



# National Gay Flag Football League

## Rule Book version 4.6.

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NOTE: The designation “K” refers to any player of the kicking team and “R” refers to any player of the receiving team. The designation “A” refers to members of the offensive team and “B” refers to any member of the defensive team.

## OFFICIAL NGFFL RULES BOOK FOR FLAG FOOTBALL

### CHANGES FOR 2015

Each change or altered segment is identified in the rules by a shaded background.

- 1.4.1. Each team may now only designate two players as field captains. Formerly, teams
- 3.2.1. could designate up to four players as field captains.
  
- 1.4.5. Changed penalty enforcement on unsportsmanlike conduct fouls and personal fouls
- 9.3. committed by team B to include awarding team A an automatic first down, in
- 9.4.1. addition to the 10-yard penalty.
- 9.8.1.
  
- 3.2.5. Changed penalty enforcement on double fouls to give team A the first opportunity
- 5.2.1. to decline team B's foul. After team A makes its choice, the choice then goes to
- 8.3.11. team B with the option to decline team A's foul.
- 10.1.1.
- 10.2.
  
- 7.5.7. Clarified existing rule to emphasize a team can only commit pass interference if a
- legal forward pass is catchable. When in doubt, a pass is considered catchable.
  
- 7.5.8. Removed language that allowed a QB to throw a second forward pass during a
- down if his/her initial forward pass first touched a team B player and then
- he/she caught the ball after that touch. The QB can no longer throw a second
- forward pass.
  
- 7.5.9. Modified illegal pass play contact rule to add that a forward pass is not required
- 7.5.10. for a foul to occur if the quarterback is still in the pocket and attempting to find an
- open receiver.
  
- 8.5.1. Changed mercy rule so that if one team is ahead by 36 or more points during pool
- play or 25 or more points during bracket/tournament play with two minutes or less
- remaining in the game, then the game is over.
  
- 10.2.5. Changed penalty enforcement on unsportsmanlike conduct fouls and personal fouls
- committed by both teams from enforcing them separate and in order of occurrence
- to offsetting equal number of fouls, with any remaining penalties enforced.

Minor editorial changes:

- 1.1.3. Added language to prohibit the use of any replay, video, photograph, mobile device, or television monitoring equipment to make any decision relating to the game.
- 2.9.4. Clarified definition of a free kick and application of penalty enforcements for free kicks out of bounds.  
6.1.11
- 2.9.5. Clarified R team’s positioning on an announced punt play.
- 2.10.5. Added definitions for diving and spinning.  
2.10.6.
- 2.14.2. NOTE Removed language that was misleading regarding penalties and change of possession.
- 3.3.5. Clarified language regarding when the clock starts following penalty enforcement inside of two  
3.3.6. minutes in the half.  
3.3.7.
- 4.2.1.e. Clarified rule to read that the ball remains live if the snap touches the ground during an announced  
6.1.7. punt.
- 4.4.2. Changed “illegal blocking” to “holding”.
- 5.1.3. Added authority for the referee to correct the number of the next down prior to a new series of downs  
being awarded to either team.
- 5.2.4.b. Clarified rule regarding a series ending after an accepted loss of down penalty or declination of any  
other penalty that occurs during 4<sup>th</sup> down.
- 6.1.4. Clarified R team’s positioning on a kickoff.
- 6.1.10. Clarified rule to include “quick kicks” by changing “announced punt” to “any punt”.
- 7.1.3. Added exception to the offsides rule that allows the center to be over the ball and in the neutral zone  
at the time of the snap. (Now mirrors encroachment rule.)
- 7.5.7. NOTE Clarified pass interference and illegal pass play contact rules to clearly state that the restrictions do not  
7.5.9. exist during a scrimmage running play and end when the pass is touched by either A or B.
- 9.2.7. Clarified flag guarding rules, and stating that it is illegal for a runner to advance the ball by diving.
- 9.2.11. Changed name of penalty from “illegal blocking” to “blocking below the waist”.
- 9.3.3. NOTE Clarified rule to read that players can be ejected for 4 or 8 scrimmage plays so that a second half  
kickoff would not be counted as one of those plays.

## **RULE 1 THE GAME, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT**

### **Section 1 General**

- 1.1.1. Football is played between two teams of seven players on a rectangular field. Each team must have a minimum of 6 players to start a game. Each team must have a minimum of 5 eligible players on the field, or the game results in a forfeit. A team may play with up to 7 players, regardless of the number of opposing players.
- 1.1.2. A crew of officials administers the game. Officials' jurisdiction begins with the scheduled coin toss of the game (or the first game if multiple games are scheduled). The Referees have authority to rule promptly, in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in these rules. All players, non-players, and others authorized to be within the team area are subject to these rules and are governed by the decisions of the officials.
- 1.1.3. The game officials shall have the authority to make decisions for infractions of the rules. The use of any replay, video, photograph, mobile device or television monitoring equipment by the game officials in making any decision relating to the game is prohibited.

### **Section 2 The Field and Markings**

- 1.2.1. The field will be rectangular with the preferred dimensions of 80 yards by 35 yards (plus two end zones of 10 yards deep), although facility limitations may cause the field dimensions to be modified.
- 1.2.2. The sidelines and end lines are the boundary of the football field. These lines demark out-of-bounds; measurements will be from the inside edges of these lines. Each goal line is entirely in its end zone so that the edge toward the field of play and its vertical plane is the actual goal line. Each sideline is entirely out-of-bounds. The inside edge of the end line is the outer limit of each end zone.
- 1.2.3. End zones and in-bounds lines will be marked with brightly colored, flexible cone pylons. These cones will be placed on the out-of-bounds and end zone lines.
- 1.2.4. All non-players, coaches and substitutes must remain in their team box unless they are a substitute or replaced player about to become a player. The team box is within an area 2 yards behind the sideline and bound by the extension of both 10-yard lines.

Outside team/  
coaches' area – 5 yds

NOTE: If repeated infractions occur: 10 yards and/or disqualification of team personnel.

### Section 3 Game Equipment

- 1.3.1. Teams will provide their own footballs. The Referee will decide whether the ball meets the specifications or may authorize substituting a non-sanctioned ball. If the field is wet, the Referee may order the ball changed between downs.
- 1.3.2. The football shall meet the following specifications:
  - a. Long circumference: 27¾"-28½"
  - b. Short circumference: 20¾"-21¼"
  - c. Long Axis: 10 7/8"-11 7/16"
  - d. Inflated to a pressure of 12½ to 13½ PSI (pounds per square inch).
- 1.3.3. Any football that includes the NFHS, NCAA, or NFL Authenticating Marks shall be considered legal. No "junior size" footballs allowed.
- 1.3.4. A down indicator will mark the spot from where the ball is to be snapped and the down. A beanbag or puck will be used to mark the ball's spot and the rush zone line.

### Section 4 Players and Their Equipment

- 1.4.1. Each team will designate up to two players as Field Captains. If all Captains become a non-player, another player will then be designated. The designated Captain(s) will confer with officials. A Captain's first choice of any offered decision is final. Decisions involving penalties will be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.
- 1.4.2. Players on each team must wear jerseys that are similarly colored. Jerseys must be long enough to remain tucked in to the pants or, if shimmell jerseys are worn, they must be at least 4 inches (approximately the width of the referee's closed fist) above the player's waist while the player is standing. Jerseys must have numbers. Jersey's must not be the same color as the football or of the flags the team is wearing.
- 1.4.3. All players must wear pants. The pants may not be the same or similar color as the football or a player's flags. Thick vertical stripes on a player's pants are not allowed. Thin piping on shorts or pants is allowed, at the referee's discretion. Pants and shorts cannot have belt loops or pockets. Short pants are preferred.
- 1.4.4. Every player must wear shoes that completely cover the foot. Metal cleats, or those that, in the opinion of the umpire, are hazardous may not be worn.
- 1.4.5. Players must wear a belt around their waist that includes three "triple threat" flags that hang at the player's sides and posterior. The flags must contrast with the player's pants and should, but don't have to, contrast the opposing teams' flags. Flags may not be looped around the inside of the belt before securing the belt. The flags shall be freely removable.
- 1.4.6. Players may wear an intraoral mouth and tooth protector.

Altering flags or uniform to gain competitive advantage – 10 yds & automatic first down for A, if by B,+ ejection from game

- 1.4.7. Players may wear soft, pliable basketball or wrestling knee pads or soft pads specifically made for scrimmage pants; soft, single-layer, pliable elastic joint braces; stocking caps and other caps without hard bills and prescription or athletic safety eyeglasses. Eyeglasses must be secured with an eyeglass band. Tape, applied in fewer than four layers, may be used to support joints, such as wrists or fingers. Sunglasses are allowed, but plastic frames and lenses must be used.
- 1.4.8. Illegal equipment includes:
  - a. Helmets
  - b. Any kind of pads with hard components such as those for shoulder, hand, forearm or thigh, unless specifically authorized by the Head Referee
  - c. Any hard or unyielding substance, other than permitted by a specific rule
  - d. Anything that, in the opinion of the Head Referee, would confuse, potentially harm or endanger other players or is rough or abrasive
  - e. Watches, rings or other jewelry
  - f. Any foreign slippery or sticky substances
- 1.4.9. Caps and visors with hard bills may only be worn backwards. Foreign objects attached to a hat or visor are prohibited.
- 1.4.10. Prior to the game, the Team Captain will verify that all his/her players are legally equipped. The Head Referee will determine any questions concerning equipment legality. Each player must properly wear the required equipment while the ball is in play. A player with missing or illegal equipment must correct the deficiency before further participation. An official's time-out may be declared to permit repair of equipment that becomes illegal or defective through use.

Failure to properly wear required equipment during a down – 5 yds (unless a player begins the down without a flag belt – the ball becomes dead upon player possession)

## **RULE 2 DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS**

### **Section 1 Team and Player Designations**

- 2.1.1. A player is one of the team members who is designated to start either half of the game or who replaces another player. A player continues to be a player until a substitute enters the field and indicates to the player that he/she is replaced.
- 2.1.2. A disqualified player is a player barred from further participation in the game.
- 2.1.3. A non-player is a coach, trainer or other attendant, or a substitute who does not participate by touching the ball, hindering the opponent or influencing play.
- 2.1.4. A quarterback is the player who receives the ball at the snap.
- 2.1.5. A runner is the player who is in possession of a live ball or simulated possession of a live ball.
- 2.1.6. A pass rusher is a Team B player whose intent is to cross the line of scrimmage in an attempt to interfere with a passing play and/or deflag the passer.

### **Section 2 Ball – Status and Catching and Touching**

- 2.2.1. A live ball is a ball in play while a down is in progress. A dead ball is a ball not in play and indicates that the game is between downs.
- 2.2.2. A loose ball is a pass or fumble or a kick or otherwise not in player possession. A loose ball that has not yet touched the ground is in flight. A grounded loose ball is one that has touched ground. Any loose ball continues to be a loose ball until a player catches it and secures possession or the ball becomes dead.
- 2.2.3. A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble is an interception. If a player attempts to catch or intercept a loose ball while he/she is in the air, the ball must be in his/her possession when he/she returns to the ground in-bounds (at least one foot must touch the ground in-bounds) prior to touching out-of-bounds. EXCEPTIONS: If a player catches a pass and is pushed out-of-bounds, the pass is considered complete if an official judges that the player would have caught the ball in-bounds except for the pushing.
- 2.2.4. A fair catch is a catch beyond the K's scrimmage line and between the goal lines of any legal kick by a receiver under conditions in which the receiver forfeits his/her right to advance the ball in return for protection against being deflagged or contacted by an opponent.
- 2.2.5. A valid fair catch signal is made by any R player extending and laterally waving one arm, at full arm's length, above the head. An invalid signal is one that fails to comply with a valid signal and is given before a kick is caught or



recovered. An illegal signal is a fair catch signal given by the runner after catching or recovering a kicked ball.

- 2.2.6. A simultaneous catch is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by more than one player in-bounds.
- 2.2.7. A fumble is any loss of player possession other than by passing, kicking or handing.
- 2.2.8. A muff is touching a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession; this includes an accidental kick.
- 2.2.9. Batting is intentionally slapping or striking, with hand, leg, arm or knee, a loose ball or a ball in player possession.

### **Section 3 Blocking, Rushing, and Deflagging**

- 2.3.1. Blocking is legally obstructing an opponent via contact with hands or body. Blockers must be on their feet before, during and after contact is made with an opponent. A blocker is allowed to contact only that portion of the opponent's body between the waist and shoulders and the blocker's hands or forearms must be in front or to the side of the player being blocked. Exceptions: a blocker who loses personal body control due to an opponent's aggressiveness after contact shall not be penalized if he/she contacts an opponent other than as specified. This initial point of contact against an opponent must be with either open hands with palms contacting an opponent or a forearm. In any block, the hands or arms may not be swinging forward faster than the blocker's body. Hands must always be in advance of the elbows and the arms must be flexed at the elbows. Players must block with hands and elbows within the frame of their body. Players are not allowed to cross their arms and thrust forward in the manner of a battering ram.
- 2.3.2. Clipping is an illegal block occurring when the force of the initial contact is from behind an opponent. Doubtful cases involving a side block or the opponent turning his/her back to a blocker are to be judged by an official according to whether the opponent was able to see or ward off the blocker.
- 2.3.3. Blocking below the waist is making illegal contact below the waist of an opponent.
- 2.3.4. Pass rushing is the act of crossing the line of scrimmage in an attempt to interfere with a passing play and/or deflag the passer. A pass rusher must avoid charging into any Team A player. When encountering a blocker from Team A, a pass rusher must (a) stop prior to making contact with the blocker or (b) clearly change direction in an effort to move around the blocker. If a pass rusher makes an effort to move around the blocker and the blocker moves into the path of the pass rusher, there is no charging. In any case, the pass rusher may block or contact the blocker using only the techniques described in 2.3.1 above.

Personal foul,  
unnecessary  
roughness – 10 yds +  
automatic first down  
for A

Rush zone  
encroachment – 5 yds

- 2.3.5. Any Team B player may pass rush from any position on the field provided they are on B's side of the football and outside the expanded neutral zone or when any team player that began the play outside the expanded neutral zone crosses the line of scrimmage. All rush zone restrictions for team B end once the quarterback's initial possession ends.
- 2.3.6. Deflagging is clearly removing the runner's flags. Deflagging interference is when the runner intentionally slaps or obstructs the free action of an opponent's hand during a deflagging attempt. The runner's hand may not be moving faster than his/her body nor shall be below his/her waist when initial contact with an opponent is made. The runner's arm may not be rigid and straight (stiff-arm).

#### **Section 4 Shift**

- 2.4.1. A shift is the action of any offensive player(s) who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

#### **Section 5 Down and Series**

- 2.5.1. A down is a unit of the game which starts with a legal snap or a kickoff after the ball is declared ready-for-play and which ends when the ball becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.
- 2.5.2. Loss of a down is the loss of the right to repeat a down.
- 2.5.3. A series of downs (series) is a set of four downs, numbered 1, 2, 3 or 4, that is awarded to a team.
- 2.5.4. No series can ever start on a down other than first.

#### **Section 6 Lines**

- 2.6.1. A yard line is any line and its vertical plane parallel to the end lines. The yard lines, marked or unmarked, in the field of play are numbered in yards from a team's goal line to the middle of the field.
- 2.6.2. A goal line is the zero yard line and its vertical plane which marks the start of the field of play 10 yards from the end line. A team's goal is the one they are defending.
- 2.6.3. An end line is the outer limit of each end zone.
- 2.6.4. A sideline is the lateral limit of the field of play and the end zones; it extends from one end line to the other.
- 2.6.5. A scrimmage is the action of the two teams during a down which begins with a snap or free-kick. The scrimmage line for each team is the vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. It is determined when the ball is ready-for-play and remains until the next ready-for-play signal.
- 2.6.6. Offensive players are on their line of scrimmage when they face their opponent's goal line. Offensive players must be within one yard of the line of scrimmage to be on the line. They may stand, crouch, or kneel. At the

snap, both feet of every player shall be outside the outside foot of any adjacent player. All offensive players must be behind the line of scrimmage at the snap.

- 2.6.7. A defensive player is on the line of scrimmage when he/she is within 1 yard of the scrimmage line at the snap. All defensive players must be beyond the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 2.6.8. The line-to-gain is the yard line established when a new series (1<sup>st</sup> down) occurs. Unless there is a penalty, the line-to-gain for a new series is 10 yards in advance of the ball when played for the first down of the series. If the line-to-gain extends in to the end zone, the goal line is the line-to-gain.

### **Section 7 Out-of-Bounds**

- 2.7.1. A player or other person is out-of-bounds when any part of him touches anything other than another player or game official, which is on or outside the sideline or end line.
- 2.7.2. A ball in player possession is out-of-bounds when the runner or the ball touches anything, other than another player or game official, which is on or outside the sidelines or end line. Exception: The cones marking the sideline, goal line, and back line are in. It is a legal catch if the first foot of the receiver is in-bounds if the ball was caught while the receiver was in the air.
- 2.7.3. A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official, which is out of bounds.

### **Section 8 Zones**

- 2.8.1. The offense starts a down behind the line of scrimmage and the defense starts a down beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 2.8.2. The expanded neutral zone extends five yards past the line of scrimmage on B's side of the ball.

### **Section 9 Kicks**

- 2.9.1. Kicking the ball means intentionally striking the ball with knee, lower leg, or foot. Kickoffs are used to start each half.
- 2.9.2. A kicker is the player who punts or free-kicks the football. Players on this team are called kickers and their opponents are called receivers.
- 2.9.3. A kick ends when a player gains possession or when the ball becomes dead.
- 2.9.4. A free-kick is a kick that starts each half and follows a safety.
- 2.9.5. To start both halves, all teammates of the kicker must be behind their 30-yard line until the ball is kicked. The ball must be kicked from a fixed position on the ground or punted; it may be controlled by a teammate of the kicker or positioned on a pliable tee which elevates the ball less than 2 inches above the ground or punted. If a teammate holds or controls the ball for the kicker, he/she may be slightly over the 30-yard line. No material or device may be placed on the ground to improve the kicker's footing. The receivers must

have at least 4 players between their 30-yard line and midfield. At least 4 receivers must remain in this 10 yard area until after the ball is kicked.

- 2.9.6. A punt is legally kicking the ball by the player who drops it and kicks it before the ball hits the ground.
- 2.9.7. A scrimmage kick is a punt from at or behind the line of scrimmage. For announced punts, a scrimmage kick formation must be used; it is a formation where all the teammates of the kicker, except the kicker, must be within 1 yard of the line of scrimmage. An announced punt also requires that team R must have a minimum of 4 players in the rush zone (expanded neutral zone) until after the ball is kicked. No receiver may cross or move off the line of scrimmage until after the ball is kicked. Minor encroachments will be tolerated.

### **Section 10 Advancing the Ball**

- 2.10.1. The ball may be advanced by a scrimmage running play or scrimmage passing play.
- 2.10.2. A scrimmage running play is advancing the ball across the line of scrimmage via a runner. It includes handing the ball and any backward pass thrown behind the line of scrimmage. Only one scrimmage running play may be used in any one possession. A scrimmage running play does not include a legal forward pass. Note: Point after conversions are considered a separate series, so running is allowed on these plays.
- 2.10.3. If the penalty is accepted for a foul which occurs during a scrimmage running play, the spot of enforcement will determine if Team A is considered to have used a running play. If the spot of enforcement is beyond the line of scrimmage, a running play has been used. If the spot of enforcement is at or behind the line of scrimmage, a running play has not been used.
- 2.10.4. A scrimmage passing play is any play that includes a legal forward pass.
- 2.10.5. Diving is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull or advance the ball by leaning his/her upper body forward while leaving both feet.
- 2.10.6. Spinning is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by turning his/her body at the vertical axis. Spinning is legal.

### **Section 11 Snap**

- 2.11.1. A snap is handing or passing the ball backward from its position on the ground. The snap begins when the snapper first moves the ball other than an adjustment. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the hand(s) during which the ball actually leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches the quarterback before it touches a Team A lineman or the ball touches the ground. The snap ends when the ball touches the ground or is possessed by any player. The player who snaps the ball, usually the center, is the snapper.

- 2.11.2. Every scrimmage down, including a down that includes a declared punt, shall begin with a legal snap.
- 2.11.3. The snap shall always be from the middle of the field. In an emergency, such as a pool of water on the line, the referee has authority to move the ball to a playable spot.

### **Section 12 Handing the Ball**

- 2.12.1. Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without passing, fumbling, or kicking it. The ball is still in contact with the first player when it is touched by the receiving player.

### **Section 13 Passing the Ball**

- 2.13.1. Passing the ball is throwing it. In a pass, the ball travels in flight. The initial direction determines whether a pass is forward or backward; therefore, a shuffle pass, screen pass, etc. is either backward or forward.
- 2.13.2. A pass ends when it is caught or not caught, touches the ground, or is out-of-bounds.
- 2.13.3. A passer is a player who throws a forward pass. He continues to be a passer until the pass ends or until he/she moves to participate in the play.
- 2.13.4. A forward pass is a pass thrown toward the opponent's end line.
- 2.13.5. A backward pass is a pass thrown parallel with or toward the passer's end line.
- 2.13.6. A catchable forward pass is an untouched legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone where a Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to move toward and catch the ball. When in question, a forward pass is catchable.

### **Section 14 Foul**

- 2.14.1. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. A penalty is a yardage loss that may be imposed by a rule against a team that has committed the foul; it may include a loss of down, but usually includes replaying the down. The type of fouls are:
  - a. Player - A foul, other than unsportsmanlike, by a player in the game (hereafter referred to as a foul)
  - b. Non-player or unsportsmanlike - A non-contact foul during the down which is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.
  - c. Double - One or more live ball fouls, other than unsportsmanlike, committed by each team.
  - d. Multiple - Two or more live ball fouls, other than unsportsmanlike, committed by the same team during the same down at such time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.
  - e. Dead Ball - A foul that occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before a ball is next legally snapped or free-kicked.

- f. Simultaneous with Snap - An action or game situation that becomes an infraction when the ball is snapped.
  - g. Post-scrimmage kick - a foul by R (other than illegal substitution or participation) when the foul occurs during a scrimmage kick play in which:
    - i. the ball crosses the expanded neutral zone.
    - ii. the foul occurs beyond the expanded neutral zone.
    - iii. the foul occurs before the kick ends.
    - iv. K shall not be the next to put the ball into play.
- 2.14.2. A flagrant personal foul is a rule infraction so extreme or deliberate that it places an opponent in danger of serious or catastrophic injury.

NOTE: No live ball foul causes the ball to become dead. There are game situations that produce results somewhat similar to fouls but are called violations. They include player disqualification, forfeiture of a game, and players (accidentally) crossing the line of scrimmage before a declared punt.

### **Section 15 Spots Used in Administration**

- 2.15.1. The previous spot is where the ball was last snapped.
- 2.15.2. The spot where a run ends is where the runner loses player possession, where an illegal pass is thrown, or where the ball becomes dead in his/her possession.
- 2.15.3. The succeeding spot, as related to any non-player, unsportsmanlike, or dead foul, is where the ball would next be snapped if a foul had not occurred.
- 2.15.4. The spot of a player foul is where the foul occurs. If a player foul occurs out-of-bounds and during a down, the spot of the foul is at the intersection of the sideline and the yard line extended through the spot on which the foul occurs. (A non-player or unsportsmanlike foul is treated as dead ball foul and is administered from the succeeding spot).

### **Section 16 Hurdling**

- 2.16.1. Hurdling is the runner jumping so that both feet leave the ground at the same time. The runner may not hurdle to avoid being deflagged. The runner may step over an opponent who is lying prone.

### **Section 17 Tripping**

- 2.17.1. Tripping is obstructing an opponent below the knee.

### **Section 18 Time-Outs**

- 2.18.1. Time-outs are suspensions of play when any player requests a charged time-out or when an official suspends play. Each team is allowed 4 timeouts per non-overtime game, with no more than 3 timeouts used in one half. The

duration of each charged time-out is 1 minute. Captains and team attendants may enter the field during time-outs.

- 2.18.2. Successive charged time-outs may be granted during the same dead-ball period. An official's time-out may follow a charged time-out if it is for the continuance of a coach-referee conference, or if safety is involved.
- 2.18.3. An official may suspend play with an official's time-out to administer a penalty, review a misapplied rule, or manage other game-related contingencies. Official's time-outs are discretionary.

### **Section 19 Ready-for-Play**

- 2.19.1. A ready-for-play signal is an indication by the referee that a snap or free-kick may occur. It is a short blast of the whistle given after administration duties are complete, e.g., administering a penalty and/or after the ball is spotted for the succeeding down. The ready-for-play signal is given during a dead ball interval. A ball may not be legally snapped or free-kicked until the ready-for-play signal.

### **Section 20 Force**

- 2.20.1. Force is a result of energy exerted by a player that provides initial movement of the ball. The term force is used only in connection with the goal line and in only one direction, i.e. from the field of play into the end zone. Force may result from a carry, fumble, kick, pass, or snap. Force is not a factor on grounded, muffed kicks in R's end zone; they are always a touchback regardless of who supplied the force.

### **Section 21 Possession**

- 2.21.1. A ball in player possession is a live ball held or controlled by a player after it has been handed or snapped to him, or after he/she has caught or recovered it.
- 2.21.2. A ball in team possession is a live ball which is in player possession or one which is loose following loss of such player possession. A live ball is always in possession of a team.
- 2.21.3. A change of possession occurs when the opponent gains player possession during the down.

### **Section 22 Rule**

- 2.22.1. A rule is one of the groups of regulations that govern the game. A game regulation, commonly called a rule, sometimes states what a player may do, but if there is no such statement for a given act (such as faking a pass), it is assumed that he/she may do what is not prohibited. In like manner, a game regulation sometimes states or implies that the ball is dead or that a foul is involved. If it does not, it is assumed that the ball is alive and that no foul has occurred to affect the given situation. If a foul is mentioned, it is assumed that it is not part of a double or multiple fouls unless so stated or implied. Rules are enforced according to their intent and spirit.

## **RULE 3 PERIODS, TIME FACTORS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

### **Section 1 Length of Periods (Halves)**

- 3.1.1. The game shall be played in two periods (hereinafter called “half”) of 30 minutes each. During the first 28 minutes of each half, the clock will run continuously, except that the clock will stop for player’s time-outs, official’s time-outs, and the 2-minute warning of each half.
- 3.1.2. After player time-outs and the 2-minute warning of each half, the game clock will start with the next legal snap of the next timed down. After official time-outs, the game clock will start with the next ready-for-play signal. During the last two minutes of the each half, the clock will run according to high school football rules (see 3.3.5 and 3.3.6.). The clock will stop for player's time-outs, official time-outs, penalties, after a first down, after an incomplete pass, after a play ends out of bounds, after a scoring play, or after a change of possession. In the case of a player’s time-out, an incomplete pass, a change of possession, a scoring play, or after a play ends out of bounds, the clock will start on the next legal snap of a timed down. If the clock is stopped for an official time-out or first down, the game clock will start again once the ball is spotted and the ready for play signal is given by the referee. A half may be shortened by agreement of opposing coaches and the Head Referee.

**COMMENT: If a timeout is called by a player after a touchdown is scored, the game clock will next start with the legal snap after the non-scoring team takes possession at the 15-yard line. The try is considered an untimed down. If an official stops the clock for an injury after a touchdown is scored, by rule, the clock will start on the ready-for-play during the try.**

- 3.1.3. An errant snap that touches the ground during the last two minutes of each half does not cause the clock to stop.
- 3.1.4. Games interrupted because of events beyond the control of the officials shall be continued from the point of interruption unless the teams agree to do otherwise. When weather conditions are construed to be hazardous, the officials are authorized to delay or suspend the game.
- 3.1.5. There will be a 10-minute intermission between the halves.

### **Section 2 Starting and Ending Each Half**

- 3.2.1. Three minutes before the start of the game, the officials and team captains will meet at midfield. One team will arbitrarily be assigned heads and the other team will be assigned tails. The Head Referee will toss a coin to determine which team is permitted a choice of options. The options are: receiving the ball, kicking the ball, or choosing a goal to defend. The captain who loses the coin toss may choose from the remaining option(s). No more than three captains (one captain and two field captains) from each team may be present at the coin toss. The



second half is a "mirror" half; i.e., teams will switch directions from the first half, and the team that received the ball to start the first half will kick the ball to start the second half.

- 3.2.2. 20, 10, 5, and 2 minutes before the end of each half, and after every play during the last two minutes of each half, the clock operator will notify both teams and officials of the time remaining.
- 3.2.3. If time for any period expires during a down (clock indicates 0:00), play shall continue until the down ends, even if a mechanical signal is allowed to sound.
- 3.2.4. If a dead ball, unsportsmanlike conduct or non-player foul occurs after either half ends, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot.
- 3.2.5. A period (half) must be extended by an untimed down if during the last timed down of the period, one of the following occurred:
  - a. There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted, except for those fouls listed in 3.2.6.c.
  - b. There was a double foul and fouls by each team are accepted.
  - c. There was an inadvertent whistle.If (a), (b) or (c) occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated.
- 3.2.6. A period shall not be extended by an untimed down if during the last timed down of the period, one of following occurs:
  - a. When the defense fouls during a successful try and the offended team accepts the results of the play with enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.
  - b. When the half ends because of a runoff per rule 10.6.
  - c. There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted for:
    - i. unsportsmanlike fouls,
    - ii. nonplayer,
    - iii. fouls that specify a loss of down,
    - iv. fouls that are enforced on the subsequent kickoff;
    - v. fouls for which enforcement, by rule, result in a safety; orNOTE: The score is cancelled in the event of an accepted penalty that specifies a loss of down.
- 3.2.7. If a dead-ball foul occurs after time expires for any period, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot

### **Section 3 Starting and Stopping the Clock**

- 3.3.1. At the beginning of each half, the clock shall start when the ball is kicked on the first play.
- 3.3.2. Each team is permitted 4 timeouts per non-overtime game, with no more than 3 timeouts used in one half.
- 3.3.3. Timeouts will last 60 seconds; the ready-for-play signal will be given immediately after the time-out expires.

- 3.3.4. Whenever the game clock is stopped for a player's time-out or a two-minute warning, it will begin when the ball is legally snapped or kicked.
- 3.3.5. With two minutes or less remaining in either half, the clock shall start with the ready-for-play signal on a down beginning with a snap if the ball was stopped for any reason other than specified in Rule 3.3.6. or an untimed down:
- a. For an official's time-out, other than when B is awarded a new series or either team is awarded a new series following a legal kick.
  - b. Because the ball has become dead following any foul provided:
    - i. There has been no charged time-out during the dead-ball interval.
    - ii. The down is not an extension of a period or try.
    - iii. The action which caused the down to end did not also cause the clock to be stopped.
  - c. Because of an inadvertent whistle
- 3.3.6. With two minutes or less remaining in either half, the clock shall start with the snap or when any punt is kicked if the clock was stopped because:
- a. The ball goes out of bounds.
  - b. B or R is awarded a new series.
  - c. Either team is awarded a new series following a legal kick.
  - d. The ball becomes dead behind the goal line.
  - e. A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete.
  - f. A request for a charged time-out is granted.
  - g. A team attempts to consume time illegally.
  - h. The penalty for a delay of game foul due to the expiration of the play clock is accepted.
  - i. A fair catch is made.
- 3.3.7. With two minutes or less remaining in either half, the clock shall be stopped when:
- a. The down ends following a foul.
  - b. An official's time-out is taken.
  - c. A charged time-out is granted.
  - d. The period ends.
  - e. The ball is out of bounds.
  - f. A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete.
  - g. A score or touchback occurs.
  - h. A fair catch is made.
  - i. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.

#### **Section 4 Ball Ready-for-Play and Delay**

- 3.4.1. The ball is declared ready-for-play when, after it has been placed for a down or is back in the vicinity of the line of scrimmage, the referee gives the ready-for-play signal.

- 3.4.2. Action or inaction that delays putting the ball in play is delay of game. This includes:
- a. Failing to snap the ball within 30 seconds after the ready-for-play signal;
  - b. Unnecessarily carrying the ball after it becomes dead or intentionally consuming time when the down ends;
  - c. No change in the ruling occurs after a coach-referee conference during which the referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule after all permissible timeouts have been used;
  - d. Failure to wear the legal or required equipment when the ball is about to become alive;
  - e. Failure of the offense to assist the officials in resetting the field;
  - f. Throwing a pass backward and out of bounds to intentionally stop the clock.
  - g. Any other conduct which unduly delays the game.
- 3.4.3. Failure to play within 2 minutes after being ordered to do so by the referee shall result in forfeiture.

Delay of game –  
5 yards, dead  
ball

## **Section 5 Substitutions**

- 3.5.1. No substitutes shall enter during a down. Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players.

## **RULE 4 Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-of-Bounds, & Deflagging**

### **Section 1 Putting the Ball in Play**

- 4.1.1. A snap shall put a ball in play for each scrimmage down. After putting a ball in play, the ball remains alive until the down ends.
- 4.1.2. After a dead ball has been declared ready-for-play, it becomes live when it is legally snapped. The ball remains dead and the down has not begun if a snap is attempted before the ball is ready-for-play or there is an illegal snap or other snap infraction or a dead ball foul occurs.

### **Section 2 Dead Ball and End of the Down**

- 4.2.1. The ball becomes dead and the down is ended when:
  - a. a live ball goes out of bounds;
  - b. the runner goes out-of-bounds or allows any part of his/her body except hand or foot to touch the ground (note: the down does not end if a ball touches the ground while still in control of a player);
  - c. the runner is deflagged (note: if a runner's flag falls off accidentally i.e. without any defensive contact, he/she is not considered down until touched by a defender);
  - d. the runner's jersey becomes untucked and interferes with deflagging;
  - e. any fumbled or muffed ball, including a punt or a free-kick muffed in flight, touches the ground, except muffed snap or a bad snap that touches the ground not in player possession during an announced punt.
    - i. A snap that touches the ground is placed at the original line of scrimmage, and that down counts.
    - ii. If a fumbled ball touches the ground, it is spotted where the ball touches the ground, unless the ball is fumbled forward, and then it is spotted where the runner loses possession.
  - f. any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete;
  - g. any loose ball is simultaneously caught by opposing players;
  - h. any member of the kicking team catches or possesses a kicked ball or touches a grounded, kicked ball;
  - i. the passer passes to himself;
  - j. following a valid or invalid fair catch signal given by R and the ball is caught by R;
  - k. any score occurs;
  - l. a runner has less than three flags and is touched by an opponent between the shoulders; and waist, including touching a runner whose three flags are not reasonably in proper position (unless misadjusted by action during a down);
  - m. an official inadvertently sounds his/her whistle;
  - n. a player that started the down without a flag belt possesses a live ball.

NOTE: The ball belongs to the team in possession after a simultaneous catch (see g above).

- 4.2.2. During a down, or during a down in which a penalty for a foul is declined, if an inadvertent whistle occurs while:
  - a. A legal pass or snap is in flight or during a legal kick, the down shall be replayed.
  - b. The ball is loose following a backward pass, fumble, illegal forward pass or illegal kick, the team last in possession may choose to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
  - c. The ball is in player possession, the team in possession at the time of the inadvertent whistle may choose to either accept the results of play at the dead-ball spot or replay the down.
- 4.2.3. During a down, if a live-ball foul occurs prior to an inadvertent whistle and the penalty is accepted, the penalty shall be administered as determined by the basic spot and takes precedence over inadvertent whistle administration.

### **Section 3 Dead Ball Spot, Out-of-Bounds and In-bounds Spots**

- 4.3.1. The dead ball spot is the spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule or is declared dead by an official.
- 4.3.2. When a runner goes out-of-bounds, the in-bounds spot is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the ball at the time the runner crosses the plane of the sideline.
- 4.3.3. If a ball is declared out-of-bounds and the out-of-bounds spot is between the goal lines, the ball shall be put in play at the in-bounds spot unless a forward pass is involved. If the out-of-bounds spot is behind a goal line, it is a safety or a touchback. If the ball touches a pylon on the goal line, it is out-of-bounds behind the goal line.
- 4.3.4. If a ball is declared out-of-bounds during a forward pass, the ball is returned to the spot of the snap if the pass is legal and to the spot of the pass if it is illegal and the penalty is accepted.
- 4.3.5. The post-scrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. R retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the post-scrimmage kick spot when a post-scrimmage foul occurs. Fouls by R behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

### **Section 4 Deflagging**

- 4.4.1. The runner is considered “tackled” when a player clearly removes the runner’s flags. The player should hold the flags over his/her head at the spot of the deflagging.
- 4.4.2. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag. It is best for the defensive player to attempt to

grab only one flag at a time. Attempting to grab more than one flag at the same time may be considered **holding** if it appears that the deflagger is attempting to obstruct the forward progress of the runner.

- 4.4.3. The runner must keep flags on each side of his/her body at waist level and across the posterior. Flags not in proper position will cause a runner to be considered deflagged when touched. Allowances will be made for flag position shifts as a result of action that occurs during the down.
- 4.4.4. If a runner has less than three flags and is touched by an opponent between the shoulders and waist, the runner is considered to be deflagged. The ball becomes dead at the spot where the ball was when the runner is touched.

## **RULE 5 DOWNS AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY**

### **Section 1 Series of Downs**

- 5.1.1. A team in possession of the ball shall have four consecutive downs (a series) to advance to the line-to-gain. Any down may be repeated if provided for by rules (usually a penalty).
- 5.1.2. When a scrimmage down ends and after considering any live ball fouls, except unsportsmanlike fouls, with the ball in the field of play or out-of-bounds between the goal lines, a new series is to be awarded:
  - a. to Team A if the ball belongs to A on or beyond the line-to-gain;
  - b. to Team B if the ball belongs to B at the end of any down;
  - c. to Team B if, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> down, the ball belongs to A behind the line-to-gain;
  - d. to the team in possession at the end of the down, if there is a change of possession during the down, unless the penalty is accepted for a foul which occurred before the change of possession;
  - e. to Team R if K punts during any scrimmage down or an unannounced punt goes out-of-bounds.
- 5.1.3. The referee shall have authority to correct the number of the next down prior to a new series of downs being awarded.

NOTE: The loss of down aspect of a penalty has no significance following a change of possession or if the line-to-gain is reached after enforcement. The forward-most point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor in establishing the next line-to-gain.

### **Section 2 Down and Possession after Penalty**

- 5.2.1. When a penalty is declined, the number of the next down is the same as if the foul had not occurred. If a double foul occurs during a down and fouls by each team are accepted, the number of the next down is the same as that of the down in which the foul occurred. After a distance penalty, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the time of the foul. Team possession may then change if a new series is awarded.
- 5.2.2. When a foul by A or B occurs during a scrimmage down and before any change of possession, and before a receiver is first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the line, the ball belongs to A after measurement. The number of the next down is the same as that of the down during which the foul occurred unless penalty acceptance includes a 1<sup>st</sup> down or loss of down or the measurement or the advance results in a 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- 5.2.3. When a foul by A or B occurs prior to a scrimmage down or simultaneously with the snap, the number of the next down after measurement is the same

as the number established before the foul occurred unless measurement for a foul by B results in a 1<sup>st</sup> down.

- 5.2.4. Following a foul, a series of downs ends when:
- a) the acceptance of a that penalty includes the award of a 1<sup>st</sup> down;
  - b) acceptance of a penalty that includes loss of down or declination of any penalty during 4th down leaves A in possession beyond the line-to-gain;
  - c) declination of any penalty leaves B in possession;
  - d) there is acceptance or declination of the penalty for any foul which occurs after team possession changes during a down.

After a series of downs ends, a new series, with the line-to-gain ten yards in advance of the ball is awarded unless a team scores. The 1<sup>st</sup> down is awarded to the team in possession when the foul occurs unless, as in c) and d), declining the penalty leaves the other team in possession.

### **Section 3 Line-to-Gain**

- 5.3.1. The line to gain is 10 yards in advance of the ball's foremost point when a new series of downs is awarded. When a new series of downs is awarded, the penalties for all fouls (including nonplayer and unsportsmanlike) committed prior to the ready-for-play signal shall be administered before the line to gain is established. The line to gain then remains fixed until the series ends and a new line to gain is established. A new line to gain is established at the beginning of each half after the kickoff and at the end of the down in which a new series is awarded and after considering the effect of any act that occurs during the down.
- 5.3.2. A referee may call for the line judge or linesman to bring the official line-to-gain equipment on the field for a measurement. Measurement shall be parallel with the sideline and form a convenient yard line to the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when it became dead. The ball shall be placed with its long axis parallel with the sideline before measurement. The inside edge of the foremost rod marks the line-to-gain when the traditional yardage chain is used.

NOTE: A measurement may be requested by the captain prior to the ball being marked ready for play, but it may be denied if, in the referee's opinion, it is obvious the line-to-gain has or has not been reached.

- 5.3.3. A ball touching the goal line (vertical) plane when it becomes dead is in the end zone.



**RULE 6 KICKING THE BALL AND FAIR CATCH****Section 1 Kickoffs and Punts**

- 6.1.1. To start each half, a free-kick line, corresponding to a scrimmage line, is established for each team. These lines are always 10 yards apart. Unless moved by penalty, K's free-kick line is their 30 yard line; R's free-kick line is midfield.
- 6.1.2. A free-kick shall be made from any point between the in-bounds lines on K's free-kick line.
- 6.1.3. All kickers, except the ball holder, must be behind their free-kick line before and until the ball is kicked.
- 6.1.4. At least 4 R players must be behind and within 10-yards of their free-kick line until the ball is kicked.
- 6.1.5. On 4<sup>th</sup> down and before the ready-for-play signal, the captain(s) of Team A will be given the option to punt or use a scrimmage play; they must declare this option quickly and the referee will announce this decision to the opposing team. The decision is irrevocable, unless a team timeout is used; if the down is replayed, team will be provided the same scrimmage play/punt option.
- 6.1.6. If team chooses an announced punt, they must attempt a punt. Their team must be in scrimmage kick formation; an attempt to punt must occur immediately after the punter receives the snapped ball. All K players, except the kicker must be on their line of scrimmage. At least 4 team R players must be in the rush zone (expanded neutral zone) until after the ball is kicked. Minor encroachments will be tolerated.

Offsides – live ball foul,  
5 yards, rekick or  
added to end of return



Offsides – live ball foul,  
5 yards, rekick



NOTE: Team A may kick, unannounced, on any down, however the ball must be kicked behind the line of scrimmage.

- 6.1.7. If any snap (muffed or bad) touches the ground while not in player possession during an announced punt, the ball remains live (see 4.2.1.e.), and ball must still be punted.
- 6.1.8. Any R may catch and advance a punt. If R touches the ball in flight and the ball then touches the ground (muff a kick), it belongs to him and becomes dead.
- 6.1.9. Touching of a low punt by any player is ignored if the touching is in the expanded neutral zone or on K's side of the line of scrimmage.
- 6.1.10. Team K may not gain possession of any punt, even if the kick is muffed by team R. Team K may only gain possession during a scrimmage kick down (punt) if the kick has ended by R establishing possession of the ball, then fumbling during the return, and K recovers that fumble in flight. If any K player touches a kicked ball, Team R shall have the choice of taking the result of the play or taking possession at the spot of first touching by K.

- 6.1.11. When any kick is out-of-bounds between the goal lines or becomes dead in-bounds between the goal lines while no player is in possession or in-bounds anywhere while opponents are in joint possession, the ball is awarded to R. Following a punt that goes out-of-bounds without being touched, the ball will be put in play at the in-bounds spot where the ball crossed the out-of-bounds line. Following a free-kick (which starts each half or follows a safety) that goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines untouched by a team R player, R will choose between: 1) putting the ball in play 20 yards beyond K's free kick line; 2) putting the ball in play at the inbounds spot where the ball crossed the sideline; or 3) electing for a re-kick by K after a 5-yard penalty is enforced.
- 6.1.12. Any kicked ball is not dead if it touches the ground and remains in-bounds beyond the line of scrimmage. It may be advanced by any R or becomes dead if any K player touches the grounded ball. Any grounded, kicked ball that moves behind the line of scrimmage becomes dead and belongs to R.

## **Section 2 Kicks Dead in the End Zone**

- 6.2.1. Any kick muffed in flight that touches the ground while the kicked ball is on or behind R's goal line is dead and becomes a touchback. If any kick becomes dead in K's end zone, it is a safety. NOTE: K is team in possession during a kick. A kick ends when a player gains possession or when the ball becomes dead.
- 6.2.2. If a kick becomes dead in K's end zone and the force is the kick, it is a safety if the kick is out-of-bounds or K has possession; it is a touchdown if R catches the kick or has possession.
- 6.2.3. Any kicked ball that goes out-of-bounds behind R's goal line, untouched by R, is a touchback.

## **Section 3 Fair Catch**

- 6.3.1. Any receiver off the line of scrimmage may signal for a fair catch while any legal kick is in flight and beyond the kicker's line of scrimmage. Any receiver giving a valid or invalid fair catch signal is prohibited from blocking until the kick has ended.
- 6.3.2. If any receiver gives a valid signal for a fair catch and catches the kick beyond K's line of scrimmage and between the goal lines, it is a fair catch and the ball becomes dead. Only the receiver who gives a valid signal is afforded protection from being deflagged or contacted. If a receiver signals, but the catch is made by a teammate beyond the line, it is not a fair catch but the ball becomes dead.
- 6.3.3. After a valid or invalid fair catch signal by any member of the receiving team, no receiver may advance the ball.

Blocking after giving a valid or invalid signal – 10 yds

Kick Catch  
Interference – 10 yds

- 6.3.4. While any kick is in flight beyond the line of scrimmage:
- a. K shall not touch the ball if an R player is in position to catch or field the kick.
  - b. K shall not obstruct R's path to the ball.

NOTE: These restrictions apply even when no signal is given. R must be given an unhampered opportunity to catch the ball. Usually, an individual distance of two yards is desirable.

NOTE: For kick catch interference, R may accept a 10-yard penalty from the previous spot and replay the down; or they may chose an awarded fair catch after enforcement of a 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

Invalid or Illegal Fair  
Catch Signal - 5 yds

- 6.3.5. No receiver shall give an invalid fair catch signal.
- 6.3.6. No runner shall give an illegal fair catch signal.

## RULE 7 SNAPPING, HANDING AND PASSING THE BALL

### Section 1 Before the Snap

Encroachment (dead ball foul) - 5 yds

7.1.1. No player shall encroach upon the neutral zone after the ball is declared ready-for-play and touch the ball or an opponent. After the snapper has made his/her final adjustment of the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the plane of the line of scrimmage, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball, and touch the ball or an opponent. Exception: For announced punting situations, minor encroachments will be tolerated.

Encroachment (dead ball foul) - 5 yds

7.1.2. After the ball is ready-for-play and until it is snapped, no defensive player may touch the ball or any Team A player.

Offsides (live ball foul) - 5 yds

7.1.3. No offensive or defensive player shall be in the neutral zone or on the opponent's side of the neutral zone at the time of the snap, **except for the snapper's right to be over the ball.**

False Start (dead ball foul) - 5 yds

7.1.4. After the ball is ready-for-play and before the snap, no false start shall be made by any A player. It is a false start if:

- a shift or feigned charge simulates action at the snap;
- any act is clearly intended to cause an opponent to encroach.

NOTE: If a false start causes B to encroach, only the false start is penalized. If B moves into the neutral zone and causes A to false start, only the encroachment is penalized.

7.1.5. The snapper may make preliminary adjustments to the ball before assuming a set position and before Team A lineman have assumed positions on their line. During these preliminary adjustments, the snapper may slightly lift the ball off of the ground for lateral rotation without changing the location of the ball, tilt the ball, or remove his/her hand(s).

Snap Infraction (dead ball foul) - 5 yds

7.1.6. After gripping the ball following preliminary adjustment or prior to the snap and with the ball resting on the ground with the long axis at right angles to the line of scrimmage, the snapper may not:

- fail to clearly pause before the snap;
- remove both hands or slide his/her hand(s) along the ball;
- make any movement which simulates a snap;
- lift or move the ball in other than a legal snap.

An illegal snap or other snap infraction causes the ball to remain dead.

### Section 2 Position and Action During the Snap

Illegal Formation (live ball foul) - 5 yds

7.2.1. There are no restrictions to the number of Team A that must be on the line of scrimmage.

7.2.2. After the ball is ready-for-play, each Team A player must momentarily be within 17.5 yards of the ball before the snap.

Illegal Motion (live ball foul) - 5 yds

7.2.3. Only one A player may be in motion at the snap and then only if such motion is not toward the line of scrimmage.

Illegal Shift (live ball foul) - 5 yds

7.2.4. After a huddle or shift, all Team A players shall come to an absolute stop and remain stationary, simultaneously, without pronounced movement of hands, feet, head or body for at least one second before the snap.

Illegal Snap (dead ball foul) - 5 yds

7.2.5. A legal snap shall be such that the ball leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches any player or the ground. A scrimmage down must start with a legal snap. An illegal snap causes the ball to remain dead.

7.2.6. At the snap, Team A players on the line of scrimmage must have both feet outside the outside foot of the player next to him.

7.2.7. No offensive or defensive player shall be in the neutral zone at the time of the snap.

### **Section 3 Handing and Advancing the Ball**

7.3.1. Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.

Illegal Forward Handing - 5 yds, loss of down

7.3.2. During a down, Team A player may hand the ball forward only behind the line of scrimmage to a teammate. There may be an unlimited number of forward handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Team A may not hand the ball forward beyond the line of scrimmage. No player may hand the ball forward after a change of possession.

7.3.3. In each possession, Team A may use only one scrimmage running play, where the runner crosses the line of scrimmage. Any number of backward passes and hand-offs may be used before the runner crosses the line of scrimmage. If a shovel or a screen pass is used, its initial direction determines whether it is a forward or backward pass.

Illegal Procedure – loss of down at the previous spot

7.3.4. If more than one scrimmage running play is used during a series, play shall continue until the ball becomes dead by rule. All Team A progress beyond the line of scrimmage is negated. The ball will be spotted at the previous spot (spot of the snap) unless Team A controls the ball behind the previous spot or there was a change of possession. If Team A controls the ball behind the previous spot, the down counts and the ball is spotted at the end of the run. If there was a change of possession, a new series will be awarded.

NOTE: Only one scrimmage running play is allowed per possession; the other downs must include a forward pass.

### **Section 4 Fumble and Backward Pass**

7.4.1. During any down, any player in possession may make a backward pass or may lose possession through a fumble. There is no limit to the number of backward passes that may be made, including backward passes beyond the line of scrimmage.

7.4.2. Any player that catches a fumble or backward pass before it hits the ground may advance. If a fumble or backward pass hits the ground, it becomes dead

and is spotted where the ball touches the ground, unless the ball is fumbled forward, and then it is spotted where the runner loses possession. If a backward pass or fumble goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or becomes dead in-bounds or is caught simultaneously by opposing players, the ball belongs to the passing or fumbling team unless lost after 4<sup>th</sup> down. If a fumble or backward pass is out-of-bounds and becomes dead behind a goal line, the ball belongs to the team defending their goal and the result is either a touchback or safety.

## Section 5 Forward Pass

### Forward Pass Classification:

Legal Forward Pass: From in or behind the neutral zone

Illegal Forward Pass: (Ball remains alive until declared dead by rule) From a point beyond B's side of the neutral zone or after team possession has changed during the down

Completed Forward Pass: Pass caught by any player or pass simultaneously caught by opposing players (ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team)

Incomplete Forward Pass: Pass which touches the ground; pass which goes out-of-bounds; pass possessed by a player who is in the air but first touches the ground out-of-bounds (except in force-out situation defined in Rule 7.5.5.)

7.5.1. It is a legal forward pass, if during a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a player of Team A throws the ball with both feet of the passer on his/her side of the line when the ball is released. Only one legal forward pass (including a forward shuffle or screen pass) is permitted per down.

7.5.2. An illegal forward pass includes:

- a. a pass from B's side of the line of scrimmage;
- b. a pass after team possession has changed during the down;
- c. any forward pass after a scrimmage running play has been established;
- d. a second or subsequent forward pass thrown during a down.
- e. a pass caught by the passer, except when deflected by an opponent. The passer may not intentionally throw the ball at an opponent to facilitate catching his/her pass.

Illegal Forward Pass -  
5 yds & loss of down

NOTE: Intentional grounding is allowed.

7.5.3. If the illegal forward pass as described in (a), (c), or (d) above occurs within one yard of the line of scrimmage, it is a 5-yard penalty and loss of down, but does not count as the team's scrimmage running play for that series. However, if the illegal forward pass clearly occurs beyond 1 yard from the

line of scrimmage or if the illegal forward pass – as described in (c) above – is thrown after the ball has been advanced more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage, it shall count as the team’s scrimmage running play for that series.

- 7.5.4. If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is complete, the ball may be advanced when caught by any player. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by opponents, the ball comes dead and belongs to the passer’s team.
- 7.5.5. If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete, the ball becomes dead when the pass touches the ground or goes out-of-bounds. It is also incomplete when a player in the air possesses the pass and alights so that his/her first contact with the ground or with anything other than a player or game official is on or outside a boundary (first foot needs to be in-bounds). When contact by an opponent causes a receiver, who is airborne, to first contact the ground out-of-bounds, the pass is complete if the covering official judges that the receiver would have landed in-bounds if no contact had occurred. To complete the catch, the airborne player must have possession of the ball when he/she touches the ground. When an incompleteness occurs, the down counts unless the pass is after a series has ended. If the pass is legal and incomplete, the passer’s team next snaps the ball (unless lost after a 4<sup>th</sup> down) from the spot of the previous snap. If the penalty for an illegal pass is accepted, measurement is from the spot of such pass. If the offended team declines the distance penalty, it has the choice of having the down counted at the spot of the illegal pass; or if the illegal pass is caught or intercepted, of having the ball put in play as determined by the action which followed the catch.
- 7.5.6. Pass eligibility rules apply on a legal forward pass. All Team A and Team B players are eligible.
- 7.5.7. No player of A or B shall interfere with an opponent beyond the line of scrimmage during a legal forward pass play. For A, the restriction begins at the time of the snap, and for B, when the ball leaves the passer’s hand. The restriction does apply even if the pass does not cross the line of scrimmage. It is interference if any player who is beyond the neutral zone interferes with an opponent’s opportunity to move toward, catch, or bat a catchable ball.

Pass Interference -  
10 yds & automatic first  
down for A, if by B, and see  
Note.

**NOTE:** It is pass interference only if a catchable forward pass is involved.

**NOTE:** If Pass Interference by either team’s player is conspicuously intentional or unsportsmanlike, his/her team may be penalized another 10 yards. If the foul is flagrant, e.g. tackling a receiver before the ball is caught, the offending player may be ejected.

## EXCEPTIONS TO INTERFERENCE

1. Unavoidable contact occurs when two or more players are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch, or bat a catchable ball.
2. If the ball has been touched by A or B, restrictions end for all players.
3. If contact on A is immediately made by B and contact does not continue beyond the expanded neutral zone.

NOTE: There are no pass interference restrictions during a scrimmage running play.

Illegal Forward Pass -  
5 yds & loss of down

7.5.8. The passer may not pass to himself. He may catch his/her own forward pass if the ball first touches an opponent. The passer may not deliberately pass to an opponent to facilitate catching his/her own pass.

7.5.9. During a down in which a forward pass is thrown, no A player who is beyond the neutral zone or B player who is beyond the expanded neutral zone may contact an opponent or obstruct an opponent's opportunity to move freely about the field.

7.5.10. During a down in which a forward pass is not thrown and while the quarterback is dropped back and attempting to find an open receiver, no B player who is beyond the expanded neutral zone may contact an opponent or obstruct an opponent's opportunity to move freely about the field. This restriction ends when the quarterback hands off to a teammate, or moves laterally (scrambles) from the initial drop-back position.

Illegal Pass-Play Contact  
- 5 yds

NOTE: A defender must use a legal block before the restriction.

7.5.11. All illegal pass play contact and pass interference restrictions end when a legal forward pass is touched by A or B.



**RULE 8 SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACKS****Section 1 Value of Scores**

- 8.1.1. The game is won by the team that accumulates the most points.
- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| a. Touchdown  | 6 points |
| b. Safety (points awarded to opponent)                | 2 points |
| c. Successful Try-For-Point (from either run or pass) |          |
| i. From the 10-yard line                              | 2 points |
| ii. From the 5-yard line                              | 1 point  |
| d. Safety on Try-For-Point (awarded to opponent)      | 1 point  |

**Section 2 Touchdown**

- 8.2.1. Possession of a live ball in the opponent's end zone is always a touchdown.
- It is a touchdown when the runner advances from the field of play so that the ball penetrates the opponent's goal line (vertical plane).
  - It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player in-bounds on while the ball is on or behind his/her opponent's goal line.
- 8.2.2. If an opponent of the scoring team fouls during a down in which a touchdown is scored and there is no change of possession; or there was a change of possession and the opponent fouled after the final change of possession; the following rules apply:
- Any foul that carries a 5-yard penalty is automatically declined.
  - The offended team may choose to enforce the penalty for any other foul on the try or on the subsequent possession following the try.
- 8.2.3. If either team fouls following a down in which a touchdown is scored and prior to the initial ready-for-play signal on the try, the offended team may choose to enforce the penalty on the try or on the subsequent possession following the try.

**Section 3 Try-for-Point**

- 8.3.1. After a touchdown, the scoring team is permitted a try-for-point where the ball is snapped from B's 5- or 10-yard line (as indicated by A).

Exception: If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the game during championship bracket play, the try-for-point shall not be attempted unless the point(s) could affect the outcome of the game. All tries-for-point shall be attempted during pool play.

- 8.3.2. The try-for-point begins when the ball is ready-for-play. It ends when the ball becomes dead or either team scores.
- 8.3.3. During a try-for-point, Team A may score 2 points from a play originating on the 10-yard line, or 1 point from a play originating from the 5-yard line. Either a running play or a pass play may be used to score during the try.
- 8.3.4. During a try-for-point, a team may score 1 point for a safety by their opponent under rules governing play at other times during the game.

- 8.3.5. Team A may change their decision to attempt a 1- or 2-point play after a team timeout is used. The defense shall be given notice of the decision and shall be allowed ample time for player substitution, if necessary.
- 8.3.6. If during a successful try Team A commits a loss of down foul, no point(s) are scored and there is no replay.
- 8.3.7. If an opponent of the scoring team fouls during a down in which a try for point is scored and there is no change of possession; or there was a change of possession and the opponent fouled after the final change of possession; the following rules apply:
  - a. Any foul that carries a 5-yard penalty is automatically declined.
  - b. The offended team may choose to enforce the penalty for any other foul on the try or on the subsequent possession following the try.
- 8.3.8. Team A is given the choice of accepting the penalty and replaying the down following measurement or accepting the results of the play and having the penalty administered from the succeeding spot. If A fouls (with no loss of down) during a successful try, the down is replayed after measurement.
- 8.3.9. If during an unsuccessful try-for-point, a foul by A occurs, there is no replay. If B fouls, the down is replayed after measurement.
- 8.3.10. If either team commits a dead ball foul prior to the try-for-point, the down is played after measurement.
- 8.3.11. If a double foul occurs during a try where there is no change of possession and fouls by each team are accepted, or both teams foul before a change of possession, the down is replayed.
- 8.3.12. During a try, if either team fouls after a change of possession:
  - a. Distance penalties against either team are declined by rule.
    - i. Exception: If there's a foul by A that directly affects the runner (holding, personal foul, tripping, etc.), then team B shall be awarded an attempt to try for 2 points from A's 10 yard line.
    - ii. Exception: If there's a foul by A that doesn't affect the runner, the penalty is assessed from the succeeding spot (the 15 yard line on the start of the next possession).
  - b. A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled.
  - c. If both teams foul during the down and Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls offset, the down is not repeated, and the try is over.
- 8.3.13. When a try-for-point is replayed, the snap may be from any point between the in-bounds lines on the yard line through the spot of the ball.
- 8.3.14. If team B intercepts a pass or fumble during the try and returns it for a touchdown, they score 2 points.
- 8.3.15. After the try-for-point, the non-scoring team takes possession of the ball at their 15-yard line, unless that spot is moved after enforcement of a penalty carried over from the previous touchdown scoring play or the try to the succeeding spot.

#### **Section 4 Force, Safety and Touchback**

- 8.4.1. Responsibility for forcing the ball from the field of play across a goal line is attributed to the player who carries, snaps, passes, fumbles or kicks the ball. The muffing or batting of a pass, kick, or fumble in flight is not considered a new force because the original force has not been spent.
- 8.4.2. It is a safety when: (also see Rule 6.2)
- a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line and it becomes dead there in his/her team's possession. Exception: when a Team B player intercepts a forward pass or catches a kick between his/her 5-yard line and the goal line and his/her original momentum carries him in to the end zone, where the ball is declared dead in his/her team's possession or it goes out-of-bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where the pass was intercepted or the kick was caught.
  - a player who is either in the field of play or in his/her end zone, forces a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line by his/her kick, pass, fumble, snap, muff or bat and provided that the ball becomes dead there in his/her team's possession or the ball is out-of-bounds when it becomes dead on or behind their goal line. This does not apply to a legal forward pass that becomes incomplete
  - a player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her end zone or throws an illegal forward pass from his/her end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves him in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced in to the end zone by the passing team.
- 8.4.3. It is a touchback when any kick in flight is muffed and touches the ground behind R's goal line (also see Rule 6.2). It is also a touchback when B intercepts a forward pass in their end zone and the ball becomes dead there in B's possession (before B leaves the end zone).
- 8.4.4. The team whose goal line is involved should put the ball in play on its 15-yard line if a touchback; for a safety, the opponent will free kick or punt the ball behind their 10-yard line.
- 8.4.5. If a penalty resulting in a safety occurs on the last timed down of a period, the period is not extended.

#### **Section 5 Mercy Rule**

- 8.5.1. If one team is ahead by 36 or more points during pool play or 25 or more points during bracket/tournament play with two minutes or less remaining in the game, then the game is over.

## **Section 6 Tie Games and Overtime Procedure**

- 8.6.1. If, at the end of the game, the teams have identical scores, the tie will be resolved by one or more series of unlimited downs. All game rules apply except:
- a. the line-to-gain will be established after any dead-ball penalties that are carried over from regulation are enforced, using the chains, which shall operate in the same manner as in regulation play;
  - b. no try will be made if the winner of the game has been determined;
  - c. only non-player, unsportsmanlike, dead ball fouls or defensive fouls during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try-for-point are penalized from the succeeding spot.
  - d. If the defensive team gains possession of a live ball, the ball becomes dead immediately and the down and series has ended for the offensive team.
  - e. Any unused second half time-outs can not be used in overtime.
  - f. Each team shall be permitted one time-out during each overtime period (a series for A and a series for B).

When the score is tied at the end of the game, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a 3-minute intermission during which both teams may confer with their coaches. All officials and team captains will meet at midfield for the coin toss after the intermission. The winner of the toss will be given a choice of defense, offense or designating the end of the field to start the overtime. The loser of the toss will chose from the remaining options. Each team will be permitted to use one timeout during each overtime period (a series for A and a series for B). In overtime, each team is guaranteed one possession. Each possession starts at the opponent's 20-yard-line. Series alternate until one team has scored more points than the other. If after two possessions each the score is still tied, teams must go for 2 points after scoring. The possessions alternate as follows: Series 1-3-5 etc.: Team A, followed by Team B; Series 2-4-6 etc.: Team B, followed by Team A. The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime plus those accumulated in regulation play shall be declared the winner. Note: An overtime is considered a new series. Therefore, no more than one scrimmage running play may be used per overtime series.

**RULE 9 CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS****Section 1 Helping the Runner**

Helping the Runner – 5 yds 9.1.1. An offensive player shall not push, pull, or lift the runner.

**Section 2 Illegal Use of Hands and Holding and Blocking**

- 9.2.1. An offensive player shall not use a blocking technique
- Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yds a. that is not permissible by Rule 2.3.1.
  - Interlocked Interference – 5 yds b. grasp or encircle any teammate to form interlocked interference
  - Holding – 5 yds c. use hands, arms or legs to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent
- 9.2.2. The runner may not grasp a teammate.
- 9.2.3. The defensive player shall not use a technique which
- Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yds a. is not permissible by Rule 2.3.1.;
  - Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yds b. use his/her hands to add momentum to charge of a teammate;
  - Holding – 5 yds c. use his/her hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle, or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent.
- 9.2.4. A defensive player may not intentionally push or block a runner who is near the sideline. A defensive player shall not intentionally hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when trying to remove his/her flag (this includes tackling and body blocking). Grabbing for more than one flag by a defensive player may be considered illegal blocking if it appears that the deflagger is attempting to obstruct the forward progress of the runner.
- 9.2.5. No player shall intentionally deflag a player who is not a runner before the player receives the ball.
- 9.2.6. No player shall obstruct an opponent with an extended (non-flexed at the elbow aka stiffarm) hand and arm
- 9.2.7. The runner shall not:
- Flag guarding – 5 yds, loss of down a. use their hand or arm, either intentionally or accidentally, to obstruct a defender's access to their flags, including but not limited to dropping the arm below the waist or using a stiffarm;
  - b. jump or hurdle to avoid being deflagged;
  - c. lower their head more than halfway between the waist and shoulders to avoid being deflagged;
  - d. dive forward in an attempt to gain yardage and/or avoid being deflagged.
- NOTE: A runner may spin to avoid being deflagged.
- 9.2.8. A runner may not charge into a potential deflagger.
- 9.2.9. A receiver who has given a valid or invalid fair catch signal may not block an opponent until the kick has ended.
- Personal Foul – 10 yds
- Illegal Blocking – 10 yds

Clipping – 10 yds

9.2.10. No player may clip an opponent.

NOTE: Blocking an opponent from behind is not necessarily clipping. The intent of the clipping infraction is to protect players from an unanticipated and unsafe block from the rear. A player turning his/her back on an opponent or slowing down in front of an opponent to “draw” a clipping penalty will usually be unsuccessful. Additionally, blocking from the rear on the initial line charge and immediately after the snap is not clipping.

Blocking Below The Waist – 10 yds

9.2.11. No player may block an opponent below the waist.

Tripping – 10 yds

9.2.12. No player may trip an opponent.

Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yds

9.2.13. The center must be given ample opportunity, before being blocked, to regain his/her balance after snapping the ball.

Illegal Blocking – 10 yds

9.2.14. Two-on-one blocking is limited to the expanded neutral zone and behind it.

NOTE: The only way to “tackle” a runner is by deflagging. Any contact with a runner must be an attempt to deflag.

### Section 3 Illegal Personal Contact

Flagrant Personal Fouls - 10 yds & automatic first down for A, if by B, plus mandatory disqualification for the rest of the game & the team’s next game

9.3.1. No player shall commit a flagrant foul. These include: striking an opponent with a fist, locked hand, forearm, elbow, knee or foot or wearing any illegal equipment that is unsafe to opponents.

NOTE: Fighting causes all fighters to be ejected regardless of who started the fight.

Misconduct Towards an Official – 10 yds & automatic first down for A, if by B, & possible disqualification

9.3.2. No player shall physically or verbally afflict an official. When in question, the act is considered a flagrant harrying or intimidation.

NOTE: Any single flagrant foul results in mandatory disqualification. A team may forfeit a game if it allows a disqualified player to become a player. Ejected players must leave the playing area.

Personal Fouls – 10 yds & automatic first down for A, if by B, & see Note

9.3.3. No player shall position himself on the shoulders of a teammate to gain an advantage; hide the ball under a jersey; tackle a runner; charge in to an opponent or make any other contact, physical or verbal, that an official determines is unnecessary and incites roughness. The runner shall not deliberately run in to a defensive player.

NOTE: At the official’s discretion, a player may be ejected for 4 or 8 scrimmage plays for those acts considered major but not flagrant.

Roughing the Passer – 10  
yds and an automatic first  
down

- 9.3.4. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer who has thrown or is throwing a legal forward pass or a passer who is fading back or standing still because he/she is considered out of play after the pass. A defensive player may not forcibly contact the passer's arm above the elbow (from the elbow to the shoulder). If the quarterback's arm is hit below the elbow, it is up to the official whether it is roughing the passer, or if the defender was simply attempting to legally make a play on the ball.
- 9.3.5. Fighting with another player requires:
  - a. disqualification from the current game
  - b. disqualification from the team's next scheduled game
  - c. possible current and future tournament disqualification, to determined by the NGFFL board.
- 9.3.6. Misconduct towards an official requires:
  - a. disqualification from the current game
  - b. disqualification from the team's next scheduled game
- 9.3.7. Striking an official requires:
  - a. current tournament disqualification
  - b. possible future tournament disqualification, to determined by the NGFFL board.
- 9.3.8. When a player is disqualified from the game due to a flagrant personal foul in any national or regional tournament that is using all or part of the NGFFL rulebook, the NGFFL board has the authority to review for possible additional sanctions before the next scheduled game or tournament. This review could include:
  - a. medical records/history;
  - b. interviewing team captains, team players, city leaders, or observers of the foul;
  - c. interviewing officials that were officiating the game or officials that were observing the game in which the foul occurred;
  - d. reviewing any video evidence of the foul that may exist;
  - e. any other methods to gather information about the foul or a player's history that the NGFFL board may deem necessary to make an informed decision.
- 9.3.9. Additional sanctions for committing a flagrant personal foul in any national or regional tournament that is using all or part of the NGFFL rulebook could include suspension or expulsion from future Gay Bowl tournament games or the entire Gay Bowl/NGFFL tournament.

#### **Section 4 Non-contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct By Players**

- 9.4.1. No player may act in an unsportsmanlike manner during the game or intermission. Examples include:
  - a. abusive or insulting language or gestures
  - b. baiting acts or words or insignia worn which engenders ill will

Unsportsmanlike Acts – 10  
yds & automatic first down for  
A, if by B, (enforced from the  
succeeding spot) & possible  
removal from game for (a) &  
(d)

Unsportsmanlike Acts – 10 yds & automatic first down for A, if by B, (enforced from the succeeding spot) & possible removal from game for (a) & (d)

- c. using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A’s signal or movements
  - d. intentionally kicking at any player or the ball (other than a kick) or intentionally swinging an arm or fist at any player
  - e. leaving the field between plays or using a “hide out play” by placing a player or players near the sideline to gain an advantage unless replaced or unless with the permission of the referee
  - f. failing to place the ball, after it becomes dead, on the ground or immediately return it to a nearby official
  - g. spiking the ball or throwing the ball in the air or from the field of play
  - h. attempting to substitute a suspended player
  - i. taunting an opponent
- 9.4.2. A second unsportsmanlike conduct foul with a 10-yard penalty results in disqualification.

**Section 5 Illegal Substitution**

Illegal Substitution (live ball foul – 5 yds)

Illegal Substitution (dead ball foul – 5 yds)

- 9.5.1. Any number of eligible substitutes may replace players, under the following conditions:
- a. The substitution must occur between downs. No substitute shall enter during a down.
  - b. A replaced player must be off of the field before the ball becomes live.
  - c. A replaced player must begin to leave the field within three seconds of being replaced by a substitute.

**Section 6 Illegal Touching and Illegal Participation**

Illegal Touching – Loss of down at the previous spot

- 9.6.1. No eligible offensive player who goes out of bounds during a down shall touch a legal forward pass in the field of play or end zones or while airborne until it has been touched by an opponent or official.

**EXCEPTION:** This does not apply to an eligible offensive player who attempts to return inbounds immediately after going out of bounds due to contact by an opponent.

Illegal Participation – 10 yds

- 9.6.2. No replaced player, substitute, or non-player shall hinder an opponent, touch the ball, influence the play or otherwise participate.

Illegal Participation – 10 yds

Illegal Participation – 10 yds

- 9.6.3. It is illegal participation when:
- a. 8 or more players participate at the snap
  - b. an injured player is not replaced for at least one down unless a half-time occurs
  - c. using a replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretend substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before a snap
  - d. for a disqualified player to reenter the game

Illegal Participation – 10 yds

Allowing a Disqualified Player – possible game forfeit



Illegal Kicking or  
Batting – 10 yds

### Section 7 Illegal Kicking or Batting

- 9.7.1. No player shall intentionally kick the ball other than as a punt or free-kick .
- 9.7.2. No player shall bat a loose ball other than a pass or a fumble in flight or a low scrimmage kick in flight which he/she is attempting to block in the expanded neutral zone. A backward pass behind the line of scrimmage and in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team.

NOTE: Any pass in flight may be batted in any direction, unless it is a backward pass behind the line of scrimmage batted forward by the passing team.

Illegal  
Batting – 10 yds

- 9.7.3. A ball in player possession may not be batted or stripped by any player.

### Section 8 Non-contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Non-Players

- 9.8.1. No coach, substitute, trainer or other team attendant shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner during the game or intermission. Examples are:
  - a. using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures
  - b. attempting to influence or indicating an objection to a decision of an official
  - c. disrespectfully addressing an official
  - d. failing to be ready to start either half
  - e. be on the field except as a substitute or replaced player
  - f. abusively or derisively harrying an opponent

Non-Player Fouls – 10 yds  
& automatic first down for  
A, if by B

Non-Player Foul – 5 yds, if  
repeated infractions  
occur, 10 yds and/or  
disqualify the offending  
teammate.

- 9.8.2. A non-player shall not be outside his/her team box except to become a player. Attendants and coaches may not enter the field except during a timeout or unless sanctioned by the referee.

### Section 9 Unfair Acts

Unfair Acts – Referee  
enforces any penalty he  
considers equitable, incl. the  
award of a score.

- 9.9.1. No player or non-player shall hinder play by an obviously unfair act which has no specific rule coverage. Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game.

NOTE: Repeated fouls will cause the game to be forfeited.

### Section 10 Protests and Suspensions

- 9.10.1. The Team A or B captain may elect to challenge an official's penalty enforcement any time a penalty has been called. A captain may not challenge an official's actual call, only the enforcement of that call. If a team correctly challenges the enforcement of a penalty, the correct rule is enforced. If a team incorrectly challenges the enforcement of a penalty, it will be assessed one timeout. If the team has no timeouts, the captain will be assessed a personal foul and the team penalized 10 yards.

## **RULE 10 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

### **Section 1 Procedure after a Foul**

- 10.1.1. When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains. He shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined, there is no loss of distance. In case of a double foul, team A captain is consulted first to choose to accept or decline team B's foul. After team A chooses its option, the option then goes to team B with an option to accept or decline team A's foul. The captain's choice may not be revoked.
- 10.1.2. When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a snap, the official shall not permit the ball to become live. The referee shall notify the captains and the captain of the offended team will be presented with the options and the effect of acceptance or declination on the down and distance to be gained. The captain may accept or decline the penalty.
- 10.1.3. When a live ball foul by one team is followed by a dead ball foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.
- 10.1.4. When the same team commits a live ball foul followed by one or more dead ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

### **Section 2 Double and Multiple Fouls**

- 10.2.1. It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player fouls, during the same down in which there is no change of team possession. Team A is first offered the option to accept or decline the penalty for Team B's foul then Team B is offered the option to accept or decline the penalty against Team A. If both fouls are accepted, the penalties offset and the down is replayed at the previous spot.
- 10.2.2. It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player fouls, during the same down in which there is a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to the final change of possession. The penalties offset and the down is replayed at the previous spot. This does not apply if the team in possession at the end of the down commits only post-scrimmage kick fouls as in 2.14.1.g.
- 10.2.3. If both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player fouls, during the same down in which there is a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down does not foul prior to the final change of possession, or their only foul was a post-scrimmage kick foul, that team is first offered the option to accept or decline the penalty against their opponent. The opponent is then offered the same option. If both fouls are accepted it is a double foul, the penalties offset and the down is replayed at the previous spot.
- 10.2.4. When two or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team (multiple fouls), only one penalty may be measured, except when foul(s) for unsportsmanlike conduct occurs. In such cases, the penalty (or penalties) for unsportsmanlike conduct is administered from the

succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for the previous foul. When only one penalty is to be administered, the offended captain may choose which one it shall be, or he/she may decline all penalties.

- 10.2.5. If both teams commit 10-yard unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls, the penalties for an equal number of these fouls will offset. Any remaining penalties will be enforced separately and in the order of occurrence. A subsequent unsportsmanlike, nonplayer, or dead-ball personal foul after enforcement of another will not have an offsetting penalty and will be enforced in order of occurrence.
- 10.2.6. A dead ball foul is not coupled with a live ball foul or another dead ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.
- 10.2.7. A foul during a try is not paired with a dead ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

### **Section 3 Types of Play and Basic Enforcement Spots**

- 10.3.1. If a foul occurs during a down, the basic enforcement spot is fixed by the type of play. There are two types of play: loose ball play and running play. Loose ball play is action during a scrimmage kick; legal forward pass; a backward pass or fumble made by A from on or behind its scrimmage line. A loose ball also includes the run or runs which precede such a legal forward pass, kick, or fumble. A running play is any action not included in loose ball play.
- 10.3.2. If a foul occurs during loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot.
- 10.3.3. If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends. The run ends where the player loses possession if his/her run is followed by a fumble or pass. If the runner does not lose possession, his/her run ends where the ball becomes dead.
- 10.3.4. The basic spot is the previous spot:
  - a. For a foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick.
  - b. For a foul which occurs during a loose ball play, as defined 10.3.1. See 10.5.1. for special enforcement on roughing the passer.
  - c. For a foul which occurs during a down in which a legal kick occurs and an inadvertent whistle ends the down prior to possession by either team.
- 10.3.5. The basic spot is the succeeding spot:
  - a. For an unsportsmanlike foul.
  - b. For a dead-ball foul.
  - c. For a nonplayer foul.
  - d. When the final result is a touchback.
- 10.3.6. The basic spot is the spot where the kick ends when R commits a post-scrimmage kick foul (2-16-2h). R fouls behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

### **Section 4 Administering Penalties**

- 10.4.1. The penalty for any dead ball foul, any non-player foul or an unsportsmanlike foul is administered from the succeeding spot, unless the foul is committed by team B and is prior to the ready-for-play after a touchdown scoring play.

- 10.4.2. The penalty for a foul that occurs simultaneously with a snap is administered from the previous spot.
- 10.4.3. The penalty for a foul during a running play or loose ball play is administered from the basic spot, except:
  - a. if a foul by either team occurs, except flag guarding by team A (see 10.4.3.c.), behind the line of scrimmage before a change of team possession, the penalty is administered from the previous spot;
  - b. if a foul by the offense (other than in 10.4.3.a. above) occurs behind the basic spot, the penalty is administered from the spot of the foul;
  - c. a flag guarding foul by team A is always enforced from the spot of the foul.
- 10.4.4. Any live ball foul is penalized according to the all-but-one enforcement principle (see below) except:
  - a. a foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap (see 10.4.2.)
  - b. a foul by either team behind the line of scrimmage before a change of team possession (see 10.4.3.)
  - c. a foul by the opponents of the scoring team during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try-for-point
  - d. kick catch interference, which is penalized from the previous spot or from the spot of the foul

## **Section 5 Special Enforcements**

- 10.5.1. The following fouls have special enforcement provisions and options for the offended team:
  - a. Free kick out of bounds untouched by R. (see 6.1.11.)
  - b. Kick-catching interference. (see 6.3.4. & 10.5.3.)
  - c. Unfair acts. (see 9.9.1.)
  - d. A foul by the opponents of the scoring team on a successful try. (see 8.3.7.)
  - e. Fouls that occur during or after a touchdown scoring play. (see 8.2.2. through 8.2.6.)
  - f. Roughing the passer. (see 9.3.4. and 10.5.5.)
- 10.5.2. A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the ordinary distance penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the spot of enforcement to the goal line.
- 10.5.3. For kick catch interference, the offended team may choose a 10-yard penalty from the previous spot with K retaining the ball and the down being replayed or the offending team may accept an awarded fair catch after the enforcement of a 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul.
- 10.5.4. If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind the goal line, it is a safety. For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot is on or behind the offended team's goal line, any measurement is from the goal line.
- 10.5.5. The enforcement spot is the end of the last run for roughing the passer when the last run ends beyond the neutral zone and there has been no change of team possession.
- 10.5.6. A disqualified player must always be removed.
- 10.5.7. The referee's decision to forfeit a game is always final.

## Section 6 10-Second Subtraction from Game Clock

- 10.6.1. With the game clock running and less than one minute remaining in either half, if a player of either team commits a foul that causes the clock to stop, the officials may subtract 10 seconds from the game clock at the option of the offended team. The fouls that fall in this category include but are not limited to:
  - a. Any foul that prevents the snap (e.g., false start, encroachment, defensive offside by contact in the neutral zone, etc.);
  - b. Incomplete illegal forward pass;
  - c. Backward pass thrown out of bounds to stop the clock;
  - d. An illegal shift committed by the offensive team never coming to a one-second stop prior to the snap after the ball is ready for play;
  - e. Any other foul committed with the intent of stopping the clock.
- 10.6.2. The offended team may accept the yardage penalty and decline the 10-second subtraction. If the yardage penalty is declined the 10-second subtraction is declined by rule.
- 10.6.3. The 10-second runoff does not apply:
  - a. If the game clock is not running when the foul occurs;
  - b. If the foul does not cause the game clock to stop;  
**EXCEPTION:** Situation 10.6.1.d. above does cause a 10-second subtraction.
  - c. To delay of game penalties caused by expiration of the play clock (3.4.2.a).
- 10.6.4. If the fouling team has a timeout remaining they may avoid the 10-second subtraction by using a timeout. In this case the game clock starts on the snap after the timeout.
- 10.6.5. Either half can end as the result of the 10-second runoff.
- 10.6.6. Offsetting fouls do not involve any run-off.
- 10.6.7. After the penalty is administered, if there is a 10-second subtraction, the game clock starts on the referee's signal. If there is no 10-second subtraction, the game clock starts on the snap.

### Football Penalty Enforcement

Enforcement provisions apply to all player fouls. These provisions are not complicated by exceptions or special penalties. Enforcement philosophy is based on the fact that a team is given the advantage of the distance that is gained without assistance of a foul. It is assumed that the only foul that could aid this is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot. Therefore, all fouls but this one (a foul by the offense behind the basic spot) are penalized from the basic spot. Whenever the ball is live, one of two types of plays is in progress, that is, either a loose ball play or a running play. If a foul does occur, the kind of play determines the basic spot. The basic spot is the previous spot (spot of the snap) for loose ball fouls and fouls simultaneous with the snap. The basic spot for running plays is where the related run ends. "All but one" means all fouls except those by the offense are enforced from the spot of the foul if the foul occurs behind the end of the run (the basic spot). If a foul occurs during a running play, the enforcement spot is the end of the run or if the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the end of the run, from the spot of the foul. (See figure below.)

#### BASIC ENFORCEMENT SPOTS

