

FOOTBALL (Houston County Middle School)

Regular Season:

- A. All football games must be played according to the rules as published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, and any other rules found in this section.
 - 1. Beginning with the 2011 season, extra points will follow NFHSA. 1 point for successful kick, two points for successful run or pass.
- B. The number of football games allowed (excluding playoffs) is six(6).
 - 1. Only one football game may be played per week by the same team.
 - 2. The football season ends for a team or individual when that team, having completed its regular-season schedule, is eliminated from playoff competition or wins the County Championship.
- C. The season shall begin with practice in full pads no earlier than the first day that teachers report to school. Refer to the GHSA constitution for rules regarding the wearing of full pads as this may change year to year.
 - 1. A student must receive 5 days of school-supervised conditioning before the first date of practice in pads, whenever that date is.
 - 2. The practice schedule shall be as follows:
 - a. **CONDITIONING WEEK** – Practice in helmets, mouthpieces, shoes, and shorts only. **NOTE:** No shoulder pads, girdle pads or leg pads are allowed.
 - b. **BEGINNING WEEK TWO** – Practice in full pads.
- D. 7th grade teams will play seven (7) minute quarters with the game starting at **3:30 pm** and ending by 5:00 pm.
 - 1. The Houston County Middle Schools overtime procedure will be used if teams are tied when the game is stopped because of the 5:00 pm ending time.
- E. 8th grade teams will play eight(8) minute quarters with the game starting no later than **5:05 pm**.

Extended Play Policy

When the actual time expires for the 7th grade teams at 5:00 and for the 8th grade teams at 7:00 and the game clock has not expired with a team holding a 14 point or less lead, the teams may continue the game until the game clock expires or the actual time reaches 5:15 for 7th grade and 7:15 for 8th grade or whichever comes first. Past 5:00, if a team's lead is extended greater than 14 points or more the actual game clock expires, the game is complete.

In case of lightning delay for football, we will follow this procedure:

7th grade: Can extend the game 30 minutes for a lightning delay and play until 5:30. If there is a second delay that would extend the game beyond 5:30, the game will be suspended and completed as stated in the handbook.

8th grade: Can extend the game 30 minutes for a lightning delay and play until 7:30. If there is a second delay that would extend the game beyond 7:30, the game will be suspended and completed as stated in the handbook.

*The handbook states that all suspended games must be made up by the first open Saturday. A Wednesday suspended or cancelled game can be made up on Thursday as long as the teams can secure a field and officials.

* Page 13 is our lightning procedures. A change to that page is as follows:

The home team shall have the white detector and the Coach App on the I-phone. If the Coach App on the I-phone reads a strike of 6 miles, the game is suspended for 30 minutes.

- F. All football games shall be played with a minimum of four (4) field officials who are registered under the GHSA plan for registering officials. The officiating crew also shall have an electric clock operator whose sole duty is to operate the game clock (the clock operator may be an appointed person by the host school). The clock operator must be over the age of 18.
 - 1. The football officials association used will be determined by the Houston County Middle School Athletic Directors.
 - 2. During the regular season, the host school is responsible for providing a crew to work the sideline chains. These individuals must include a responsible adult. The home team will determine on which side the chain crew will work.
- G. The following items allowed in the National Federation rulebook as "State Adoptions" have been adopted by the Houston County Middle School Athletic Directors.
 - 1. All Houston County Middle School games will have a five (5) minute half time.
 - 2. Bands are not to play during live-ball situations. NOTE: This includes the situation in which there is no timeout and the teams are in a huddle.
 - a. If, during a football game, a team claims interference with communications due to band noise, the Referee shall give a warning to both head coaches and the bands must cease playing.
 - b. If there is a second offense by the same school's band, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be imposed against that school's team.
- H. Spring Football Practice
 - 1. Students enrolled in grade 8 in a middle school or junior high school that is a feeder school to the high school may participate in Spring Practice at that high school. These students must be pre-enrolled at that member high school, and once pre-enrolled, the student has established his/her eligibility at that high school.
- I. Football games must be played to completion. Any interrupted game must be replayed from the point of interruption. The school that is behind in the score may choose not to continue the game. **Interrupted or canceled games must be made up by the following Saturday.** NOTE: Teams will not be allowed to play two football games in the same week, except when making up a suspended game with the permission of Houston County Board of Education.

- J. During warm-ups before the game and at halftime, there shall be a division of the field and neither team shall enter the other team's portion of the field. That division shall be as follows:
1. Before the game: each team shall occupy the space from their own 45-yard line to the end line of their goal line. Neither team shall occupy the area between the 45-yard lines. **EXCEPTION:** When kicking, each team shall have the area between the opponent's 45-yard line and kicking team's end zone in the side zone area on the same side of the field as their bench. Kickers shall kick toward their end zone.
 2. Re-entering the field before the game and at halftime, each team shall have the portion of the field between their bench and the near edge of each goal post – i.e., field divided lengthwise.
- K. The Houston County Middle Schools Overtime Procedure will be used whenever two schools are tied at the end of regulation play. (**EXCEPTION: Championship Game**).
1. There will be a 3-minute intermission between the end of regulation play and the coin toss to start the overtime procedure.
 2. The captains will meet for the coin toss, and the winner may choose one of the following:
 - a. Be on offense first
 - b. Be on defense first
 - c. Choose the end of the field on which to play
 3. The ball is placed on the 10-yard line and the offense keeps the ball until:
 - a. The ball is turned over on downs (**NOTE:** The team on offense can gain a first down)
 - b. The defense gains possession of the ball (ball is dead immediately)
 - c. The offense scores a touchdown or field goal.
 - d. The offense misses a field goal
 4. After the first offensive team completes its possession, the opposing team gets its opportunity from the 10-yard line.
 5. If the game remains tied after each team has had an offensive possession, there will be a 2-minute intermission and the team that lost the first coin toss has the option for the second possession.
 6. Each team is allowed one (1) timeout per overtime period. No timeouts may be carried over from regulation play.
 7. Penalty enforcement is handled the same way in overtime as in regulation play.
- L. **MERCY RULE:** At the end of the first half of play, if a team is trailing by 30 points or more, the coach of the trailing team may choose to play the second half with a running clock. Quarters would remain 7 or 8 minutes.
1. If the coach does not exercise the option of the running clock, the third quarter will be played with regulation timing.
 2. If the point differential reaches, or remains, 30 or more points during the third quarter, the clock will still run according to rule for the remainder of the third quarter, but the fourth quarter will have a running clock mandated.
 3. A running clock means the clock will be stopped only:

- a. After a touchdown and until the ball is kicked off.
 - b. During deliberations for penalty administration.
 - c. During charged timeouts or official's timeouts.
- M. A game that is reduced in time by use of a running clock shall constitute a "completed" game.

CHAMPIONSHIP OVERTIME PROCEDURE

- 1) There will be a 3-minute intermission between the end of regulation play and the coin toss to start the overtime procedure.
- 2) The captains will meet for the coin toss, and the winner may choose one of the following:
 - a. Be on offense first.
 - b. Be on defense first.
 - c. Choose the end of the field on which to play.
- 3) The ball is placed on the 15-yard line and the offense keeps the ball until:
 - a. The ball is turned over on downs (NOTE: The team on offense can gain a first down).
 - b. The defense gains possession of the ball (ball is dead immediately).
 - c. The offense scores a touchdown or field goal.
 - d. The offense misses a field goal.