



Minimum Players

IHSA Question: On the rules video a statement was said that a team may have no more than 7 players on the field and no fewer than 5 to play if no subs are available. What if they start the game with 5? Can they still play, or must they have 7 to start?

NFHS Response: *The only requirement is that you must always have 5 minimum. There is no starting requirement. They could start a game with 5 or 6.*

Flag Rule Clarifications

1) **Flag Guarding - 9.2** ***The runner shall not use hands, arms, or the ball to deny a defender's opportunity to pull a flag.***

This includes but is not limited to:

- Swiping at a defender's hands
- Stiff arms or extending hands or arm to ward off opponent
- Lowering shoulder(s) to conceal flag belt
- Placing ball over flag belt
- A running motion that causes the ball to drop and deny a flag attempt (runners should be taught to hold ball high against chest or run with ball extended) - *penalty: Flag Guard*

- **Defensive** players may not bat or strip the ball from an offensive player once possession is established. - *penalty: Illegal use of hands*

2) **Screen Blocking** - Screen Blocking is allowed in Flag Football. Physical blocking is not.

2.3- 'Screen blocking is taking a position to obstruct the path of an opponent with any part of the blocker's BODY.'

3.2- 'A screen blocker may maintain legal position by moving in the same direction or path as an opponent. Screen blockers shall not initiate contact now extend hands, arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact.'

The IHSA's simple philosophy on screen blocking fouls is stated as:

'Any impactful contact is a foul on whomever initiates the contact'

- This includes screeners lowering a shoulder into a defender
- This includes defenders who initiate contact by charging, running through, or using hands or arms to create an impactful contact with offensive screener
- Offensive players may move with the ball carrier as long as contact is not initiated with defenders
- Offensive players may assume legal screening position downfield - *penalty: illegal contact*

3) **Snapping - 2.34, 7.1-4** ***A snap is the legal act of passing the ball backward from the ground and ahead of the snapper's body.***

- Snaps may be between the legs or side snap.
- Side snappers may not be offsides; both feet must be on the offense's side of the ball. Only the hand on the ball may breach the neutral zone.
- All snaps must be made to an offensive player who is at least 2 yards from the LOS.
- Long end of the ball must remain perpendicular to the LOS. Ball may be standing on end but cannot be turned sideways.





- Snappers may lift the ball for adjustment prior to becoming set; once ball is set it must remain stationary
- Snap begins when the player first moves the ball legally after being set. Snap must be a quick and continuous backward motion.

4) **Roughing the Passer - 9.5-4** *'Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging Into a passer or player attempting a pass. Defenders must make an effort to pull the passer's flag. Defenders may not contact the passing arm or head of the passer.'*

- Hands on hips making a bona fide flag attempt should not be considered Roughing the Passer, unless egregious Illegal contact was made. A passer falling to the ground as a result of a legal flag attempt must meet the definition of impactful contact.
- Attempting to block a pass is legal, but any contact with the passer's arm during the throw, even after the ball is released, is a foul.

Two-Minute Notification

IHSA Question: Is the 2-minute notification a full timeout or merely a stoppage in play and reset the play clock, starting on ensuing snap?

NFHS Response: The clock will stop for the 2-minute notification in the SECOND AND FOURTH PERIOD. The clock starts on the snap after the 2-minute notification. (There is no two-minute notification in the first and third period.)

**Reference the NFHS General Game Clock Procedures document for additional timing questions*

