 30-point differential has been met but the score drops below 30 points, the clock reverts to regular timing.

Running clock procedures, which include when the clock will still be stopped, are published on the OHSAA website on the football page.

Note: The use of this rule does not preclude the use of NFHS Rule 3-1-3, which reads: “A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, any remaining periods may be shortened at any time or the game terminated.”

- 1.45) Kickoff Modification below Varsity Level: There will be no Free Kicks (Kickoffs) for 7th and 8th grade or Freshman contests. JV contests may include Free Kicks IF both coaches agree (by informing the Referee) prior to the contest. There shall be no Free Kicks if one coach does not agree. Teams may begin the game with kickoffs and discontinue at any time during the contest by agreement of the coaches.

1.5) No Contest/Forfeit

Teams are expected to play all games not begun on the earliest potential makeup date. If a game is not played on the scheduled date and the schools are unable to agree to a mutually convenient makeup date, the Executive Director’s office will determine whether the date is treated as a “no-contest” or forfeiture, taking into consideration the reason for cancelling the scheduled contest and the rationale used by the schools in their efforts to re-schedule the contest.

1.6) Eight-Player Football

High school and 7th-8th grade teams may participate in a modified version of 11-player football by utilizing eight players.

- 1.61) High schools with enrollments of 160 males or less (obtained from October 2018 enrollments plus Competitive Balance factors) may choose to participate in eight-player football.

- 1.62) Schools that choose to play the eight-player format shall not have both an 11-player team and an eight-player team.

- 1.63) Schools (Varsity Teams) that choose to play the eight-player format are not eligible to qualify for and participate in the OHSAA 11-player football tournament.

- 1.64) Schools (Varsity teams) that choose to play the 11-player format may participate in an “exhibition” 8-player format contest with permission from the OHSAA Executive Director’s office. The contests utilizing the 8-player format shall count as open dates for those schools desiring to qualify for the OHSAA’s 11-player tournament.

- 1.65) Middle schools and sub-varsity teams have the flexibility for their one team to participate in 11-player or 8-player formats.

- 1.66) Schools playing eight-player football must follow all other OHSAA bylaws, general sports regulations and football regulations unless noted elsewhere.

1.7) Grades 7 & 8 – Special Information

- 1.71) Game Ball — (Wilson Game Ball Recommended)

The football used in games involving players in the 7th or 8th grade shall be the youth football.

- 1.72) Modification

In games involving only players below ninth grade, teams will not free kick. In place of a free kick, the receiving team will put the ball in play by a snap. The snap shall be made from the yard line 25 yards beyond the kicking team’s free kick line. This modification does NOT apply to scrimmage kicks (punts or placement).

2) **Out-of-State Travel**

A football team may travel out of state to compete in contests (scrimmages, previews and games) in states that are contiguous to Ohio regardless of distance to travel. The states include Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The Canadian province includes Ontario. Additionally, a football team may travel to a non-contiguous state or province one time per interscholastic season. (Bylaw 9-2-1). Schools must complete the form from the following link when they are participating in a non-contiguous state: <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Eligibility/forms/NonBorderingStateApproval.pdf>.

A football team may not travel out of state to practice (See Bylaw 9-2-2 for exceptions).

3) **Ejection for Unsporting Conduct**

Any student or coach ejected or disqualified for unsporting conduct or a flagrant foul shall be ineligible for all football contests for the remainder of that day. In addition, he/she shall be ineligible for all football games at all levels until one regular season/tournament contest is played at the same level as the ejection or disqualification. (General Sports Regulations Sections 13 and 14).

Exception 1: A player disqualified for flagrant personal fouls other than fouls in Rule 9, Section 4 Articles 1, 2 and 3-j, shall be ineligible for all contests for the remainder of that day. The disqualification for these fouls may be extended through the next scheduled game at the same level of the disqualification by the OHSAA Football Administrator or his/her designee. Video of these fouls shall be emailed to the OHSAA Football Administrator or his/her designee within 48 hours of the contest.

Exception 2: A player disqualified for fighting shall be ineligible for all football contests for the remainder of that day. In addition, he/she shall be ineligible for all football games at all levels until TWO regular season/tournament contest is played at the same level as the ejection or disqualification. The disqualification for these fouls may be reduced by the OHSAA Football Administrator or his/her designee. Video of these fouls shall be emailed to the OHSAA Football Administrator or his/her designee within 48 hours of the contest.

4) Transfer Bylaw

Due to the many questions regarding this bylaw and its application to students desiring to play football, please go to the OHSAA website (OHSAA.org), click on the “Eligibility” link, then click on the “Transfer Bylaw Resource Center” to assist in the understanding of this bylaw.

Note that students who transfer and do not meet an exception to this bylaw are ineligible for all contests after game 5 of the regular season including postseason contests.

5) Noise

- A. Bands shall not play music at football games while the ball is in play, or while signals are being called by the quarterback. This means that it is not permissible to use either:
 - 1. Drum roll or beat
 - 2. Cymbals clashing
 - 3. Horn sounds, or
 - 4. Any other kind of musical instrument while the play is underway in football.
 - 5. Roving bands shall be allowed to participate at the discretion of the host Athletic Director. However, such bands shall not perform while the ball is in play or while signals are being called by the quarterback.
- B. Amplified noise shall not be played while the ball is in play, or while signals are being called by the quarterback. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Any noise over the public-address system.
 - 2. Any “powered” noise such as a cannon or whistle.

Note: Game Administration shall be notified if these violations occur and they shall correct the situation. Game officials are not authorized to give a penalty for these violations.

6) Non-Interscholastic Participation

6.1) A member of an interscholastic football team may participate with a non-interscholastic program or team in contests, tryouts, training and/or practices prior to and after the interscholastic team’s season under the following condition:

The number of team members on the non-interscholastic team who are enrolled at the same school and/or participated in that sport at that same school in the preceding season, or team members on the non-interscholastic team who participated in that sport at another school in the preceding season and transferred or matriculated to the same school, is limited to the number of team members outlined below. Rotating players from the same team is not permitted within the player limitation.

Note: Students who did NOT play for an interscholastic team the previous year do not count in the team limitation of that sport.

The team limit for football is 7.

Note: All activities must be non-contact and the only football equipment the player may wear are helmets and cleats.

6.2) All-Star Competition

In the sport of football, only a graduating senior or a student completing athletic eligibility at the end of the current semester may participate in “All-Star” contact football competition.

See General Sports Regulation 7.6 for regulations permitting coaches to coach their own student-athletes on non-school teams outside the school team’s season (“All-Star” Games).

6.3) Individual Non-Interscholastic Competition Dates:

6.31) A football athlete who has not participated for the school team in football that season must cease non-interscholastic football prior to the season start date of **August 19** in order to be eligible for OHSAA Tournament competition provided applicable Bylaws and Regulations have been followed.

6.32) Football players may be used for out-of-season demonstrations only if approved in advance by the Football Administrator.

6.4) Coaching And Coaches

- 6.41 All interscholastic football coaches, whether paid or volunteer, must be approved by the Board of Education.
- 6.42 See General Sports Regulation 7.9 for regulations permitting school coaches to provide individual skill instruction from August 1 through May 31.
- 6.43 See General Sports Regulation 7.6 for regulations permitting school coaches to coach their own student-athletes on non-school teams outside the school team's season.

7) Coaches — No Contact Period

See *Regulations for No Contact Period – Coaches* under Section 11 of the General Sports Regulations.

8) Penalties

- 8.1) The maximum penalty for violation of Sports Regulation 7 (participation with a non-interscholastic football squad) or any OHSAA regulations for any member of the school squad, EXCEPT a senior, is ineligibility for the remainder of the interscholastic football season and/or the ensuing football season. For a senior, the maximum penalty may be ineligibility for the remainder of the school year.

B. SPECIFIC REGULATIONS — GRADES 9-12

1) Coaching and tryouts may begin — August 1 for all schools

Note: The five-day acclimatization period may begin July 15 but may not be mandatory until July 31.

2) First game — August 19, 2024

3) Coaching and Season end – Conclusion of last regular season or tournament game.

4) Scrimmages – Two scrimmages are permitted. Schools may use a game format in scrimmages and charge admission

5) Regular season games — 10

Note: Schools may play a regular season game after the tournament has started if they have not reached 10 regular season contests.

6) Rules — National Federation Football

7) Officials:

7.1) Varsity — OHSAA Class 1 football only. Minimum crew of at least 6 with Center Judge.

Note: Five (5) officials may be used in areas (or specific games) where 6 are not available.

7.2) Reserve/Junior Varsity — Minimum of 4, recommended 5 OHSAA Class 1 or Class 2 football only.

Freshman — Minimum of 4 OHSAA Class 1, 2 or 3 football officials required. All other officials shall be OHSAA Class 1, 2, or 3 or OHSAA football officials in training. In the event only 3 OHSAA registered football officials arrive to the game, the game may be played provided the participating coaches agree.

C. SPECIFIC REGULATIONS — GRADES 7 & 8

1) Coaching and tryouts may begin — August 1 for all schools

Note: The five-day acclimatization period may begin July 15 but may not be mandatory until July 31.

2) First game — After 3 days of full contact practice, but no earlier than August 19, 2024

3) Coaching and Season end – October 31, 2024 or at the conclusion of last contest, whichever occurs earliest

4) Scrimmages – Two after 3 days of full contact practice a

5) Regular season games — Maximum of 8.

6) Rules — National Federation Football (with kickoff modification)

7) Officials — Minimum of 4 OHSAA Class 1, 2 or 3 football officials required. All other officials shall be OHSAA Class 1, 2, or 3 or OHSAA football officials in training. In the event only 3 OHSAA registered football officials arrive to the game, the game may be played provided the participating coaches agree.

FOOTBALL CALENDAR

Football	2024	2025	2026
Coaching Begins	8/1	8/1	8/1
Season Begins	8/19	8/18	8/17
Non-Interscholastic Date	8/19	8/18	8/17
Regional First Round	11/1	10/31	10/30
Regional Quarterfinals	11/8	11/7	11/6
Regional Semifinals	11/15	11/14	11/13
Regional Finals	11/22	11/21	11/20
State Semifinals	11/29	11/28	11/27
State Finals	12/5-12/7	12/4-12/6	12/3-12/5
Thanksgiving	11/28	11/27	11/26
Season Ends	Conclusion of last regular season or OHSAA tournament game		
Coach — No Contact Period	Begins on first day after last game and ends after 28th day		

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS ORDER OF COMPETITION

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
2024	F	F	F	S	S	S	F
2025	F	F	F	F	S	S	S
2026	F	F	F	S	F	S	S
Session Sequence — State Finals							
2024	Dec. 5-7-TBA						