The 2019 NFHS football rule changes have been released and are listed below. I have added a few comments for clarification. Please feel free to email me at brugg@ohsaa.org if you have questions.

**BY STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTION, USE OF VIDEO REVIEW ALLOWED FOR STATE POST-SEASON CONTESTS [1-3-7 NOTE (NEW), TABLE 1-7 – 1-3-7 NOTE (NEW)]**

Rationale: By state association adoption, instant replay may only be used during state postseason contests to review decisions by the on-field game officials. This adoption would allow state associations to develop protocols for use of video replay.

Comment: We are looking at this and will decide on a course of action this spring.

**IMPROVED VISIBILITY OF NUMBERS [1-5-1c, 1-5-1c(6) (NEW)]**

Rationale: The purpose of numbers on jerseys is to provide clear identification of players. In order to enhance the ability to easily identify players, the committee has clarified the size requirements for jersey numbers through the 2023 season. The committee also added a new requirement that, effective in the 2024 season, jersey numbers must be a single solid color that clearly contrasts with the body color of the jersey.

Comment: This is needed.

**REDEFINED REQUIREMENTS FOR A LEGAL SCRIMMAGE FORMATION [2-14-1, 7-2-5a]**

Rationale: A legal scrimmage formation now requires at least five offensive players on their line of scrimmage with no more than four backs. This change will make it easier to identify legal and illegal offensive formations.

Comment: This rule has not really changed. Instead of counting 7 on the line of scrimmage, there is a maximum of 4 in the backfield. The definition of a “back” is (Rule 2, Section 32, Article 3): A back is any A player who has no part of his body breaking the plane of an imaginary line drawn parallel to the line of scrimmage through the waist of the nearest teammate who is legally on the line, except for the player under the snapper, who is also considered a back.

**PROHIBITION ON TRIPPING THE RUNNER [2-45, 9-4-3o (NEW), 9-4-3o PENALTY (NEW)]**

Rationale: In an effort to decrease risk, tripping the runner is now prohibited. It is now a foul to intentionally use the lower leg or foot to obstruct a runner below the knees.

Comment: This is a safety rule consistent with the NCAA and NFL.

**40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK [2-35-1, 3-6-1, 3-6-2a, 7-2-1]**

Rationale: To have a more consistent time period between downs, the rules committee approved situations where 40 seconds will be placed on the play clock. The new rule defines when 40 seconds will be placed on the play clock and when 25 seconds will be placed on the play clock.
Comment: This is very similar to the NCAA and NFL rules that you have witnessed for years. It will be simpler in that all administrative stoppages (except first downs) will be 25 seconds. There will be a separate communication to schools on re-programming visible clocks, if they have them. There will also be a communication to officials on re-programming their timing devices.

HORSE-COLLAR TACKLE ADDITION [9-4-3k]
Rationale: Grabbing the nameplate area of the jersey of the runner, directly below the back collar, and pulling the runner to the ground is now an illegal personal contact foul.
Comment: This is a safety rule change.

ILLEGAL KICKING AND BATTING PENALTY REDUCED [9-7 PENALTY]
Rationale: The penalty for illegal kicking or batting the ball was reduced from 15 to 10 yards.
Comment: This distance better reflects the foul.

PLEASE EMAIL BEAU AT BRUGG@OHSAA.ORG WITH QUESTIONS.