



IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Football Memo #8

October 11, 2022

Good afternoon football coaches and athletic directors –

We have reached the end of the regular season for four of our classes. Once we collect every score in Class A-2A and 8-player, we will post a qualifier list on our website. Schools are to contact us immediately if they believe there is an error in the qualifying list. October 21 matchups will be posted on our website at 10 am on Saturday, October 15.

We encourage everyone on this mailing list, regardless of classification, to review the postseason manual this week to review qualifying, tiebreaking and hosting selection criteria. Also, please review current standing page for any discrepancies, in particular the 17-point tiebreaker for 8-player district runner-up host criteria and for any three-way ties in which all three teams defeated each other in the four classes that end their regular season this week. The 17-point tiebreaker is not in place for Class 3A and 4A.

1. Free Blocking Zone

I've received a few questions regarding the free blocking zone, in particular, when is the tight end considered to be in the free blocking zone. Per a NFHS interpretation, since offensive linemen are in the zone if any part of their body is in the zone at the snap, game officials must check the spacing between offensive linemen. As long as the line is using "normal" splits and the formation is "balanced" (i.e., the distance between the outside foot of each lineman and the inside foot of the adjacent linemen is no greater than 2 feet and an equal number of linemen are on each side of the snapper), all players, including the tight end, are deemed to be in the zone at the snap. If the splits are wider than 2 feet, the tight end is considered out of the zone and therefore cannot legally block below the waist or in the back. Even though the width of the free blocking zone is slightly smaller in 8-player football, this guidance is the same for both 11-player (TE-T-G-C-G-T-TE) and 8-player (TE-G-C-G-TE).

2. Overtime Procedure

The overtime procedure has not changed from last year and can be reviewed here: <https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/IHSAA-Overtime-Procedures.pdf>. A couple of key points to remember if a game were to go into overtime. First, the possession always begins as 1st and goal, regardless if a penalty is carried over from regulation or from one possession to the next. Second, the ball is dead immediately if the defensive team gains possession. The defense cannot score in overtime. Iowa does have one adaptation to the overtime rule: all overtimes will be played on the same 10-yard line as designated with the initial overtime. From a 17-point tiebreaker perspective, the team winning in overtime receives a +1, while their opponent receives a -1.

3. Interception in End Zone

We are getting reports that officials are immediately killing the play once Team B intercepts the pass in the end zone. This is not correct. Team B can run both an interception and fumble out of the end zone. Also, if Team B attempts to run the ball out of the end zone and is tackled by Team A inside the end zone, the play results in a touchback.

4. Hurdling

Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump (hurdle) with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one or both feet. If so, the offending team is penalized 15 yards for a personal foul. The key here is that the defender only has his feet on the ground to meet this definition. A player can jump over someone on their knees or laying on the ground.

5. Ninth Regular Season Game – Non-Playoff Teams

I know I covered this in our last memo, but non-playoff teams in 8-player, Class A, 1A and 2A teams have the opportunity to schedule a ninth regular season game during week nine. Schools are on their own to find an opponent and officiating crew for the contest. We do ask that once plans are finalized that one of the schools completes this online form, so we have an idea as to who is playing during the week. <https://www.iahsaa.org/ninth-regular-season-football-game/>

As always, don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Jared