



Football New Brunswick Fall Tackle Rules & Regulations

Last revision: April 14, 2026

Unless otherwise specified, games will be conducted in accordance with the Canadian Rulebook for Amateur Tackle Football. All rules and regulations apply to all U14, U16 and U18 regular season, playoff and provincial championship games.

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Age Eligibility

U14: Players cannot be older than 14 on December 31 in the year of play.

U16: Players cannot be older than 15 on December 31 in the year of play. Any U16 age player who dresses for a High School Varsity game after September 30 in the year of play, will be no longer eligible to play U16 minor league football again that year.

VG: Players must be 14 years and cannot be older than 17 years on December 31 in the year of play.

Roster Caps

	Minimum to Start a Season (Football Canada)	Minimum to Start a Game (Football Canada)	Recommended to Play a Game	Maximum to begin Thinking of Alternative Options	Roster Maximum
6-a-Side	9	8**	12	18	24*
9-a-Side	17	13**	18	28	36*

*Minimums cannot be changed, however extenuating circumstances may allow for changes to the maximum, Football New Brunswick will evaluate these case by case

**If any team fails to meet the roster minimums at any time during a game they will be unable to compete and must forfeit the game. However, as per both coaches' discretion, they may agree to conduct a joint practice or use a format that requires fewer players on the field (ex. 9-a-side to 6-a-side) and play a controlled scrimmage. Regardless of the outcome, the team that failed to meet the roster minimums will forfeit the game.

Forfeit Rule

A team that is awarded a victory by forfeiture will be granted a 6-0 win over the forfeiting team. No other stats, if any, will be kept of the game. A game is considered to be forfeit if one of the teams is more than fifteen (15) minutes late for the scheduled kick-off or lets the other team know of the forfeit in advance.

If a team has more then one forfeit in a season they will not be eligible to qualify to participate in playoffs.

Field Dimensions

9-a-Side (9AS): The 9AS sideline will be 7.5 yards in from the standard sideline.

Hash marks will be based off the uprights. Please reference figure 1.1 below.

6-a-Side (6AS): The 6AS sideline will be 12.5 yards in from the standard sideline.

Hash marks will be based off the uprights. Please reference figure 1.2 below.

Fig 1.1

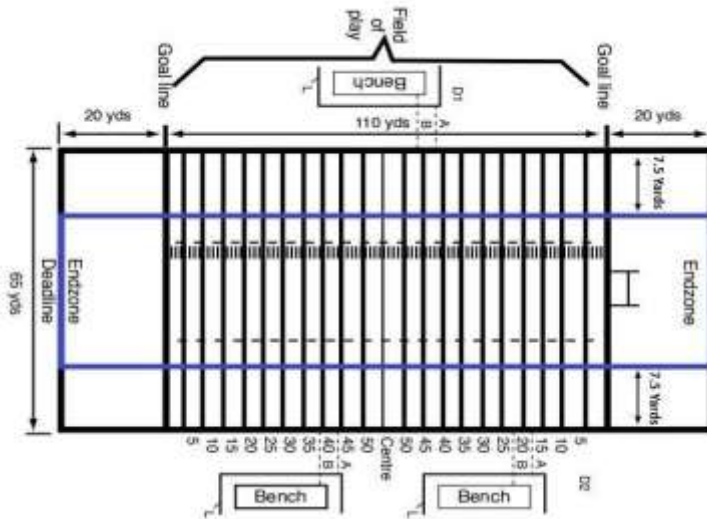
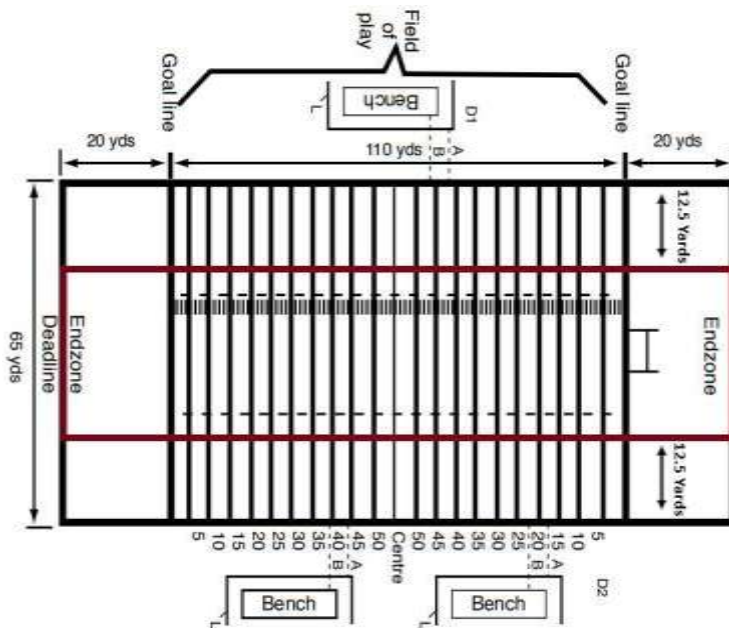


Fig 1.2





Ball Size

U16: The game ball must be senior composite size and must be either Nike or Wilson. The brand of the ball must be either Nike or Wilson.

VG & U14: The game ball must be youth composite size. The brand of the ball must be either Nike or Wilson.

Number of Downs

Teams will play 4-down football with a 1-yard neutral zone.

Converts

A kicked convert is worth 2 points and will be kicked from the 5-yard line; a pass or run convert is worth 1 point and will be scrimmaged from the 5-yard line.

Timing of Games

Games will consist of 4x15 minute quarters with a 10-minute half-time. These games will be run “straight time” until the last 3 minutes of both halves. The time will still stop for injury and official timeouts. During these 3 minutes, the games shall be timed according to the Canadian Amateur Rule book.

The time clock will run continuously and only stop in the following situations:

- (1) A team time out. Each team will have 2 timeouts per half.
- (2) An officials’ timeout.
- (3) A prolonged injury where a player is on the ground for more than 15 seconds.
- (4) A prolonged officials’ conference or delay of more than 15 seconds.

During the last 3 minutes of each half the clock will stop after each play. It will start again in accordance with Rule 1 Section 5 Article 1 of the Canadian Rulebook for Amateur Tackle Football.



Game Film

Game film is required for all regular season and playoff games for U14, U16 and Varsity Girls.

1. The home team is responsible for the filming and uploading of game film.
2. Games must be filmed in an appropriate and functional manner:
 - a. Games will be filmed from the wide angle. This angle should have all players on the field within the frame.
 - b. For optimal film review, It is recommended that games will not be filmed in a continuous manner; each play must be its own clip (stop recording in between plays).
 - c. The quality and focus of the film must be good enough that jersey numbers are visible.
3. Games must be uploaded within 48 hours of said game ending. The host association will be responsible for ensuring that this happens. Film will be uploaded to a shared drive where a representative from all teams will have access. One person from each association will have uploading access to the drive.
4. Associations that fail to meet this standard will not have access to film until they comply.

Mercy Rule

In the second half, if the difference in score between two teams becomes 35 points or more, the clock will be running time for the remainder of the game. Time will still stop for injury and official timeouts or any other time the official deems necessary.

Game Cancellations

In the event of a game cancellation the following procedures will be followed:

1. If a regular season game is cancelled in advance due to unforeseen circumstances such as adverse weather or field availability etc. The game will try to be re-scheduled at a later date that fits within the season schedule. If the game cannot be rescheduled then the game will be recorded as a tie.
2. In the event a game is called by the officials after it has started, the following rules will apply to determine the outcome:



- a. The game will result in a tie if the game is called during the 1st or 2nd quarter regardless of score.
- b. If the game is in the 3rd or 4th quarter and the difference in score is 17 points or more, the team with the lead will be named the winner.
- c. If the game is in the 3rd or 4th quarter and the difference in score is 16 points or less the game will be called a tie.
- d. Outcomes in scenarios a, b and c can be overruled by Football New Brunswick pending a review as to why the game is called by the officials (example: if a team displayed actions contrary to the code of conduct severe enough to warrant a forfeit).
 - i. This would also apply to any playoff or provincial games where a winner is needed to be declared.

Taking a Knee

When a team advises the referee that they are going to take a knee for the purpose of ending the half or a game, the Referee will advise both teams of what is going to take place so that there is no misunderstanding with either team on the field. After the Referee declares this, if during the next play a member of either team crosses the neutral zone in a threatening manner, even without physical contact being made, that player will be ejected from the game.

If the offense needs to take the knee more than once, they are to declare that before each play and the Referee will advise both teams before each play. Score and field position are not factors, there is no play when the offense declares they are taking the knee.

High Tackle

Definition: Any tackle by a player who has initiated above the shoulder pads - specifically the neck area. *It is important to recognize that there will be situations when a tackle is initiated around the shoulder pad area, and because of player size differentials, or the ball carrier going down, the tackle could end up being around the neck area. In that case, it would be a judgment call by the Official. It will be important for coaches to understand that this is separate from the "Facemask" penalty, and the new "Horse collar" rule."

Penalty

Unnecessary Roughness - 15 yards applied as per the rule book.



Head Out of the Game /Unnecessary Roughness Rule

For the purpose of this rule, INTENT is NOT a factor when considering whether it is a foul or not. The responsibility lies solely with the player initiating the hit or tackle to avoid the contact to the head and neck area.

- (1) Any SIGNIFICANT contact delivered TO THE HEAD OR NECK AREA of an opponent with the helmet, facemask, forearm, shoulder, or hands shall be ruled as unnecessary roughness.
- (2) Any SIGNIFICANT contact by a player with their HELMET to an opponent either in attempting a tackle or a block shall be ruled as unnecessary roughness.

Penalties

1st Offence: Team A 15 yards DR; Team B 15 yards, automatic first down for team A.

2nd Offence (by SAME PLAYER): Team A 15 yards DR; Team B 15 yards, automatic first down for team A *Referee will tell head coach that the next infraction by that player will result in a disqualification.

3rd Offence (by SAME PLAYER): Team A 25 yards DR, player ejected from game; Team B 25 yards DR, automatic first down, player ejected from game.

Exceptions

1. Straight arm by ball carrier; A ball carrier is permitted to make contact to the helmet, facemask, or neck area of an opponent attempting to make a tackle with their hand provided there is no thrusting motion of the arm involved in making the contact to the head or neck area. After the hand is in contact with the potential tackler, a pushing action is permitted to ward off the tackler. The hand may be on the facemask, but must not grasp the facemask.
2. Short yardage plunge; A ball carrier may plunge headfirst toward a gap when attempting to gain a first down or a play at the goal line, either attempting to score or get out of the end zone. An opponent attempting to stop the runner may make unavoidable contact to the head or neck area of the runner due to the position the runner has assumed to gain the required distance, this contact shall not be considered a foul unless it involves SIGNIFICANT helmet to helmet contact. A short yardage play of this nature does not permit the ball carrier to lower their helmet and target a potential tackler with their helmet.

Blocking Restrictions: Initiating blocks below the waist is not permitted. Illegal blocks below the waist are a 15-yard penalty. Any player penalized twice for this infraction in the same game will not be permitted to play the remainder of the game.



Head Leading Contact

If a head leading contact penalty is called the official will remove the player from the game for a minimum of 3 plays. When this takes place the coach can then speak with the player about tackling techniques to try and keep the head out of play and ensure the athletes safety.

Use of Headsets/Communication Devices

The use of headsets/communication devices are not permitted during any minor football games.

Use of Drones

Drones can be flown over your own bench and the end zone your defending and never over the field of play or over your opponents bench.

Special Rules

U14 Pressure Defense

The defence can have as many defensive linemen as the offense has interior offensive linemen (i.e. C, G, TE). Linebackers and defensive backs are not allowed to blitz. Defensive ends cannot line up wider than an "outside shade" on the most outside interior offensive lineman, (i.e. G or TE). The defensive end's inside foot cannot be lined up outside the offensive lineman's outside foot. There is no restriction on where linebackers or defensive backs can line up; however, they cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the quarterback no longer has the ball or has left the pocket. If this rule is violated, the defence will be penalized 5 yards for "illegal defence". ***This rule is not in effect when there are two yards or fewer to go for a first down or when the offense is scrimmaging inside the defensive team's 2-yard line.**

Note: Any End player lined up on the line of scrimmage must be at least 3 yards outside the G on the snap to NOT be classified as a TE for the purposes of this rule. Any player lined up behind the line of scrimmage (other than the QB) must be at least 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage OR 3 yards outside the G or TE on the snap to NOT be classified as a TE for the purposes of this rule.



Overhand Forward Pass Requirement

Pass requirement: The offence must throw a legal OVERHAND forward pass on at least 1 of the first 3 downs in each series of downs. Failure to do so will result in an "Illegal Procedure" penalty. Officials will not stop play until the ball is dead. A five (5) yard penalty will be applied and the down repeated. The offensive team will still be obligated to pass the ball again after the penalty has been applied.

1. Attempting to pass and getting sacked or being forced to run will not satisfy this rule. The ball must be thrown as a legal forward pass and must cross the line of scrimmage.
 - a. This does not apply to a screen pass.
2. A lateral pass will not satisfy this rule. Officials should point this out to a team that has just thrown a lateral pass.

The defensive team has the option to decline the penalty, let the play stand, and bring up fourth down. The offensive team can run the ball on fourth down. To avoid this penalty, teams are strongly advised to pass on either first or second down. **The offence is not required to pass the ball in any set of downs that starts inside their own 15-yard line.**

Limit on number of practices and contact

During the regular season, teams are limited to a maximum number of practices per week as per the football Canada LTAD:

U14 – 3 practices of no more than 90 minutes in length and one must be helmets only

U16 and U18 4 practices of no more than 120 minutes in length and one must be helmets only

Coaches on the field

Teams are permitted to have a maximum of 2 coaches on the field during the first two games of the season.



Provincial and Playoff Rules and Regulations

Regular Season Tie Breaking Rules:

In the event of a tie in the standings during the regular season, the following formula will be implemented. If three or more teams are tied and one of the teams is removed due to winning a tiebreaker, the remaining teams revert to Step #1 to decide the remaining tiebreakers.

1. Forfeiture If a team forfeits a game in the regular season, the forfeiting team will automatically lose the tiebreaker.

2. Head-to Head

If two teams are tied in the standings, the team that won the game between the two teams shall be awarded the higher standing. If the teams tied during the regular season, you would move to the next tiebreaker.

If three or more teams are tied, the team with the best record in head-to-head games among the teams that are tied would win the tiebreaker.

3. Points Against vs Common Opponents

If #2 does not break the tie, the least points scored against for each team vs common opponents will decide the tiebreaker.

4. Points For vs Common Opponents If #3 does not break the tie, the most points for each team vs common opponents will decide the tiebreaker.

5. Points Against (All Games)

If #4 does not break the tie, the least total points scored against each team will decide the tiebreaker.

6. Points For (All Games) If #5 does not break the tie, the most total points for each team will decide the tiebreaker.

7. Coin Flip If after scenario #6 above there is still a tie, a coin toss will be utilized.



Playoff Overtime Rules:

Overtime rules will follow the Football Canada rulebook, with one exception regarding scoring:

Scoring - The team scoring the greater number of points during an extra period shall be declared the winner. If the score is still tied after three extra periods having been played, any subsequent touchdown must be followed by a run or pass conversion.

U14 and U16 Playoff Format – 3 City Champions Advance

1. The City Champions from the three associations will advance to the playoffs.
2. Once the 3 teams are determined they will be seeded 1 to 3 based on the regular season standings.
3. The top seeded team will receive a bye to the Provincial Final. The number 2 and 3 seeded teams will play in a Provincial semi final.

Semi Final Schedule

2nd seed hosts 3rd seed

1st seed receives a bye

Provincial Final Schedule

Winner of semi final game vs 1st seed.

1st seed will have home field advantage regardless of location.

Varsity Girls Playoff Format

Semi Final Schedule

Seeding is based on regular season standings.

1st seed hosts 4th seed

2nd seed hosts 3rd seed

Provincial Final Schedule

Highest seed will have home field advantage regardless of location.



Postponed Playoff Games

All playoff games cancelled due to inclement weather must be replayed at the earliest reasonable opportunity. If the hosting team does not have a lighted field satisfactory for the rescheduled game, it will lose home field advantage and therefore must travel to the other team's home field to complete the game.

Hosting Format

The three associations listed below will rotate hosting Provincial Finals on a 3 year cycle as shown:

- (1) Capital Area Minor Football Association (CAMFA)
- (2) Fundy Minor Football Association (FMFA)
- (3) Greater Moncton Football Association (GMFA)

Uniform Colors

Once the participating teams have been determined a comparison of uniform colours will be made. If they are too similar the hosting team must change jerseys to accommodate the visiting team.

Bench Staff Regulations

For a coach/staff to be eligible on the sidelines they must meet the following requirements:

1. Be registered and vetted through their associations policies
2. Have coached in the regular season with the respective team
3. Be listed on the official provincial roster sheet submitted to FNB

Appeals

Any appeals must be submitted, in writing, to the Executive Director of FNB within 48 hours of the end of a game. The Executive of FNB will rule on any appeals. Appeals cannot be made based on alleged errors by game officials.