

# 2020/2021 NFHS Rule Changes

With Ralph Slides

A word of caution before watching these presentations:

1. Know that NFHS rules have changed and the video along with the audio and notations may not reflect the current rules.
2. Distinguish the difference between the narrator's rules interpretation and his personal opinion. Some opinions that come to mind.
  - The video shows three members of the kicking team are in the neutral zone prior to the kick. The narrator comments that "you should not throw a flag if the kick goes down field but throw the flag if it is an onside kick." Really! Encroachment is a blow and throw, not a wait and see where the ball goes before throwing a flag.
  - "If you think you have defensive pass interference, you don't. When you have DPI you will know for sure." Really! Show me that in the rule books.
  - "A little encroachment is ok, except on fourth down." Really! Define a little encroachment.
3. If there is video to watch, I have noted the time on the video where the play begins. For example the video included in this presentation on blocking below the waist begins at 2:08. I am not savvy enough to just take the play out of the entire video.
4. Please disregard the slides for Covid Guidelines at the end of this presentation as they were written for the 2020 season. There are no such guidelines for the 2021 season.

# Designated Representative for Penalty Decisions

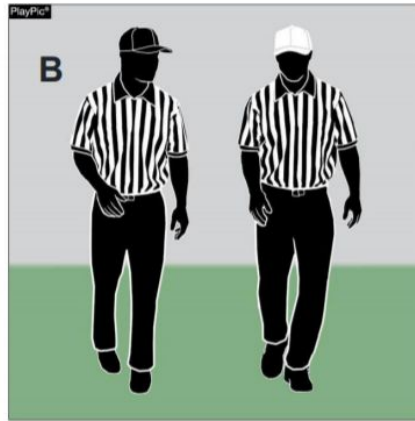
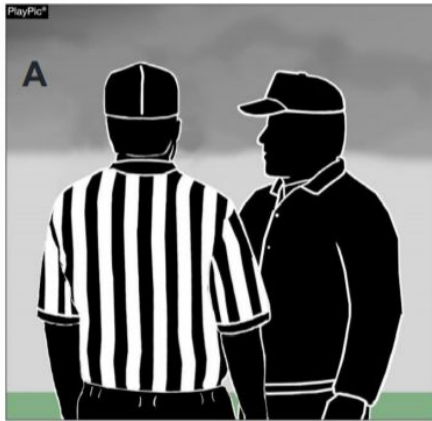
## **Defining Team Designated Representative for Penalty Decisions**

**[1-4-1, 1-4-4 (NEW), 2-32-5, 3-5-2, 10-1-1, 10-1-2, 10-2-4]** — Prior to the game, the head coach will notify the referee of the designated representative (coach or player) who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination.

Rule Change

## DESIGNATING TEAM REPRESENTATIVE

### RULES 1-4-1, 1-4-4 (NEW), 2-32-5, 3-5-2, 10-1-1, 10-1-2, 10-2-4



Prior to the game the head coach will notify the referee of the designated representative (coach or player) who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination (PlayPic A). When a foul occurs, the linesman or line judge will inform the referee as to the penalty decision if the coach is the decision maker (PlayPic B).

# Added Halftime Intermission Option Following Weather Delay

**Halftime Intermission Option Following Weather Delay**  
**[3-1-6c EXCEPTION (NEW)]** — The halftime intermission may be shortened by mutual agreement of opposing coaches if a weather delay occurs during the last three minutes of the second period.

Page 40 Exception: If the game is interrupted due to weather during the last 3 minutes of the second period, and the delay is at least 30 minutes, the opposing coaches can mutually agree to shorten halftime intermission, provided there is at least one minute intermission (not including the three minute warm-up period)

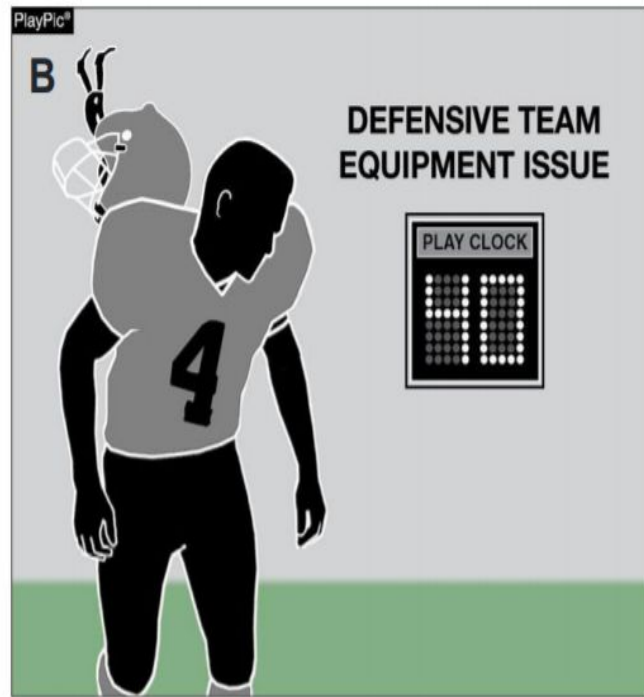


If weather causes a delay during the last three minutes of the second period, the opposing coaches may mutually agree to shorten the halftime intermission below the 10-minute minimum (PlayPic A). The mandatory 3-minute warm-up must take place before the third period begins (PlayPic B).



# 40-Second Play Clock Clarification

To eliminate a potential timing advantage gained by the defensive team, the rules committee approved the play clock being set to 40 seconds when an officials' time-out is taken for an injury to a defensive player or a defensive player has an equipment issue.



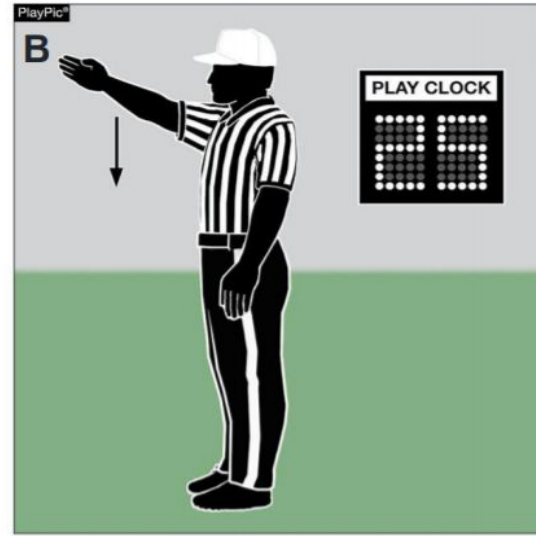
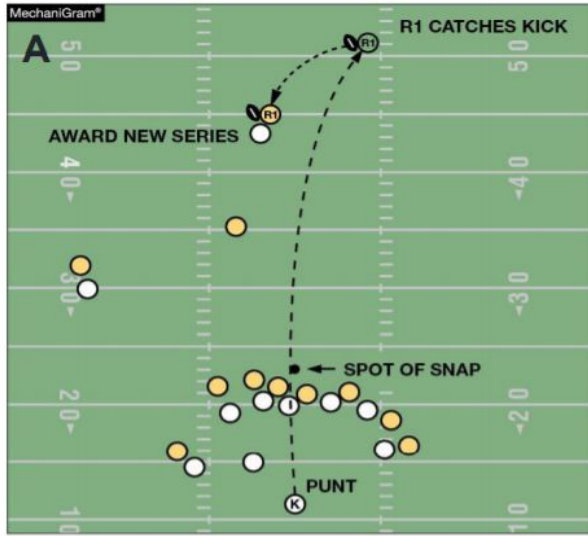
The play clock will be set to 40 seconds when an officials' time-out is initially taken for an injury to a defensive player (PlayPic A) or a defensive player has an equipment issue (PlayPic B).





# **25-Second Play Clock Clarification**

Following a legal kick when either team is awarded a new series, the play clock will be set to 25 seconds.



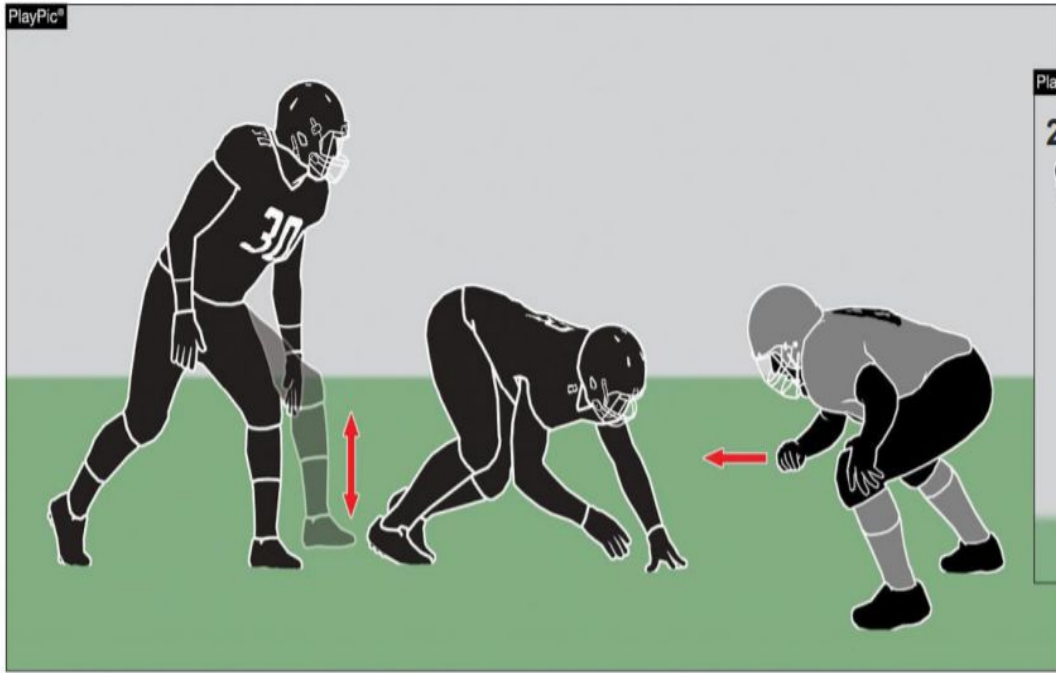
When Team R is awarded a new series after a legal kick (MechaniGram A), the play clock is set to 25 seconds and starts with the ready-for-play signal (PlayPic B).

Last year: Rule 3-6-1e: 25 second play clock following an official's time out for change of team possession. If R muffs the punt and K recovers..... the exception in this year's book says that it will be a 25 second play clock not a 40. Clarification.

## **Disconcerting Act Foul and Penalty Reclassified [7-1-9 (NEW), 7-1-9 PENALTY (NEW)]**

Prior to the 2020 rule change, the rule book said that, "Using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A's signals or movements" was an unsportsmanlike foul and was assessed 15 yards. I was the umpire in a playoff game in Commerce with Referee Steve Brennan. The defensive line were making loud vocal sounds as the opposing quarterback was calling his signals. I told the defense after a play early in the game that they would have to stop because Mr. Brennan would not let that fly. The next play they repeated their vocalizations and the offense had a lineman jump into a false start. The false start was penalized, but Steve stepped toward their defense and told them that any future disconcerting acts would be penalized. The players were absolutely livid, but they stopped doing it.

I don't remember if it was at halftime or after the game but the home team coach, whose team had been given the warning, uttered one of the more cliché coaching statements of all time. "We've been doing that all year and no other crew penalized it." Why weren't other crews penalizing it? Can we arbitrarily disregard a rule because we think it's silly? The National Federation of High Schools concluded that officials weren't making the call because it was a 15 yard penalty and an unsportsmanlike foul to boot. As of 2020, disconcerting acts or words by the defense has been reclassified from a unsportsmanlike foul to a disconcerting act foul, and the penalty changed from 15 yards to 5 yards.



Disconcerting Act

Disconcerting acts or words by the defense has been reclassified from an unsportsmanlike foul to a disconcerting act foul, and the penalty changed from 15 yards to 5 yards. Signal 23 will be used to indicate the foul.



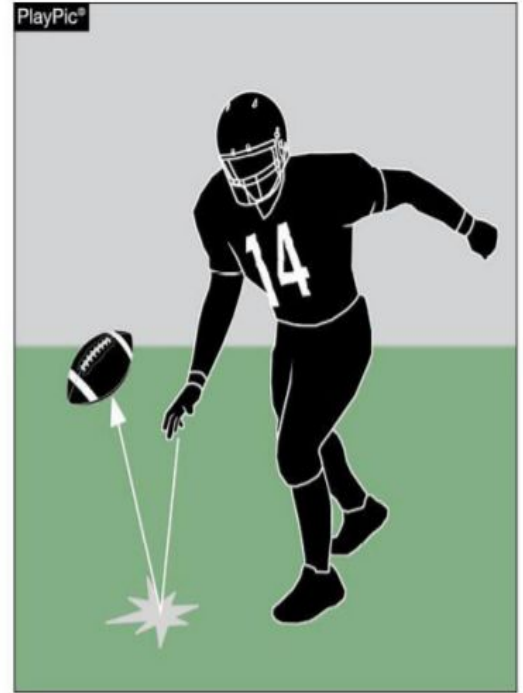
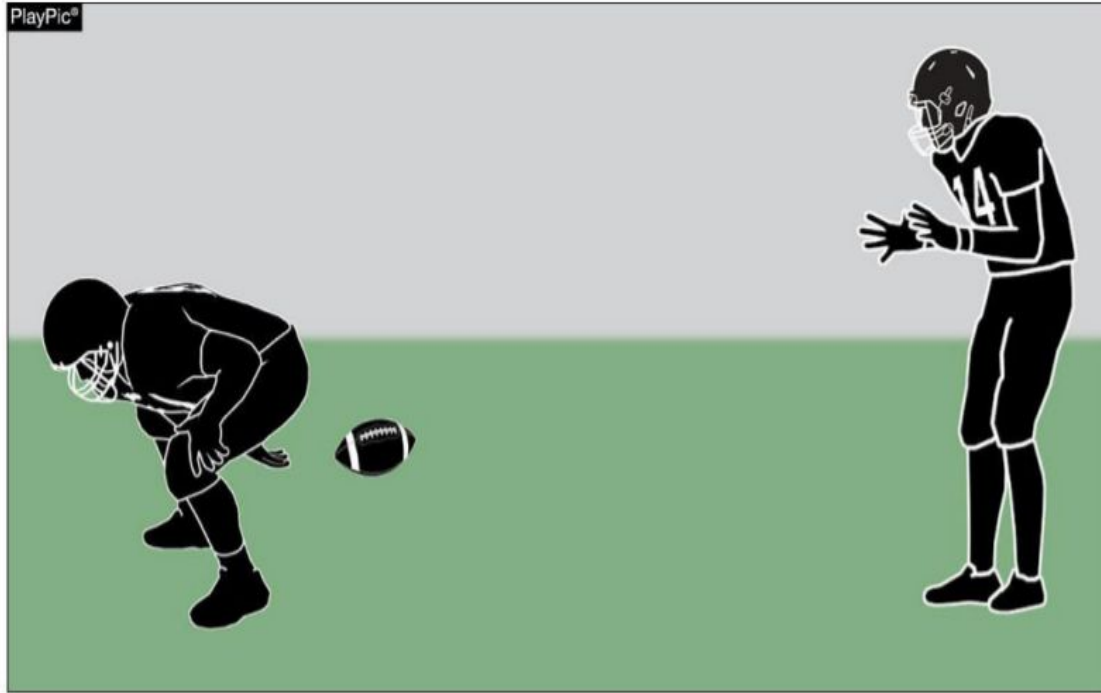
**The offensive team is trained to start on an audible command. The defense is trained to start on movement.**

Rule 7-1-9: No defensive player shall use disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in attempt to interfere with A's signals or movements.

Rule 7-1-7: After the ball is ready to play and before the snap begins, not false start shall be made by any A player. It is a false start if: a) A shift or feigned charge simulates action at the snap. b) Any act is clearly intended to cause B to encroach.

# Spiking the Ball to Conserve Time

7-5-2 Exception: It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.



The exception to allow a player to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap has been expanded. This exception now includes snaps that are not hand-to-hand.

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Youtube: [NFL/NCAA Fake Spike Trick Plays](#) time 6:40



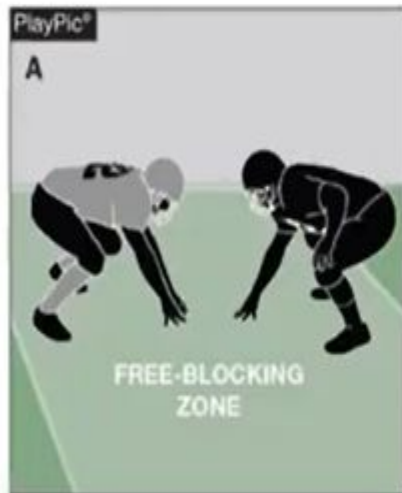
## **Action in the Free-Blocking Zone [2-17-2c (NEW), 2-17-4]**

Blocking below the waist now requires the block to begin immediately following the snap.

As a result of numerous interpretations of current language regarding blocking below the waist in the free-blocking zone, the committee approved another condition in Rule 2-17-2 that must be met for a legal block below the waist in the free-blocking zone, which is a rectangular area extending laterally 4 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage.

The new requirement (2-17-2c) is that the block must be an immediate, initial action following the snap. Under the current rule, an offensive lineman can delay and then block below the waist if the ball is still in the zone. In the committee's ongoing quest to minimize risk in high school football, the change was approved to require the block to be immediate.

## BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST RULE 2-17-2c (NEW)



In PlayPic A, both players are in the free-blocking zone and on their lines of scrimmage. In PlayPic B, the block is legal because it is in the zone at the time of the snap, is an immediate, initial action following the snap, and both players began the play on their lines of scrimmage and in the free-blocking zone.

## BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST RULES 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 2-17-4



It is legal for offensive linemen to block below the waist in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 77 could only block No. 62 below the waist if the block was immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 65 can block No. 93 below the waist even though No. 93 is playing off his shoulder, if the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap. No. 72 could not block No. 55 below the waist at any time during this play.

## BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 9-3-2



While in the free-blocking zone, the initial contact in PlayPic A is with the hands below the waist. When the blocker finishes the block below the waist as in PlayPic B, it is not a foul. A block below the waist is legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.



## BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST

### RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-1, 2-17-2, 9-3-2



The initial contact in PlayPic A is above the waist. In PlayPic B, the blocker then loses contact and the blocker starts a new block below the waist, this is a foul. A block below the waist is legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.

## BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST RULES 2-3-7, 2-17-2, 9-3-2



The rules regarding blocking below the waist apply equally to both teams. In the PlayPic, the defender goes below the waist outside the free-blocking zone to take out the lead blocker. This is an illegal block by the defender. A block below the waist is only legal if it occurs in the free-blocking zone, provided both players were on their lines of scrimmage and within the zone at the time of the snap and the block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.



## WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?



- Officials are no longer required to determine the location of the ball when the block occurs.
- If the blocker takes a backward step at the snap, he cannot block low.
- The initiation of the block and the block itself must be a continuous motion.





## PLAYS

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**PLAY 1:** Immediately after the snap, A66 blocks B99 above the waist. A66 disengages and blocks B55 below the waist.





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**RULING 1:** A66's block on B99 is legal. However, it is illegal for A66 to block B55 below the waist because the block was not an immediate, initial action following the snap.





## PLAYS

**PLAY 4:** Immediately after the snap, A66 and A70 block B98 below the knees from the front.





## PLAYS

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**PLAY 4:** Immediately after the snap, A66 and A70 block B98 below the knees from the front.

**RULING 4:** The combination or multiple block is legal if all contact is immediate, initial action following the snap and by linemen.



## PLAYS

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**PLAY 5:** A63 is in a three-point stance. B98 is positioned in the gap off A63's shoulder. Immediately at the snap, A63 (a) takes one inside step and blocks B98 below the waist or (b) needs two steps to reach B98 before he blocks below the waist.





## PLAYS

**PLAY 5:** A63 is in a three-point stance. B98 is positioned in the gap off A63's shoulder. Immediately at the snap, A63 (a) takes one inside step and blocks B98 below the waist or (b) needs two steps to reach B98 before he blocks below the waist.

**RULING 5:** Legal block in (a) but illegal in (b).





## PLAYS

**PLAY 6:** B56 is in a two-point stance in front of A77. Immediately at the snap, A77 blocks B56; A77's hands are (a) above or (b) below B56's waist. A77 continues the block below B56's waist; the action is continuous.





## PLAYS

**PLAY 6:** B56 is in a two-point stance in front of A77. Immediately at the snap, A77 blocks B56; A77's hands are (a) above or (b) below B56's waist. A77 continues the block below B56's waist; the action is continuous.

**RULING 6:** Illegal block below the waist in (a) because the initial block is with the hands, which are above the waist. Legal block in (b) because the immediate block is with the hands, which are below the waist and the block below the waist immediately follows that block.



2016 Low Blocks in the  
Free Blocking Zone Rev4  
- YouTube 2:08

# Covid-19 Rules

<http://www.anefo.org/nfhs-2020-football-rules-consideration-covid-19>

- **The team box may be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines (for players only) in order for more social-distancing space for the teams.**

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- **The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.**

### Wilson recommendations:

It is critical to follow manufacturer and CDC recommendations for the correct application and contact time for each cleaning product to maximize efficacy against SARS-CoV-2. Please note that some products require a wetting time up to 10 minutes to be effective.

Further, we do not recommend using high concentrations of bleach or alcohol to disinfect our products because it can degrade the performance of the product. We also do not recommend using hand sanitizer, which can degrade product performance and is not on the CDC's list N.

Another consideration in cleaning our game ball products is maintaining performance (e.g., grip, pebble, color) over multiple applications. We tested several List N cleaners (up to 5 applications in a 24-hour period) and found they had minimal or no effect on performance:

**List N: Products with Emerging Viral Pathogens AND Human Coronavirus claims  
for use against SARS-CoV-2**

<b>EPA Registration Number</b>	<b>Active Ingredient(s)</b>	<b>Product Name</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Contact Time (in minutes)</b>
88373-1	Hypochlorous acid	275 TBD	Innovacyn Inc	10
6836-357	Quaternary ammonium	Carbosan 20D	Lonza LLC	5
6836-358	Quaternary ammonium	Carbosan 7.5D	Lonza LLC	5
6836-356	Quaternary ammonium	Carbosan 50D	Lonza LLC	5
5813-113	Quaternary ammonium	CDW	The Clorox Company	0.5 (30 seconds)
5813-79	Quaternary ammonium	Clorox Disinfecting Wipes	The Clorox Company	0.5 (30 seconds)
67619-31	Quaternary ammonium	Clorox Commercial Solutions® Clorox® Disinfecting Wipes	Clorox Professional Products Company	0.5 (30 seconds)
70385-8	Quaternary ammonium	Professional Strength Multi-Purpose	Prorestore Products	10

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- **The intermission may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick.**

# Whistles



x2

Fox 40 Mini Official CMG Cushioned  
Mouth Grip Pealess Whistle & Lanyard  
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\$14<sup>70</sup>

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FREE Shipping on your first order shipped by  
Amazon



**Electronic Whistle - Black**

\$29.99

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- **Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.**