

Home Team Uniform Requirements Clarified in High School Football Rules

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Language in the 2024 NFHS Football Rules Book will be changed in an effort to ensure consistent interpretation of the rule regarding requirements for home team uniforms in high school football. Next season, all home team jerseys must be the same dark color(s) that clearly contrasts with white.

This uniform change in Rule 1-5-1b(3) was recommended by the NFHS Football Rules Committee at its January 14-16 meeting in Indianapolis and subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors. The Football Rules Committee is composed of one member from each NFHS member state association that uses NFHS playing rules, along with representatives from the NFHS Coaches Association and NFHS Officials Association.

Previously, the rule regarding home team jerseys stated that the jerseys of the home team “shall be a dark color that clearly contrasts to white.” The revised rule will state that the jerseys of the home team “shall **all be the same** dark color(s) that clearly contrasts to white.”

“We kind of had a loophole in the rule that we didn’t specify that everyone on the home team had to wear the same color dark jersey,” said Richard McWhirter, chair of the NFHS Football Rules Committee and assistant executive director of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association. “Even though you didn’t see a major issue with it, it was a loophole in the rule that could possibly be a major issue in the future if it wasn’t corrected.”

McWhirter noted that while this was the only rules proposal that was approved by the committee, there was considerable discussion related to the other eight proposals that advanced to the full committee. He said there was considerable discussion dealing with sportsmanship, particularly unsporting acts in dead-ball situations.

“There was solid agreement by the committee that the rules of the game are in good shape,” McWhirter said. “There was great discussion regarding the need for consistent enforcement of the existing rules specifically in regard to equipment and sportsmanship. Several proposals garnered substantial interest and discussion and may merit further consideration in future committee meetings.”

Three Points of Emphasis were identified by the committee for the 2024 season, including Player Equipment and Enforcement, Sportsmanship and Protocols, and Formation Requirements.

A complete listing of the football rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Football.”

According to the 2022-23 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, 11-player football is the most popular high school sport for boys with 1,028,761 participants in 13,670 schools nationwide. In addition, there were 35,301 boys who participated in 6-, 8- and 9-player football, along with 3,838 girls in all four versions of the game for a grand total of 1,067,900. There also were 20,875 participants in girls flag football in 2022-23.