



NFHS FOOTBALL RULE 3-1-2 (Mercy Rule)

STATE	State Utilizes Rule (Yes/No)	COMMENTS
Alabama	No	
Alaska	Yes	Upon reaching a 35 or more point differential at the end of the third (3rd) period or thereafter, a running clock will be used.
Arizona	Yes	Special timing rules will apply anytime a team is ahead of an opponent by 42 or more points. The referee will start the clock on the ready-for-play signal if the clock was stopped because of: a) The ball goes out of bounds b) There was a change of possession c) A legal or illegal pass is incomplete d) A delay of game penalty e) Following a legal kick play. Regular timing rules will apply in the last two minutes of the game or when the score returns to less than 42 points.
Arkansas	Yes	The game clock will run when after the beginning of the second half the score has reached a differential of thirty-five points or more. The game clock will be stopped when: 1. An official's time-out is called; a) following a change of possession, or c) to dry or change a game ball, 2. A charged time-out is called, 3. At the end of a period, 4. A score occurs. Note: The game clock will run in all other situations.
California	No	
Colorado	Yes	COLORADO 45/40-POINT MERCY RULE In class A6 – 45-point Mercy Rule will be used. In classes A8, 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A and 5A – 40-point Mercy Rule will be used. In all conference and non-conference games played in Colorado, when a team is ahead at half time by 45/40 or more points, or goes ahead by 45/40 or more points in the second half, the running clock will be used for a remainder of the game. The clock will not stop on: 1. Out of bounds plays 2. Incomplete passes 3. First downs 4. Change of possession (including touchbacks and fair catches) 5. Penalties 6. Scores. The clock will stop as required by rule on: 1. Time-outs (charged and injury) 2. End of period. This rule applies to all regular and post season contests, except the live televised championship games. Under the circumstances described above, the officials will continue to use the standard signals. The timer, prior to the game, will be given instructions by the game officials, and will ignore all signals regarding the clock except those given by the referee. Note: The use of this rule does not eliminate the use of Rule 3-1-3 (page 36) which reads: "A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, any remaining period may be shortened at any time or the game terminated."
Connecticut	No	
Delaware	Yes	The DIAA has adopted a Mercy Rule for football that is as follows: If at any time during the second half of play a 35 point or more differential occurs, then there will be a running clock until the 35 point differential is reduced. The clock only stops on: scores, injury time outs, official's time-out or team time-out. This is an injury concern. This must be adopted by the State Conferences or individual schools. It is not mandatory for all play in the state. It is used for the State Championship Tournament
District Of Columbia	Yes	At anytime during a game, if a team falls behind 35 points or more, the clock will revert to running time. If a team reduces the margin of 35 points, the clock will revert back to regulation time. Once a team is behind 50 points or more, at the beginning of the next quarter, the time will be reduced to 8 minutes and running time. If the deficit is reduced below 50 points, revert to the regular time period for the next quarter and running time if the margin is still 35 points or more.

Florida	Yes	35 pt. differential, optional running clock during the 3rd quarter. Option of losing head coach. Running clock becomes mandatory at start of 4th quarter. Entire verbiage can be found in the FHSAA Football Manual (p. 5) @ www.fhsaa.org.
Georgia	Yes	If a team trails by 30 or more points at halftime, their coach has the option to play the 3rd quarter with regular timing rules, or with a running clock. If a team trails by 30 or more points at the end of the 3rd quarter, the 4th quarter <u>must</u> be played with a running clock. Running Clock Rules: Clock will be stopped only: a) after a TD and until the kick off is legally touched by R, b) during deliberations for penalty administration, and c) during charged time-outs or officials time-outs.
Hawaii	Yes	At any time during the second half of a game, if the winning team is leading by 35 or more points, the clock will not stop for incomplete passes, change of possession, out of bounds plays, or first downs. The clock will stop for time-outs, any score, administration of penalties, and injuries. Should the winning team's lead go below 35 points, revert back to regular clock rules.
Idaho	Yes	Eight-man football shall be played under the same rules as eleven-man football except for the rule differences as listed in the NFHS rule book. Three certified officials are required for all eight-man football games. 45 Point Rule: In eight-man football, when one team is 45 or more points ahead at the end of the first half, or if it secures such a lead during the second half, the game is ended immediately. This rule is not in effect during the state championship game.
Illinois	Yes	40 point differential at the start end of the first half or anytime after during the second half will keep the clock running continuously except after score or a time-out.
Indiana	No	
Iowa	Yes	Beginning in second half, if point differential is 35 points or more, continuous clock except on scores, time-outs, officials time-out, between quarters. Periods can be reduced if mutual agreement of coaches and administration.
Kansas	Yes	In 8-man football - 45 pt. differential in 2nd half, the game is over (all season & all games). In 11-man football (regular season only) By league adoption running clock and/or game ending. Also by mutual agreement of administrators of two teams prior to game may adopt game ending procedures or Mercy Rule (seldom used)
Kentucky	Yes	45-pt. running clock, halftime or later.
Louisiana		
Maine	No	Utilize 3-1-3
Maryland	Yes	1. If a 35-point differential exists in the second half, the clock will not be stopped when: a) ball goes out of bounds, b) forward pass is incomplete, c) score or touchback occurs (unless it reduces point spread to less than 35 points, d) fair catch is made or awarded. 2. The clock will continue to be stopped on all other situations as specified by Rule 3-4-4. NOTE: The use of this rule does not preclude the use of Rule 1-3-3, which reads "A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, any remaining period may be shortened at any time or the game terminated."
Massachusetts		
Michigan	Yes	The running clock, 35 pt. margin point differential rule will be used for all football games, regular season and playoffs, varsity and sub-varsity, high school and junior high/middle school. After the first half, any time the score differential reaches 35 pts. or more, the following changes, and only these changes, shall be made regarding the rules determining when the clock will and will not be stopped: The clock shall run continuously, except for the following situations when it will be stopped: a) time-outs (charged to a team), b) intermission (between 3rd and 4th quarters, and after a score), c) penalty enforcement (whistle to ready-for-play), and d) safety reasons (injuries, etc.). Normal timing procedures shall resume if the point differential is reduced to less than 35 points.
Minnesota	No	
Mississippi	No	However; if both coaches agree, they can keep the clock running.

Missouri	Yes	<u>RUNNING CLOCK.</u> The point differential applies to all football contests. The National Federation's Football Rules Committee made a change in playing rules which permit state associations to adopt a "running clock" when a point differential is attained. The Football Advisory Committee, with approval of the Board of Directors has approved the following plan for all football playing schools for all levels: After the first half, any time the score differential reaches 35 points or more, for 11-man and 45 points or more for 8-man, the following changes, and only these changes, will be made regarding rules determining when the clock will be stopped: The clock will be stopped when: 1. An official's time-out is called, except: a) when a first down is declared b) following a change of team possession c) to dry or change the game ball 2. A charged time-out is called; 3. At the end of a period; 4. A score occurs. <u>NOTE:</u> The clock will continue to run in all other situations. <u>NOTE:</u> The use of this rule does not preclude the use of NFHS Rule 3-1-3 which reads: "A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, any remaining periods may be shortened at any time or the game terminated."
Montana	Yes	We have a 35 pt. rule. When there is a difference of greater than 35 points, there is a running clock in the 2nd half. If the differential falls under 35 points, then we will revert back to normal timing procedures. This rule applies in all classifications, except our highest level.
Nebraska	Yes	A running clock will be used at all classes, for regular-season and playoff games, whenever a 35-point differential in score is reached after the first half of play. The clock will run continuously except during called timeouts; the break between the third and fourth quarters and following a score; during penalty enforcement; and for safety reasons, such as injuries. Normal timing procedures resume if the point differential is reduced to less than 35 points.
Nevada	Yes	45-Point Running Clock Rules – Application The following running clock rules apply to all NIAA sponsored football games played in the state of Nevada, including varsity, JV, B, and middle school games. These rules will apply to playoff games, but will not be applied to state championship games. Point Differential Rule 1. When one team leads by 45 or more points at the end of the first half or at any time during the second half, the officials shall use a running clock to time the game. 2. If the score differential becomes less than 45 points at any time during the second half of the game, the officials shall revert to regular timing until the point differential again reaches 45 or more points. 3. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, a running clock may be used at any time during the game. Running Clock Operations Rule 1. The clock will be run continuously when: a) First down is awarded to either team, including following a change of possession b) Ball or runner with the ball goes out of bounds c) Legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete d) Penalty enforcement that does not require deliberation with captains 2. The clock shall be stopped for a) End of a period b) Scores (touchdown, field goal, safety) c) Try plays following a touchdown d) Touchback e) Free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch f) Charged team time-out g) Coach-referee conference h) Official's time-out for injury, faulty equipment, or other situations as required i) First down measurement j) Penalty enforcement that requires deliberation with captains k) Inadvertent whistle 3. Following a clock stoppage, the clock will start when the ball is a) Marked ready for play, or b) b) Legally touched on the free kick following a score or after a fair catch or awarded fair catch.
New Hampshire	Yes	New Hampshire adopted a Mercy Rule starting with the 2007-2008 schools year. If the score differential is 35 points or more in the second half, the clock goes to running time. The clock will stop only for the following: 1) charged time-outs, 2) inquiries, 3) penalties, 4) scores and 5) measurements. If the clock is stopped for any of the above, the clock will start on the ready-for-play or when a free kick is touched (other than first touching by K). If the point differential gets below 35 points, timing will revert to standard timing rules.
New Jersey	No	
New Mexico	Yes	11-man - When a team is 35 points ahead in the second half, we use a running clock, except for touchdowns and time-outs. 6-man - Anytime there is a 45 point differential, the game is over.
New York	No	
North Carolina	No	
North Dakota	Yes	Running clock in 2nd half when differential is 30 points or more.
Ohio	No	

Oklahoma	Yes	In eight-man football, when a 45-point margin is reached by half-time or any time in the second half, the game will be concluded.
Oregon	Yes	When a 45 pt. differential is reached at the half or at any time thereafter, classifications have three options: a) terminate the game, b) running clock-stopped only for time-outs, injury, or scores, and c) alternative plan-teams file a report with the state association as to efforts to not run up the score, i.e. play, subs, etc. (8-man only, options a or b)
Pennsylvania	Yes	Upon completion of the first half and one team gains a 35-point differential over its opponent, the clock shall be stopped only when an official's time-out is taken, a charged time-out is granted, a period ends, or a score occurs.
Rhode Island		
South Carolina	No	South Carolina does not have a point differential mercy rule as stated in rule 3-1-2. However, we do use 3-1-3 and allow periods to be shortened by mutual agreement of the coaches and the Referee when games have reached a point where they are no longer competitive.
South Dakota	Yes	When a team secures a 35-point lead in the second half, the clock will continue to run except for time-outs (team or official) and after a score. If the point margin falls below 35 points, regulation timing resumes. If a team is 50 points or more ahead at the end of the first half or if it secures such a lead during the second half, the game is ended immediately. Regulation timing is followed in the first half regardless of the score.
Tennessee	Yes	Beginning in second half, if point differential is 35 points or more, continuous clock except on scores, time-outs, officials time-out, between quarters. If point differential goes below 35 points, you go back to regular timing rule(s).
Texas	Yes	We do have a mercy rule; however, in 6-man football, when one team is 45 or more points ahead at the end of the first half or if a team achieves a 45 point lead during the second half, the game is ended immediately and in 11-man football we have no rule on point differential. Texas does not follow NFHS rules in football.
Utah	Yes	35 Point Rule: An alternate timing rule is in effect for all levels, (i.e., varsity, junior varsity, sophomore, freshman) of Utah high school football games when after halftime, a team's lead exceeds 34 points. Modified rule: the clock shall be stopped as per rule 3-4-4. In effect the clock will be stopped as current NFHS rules require. However, the clock will start on the ready for play signal in all situations until the point differential reaches 21 points or less. At that point, all NFHS timing rules listed in Rule 3 will be followed.
Vermont	No	
Virginia	Yes	After a one-year trial, Virginia (VHSL) will continue to utilize an "Adjusted Timing Rule. When the score differential at half-time or in the second half reaches 35 points, game officials will adjust timing rules as follows: When there is an incomplete pass or the runner goes out of bounds, the clock will continue to run. During the "Adjusted Timing Procedures" if there is an officials' timeout (measurement, injury, etc.) or team charged timeout, the clock will be stopped but started again on the "ready for play" signal. Following scores during "Adjusted Timing Procedures" the clock will be started on the "ready for play" on the Free Kick. Following a change of possession, the clock will start on the "ready for play" signal. After initiating the "Adjusted Timing Procedures" if the score differential goes below 35 points, regular timing procedures will resume.
Washington	Yes	For 8-man football only: NFHS Rule 3-1-2, utilizing a 45-point differential, applies to all 8-man football games in the regular season and post season.
West Virginia	No	
Wisconsin	Yes	Running clock in second half, if differential reaches 35 points or more.
Wyoming	Yes	45-point rule in the second half. Running clock.
States Utilizing Rule	34	