FBU NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

THE PATH TO NAPLES

FOOTBALL UNIVERSITY NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Official Playing Rules

Subject to change, revision, addition, amendment at the discretion of the FBU National Championship and its governing body.

All FBU National Championship Tournament games will adhere to the rules outlined by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Directors, Team Directors and Team Coaches should familiarize themselves with these rules and the 2026 NFHS Rule Book

A) Tryouts/Practices & Athlete Qualifications

- Teams are authorized to start hosting All-Star Tryouts on 8/1/26 – teams MUST follow the tryout procedures set in place regarding insurance, venue contracts, etc.
- Teams are authorized to begin official, padded practices on November 1, 2026 – teams found to have begin formal padded practices prior to 11/1/26 are subject to removal from the tournament

B) Athlete & Team Qualifications

- All players MUST be certified through National Sports ID in order to participate in the 2026 FBUNC
- 6th-grade team members can't turn 13 years old before 8/01/26; must be born on or after 08/01/13
- 7th grade team members can't turn 14 years old before 8/01/26; must be born on or after 08/01/12
- 8th grade team members can't turn 15 years old before 8/01/26; must be born on or after 08/01/11
- Players are allowed to play at a higher grade level but may not play down a grade level – even if they meet the age requirements for that grade.
- No athlete is allowed to move up a grade once they are on an FBU certified team roster
- Each Individual Team may not roster more than ten (10) players from an existing travel, youth, or school team at each grade level

C) Official Game Balls

- Only Wilson-branded TDJ or higher for 6th or 7th grade games
- Only Wilson-branded TDY or higher for 8th grade games
- **Teams are required to play with either the Wilson TDJ or TDY ball in every round of the FBU National Championship. There will be no exception to this rule. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a team monetary penalty**
- Teams are encouraged to bring their own balls for tournament play
- FBU will provide ONE Wilson TDJ ball and one Wilson TDY game ball at each game site

D) On-Field Play

- All players must wear appropriate on-field equipment while participating – Certified Helmet, Shoulder Pads, Hip/Thigh/Knee/Tail Pads, Mouth Guard, Cleats, etc. **Per NFHS Rules, players may NOT wear Tinted Visors**
- Games will be officiated by registered officials to ensure that games follow official NFHS game rules, and that game play maintains high level of sportsmanship and fair play
- Coaches may utilize sideline headsets for coach-to-coach communication but may **NOT** utilize for Coach to Player Communication in the field of play. I.E. Coaches may not communicate to player who is on the field of play via earpieces, headsets, etc.
- Each game will include an officially certified Trainer who will be responsible for servicing any injuries conducted during game play and filling out injury assessment
- Minimum of three (3) conditioning days with just helmets and contact limited to five (5) days in a single week
- Coaches manage all playing time for athletes. There are no minimum snap counts in any phases
- A play clock will be utilized for all games except for “Mercy Rule” (+24 points), injuries or timeouts
- All games are played until a winner is declared – see OT Rules below
- Quarters: 10 minutes
- Halftime: 8 minutes
- Time between games (Rds. 1-4): 15 minutes
- All players must always have their mouthpiece in while on-field during play
- Positional jersey number rules do not apply
- Up to four captains per team are allowed at coin toss ceremony
- Kickoffs: Ball will be placed at the 30-yard line on receiving teams end of the field. There will be no kickoffs.
- Teams have a choice of either kicking the extra point or attempting a two-point conversion
  - Extra points via kick are worth one point
  - Two-point conversions from the 3-yard line by run or pass are allowed

E) Overtime Rules

- All game rules will apply except the line-to-gain shall always be the goal line. The try will not be made when it is not required to break the tie
- When the score is tied at the end of the fourth quarter, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a three (3) minute intermission during which time both teams may confer with their coaches. All officials will assemble at the 50-yard line, review the overtime procedures, and determine the number of time outs remaining for each team. Each team shall be permitted one additional time out for each extra period plus any unused regulation game time outs. At the end of three (3) minutes the Head Linesman will go to the team on the side of the field where the line- to-gain equipment is located, and the Field Judge to the other team, to inform the coaches of the number of time outs remaining and to escort the respective team captains to the center of the field for the coin toss
- The visiting team captain shall be given the privilege of calling the coin while it is in the air. The winner of the toss shall be given choice of ball possession or designating the direction of the offense for the OT period(s)
- To start the overtime, the offensive team (A) shall put the ball in play, first and goal, on the defensive team's (B) 10-yard line. Team A shall have a series of four downs. The series shall be terminated by any score by Team A or if Team B has possession at the end of any down
- Team A shall be awarded a new series when any of the following events may occur
- There is a change of team possession during the down and the ball belongs to Team A at the end of the down
- Team A recovers a scrimmage-kick (field-goal attempt) between the goal lines after it has been touched first by Team B beyond the neutral zone
- If Team A scores a touchdown, it is entitled to the opportunity to try for point, except when it is unnecessary to break the tie. A field goal attempt is permitted during any down. If the defensive team gains possession by recovering a fumble or intercepting a pass, the ball remains alive until that down has ended. This provides the defensive team (B) the opportunity to score following a recovery or interception
- After Team A has completed its series, Team B will become the offensive team with the ball in its possession at the 10-yard line. The same end of the field will be used for both possessions in order to insure equal game conditions and conserve time
- If the score remains tied after each team has been given one series, the procedure shall be repeated until a winner is determined. There will be an intermission of two (2) minutes during which the loser of the original post regulation coin toss will be given first choice of the options. If additional overtime periods are required, first choice of the options will be alternated
- The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime shall be declared the winner. The final score shall be determined by totaling all points by each team during the regulation and overtime period

F) Recruiting Boundaries and Team Composition

- FBU National Championship teams may consist of up to 40 participants and all student-athletes must be in corresponding grade and meet age requirement for the team on which there being certified
- A player may play up one (1) grade level, however a player can never play down a grade even if his age qualifies for a lower grade. Teams will not be allowed to change their roster after team certification
- Team members will be composed of eligible athletes from the nearest city that a team calls home base. Participants that do not have a team in their state will be allowed to tryout and roster for the next nearest team to them as determined by the Governing Body
- Teams may not have more than ten (10) players from an existing travel, youth or school team at each grade level. Any teams found to have rostered more than ten (10) players from an existing team are subject to removal from the tournament
- If a player is certified on a roster the previous year he will not be permitted to roster to another team unless 1) that team is located within 25 miles of his home address or 2) the previous team has withdrawn from the current year tournament
- If said player has a bona fide move with proof of change of address he can petition the Governing Body to roster with a new team. These cases will be handled on an individual basis and be submitted to the Governing Body by that areas Team Director (not the head coach)
- **If any coach is found guilty by the Governing Body of recruiting previously rostered athletes from another team, they could risk suspension from the tournament**
- Any Coach that was rostered and or certified to a team will need a release from that Team Director to move to another (team, city or state) team in consecutive years. This rule is not applicable to coaches that sit out the previous year and were not rostered. This rule does not apply to a coach wanting to move from one age group to another for the same (team, city, or state) he was rostered previous year
- Any appeals to this rule/amendment will need to be submitted to the Governing Body at least 30 days prior to the first round scheduled games in that calendar year. NFHS Definition of a Bona Fide Move - A student/athlete whose parents and or legal guardians make a bona fide move completely out of one school zone into another may be granted permission to transfer all his or her rights and privileges to the team that serves the area where his or her parents reside