



Updated 3-20-2026

UNDER THE LIGHTS

OFFICIAL RULES & GAME POLICIES

TEAMS & PLAYER EQUIPMENT

1. Uniform

- All players must wear their UTL-issued jersey, current-season soft-shell helmet, and black bottoms (pants or shorts only; pajama bottoms are prohibited). Any player not in compliance with these uniform requirements shall be deemed ineligible to participate.

NOTE: The opposing coach may file a protest regarding an ineligible player. All protests must be made prior to the start of the second half. Upon protest, one of the following actions shall be taken:

The ineligible player is removed from the game and play shall resume, or

If the ineligible player is not removed, the game may continue but shall be recorded as a forfeit, with the win awarded to the opposing team.

Players are strictly prohibited from swapping or sharing jerseys or helmets at any time. Any player found in violation of this rule shall be immediately removed from the game. Although play may resume, the game shall be recorded as a forfeit.

2. Footwear

- Standard cleats with plastic or rubber spikes only.
- Metal spikes are not allowed.

3. Mouth Guards

- Mouth guards are mandatory and must be worn at all times.
- Quarterbacks (QBs) are not required to wear a mouth guard.
 - However, if a QB does not have a mouth guard:
 - The QB cannot pursue or tag a defender after an interception.
 - If the QB makes the tag without a mouth guard, it is an automatic touchdown for the defense.

4. Helmets

- Under the Lights soft-shell helmets are mandatory and must be worn at all times during play.
- Helmets must be fully fastened.
- Players not in compliance may be removed from the field.
- Non-compliance may result in loss of down or loss of play.
- Quarterbacks are not required to wear a helmet.
 - If a QB does not wear a helmet or has an unstrapped helmet:

- The QB cannot pursue or tag a defender after an interception.
- If the QB makes the tag, it is an automatic touchdown for the defense.

5. **Prohibited Items**

- Hats and jewelry are not allowed on the field during gameplay.
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COACHES

1. **Offensive Coaches**

- One offensive coach is allowed on the field and in the huddle.
- Must be a minimum of 5 yards behind the quarterback before the snap.
- May not interfere with gameplay or officials.
- Offensive coaches cannot stand in the back of the end zone and coach the players.

2. **Defensive Coaches**

- Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field.
- Defensive coaches cannot stand in the back of the end zone and coach the players.

3. **Responsibility**

- Coaches are responsible for knowing all rules and educating players on rules and conduct.
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OFFICIALS

1. Each game will have up to two officials.
 2. An On-Site Director will be present to answer questions and resolve issues.
 3. Officials are responsible for:
 - Keeping the 4-second clock
 - Keeping score
 - Ensuring games start on time
 - Enforcing rules
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SCORING

1. Touchdown: 7 points
 2. PAT (2-point conversion from the 10-yard line):
 - Successful: +2 points (total of 8)
 - Unsuccessful: Score remains 6 points
 3. Interception: 3 points
 4. Interception return for touchdown: 6 points
 - Interception points are not added to the TD
 5. Turnover on PAT: 0 points (dead ball)
 6. Official score is kept by the referee and home team
 - Coaches are encouraged to confirm the final score after the game
 7. Points for defensive stop and interception are not “added together”. One or the other ends a possession with defensive points.
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MERCY RULE

Does NOT apply to Playoffs or Consolation Games

1. 30-Point Differential

- Team leading by 30+ points:
 - Has 4 downs to score from the 40-yard line
- Team trailing by 30+ points:
 - Starts at the 10-yard line
 - Has 4 downs to score
- Once the differential drops below 30 points, normal rules apply.

2. Interceptions

- If the leading team (30+) intercepts the ball:
 - No points awarded
 - Ball placed at the 40-yard line
 - 4 downs to score
- If the trailing team (down 30+) intercepts:
 - Points are awarded
 - Pick-6 = 6 points
 - Interception with tag = 3 points, ball at the 10-yard line

3. Posted Scores

- Website scores will show a maximum 30-point differential
 - Example: Actual score 44-4 → Posted score 34-4
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GAME TIMES

- Up to two 20-minute halves
 - Running clock
 - Teams must be ready at game time
 - Not ready at start: Opponent awarded 2 points
 - Not ready after 5 minutes: Forfeit (21-0)
 - 1 timeouts per half
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OVERTIME FORMAT

(Playoffs Only)

1. Each team receives one possession
2. Coin flip determines first possession
3. Possession begins at the 10-yard line
4. Teams go in the same direction
5. Touchdown:
 - Team may go for 1 or 2 points
6. Interceptions:
 - Change of possession unless returned for a TD
 - Game may end if intercepting team is already ahead
7. Teams receive 2 downs to score

8. Possession order alternates each overtime
 9. Overtime repeats until a winner is determined
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GAME PLAY RULES

1. Field length: 53 yards
 2. Start point: 40-yard line
 3. End zones: 10 yards deep
 4. First down lines: 25-yard and 10-yard
 5. Defense:
 - o NO Cover 2 Press Man-to-Man
 - o Penalty: 15 yards + automatic first down
 - o (Press Man or Man to Man) Must play Single High Safety
 - o Press/jam allowed within 5 yards
 6. Offense:
 - o No shoving defenders for separation
 - o No running plays
 - o QB may not run
 - o No trick plays (reverses, double passes, hook-and-ladders)
 7. Ball carrier is down when touched below the neck
 8. No kicking or punting, No blitzing, No blocking on offense and no blocking on defensive interceptions,
 9. QB cannot run the ball, No double passes or shuffle passes.
 10. All passes must be thrown forward. No passes can be caught behind the line of scrimmage, No Trick Plays, Hand offs in the backfield are not allowed.
 11. Offensive player is down with one hand touch anywhere.
 12. Excessive force results in penalty or ejection
 13. Fumbles are dead balls (last possession retains)
 14. QB has 4.0 seconds to throw
 15. Offense has 3 downs to gain 15 yards
 16. No 4th downs
 17. 7 defenders (may not line up 8 & drop one before snap) and 6 offensive players (must use a center or extra player to snap).
 18. The offensive center is not an eligible receiver.
 19. The center will be responsible for setting or re-positioning the football at the line of scrimmage
 20. All offensive formations must be legal sets. Receivers' alignment should respect the tackle box.
 21. One offensive coach may be in the huddle with players between plays but when the huddle breaks the coach must be 5 yards behind the QB so as to not interfere with the operation of the official or game play.
 22. Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field at any time. Defensive coaches and Offensive coaches cannot stand in the back of the endzone and coach players.
 23. Possession starts on the 40-yard line – going in. First downs are made by crossing the 25-yard line and the 10-yard line. Three downs to make a first down; even inside the 10-yard line. The offense must gain at least 15 yards in the first 3 or less plays or the defense takes over. No 4th downs. Three (3) downs in all zones.
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OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

1. Off-sides: Loss of down
 2. Delay of game: Loss of down
 3. 25-second play clock
 4. Offensive pass interference:
 - o 5 yards + loss of down
 5. No penalty enforced beyond the 40-yard line
 6. Exceeding 4 seconds:
 - o Play blown dead
 - o Loss of down
 7. Delay retrieving ball:
 - o Delay of game + 5 yards
 8. Illegal formation:
 - o 5-yard penalty
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DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

1. Off-sides: 5 yards
 2. Defensive holding: 5 yards
 3. Defensive pass interference:
 - o Spot foul
 - o End zone = ball at 1-yard line
 4. Dead ball penalties after change of possession:
 - o Loss of down on next possession
 5. Excessive contact:
 - o 5-yard tack-on penalty
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TIEBREAKERS (REGULAR SEASON)

1. Head-to-head record
 2. Points allowed
 3. Points scored
 4. Coin flip
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APPEALS

1. Judgment calls may not be disputed with officials
2. Disputes go to the On-Site Director
3. Must be reported immediately after the game (**uniform protests must be submitted before the start of the second half**)
4. Final decisions are made by On-Site Director and League Commissioner
5. No electronic devices allowed for disputes during games
6. Only the Head Coach may approach an official with a discrepancy regarding an official's call.
7. No other coaches are allowed on the field to approach officials.

CONDUCT

1. Sportsmanlike behavior required at all times
2. Verbal abuse or threats result in removal
3. No taunting or foul language
4. No vandalism
5. Teams must clean up after games
6. Weapons, drugs, alcohol, smoking, and tobacco are prohibited

BALL SIZE

- High School & JV: Official
- 7th/8th Grade: Youth (teams have the option to use a larger ball)
- 5th/6th Grade: Junior (teams have the option to use a larger ball)

ANY rules not addressed in this document will defer to NFHS football rules