

# NFFLA

## Rule Book Version 2.0

RULE 1 The GAME, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT .....	3
Section 1 General.....	3
Section 2 The Field and Markings .....	4
Section 3 Game Equipment .....	4
Section 4 Players and Their Equipment.....	4
RULE 2 DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS.....	5
Section 1 Team and Player Designations.....	5
Section 2 Ball – Status and Catching and Touching.....	6
Section 3 Blocking and Deflagging .....	6
Section 4 Shift.....	7
Section 5 Down and Series .....	7
Section 6 Lines.....	7
Section 7 Out-of-Bounds .....	8
Section 8 Zones.....	8
Section 9 Kicks .....	8
Section 10 Advancing the Ball .....	9
Section 11 Snap.....	9
Section 12 Handing the Ball.....	9
Section 13 Passing the Ball.....	9
Section 14 Foul.....	9
Section 15 Spots Used in Administration.....	10
Section 16 Hurdling.....	10
Section 17 Tripping .....	10
Section 18 Time-Outs.....	10
Section 19 Ready-for-Play.....	11
Section 20 Force .....	11
Section 21 Rule.....	11
RULE 3 PERIODS, TIME FACTORS AND SUBSTITUTIONS.....	12
Section 1 Length of Periods (Halves) .....	12
Section 2 Starting and Ending Each Half .....	12
Section 3 Starting and Stopping the Clock .....	12
Section 4 Ball Ready-for-Play and Delay .....	13
Section 5 Substitutions.....	13
RULE 4 Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-of-Bounds & Deflagging .....	13
Section 1 Putting the Ball in Play .....	13
Section 2 Dead Ball and End of the Down .....	14
Section 3 Dead Ball Spot, Out-of-Bounds and In-bounds Spots .....	14
Section 4 Deflagging.....	15
RULE 5 DOWNS AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY .....	15
Section 1 Series of Downs .....	15
Section 2 Down and Possession after Penalty .....	16
Section 3 Line-to-Gain.....	16
RULE 6 KICKING THE BALL AND FAIR CATCH .....	17
Section 1 Punts.....	17

Section 2 Kicks Dead in the End Zone .....	18
Section 3 Fair Catch.....	18
<b>RULE 7 SNAPPING, HANDING AND PASSING THE BALL .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Section 1 Before the Snap.....	19
Section 2 Position and Action During the Snap.....	20
Section 3 Handing and Advancing the Ball.....	20
Section 4 Fumble and Backward Pass .....	20
Section 5 Forward Pass.....	21
<b>RULE 8 SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACKS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Section 1 Value of Scores .....	23
Section 2 Touchdown .....	23
Section 3 Try-for-Point.....	23
Section 4 Force, Safety and Touchback.....	24
Section 5 Tie Games and Overtime Procedure .....	25
<b>RULE 9 CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Section 1 Helping the Runner .....	26
Section 2 Illegal Use of Hands and Holding and Blocking .....	26
Section 3 Illegal Personal Contact .....	27
Section 4 Non-contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct By Players .....	27
Section 5 Illegal Participation.....	28
Section 6 Illegal Kicking or Batting .....	28
Section 7 Non-contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Non-Players.....	28
Section 8 Unfair Acts.....	29
Section 9 Protests and Suspensions .....	29
<b>RULE 10 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Section 1 Procedure after a Foul.....	29
Section 2 Double and Multiple Fouls .....	29
Section 3 Types of Play and Basic Enforcement Spots .....	30
Section 4 Administering Penalties .....	30
Section 5 Special Enforcements.....	30
Football Penalty Enforcement .....	31

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. The use of masculine pronouns is arbitrary and not meant to be sexist.

## OFFICIAL NFFLA RULES BOOK FOR FLAG FOOTBALL

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

### CHANGES FOR 2011

- 2.3.1. Changes blocking rules at and behind the line of scrimmage to allow minimal contact, with arms flexed at the elbows and arms not extended or moving forward faster than the blocker's body.
- 2.3.2. Minor editorial changes.
- 2.3.3. Minor editorial changes,
- 6.1.6. Revised free kick rules to clearly state that K cannot recover a free kick.
- 7.2.1. Eliminated requirement to have 4 Team A players on the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 7.3.3. Changed rule to allow two scrimmage running plays by any Team A player (not just the quarterback) per possession.
- 7.3.4. Revised penalty enforcement to match new wording of rule 7.3.3.
- 7.5.6. Changed offensive pass interference penalty to 10-yards and replay the down.

## 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 5 players on the field. Each team may play with up to 7 players regardless of the number of opposing players.
- 1.1.2. Should a team not have enough players to field a team (seven players), they may recruit another player from a league team only. No outside player may take the field unless they join the league prior to the start of the game by paying the league fee and signing a waiver.
- 1.1.3. Should a team have only seven players, they may recruit an additional player as a substitute in case of an injury or temporary player emergency only. Original members must play at all times before a recruited player may take the field. However, if a team has an injured or missing quarterback, the team may recruit from within the league for a substitute quarterback who can take the field, even if the field has seven or more players.
- 1.1.4. In the event a team is short players and requires one or more substitutes, they may only pick up one player from the travelling Gay Bowl team. Other player substitutions are allowed within reason, and shall be decided upon by both team captains or acting captains.
- 1.1.5. 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.

## 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 20-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. Footballs must be a pebble grained or rubber covered football of official size. No youth or intermediate size footballs may be used. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure. 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. A down indicator will mark the spot from where the ball is to be snapped and the down. A beanbag will be used to mark the ball's spot and 5-yards off the ball's spot to mark the expanded neutral zone.

## Section 4 Players and Their Equipment

- 1.4.1. Each team will designate up to four 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. Jerseys must cover the player's shoulders, chest, and back.
- 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. Vertical stripes on a player's pants are not allowed. Pants can not have belt loops or pockets. Short pants are preferred.

Altering flags or uniform to gain competitive advantage – 10 yds + ejection from game

- 1.4.4. Every player must wear shoes that are made of a soft, pliable upper material (i.e. canvas/synthetic), completely cover the foot, and is attached to a one-piece molded composite bottom (i.e. tennis shoes). Metal cleats, or those that, in the opinion of the referee, are hazardous may not be worn.
- 1.4.5. Molded rubber shoes only. No metal cleats or baseball cleats allowed.
- 1.4.6. Players must wear a belt around their waist that includes “triple threat” that hang at the player’s side and posterior side (3 flags). 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. (Penalty adopted Aug 2007)
- 1.4.7. Players may wear an intraoral mouth and tooth protector.
- 1.4.8. 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 should be used.
- 1.4.9. Flags will be provided by the league. They shall be a one-piece flag belt (Triple Threat, Flag Tag, or similar) without any knots. The flags must be permanently attached.
- 1.4.10. 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. Caps with hard bills
  - g. Any foreign slippery or sticky substances
- 1.4.11. Prior to the game, the Team Captain will verify that all his 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

## **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 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. To be eligible, pass rushers must be outside the expanded neutral zone. Any B player becomes an eligible pass rusher when a team player that began the play outside the expanded neutral zone crosses the line of scrimmage.

## **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.  
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 is in the air, the ball must be in his possession when he 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.
- 2.2.3. 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 right to advance the ball in return for protection against being deflagged or contacted by an opponent.
- 2.2.4. A valid fair catch signal is made by extending and laterally waving one arm, at full arm's length, above the head by any receiver. 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.
- 2.2.5. A simultaneous catch is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by players in-bounds.
- 2.2.6. A fumble is any loss of player possession other than by passing, kicking or handing.
- 2.2.7. A muff is touching a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession; this includes an accidental kick.
- 2.2.8. 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. For a legal block at or behind the line of scrimmage, a blocker is allowed to contact only the 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 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.
- b. For a legal block beyond the line of scrimmage, a blocker cannot continue to move once they reach a defender nor move alongside or in the vicinity of a runner in such a way that prevents a defender from reaching the runner.
- 2.3.2. Pass rushing is the act of crossing the line of scrimmage in an attempt to interrupt a passing play and/or deflag the passer.
- a. A pass rusher must avoid charging into any Team A player. If a pass rusher makes a clear effort to move around the Team A player and the Team A player moves into the pass rusher's path, there is no charging.
  - b. When encountering a blocker, a pass rusher must avoid making contact with the blocker and clearly change direction in an effort to move around the blocker.
  - c. A legal pass rusher is any Team B player who takes an initial position on B's side of the line of scrimmage and outside the 5-yard expanded neutral zone and is in this position at the snap or at any time after the snap and before crossing the line of scrimmage.
  - d. Any team B player may cross the line of scrimmage after a legal rusher as in item (c.) above has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- 2.3.3. Deflagging is the act of clearly removing the runner's flags. Flag guarding is the act of a runner physically preventing the removal of their flags.

#### **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, punt 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.

#### **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, punt, 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 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 the next yard line in 20 yard increments. The line to gain can only be the goal line, the 20 yard lines, or the 40 yard line.

### **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 kicking the ball to start both the halves (kickoff). All teammates of the kicker must be behind their 20-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 may be slightly over the 20-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 on the 40-yard line.
- 2.9.5. A punt is legally kicking the ball by the player who drops it and kicks it before the ball hits the ground.
- 2.9.6. A scrimmage kick is a punt from at or behind the kicker's line-of-scrimmage.

## **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. Any number of scrimmage running plays may be used per possession, however only one scrimmage running play may be used per possession where the player who receives the initial snap advances the ball past the line of scrimmage without the ball first being possessed by another player. A scrimmage running play does not include a legal forward pass. Note: Point after conversions are considered a separate possession, so running is allowed on these plays.
- 2.10.3. A scrimmage pass play is advancing the ball across the line-of-scrimmage by throwing a forward pass.

## **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 any player. The player who snaps the ball, usually the center, is the snapper.
- 2.11.2. Every scrimmage down, except a down that includes a declared punt, must begin with a legal snap.
- 2.11.3. The ball must be snapped from the ground, but does not have to be snapped between the legs.

## **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 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 at such time that the penalties offset.
- 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.

NOTE: No foul causes loss of the ball. 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 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. The succeeding spot is the 15-yard line after a try, unless adjusted by a foul.
- 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/Diving**

- 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 be deflagged. The runner may step over an opponent who is lying prone. A runner may not leave his feet to dive forward.

### **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 two charged time-outs per half. The duration of each charged time-out is 1 minute. A maximum of 1 unused timeout from the first half can carry over to the second half.
- 2.18.2. 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, free kick, or scrimmage 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 Rule**

2.21.1. 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 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 20 minutes. For the first 18 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. During the last two minutes of each half, the clock will run according to high school and college football rules. The clock will stop for player's time-outs, official's time-outs, penalties, after a first down, after an incomplete pass, or after a play ends out of bounds. In the case of a time-out, an incomplete pass, or after a play ends out of bounds, the clock will start on the next legal snap. In the case of a penalty 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.
3. 1.3. 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. 1.4. There will be a 5-minute intermission between the halves.

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

- 3.2.1. Each half of the game shall be started by a kickoff. Before the scheduled game starting time, the referee, in the presence of the field captains, shall instruct the visiting captain to give a “heads” or “tails” choice before the coin toss.
- 3.2.2. No more than four captains from each team may be present at the coin toss and only one from each team shall be designated as its spokesman.
- 3.2.3. The winner of the coin toss shall have first choice of options for the first half or to defer and have first choice for the second half. The loser shall have the first choice of options for the half the winner of the toss did not select. The options for each half shall be:
  - a. To choose whether his team will kick or receive.
  - b. To choose the goal his team will defend.The captain not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option.
- 3.2.4. Two minutes before the end of both halves, the clock operator will notify both teams and officials of the time remaining.
- 3.2.5. If a dead ball, unsportsmanlike conduct or non-player foul occurs after either half ends, 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 2 timeouts per half. One unused timeout from the first half may be used in the second half.
3. 3.3. Time-outs 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 time-out (player's or official's) or a two-minute warning, it will begin when the ball is legally snapped or kicked.
- 3. 3.5. When the game clock is stopped in the final two minutes of each half after a first down or penalty, it will begin again with the ready-for-play signal.

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

Delay of game -5 yds.

- 3.4.1. The ball is declared ready-for-play when, after it has been placed for a down, 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 25 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. 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.

#### **Section 5 Substitutions**

- 3.5.1. No substitutes shall enter during a down. Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball becomes live.

### **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.

**EXCEPTION: On a down that is to include a declared punt, that down may legally begin with the kick.**

## **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 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 is not considered down until touched by a defender);
  - d. any fumble or muffed ball, including a punt or a free-kick muffed in flight, touches the ground. If a loose ball touches the ground, it becomes dead where the ball first touches the ground.
  - e. any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete;
  - f. any loose ball is simultaneously caught by opposing players;
  - g. any member of the kicking team catches or possesses a kicked ball or touches a grounded, kicked ball;
  - h. a kicked ball becomes loose behind the line of scrimmage;
  - i. following a valid or invalid fair catch signal given by R and the ball is caught by R;
  - j. any score occurs;
  - k. 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)
  - l. an official inadvertently sounds his whistle;

NOTE: The ball belongs to the team in possession after a simultaneous catch (see h 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 play at the dead-ball spot or replay the down.

## **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 a loose 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.

#### **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 head at the spot of the deflagging.
- 4.4.2. The runner is considered “tackled” at the point when the flag belt comes unclipped, not necessarily where the flags fall off the runner.
- 4.4.3. 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 illegal blocking if it appears that the deflagger is attempting to obstruct the forward progress of the runner.
- 4.4.4. The runner must keep flags on each side of his 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.
- 4.4.5. 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.

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, 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 the penalty includes the award of a 1<sup>st</sup> down;
  - b) acceptance or declination of any penalty 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 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. The line-to-gain remains fixed until the series ends and a new line-to-gain is established.
- 5.3.2. 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 20 yards apart. Unless moved by penalty, K's free-kick line is their 20 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 receivers must be on or within 1 yard of their free-kick line until the ball is kicked.
- 6.1.5. After the ready-for-play signal, no player, except the ball holder, may be between the free-kick lines before the ball is kicked.
- 6.1.6. If a K player is the first to touch the ball after a free kick, it is dead and shall belong to R.
- 6.1.7. 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; if the down is replayed, team will be provided the same scrimmage play/punt option.

NOTE: A team may change their choice of a scrimmage play or punt only after requesting and being granted a charged team time-out. If no timeouts remain, the choice cannot be changed.

- 6.1.8. If team chooses an announced punt, they must attempt a punt.

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

NOTE: During a down that includes a declared punt, Team A does not have to legally snap the ball. The down begins when the ball is legally kicked. If the clock is stopped, it begins when the ball is kicked.

- 6.1.9. Punts can not be blocked. K players must stay on their side of the line of scrimmage before and during the kick.
- 6.1.10. 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.
- 6.1.11. Any K may obtain possession of a punt after it has been touched by R and before it touches the ground (catch a muffed kick); it belongs to him and becomes dead. If any K touches a grounded kicked ball, it becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team.
- 6.1.12. 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

Penalty for 6.1.3,  
6.1.4, & 6.1.5:  
Encroachment (dead  
ball foul, 5 yards, &  
re-kick)

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) that goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines without being touched, R will choose between: 1) obtaining possession at their 30 yard line, 2) electing for a re-kick by K after a 5-yard penalty is enforced.

- 6.1.13. 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 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 or becomes dead by rule behind R's goal line, untouched by R, is a touchback. Any kick that crosses R's end line is a touchback.
- 6.2.4. Any kicked ball that touches the ground behind R's goal line is a touchback.
- 6.2.5. If an R player catches a kick in their own end zone, advances out of the end zone, then returns into the end zone and the ball becomes dead there, it is a safety.

## **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.
- 6.3.4. While any kick is in flight beyond the line-of-scrimmage, K shall not touch the ball or R, nor obstruct R's path to the ball. This prohibition applies 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.

Blocking after giving a valid or invalid signal  
– 10 yds

Fair Catch Interference  
– 10 yds & see Note.

NOTE: For 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 by touching the ball or an opponent. After the snapper has made his 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. When over the ball, the snapper shall have his feet behind the line and no part of his person other than a hand(s) on the ball may be beyond the foremost point of the ball. 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.

False Start (dead ball  
foul) - 5 yds

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

NOTE: If the false start causes B to encroach, only the false start is penalized. If offensive movement is caused by an irregularity such as calling players off the line for receiving a new signal or B stepping into the neutral zone too soon, the accidental false start is ignored.

- 7.1.4. 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 hand(s).

Snap Infraction (dead  
ball foul) - 5 yds

- 7.1.5. 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:
  - a. fail to clearly pause before the snap;
  - b. remove both hands or slide his hand(s) along the ball;
  - c. make any movement which simulates a snap;
  - d. 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**

7.2.1. There are no restrictions regarding the number of Team A players that must be on the line-of-scrimmage at the snap.

Illegal Motion (live ball foul) - 5 yds

7.2.2. 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

7.2.3. 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

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

**EXCEPTION:** A down that includes a declared punt does not have to begin with a legal snap. It may begin with the kick.

Illegal Formation (live ball foul) - 5 yds

7.2.5. 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.

Encroachment (dead ball foul) - 5 yds

7.2.6. No defensive player shall be in the neutral zone at the time of the snap.

**Section 3 Handing and Advancing the Ball**

Illegal Forward Handing - 5 yds & loss of down

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

7.3.2. During a down, Team A player may hand the ball forward behind the line to a teammate.

7.3.3. In each possession, Team A may use only two scrimmage running plays that do not include a forward pass, and the ball is advanced by the runner past the line of scrimmage.

7.3.4. If more than two scrimmage running plays are used during a single possession, 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 if 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 to the team last in possession.

**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 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 (NOTE exception in Rule 7.5.4.)

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 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. If a second legal forward pass is thrown (behind the line), the ball becomes dead at the spot where the second pass was thrown.

7.5.2. An illegal forward pass includes:

- a. a forward pass from B's side of the line of scrimmage;
- b. a forward pass after team possession has changed during the down;
- c. any forward pass after the second scrimmage running play where the player who receives the initial snap advances the ball past the line of scrimmage without the ball first being possessed by another player has been used in the series.

NOTE: Intentional grounding is allowed.

7.5.3. 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.

7.5.4. 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 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. **(NOTE: A penalty for unnecessary roughness can be enforced from the end of the run if the contact by B is judged to be avoidable by the referee.)** To complete the catch, the airborne player must have possession of the ball when he 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

Illegal Forward Pass -  
5 yds & loss of down

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.

7.5.5. Pass eligibility rules apply on a legal forward pass. All Team A and Team B players are eligible.

7.5.6. No player of A or B shall interfere with an opponent beyond the line-of-scrimmage during a legal forward pass. 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 not apply 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, replay down if by  
A; Spot foul & automatic  
first down if by B

NOTE: If Pass Interference by either team's player is conspicuously intentional or unsportsmanlike, his 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.

NOTE: If B commits pass interference in their own end zone, the ball is placed at the 1-yard line and an automatic first down is awarded to A.

#### **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.

7.5.7. It is illegal pass-play contact when any player who is beyond the neutral zone intentionally obstructs an opponent's opportunity to move freely about the field. For A, the restriction begins when the ball is snapped. For B, the restriction begins when the pass is in the air or when the Team A player occupies the same yard line as the Team B player or is beyond the defender. (Receivers are allowed a free release from the line of scrimmage. No "bump and run" coverage is allowed.)

Illegal Pass-Play  
Contact - 5 yds

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

## **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 5-yard line                               | 1 point  |
| ii. From the 10-yard line                             | 2 points |
| iii. From the 20-yard line                            | 3 points |

### **Section 2 Touchdown**

- 8.2.1. It is a touchdown when the runner advances from the field of play so that the ball touched the opponent's goal line (vertical plane) or when a loose ball is caught by a player, in-bounds, on or behind his opponent's goal line. A touchdown is scored when the ball crosses the goal line plane.

### **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-, 10-, or 20-yard line (as indicated by A) anywhere between the in-bound lines. The scrimmage down is not numbered and considered an untimed down.

**EXCEPTION: If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the game, the try-for-point shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game.**

- 8.3.2. The try-for-point begins when the ball is ready-for-play. It ends when the ball becomes dead by rule.
- 8.3.3. During a try-for-point, Team A may score 3 points from a play originating on the 20-yard line, 2 points from a play originating on the 10-yard line, or 1 point from a play originating from the 5-yard line, unless those lines are moved by penalty enforcement. Either a running play or a pass play may be used to score during the try.
- 8.3.4. During a try-for-point, Team B may score 2 points by securing possession of a loose ball and crossing A's goal line while still in possession of the ball.
- 8.3.5. If during a successful try Team A commits a loss of down foul, no point(s) are scored and there is no replay. If during a successful try Team B commits a foul, 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.
- 8.3.6. 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.
- 8.3.7. If either team commits a dead ball foul prior to the try-for-point, the down is played after measurement.
- 8.3.8. If a double foul occurs, the down is replayed.
- 8.3.9. 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.
- 8.3.10. 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 try to the succeeding spot.

**EXCEPTION: During the last 2 minutes of a game, after the trailing team scores, they can elect to give the leading team possession of the ball with only 20 yards to go to a touchdown. This prevents the leading team from running out the clock.**

8.3.11. After an accepted penalty by B during a try, Team A may choose a new point value for the replay of the down and then have the penalty from the previous try enforced.

EXAMPLE 1: Team A chooses to go for 1 point from the 5-yard line, and during an unsuccessful try for point, Team B commits a foul for roughing the passer. Team A then has the following choices: Retry for 1 point from the 2.5-yard line, retry for 2 points from the 5-yard line, or re-try for 3 points from the 10-yard line (since the penalty would have been 10 yards or half the distance to the goal line).

EXAMPLE 2: Team A chooses to go for 1 point from the 5-yard line, and during an unsuccessful try for point, Team B commits a foul for illegal rush. Team A then has the following choices: Retry for 1 point from the 2.5-yard line, retry for 2 points from the 5-yard line, or re-try for 3 points from the 15-yard line (since the penalty would have been 5 yards or half the distance to the goal line).

#### **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 own goal line and it becomes dead there in his team's possession. Exception: when a Team B player intercepts a forward pass or catches a kick between his 5-yard line and the goal line and his original momentum carries him in to the end zone, where the ball is declared dead in his 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 end zone, forces a loose ball from the field of play to or across his own goal line by his kick, pass, fumble, snap, muff or bat and provided that the ball becomes dead there in his 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 end zone or throws an illegal forward pass from his 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 20-yard line if a touchback; for a safety, the opponent will punt the ball behind their 10-yard line.

## **Section 5 Tie Games and Overtime Procedure**

- 8.5.1. If, at the end of the game, the teams have identical scores, the tie will be resolved by only ONE overtime period. All game rules apply except:
- a. no try will be made if the winner of the game has been determined;
  - b. 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.

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 2-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 one additional time-out in addition to those time-outs not used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. In overtime, each team is guaranteed one possession. Each possession starts at the 20-yard-line. 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 where the player who receives the initial snap advances the ball past the line of scrimmage without the ball first being possessed by another player may be used per overtime series. Teams may go for 1, 2, or 3 points after a touchdown is scored. Games will end in a tie if the score is still tied at the end of the overtime period.

In overtime, if team B secures possession of the ball during a down or a try via an interception or a fumble in flight, the ball becomes dead and that series for A has ended.

NOTE: In post-season play, teams will play an unlimited number of overtime periods until a winner has been determined. Play will alternate back & forth with the team that lost the first toss choosing from options for the second overtime period, and the team that won the first toss choosing options for the 3<sup>rd</sup> overtime period, and so on. All overtime periods will be played at the same end of the field. At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> overtime period, teams must go for either a 2- or 3-point try after touchdown.

## **Section 6 Mercy Rule**

- 8.6.1 If one team is ahead by more than 20 points with less than three minutes remaining in the game, then the game is over.

## 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:

Illegal Block – 5 yds

Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yds

Holding – 5 yds

- a. Use a blocking technique that is not permissible by Rule 2.3.1.
- b. Grasp or encircle any teammate.
- 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 defensive player shall not:

Illegal Blocking – 5 yds

Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yds

Holding – 5 yds

- a. Use a blocking technique that is not permissible by Rule 2.3.1.
- b. Use his hands to add momentum to charge of a teammate
- c. use his hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle, or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent who is not the runner.
- d. Hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner. Grabbing for more than one flag may be considered holding if it appears that the action by the defensive player obstructs the forward progress of the runner.
- e. Intentionally deflag a player before the player receives the ball.
- f. Dive in an attempt to deflag the runner.

Holding the runner – 10 yds

Illegal Deflagging – 10 yds

Illegal Deflagging – 10 yds

Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yds

9.2.3. No player shall obstruct an opponent with an extended, non-flexed arm (aka stiffarm)

9.2.4. The runner shall not:

Flag guarding – 5yds, 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 and 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.

Illegal Block – 5 yds

9.2.5. A receiver who has given a valid or invalid fair catch signal may not block an opponent until the kick has ended.

9.2.6. No player may use hands or arms to intentionally strip the ball from the runner.

Tripping – 10 yds

9.2.7. No player may trip an opponent.

Illegal Blocking – 10 yds

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

Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yds

9.2.9. No player may intentionally strip the ball from the runner.

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

NOTE: In addition to the yardage penalties prescribed, if any contact is deemed flagrant, the offending player shall be ejected. At the referee's discretion, a player may be suspended for 4 or 8 plays if the foul is overly aggressive but is not flagrant or does not warrant ejection from the game.

Personal Foul – 10 yds

9.3.1. No player shall intentionally contact any other player. This includes but is not limited to: initiating a block that involves contact, charging into an opponent, intentionally pushing, tripping, or tackling.

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

9.3.2. Contact which is not intentional but is judged to be avoidable or unnecessary is a personal foul.

Roughing the Passer – 10 yds, automatic first down

9.3.3. Defensive players must avoid charging into a passer who has thrown or is throwing a legal forward pass as the passer is considered out of the play until they move to participate in the play. A defensive player may not contact the passer's arm in any way.

NOTE: Contact which is not roughing the passer by definition may still be considered a personal foul.

Fighting – 10 yds & ejection

9.3.4. No player shall fight. Fighting includes, but is not limited to, striking or attempting to strike an opponent with a fist, locked hand, forearm, elbow, knee, or foot.

NOTE: Fighting results in an automatic ejection. This includes all combatants regardless of who began the fight.

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

9.4.1. No player may intentionally contact or verbally afflict an official.

NOTE: If flagrant, the foul results in an automatic ejection and disqualification for the team's next game.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10 yds & possible ejection

9.4.2. No player may act in an unsportsmanlike manner before or during the game or during the halftime intermission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Using abusive, insulting, or incendiary language or gestures
- b. Using language, gestures, acts, or insignia which is of a taunting nature or engenders ill will
- c. Using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with Team A's signals
- d. Spiking the ball or throwing the ball in the air or from the field of play
- e. Acts, gestures, or celebrations which are excessive, unnecessary, and/or draw prolonged attention to oneself.

NOTE: All flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, including but not limited to rules stated in this section, can result in not only ejection from a single game, but also expulsion from league in accordance with NFFLA Board policies.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10 yds

- 9.4.3. No player shall position himself on the shoulders of a teammate to gain an advantage.
- 9.4.4. No player shall hide the ball under a jersey.

**Section 5 Illegal Participation**

Illegal Participation – 10 yds

- 9.5.1. Unless blocked or pushed out-of-bounds, no player shall participate by touching the ball or hindering an opponent after having been out-of-bounds during the down.
- 9.5.2. No replaced player or substitute shall hinder an opponent, touch the ball, influence the play or otherwise participate.
- 9.5.3. It is illegal participation:
  - a. When 8 or more players participate in the play, including being in formation at the snap.
  - b. When an injured player is not replaced for at least one down unless the a halftime intermission occurs.
  - c. When a replaced player or substitute is used in a substitution or pretend substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before a snap.
  - d. For a disqualified player to reenter the game.

Allowing a Disqualified Player – also possible game forfeit

**Section 6 Illegal Kicking or Batting**

Illegal Kicking – 10 yds

- 9.6.1. No player shall intentionally kick the ball other than as a punt or free-kick.
- 9.6.2. No player shall bat a loose ball other than a pass or a fumble in flight or a low scrimmage in flight which he 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.

Illegal Batting – 10 yds

- 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.
- 9.6.3. A ball in player possession may not be batted by any player.

**Section 7 Non-contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Non-Players**

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10 yds & possible ejection

- 9.7.1. 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

Unsportsmanlike Conduct –  
10 yds & possible ejection

- g. be outside the team box but not on the field
- 9.7.2. A non-player shall not be outside his team box except to become a player. Attendants and coaches may not enter the field except during a time-out or unless sanctioned by the referee.

### **Section 8 Unfair Acts**

Unfair Acts – Referee  
enforces any penalty he  
considers equitable,  
including awarding a score.

- 9.8.1. 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 9 Protests and Suspensions**

- 9.9.1. 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 or this is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. In case of a double foul, the captains are not consulted since the penalties offset. 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, during the same live ball period during which there is no change of team possession; 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; or there is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponents foul. The penalties cancel and the down is replayed.

- 10.2.2. If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul, other than unsportsmanlike.
- 10.2.3. When two or more live ball fouls (multiple fouls) are committed by the same team, 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 may decline all penalties.
- 10.2.4. Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of their occurrence. A dead ball foul is not coupled with a live ball foul or another dead ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.
- 10.2.5. 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 run is followed by a fumble or pass. If the runner does not lose possession, his run ends where the ball becomes dead.

### **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 (the 5, 10, or 20 yard line after a touchdown).
- 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 unless the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the basic spot. In that case, it is administered 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
  - b. a foul by the opponents of the scoring team during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try-for-point
  - c. fair catch interference, which is penalized from the previous spot or from the spot of the foul

### **Section 5 Special Enforcements**

- 10.5.1. 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.

- 10.5.2. 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.
- 10.5.3. 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.
- 10.5.4. A disqualified player must always be removed.
- 10.5.5. The referee's decision to forfeit a game is always final.

### **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.

**BASIC ENFORCEMENT SPOTS**

