

SPREAD THE WORD OF U.S. FLAG FOOTBALL

The United States Flag Football Association is conducting a membership drive for new state associations and leagues. Any league comprised of four or more teams is eligible to form a state association as a member of the U.S. Association, by purchasing a franchise and membership certificates in the U.S. Association. The franchise holder is responsible for building his state association through the recruitment and creation of leagues for membership. Application for national membership may be made to:

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UNITED STATES FLAG FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

The U.S. Association comprised of member state associations is the first national flag football organization on a membership basis of its kind in the United States. Each state has purchased a franchise and membership certificate in the U.S. Association, which serves as the parent body for the member states and leagues and the some 1200 teams and 25,000 players within them. Only state championship teams are eligible to compete in the U.S. Tournament, which is conducted in flag football to determine national champion.

The U.S. Association was founded on November 8, 1976, and is the official organization for men's amateur flag football in the nation. The Association was created to provide for the unification of independent leagues into state associations, which operate under the same constitution, by-laws, tournaments standards and rules required for membership on a franchise basis in the U.S. Association. Each state association annually conducts a tournament comprised of championship teams from member leagues, with champions advancing to the U.S. Tournament. The goal of the U.S. Association is to strengthen the physical, moral, and competitive fiber of American men and women by expanding opportunities for participation in autumn flag football leagues. The Association's aim is to contribute positively to the American society by helping to create associations in every state of the nation and by triggering the creation of leagues in every city within each state association, so that all men and women might reap the benefits of physical fitness, wholesome recreation, brotherhood and leadership which the sport tends to foster and spread to other segments of society.

OFFICIAL

United States Flag Football Association

Flag Football

RULES

SIXTH EDITION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TO

The United States Flag Football Association, and its Directors wishes to express its appreciation, and thanks to the Athletic Institute for the opportunity of following, in general, their Touch and Flag Football Rule Book.

In Memoriam

Arthur W. Youngblood

March 10, 1936 - December 6, 1989

Founder/President

DIAGRAM OF EIGHT MAN FIELD

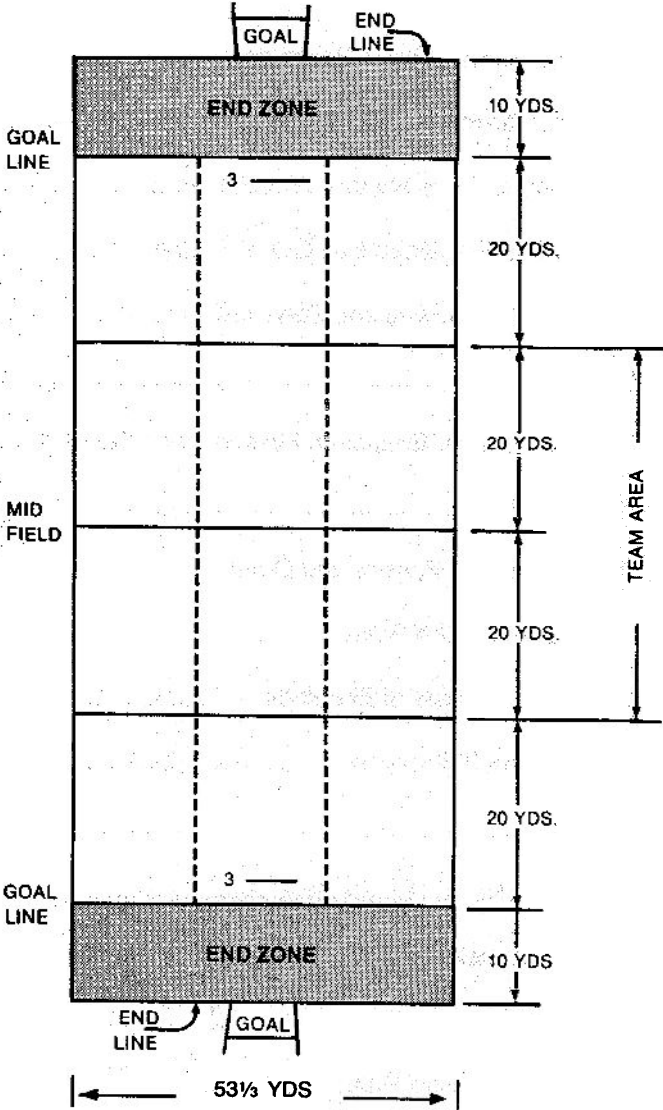


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Section 1

**Official
National Flag Football Rules
Of The
United States Flag Football Association**

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

Section 1. General

The Game

ARTICLE 1. The game shall be played between two teams of eight players each on a rectangular field and with an official football.

Goal Lines

ARTICLE 2. Goal lines for each team shall be established at opposite ends of the field, and each team shall be allowed opportunities to advance the ball across their opponent's goal line by running, passing, or kicking it.

Winning Team

ARTICLE 3. The teams shall be awarded points for scoring according to rule and, unless the game is forfeited, the team having the larger score at the end of the game shall be the winning team.

Supervision

ARTICLE 4. The game shall be played under the supervision of four officials: a Referee, Umpire, Linesman and Field Judge (four-man system). Duties of each of the officials can be found in the appendix.

Team Captains

ARTICLE 5. Each team shall designate to the Referee a field captain. The field captain or a designated representative will speak for the team in all dealings with the officials. A field captain's first choice of any option shall be irrevocable.

Section 2**Persons Subject to the Rules**

ARTICLE 6. All Players, substitutes, coaches, trainers and other persons authorized within the team area are subject to the rules and shall be governed by the decisions of the officials.

Section 2. The Field**Dimensions**

ARTICLE 1. The Field shall be a rectangular area with lines and zones as shown in the diagram. In case of facility limitations, the length and width of the field can be modified.

Inbounds — Out-of-Bounds

ARTICLE 2. The lines bounding the sidelines and the end zones are out-of-bounds in their entirety, and the inbounds area is bound by those lines. The entire width of each goal shall be a part of the end zone.

Team Area

ARTICLE 3. On each side of the field a team area is designated between the 20 yard lines for the use of the teams, coaches, and authorized team attendants.

Goals

ARTICLE 4. Each goal shall consist of two uprights, extended 20 feet above the ground and 23 feet 4 inches apart, measured inside to inside, and no more than 24 feet apart measured outside to outside. The two uprights shall be connected by a horizontal bar, the top of which is 10 feet above the ground. The use of goals is optional.

Pylons

ARTICLE 5. Soft, flexible pylons shall be placed at the inside corners of the four intersections of the goal lines, end lines and sidelines.

Down Marker

ARTICLE 6. A down indicator, which shall be located at the sideline of the line of scrimmage opposite the press box, shall be used to indicate the number of the down.

Obstructions

ARTICLE 7. The Officials of the game should inspect the field and the surrounding area and remove, or order removed, any obstruction which might prove dangerous to players.

Section 3

Section 3. The Ball

Specifications

ARTICLE 1. The official ball shall be leather and shall meet the recommendations for size and shape for regulation football. Men: NFL Official Wilson Ball. Women: Official Wilson TDY Youth League.

Administration

ARTICLE 2. The Referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his discretion.

Section 4. Players and Playing Equipment

Players

ARTICLE 1. For convenience a player is referred to as a lineman or backfieldman.

Contrasting Colors

ARTICLE 2. Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colors. The referee shall designate which team shall make a change, if necessary.

Equipment

ARTICLE 3. All players must wear regular football jerseys with blocked solid colored numbers contrasting with the jersey on the front and back of the jersey, pants and shoes, of a material which cover the foot (canvas, leather or synthetic) with a sole of leather, rubber, or composition with or without rubber cleats. Shoes with removable cleats permitted provided no metal is showing. Stocking caps, ski caps, watch caps (soft) are permitted.

Flags

ARTICLE 4. Each player on the field will wear a belt at the waistline with two (2) flags attached, but not tied thereto: one flag on each side of the body. Each flag should extend or hang from the waist. Flags should be 3 inches wide, and USFFA Approved, (Flag-A-Tag).

Wrapping, tying, or in any way securing the flags to the uniform or belt, other than prescribed by rule, or intentionally removing a flag during play, is illegal: *Penalty: 10 yards and possible disqualification. SONIC Socket Release flags will be used, or current style from Flag-A Tag.*

Section 4

Illegal Equipment

ARTICLE 5. No player wearing illegal equipment shall be permitted to play. The Umpire will decide the legality of all equipment. Illegal equipment shall include:

- a. Any equipment which, in the opinion of the Umpire, would confuse or endanger other players.
- b. Helmets, padded uniforms, sole leather or other hard or unyielding substance on the hands, wrist, forearms or elbows, no matter how covered or padded.
- c. Any projection of metal or other hard substance from a player's person or clothing.
- d. Any metal shoe cleats as distinguished from regulation football shoes.
- e. Jerseys or attachments which tend to conceal the ball by closely resembling it in color.
- f. Any slippery or sticky substance on a player's person or clothing.
- g. Electronic or other signal devices for the purpose of communicating with any outside source.
- h. Regulation shoulder pads.
- i. Baseball style caps or caps with hard visor, any head covering, except as shown on page 7.

NOTE: If illegal equipment is discovered by an official (1) it may be replaced during the interval between downs; (2) the player shall leave the game; (3) the team shall be charged with a time-out. An official's time-out shall be declared to permit prompt repair of equipment which becomes illegal or defective through use.

Section 1

RULE 2 — DEFINITIONS**Section 1. The ball: Live, Dead, Loose****Live and Dead Ball**

ARTICLE 1. A live ball is a ball in play while a down is in progress. A dead ball is that period between downs when the ball is not in play.

Loose Ball

ARTICLE 2. A loose ball is a live ball not in player possession. i.e. Any kick, pass or fumble.

When Ball is Ready-for-Play

ARTICLE 3. A dead ball is ready-for-play when the Referee: a. If time is in, sounds whistle and signals "ready-for-play." b. If time is out, sounds the whistle and signals either "start the clock" or "ball ready-for-play."

In Possession

ARTICLE 4. "In Possession" is an abbreviation meaning "in possession of a live ball." A player is a possession when both holding and controlling the ball. A team is in possession: when one of its players is in possession; while a punt, drop kick, or place kick is being attempted; while a forward pass thrown by one of its players is in flight, or during a fumble, backward pass, or illegal forward pass.

Catch, Interception, Recovery

ARTICLE 5. A catch is an act of establishing player-possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble before it hits the ground is an interception. Securing possession of a live ball after it strikes the ground is "recovering" it. If a player attempts a catch, interception, or recovery while in the air the ball must be in control when the player returns to the ground inbounds.

Section 2. Blocking

ARTICLE 1. Blocking is legally obstructing an opponent by contacting the opponent with any part of the blocker's body. Blockers must be on their feet before, during, and after contact is made with an opponent. Two on one blocking shall be limited to the area on and behind the neutral zone. Under no condition shall a high-low or rolling block be permitted.

Blocker is allowed to contact only that portion of the opponent's body between the waist and shoulders. Exception: A blocker who loses personal body control due to an opponent's aggressiveness after contact shall not be penalized.

Contact with an opponent may occur only between the opponent's waist and neck. There shall be no cross body blocking. No downfield blocking.

Offensive players may use an extended arm (pro block) provided palms are facing opponent and blocker is either stationary or moving backward.

Section 3

When using a hand or forearm block, the elbow must be outside the shoulder. The blocker's hands may not be locked. The blocker may not swing, throw, or flip the elbow or forearm. The hands may be closed or cupped but the palms may not be facing the opponent being blocked.

Downfield blocking is defined as a runner moving in advance of the ball carrier (screening), such player not in legal position to assist ball carrier by being able to receive legal handoff or backward pass - whether or not contact with an opponent occurs.

Section 3. Clipping

ARTICLE 1. Clipping is running or diving into the back, or throwing or dropping the body across the back of the leg or legs of an opponent or pushing an opponent in the back other than the runner.

Section 4. Down and Between Downs

ARTICLE 1. A down is a unit of the game which starts, after the ball is ready-for-play, with a snap or free kick and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.

Section 5. Fair Catch

ARTICLE 1. A fair catch is a catch of a kick untouched beyond the neutral zone, by a player of the receiving team, who has signalled their intention by extending one arm and hand only above the head and waving the hand from side to side of the body more than once.

ARTICLE 2. An invalid signal is any signal by a player that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal.

ARTICLE 3. An illegal fair catch signal is a valid or invalid signal given by any member of the receiving team after the kick is touched by any member of the receiving team or after the kick has touched the ground.

Section 6. Foul and Violation

ARTICLE 1. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. A violation is a rule infraction for which no penalty is prescribed and which does not offset the penalty for a foul.

Section 7. Fumble—Muff—Batting—Touching Ball

Fumble

ARTICLE 1. A fumble is loss of ball by a player in possession during an unsuccessful attempt to hold, handoff, backward pass, or kick the ball.

Section 8

Muff

ARTICLE 2. A muff is an unsuccessful attempt to catch or recover a ball, the ball being touched in the attempt.

Batting

ARTICLE 3. Batting the ball is intentionally striking a loose ball with the arm or hand.

Touching Ball

ARTICLE 4. Touching the Ball denotes any contact with it.

Section 8. Goal Lines

ARTICLE 1. Each goal line is a vertical plane separating an end zone from the field of play.

Section 9. Handing the Ball

ARTICLE 1. Handing the ball is transferring player-possession from one teammate to another without throwing, fumbling or kicking it.

Section 10. Huddle

ARTICLE 1. A huddle is two or more offensive players grouped together after the ball is ready for play before or after they have assumed a scrimmage formation prior to the snap.

Section 11. Hurdling

ARTICLE 1. Hurdling is an attempt by the runner to jump with both feet foremost over any player(s) still on their feet.

Section 12. Kicks

Legal and Illegal Kicks

ARTICLE 1. A legal kick is a punt, drop kick or place kick by a player of the team in possession when such kick is permitted by rule. Deliberately kicking the ball in any other manner is illegal. Any kick continues to be a kick until it is caught or recovered by a player or becomes dead.

Punt

ARTICLE 2. A punt is kicking the ball by the player who drops it and kicks it before it strikes the ground.

Section 13

Drop Kick

ARTICLE 3. A drop kick is kicking the ball by the player who drops it and kicks it as it touches the ground or as it is rising from the ground.

Place Kick

ARTICLE 4. A place kick is kicking the ball from a fixed position either on the ground or on a tee. The ball may be held in possession by any player of the kicking team. If a tee is used, it may not elevate the ball's lowest point more than two inches above the ground.

Free Kick

ARTICLE 5. A free kick is a kick made under restrictions which prohibit either team from advancing beyond established restraining lines until the ball is kicked.

Kickoff

ARTICLE 6. A kickoff is a free kick which starts each half and follows each try-for-point, or field goal and must be a place kick or a drop kick. A kickoff following a safety may be a punt, drop kick, or place kick.

Scrimmage Kick

ARTICLE 7. A scrimmage kick is a kick by Team A during a scrimmage down before team possession changes. It is made under restrictions which prohibit either team from advancing beyond established scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked.

Section 13. Return Kick

ARTICLE 1. A return kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession after change of team possession during a down and is a legal kick.

Section 14. The Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 1. The neutral zone is the space between the two free kick lines during a free kick and between the two lines of scrimmage during a scrimmage down and is established when the ball is ready for play.

Section 15. Encroachment

ARTICLE 1. Encroachment denotes the position of a player, except the Snapper or the kicker and holder of a place kick for a free kick, any part of whose person is beyond their scrimmage line or their restraining line anytime after the ready for play signal and before the ball is put in play.

Section 17**Section 16. Passes****Passes**

ARTICLE 1. Passing the ball is throwing it. A pass continues to be a pass until caught, intercepted, or the ball becomes dead.

Forward and Backward Pass

ARTICLE 2. A forward pass is a live ball thrown toward the opponents' end line. A backward pass is a live ball thrown toward or parallel to the Passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or recovered by a player or becomes dead.

Section 17. Penalty

ARTICLE 1. A penalty is a loss imposed by rule upon a team which has committed a foul.

Section 18. Removing the Flag

ARTICLE 1. When the flag is cleanly taken from a ball carrier the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removed the flag from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag above his head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

ARTICLE 2. In an attempt to remove a flag from a ball carrier, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders of an opponent with their hands, but not their or any part of their head. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.

ARTICLE 3. The flag may be dropped at the spot of capture by the defense with no penalty. A defensive player may leave his feet to secure a flag.

Section 19. Scrimmage**Scrimmage**

ARTICLE 1. A scrimmage is the interplay of the two teams during a down in which play begins with a snap.

Scrimmage Line

ARTICLE 2. The scrimmage line for each team is the yard-line and its vertical plane which passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. An offensive player is on the line of scrimmage when facing the opponent's goal with the line of the shoulders approximately parallel to the scrimmage line and with the head breaking the plane of an imaginary line drawn through the waistline of the snapper and parallel to the line of scrimmage. Defensive players must remain one yard off the ball (line of scrimmage) until ball is snapped.

Section 20

Stance

ARTICLE 3. All players of both the offense and the defense may take any stance. Players' hands on their knees is permissible.

Backfield Line

ARTICLE 4. The backfield line is a vertical plane one yard behind and parallel to the scrimmage line of the offensive team.

Section 20. Shift

ARTICLE 1. A shift is a simultaneous change of position by two or more offensive players after the ball is ready-for play for scrimmage and before the next snap.

Section 21. Snapping the Ball

ARTICLE 1. Snapping the ball (a snap) is handing or passing it back from the position on the ground. In a legal snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous motion of the hand or hands during which the ball actually leaves the hand or hands. The ball may not be raised to more than a 45 degree angle at the snap and the long axis of the ball must be at right angles to the scrimmage line. Must pass through snappers legs, snapper facing down field.

Section 22. Spots

Enforcement Spot

ARTICLE 1. An enforcement spot is the point from which the penalty for a foul is enforced.

Previous Spot

ARTICLE 2. The previous spot is the point from which the ball was last put in play.

Succeeding Spot

ARTICLE 3. The succeeding spot, as related to a foul, is the point at which the ball would have been put in play if that foul had not occurred.

Dead Ball Spot

ARTICLE 4. The dead ball spot is the point at which the ball last became dead.

Spot of the Foul

ARTICLE 5. The spot of the foul is the point at which that foul occurs. If out-of-bounds between the goal lines it shall be the intersection of the nearer inbounds line and the yard-line, extended, through the spot of the foul.

Section 23

Out-of-Bounds Spot

ARTICLE 6. The out-of-bounds spot is the point at which the ball becomes dead because of going or being declared out-of-bounds.

Inbounds Spot

ARTICLE 7. The inbounds spot is the intersection of the nearer inbounds line and the yard-line passing through the dead ball spot, or the spot where the ball is left in a side zone by a penalty.

Section 23. Team and Player Designations

Offensive and Defensive Team

ARTICLE 1. The offense is the team in possession. At such time the opponent is the defense. Team A is the team which puts the ball in play. The opponent of Team A, the team which does not put the ball in play, is Team B.

Kicker

ARTICLE 2. The Kicker is any player who makes a punt, drop kick or place kick.

Lineman and Backfieldman

ARTICLE 3. A lineman is any player on his scrimmage line when the ball is snapped; a back is any player who is at least one yard behind that line when the ball is snapped.

Passer

ARTICLE 4. The passer is the player who has thrown a legal forward pass. He remains the passer while the ball is in flight.

Player

ARTICLE 5. A player is any one of the participants in the game.

Ball Carrier

ARTICLE 6. The ball Carrier is a player in possession of a live ball.

Snapper

ARTICLE 7. The Snapper is the player who snaps the ball.

Substitute

ARTICLE 8. A substitute is a replacement for a player or a player vacancy.

Disqualified Player

ARTICLE 9. A disqualified player is one who becomes ineligible for further participation in the game.

Section 24

Section 24. Tripping

ARTICLE 1. Tripping is using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent (including the ball carrier) below the knee.

Section 25. Yardline

ARTICLE 1. A yardline is a line in the field of play parallel to the end line between the goal lines.

Section 26. Deflagging

ARTICLE 1. Deflagging is the legal removal of a flag of an opponent in possession of the ball. Pushing, striking, holding, or slapping are not permitted. Defensive player may leave feet to secure Flag. Offensive Player may not protect or Guard Flags. *Penalty: 10 yards.*

Section 1

RULE 3 PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, SUBSTITUTES

Section 1. The Start Of Each Period

First and Third Periods

ARTICLE 1. Each half shall start with a kickoff. Three minutes before the start of the game, the Referee shall toss a coin in the presence of the opposing Field Captains, after first designating which Captain shall call the fall of the coin.

- a. The Captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:
 - 1. To kick off.
 - 2. To receive.
 - 3. To designate which goal his team will defend.
- b. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining option.
- c. Before the start of the second half the choosing of options will be reversed.

Second and Fourth Periods

ARTICLE 2. Between the first and second periods and between the third and fourth periods the teams shall exchange goals and the ball shall be relocated in a spot corresponding to its location at the end of the previous period. Possession of the ball and the down and distance to be gained shall remain the same.

Section 2. Playing Time and Intermissions

Game Time

ARTICLE 1. Playing time shall be of 60 minutes duration, divided into four quarters of fifteen minutes each with one minute between the first and second and third and fourth quarters and ten minutes between the second and third quarters. In case of a tie there shall be a one minute intermission before the start of each overtime period.

Shortening Periods

ARTICLE 2. Before the start of the game, playing time may be shortened by mutual agreement of the field captains and the Referee, if darkness threatens. Anytime during the game, the playing time of any remaining period or periods may be shortened by mutual agreement of the opposing captains and the Referee.

Section 2

Extension of Periods

ARTICLE 3. No period shall end until the ball is dead, and in the case of a touchdown the try-for-point shall be attempted. If playing time for a period expires before completion of the penalty for a foul by Team B while the ball is ready-for-play, or during a down in which Team B commits a foul while Team A is in possession, the period shall be extended until a down which is free from such foul has been played. If Team A commits a foul, or if both teams commit fouls, the period is not extended.

Tie Game

ARTICLE 4. Games tied at the end of regulation time shall be decided by permitting each team 4 attempts to score from the 20 plus PAT attempt, repeating series until tie is broken. The 4 attempts are downs like regulation.

Game Clock

ARTICLE 5. Playing time shall be kept on a stop watch operated by an official or on a field clock operated by a designated timer.

When Clock Starts

ARTICLE 6. Following a free kick the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally touched. On a scrimmage down the game clock shall be started when the ball is snapped or on prior signal by the referee. The clock shall not run during a try-for-point or during an extension of a period.

- a. The Referee shall signal and the game clock starts when the ball is ready-for-play, if it was stopped:

A running clock shall be used. The clock shall not stop except for the following:

1. The last two minutes of each half shall be played according to time factors listed on page 19, Rule 3, Section 3, Article 2.;
 2. During free time outs;
 3. The clock shall stop after PAT attempt during game, and shall not start until first touched or snapped, after going out of bounds on ensuing kick-off.
- b. The Referee does NOT signal and the game clock starts when the ball is put in play, if it was stopped:
1. By a team time-out, a touchback, an incompleated forward pass, or a live ball going out of bounds; or after a fair catch.
- c. If incidents in (a), above, occur in conjunction with a free time-out or any other incident following which the clock would not start until the ball is put in play it shall be started when the ball is put in play.

Section 3**When Clock Stops**

ARTICLE 7. The game clock shall be stopped and time is out when each period ends and whenever "time out" is declared by the Referee as in: a touch-down, touchback, field goal, safety, penalty, free time out, out of bounds, or referee's discretion.

Two Minute Warning

ARTICLE 8. Approximately two minutes before each half ends the Referee shall inform each Field Captain and Coach of the playing time remaining in that half. He may order the clock stopped for the purpose if necessary. If a field clock is the official timepiece, notification is not required.

Section 3. Time-Outs**How Charged**

ARTICLE 1. The Referee shall declare a time-out when he suspends play for any reason. Each time-out shall be charged either to the Referee or to one of the teams.

Referee's Time-Out

ARTICLE 2. The Referee shall declare an official's time-out whenever a touchdown, field goal, touchback, or safety is made; when an excess time-out is allowed; when the game clock is stopped to complete a penalty; when a forward pass becomes incomplete; and when a live ball goes out-of-bounds. (Last two minutes of each half).

Discretionary Time-Out

ARTICLE 3. The Referee may declare an official's time-out for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules. If a time-out is for repair or replacement of player equipment which became illegal through play and is considered dangerous to other players, the Referee shall charge himself; otherwise he shall charge the team whose player is wearing the illegal equipment. The Referee shall charge himself when an injured player is designated and removed for at least one down.

Free Time-Outs

ARTICLE 4. Each team is entitled to three free time-outs during each half without penalty. Successive free time-outs may be granted each team during a dead ball period. If the ball is dead and a team has not exhausted its free time-outs the Referee shall allow a free time-out and charge that team. There will be one time out per team allowed during entire overtime period.

Section 4

Officials' Time-Out

ARTICLE 5. After a team's three time-outs have been exhausted, subsequent requests by its Field Captain may be allowed only for the benefit of a designated injured player who must leave the game for at least one scrimmage down. Such time-out, if allowed, is an official time-out.

Length of Time-Outs

ARTICLE 6. A free time-out requested by the Field Captain shall not exceed 1 minute. Other time-outs shall be no longer than the Referee deems necessary to fulfill the purpose for which they are declared, but any time-out may be extended by the Referee for the benefit of a seriously injured player.

Warning and Notification

ARTICLE 7. The Referee shall warn both teams 30 seconds before a free time-out expires and five seconds later shall declare the ball ready-for-play. When three legal time-outs have been charged to a team in the same half, the Referee shall notify the Field Captain and the Coach of that team.

Sideline Conference

ARTICLE 8. During a time-out charged to a team, one player at a time may confer with the coaching staff at the sideline near the team area.

Section 4. Delays**Delaying the Start of a Half**

ARTICLE 1. Each team shall have its players on the field for the opening play at the scheduled time for the beginning of each half. **All players must have their flags in legal position. Penalty: 10 yards.**

Illegal Delay of the Game

ARTICLE 2. The ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or inaction by either team which tends to prevent this is illegal delay of the game. This includes:

- a. Consuming more than 25 seconds in putting the ball in play after it is ready-for-play.
- b. Failing to remove an injured player for whose benefit an officials time-out has been granted.
- c. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead. *Penalty: For delay of game — 5 yards.*

Section 5**Unfair Tactics**

ARTICLE 3. The Referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever, in his opinion, either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by tactics obviously unfair. *Penalty: 5 yards.*

Section 5. Substitutions**Eligible Substitutes**

ARTICLE 1. No substitute 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 alive. An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from his team area. A replaced player must leave at the sidelines nearest his team area. *Penalty: 5 yards.*

Legal Substitutions

ARTICLE 2. During the same dead ball interval, no substitute shall become a player and then withdraw and no player shall withdraw and then re-enter as a substitute.

ARTICLE 3. **Each substitute shall be in uniform, ready for play, with Flags in position as directed in Rule 1, Section 4.** *Penalty: 5 yards.*

Section 1

RULE 4

BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT-OF-BOUNDS

Section 1. Ball in Play — Dead Ball

Dead Ball Becomes Alive

ARTICLE 1. A dead ball, after having been declared ready-for-play, becomes a live ball when it is snapped or free kicked, legally or illegally.

Live Ball Becomes Dead

ARTICLE 2. A live ball becomes a dead ball as provided in the rules or when an official sounds his whistle (even through inadvertently).

Ball Declared Dead

ARTICLE 3. A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound the whistle or declare it dead:

- a. When it goes out-of-bounds or when it touches the goal line (vertical plane) of the Ball Carrier's opponents. (Flags must cross)
- b. When any part of the Ball Carrier's person other than a hand or foot touches the ground. *Exception:* The ball remains alive when it will ostensibly be held for a kick.
- c. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, field goal or successful try-for-point is made.
- d. When, during a try-for-point, Team B obtains possession of the ball or when it becomes certain a try-for-point kick will not score the point.
- e. When a player of the kicking team catches or recovers any free kick or a scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone; when a free kick or an untouched scrimmage kick comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it.
- f. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- g. When a backward pass or fumble by a player touches the ground. *Note: (Exception) A ball snapped from scrimmage, which hits the ground after getting to or past the intended receiver, is dead at the spot at which it hits the ground. On a declared kick down a snap which hits the ground after getting to, or past the intended receiver.*
- h. When a legal forward pass is legally completed, or a loose ball is caught or recovered by a player on, above, or behind the opponents' goal line.

Section 2

- j. When a Ball Carrier has a flag removed legally by a defensive player.
- k. A muff of a kicked ball is dead when it strikes the ground.
- l. Following a valid fair catch signal when the kick is caught or recovered between the goal lines by any receiver beyond K's line (unless the kick has been touched by one of the kickers beyond the line).

Inadvertent Whistle

ARTICLE 4. If there was an inadvertent whistle when:

- a. A legal pass or snap is in flight, or during a kick, or while the ball is loose behind the line, and before hitting the ground, the down will be replayed.
- b. If the ball was loose and before hitting the ground following a backward pass or fumble beyond A's line of scrimmage, or behind A's line following a change of team possession, the ball will be awarded to the team last in possession at the spot where possession was lost and the down will be counted.
- c. When a player is in possession, the team may choose to accept the play at that point or choose to replay the down.

Ready For Play

ARTICLE 5. No player shall put the ball in play until it is declared ready-for-play. *Penalty: 5 yards.*

25 - Second Count

ARTICLE 6. The ball shall be put in play within 25 seconds after it is declared ready-for-play, unless, during that interval, play is suspended by the Referee. *Penalty: 5 yards.*

Section 2. Out-of-Bounds**Player or Held Ball Out-of-Bounds**

ARTICLE 1. A player is out-of-bounds when any part of that player touches anything other than another player or a game official which is on or outside a boundary line. A ball in player-possession is out-of-bounds when either the ball or any part of the runner touches the ground or anything else, except a player or game official, which is on or outside a boundary line.

Ball Out-of-Bounds

ARTICLE 2. A loose ball (other than a kick which scores a goal) or a forward pass is out-of-bounds when it touches the ground, a player or anything else which is on or outside a boundary line.

Section 2

Out-of-Bounds at Crossing Point

ARTICLE 3. If a live ball crosses a boundary line and is then declared out-of-bounds it is out-of-bounds at the crossing point.

Out-of-Bounds at Forward Point

ARTICLE 4. If a live ball is declared out-of-bounds because of contact with a player or anything else, and the ball does not cross a boundary line, it is out-of-bounds at the ball's most forward point when it was declared dead.

Section 1

RULE 5 SERIES OF DOWNS AND ZONE-TO-GAIN

Section 1. A Series – How Started – How Broken –Renewed

A Down is a Unit

ARTICLE 1. A down is a unit of the game which starts with a snap or free kick, and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is any period when the ball is dead.

Series of Downs

ARTICLE 2. A team, in possession of the ball, shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone by scrimmage. Any down may be repeated if provided for by the rules.

Zone Line To Gain

ARTICLE 3. The line to gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the line to gain. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.

Measurement of Distance

ARTICLES 4. The most forward point of the ball when declared dead between the goal lines shall be the determining point in establishing distance gained or lost by either team in a down. If the ball is in player possession, and declared dead as a result of a tackle (flag pull), the ball shall be spotted where the flag was pulled and that shall be the determining point in establishing distance.

Awarding A New Series

ARTICLE 5. A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the opponents move the ball into the next zone; or their opponents or they have obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, free kick, kick from scrimmage, touchback, pass interference or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.

Section 2

Section 2. Down and Possession After a Penalty

Foul During Free Kick

ARTICLE 1. When a scrimmage follows the penalty for a foul committed during a free kick, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with next zone to gain.

Penalty Resulting in First Down

ARTICLE 2. After a penalty which leaves the ball in possession of Team A beyond its line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a first down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with next zone to gain.

Foul Before Change of Team Possession

ARTICLE 3. After a distance penalty between the goal lines incurred during a down and before any change of team possession during that down, the ball belongs to Team A and the down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves loss of a down, or leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain. If the penalty involves loss of a down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series.

Foul After Change of Team Possession

ARTICLE 4. After a distance penalty for a foul committed during a down and after team possession has changed during that down, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred and the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with zone to gain.

Penalty Declined

ARTICLE 5. If a penalty is declined the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.

Foul Between Downs

ARTICLE 6. After a distance penalty incurred between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as that established before the foul occurred unless enforcement for a foul by Team B leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain.

Section 2**Foul Between Series**

ARTICLE 7. A scrimmage following a penalty incurred after a series end and before the next series begins shall be first down but the zone line-to-gain shall be established before the penalty is enforced.

Fouls by Both Teams

ARTICLE 8. If offsetting fouls occur during a down, or while the ball is ready-for-play for such down, that down shall be repeated. If each offsetting foul occurs between successive downs, the next down shall be the same as it would have been had no fouls occurred. Exception: If there is a change of team possession during a down or at the end of a down, the team last gaining possession may decline offsetting fouls and retain possession after completion of the penalty for its infraction providing that team had not fouled prior to possession. If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul was not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponents foul.

Section 1

RULE 6 — KICKS**Section 1. Free Kicks****Putting the Ball in Play**

ARTICLE 1. A free kick begins each half of a game, and begins play following a touchdown, field goal, or safety. The ball shall be put in play by a place kick or a drop kick from some spot on or behind the kicker's restraining line and between the inbounds lines. Unless relocated by penalty the kicking team's restraining line on kickoffs shall be its 20 yard line on fields 100 yards long.

Formation

ARTICLE 2. When the ball is legally kicked, all players of the kicking team must be inbounds and all players, except the holder and kicker of a place kick, must be behind their restraining line. At least four players of the receiving team with 8 players, must be within five yards of their restraining line after the ball is ready for play and until the ball is kicked. *Penalty: 5 yards.*

Restraining Lines

ARTICLE 3. For any free kick formation the kicking team's restraining line shall be the yard-line through the forward-most point from which the ball may be kicked. The receiving team's restraining line shall be the yard line *twenty yards* beyond that point. It is encroachment for any player other than the kicker and the holder to be beyond the free kick line after the ball is ready for play and until it is kicked.

Recovery of a Free Kick

ARTICLE 4. No player of the kicking team shall touch a free kick before it reaches the receiver's restraining line. Thereafter, all players of the kicking team become eligible to touch, recover, or catch the kick. However, no player of the kicking team may interfere with the receiving team's opportunity to catch the ball. A free kick touched by a player of the kicking team which then touches the ground is dead at the spot at which it touches the ground. If first touched before reaching the restraining line of the receiving team, it belongs to the receiving team. If first touched after reaching the restraining line of the receiving team, the ball belongs to the kicking team. A free kick touched by a player of the receiving team, which then touches the ground, is dead at the spot at which it touches the ground and belongs to the receiving team.

Free Kick Caught or Recovered

ARTICLE 5. If a free kick is caught or recovered by a player of the receiving team, the ball continues in play; If caught or recovered by the kicking team, the ball becomes dead.

Section 2

Free Kick At Rest

ARTICLE 6. If a free kick inbounds comes to rest and no player of either team attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the dead ball spot.

Section 2. Free Kick Out-of-Bounds

Out-of-Bounds Untouched Between the Restraining Lines

ARTICLE 1. If a free kick goes out-of-bounds untouched between the restraining lines, receiving team will put the ball in play on the inbound spot on the line opposite the out-of-bounds spot.

Out-of-Bound Untouched Beyond the Restraining Lines and Between the Goal Lines

ARTICLE 2. If a free kick goes out-of-bounds beyond the receiving team's restraining line, but between the goal lines, the ball is put in play at the receiving team's restraining line.

Out-of-Bounds Touched Between the Goal Lines

ARTICLE 3. If a free kick, which is touched by either team, goes out-of-bounds before touching the ground after being touched between the goal lines, the ball belongs to the receiving team at the inbounds spot on the line opposite the out-of-bounds spot.

Out-of-Bounds Behind End Line

ARTICLE 4. If a free kick goes out-of-bounds behind the end line, it is a touchback and the ball belongs to the team defending that goal line at their 20 yard line.

Section 3. Scrimmage Kicks

Legal Kick

ARTICLE 1. A legal scrimmage kick is a punt, drop kick or place kick made in accordance with the rules.

Protection on Scrimmage Kicks

ARTICLE 2. When a scrimmage kick is to be made, the kicking team must announce it to the referee before the ball is declared ready-for-play. After such an announcement, the kick must be attempted. No Rushing.

ARTICLE 3. Until the kick is made, both teams must maintain at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage. *Penalty: 5 yards. Illegal procedure.* Unannounced punts permitted on other than 4th down provided no forward pass had been completed (during down), ball must be turned over to opponent.

Section 3

Kicking the Ball

ARTICLE 4. The kicker must be at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage when receiving the snap. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. The kicker (punt, field goal, PAT) will have five (5) seconds from the snap to make foot contact and actually kick the ball. *Penalty: Delay — 5 yards. If repeated, Unsportsmanlike conduct — 15 yards and loss of down.*

Failure to Cross the Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 5. Except on a try-for point, a scrimmage kick which fails to cross the scrimmage line continues in play and all players are eligible to catch or recover the ball and advance it.

Crossing the Neutral Zone

ARTICLE 6. No player of the kicking team shall touch a scrimmage kick which goes beyond the neutral zone before it touches an opponent. Such illegal touching is a violation which gives the receiving team the option of taking the ball at the spot of the touching when the ball becomes dead. However, if a penalty occurred by either team before or as the ball becomes dead is accepted, the option is cancelled.

All Players Become Eligible

ARTICLE 7. When a scrimmage kick which has crossed the neutral zone touches a player of the receiving team, any player may catch the ball.

Spot of First Touching

ARTICLE 8. A scrimmage kick which touches a player of either team and then touches the ground is dead at the spot of touching the ground and belongs to the receiving team at that spot, or at the spot of first touching by the kicking team.

Forced Touching Disregarded

ARTICLE 9. A player who is pushed or blocked into a scrimmage kick which has crossed the neutral zone shall not be considered as having touched the kick unless the player's hand touched it.

Catch or Recovery By Receiving Team

ARTICLE 10. If a scrimmage kick is caught, or recovered after hitting the ground, by a player of the receiving team, the ball continues in play. *Note: If muffed, it becomes dead at the spot of hitting the ground after being muffed.*

Section 4

Catch or Recovery By Kicking Team

ARTICLE 11. If a player of the kicking team who is beyond the neutral zone catches or recovers a scrimmage kick, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team.

Kick Out-Of-Bounds Between the Goal Lines Or At Rest

ARTICLE 12. If a scrimmage kick goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest inbounds untouched and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.

Kick Touching On Or Behind the Goal Line

ARTICLE 13. When any kick (other than a successful field goal or try) touches anything while the kicked ball is on or behind the receiver's goal line (plane), it is dead immediately and is a touchback. Exception: Kickoffs and punts caught or recovered in the end-zone may be run out or downed for a touchback. Unsuccessful field goal attempts are dead balls.

Section 4. Opportunity To Catch a Kick

Interference With Opportunity

ARTICLE 1. A player of the receiving team who is so located that he could catch; (1) a free kick or, (2) a scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone and in flight, must be given an unencumbered opportunity to catch such a kick. Protection terminates when the kick is touched by any player of the receiving team. *Penalty: 10 yards from previous spot or awarded fair catch at spot of interference.*

Section 5. Fair Catch

ARTICLE 1. When a player makes a fair catch, the ball becomes dead where caught and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.

ARTICLE 2. No player of a team or a teammate who has signalled for a fair catch may carry the ball more than two steps in any direction. *Penalty: 5 yards.*

ARTICLE 3. After a legal fair catch the receiving team may choose to snap or free kick anywhere between the inbounds line on the yard-line through the spot of the catch or through the spot of interference, if awarded.

ARTICLE 4. A valid fair catch signal is the extending of one arm at full arm's length above the head and waving the hand from side to side of the body more than once.

ARTICLE 5. An invalid fair catch signal is a five yard penalty from the previous spot and the down replayed if accepted.

ARTICLE 6. A muffed fair catch shall be declared dead when the ball makes contact with the ground.

RULE 7

THE SCRIMMAGE, SNAPPING, HANDING, AND PASSING THE BALL

Section 1. The Scrimmage

The Start

ARTICLE 1. All plays from scrimmage must be started by a legal snap from a point between the inbounds lines, unless the rules provide for a free kick.

Scrimmage

ARTICLE 2. Any infraction of the following is a foul:

- a. Before the ball is snapped:
 1. The Snapper, after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play until it is snapped. An infraction of this provision may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment or contact foul by an opponent shall be cancelled.
 2. All offensive players must be within fifteen yards of the ball when it is declared ready-for-play.
 3. After the ball is ready-for-play and until it is snapped, no player on defense may touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or in any other way interfere with them. This includes standing in the zone to give defensive signals, or shifting through the zone.
 4. No player of the offensive team shall make a false start. A false start includes feigning a charge, or a play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment or contact foul by an opponent may be cancelled.
 5. In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all players of the offense must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, or arms, for at least one full second before the ball is snapped.
 6. Snap must go between snappers legs, and he must face down field.
- b. When the ball is snapped:
 1. At least four players on the offensive line must be on their scrimmage line. The remaining players must be either on their scrimmage line or behind their backfield line, except as follows:

Section 2

One player may be between the scrimmage line and the backfield line if placed in a position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the Snapper's legs. When in such position, that player may receive the snap himself or it may go directly to any back.

2. All players must be inbounds and only the Snapper may be encroaching on the neutral zone, but no part of their persons may be beyond the neutral zone and their feet must be stationary behind the ball.
3. One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line. If such player starts from the scrimmage line player must be at least five yards behind that line when the ball is snapped. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head or arms.
4. No offensive player, while on the scrimmage line, may receive a snap. *Penalty: For all above — five yards and ball remains dead.*

Section 2. Handing the Ball

Handing Forward

ARTICLE 1. No player may hand the ball forward except as follows: A Team A player who is behind the scrimmage line may hand the ball forward to a backfield teammate who is also behind that line; or to a teammate who was on the scrimmage line when the ball was snapped, provided that teammate left the line position, faced his own end line and was at least one yard behind the scrimmage line when player received the ball. *Penalty: 5 yards from spot of foul; also, loss of down if by Team A before team possession changes during a scrimmage down.*

Handing Backward

ARTICLE 2. A ball carrier may hand the ball backward at anytime.

Section 3. Backward Pass and Fumble

At Anytime

ARTICLE 1. A Ball Carrier may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at anytime except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to avoid loss of yardage.

Caught or Intercepted

ARTICLE 2. A backward pass or fumble may be caught in flight inbounds by any player and advanced.

Section 4

Out-of-Bounds

ARTICLE 3. A backward pass or fumble which goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out-of-bounds spot behind a goal line it is a touchback or safety.

Dead When Ball Hits Grounds

ARTICLE 4. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless lost on downs. In the event a ball is fumbled forward in advance of the line of scrimmage, it shall be ruled dead at the point it leaves the players hand.

Section 4. Forward Pass**Legal Forward Pass**

ARTICLE 1. All players are eligible to receive a forward pass. During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided the ball, when it leaves the passer's hand, is on A's side of the defensive team's line of scrimmage. Team A may make as many forward passes as desired from in or behind the neutral zone.

Illegal Forward Pass

ARTICLE 2. A forward pass is illegal:

- a. If the passer is beyond the neutral zone when the ball leaves the hand.
- b. If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
- c. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds.

Penalty: 5 yards from spot of foul; also loss of down if by Team A before change of team possession during a down.

Eligible Receivers

ARTICLE 3. All players of both teams are eligible to touch or catch a pass.

Eligibility Lost By Going Out-of-Bounds

ARTICLE 4. An offensive player who voluntarily goes out-of-bounds during a passing down loses eligibility until the ball has been touched by an opponent.

Penalty: Loss of down at previous spot.

Section 4**Completed Pass**

ARTICLE 5. A forward pass is completed when caught by any player of the passing team who is inbounds and the ball continues in play. If the pass is caught in-bounds simultaneously by opponents, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team at spot of simultaneous catch. Receiver must have both feet in bounds.

Incomplete Pass

ARTICLE 6. A forward pass is incomplete when the ball touches the ground or goes out-of-bounds. It is also incomplete when a player jumps from inbounds and catches the pass but lands on or outside a boundary line. An incomplete legal forward pass belongs to the passing team at the previous spot unless lost on down. An incomplete illegal forward pass belongs to the passing team at the spot of the pass unless lost on down. Fourth down incomplete pass into end zone, inside 20 yard line, ball goes back to previous spot.

Contact Interference

ARTICLE 7. Contact by a player which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the neutral zone during a legal forward pass is pass interference unless it occurs:

- a. When two or more players are making a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat the pass.
- b. When, immediately following the snap, opposing players charge into the contact opponents within one yard beyond the neutral zone.
- c. When a Team B player contacts an opponent before the pass is thrown.
- d. Interference beyond the line of scrimmage is prohibited by Team A from the time the ball is snapped until the pass is touched by any player. Interference by Team B is prohibited from the time the pass is thrown until it is touched by any player. The restriction does not apply if the pass does not cross the line of scrimmage.
- e. Face guarding by A or B shall be pass interference. See page 48, no. 22.
Penalty: For pass interference: 10 yards, if by A and down counts. If by B, first down for A at spot of foul, if by B in end zone first down for A at one yard line.

ARTICLE 8. If a Ball Carrier inadvertently loses a Flag, play shall be stopped at the spot where the flag is dropped. If any player loses a Flag, he still is eligible to catch a forward pass, but may not advance the ball, and the play is dead where ball is caught.

Section 1

RULE 8 — SCORING

Section 1. Value of Scores

Scoring

ARTICLE 1. The following methods shall be used in scoring a game:

- a. Touchdown 6 points
- b. Field Goal 3 points
- c. Safety 2 points
- d. Successful try for point:
 - (1) By kicking 1 point
 - (2) By Passing 1 point
 - (3) By Running 2 points
- e. Forfeited Game 1-0

Section 2. Touchdown

When Scored

ARTICLE 1. A touchdown shall be scored for the team to which the ball legally belongs, when a down is completed and any part of the ball is on, above or behind the opponent's goal line. (exception) Ball is placed where Flags are pulled even through ball breaks plane, **Flags must cross.**

Section 3. Try For Point

Opportunity To Score 1 or 2 Points

ARTICLE 1. An opportunity to score one or two points, while time is out, shall be granted a team scoring a touchdown. There shall be one scrimmage play (one or two points) or a kick (one point) from any point between the inbounds line on or behind the opponent's three yard line, unless the point is changed by penalty. Team may pass for 1 point, run for two points, starting from three yard line.

When Scored

ARTICLE 2. The point shall be awarded if the try results in what would have been a touchdown, or field goal, or safety under rules governing play at other times.

Foul During Try For Point

ARTICLE 3. If an Offsetting foul occurs while the ball is ready-for-play, or during the down, the down shall be replayed. When a distance penalty is incurred by Team B during a successful try, Team A shall have the option of declining the

Section 4

score and repeat the try following enforcement or accepting the score with enforcement of the penalty from the spot of the next kickoff. A replay after a penalty against Team B may be from any point between the inbounds lines on the yardline where the penalty leaves the ball.

Next Play

ARTICLE 4. After a try for point the next play shall be a kickoff. The Field Captain of the team which was scored upon shall designate the kicking or receiving team.

Section 4. Field Goal**When Scored**

ARTICLE 1. A field goal shall be scored for the kicking team, when a drop kick (a ball dropped to the ground and kicked as it touches or rises from the ground) or a place kick (a ball kicked from a fixed position on the ground or on a tee not more than two inches removed from the ground, either held or set in a position) in flight or from a free kick following a fair catch awarded or a kick off, passes over the cross bar and over an upright or between the uprights of the receiving team's goal before touching the ground or a member of the kicking team, and no penalty incurred during the down is inflicted.

Next Play

ARTICLE 2. The play following the scoring of a field goal shall be a kickoff. The Field Captain of the team scored upon shall designate which team shall kick off.

Section 5. Touchback — Safety**When Scored**

ARTICLE 1. When the ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except from an incompleting forward pass), when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player on, above, or behind player's own goal line, it is a touchback if the attacking team is responsible for the ball being on or behind the goal line; if the defending team is responsible, it is a safety. When an accepted penalty for a foul or an illegal forward pass leaves the ball on or behind the offending team's goal line it is a safety.

Responsibility

ARTICLE 2. The team responsible for a ball being on, above, or behind a goal line is the team whose player carries the ball to or across that goal line or imparts to the ball an impetus which forces it to or across that line; or incurs a penalty which leaves the ball on or behind that line.

Initial Impetus

ARTICLE 3. The impetus imparted by a player who kicks, passes, snaps or fumbles the ball shall be considered responsible for the ball's progress in any direction even though its course be deflected, or reversed, after striking the ground or after striking a player of either team. However, the initial impetus is considered expended and a new impetus is provided if a loose ball is illegally kicked or batted or it is contacted again after coming to rest.

Resulting from Foul

ARTICLE 4. When the penalty for a foul committed when the ball is loose leaves the ball behind the offender's goal line it is a safety; if behind the offended team's goal line, it is a touchback.

Play After Safety

ARTICLE 5. After a safety is scored, the ball shall belong to the defending team at its own 20 yard line and that team shall put the ball in play by a free kick which may be a punt, drop kick or place kick.

Play After Touchback

ARTICLE 6. After a touchback is declared, the ball shall belong to the defending team at its own 20 yard line and that team shall put the ball in play by a snap.

Section 6. Tie Game

Overtime Period

ARTICLE 1. When the game ends in a tied score, after a one minute intermission, the referee shall toss a coin in the presence of the opposing Field Captains, after first determining which Captain will call the fall of the coin.

- a. The Captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following:
 1. Run the offensive series.
 2. Defend the goal
 3. Designate which goal will be used for the duration of the overtime.
- b. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options.

ARTICLE 2. The ball shall be placed on the 20 yard line nearest the designated goal, and Team A will have a series of four downs to attempt a score, as in regulation play. If intercepted by Team B, the series ends for A. If a touch-down is scored, the PAT will be attempted, series ending after the attempt. A field goal may be attempted, series ending after the attempt, unless the ball does not cross the scrimmage line and it is not yet 4th down.

Section 6

ARTICLE 3. After Team A completes its series, the teams will reverse positions and Team B (now Team A) will have a series of four downs to score. If the score remains tied, the procedure is repeated until there is a winner.

Penalties During Overtime

ARTICLE 4. Penalties shall be interpreted according to the regular rules of flag football.

Running and Passing Plays

ARTICLE 5. Each play shall begin by scrimmage, and include running and passing plays.

Section 7. Missed Field Goal

ARTICLE 1. After missed field goal attempt the ball goes back to the previous spot, if attempt was outside B's 20 yard line, inside B's 20 yard line it will be a touchback, next put in play on 20 yard line.

Scoring Variation

Teams may elect not to kick field goals and extra points. They may elect not to have goal posts, and may play on 120 yard field. All extra points shall start from three yard line.

Section 1

RULE 9

CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS SUBJECT TO THE RULES

Section 1. Deliberate Flagrant Fouls

Suspension From The Game

ARTICLE 1. Whenever, in the judgment of any game official, the following acts are deliberate or flagrant, the players involved shall be ejected from the game:

- a. Using fists, kicking or kneeling.
- b. Using locked hands, elbows or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to rule.
- c. Tackling the ball carrier as in regulation football.
- d. Roughing the kicker or holder of a kick.
- e. Any other deliberate or flagrant act.

Prohibited Acts

ARTICLE 2. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches or others subject to the rules.

- a. Using any act of unsportsmanlike conduct including:
 1. Abusive or insulting language.
 2. Any acts of unfair play.
 3. Managers, coaches or others on the field of play at any time without permission, or their interference of any nature with the progress of the game.
 4. Players leaving the field of play other than during the intermission at half time.
 5. A substitute or any other person interfering with a player or any play while the ball is alive.
 6. Using a "hide out play" by placing a player or players near the side line who were not within 15 yards of the ball at the ready-for-play signal.
 7. The punter delaying the kick, after requesting protection.
 8. Attempting to substitute a suspended player.
 9. **Pulling or removing a flag from an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player intentionally.**
 10. Spiking ball, taunting opponent or other similar theatrics before or after a touchdown. *Penalty: 15 yards, and if flagrant, offender shall be disqualified.*

Section 3

Section 2. Unfair Acts

Unfair Acts

ARTICLE 1. If a team refuses to play within two minutes after ordered to play by the Referee, or if play is interfered with by an obviously unfair or unsportsmanlike act not specifically covered by the rules; or if a team repeatedly commits fouls which can be penalized only by halving the distance to its goal line, the Referee may enforce any penalty he considers equitable, including the awarding of a score. For refusal to play, or for repeated fouls, the Referee shall, after one warning, forfeit the game to the opponents.

Section 3. Personal Fouls

Player Restrictions

ARTICLE 1. No player shall commit a personal foul during a period or during an intermission. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul.

- a. No player shall block in a manner that would cause his feet, knees or legs to strike an opponent. All blocking shall be done with the feet in contact with the ground.
- b. There shall be no high-low blocking.
- c. There shall be no two-on-one blocking except as indicated by rule.
- d. There shall be no tripping; there shall be no clipping.
- e. There shall be no contact with an opponent who is on the ground.
- f. The runner shall not be thrown to the ground.
- g. There shall be no hurdling. Hurdling shall be interpreted as an attempt by the runner to jump over a player with both feet or knees of the runner foremost.
- h. No player shall contact an opponent obviously out of play either before or after the ball is declared dead.
- i. There shall be no unnecessary roughness of any nature.
- j. **The Ball Carrier shall not deliberately run into a defensive player.**
Penalty: 10 yards — Flagrant offenders may be disqualified.
- k. Tackling
- l. Using fists
- m. Knocking out-of-bounds
- n. Downfield blocking
- o. Diving to gain advantage (ball carrier)
- p. Roughing the passer - *Penalty: 10 yards and automatic 1st down, if a touchdown scored - yardage is assessed on the Kick-off. If flagrant - player ejected.*

Section 4

Section 4. Use of Hands and Arms When Ball is in Possession

Helping The Runner

ARTICLE 1. The Ball Carrier shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate. *Penalty: 5 yards.*

Offensive Use of Hands

ARTICLE 2. The offensive team shall be prohibited from obstructing an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a "stiffarm" extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag, may not charge into defensive player. (Charging) *Penalty: 10 yards.*

Blocking And Interlocked Interference

ARTICLE 3. Players of either team may block opponents provided it is neither forward pass interference, interference with opportunity to catch a kick, nor a personal foul. Teammates of a Ball Carrier or Passer may interfere by blocking, but there shall be no interlocking interference. The prohibition includes grasping or encircling one another, to any degree, with the hand or arm. *Penalty: 10 yards.*

Leaving Feet to Obtain Possession of Ball

ARTICLE 4. No player may leave the ground with both feet in an attempt to gain possession of a ball which is rolling on the ground. *Penalty: 10 yards.*

Protecting Flags

ARTICLE 5. Ball Carriers shall not protect their Flags by blocking with arms or hands the opportunity of an opponent to pull or remove a Flag. *Penalty: 10 yards.*

Obstruction of Ball Carrier

ARTICLE 6. The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct forward progress of a Ball Carrier when in the act of removing a Flag. *Penalty: 10 yards.*

Blocking

ARTICLE 7. Players shall be limited to the following: 1) In all instances blockers must be on their feet when blocking. Accidentally falling when attempting a block is not an illegal block. 2) When using a hand or forearm to block, the elbow must be entirely outside the shoulder. 3) The blocker's hands may not be locked. 4) The blocker may not swing, throw, or flip the elbow for forearm. 5) The hands may be closed or cupped but the palms may not be facing the

Section 5

opponent being blocked. 6) There shall be no two on one blocking beyond the line of scrimmage. 7) Blocking below the waist is illegal. 8) Offensive player may use an extended arm (pro block) providing palms are facing opponent and blocker is either stationary or moving backward. *Penalty: Illegal block: 10 yards. (No cross body blocking.)*

Use of Hands

ARTICLE 8. Players may use their hands to grasp, push or pull an opponent in an attempt to get at the Ball Carrier, and may also use their hands for protection in warding off an opponent, or to get at a loose ball.

ARTICLE 9. Defensive holding shall be a 5 yard penalty and a first down, *Except: On the ball carrier.*

**Section 5. Illegal Participation
Batting and Kicking****Batting a Free Ball**

ARTICLE 1. No player shall participate by touching the ball or hindering an opponent after having been out of bounds. This does not include being blocked or pushed out of bounds.

ARTICLE 2. No replaced player or substitute shall hinder an opponent, touch the ball, or otherwise participate.

ARTICLE 3. No A player shall be lying on the ground, nor shall team attendant(s) or substitute(s), or a pretended substitution be used to deceive B at or immediately before the snap.

ARTICLE 4. While a pass is in *flight*, any player may bat the ball in any direction. No player shall bat any other loose ball in flight forward in the field of play, or in any direction if it is in an end zone. *Penalty: 10 yards.*

Illegally Kicking Ball

ARTICLE 5. No player shall deliberately kick a loose ball, a pass, or a ball being held for a place kick by an opponent. *Penalty: 10 yards.*

Section 1

RULE 10

ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

Section 1. Procedure After a Foul

ARTICLE 1. *When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify the offended captain of his option. If the penalty is declined or there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. A captain's choice of options may not be revoked.*

ARTICLE 2. *When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free kick or a snap, the ball does not become alive. The referee shall notify the offended captain of his options.*

ARTICLE 3. *When a live ball foul is followed by a dead ball foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.*

Section 2. Double and Multiple Fouls

ARTICLE 1. *When both teams commit live ball fouls during the same live ball period and (a) there is no change of team possession, or (b) there was a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down had fouled prior to final change of possession, it is a double foul. In (a) or (b) the penalties cancel and the down is replayed.*

ARTICLE 2. *If both teams foul during a down where there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided it did not foul prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul.*

ARTICLE 3. *When two or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team, only one penalty may be chosen except when a foul(s) for unsportsmanlike conduct follows a previous foul. In such a case, the penalty(s) for the unsportsmanlike conduct is administered separately. The offended captain may choose which penalty will be administered or he may decline all penalties.*

ARTICLE 4. *Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrences. Dead ball fouls are not coupled with live ball fouls or other dead ball fouls to create double or multiple fouls. Penalize all unsportsmanlike fouls separately, and in addition to those occurring during a down by the same team.*

Section 3. Types of Play and Basic Enforcement Spots

ARTICLE 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: (a) a loose ball play, and (b) a running play. a. A loose ball play is action during.*

Section 4

1. A free kick.
2. A scrimmage kick.
3. A legal forward pass.
4. A backward pass or a fumble by A from in or behind the neutral zone.
5. A loose ball play also includes the run which precedes a legal pass, kick, or fumble.

NOTE: When a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot. However if the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the basic enforcement spot, it is from the spot of the foul.

- b. A running play is any action not included an item (a).
1. Behind the line, a running play includes a run which is not followed by a loose ball.
 2. Beyond the line, a running play includes any run and any loose ball which starts beyond the line following the run.
 3. A run ends when a runner loses possession, and that spot becomes the basic spot of enforcement.

NOTE: When a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is where the related run ends, which is where the ball becomes dead or where the player loses possession. However, if the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the basic enforcement spot, it is from the spot of the foul.

Section 4. Administering Penalties

ARTICLE 1. The penalty for a foul between downs is enforced from the succeeding spot.

ARTICLE 2. The penalty for a foul which occurs simultaneously with a snap or free kick is enforced from the previous spot, which is the spot of the snap or free kick.

Section 5. Special Enforcements

ARTICLE 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 penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the enforcement spot to the goal line.

ARTICLE 2. If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul on or behind its goal line for which the penalty is accepted, it is a safety. For a defensive team foul on or behind the offended team's goal, measurement is from the goal line.

ARTICLE 3. If there is a foul by the defense during a down which results in a successful field-goal, touchdown or try, the penalty may be measured on the succeeding kickoff or, if there is an overtime, from the succeeding spot.

ARTICLE 4. A disqualified player must always leave the game.

ARTICLE 5. A referee's decision to forfeit a game must be accepted by both teams.

NOTE: There are some tenets or basic rules which are established for flag football because of legal or illegal removal of flags which do not apply to regular football. These follow:

(1) Deflagging (one or more flags) is only allowed under special circumstances similar to tackling in football. Offensive players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged.

(2) A flag(s) removed inadvertently (not removed by grabbing and pulling) does not cause play to stop. It should continue as if the flag(s) had not been removed.

(3) In circumstances where a flag(s) is removed inadvertently or illegally (accidentally) the play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play.

(4) In all situations where a play is in progress and a ball carrier loses one or all flags (rare) either accidentally, inadvertently, or on purpose, play shall be stopped at the spot where the flag is dropped. If any player loses a flag, he still is eligible to catch a forward pass, but cannot advance the ball, and the play is dead where the ball is caught.

Penalty Enforcement Philosophy

Whenever the ball is alive one of two types of plays is in progress. It is either a running play or a loose ball play. The type of play has no significance unless a foul occurs. When a foul occurs, in order to determine the basic spot of enforcement, the official must know (1) which team committed the foul and where it occurred in relation to where the play started; (2) whether the foul was during a running play; or (3) whether it was during a loose ball play.

If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the run ends. Example: A1 runs to B's 20 where his flag is removed. During the run there is a foul by A. The run ended at B's 20, therefore that is the spot of enforcement. All fouls on this play would be penalized from B's 20 except a foul by A behind B's 20, which would be penalized from the spot of the foul.

A running play which is followed by a loose ball such as backward pass, fumble, or illegal pass by A during which a foul occurs, either during the run or the loose ball, is also enforced from the spot where the run ended, unless it is by the offense behind where the run ends, in which case it would be enforced from the spot of the foul.

If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic penalty enforcement spot is the previous spot, which is either the spot of the snap or the spot of the free kick. Example: K1 punts and between the time of the snap and the time the kick ends there is a foul by A or B. RULING: The foul occurred during a loose ball play, therefore the previous spot (same as the spot of the snap) is the basic enforcement spot. The only exception would be a foul by the offense behind the basic spot, which would be enforced from the spot of the foul.

Enforcement provisions apply to all fouls, whether by players or non-players.

PLAY RULINGS

A play ruling is an official decision on a given statement of fact. It illustrates the spirit and application of the rules.

Rule 3 — Periods, Time Factors, Substitutes

1. A shoelace, jersey, or other equipment breaks or tears. Should repair or replacement be made on the Referee time. RULING: No, unless the Referee considers such equipment dangerous to other players.
2. Neither team has been charged with a time-out when a Field Captain requests a time-out and designates an injured player who is replaced. RULING: Charge the Referee with a time-out.
3. After a one-minute intermission one of the teams is not ready to play. RULING: Penalize the offending team for illegal delay.
4. In an attempt to consume time near the end of a period, Team A "stalls" and exceeds the 25 second count. RULING: The Referee shall order the clock be started when the ball is next put in play.

Rule 4 — Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-of-Bounds

5. A Ball Carrier inbounds bumps into or is touched by a player on the side line. RULING: The ball is *not out-of-bounds*.

Rule 5 — Series of Downs and Zone-To-Gain

6. Team B runs back Team A's kick or intercepted pass. During the run a Team B player holds. RULING: Team B is penalized 10 yards from the spot of the holding foul and it is B's ball. 1st and zone in advance of the holding spot.
7. Team A Ball Carrier attempts a backward pass which is ruled forward and illegal. The pass strikes the ground. RULING: Penalize Team A 5 yards at the spot from where the pass was thrown and, unless the current series is broken, the scrimmage counts a down.
8. Team A's scrimmage kick goes out-of-bounds at B's 30 yard line after which a Team B player commits illegal use of the hands. RULING: 1st and two zones to go.


Rule 6 — Kicks

9. Team A player touches a rolling free kick before it reaches the opponents restraining line. RULING: Team B's ball where first touched by A.
10. A player of Team A recovers a rolling free kick beyond B's restraining line and makes a backward pass which goes out-of-bounds. RULING: The ball is dead and belongs to Team A where its player recovered it.

11. A free kick strikes a Team B player who is in Team B's end zone and the ball then goes out-of-bounds at the 3 yard line. RULING: Touchback.
12. Team A player catches a free kick, this preventing a nearby opponent from making the catch. RULING: Illegal interference.
13. Team B player about to catch a scrimmage kick is touched or deflagged before the ball arrives but catches the kick. RULING: Illegal interference.
14. A player of the kicking team who is standing or running between a kick in flight and an opponent is struck by the ball in flight; or, the receiver, in attempting to catch the kick, bumps into a member of the kicking team. RULING: Illegal interference by the kicking team.
15. A player of the receiving team, attempting to catch a kick, touches the ball which is then caught by an opponent before striking the ground. RULING: Not interference. Protection against interference with opportunity to catch a kick ceases when any player of the receiving team touches it. Ball is dead where caught and belongs to kicking team, 1st and zone to gain.

Rule 7 — The Scrimmage, Snapping, Handing, and Passing the Ball

16. A defensive player charges into the neutral zone but gets back into legal position before the snap. RULING: Encroachment.
17. After a huddle or shift all offensive players come to a legal stop and remain stationary for a full second. Then, before the snap, two or more of them simultaneously change their positions. RULING: A second shift. All offensive players must remain stationary for one full second before the snap. Otherwise it is an illegal shift.
18. Following a huddle or shift offensive players take preliminary positions, then advance or drop into final positions. RULING: Such movement constitutes a shift; players must hold their final positions for one second before the snap.
19. An opponent snatches ("steals") the ball from the Ball Carrier. RULING: The ball continues in play.
20. A player of the receiving team catches a kick, then fumbles the ball. A player of the kicking team catches the fumbled ball before it strikes the ground. RULING: The ball continues in play.
21. Team A's legal forward pass is first touched by one of its receivers, then caught by another. RULING: Completed pass. On such a play Passer also becomes eligible receiver.
22. A Team B player, defending against a legal forward pass, with back to ball and waving his or her arms in the face of an eligible receiver of Team A, who, in attempting to catch the pass, bumps into the Team B player. RULING: Pass interference by the Team B player. A bona fide attempt to catch or bat the pass was not being made.



Rule 8 — Scoring

23. The Ball Carrier, after receiving the snap in the end zone, the flag is removed with the ball resting above the goal line, its forward point being in the field of play. RULING: Safety: A part of the dead ball is on the Runner's goal line.
24. The ball is snapped to a Team A player who punts from Team A's end zone, the ball going out-of-bounds behind the Kicker's goal line. RULING: Safety.
25. A Team B player intercepts a legal forward pass in Team B's end zone, attempts to run it out but has **the flag removed** behind his goal line, RULING: Touchback.
26. A Team B player catches a kick in Team B's end zone; then fumbles and the ball goes out-of-bounds behind the goal line. RULING: Touchback.

Ruling 9 — Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules

27. An offensive player's hand or arm, which is in legal blocking position, contacts an opponent above the shoulder, the contact occurring because the opponent squats, ducks or submarines. RULING: Not an infraction.
28. After a legal forward pass has been touched a receiver who has a reasonable chance to reach the pass uses hand or arm to push an opponent out of the way. RULING: Legal use of hand or arm.

SUMMARY OF PENALTIES

O, OFFICIALS' SIGNALS (SEE PAGES 55-59) WITH THE NUMBERS REFERRING TO THE NUMBERED ILLUSTRATIONS:

R, RULINGS; S, SECTION; A, ARTICLE; P, PAGE

Loss of 5 Yards

	O	R	S	A	P
Illegal forward pass by Team A or B (if by A, the down counts).....	13	7	4	2	34
Invalid fair catch	26	6	5	5	31
Excess time-out illegally used or requested	6	3	3	5	20
Illegal Delay of Game	6	3	4	2	20
Putting ball in play before declared ready-for-play	2	3	4	2	20
Infraction of free kick formation	1	6	1	2	28
Illegal snap	2	7	1	2	32
Infraction of scrimmage formation	1	7	1	2	32
Interference with opponents or the ball	14	7	1	2	32
Offensive player illegally in motion at the snap	3	7	1	2	33
False start or simulating start of the play	2	7	1	2	32
Player on line receiving snap	2	7	1	2	33
Illegally handing ball forward (also loss of down if by Team A)	13	7	2	1	33
Intentionally ground pass (also loss of a down)	12	7	4	2	34
Illegal kick	15	6	3	1	29
Illegal shift	3	7	1	2	33
Interlocked Interference	7	9	4	3	42
Helping the Runner	17	9	4	1	42
Defensive holding (Except Ball Carrier)	11	9	4	9	43

Loss of 10 Yards

Team not ready to play at start of either half	6	3	4	1	20
Interference with opportunity to catch a kick	14	6	4	1	31
Offensive forward pass interference (also the down counts if by A)	14	7	4	7	35
Striking, kicking, kneeling, elbowing, etc.	10	9	1	1	40
Meeting with knees, striking with open hand, etc.	7	9	1	1	40
Roughing the kicker or holder (also 1st down)	9	9	1	1	40
Hurdling	6	9	3	1	41
Tripping	7	9	3	1	41
Running into opponent	7	9	3	1	41
Roughing the passer (also 1st down)	7	9	3	1	41
Clipping	8	9	3	1	41
Illegal use of hand or arm by offense	11	9	4	2	42
Protecting flags	7	9	4	5	42
Illegal removal of flag	10	9	1	2	40
Obstructing ball carrier	7	9	4	6	42

Loss of 15 Yards

Unsportsmanlike conduct	10	9	1	2	40
Persons Illegally on the field	10	9	1	2	40

OFFENDED TEAM'S BALL AT SPOT OF FOUL

	O	R	S	A	P
Defensive Pass Interference	14	7	4	7	35
Violation					
Illegally Kicking a ball	15	9	5	5	43
Illegal participation	4	9	5	1	43
Illegal touching a free kick by kicking team					
(offended team's ball at spot)	15	6	1	4	28
Illegal touching of scrimmage kick	15	6	3	6	30
Loss of half distance to goal line					
if distance penalty exceeds half the distance		10	5	1	45

THE OFFICIALS

Responsibilities and Procedures

General

The authorized officials are the Referee, Umpire, and Linesman when three officials are used and the Field Judge when four officials are used. All officials have concurrent jurisdiction over any foul and each shares responsibility for the proper conduct of the game and enforcement of the rules.

All officials on the playing field will carry a whistle. The official who is covering the runner is primarily responsible for sounding the whistle when the ball becomes dead. This should be done quickly and loudly in order to stop action and prevent rough play.

The Referee will sound a whistle to indicate that the ball is ready for play. An official will sound the whistle immediately to prevent a snap or free kick when a dead ball foul occurs. For other situations, officials should use a marker to indicate that a foul has occurred.

When an official sees an infraction, a marker should be thrown, the spot of the foul noted, and the spot where the given run ended noted. The official should continue to attend to other assigned duties while the ball is alive. When the down ends the Referee should be informed of the foul, the status of the ball when the foul occurred, and the offending team. The Referee will give the preliminary signal prior to explaining the options to the offended captain. Following the administration of the penalty, the Referee will face each sideline and give the proper signal.

If there is a difference of opinion, testimony or interpretation, the referee shall make the final decision. Players may be cautioned against technical violations. All officials must know and use arm signals to indicate fouls and violations called.

Whenever a runner goes out of bounds the nearest official should signal "time out" immediately and mark the out-of-bounds spot. The other officials should repeat the "time out" signal at once.

Referee

The Referee has general oversight and control of the game and is sole authority for the score, sole judge of forfeiture of game by rule, and decides upon all matters not specifically placed under the jurisdiction of the other officials.

Whenever play is suspended the Referee will complete any penalty which may have been incurred; spot the ball where play is to resume; announce team-possession for the next down; and indicate, by use of prescribed signal, that the ball is ready-for-play.

The Referee must see that the ball is put in play and declared dead according to rule and has final authority over the ball's position and progress.

Prior to the beginning of a game the Referee must test and select the game ball or balls and must also inspect the entire field and report any irregularities to the Field Captain of each team and to fellow officials.

If a Referee orders the ball changed between downs an assistant on each side line may be asked to expedite the exchanges.

After each time-out and before play is resumed, the Referee must make sure that both teams and all officials are ready.

Unless the most advantageous choice is obvious the Referee shall explain to the Field Captain any option or alternatives to which players may be entitled and then proceed in accordance with the choice first expressed by that Field Captain.

The Referee must instantly signal "time out" whenever play is suspended.

For scrimmage play the Referee's normal position is behind and to the side of the team on offense.

Umpire

The Umpire has primary jurisdiction over the equipment and conduct of the players.

In each scrimmage the Umpire is particularly responsible for observing line play but must also cover open play which develops after linemen make their initial charge.

For scrimmage plays the Umpire's normal position is behind the team on defense. Umpires must adjust their position to the defensive formation and avoid interfering with the vision of movement of defensive players.

Linesman

The Linesman has initial responsibility over the neutral zone and infractions of the scrimmage formation but must also cover open play which develops to the Linesman's side of the field.

Linesmen assist the Referee in marking the progress of the ball and keep an accurate count of the downs. They must provide themselves with assistants who remain out-of-bounds and conform to the linesman's direction.

For a scrimmage formation the Linesman's normal position is straddling the neutral zone but well clear of all players.

Field Judge

The Field Judge has primary jurisdiction over the timing of the game and must have a whistle and act for the Referee on down field play.

The Field Judge must start and stop the game clock as prescribed by the rules and keep the Referee informed with respect to the time remaining in each period. When a foul is declared while the ball is in play, the Field Judge shall stop the clock when the ball becomes dead. (Exception:) Running clock except last two minutes of each half.

The Field Judge must provide a stop watch and be prepared to time the game with that watch or with a scoreboard clock operated by an assistant.

Whenever a scoreboard clock is used, the Field Judge must observe it closely and be ready to take up the timing with a stop watch if for any reason the scoreboard clock fails to function properly.

The Field Judge must be particularly alert to cover and rule on down field play and shall sound a whistle instantly whenever the ball becomes dead.

For a scrimmage, the position of the Field Judge is on the side of the field opposite the Linesman either straddling or beyond the scrimmage line toward the defense.

Officials' Signals



1. Encroachment or violation of free-kick rules.



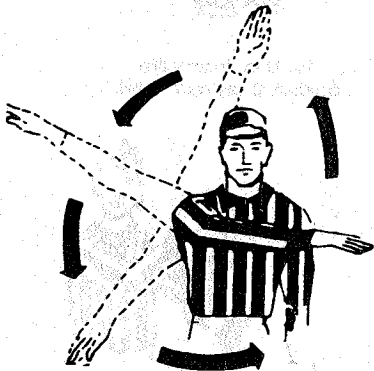
2. False start. Illegal position or procedure. Illegal forward handling.



3. Illegal Motion
Illegal Shift



4. Illegal Participation



5. Start the clock.



6. Delay of game.



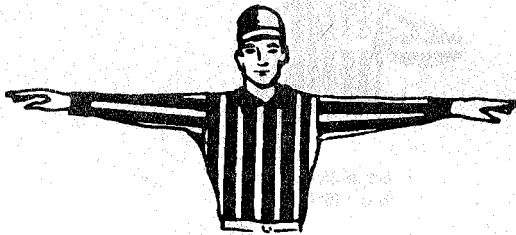
7. Personal Foul



8. Clipping



9. Roughing the kicker



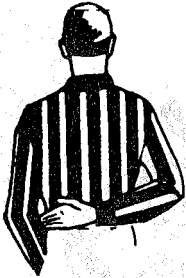
10. Unsportsmanlike conduct. Delay start of half.



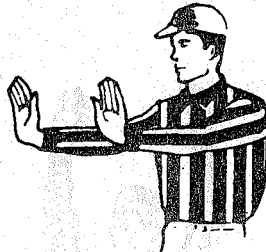
11. Illegal use of Hand or Arm



12. Intentional Grounding



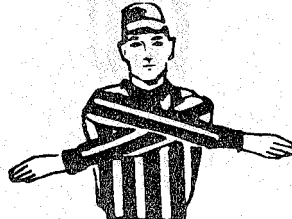
13. Illegally Passing or Handing Ball Forward



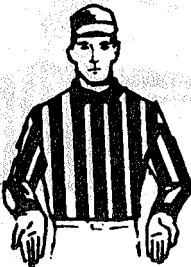
14. Interference with fair catch or forward pass.



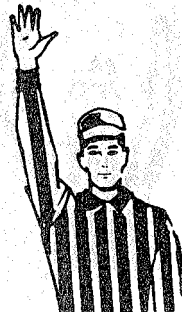
15. Illegally kicking or batting a loose ball. First touching of a kick.



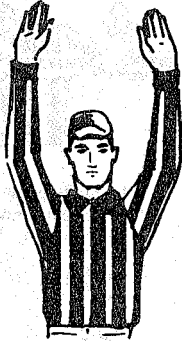
16. Incomplete Forward Pass. Penalty Declined, No Play, or No Score.



17. Pushing, helping runner or interlocked interference.



18. Dead ball foul (Follow with foul signal). If waved side to side: Touch back.



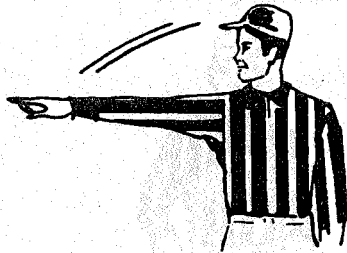
19. Touchdown or Field Goal



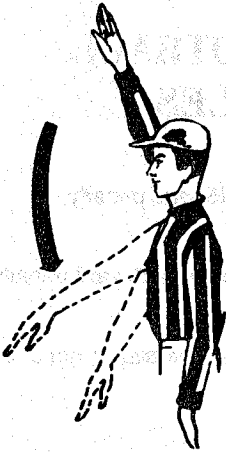
20. Safety



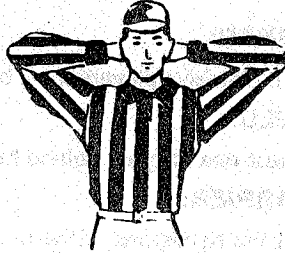
21. Time-Out



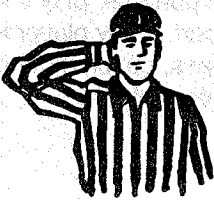
22. First Down



23. Ball Ready-for-Play



24. Loss of Down



25. Illegal protecting or illegal removal of the flag.



26. Invalid Fair Catch.

BASIC FLAG FOOTBALL PLAYING RULES

AT THE SNAP:

4 of 8 offensive players must be on the line. (5 yard penalty.)

BACKFIELD:

At least one (1) yard behind the line of scrimmage. (5 yard penalty.)

BALL CARRIER:

Shall not deliberately drive or run into a defensive player, nor straight arm, nor protect the flag. (10 yard penalty)

BLOCKING

Blockers must be on their feet before, during, and after contact. (10 yard penalty).

DEAD BALL:

The ball is dead when an opponent removes the ball carrier's flag.

NOTE: In all cases where a play is in progress and a ball carrier loses a flag either accidentally, inadvertently, or on purpose, play shall be stopped at the spot where the flag is dropped. If any player loses a flag, he still is eligible to catch a legal forward pass, but cannot advance the ball, and the ball is dead where the ball is caught.

DECLARED SCRIMMAGE KICK:

There is no rushing the kicker when a team announces a declared kick to the Referee before the ready-for-play. After announcement a team must kick. Both teams must keep 4 players on the line of scrimmage until the kick is made. A declared kick may be used for the try and is worth one point. (10 yard penalty).

DEFENSIVE PLAYER:

Shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct forward progress of ball carrier when in the act of removing a flag. (10 yard penalty) Exception: (5 yards and first down defensive holding)

END ZONES:

Are 10 yards in width. Goal posts are on the end line.

EQUIPMENT:

Shoulder pads, helmets, and hip pads are not legal equipment.

FLAGS:

Players must wear two USFFA approved same length flags attached to a belt at the waist. (Flag-A-Tag Flags)

FORWARD PASS:

All players are eligible receivers. A team may make multiple forward passes behind the neutral zone. No pass interference rule if pass stays in or behind the neutral zone.

FUMBLE:

Loss of possession after control: Ball is dead when it strikes the ground.

GAME TIME:

A regulation game is of 60 minute duration, including 4 quarters of 15 minutes each.

KICKOFFS:

Must be a place kick or a drop kick. Ball is kicked from the 20 yard line in a 4 zone field and from the 40 yard line in a 5 zone field.

KICKOFF RECOVERY:

An untouched free kick must travel 20 yards before the kicking team can legally recover unless touched by the receiving team.

LINE TO GAIN:

The line-to-gain in any series is the zone in advance of the ball. A new series is awarded a team when they legally advance to the next zone.

MUFF

An unsuccessful attempt to catch or recover the ball. Ball becomes dead when it touches the ground after a muff.

STANCE:

All players of *both teams*, except the snapper, may use any stance.

TEAMS:

The game is played between two teams of eight players per team.

ZONES:

A zone is 20 yards wide. Four or five zones constitute the playing area plus 10 yard end zones.

NOTES

The following are rule changes called to your attention:

1. Playing fields 100 yards, including end zones. Page 3
2. Four fifteen minute quarters. Page 17
3. Soft caps are legal. Page 7
4. No downfield blocking. No cross body blocking any time. Page 9, 41
5. Offensive and defensive players (except center) may take any stance. Snapper must snap back between legs, facing downfield. Page 13, 32
6. Defensive players must remain one yard off the ball (neutral zone) until ball is snapped. Page 13
7. Defensive player may leave his feet to secure a flag. Page 13
8. Ball carrier may not run into defensive player (charging) 10 yards. Page 41
9. See rule book on overtime. Page 18, 38
10. Two minute warning. Page 19
11. Backward pass, if goes past receiver ball is dead where hits ground. Page 22, 34
12. No rushing kicker. Page 29
13. All players are eligible. Page 34
14. Receivers must have both feet in bounds for legal catch. Page 35
15. Fourth down incomplete pass into end zone inside 20 yard line, ball goes back to previous spot. Page 35
16. Ball is placed where flags are pulled, even though ball breaks plane, flags must cross goal line. Page 22, 25
17. Pass interference: If by A 10 yards and down counts, if by B first down for A at spot of foul, if in B end zone, first down on one yard line. Page 35
18. Four men, must be on line of scrimmage. Page 32
19. All defensive holding except on the ball carrier shall be a FIVE YARD penalty and a new series (FIRST DOWN) Official should note that some grabbing and pushing does go on at the line of scrimmage, HOLDING OF THE BALL CARRIER is different and is covered in our rules. Page 43
20. See Rule and Player loses his flag. Page 35, 46
21. Team area shall be between the 20 yard lines. Page 3, 6
22. All flags must be USFFA approved same length Flag-A-Tag Flags. Page 7
23. Kick-Off that goes out of bounds spotted as per rule. Page 29
24. Players not wearing belts and flags. Page 7, 20, 21, 35, 46