

FOOTBALL

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FOOTBALL

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

	Week/Day	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
First Allowable Practice Date	Thursday, Week 5 or Monday, Week 6	9-Man/11B – Aug. 7 Others – Aug. 11	9-Man/11B – Aug. 6 Others – Aug. 10	9-Man/11B – Aug. 5 Others – Aug. 9
Team Rosters & Schedules Posted	Monday, Week 7	August 18	August 17	August 16
Coaches Education Classes Completed	Thursday, Week 5 or Monday, Week 6	9-Man/11B – Aug. 7 Others – Aug. 11	9-Man/11B – Aug. 6 Others – Aug. 10	9-Man/11B – Aug. 5 Others – Aug. 9
First Allowable Contest Date	Thursday, Week 7 or Thursday, Week 8 Monday, Week 8	9-Man/11B – Aug. 21 Others – Aug. 28 JV Games – Aug. 25	9-Man/11B – Aug. 20 Others – Aug. 27 JV Games – Aug. 24	9-Man/11B – Aug. 19 Others – Aug. 26 JV Games – Aug. 23
Last Regular Season Game Date	Fri., Week 15 or Thurs., Week 16	9-Man/11B – Oct. 17 Others – Oct. 23	9-Man/11B – Oct. 16 Others – Oct. 22	9-Man/11B – Oct. 15 Others – Oct. 21
11B & 9-Man First-Round Playoffs	Thursday, Week 16	October 23	October 22	October 21
11AAA/AA/A Quarter-Finals	Thursday, Week 17	October 30	October 29	October 28
11B & 9-Man Quarter-Finals	Thursday Week 17	October 30	October 29	October 28
11AAA/AA/A Semi-Finals	Friday, Week 18	November 7	November 6	November 5
11B & 9-Man Semi-Finals	Friday, Week 18	November 7	November 6	November 5
State Football Championships	Thurs-Sat, Week 19	November 13-15	November 12-14	November 11-14
Summer Moratorium		July 1-7	July 1-7	July 1-7
Winter Moratorium		December 23-26	December 23-26	December 23-26

2025 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS TIME/DATE SCHEDULE:

Day One - Thursday, November 13

Class 9B: 11:00 AM

1

Class 9AA: 7:00 PM

2

Day Two - Friday, November 14

Class 9A: 10:00 AM

3

Class 11B: 2:00 PM

4

Class 11AA: 7:00 PM

Day Three - Saturday, November 15

Class 11A: 12:00 PM

5

Class 11AAA: 5:00 PM

6

Participation in school activities teaches that it is a privilege and an honor to represent one's school. Interscholastic activities constitute a part of the right kind of "growing up" experiences for students. Participants learn to accept success and failures, gain poise and confidence, achieve tolerance and understanding of others and gain the self-satisfaction of accomplishing goals. Under a well-administered school program, students and spectators become better citizens through participation and observation of activities conducted under established rules. Please refer to the **Sportsmanship Section of the SDHSAA Athletic Handbook**.

RULE ON SEASON DATES:

Practice may begin on Thursday of Week 5 for 11B & 9-Man teams, and Monday of Week 6 for Class 11A/AA/AAA Teams. No member school shall play another school in a football game unless it has completed its requirements for heat and contact acclimatization. Schools may participate in jamborees sponsored by the SDHSAA in accordance with this acclimatization policy; jamborees are conducted as a training ground for football officials.

Class 11 AAA/AA/A may have JV games starting on Monday of Week 8.

It is permissible for teams to issue equipment at any time, including prior to the first allowable practice date.

All Coaches must take the Heat Illness Prevention Course from the NFHS, as well as all teams must follow the below Heat Acclimatization and Contact Restrictions:

Heat-Acclimatization Regulations for SDHSAA Football

1. Days 1 through 5 of the heat-acclimatization periods consist of the first 5 days of formal practice. During this time, athletes may not participate in more than 1 practice per day.
2. If a practice is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions, the practice should recommence once conditions are deemed safe. Total practice time should not exceed 3 hours in any 1 day.
3. A 1-hour maximum walk-through is permitted during days 1–5 of the heat-acclimatization period. However, a 3-hour recovery period should be inserted between the practice and walk-through (or vice versa). The only pieces of player equipment to be worn by the individuals during the walk-through are shoes and helmets. The only pieces of general equipment to be used during the walk-through are footballs and kicking tees.
4. During days 1 & 2 of the heat-acclimatization period, helmets are the only protective equipment permitted. During days 3 & 4, only helmets and shoulder pads permitted. Beginning on day 5, all protective equipment may be worn.
5. Beginning no earlier than day 6 and continuing through day 14 or the first scheduled varsity game, double-practice days must be followed by a single- practice day. On single-practice days, a 1-hour maximum walk-through is permitted, separated from the practice by at least 3 hours of continuous rest. When a double-practice day is followed by a rest day, another double- practice day is permitted after the rest day. Following the initial 14 days or varsity game, this restriction is removed.
6. On a double-practice day, neither practice should exceed 3 hours in duration, and student-athletes should not participate in more than 5 total hours of practice. Warm-up, stretching, cool-down, walk-through, conditioning, and weight-room activities are included as part of the practice time. The 2 practices should be separated by at least 3 continuous hours in a cool environment.
7. Because the risk of exertional heat illnesses during the preseason heat-acclimatization period is high, we strongly recommend that an medical personnel be on site before, during, and after all practices when possible.

***NOTES:**

1. Consideration should also be taken for any practices conducted in hot and humid weather in non-air-cooled facilities.
2. Marching Bands should be considered for Heat Acclimatization protocols.
3. Consult the Heat Index Calculator for more information at:
<http://www.sdhsaa.com/Athletics/HealthSafetyIssues/HeatIndexCalculator.aspx>
4. Days are calculated inclusive of Sundays/weekends.

References:

National Federation of State High School Associations Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. Heat acclimatization and heat illness Prevention position statement. Published 2012 <http://www.nfhs.org>.

FOOTBALL CONTACT LIMITATIONS

LEVELS OF CONTACT

Levels of Contact focus on the varying levels of intensity throughout practices to build player confidence, ensure their safety and prevent both physical and mental exhaustion. These Levels of Contact will increase player safety by reducing the risk of helmet-to-helmet contact without sacrificing skill development.

Five intensity levels are used to introduce players to practice drills which position them to master the fundamentals and increase skill development.

<i>Air</i>	(Coach pre-determined outcome) Players run a drill unopposed without contact.
<i>Bags</i>	(Coach pre-determined outcome) Drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface.
<i>Control</i>	(Coach pre-determined outcome) Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; one player is pre-determined the “winner” by the coach. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet.
<i>Thud</i>	(No coach pre-determined outcome) Drill is run at assigned speed through the moment of contact; no pre-determined “winner”. Contact remains above the waist, players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill.
<i>Live Action</i>	(No coach pre-determined outcome) Games, scrimmages and drills run in game-like conditions. These are the only times that players are taken to the ground.

CONTACT LIMITATIONS

<i>Day 1 & 2</i>	3.11.4.6 – No Contact Rule Equipment – Helmets Allowable Contact – “Air” and “Bag” (COACH PRE-DETERMINED OUTCOME) <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Unlimited
<i>Day 3 & 4</i>	Equipment – Helmets and shoulder pads Allowable Contact – “Air”, “Bag” and “Control” (COACH PRE-DETERMINED OUTCOME) <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Unlimited

<p>Day 5 – 14</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Day 5 – First Contest Date</p>	<p>Equipment – Full protective equipment may be worn</p> <p>Allowable Contact – “Air”, “Bag” and “Control” (COACH PRE-DETERMINED OUTCOME)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unlimited <p>“Thud” and “Live Action” (NO COACH PRE-DETERMINED OUTCOME)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maximum 30 minutes per practice ○ No more than 2 consecutive days ○ Only one practice (on a scheduled 2-a-day) ○ 2 scheduled scrimmages, not to exceed 90 minutes each <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not to be scheduled before day 6
<p>Remainder of Season</p>	<p>Equipment – Full protective equipment may be worn</p> <p>Allowable Contact – “Air”, “Bag” and “Control” (COACH PRE-DETERMINED OUTCOME)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unlimited <p>“Thud” and “Live Action” (NO COACH PRE-DETERMINED OUTCOME)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maximum of 4 days per week (including games) ○ No more than 2 consecutive days ○ Maximum of 30 minutes per practice

Note: Days are calculated inclusive of Sundays/weekends.

GAME LIMITATIONS:

The length of the regular season for all classes of football in South Dakota shall be nine weeks with eight or nine scheduled games. This nine-game limitation applies to all levels of competition, including but not limited to: Varsity, Junior Varsity, Sophomore and/or Freshman squads. (Updated, 2014 Season)

CLASSIFICATION AND ALIGNMENT

Member schools participating in football are divided into four 11-Man classifications and three 9-Man classifications. Classifications for the current school year have been based on enrollments based upon Board of Directors policy. Classifications are defined in the “Athletic Alignment” section of the SDHSAA Handbook.

If the number of nine-man teams is not divisible by three (not including teams ineligible for the playoffs), the odd number will go to the lower classes. If the number of 9-man teams falls below 64 for two consecutive alignment periods, the number of 9-man classes will drop from three to two. The number of teams will then be equally divided into two classes.

CLASSIFICATION/ALIGNMENT SPECIAL NOTES:

- **PETITION PROCESS FOR ALL CLASSES:** The Board of Directors will grant permission to any school to participate in a higher classification than their ADM (9-11) places them. If a school requests and is granted permission, they will remain in the higher classification for a two-year alignment period. At the end of the two years, they could exercise their option again if they so desire. The SDHSAA must be notified by July 1 of a classification year.
- Schools with Average Daily Memberships below the 11-man threshold may elect to play 11-man football. Any 9-man school/coop whose enrollment jumps from below the threshold to above the threshold has two years to make the transition from 9-man to 11-man. The transition period applies to a team composed of players from one school and also to existing cooperatives. There is no transition period allowed for a new football cooperative insofar as classification is concerned. Any new cooperative that has an initial combined ADM higher than the nine-man threshold may only be eligible for eleven-man football playoff competition. Schools provided this two-year transition period must

demonstrate, using SD DOE published figures, that their enrollment will return to nine-man figures for the following cycle in order for the grace period to be granted.

- For football classification purposes, If two (2) or more schools enter into a cooperative agreement, the larger school will be considered the base school and the smaller school(s) will be considered the satellite school(s). The entire ADM (9-11) of the base school will be counted. The number of student participants from the satellite school(s) will be determined from the active participants listed on the roster submitted on the SDHSAA website as of a date determined during the season by the SDHSAA Executive Staff. For each active, rostered participant grades nine through eleven from the satellite school(s), 20% of that school's ADM will be counted. It will be necessary for the satellite school to identify students from their school listed on the roster.
- **UPDATED, 2016:** All football cooperatives must remain intact for two classification cycles. Disbanding or creating any football cooperative must be granted approval by the Board of Directors prior to the establishment of a new master schedule for the next alignment period. The very latest for approving applications for creating or disbanding a football cooperative will be the January meeting of the Board of Directors preceding the establishment of the schedules for the next alignment period. This regulation applies only in those situations where an effect on scheduling will take place.
- Schools/teams whose ADM figure designates them as an 11-man program are only able to appeal to participate in the highest classification or 9-man football if that school/team so desires to file an ADM appeal.

2025 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

Committee Clarifies and Restricts Attachments on Tooth and Mouth Protectors Effective with the 2026

Season [1-5-1d(5)a - 4, 5 (NEW)] – Items that are attached to the tooth and mouth protector that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth will not be allowed. Items that are a part of the tooth and mouth protector that are a health or risk issue to the player and can pose a danger to themselves or other players, will not be allowed.

Arm Sleeve Specifications Developed to Guide Manufacturers, Players and Coaches Effective with the 2027

Season [1-5-2d (NEW), 1-5-3c(6)] – The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), in working with the football arm sleeve manufacturers and the NFHS, has developed new football arm sleeve performance specifications to be effective with the 2027 playing season. These new specifications closely align with the current rules for football gloves.

Electronic Equipment Approved to Permit Non-Audio and Still Images to Assist with Relaying Plays from

the Sideline to Players [1-5-3c(2)] – This change allows for the use of some additional equipment, but continues to preclude in-helmet communication. This would allow for fixed electronic signs with play signals as well as non-audio methods but still would not permit the players between the numbers to watch video.

Rules Additions Further Prohibit the Use of Video and Audio Devices by Players [1-5-3c(3) (NEW)] – No

player participating in the game will be allowed to wear any type of audio or video device in order to record or transmit audio or video.

Forward Fumbles Out of Bounds to be Returned to the Spot of the Fumble [3-4-2d (NEW), 3-4-3a, 4-3-1

EXCEPTION (NEW), 8-5-2a EXCEPTION] – A situation potentially giving an unfair advantage to a fumbling team was revised. When a forward fumble goes out of bounds or is ruled out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball shall be returned to the spot of the fumble.

Further Clarifications Made to Rule 10-4 in Specific Situations [9-6 PENALTY, 10-4-4b (DELETED)] – The

committee continues its revisions and clarifications within the penalty enforcement rules to ensure consistency, particularly among illegal participation fouls.

2025 EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-5-1b(2)b(1); 1-5-1b(3)b(1); 2-32-16d; 2-33-1a, 2; 2-41-9b; 2-41-9c; 6-1-9; 7-2-5b EXCEPTION 2; 9-4-3p (NEW); 9-4 PENALTY; 9-5-1g; 9-8-1g; 9-8-1j; 10-3-1, 2; 10-3-3c; 10-4-2b; 10-4-2d; 10-4-4a; 10-5-3; NINE-, EIGHT-, AND SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES; PENALTY SUMMARY, INDEX..

2025 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Illegal and Improperly Worn Player Equipment
2. Sportsmanship
3. Defenseless Player/Targeting

2025 SDHSAA RULE CHANGES

- A. Increasing Officials Pay from \$125 to \$150 per official per game
- B. Riding time payment is mandatory at .18 per mileage round trip per rider.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Athletic Contest Contracts

According to Article VIII, Section 2 of the SDHSAA Constitution, all contests must be sanctioned by the Principal, Superintendent or Athletic/Activities Director of the schools involved. It is recommended that athletic contest contracts be used for all levels of competition.

The SDHSAA Office shall be responsible for the assignment of all regular season schedules. Schools must identify with a single conference, wherein conferences **may only have a maximum of seven conference games**, with the option for a cross-division championship.

B. Licensed Officials Mandatory

Only licensed officials may be used for interscholastic varsity football contests. The official must be licensed with the SDHSAA and have completed all requirements. The SDHSAA office publishes a list of all “registered” and “certified” football officials. Officiating crews requesting SDHSAA Varsity Football Contracts are responsible for providing a licensed crew for varsity contests to schools.

The SDHSAA Office is responsible for all officials’ assignments for varsity contests during the regular season. Prior to each season, the SDHSAA will provide crew assignments for all regular season games to both crews and schools. The rate that all schools must pay officials is **\$125 per man. Crews should also receive mileage for travel to the game. The SDHSAA also strongly encourages schools to pay riding time**

C. Team Roster and School Information

- Coaches are required to enter their team roster on the SDHSAA website. (WEB FORM – Football Roster) **A \$50.00 fine will be assessed to any school not meeting the deadline for entering their roster: (See Chart on Page 3)**
- The roster should be edited as the season progresses. This will enable all schools to access the roster for program purposes during the season. This roster shall be updated on-line one week prior to the First Round Playoff Games. Additional information may be required.
- A coach may include as many players on the list or roster as he wishes. The actual players making up the team may change from game to game, day to day, etc.
- All information on Bound (school info, coaches, cheerleaders, student managers, etc) will be used for playoff programs including State Championship contests. **Each school is responsible for their own updates. Playoff Program Information must be on Bound no later than the week before playoffs begin. Any Changes after that must be approved by the SDHSAA Office**
- If a school needs to draw upon a substitute during the playoffs whose name was not on the Team Roster and School Information Form, they may do so as long as the substitute is eligible per the SDHSAA Constitution and Bylaws.

D. Schedules Due

All schedule information is on the SDHSAA website. The deadline for schools to make changes in their schedules is **August 18** (see chart on page 3). Should a school discontinue their football program after the deadline then the opponents of said school will be permitted to schedule other opponents in lieu thereof.

E. Player Equipment

The National Federation football rules require all players be equipped with a helmet and face mask with the NOCSAE seal of approval along with having a visible exterior warning label which indicates the players have been instructed and understand the risks involved in the game of football. The helmet shall be secured by a properly fastened chin strap with at least four snaps. No helmet older than ten years may be reconditioned and/or certified. ***It is also required for a player to wear an intraoral mouth and tooth protector, soft knee pads worn over the knees and under the pants; pants which cover the knees and knee pads; hip pads with tailbone protector; shoulder pads fully covered by the jersey; thigh guards; shoes; and a jersey with numerals on the front and back. Required equipment may not be altered from the manufacturer’s original design/production. Prior to the start of the game, the head coach shall be responsible for verifying to the game officials that all of his players are equipped in compliance with these rules.***

F. Field Markings

Rule 1-2 of the NFHS Football Rules Book lists the requirements of a regulation football field. Of note:

- Five-yard lines are to be marked along with the ten-yard lines.
- Hash Marks, 100 Yard Field – NFHS Rules require hash marks to be placed 53' 4" from either sideline, dividing the field into perfect thirds. However, college fields require a 60' width from sideline to hash, hash to hash and hash to sideline. It should be noted that either set-up is deemed acceptable for SDHSAA play. State Championship contests will be played utilizing the 60' width.
- Hash Marks, 80 Yard Field – NFHS Rules require hash marks to be placed 48' 4" from the sideline and 23' 4" apart.
- Eleven-man Football must be played on a traditional 100-yard field. Nine-man Football may be played on either an 80-yard or 100-yard field.
- Nine-Yard Marks (numbers) should be designated by a bisecting mark on each five-yard line, nine yards inside of the field from either sideline

G. Restraining Line

A four-inch wide, broken restraining line shall be placed around the outside of the field, at least two yards from the sidelines and end lines, as an extension of the line limiting the team box area, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. It is recommended that the restraining line be marked by placing 12-inch lines, separated at 24-inch intervals.

H. Team Boxes

(Adopted 2022) Team boxes shall be marked on each side of the field outside the coaches' area between the 15-yard lines for use of coaches, substitutes, athletic trainers, etc., affiliated with the team. The coaches' area is a minimum of a 2-yard belt between the front of the team box and the sideline and becomes a restricted area when the ball is in play.

NOTE: It is permissible for both team boxes to be on the same side of the field, provided each team box is marked between respective **15- and 45-yard lines**.

I. Goal Posts

1. The NFHS Rule Book calls for goal posts to be constructed in each end zone with a cross bar 10' above the ground level, and 23' 4" between uprights. It is permissible to use college or professional-style goal posts with uprights set at widths less than the 23' 4" NFHS minimum.
2. The goal posts shall be padded with a resilient, shock absorbing material to a height of at least six feet above the ground. If such padding is not in place, the game shall not be played until padding is secured. Any instance where this occurs should be reported by game officials to the SDHSAA office.

J. SDHSAA Headphone Policy

Schools are not required to provide communication (headphone) service for both teams. Each school is to be considered 'on their own.' However, the host school is responsible for providing a suitable, equitable place for coaches to observe the contest from (press box). NOTE: Headphone or other wireless device radio-style communication with on-field players is strictly prohibited.

K. Tie-Breaking Procedure to be Followed

The "Ten Yard line Overtime Procedure" spelled out in detail in the FOOTBALL RULE BOOK will be used for breaking all ties during the regular season as well as during the playoffs. This pertains to games played against all out-of-state opponents, regardless of where the contest is played.

L. Mercy Rule (UPDATED: 2020)

In ALL Classes, when a team secures a 35-point lead during the third or fourth quarter, the clock will continue to run except for timeouts (team or official) or after a score. If a team secures a 35-point lead in the second half and the score subsequently falls below the 35-point mark, the clock will continue to run as outlined.

In any contest featuring a team from 11A, 11B or Nine-Man football: If a team secures a 50 point or greater lead at the end of the first half, or if they secure such a lead during the second half, the game is ended immediately. Regulation timing is followed in the first half regardless of the score.

These regulations shall be followed for all regular-season contests, as well as all first-round, quarterfinal and semifinal playoff contests. Only the 35-point running clock rule shall be in effect for State Championship contests (50-point rule will not take effect in a State Final contest).

Of note, NFHS Rules further allow for coaches and officials to decide to shorten any period or terminate the game early in accord with rule 3-1-3.

M. Head Coaches Must Complete Rules Meetings and Pass Open Book Test

All SDHSAA Member School Head Football Coaches must view an online rules meeting, as well as pass an open book rules exam. A fine of \$50.00 will be assessed against any member school whose head coach fails to complete the rules meeting or pass the open book test. If the head coach fails to complete both requirements, the fine will be \$75.00. **(This must be completed between August 1-31)**

N. Extra Time-Out Due to Heat

Football contest officials have the authority to call an extra, officials' timeout during contests in the event of extreme heat and/or humidity. This timeout is not charged to either team and should be taken at a time when it will not provide a significant advantage/disadvantage to either team (preferably after a change of possession or score near the mid-point of each quarter). Decisions on whether to utilize heat timeouts should be made prior to the beginning of the contest and made primarily in the best interest of the health and safety of participating athletes.

O. Disruption of Games Due to Weather (Lightning, Etc.)

Officials and school personnel should always rule on the side of safety and postpone or delay any outside activity when threatening weather exists. The SDHSAA expects home site management and Officials to follow NFHS Policy for suspension and resumption of play, which can be found in the rule book of each "outdoor" sport as well as in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook. The use of a lightning app (WeatherBug) that has a lightning strike indicator is preferred to help with decisions on lighting related issues. ***In the event that a contest cannot be resumed after a delay, based upon mutual agreement of both schools (not the officials), one of the following options may be selected:***

1. Resume play from the point of interruption at a later date.
2. Declare a winner and loser based upon the score at the time of interruption.
3. **(NEW 2015):** If no mutual decision can be reached for the conclusion of a contest delayed by adverse weather, the SDHSAA will make the determination on whether or not to resume, and if so, will set a time/date for resumption of play.

P. Medical Coverage

For all games and practices, the SDHSAA recommends the following emergency procedures be in place:

1. Each School should have an Emergency Action Plan (EMP).
2. Have physicians or other medical personnel (P.A., EMT, etc.) available by phone or on location.
3. Phone location and phone numbers available for contacting physician and/or ambulance service.

Q. Injured Participant

The NFHS Football Rules Book states: "Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional."

R. Six-and Eight-Man Football

Member schools may schedule and play 6-man football if they so desire. However, there will be no championship play-off games conducted insofar as 6-man football is concerned, until the Board of Directors decides otherwise. It should be emphasized that there will be no team points or bonus points awarded to a 9-man football team who opts to play one of their allotted eight regular season games against a 6-man opponent. 9-Man, teams may play 8-man teams from another state and the game will be handled as any other regular season contest in terms of seed points, etc.

S. Halftime Length

NEW – 2016: Halftimes for all 11-man competitions shall be 15 minutes, followed by the mandatory plus-three warm-up. Halftimes may only be extended to 20-plus-three if both teams have been provided with 24 hours of advance notice.

NEW – 2017: Halftimes for all 9-man competitions shall be 12 minutes, followed by the mandatory plus-three warm-up. Halftimes may only be extended if both teams have been provided with 24 hours of advance notice.

Halftimes in contests where the 2nd quarter was interrupted by weather may be shortened by NFHS Rule.

T. Ejections

All ejections shall follow the SDHSAA policy as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws, including those ejections for flagrant personal foul acts as outlined in NFHS Rule 9-4-3, sub-sections (a) through (i) and (k) through (o) that carry a reduced penalty. **Schools are required to go online and fill out an ejection report by the following day. This form can be found on each individual school Bound site under South Dakota High School Activities Association Forms.**

SOUTH DAKOTA FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

A. General Information

1. Participation in the playoffs is optional for all schools. Schools playing football are considered a participant in the playoffs unless the school has informed the SDHSAA Office to the contrary.
2. An ADM cap has been established as the cut-off between nine-man and eleven-man football. Schools above this cap are only eligible for the eleven-man playoffs with the exceptions as noted at the beginning of this section.

B. Selection Method

1. In 11AAA – The Top eight teams based upon head-to-head results will qualify for the first round of the playoffs, with the top four seeds hosting first round contests. Teams will be ranked based upon winning percentage/direct results against the other teams within that classification. If teams have identical records/winning percentages, ties will be broken based on the following criteria, applied in order, with all teams tied being considered by these criteria:
 - a. Head-to-Head Results
 - b. Common Opponent Results, Comparing Opponents from “best to worst” in classification standing (best, then next best, then next best, and so on)
 - c. SDHSAA Power Point System Ranking
 - d. Random Draw
2. In 11AA and 11A – The top eight teams based on seed point average will qualify for the first round of the playoffs. Teams will be seeded one through eight based upon seed point average, with the top four seeds hosting first-round contests.
3. In 11B and 9-Man football, the top sixteen teams based on seed point average will qualify for the first round of the playoffs. Teams will be seeded one through sixteen based upon seed point average, with the top eight seeds hosting first-round contests.
4. Only games between schools recognized by the South Dakota High School Activities Association as having varsity football teams will count when calculating the point totals. Games involving a non-varsity team shall not count toward a team’s total points.
5. Only the results of regularly scheduled games will be used in calculating the point totals. If two teams play each other twice as part of their regular season schedule, then points may be earned for both games played, and each game shall count as one of the team’s scheduled games during the regular season.
6. The points accrued for the determination of play-off entries in all classes shall terminate at the end of Week 9 of the Football Schedule for 9-Man and 11B squads (**Saturday, October 18**), and week 10 for all other 11-man squads (**Thursday, October 23**). Teams who have an out-of-state opponent with a game after this date will have their seed point reward based upon games through the end of Week 8 of the SDHSAA football schedule.
7. A team must play a minimum of six games with varsity football teams recognized by the SDHSAA or other state associations.
8. If a 9-man team plays a combination of 11/9/8/6-man opponents during the course of a season in order to fill their schedule, it is understood that if 50% of the regular season games played are eleven-man games, the school will be classified as an eleven-man school for football play-off purposes. If more than 50% (five or more) of the regular season games played are nine-man and/or eight-man, then the school will be classified as a nine-man school for football play-off purposes.
9. If a South Dakota nine-man team plays an eight-man or six-man team from another state, the South Dakota team will receive points based upon the formula.
10. Classification of Out-of-State schools will be based on actual enrollment, grades 9-11, with the appropriate points awarded accordingly.
11. If it is mutually agreed to cancel a game, no points will be figured; however, if forfeiture takes place, it will be treated as a win and a loss with a score of 1-0 recorded (NFHS Rule).

C. SDHSAA Football Seed Point System (NEW 2015)

1. The following system for seed point determination for post-season seeding will be used as follows:
Seed points will be awarded based upon the opponent’s win percentage as shown in the chart below.

*Win percentage = number of varsity wins divided by the number of varsity contests played.

Opponent’s Winning Percentage	Points for Win	Points for Loss
.750 and above	50	39
.500 - .749	47	36
.250 - .499	44	33
.249 and below	41	30

- a. No points are deducted for playing teams which are classified below your classification.
 - b. No additional points are awarded for playing teams which are classified above your classification.
 - c. No contests against non-varsity opponents will count toward seed points. However, such games must be counted as one of the allowable games that have been established for each team.
2. A team’s seed point average will be determined by dividing the total number of seed points earned by the total number of contests played against varsity opponents, regardless of the opponent’s classification.
 3. One bonus point added for each contest while a team remains undefeated (all bonus points are removed

once a team is no longer undefeated) Point average for the season is computed to the nearest thousandth of a point.

D. Seed Point Average Tie-Breaking Procedure

If teams should tie for a qualifying spot because of identical point averages, then the tie will be broken by applying the following criteria in the order listed (*in all classes except for 11AAA*). In the event of a multiple-team tie-break situation, teams shall be evaluated together until one is separated by the criteria in order. After one team is removed, the process shall start over with the remaining teams.

1. Head-to-Head result(s) **All Teams involved in the tie must have played each other in order for head-to-head competition to be considered**
2. If a tied team has an undefeated record while the other(s) do(es) not
3. Team playing the most games
4. Team with the most victories
5. Team with the least losses
6. Common opponent – evaluated individually and in order of common opponent’s seed point average
 - a. If team(s) played multiple common opponents, results of contest(s) against the common opponent with the best regular season seed point average will be evaluated as a first tiebreaker, followed by the next best, and so on
7. The average of the tying teams opponents’ seed points
8. SDHSAA to conduct a drawing by lot of the team(s) involved to take place in the presence of a Notary Public.

E. Procedure to be Followed in Notifying Qualifying Schools

1. SDHSAA staff will contact schools hosting a first-round contest, informing that school of their opponent and the names of the officials assigned to work the game.
2. Host Schools will then be responsible to contact their opponents’ school and to contact the assigned officials.
3. Host Schools should also work with visiting schools to set a game time as per “**Section N #3: Game Procedure**” of this Handbook.
4. Host Schools should follow up with SDHSAA staff to confirm all parties (opponents and officials) have been notified, as well as designated game time/location.

F. Pairings

1. Class 11AAA, 11AA & 11A
 - a. First-Round Pairings will be a traditional Eight-Team bracket (1v8, 2v7, etc). This bracket will not be re-seeded after any round.
 - b. Teams with the higher awarded seed shall be designated as the “home team” for each round of post-season play, including the State Championship contest(s)
2. Class 11B & 9-Man
 - a. Sixteen teams per class shall qualify for the first round of playoffs
 - b. Teams will be placed in a traditional sixteen-team bracket (1v16, 2v 15, etc.). This bracket will not be re-seeded after any round.
 - c. Teams with the higher awarded seed shall be designated as the “home team” for each round of post-season play, including games through the State Championship contests

G. Determination of Sites

1. The determination of site for all sub-state football games will be as follows:
 - a. The highest seeded team will always host the playoff game. This includes all first round, quarter-final, and semi-final games.
 - b. In the event the school designated to host the game does not have access to a lighted field the game can be played in the afternoon at the designated host site. Schools may mutually agree to move the game to a neutral site and play the game at night. **NOTE:** If one school in a coop has a lighted field and the other school in the co-op does not have a lighted field and the school with no lights has been designated to host the playoff game, mutual agreement must be granted from the visiting school to play an afternoon game. If mutual agreement cannot be reached, the game will be moved to the lighted field within the co-op and the game will be played at night.
 - c. If a first round, quarter-final or semi-final playoff game is to be played on a field that is not the normal home field for the team scheduled to host the game, and if both teams agree to play at the neutral field at no additional mileage or team expense reimbursement, then said game could be played at the neutral field subject to final approval by the SDHSAA. The cost of renting the field shall be the responsibility of the schools requesting permission to take their game to the neutral site. Rental of the neutral site is not an allowable itemized expense.

2. Sharing/Rental of Fields.
 - a. Rental Fields: In the event a member school rents their playing field for regular season games and said field is not available, then the play-off game will be played according to one of the following mutually agreed upon options:
 - 1) Reverse the site to the opponent's field. In such cases, the team that traveled would be considered a traveling team.
 - 2) Play at a neutral site so long as mileage is not increased. In such cases, the host school is considered as playing at home. Mileage reimbursement shall be based on the shortest route via the state highway system.
 - 3) Play in the afternoon or the following day at the rental field.
 - b. In cases where there is more than one high school in the same city and more than one school share the same field, the following would apply:
 - 1) Starting time for the first game to be mutually agreed upon by the four teams.
 - 2) The host school that has control of the field will serve as host for the double header and shall have the right to choose the first or second game.
 - 3) In cases where two schools from the same city play each other, both teams will be considered as playing at home.
 - 4) Sharing of profits/losses for double-headers will be as per the formula with the SDHSAA receiving 30% (First round and Quarter-final) 40% (semi-final) of the gross ticket sales and each of the four participating schools to receive 25% of the profits after expenses have been paid. In the event a loss occurs the SDHSAA will reimburse the host school for the loss. The maximum amount of the reimbursement will be 50% of the mileage paid to the traveling teams or 50% of the total loss, whichever is less. Ticket prices for a double-header will be \$5 for students and \$7 for adults.
3. Moving sub-state games to opponent's field, neutral site or Dakota Dome: Permission from the executive staff will be contingent on the following:
 - a. Severe weather conditions, severe weather forecast or unplayable field conditions at the designated site. Any of the following options are available to the participating schools:
 - 1) Move the game to the opponent's field provided the field and weather conditions are more favorable. In such cases the team that traveled will be considered as a traveling team and entitled to mileage.
 - 2) Move the game to a neutral site provided travel distance is not increased. In such cases, the host school is considered as playing at home. Mileage reimbursement for both schools shall be the shortest route via the state highway system. Both teams shall be entitled to mileage as per the formula.
 - 3) Move the game to the afternoon or the following day.
 - 4) Move the game into the Dakota Dome based upon the following:
 - a) Availability of the Dakota Dome to the high schools.
 - b) Movement of any game into the Dakota Dome is subject to the mutual agreement of both schools and the executive staff.
 - c) The cost of renting the Dakota Dome shall be borne by the schools requesting permission to take their game inside. Rental of the Dakota Dome is not an allowable itemized expense.

H. Football Jersey Color Designation

The home (host) team will wear dark jerseys, and the visiting team will wear white jerseys. For the Championship finals, designation of the school to wear the dark jersey will be the team with the highest point average.

I. Game Administration

The Board of Directors will designate the host school as well as the tournament manager for all sub-state games. The tournament manager at each site and each level of competition will administer the game according to the regulations established by the Board of Directors.

1. Provide participating schools with any necessary information not included in this manual.
2. Arrange for a competent timer, scoreboard operator, announcer, two ball boys, and chain crew.
3. Arrange for a competent statistician for all final games played.
4. Make arrangements for management of concessions.
5. Arrange to have a physician present, if possible, at the game site. If this is not possible, it is strongly recommended that medical personnel (P.A., EMT, etc.) in some capacity be present.
6. Arrangement should be made to have an ambulance available for an emergency.
7. Secure ticket sellers, ticket takers, and ushers if needed.

8. Host school to furnish roll tickets for both students and adults and furnish appropriate ticket manifest and reconciliation forms for all play-off games. In addition, the host school shall make a financial report to the SDHSAA Finance Director no later than one (1) week after the game. Report forms will be distributed online through the School Zone section of the SDHSAA website.
9. Complimentary passes to qualifying schools for the sub-state games may be provided for the schools' administration (Superintendent, High School Principal(s), Athletic Director) and the spouses of the Administration and Coaches (Varsity Football). For the Final Play-off Games, eight reserved-seat tickets will be mailed to the qualifying schools (coops) for the session that involves their team.
The High School Press Pass Request and Adult Floor Pass Request forms are located in the Varsity Bound Area under forms (Journalism, Student & Adult Press Pass).
10. Assign dressing rooms to the teams and game officials.
11. Designate cheering sections for each participating school. Cheerleaders are expected to adhere to the "Cheerleader Safety Guidelines" published in the cheerleading section of the SDHSAA Handbook.
12. Arrange for adequate police protection as deemed necessary. Assign at least one policeman to the officials for half-time and the conclusion of the games.
13. Assist teams in making any housing arrangements. (Each school will be responsible for its own housing arrangements and meals but may need assistance from the tournament manager.)
14. Make necessary arrangements for marking the field in accordance with the official rule book.
15. Secure the appropriate yard-to-gain chain. The length of this chain will be 10-yards for all levels of play.
16. Each participating school shall furnish three game footballs of their choosing that meet NFHS specifications. All game balls must have the official authenticating mark of the NFHS stamped on the ball.
17. Only varsity cheerleaders in uniform shall be admitted free to sub-state games. Cheerleader passes will not be issued at any level of sub-state play-off competition. Cheerleader passes for those schools in the final games will be issued from SDHSAA.
18. Teams should be prepared to furnish their own towels for all play-off games.
19. Tournament managers are to make sure the flag is presented or displayed, and the Star-Spangled Banner is played by either a band or recording. Appropriate flag etiquette by athletes, coaches, cheerleaders is expected.
20. Band(s) volunteering to play in any play-off game will be admitted free of charge. Band chaperones and band bus driver(s) are to be admitted free when identified by the director of said band. No band will receive any remuneration for its appearance at any sub-state play-off game(s). Bands wishing to apply to perform at one of the sessions of the State Finals Play-off should use the application form provided in the Varsity Bound Area. **The deadline for the return of this application is September 20.**
21. The displaying of signs, banners, flags or placards at all first-round, quarter-final, semi-final and final games is prohibited. Tournament manager will not permit these devices to be displayed. Banners and/or signs displayed by the SDHSAA, Bands of the Day, Radio Stations, Television Stations, and management signs are approved.
22. Prior to the start of the game or the second half, fans are not to make a human tunnel, or the cheerleaders are not to have a hoop which the players can run through; fans are to remain off the field. This applies to all play-off games.
NOTE: When awards are presented (championship games) fans are to remain off the field until after the awards have been presented and the official team picture has been taken.
23. All mechanical noise-making devices, including band instruments, are prohibited in the cheering sections for all first-round, quarter-final, semi-final and final games.
24. Laser pointers are prohibited.
25. All fans must wear shirts. This includes both adults and students.
26. The host school must provide a suitable place for coaching staff to observe from (Press Box).
27. Programs for all sub-state games are to be the responsibility of the host school and tournament manager.
28. Programs for all rounds of playoffs shall be the responsibility of the host sites. Hosts shall have authority to sell advertisements in accordance with SDHSAA policy and are entitled to all profits from the sale of programs. To be assured of having the necessary program information that is needed to produce a program for the finals, all schools that qualify for second-round games must verify that their program information is correct on the SDHSAA website. It is the tournament manager's responsibility to print these rosters off the SDHSAA website.
30. Radio Broadcasts. Because of limited facilities at some sites, it may be difficult to provide space for all radio stations wishing to broadcast the game. A positive effort should be made to provide space for stations wishing to broadcast the game. Requests to broadcast any play-off game should be in writing to the tournament manager and/or via the telephone.

31. Television crews may shoot footage for news telecasts. Television rights to broadcast the game(s) live or on a delayed basis are to be determined by the Board of Directors.
32. Press pass guidelines: Media members may use their SDHSAA issued press passes for all sub-state games and the Finals.

J. Percentage of Receipts to SDHSAA

Thirty percent (30%) of the gross receipts of all first round and quarter-final round games and forty percent (40%) of all semi-final games shall be paid to the SDHSAA for deposit in the general treasury of the Association. Receipts and disbursements are to be run through a regular school account or a school activity account.

K. Profit/Loss

The finances of each sub-state game will be kept separate. The host schools for all sub-state games are to pay all expenses out of the gate receipts, including the percentage to the SDHSAA and the fee and mileage for the game officials. The participating schools will each receive 50% of the profit. In the event a loss occurs the SDHSAA will reimburse the host school for the loss. The maximum amount of reimbursement will be either 50% of the mileage paid to the traveling team or 50% of the total loss, whichever is less.

L. State Championship & Sub-State Game Procedure Notes

1. There shall be no practice on the official playing field for State Finals during the week of the game. If the game is being played at the site of one of the participating schools, that school can practice on the field. Teams traveling for the final games may use other practice facilities.
2. During the championship games, no team will be allowed to begin structured warm-ups or any football activity on the game field earlier than one hour before kick-off time. For first-round, quarter-final and semi-final round games, teams may enter the field of play by mutual agreement between the two teams playing the game.
3. The official recommended start time for all first-round and quarter-final games is 7:00 PM local time. Under favorable conditions, all first-round and quarter-final games are to be played at night and may start as early as 5:30 PM local time, subject to the approval of both teams. If two schools are unable to reach an agreement on contest time for any round of playoff contest, the recommended start time of 7:00 PM local time will be used. All semi-final round games may be played in the afternoon or evening subject to the approval of both teams. All First-Round and Second/Quarterfinal Round games should be played at night, with the following exceptions:
 - a. In the event the school designated to host a first-round or quarter-final game does not have a lighted field the game can be played in the afternoon at the designated host site. Schools may mutually agree to move the game to a neutral site and play the game at night.
 - b. If one school in a coop has a lighted field and the other school in the coop does not have a lighted field and the school with no lights has been designated to host the playoff game, mutual agreement must be granted from the visiting school to play an afternoon game. If mutual agreement cannot be reached, the game will be moved to the lighted field within the coop and the game will be played at night.
 - c. Under severe weather conditions, severe weather forecast or severe driving conditions, the executive staff shall serve as the ultimate authority pursuant to a postponement or movement of the games to an earlier start time when the two schools cannot reach agreement. In such cases, preference will be given to the traveling team. The earlier start time, due to severe weather and/or road conditions, has to be finalized by the executive staff.
4. Only players, coaches, trainers, and managers are allowed on the playing field during warm-ups.
5. Only official squads (players, coaches, trainers, managers, statisticians) and members of the press will be permitted on the sidelines during the game.
6. Squad Size: There is no limit to squad size for football.

M. Officials Selection Process

1. A crew of certified football officials will be assigned to each play-off game by the SDHSAA. Teams involved in the playoff games will be notified by the SDHSAA of the name of the crew chief for the crew assigned. Each official will be paid \$150.00 dollars for each sub-state game. Each official will be paid \$157.50 dollars for state championship games. Mileage will be paid both ways at the state rate per mile for one car. Officials' assignments are considered final and non-negotiable. Mileage (Current Rate) for the driver and riding time (.18) will also be provided.

NOTE: Football officials scheduled to work a volleyball game but selected to work a football play-off game are to be released from their volleyball contract without penalty.

2. Assignment of officials to sub-state and State Championship contests shall be done in accord with the policy as listed in the SDHSAA Sports Officials' Handbook.

N. Awards

1. **Sub-State.** Medals or trophies are not awarded for any sub-state round games by the SDHSAA.
2. **Finals.** Trophies and medals are awarded to all teams that participate in the finals. A maximum of forty-one medals for nine-man and fifty-one medals for eleven-man teams will be furnished by the SDHSAA. At the finals, all awards will be presented immediately following the completion of each game. Teams scheduled to play the second game of a two-game session must remain in the locker room until all awards for the previous game have been presented. In this instance, the two teams will be entitled to thirty minutes for warm-up drills.

O. Ticket Information

1. Sub-State Ticket prices
 - a. Students - \$5.00
 - b. Adults - \$7.00
 - c. Failure to charge the correct prices will result in the participating schools making up the financial shortage.
2. State Finals
 - a. Students - \$10.00
 - b. Adults - \$15.00
 - c. Ticket information will be released at a later date.

P. Videotaping Policy

At State and Sub-State Events:

1. In all SDHSAA activities, the video recording of any State or Sub-State level contest for resale purposes by individuals or commercial business organizations is prohibited without expressed advanced approval from the SDHSAA and its contracted television broadcaster. The contracted television broadcaster that has purchased exclusive rights for the live telecast of SDHSAA events does possess resale rights.
2. Provided that the video recording is not intended for broadcast, participating schools may video record the game or event that involves their team or athletes at a State or Sub-State event. Schools wishing to video record any Sub-State or State contest for broadcast on a local access cable station (after a 24-hour delay) must secure permission from the Sub-State contest committee or the SDHSAA.
3. Any member school that wishes to video record a game or event that does not involve its own team or athletes, at a Sub-State event, must receive permission from the committee in charge as well as the teams involved.
4. Upon advising the SDHSAA and the team(s) and/or individuals involved in a specific State event, schools may video record other teams and/or individuals for scouting purposes at said state event.
5. Parents or guardians may, for their personal use, video record the game or event that involves their son or daughter at a Sub-State or State event provided that the video recording is not intended for broadcast.

At Regular Season Games, Meets or Tournaments:

1. The host school always has the right to video record any regular season competition that is held in its facility without seeking permission from anyone.
2. The visiting school(s) that wishes to video record should seek permission from the host school. In the interest of promoting goodwill and friendly relationships between the schools, it is recommended that permission be granted by the host school whenever the request is made.
3. Any member school that wishes to video record a regular season game or event that does not involve its own team or athletes must receive permission from the host school as well as the team(s) that are involved in the competition.
4. Parents or guardians who wish to video record a game or event, during the regular season, that involves their son, or daughter should request permission from the host school. It is recommended the host school allow parents to video record their children during the regular season events.

NOTE: In all cases, lights that are distractive are prohibited. Likewise, camera placement that creates a safety concern is also prohibited.

Q. Appeal and Grievance Procedure

Refer to the General Section of this Handbook for the SDHSAA appeal and grievance procedure.

Any appeals in the sport of football arising out of a situation that took place during a sub-state football game go directly to the Executive Staff whose decision will be final.

R. Video Replay Protocol – See attached to be used in State Championship Games.

SDHSAA State Championship Game -- Instant Replay Policy and Protocol

Purpose: the purpose of using Instant Replay is to correct obvious, potential game-changing mistakes. The purpose is to not make sure that every call is accurate.

Replay reviews will occur automatically in the following situations:

- 1) On any scoring play or potential scoring play (a play in which a decision by an official may have prevented or awarded a score, which includes a try, field goal, or safety).
- 2) On any turnover or potential turnover.
- 3) Any other play in the last two minutes of either half or during any overtime, when the outcome of the review would have a direct competitive impact on the game. ** These plays would include but are not limited to:
 - Determine if a player was in bounds or out of bounds
 - Determine whether there was a catch on a pass or interception
 - When the ball is ruled dead in a loose ball situation
 - Determine spots that affect the line to gain
 - Determine whether a kick or pass was touched
 - A call or a timing error that may have impacted the status of the clock

** Direct competitive impact is defined as a situation when the call or lack of a call by an official has an impact on the opportunity for a team to change the outcome in a game with a point differential of 16 points or less.

Protocol:

- Coaches may not request reviews.
- The on-field officials and sideline attendants have no control and no direct involvement in the review of plays.
- The Replay Official and the Replay Assistant will review plays from a booth in the press box.
- If the Replay Official can confirm the ruling on the field without stopping play, he will do so.
- Play will only be stopped if the ruling on the field meets the above criteria, and the Replay Official cannot confirm the ruling on the field prior to the next legal snap.
- Replay decisions will be communicated to a Sideline Assistant, who will communicate directly with the on-field Referee.
- The Referee will announce the results of the review.
- The Sideline Assistant will tell the on-field officials when play needs to be stopped until a review is complete.
- On most reviews the call will be confirmed quickly, there will be no stoppage of play, and no announcement.
- There will be a limited number of camera angles on each play.
- For a play to be reversed there must be indisputable evidence that shows the original call was incorrect.
- If there is not a camera angle that definitively shows there was an error, the call will stand.
- When the replay officials have an angle that shows the call was correct, they will confirm the original call.
- If a camera angle does show that an error was made, the call will be reversed.
- Every attempt will be made to complete the review in ninety seconds or less.
- Additional reviewable items:
 - If the play in question meets replay criteria (scoring play, turnover, last two minutes) you can review and create a foul or take a foul off the play for the following:
 - Player making a forward pass/handoff when beyond the neutral zone or after a change of possession
 - Running into or roughing the kicker where video evidence clearly indicates touching of the kick prior to the foul
 - The number of players on the field for either team during a live ball
 - Illegal participation fouls
 - Player who is out of bounds touching a free kick that had not been touched in bounds
 - Forward pass that becomes illegal as a second forward pass during the down
 - Whether or not an onside kick has traveled 10 yards before contact is initiated by K.
 - Defensive or offensive pass interference where video evidence clearly indicates touching of the pass prior to the foul

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT TEAM AWARD

To recognize the academic excellence of the athletic teams and fine arts groups in each school, the SDHSAA created the “Academic Achievement Team Award”. The “Academic Achievement Team Award” is designed to recognize “varsity” level “teams” that achieve a combined GPA of 3.0 or higher. For additional information about the “Academic Achievement Team Award”, refer to the “Academic Achievement Team Award” section of either the ATHLETIC or FINE ARTS HANDBOOK.