

# FOOTBALL PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

(Provided by the Iowa High School Athletic Association, taken from the current NFHS Football Handbook)

## **1 ) HEAD COACH MUST VERIFY THAT PLAYERS ARE LEGALLY EQUIPPED**

**The responsibility for insuring that all players are legally equipped is that of the head coach.** Prior to the game, the referee and umpire will visit each team's dressing room. The head coach must verify to the referee, in the presence of the umpire, that his players are equipped in compliance with the rules.

## **2) REQUIRED EQUIPMENT**

While required equipment protects the wearer, it must also protect other players against the danger of unnecessary injury.

The player must frequently check his equipment and report to his coach or manager when he discovers any part of his equipment has become damaged or illegal through use. He should request replacement or repair of such items as shoe cleats which have developed nicks or burrs, or are worn or loose in their sockets; exposed hard substances, broken or damaged helmets or shoulder pads; missing chin straps; cracked or damaged mouth protectors and face protectors. Equipment which is improperly fitted is an invitation to injury.

Certain items of player equipment are required by the rules and no player may participate without them. ***The following items are required equipment:***

1. A face mask which met NOCSAE test standards at the time of manufacture.
2. A helmet which met NOCSAE test standards at the time of manufacture and has a visible exterior label regarding the risk of injury. The helmet must be secured by a chin strap.
3. Hip pads with a tail bone protector.
4. A jersey with number 1-99, inclusive, on the front and back which must reach the top of the pants.
5. Knee pads worn over the knees.
6. Pants which cover the knees and knee pads.
7. Shoes, and if with cleats, they must meet specifications.
8. Shoulder pads and any hard surface attachments fully covered by a jersey.
9. Thigh guards.

10. A tooth and mouth protector which includes an occlusal and labial portion covering all upper teeth.

An official will NOT permit a player to participate if he is not equipped with all mandatory items.

### **3) HELMET**

In order to evaluate the protective qualities of football helmets, the National Federation of State High School Associations, in cooperation with other interested athletic organizations and manufacturers, formed the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) in 1971. NOCSAE established test standards for evaluating the protective effectiveness of football helmets. A player must wear a helmet which carries the NOCSAE mark. This mark indicates the helmet passed the NOCSAE test standard at the time it was manufactured. This mandatory requirement went into effect in 1980. The helmet must also have an exterior warning label regarding the risk of injury.

### **4) FACE MASK AND TOOTH PROTECTOR**

Experimentation conclusively demonstrated the wearing of a modern face mask substantially reduced the number of injuries, as well as their severity. The requirement that every player wear a face mask was instituted for safety reasons and not to accommodate the wearer's opponent.

The face mask shall be made of material designed to be nonbreakable with rounded edges, and those constructed of metal shall have the surface covered with resilient material designed to prevent chipping and burrs or an abrasiveness which would endanger players. The face mask must also meet NOCSAE standards when manufactured.

Each player is also required to properly wear a tooth and mouth protector. A portion of an acceptable tooth and mouth protector must fit within the mouth and cover all upper teeth. It also shall have a labial part which covers the inner lips and an occlusal portion which separates the biting surfaces of the teeth.

### **5) ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT**

***There are certain types of equipment which are illegal & may not be worn.***

***Among these are:***

1. Ball-colored helmets, jerseys, patches, pads or gloves, penalty-flag colored pads or gloves, any transverse stripe on the sleeve below the elbow.
2. Computers or any other electronic or mechanical device for communication.
3. Hard substance in its final form on elbow, hand, wrist, or forearm unless padded as specified and directed by a licensed physician.

4. Knee braces made of hard unyielding material, unless hinges are covered on both sides and all of its edges overlapped and worn under the pants. Any other hard surface across the front of the leg must be covered with at least ½ inch closed-cell, slow recover rubber or other material of the same minimum thickness and having similar physical properties. If any part of the brace extends below the pants, it must be covered from direct external exposure.
5. Metal which is projecting or other hard substance on clothes or person.
6. Plastic material covering protective pads whose edges are not properly rounded.
7. Rib pads and back protectors unless fully covered by the jersey.
8. Slippery or sticky substances on clothing, person or equipment.
9. Tear-away jerseys or any taped, tied or altered.
10. Uniform adornments other than a single, plain, white towel.
11. More than one manufacturer's logo/trade name on the outside of the jersey and/or pants and not exceeding 2 1/4 square inches and not exceeding 2 1/4 inches in any one dimension
12. Jewelry.
13. Eye shields which are not clear, not molded nor not rigid.

## **6) ARTIFICIAL LIMBS**

Since 1978 it has been permissible for players to wear an artificial hand, arm or leg. A player may be permitted to participate while wearing an artificial prosthesis which is, in the opinion of the administrative rules body, no more dangerous to players than the corresponding human limb, and does not place an opponent at a disadvantage. The "rules administering officials" having been determined to be the state high school association, or representatives designated by the state high school association. Each case has to be handled on an individual basis.

After consulting with representatives of the medical profession who specialize in working with juvenile amputees, the following criteria are recommended as a guideline to follow in determining the legality and suitability of wearing an artificial prosthesis in a contact sport:

1. Metal hinges restricted to the lateral and medial surfaces and covered with leather or padding (similar to that required on approved knee braces).
2. No metal in front of the knee unless properly padded.

3. Prosthesis should be wrapped with a minimum of ½ inch high-density polyurethane or foam rubber.

4. Approval of an orthopedic surgeon or physician associated with a juvenile amputee clinic.

### **7) FAILURE TO WEAR MANDATORY OR LEGAL EQUIPMENT**

The head coach verifies prior to the game that all his players are legally equipped. Once this verification has been made to the referee, any violation of the legal or mandatory player-equipment rule is a 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul charged to the head coach. If a substitute comes on the field wearing illegal equipment or missing required equipment, he will be asked to leave and correction must be made before participation. If, following a play, it is determined that a player participated while wearing illegal equipment or missing mandatory equipment during the down, the 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul will be charged to the coach and will be enforced from the succeeding spot. The player shall not participate further until he is in compliance with the rules. Equipment which becomes defective or illegal because of game use may be corrected without penalty.

### **8) FAILURE TO PROPERLY WEAR REQUIRED EQUIPMENT**

Failure to properly wear player equipment is a foul. Player equipment is designed to protect players, but there have been instances in which it has not been worn properly for one reason or another.

If any player is not properly wearing required player equipment when a free kick or snap is about to occur, it is a dead-ball foul. It authorizes officials to penalize players who are not properly wearing required equipment during the dead-ball period momentarily before the ball will become live. Failure to properly wear required equipment while the ball is live is a 5-yard penalty.

### **9) AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT**

The following auxiliary equipment may be worn, if approved by the umpire as being soft, nonhardening, etc.

1. Forearm pads or hand pads.
2. Tape, bandage or support wrap on the hand or forearm to protect an injury.
3. Gloves which have a label/stamp indicating compliance with test specifications.

**IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
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