



# Girls Flag Football Rules Meeting

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Coaches & Officials 2026



# Introductions



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# TSSAA Flag Football Sports Calendar

- Maximum number of regular season games - 16
  - Each tournament counts as 2 games
- A maximum of eight days of Pre-Season team practice within a 15 consecutive school day period are permitted prior to January 1

## Spring 2026 Dates:

- First practice date - Monday, February 2
- First contest date - Monday, February 23
- Region tournaments must be completed by - Saturday, May 9
- State Championships - Thursday, May 14-Friday, May 15 at Richard Siegel Complex in Murfreesboro



# TSSAA Benefit Games

- Schools may choose to host one additional regular season contest in girls flag football that will not count against their regular season contest limits
  - Schools must request through the TSSAA Portal
  - Host fee = \$100 (Invoice on TSSAA Portal)
  - Schools may play a maximum of 2 benefit games per season (host one and play in another as the visitor)

Portal > Forms >  
New Form

Letter to Graduating Seniors (PDF)  
Championship Participation Certificates (PDF)  
**Benefit Contests**  
[Request to Participate](#)  
**Competition**  
Postseason Entry Form  
**Postseason Tournament Financials**  
Baseball

Sport:  
Girls' Soccer

Contests Involving Alcoa High School

Date: YYYY-MM-DD Home/Away/Neutral:  
Opponent (or Host if Neutral Site):  
Date: YYYY-MM-DD Home/Away/Neutral:



# TSSAA Classification & Postseason

- Currently 154 schools have indicated they will be participating in 2026
- Schools split evenly between Class A and Class AA
  - Each class has 8 regions
  - Each region champion will advance to the state tournament
  - Region tournaments must be completed by May 9



# Flag Football Home Page -

<https://tssaa.org/sports/football-flag-girls>

## Girls' Flag Football



CEJrPhotography.com

### Girls' Flag Football on TSSAAsports.com

Team Rosters

Team Schedules

Historical Archives

### Postseason Information

Girls Flag Football State Championship Information

### General Information

Participating Girls' Flag Football Schools for Spring 2026

### Sport Administration

MaxPreps Official Sports Statistics

Girls' Flag Football Officials' Associations

Girls Flag Football Rules for 2025-26

Girls' Flag Football Officials' Fees

2025-26 Sports Calendars

2025-26 Girls Flag Football Rules Meeting Slides

NFHS Flag Football Game Clock Format Sheet for Press Box Workers

Flag Football Officials Mechanics Manual

### Health and Safety

- Officials' Fees
  - \$65 per official for a single varsity game
  - \$55 per official per game if more than one varsity game at a site
  - JV and middle school games left to negotiation between school and local officials' association
- Game Clock Format Sheet
- Officials' Mechanics Manual



## Officials' Resources

- Accidental medical insurance through Arbiter - \$250 deductible, up to \$50,000 limit (must be working assigned TSSAA contest)
- Unusual Occurrence/Unsportsmanlike Conduct Report (player/coach ejections, fan on field, coach removes team from field, etc.)
  - It is your responsibility to report the incident to TSSAA - Login through Arbiter account to report
  - It is NOT your responsibility to discuss potential disciplinary action – TSSAA will communicate the punishment.
  - Schools can only appeal a misapplication of a rule

# New NFHS Flag Football Rules Book

Significant changes from the 2024-25 TSSAA Rules:

- Player equipment
- Game timing
- Formations
- Flag inspection
- Kicking





# NFHS Flag Football Rules - State Association Adoption

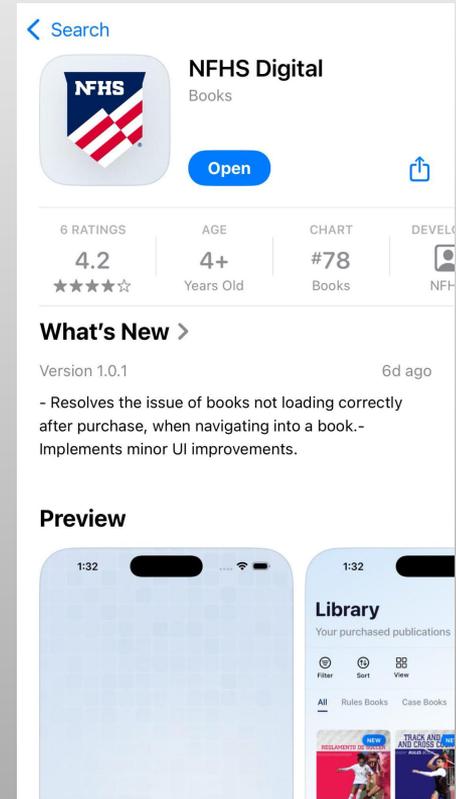
- 19 State Association Adoption Options
- Scan the QR code to access TSSAA's Adoptions
  - Field dimensions
  - # of game officials
  - Style of flag belt used
  - OT regulations
  - Mercy rule regulations
  - Halftime length





# Accessing Rules Books

- Rules books are delivered digitally directly to coaches through the use of the new **NFHS Digital app**.
  - The app is free for smartphones and tablets through the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.
- Head coaches will need to sign into the TSSAA Portal, click Resources then Sport Rules Books to request access to their digital book.





# Player Equipment

- Jerseys -
  - Dark for home
  - White for visitors - will be mandatory in 2028  
(visitors are responsible for conflict in colors in the meantime - pinnies are acceptable)
  - Numbers on front and back
  - School name, school logo, mascot, or nickname
  - Must be tucked in
- Shorts -
  - 1 single color (no stripes or other markings) - mandatory in 2028
    - If shorts have more than one color, until 2028, a team may not use a flag with any color that is on the shorts
  - Shorts must **clearly contrast** with color of flags
  - No pockets or exposed drawstrings

# Player Equipment

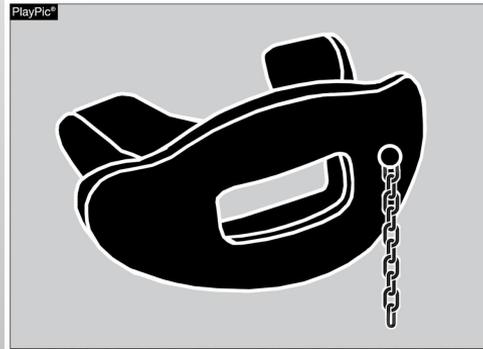
- **Flags & Flag Belts -**
  - 3 flags - mandatory “triple-threat” style for postseason in 2026, mandatory for all in 2028
  - To play a regular season game, opposing teams must have same style of belt (pop or triple threat) and same number of flags
  - Flag dimensions - flags must be at least 1.5 inch by 14 inches
  - With triple threat style, belt sizes important for where flags are positioned
  - Flags must be a single color, belt must be a single color (no customization)
- **Ball -**
  - Same specs; typically called youth size
  - Must be tan-colored
  - Check your NFL donated balls
  - Effective 2028 - balls must have NFHS Authenticating Mark



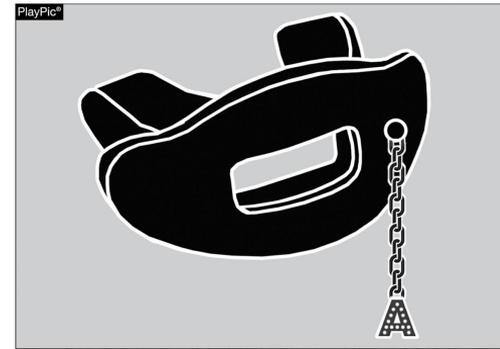
# Player Equipment - Mouth Protectors

Mouth protectors are mandatory

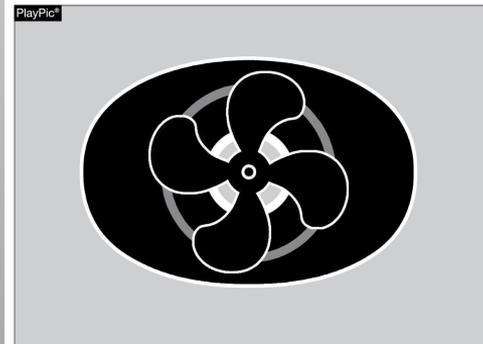
- May not include any attachment(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth.
- May not include anything on them that is a health or risk issue and can pose a danger to themselves or other players.



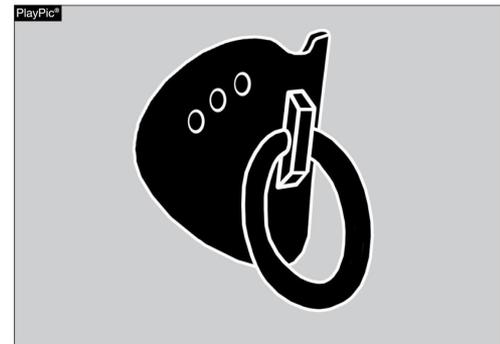
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ILLEGAL



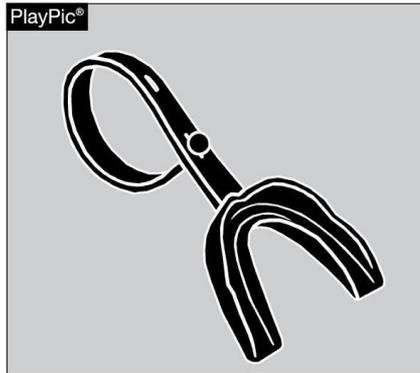
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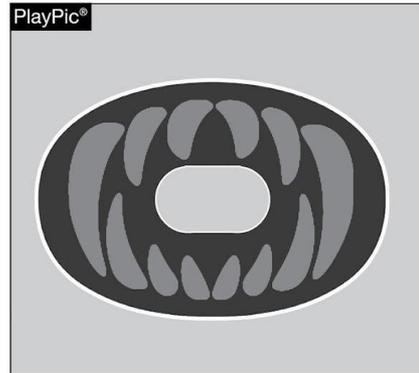
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## Player Equipment - Mouth Protectors

- These tooth and mouth protectors neither include any attachment(s) that does not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth, nor anything that is a health or risk issue posing a danger and are all legal as shown.



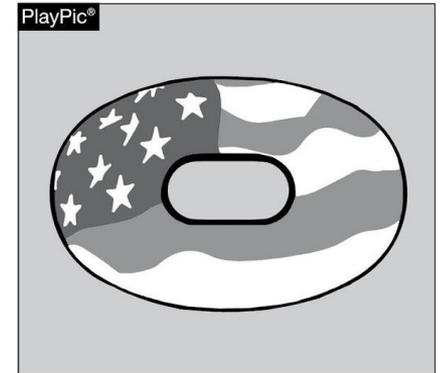
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**LEGAL**



**LEGAL**



**LEGAL**



# Legal Player Equipment

- Arm sleeves
  - Effective 2027, arm sleeves, whether attached to a shirt or unattached, manufactured to enhance contact with the football or opponent must meet the SFIA specification at the time of manufacture.
- Soft headwear not made from abrasive or hard material
- Rubber, cloth or elastic bands to control hair
- Hard items, including, but not limited to, beads, barrettes, bobby pins and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened to the head and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates or opponents **are allowed**.

# Legal Player Equipment

- Football gloves
  - Gloves, which may be anchored with athletic tape, and even though modified, must meet the NOCSAE standard or the SFIA specification at the time of manufacture.
  - SFIA mark has to be visible or the glove cannot be worn



# Legal Player Equipment

- Patellar Tendon Straps
  - Patellar tendon straps are permissible by current 2025-26 NFHS Flag Football Rules and is not considered an illegal equipment adornment.





# Illegal Player Equipment

- Uniform adornments, with the exception of: (a) Moisture-absorbing sweatbands.
- Ball-colored headwear, jerseys, patches, exterior arm covers/pads, undershirts or gloves.
- Any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device worn by a player during a game.
- Eye shade (grease or no-glare strips or stickers) that includes words, numbers, logos or other symbols within the eye shade.
- Jewelry. Religious medals and a medical-alert indicator are not considered jewelry. Religious medals or other religious items must be taped to the body and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert indicator must be taped to the body and may be visible.



# Game Clock Format

- Total Game Time: 48 minutes
- 12 minute quarters
- 1 minute intermission between periods 1 & 2 and periods 3 & 4, and teams change goals
- 10 minute halftime intermission (unless coaches agree to shorten)
- Two-minute timeout:
  - During first dead ball in last two minutes of each half, referee stops clock and notifies field captains and coaches of time remaining. The clock would then start on the snap (Rule 3-4-3-k).
  - Clock stops for dead ball as in tackle football for the remainder of the half (out of bounds, incomplete pass, score, etc.) - Rule 3-4
- Each team gets two charged timeouts per half. Charged timeouts are 1 minute.



# Scoring

- Table 8-1 Point Values

Touchdown	6 points	
Safety	2 points	<i>Points awarded to the opponent</i>
Successful Try (PAT) a. Touchdown - 10 yards b. Touchdown - 3 yards	2 points 1 point	<i>Interceptions during a try are an immediate dead ball (Rule 4-2-2j)</i>



## Flag Inspection After Scoring

- A teammate must immediately pull the flag to show it could have been pulled/was not tampered with

*Rule 8-2-1c: Following a touchdown, a teammate of the scoring player must remove the scorer's flag in view of the official*

- If the flag inspection reveals that the flag has been tampered with, the head coach is ejected by the penalty for Rule 9-8-1h.



# Start of Play/Formations

- Snaps shall be made from the center of the field; an illegal or fumbled snap is a dead ball
- Neutral zone is the 1-yard area between the offensive and defensive lines of scrimmage (LOS)
  - Offensive LOS is the vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest that team's goal line
  - Defensive LOS is 1 yard beyond the vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest that team's goal line
  - The only 2 players who are restricted are the snapper and the QB. All other players have no restriction on or off the LOS
  - ***Rushers are no longer required to be 5 yards off the ball at the snap***

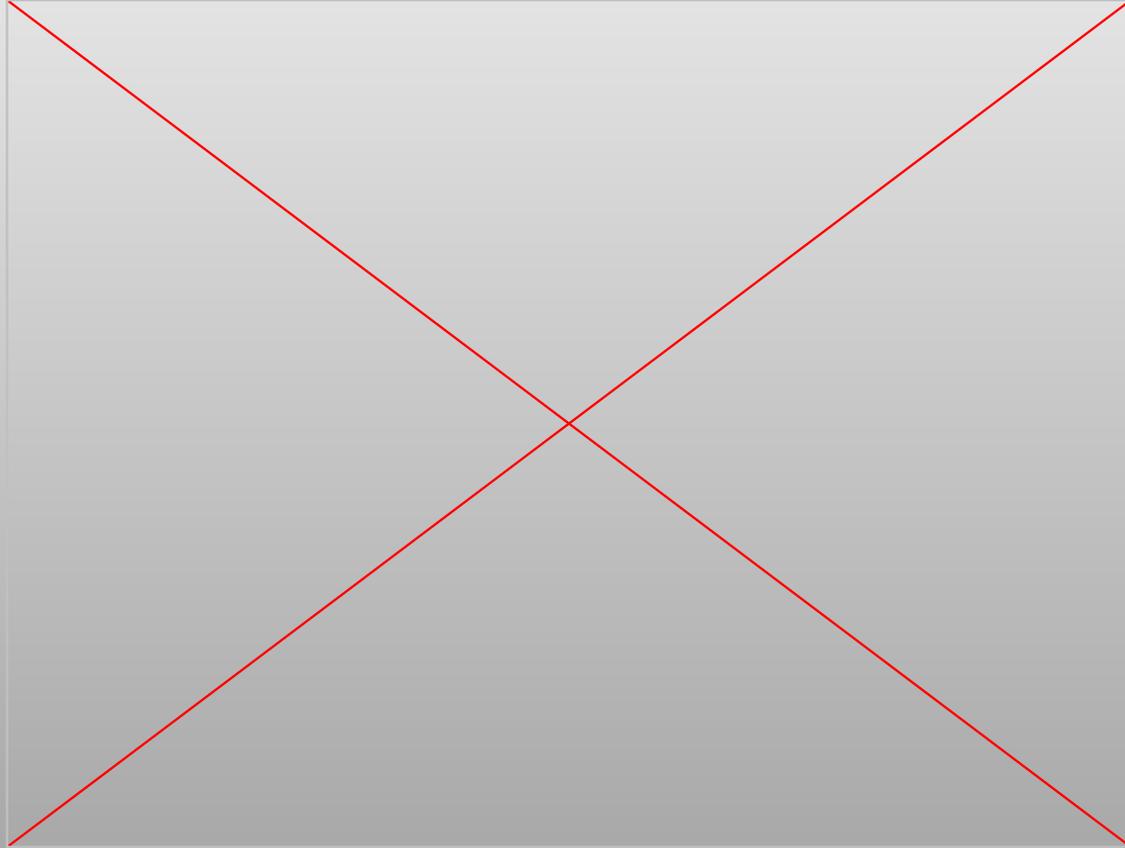
## Blocking (Rule 9-3)

- Screen blocking is the only kind of blocking allowed
  - It is always illegal to initiate contact.
  - There must be contact for there to be an illegal block call. If there is no contact, there is no illegal block.
  - Similar to a basketball screen, but not as restrictive. The screen blocker can move in the same direction or path as their opponent.
  - A screen blocker cannot extend the arms, or use hands, arms, elbows or legs to initiate contact.
- Penalty - Illegal Blocking - (S34) - 10 yards

**34**    **Illegal block**  
**Illegal use of**  
**hands/arms**



# Legal & Illegal Blocking



## Flag Guarding (Rule 9-2c)

- The runner shall not use hands, arms or the ball where contact occurs between the runner and an opponent that denies the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag or flag belt.
- Flag guarding can only occur if there is contact made between the runner and opponent.
- Penalty - Flag Guarding - (S38) - 10 yards





## Kicking - Rule 6

- Scrimmage kick (punting) is allowed from at least 2 yards behind the neutral zone if declared prior to the ball being made ready to play.
- No rushing allowed (Rule 7-1-7a - encroachment)
- On a punt, if the snap hits the ground, it's a dead ball. (Rule 2-1-3)
- The ball must be kicked within 5 seconds of receiving the snap. Failure to do so will result in a 5-yard delay of game penalty (Rule 3-6-2).
  - If perceived to be intentional to run out the clock, a dead ball, 5-yard penalty with loss of down can be assessed. If this occurs and time runs out, one untimed down will result. (TSSAA is more restrictive on this rule.)



## Receiving the Kick - Rule 6

- Any receiver may catch or recover a scrimmage kick in the field of play and advance the ball. The kicking team must deflag the receiver to stop the play.
- If a receiver does not catch the ball cleanly and the ball hits the ground, the ball is dead immediately.
- Any player from the kicking team may catch or recover a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone. Such catch or recovery causes the ball to become dead.
- The only way the kicking team recovers and keeps possession of the ball is if the kick hits a receiver and then the kicking team catches the ball before it hits the ground. The ball then becomes dead (it cannot be advanced) and belongs to the kicking team at that spot.



## Flag belt inadvertently falls off (Rule 4-2-2c)

- If the flag belt of the player in possession of the ball inadvertently falls to the ground, the opponent must deliver a one-hand touch between the shoulders and knees (including arms and hands) to end the play.



## Player with ball falls down (Rule 4-2-2a)

- The ball becomes dead and the down is ended when a runner goes out of bounds or allows any part of their person other than hand or foot to touch the ground.

# Additional NFHS Flag Football Updates

- Injury surveillance for flag football is coming
- Rules Committee will meet in January (next week) for 2026-27 rules
- Coming next season: preseason guides, casebook, exams, rules powerpoint





# TSSAA Health & Safety Policies

- TSSAA Heat Policy
- TSSAA Concussion Policy
- TSSAA Lightning Policy
- Rehearse Emergency Action Plans
  - AED within 3 minutes of the field

<https://tssaa.org/health-safety-policies>



## Heat Policy - School responsibility

- Each school is responsible for measuring Wet Bulb Globe Temperature or Heat Index at the site of practices and competitions and making appropriate modifications.



# Heat Policy - Modifications to Practice

Modifications to practice/Contests must be made based on the WBGT or Heat Index reading



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TSSAA Heat Policy (Revised October 2024)

Each school is responsible for obtaining either a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature or Heat Index reading at the site of practice and competitions. **Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)** takes into account more environmental factors than heat index and should be a school's first choice when evaluating conditions and planning activities. In the absence of a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature reading, a digital psychrometer or other instrument may be used at the site of the activity to measure the heat index. The use of a weather app on a cell phone is permissible to measure heat index if no other instrument is available to measure heat index at the site of the practice or competition.

A cold water immersion tub or other form of rapid on-site cooling should be available for all warm weather practices. If exertional heat stroke is suspected, use immersion for on-site cooling before transporting to the hospital. Access to water should be available to all athletes at all times.

#### **WBGT 82.0 – 86.9 or Heat Index Under 95 Degrees**

- Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 3 minutes each during the workout.

#### **WBGT 87 to 89.9 or Heat Index of 95 Degrees to 99 Degrees**

- Maximum practice time is 2 hours.\*
- For All Sports: Provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each.
- For Football:
  - Contact is allowed. Full pads may be worn during contact activities. Shoulder pads and helmets must be removed for any activity that does not involve contact. All protective equipment, with the exception of football pants with pads, must be removed during conditioning activities. If the WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing to shorts.

#### **WBGT 90 to 92 or Heat Index of 100 Degrees to 104 Degrees**

- Maximum practice time is 1 hour. \*(This hour includes the 20 minutes of rest breaks)
- For All Sports: There must be 20 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice and no conditioning activities.
- For Football: No protective equipment may be worn during practice that does not involve contact. Protective equipment may be worn for drills that do involve contact.

#### **Above 92.0 WBGT or Heat Index Above 104 Degrees**

- No outdoor practice. An outdoor practice cannot take place until WBGT level is 92.0 or below or heat index is 104 or below.
- Interscholastic competitions, including preseason scrimmages and jamborees, must be postponed in the absence of an appropriate health care professional (Certified Athletic Trainer, Certified Nurse Practitioner, Physician Assistant, Doctor of Medicine, Osteopathic Physician) with access to a cold water immersion tub or other rapid on-site cooling method. Under no circumstances can an outdoor practice take place in these conditions.

**WBGT 82.0 - 86.9 or Heat Index Under 95 Degrees** : 3 separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 3 minutes each during the workout.

**WBGT 87 - 89.9 or Heat Index of 95 Degrees - 99 Degrees**: Maximum practice time is 2 hours. \*(This includes time spent for rest breaks)

4 separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 minutes each.

**WBGT 90 to 92 or Heat Index of 100 Degrees to 104 Degrees**

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No outdoor practice.



# Heat Policy - Modifications to Contests

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A cold water immersion tub or other form of rapid on-site cooling should be available for all warm weather practices. If exertional heat stroke is suspected, use immersion for on-site cooling before transporting to the hospital. Access to water should be available to all athletes at all times.

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## WBGT > 92

- Competitions must be postponed in the absence of an appropriate health care professional with access to a cold water immersion tub or other rapid on-site cooling method when the.

## Heat index > 104

- Competitions must be postponed in the absence of an appropriate health care professional with access to a cold water immersion tub or other rapid on-site cooling method.

## Rapid cooling

- A cold water immersion tub or other form of rapid on-site cooling should be available for all warm weather practices and competitions. If exertional heat stroke is suspected, use immersion for on-site cooling before transporting to the hospital.



# Tennessee Sport Concussion Law

**Coaches, Parent / Student Athlete Forms** - Coaches, parents, and students athletes are required to sign a standardized form that can be found on the TSSAA website acknowledging that they are aware of the signs, symptoms, and dangers of concussions.

**Annual Online Education for Coaches** – Coaches must complete a concussion education course annually. The course produced by the NFHS entitled "*Concussion in Sports*" fulfills this requirement and can be accessed at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com).

## **Concussion Policy for Officials -**

Monitor and advise - Remove any player showing signs/symptoms

Designated Health care provider can approve return to play

-Head coach is responsible for following all Concussion protocol

- “TSSAA Concussion Return to Play” - (Unusual Occurrence)

- Only Medical Providers can diagnose



# Lightning Guidelines

- Protocol and chain of command for suspension of play should be discussed in **the pre-game meeting with the game officials.**
  - **If a host school has a policy which bases suspension of play on proximity of lightning while using a lightning detector, this must be communicated to the game officials at the pre-game meeting.**
  - It should be clearly stated who will be in charge of monitoring the lightning detector and notifying the game officials when lightning is in the area. **If cloud to ground lightning is seen or thunder is heard by the game officials before a lightning detector displays an alert, the game shall be suspended and the 30 minute count shall begin.**



## Questions?



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