



9-on-9 football rules

2025

1 General

1. 9-on-9 football shall be played to the same rules as 11-on-11 football with the following exceptions.

2 Players and substitutions

1. The game shall be played between two teams of not more than 9 players each (Rule 1-1-1-a).
2. A team legally may play with fewer than 9 players, but a foul for an illegal formation occurs if the following requirements are not met:
 - a) When the ball is free-kicked, at least three Team A players are on each side of the kicker. (Rules 1-1-1-b-1 and 6-1-2-c-3)
 - b) At the snap, at least three players wearing jerseys numbered 50 through 79 are on the offensive scrimmage line and no more than four players are in the backfield. (Rules 1-1-1-b-2 and 7-1-4-a)
3. A player vacancy occurs when a team has fewer than 9 players in the game. (Rule 2-27-11)
4. The tackle box is defined as the rectangular area enclosed by the neutral zone, the two lines parallel to the sidelines three yards from the snapper, and Team A's end line. (Rule 2-34-1)
5. No player, in excess of 9, shall leave the field of play or an end zone while the ball is in play. (Rule 3-5-2-b)
6. Team A may not break the huddle with more than 9 players nor keep more than 9 players in the huddle or in a formation for more than three seconds. Officials shall stop the action whether or not the ball has been snapped. (Rule 3-5-3-a)
7. Team B is allowed to briefly retain more than 9 players on the field to anticipate the offensive formation, but it may not have more than 9 players on the field when the ball is snapped. The infraction is treated as a live-ball foul. (Rule 3-5-3-b)
8. When Team A is in formation, Team B must not have more than 9 players in its formation. If the play clock is at :00 (or at :05 or less and Team A calls a timeout) and Team B has more than 9 players on the field, it is a foul against Team B. (Rule 3-5-3-c)

3 Timing

1. The maximum total playing time in a game shall be 48 minutes, divided into four periods of 12 minutes each, with one-minute intermissions between the first and second periods (first half) and between the third and fourth periods (second half) (Exception: A one-minute intermission between the first and second and the third and fourth periods may be extended for radio and television timeouts).
2. The intermission between halves shall be 15 minutes, unless altered before the game by mutual agreement of the administrations of both teams. Immediately after the second period ends, the referee should begin the intermission by signalling to start the game clock.