

BIG GOLD FOOTBALL

GAME RULES - 2026

1. Game Length / Clock

- a. Game Length = 4 – 12 Minute quarters with a running clock. The last two minutes of each half will follow normal clock operations. If a team has a 10 point lead during the last two minutes of the game, the clock will continue to run.
- b. Half Time = 5 Minutes
- c. Each team receives 3 timeouts per half (2 full & 1 Stop the Clock). Timeouts do not carry over.
- d. One coach will be allowed on the field to help align players and speed up the games. These coaches will refrain from coaching during the play.

2. Offensive Alignment

- a. Formations must be balanced with a standard 7 man line and 4 man backfield.
- b. Trips would be considered an unbalanced alignment. A team may motion a player towards an unbalanced formation, but the football must be snapped prior to the motion getting to the center.
- c. Splits for offensive linemen will be no greater than 1 yard.

3. Defensive Alignment

- a. Teams must play a standard 4-3 defense with 2 safeties and 2 corners
 - i. Linemen must be head-up on the offensive guard and tackles and must line up on the line of scrimmage in either a 3 or 4 point stance.
 - ii. Linebackers must line up 4 yards off the ball. The middle linebacker must align over the center and the outside linebackers will align outside of the tackles. Outside linebackers may flex out to cover extra receivers or to line up outside of a wingback.
 - iii. The cornerbacks will line up 4 yards off the ball and head up or outside of the outside receiver.
 - iv. The safeties must align on their side of the formation. One safety to the left and one safety to the right of the center.
- b. Defensive players must play the same position on the same side of the alignment for each snap. Corners, and outside linebackers may not switch sides of the defensive formation. Safeties are permitted to switch sides.
- c. Blitzing is not allowed by any player. Blitzing is defined as a player who is more than 1 yard off the line of scrimmage at the snap, charging in before or immediately upon the snap of the ball.

- d. Ball on the goal line – The outside linebackers and corner backs may move in to not be in the endzone, but not offsides. The middle linebacker must remain 4 yards off the ball.

4. Playing Time and Substitution

- a. All players will play each half of the game, one half on offense and one half on defense.
 - i. Players only playing offense in the first half will be required to play defense during the second half and vice versa.
 - ii. Barring injury, substitutions are to be made per half, not per quarter.
 - iii. On either side of the ball, players starting the 1st half will play the entire 1st half at one position. Players starting the 2nd half will play the entire 2nd half at one position.
 - iv. Teams will submit offensive and defensive lineups for each half before the game begins.
 - v. Players used to advance the ball in one half are ineligible to advance the ball in the opposite half.
 - vi. Officials will also monitor playing time and substitution rules by watching players on the sideline during a change of possession. All players standing on the sideline will enter the game during a change of possession.
- b. Any intentional misuse of this rule will result in the head coach being permanently removed from coaching duties in the Big Gold Football program.
- c. Players may only play one half in the offensive backfield. Players may NOT rotate into these positions during the half, or they will be ineligible for the second half.
- d. The goal is for each team to have 2 quarterbacks and 4 running backs. Players may play a wing position but cannot take a direct handoff from the quarterback (ie... a first half RB or QB may play wing and run a reverse during the second half).
 - i. Violations of these rules will be a 15 yard un-sportsmanlike penalty.

5. Injured Players

- a. An injured player must be removed from the playing field for at least one play. Once the injured player is able to return to the game, that player must go back in the game for the substituted player.

6. Punts, Field Goals, and Extra-Point Kicks

- a. 3rd/4th Grade – When a team elects to punt, the play shall be dead and the ball will be advanced 30 yards unless the ball is inside the 50-yard line, in which case the ball shall be advanced half the distance to the goal line. The team electing to punt must declare before the play clock expires or a delay of game penalty shall be assessed.

- b. **5th/6th Grade** - Punts are dead ball plays with no rushing. Only the punter or kicker/holder may substitute during the play. All team members will be taught the proper position and responsibility during the play.
 - i. Kicking team must line up in a legal formation. The defense must have four down linemen.
 - ii. The receiving team will take possession where the receiving team touches the ball or the ball becomes dead.
- c. **5th/6th Grade** - Field goals / Extra-Point kicks – These are dead ball plays with no rushing. The defense may jump to block the kick but may not cross the neutral zone. The kicking team must be in a legal formation and defensive alignments apply.
 - i. Field goals = 3 Points
 - ii. Extra-Point Kicks = 1 Point

7. Kick-Offs

- a. There are no kick-offs in this league. The ball will be put in play 25 yards from the kick line.

8. PAT Scoring

Conversions after Touchdowns will be as follows:

- a. **3rd/4th Grade** - Extra Points – Run or Pass. A run is worth 1 point, A pass is worth 2 points
- b. **5th/6th Grade** – Kick, Run or Pass. A kick is worth 1 point. A pass or run is worth 2 points
- c. Run or Pass Attempts – Ball will be placed at the 2.5 Yard Line. Team does not have to declare RUN or PASS, Official will award the points based on the play. A backwards pitch does NOT constitute a pass and will be scored as a run if successful.

9. Weight Limits – Position Players: **3rd/4th Grade = 105 lbs, 5th/6th Grade = 115 lbs**

- a. Players over their division weight limit – Must be a down lineman in either a 3 or 4 point stance and must align head up between the tackles.
 - i. The ball may not be advanced by a player over the weight limit. The ball will be blown dead where they possess it.
 - ii. Players over the weight limit may not be used as a pulling blocker and must fire straight out during the snap of the ball.
 - iii. Weight is determined during the conditioning week. This weight is used throughout the season.
 - iv. Players over the limit will be identified by a marking on the back of their helmet.

10. Miscellaneous

- a. No quarterback sneaks unless the offense is within 5 yards of its own goal line.
- b. There is no free “blocking-zone.” All blocks will be legal blocks above the waist. Crack back or blindside blocks are illegal.
- c. Offensive and defensive coaches should work together to match linemen of like skill levels. Linemen may not change positions based on the play called or defensive linemen they are going up against.
- d. Players starting in the backfield on offense are not allowed to play as down linemen on defense. Players over weight limits are required to play line. League officials may require a team to change linemen to keep parity in place.
- e. If a team gains an 18 point lead at any time during the game the clock will continue to be a running clock. The team with the lead will be required to play its least experienced players and a third offensive backfield will used. Pass plays, trick plays, and plays utilizing the team’s better players will not be permitted. The intent is to provide a game atmosphere that in no way demoralizes the other team.
- f. All rules not specifically covered in these rules are governed by OHSAA football rules.