



FLAG
FLAG FOOTBALL
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RULE BOOK

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New for Spring and Fall 2016

Each change or altered segment is identified in the rules by a highlighted background. The different colors indicate when the change was implemented: **Spring 2016** and **Fall 2016**.

General

- 1.1.1** Football is played between two teams of seven players on a rectangular field. Each team must have a minimum of 6 players to start a game. Each team must have a minimum of 5 eligible players on the field, or the game results in a forfeit. A team may play with up to 7 players, regardless of the number of opposing players. All players present at the start of a game must play either the first possession on offense or the first possession on defense. In this case, a possession is defined as the period of time one team controls the football. A single possession may include multiple series. A player may only be excluded from this rule with the agreement of the head referee prior to the start of the game.

PENALTY – Excessive Unsportsmanlike Act – 25 yards from previous spot

Changes to Time-Outs and Game Clock

- 3.2.4** A period (half) must be extended by an untimed down if during the last timed down of the period, one of the following occurred:
- a) There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted, except for those fouls listed in 3.2.6b.
 - b) There was a double foul.
 - c) There was an inadvertent whistle.
 - d) If a timeout is called by either team with 30 seconds or less left in the first half.

If (a), (b) or (c) occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated.

- 2.17.1** Time-outs are suspensions of play when any player requests a charged time-out or when an official suspends play. Each team is allowed 3 timeouts per non-overtime game, with no more than 2 timeouts used in one half. The duration of each charged time-out is 30 seconds. Captains and team attendants may enter the field during time-outs.

- 3.1.4** The clock will not stop for player's time-outs during the first half.

- 3.1.5** During the last two minutes of the second half, the clock will stop for player's time-outs, official time-outs, delay of game penalties, after an incomplete pass, a first down, the ball carrier stepping out of bounds and after a scoring play. In the case of a player's timeout, a delay of game penalty or a scoring play, the clock will start on the next legal snap of a timed down. In all other cases, the game clock will start again once the ball is spotted and the ready for play signal is given by the referee. A half may be shortened by agreement of opposing coaches and the Head Referee.

- 3.3.2 Each team is allowed 3 timeouts per non-overtime game, with no more than 2 timeouts used in one half. The duration of each charged timeout is 30 seconds. Captains and team attendants may enter the field during time-outs.
- 3.3.3 The clock will not stop for player's time-outs during the first half and during the first 23 minutes of the second half.
- 3.3.4 At 2 minutes remaining in the second half, or at the next play stoppage after 2 minutes, the clock will stop; the head referee will blow the whistle and announce the two-minute warning. The clock will start again on the ready for play whistle.
- 3.4.2 The clock will stop for a delay of game penalty that occurs within the last two minutes of the second half. The clock shall start when the ball is snapped.

PENALTY: Delay of Game (dead-ball foul) - 5 yards

- 7.6.1 If one team is ahead by 20 or more points with two minutes remaining in the second half, then the game is over.

Rule Clarifications

- 2.2.3 A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble is an interception. If a player attempts to catch or intercept a loose ball while he is in the air, the ball must be in his possession (A player is in possession when he is inbounds and has a firm grip and control of the ball with his hands or arms.) when he returns to the ground in-bounds (at least one foot must touch the ground in-bounds) prior to touching out-of-bounds.
EXCEPTIONS: *If a player catches a pass and is pushed out-of-bounds, the pass is considered complete if an official judges that the player would have caught the ball in-bounds except for the pushing.*
- 2.2.7 Batting is intentionally slapping or striking, with hand, leg, arm or knee, a loose ball or a ball in player possession.
NOTE: *A player is in possession when he is inbounds and has a firm grip and control of the ball with his hands or arms.*
- 2.10.2 A portion of the snapper's body may be over the ball at the time of the snap as long as the snapper is set and the snap occurs as defined in 2.10.1. If the head referee determines that the snapper's position gives them a distinct advantage the referee shall explain that to the snapper as well as the captain and allow them to adjust.
- 6.1.3 No offensive or defensive player shall be in the neutral zone or on the opponent's side of the neutral zone at the time of the snap.
NOTE: *Snapper exception defined in Section 2.10.2*
PENALTY: Offsides (live-ball foul) - 5 yards
- 6.2.3 After a huddle or shift, all Team A players shall come to an absolute stop and remain stationary, simultaneously, without pronounced

movement of hands, feet, head or body for at least one second before the snap.

PENALTY: Illegal Shift (live-ball foul) - 5 yards

7.6.1 If one team is ahead by 20 or more points at the two-minute warning, then the game is over.

8.2.4 A defensive player may not intentionally push or block a runner who is near the sideline. A defensive player shall not intentionally hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when trying to remove his flag (this includes tackling and body blocking). Grabbing for more than one flag by a defensive player may be considered illegal blocking if it appears that the deflagger is attempting to obstruct the forward progress of the runner.

PENALTY: Holding the Runner - 10 yards

8.4.1 No player may act in an unsportsmanlike manner during the game or intermission. Examples include:

- a) abusive or insulting language or gestures
- b) baiting acts or words or insignia worn which engenders ill will
- c) using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A's signal or movements
- d) intentionally kicking at any player or the ball or intentionally swinging an arm or fist at any player
- e) leaving the field between plays or using a "hide out play" by placing a player or players near the sideline to gain an advantage unless replaced or unless with the permission of the referee
- f) failing to place the ball, after it becomes dead, on the ground or immediately return it to a nearby official
- g) spiking the ball or throwing the ball in the air or from the field of play
- h) attempting to substitute a suspended player
- i) taunting an opponent

PENALTY: Unsportsmanlike Acts - 10 yards (enforced from the succeeding spot) & possible removal from game for (a) & (d). An Unsportsmanlike Act may be deemed excessive by the Head Referee - 25 yards (enforced from the succeeding spot) & possible removal from game.

8.9.1 No player or non-player shall hinder play by an obviously unfair act which has no specific rule coverage. Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game. **NOTE: Repeated fouls will cause the game to be forfeited.**

PENALTY; Unfair Acts - Enforces any penalty he/she considers equitable, including the award of a score.

RULE 1

THE GAME, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

Section 1 General

- 1.1.1 Football is played between two teams of seven players on a rectangular field. Each team must have a minimum of 6 players to start a game. Each team must have a minimum of 5 eligible players on the field, or the game results in a forfeit. A team may play with up to 7 players, regardless of the number of opposing players. All players present at the start of a game must play either the first possession on offense or the first possession on defense. In this case, a possession is defined as the period of time one team controls the football. A single possession may include multiple series. A player may only be excluded from this rule with the agreement of the head referee prior to the start of the game.

PENALTY – Excessive Unsportsmanlike Act – 25 yards from previous spot

- 1.1.2 A crew of officials administers the game. Officials' jurisdiction begins with the scheduled coin toss of the game (or the first game if multiple games are scheduled). The Referees have authority to rule promptly, in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in these rules. All players, non-players, and others authorized to be within the team area are subject to these rules and are governed by the decisions of the officials.

Section 2 The Field and Markings

- 1.2.1 The field will be rectangular with the preferred dimensions of 60 yards by 30 yards (plus two end zones of 7 yards deep), although facility limitations may cause the field dimensions to be modified.
- 1.2.2 The sidelines and end lines are the boundary of the football field. These lines demark out-of-bounds; measurements will be from the inside edges of these lines. Each goal line is entirely in its end zone so that the edge toward the field of play and its vertical plane is the actual goal line. Each sideline is entirely out-of-bounds. The inside edge of the end line is the outer limit of each end zone.
- 1.2.3 End zones and in-bounds lines will be marked with brightly colored, flexible cone pylons. These cones will be placed on the out-of-bounds and end zone lines.

Section 3 Game Equipment

- 1.3.1 Teams will provide their own footballs. The Referee will decide whether the ball meets the specifications or may authorize substituting a non-sanctioned ball. If the field is wet, the Referee may order the ball changed between downs.

- 1.3.2** The football shall meet the following specifications:
- a) Long circumference: 27³/₄"-28¹/₂"
 - b) Short circumference: 20³/₄"-21¹/₄"
 - c) Long axis: 10 7/8"-11 7/16"
 - d) Inflated to a pressure of 12¹/₂ to 13¹/₂ PSI (pounds per square inch).
- 1.3.3** Any football that includes the NFHS, NCAA, or NFL Authenticating Marks shall be considered legal. No "junior size" footballs allowed.
- 1.3.4** A down indicator will mark the spot from where the ball is to be snapped and the down. A beanbag or puck will be used to mark the ball's spot and the rush zone line.

Section 4 Players and Their Equipment

- 1.4.1** Each team will designate one player as Field Captain. The designated Captain will confer with officials. A Captain's first choice of any offered decision is final. Decisions involving penalties will be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.
- 1.4.2** Players on each team must wear jerseys that are similarly colored. Jersey's must not be the same color as the football or of the flags the team is wearing.
- 1.4.3** All players must wear pants. The pants may not be the same or similar color as the football or a player's flags. Thick vertical stripes on a player's pants are not allowed. Thin piping on shorts or pants is allowed, at the referee's discretion. Pants and shorts cannot have belt loops or pockets. Short pants are preferred.
- 1.4.4** Every player must wear shoes that completely cover the foot. Metal cleats, or those that, in the opinion of the umpire, are hazardous may not be worn.
- 1.4.5** Players must wear a belt around their waist that includes three "triple threat" flags that hang at the player's sides and posterior. The flags must contrast with the player's pants and should, but don't have to, contrast the opposing teams' flags. Flags may not be looped around the inside of the belt before securing the belt. The flags shall be freely removable.
- 1.4.6** Players may wear an intraoral mouth and tooth protector.
- 1.4.7** Players may wear soft, pliable basketball or wrestling knee pads or soft pads specifically made for scrimmage pants; soft, single-layer, pliable elastic joint braces; stocking caps and other caps without hard bills and prescription or athletic safety eyeglasses. Eyeglasses must be secured with an eyeglass band. Tape, applied in fewer than four layers, may be used to support joints, such as wrists or fingers. Sunglasses are allowed, but plastic frames and lenses must be used.
- 1.4.8** Illegal equipment includes:
- a) Helmets

- b) Any kind of pads with hard components such as those for shoulder, hand, forearm or thigh, unless specifically authorized by the Head Referee
 - c) Any hard or unyielding substance, other than permitted by a specific rule
 - d) Anything that, in the opinion of the Head Referee, would confuse, potentially harm or endanger other players or is rough or abrasive
 - e) Watches, rings or other jewelry
 - f) Any foreign slippery or sticky substances
- 1.4.9** Caps and visors with hard bills may only be worn backwards. Foreign objects attached to a hat or visor are prohibited.
- 1.4.10** Prior to the game, the Team Captain will verify that all his players are legally equipped. The Head Referee will determine any questions concerning equipment legality. Each player must properly wear the required equipment while the ball is in play. A player with missing or illegal equipment must correct the deficiency before further participation. An official's time-out may be declared to permit repair of equipment that becomes illegal or defective through use.

RULE 2

DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

Section 1 Team and Player Designations

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

Section 2 Ball – Status and Catching and Touching

- 2.2.1** A live ball is a ball in play while a down is in progress. A dead ball is a ball not in play and indicates that the game is between downs.

- 2.2.2** A loose ball is a pass or fumble or otherwise not in player possession. A loose ball that has not yet touched the ground is in flight. A grounded loose ball is one that has touched ground. Any loose ball continues to be a loose ball until a player catches it and secures possession or the ball becomes dead.
- 2.2.3** A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble is an interception. If a player attempts to catch or intercept a loose ball while he is in the air, the ball must be in his possession (A player is in possession when he is inbounds and has a firm grip and control of the ball with his hands or arms.) when he returns to the ground in-bounds (at least one foot must touch the ground in-bounds) prior to touching out-of-bounds.
- EXCEPTIONS:** *If a player catches a pass and is pushed out-of-bounds, the pass is considered complete if an official judges that the player would have caught the ball in-bounds except for the pushing.*
- 2.2.4** A simultaneous catch is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by players in-bounds.
- 2.2.5** A fumble is any loss of player possession other than by passing or handing.
- 2.2.6** A muff is touching a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession.
- 2.2.7** Batting is intentionally slapping or striking, with hand, leg, arm or knee, a loose ball or a ball in player possession.
- NOTE:** *A player is in possession when he is inbounds and has a firm grip and control of the ball with his hands or arms.*

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

- 2.3.1** Blocking is legally obstructing an opponent via contact with hands or body. Blockers must be on their feet before, during and after contact is made with an opponent. A blocker is allowed to contact only that portion of the opponent's body between the waist and shoulders and the blocker's hands or forearms must be in front or to the side of the player being blocked. Exceptions: a blocker who loses personal body control due to an opponent's aggressiveness after contact shall not be penalized if he contacts an opponent other than as specified. This initial point of contact against an opponent must be with either open hands with palms contacting an opponent or a forearm. In any block, the hands or arms may not be swinging forward faster than the blocker's body. Hands must always be in advance of the elbows and the arms must be flexed at the elbows. Players must block with hands and elbows within the frame of their body. Players are not allowed to cross their arms and thrust forward in the manner of a battering ram.
- 2.3.2** Clipping is an illegal block occurring when the force of the initial contact is from behind an opponent. Doubtful cases involving a side block or the opponent turning his back to a blocker are to be judged by an official according to whether the opponent was able to see or ward off the blocker.

2.3.3 Blocking below the waist is making illegal contact below the waist of an opponent.

2.3.4 Pass rushing is the act of crossing the line of scrimmage in an attempt to interfere with a passing play and/or deflag the passer. A pass rusher must avoid charging into any Team A player. When encountering a blocker from Team A, a pass rusher must (a) stop prior to making contact with the blocker or (b) clearly change direction in an effort to move around the blocker. If a pass rusher makes an effort to move around the blocker and the blocker moves into the path of the pass rusher, there is no charging. In any case, the pass rusher may block or contact the blocker using only the techniques described in 2.3.1 above. Any Team B player may pass rush from any position on the field provided they are on B's side of the football and outside the expanded neutral zone or when any team player that began the play outside the expanded neutral zone crosses the line of scrimmage.

PENALTY: Rush Zone Encroachment – 5 yards

2.3.5 Deflagging is removing the runner's flags. Deflagging interference is when the runner slaps or obstructs the free action of an opponent's hand during a deflagging attempt. The runner's hand may not be moving faster than his body nor shall be below his waist when initial contact with an opponent is made. The runner's arm may not be rigid and straight (stiff-arm).

Section 4 Shift

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

Section 5 Down and Series

2.5.1 A down is a unit of the game which starts with a legal snap after the ball is declared ready-for-play and which ends when the ball becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.

2.5.2 Loss of a down is the loss of the right to repeat a down.

2.5.3 A series of downs (series) is a set of four downs, numbered 1, 2, 3 or 4, that is awarded to a team.

2.5.4 No series can ever start on a down other than first.

Section 6 Lines

2.6.1 A yard line is any line and its vertical plane parallel to the end lines. The yard lines, marked or unmarked, in the field of play are numbered in yards from a team's goal line to the middle of the field.

2.6.2 A goal line is the zero yard line and its vertical plane which marks the start of the field of play 7 yards from the end line. A team's goal is the one they are defending.

- 2.6.3 An end line is the outer limit of each end zone.
- 2.6.4 A sideline is the lateral limit of the field of play and the end zones; it extends from one end line to the other.
- 2.6.5 A scrimmage is the action of the two teams during a down which begins with a snap. The scrimmage line for each team is the vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. It is determined when the ball is ready-for-play and remains until the next ready-for-play signal.
- 2.6.6 Offensive players are on their line of scrimmage when they face their opponent's goal line. Offensive players must be within one yard of the line of scrimmage to be on the line. They may stand, crouch, or kneel. At the snap, both feet of every player shall be outside the outside foot of any adjacent player. All offensive players must be behind the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 2.6.7 A defensive player is on the line of scrimmage when he is within 1 yard of the scrimmage line at the snap. All defensive players must be beyond the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 2.6.8 The line-to-gain is the yard line established when a new series (1st down) occurs. Unless there is a penalty, the line-to-gain for a new series is 10 yards in advance of the ball when played for the first down of the series. If the line-to-gain extends in to the end zone, the goal line is the line-to-gain.

Section 7 Out-of-Bounds

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

Section 8 Zones

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

Section 9 Advancing the Ball

- 2.9.1** The ball may be advanced by a scrimmage running play or scrimmage passing play.
- 2.9.2** A scrimmage running play is advancing the ball across the line of scrimmage via a runner. It includes handing the ball and any backward pass thrown behind the line of scrimmage and any forward pass caught behind the line of scrimmage and subsequently advanced. Only one scrimmage running play may be used in any one possession. A scrimmage running play does not include a legal forward pass.
NOTE: Point after conversions are considered a separate series, so running is allowed on these plays.
- 2.9.3** If the penalty is accepted for a foul which occurs during a scrimmage running play, the spot of enforcement will determine if Team A is considered to have used a running play. If the spot of enforcement is beyond the line of scrimmage, a running play has been used. If the spot of enforcement is at or behind the line of scrimmage, a running play has not been used.
- 2.9.4** A scrimmage passing play is any play that includes a legal forward pass.

Section 10 Snap

- 2.10.1** A snap is handing or passing the ball backward from its position on the ground. The snap begins when the snapper first moves the ball other than an adjustment. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the hand(s) during which the ball actually leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches the quarterback (or other receiving player) before it touches a Team A lineman or the ball touches the ground. The snap ends when the ball touches the ground or is possessed by any player. The player who snaps the ball, usually the center, is the snapper.
- 2.10.2** A portion of the snapper's body may be over the ball at the time of the snap as long as the snapper is set and the snap occurs as defined in 2.10.1. If the head referee determines that the snapper's position gives them a distinct advantage the referee shall explain that to the snapper as well as the captain and allow them to adjust.
- 2.10.3** Every scrimmage down shall begin with a legal snap.
- 2.10.4** The snap shall always be from the middle of the field. In an emergency, such as a pool of water on the line, the referee has authority to move the ball to a playable spot.

Section 11 Handing the Ball

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

Section 12 Passing the Ball

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

Section 13 Foul

- 2.13.1** A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. A penalty is a yardage loss that may be imposed by a rule against a team that has committed the foul; it may include a loss of down, but usually includes replaying the down. The type of fouls are:
- a) **Player**—A foul, other than unsportsmanlike, by a player in the game (hereafter referred to as a foul)
 - b) **Non-player or unsportsmanlike**—A non-contact foul during the down which is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.
 - c) **Double**—One or more live ball fouls, other than unsportsmanlike, committed by each team at such time that the penalties offset.
 - d) **Multiple**—Two or more live ball fouls, other than unsportsmanlike, committed by the same team during the same down at such time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.
 - e) **Dead Ball**—A foul that occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before a ball is next legally snapped.
 - f) **Simultaneous with Snap**—An action or game situation that becomes an infraction when the ball is snapped.
- 2.13.2** A flagrant personal foul is a rule infraction so extreme or deliberate that it places an opponent in danger of serious or catastrophic injury.

NOTE: *No foul causes loss of the ball. No live ball foul causes the ball to become dead. There are game situations that produce results somewhat similar to fouls but are called violations. They include player disqualification and forfeiture of a game.*

Section 14 Spots Used in Administration

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

Section 15 Hurdling/Diving

- 2.15.1 Hurdling is the runner jumping so that both feet leave the ground at the same time. The runner may not hurdle to avoid being deflagged. The runner may step over an opponent who is lying prone.
- 2.15.2 Diving is the runner jumping such that both feet leave the ground at the same time and runner does not land on his feet. The runner may not dive to avoid being deflagged.

NOTE: *Diving to catch or deflag is legal provided normal contact rules apply. (i.e. Diving into a player to deflag the player is a personal foul)*

Section 16 Tripping

- 2.16.1 Tripping is obstructing an opponent below the knee.

Section 17 Time-Outs

- 2.17.1 Time-outs are suspensions of play when any player requests a charged time-out or when an official suspends play. Each team is allowed 3 timeouts per non-overtime game, with no more than 2 timeouts used in one half. The duration of each charged time-out is 30 seconds. Captains and team attendants may enter the field during time-outs.
- 2.17.2 Successive charged time-outs may be granted during the same dead-ball period. An official's time-out may follow a charged time-out if it is for the continuance of a coach-referee conference, or if safety is involved.
- 2.17.3 An official may suspend play with an official's time-out to administer a penalty, review a misapplied rule, or manage other game-related contingencies. Official's time-outs are discretionary.

Section 18 Ready-for-Play

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

Section 19 Possession

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

Section 20 Rule

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

RULE 3

PERIODS, TIME FACTORS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Section 1 Length of Periods (Halves)

- 3.1.1** The game shall be played in two periods (hereinafter called "half") of 25 minutes each. **NOTE:** *Spring season has 20 min periods.*
- 3.1.2** Games interrupted because of events beyond the control of the officials shall be continued from the point of interruption unless the teams agree to do otherwise. When weather conditions are construed to be hazardous, the officials are authorized to delay or suspend the game.
- 3.1.3** There will be a 5-minute intermission between the halves.

3.1.4 The clock will not stop for player's time-outs during the first half.

3.1.5 During the last two minutes of the second half, the clock will stop for player's time-outs, official time-outs, delay of game penalties, after an incomplete pass, a first down, the ball carrier stepping out of bounds and after a scoring play. In the case of a player's timeout, a delay of game penalty or a scoring play, the clock will start on the next legal snap of a timed down. In all other cases, the game clock will start again once the ball is spotted and the ready for play signal is given by the referee. A half may be shortened by agreement of opposing coaches and the Head Referee.

Section 2 Starting and Ending Each Half

3.2.1 Before the start of the game, the officials and team captains will meet at midfield. One team will arbitrarily be assigned heads and the other team will be assigned tails. The Head Referee will toss a coin to determine which team is permitted a choice of options. The options are: receiving the ball, defending the ball, or choosing a goal to defend. The captain who loses the coin toss may choose from the remaining option(s). No more than four captains from each team may be present at the coin toss. The second half is a "mirror" half; i.e., teams will switch directions from the first half, and the team that received the ball to start the first half will defend the ball to start the second half.

3.2.2 If time for any period expires during a down (clock indicates 0:00), play shall continue until the down ends, even if a mechanical signal is allowed to sound.

3.2.3 If a dead ball, unsportsmanlike conduct or non-player foul occurs after either half ends, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot.

3.2.4 A period (half) must be extended by an untimed down if during the last timed down of the period, one of the following occurred:

- a) There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted, except for those fouls listed in 3.2.6b.
- b) There was a double foul.
- c) There was an inadvertent whistle.
- d) If a timeout is called by either team with 30 seconds or less left in the first half.

If (a), (b) or (c) occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated.

3.2.5 A period shall not be extended by an untimed down if during the last timed down of the period, one of following occurs:

- a) When the defense fouls during a successful try and the offended team accepts the results of the play with enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.
- b) When the half ends because of a runoff per rule 9.6.

- c) There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted for:
 - i. unsportsmanlike fouls,
 - ii. non-player,
 - iii. fouls that specify a loss of down, or
 - iv. fouls for which enforcement, by rule, result in a safety

NOTE: *The score is cancelled in the event of an accepted penalty that specifies a loss of down.*

- 3.2.6 If a dead-ball foul occurs after time expires for any period, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot

Section 3 Starting and Stopping the Clock

- 3.3.1 At the beginning of each half, the clock shall start when the ball is snapped on the first play.
- 3.3.2 Each team is permitted 3 timeouts per non-overtime game, with no more than 2 timeout used in one half. The duration of each charged time-out is 30 seconds. Captains and team attendants may enter the field during time-outs.
- 3.3.3 The clock will not stop for player's time-outs during the first half and during the first 23 minutes of the second half.
- 3.3.4 At 2 minutes remaining in the second half, or at the next play stoppage after 2 minutes, the clock will stop; the head referee will blow the whistle and announce the two-minute warning. The clock will start again on the ready for play whistle.
- 3.3.5 Time-outs will last 30 seconds; the ready-for-play signal will be given immediately after the time-out expires.

Section 4 Ball Ready-for-Play and Delay

- 3.4.1 The ball is declared ready-for-play when, after it has been placed for a down, the referee gives the ready-for-play signal.
- 3.4.2 The clock will stop for a delay of game penalty that occurs within the last two minutes of the second half. The clock shall start when the ball is snapped.

PENALTY: Delay of Game (dead-ball foul) - 5 yards

- 3.4.3 Failure to play within 2 minutes after being ordered to do so by the referee shall result in forfeiture.

Section 5 Substitutions

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

RULE 4

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

Section 1 Putting the Ball in Play

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

Section 2 Dead Ball and End of the Down

- 4.2.1** The ball becomes dead and the down is ended when:
- a) a live ball goes out of bounds;
 - b) the runner goes out-of-bounds);
 - c) the runner is deflagged (note: if a runner's flag falls off accidentally i.e., without any defensive contact, he is not considered down until touched by a defender);
 - d) any fumbled or muffed ball, including when the ball touches the ground.
 - e) A snap that touches the ground is placed at the original line of scrimmage, and that down counts.
 - f) If a fumbled ball touches the ground, it is spotted where the ball touches the ground, unless the ball is fumbled forward, and then it is spotted where the runner loses possession.
 - g) any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete;
 - h) any loose ball is simultaneously caught by opposing players;
 - i) the passer passes to himself;
 - j) any score occurs;
 - k) a runner has less than three flags and is touched by an opponent between the shoulders; and waist, including touching a runner whose three flags are not reasonably in proper position (unless misadjusted by action during a down);
 - l) an official inadvertently sounds his whistle;
 - m) a player that started the down without a flag belt possesses a live ball.

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

NOTE 2: *If a player's knee touches the ground or falls down while his flags are still on, he may get up & advance the ball until he is deflagged. If the ball carrier, while still on the ground, is touched by an opposing player, the ball carrier is considered deflagged and the play will be blown dead. If the referee determines that the ball carrier is in an unsafe position, he or she may blow the play dead without an actual "touch" by an opposing player.*

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

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

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

Section 4 Deflagging

- 4.4.1** The runner is considered "tackled" when a player removes the runner's flags.
- 4.4.2** A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag. It is best for the defensive player to attempt to grab only one flag at a time. Attempting to grab more than one flag at the same time may be considered illegal blocking if it appears that the deflagger is attempting to obstruct the forward progress of the runner.

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

RULE 5

DOWN AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

Section 1 Series of Downs

- 5.1.1 A team in possession of the ball shall have four consecutive downs (a series) to advance to the line-to-gain. Any down may be repeated if provided for by rules (usually a penalty).
- 5.1.2 When a scrimmage down ends and after considering any live ball fouls, except unsportsmanlike fouls, with the ball in the field of play or out-of-bounds between the goal lines, a new series is to be awarded:
 - a) to Team A if the ball belongs to A on or beyond the line-to-gain;
 - b) to Team B if the ball belongs to B at the end of any down;
 - c) to Team B if, at the end of the 4th down, the ball belongs to A behind the line-to-gain;
 - d) to the team in possession at the end of the down, if there is a change of possession during the down, unless the penalty is accepted for a foul which occurred before the change of possession;
 - e) to Team B at their own 5 yard line if, at the end of the 3rd down, the ball belongs to A behind the line-to-gain, and A elects to "punt" the ball to B.
 - i. There are no kicks.

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

Section 2 Down and Possession after Penalty

- 5.2.1 When a penalty is declined, the number of the next down is the same as if the foul had not occurred. If a double foul occurs during a down, the number of the next down is the same as that of the down in which the foul occurred. After a distance penalty, the ball belongs to the team

in possession at the time of the foul. Team possession may then change if a new series is awarded.

5.2.2 When a foul by A or B occurs during a scrimmage, the ball belongs to A after measurement. The number of the next down is the same as that of the down during which the foul occurred unless penalty acceptance includes a 1st down or loss of down or the measurement or the advance results in a 1st down.

5.2.3 When a foul by A or B occurs prior to a scrimmage down or simultaneously with the snap, the number of the next down after measurement is the same as the number established before the foul occurred unless measurement for a foul by B results in a 1st down.

5.2.4 Following a foul, a series of downs ends when:

- a) the acceptance of the penalty includes the award of a 1st down;
- b) acceptance or declination of any penalty leaves A in possession beyond the line-to-gain;
- c) declination of any penalty leaves B in possession;
- d) there is acceptance or declination of the penalty for any foul which occurs after team possession changes during a down.

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

Section 3 Line-to-Gain

5.3.1 The line to gain is 10 yards in advance of the ball's foremost point when a new series of downs is awarded. When a new series of downs is awarded, the penalties for all fouls (including nonplayer and unsportsmanlike) committed prior to the ready-for-play signal shall be administered before the line to gain is established. The line to gain then remains fixed until the series ends and a new line to gain is established.

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

RULE 6 SNAPPING, HANDING AND PASSING THE BALL

Section 1 Before the Snap

- 6.1.1** No player shall encroach upon the neutral zone after the ball is declared ready-for-play and touch the ball or an opponent. After the snapper has made his final adjustment of the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the plane of the line of scrimmage, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball, and touch the ball or an opponent.

PENALTY: Encroachment (dead-ball foul) – 5 yards

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

PENALTY: Encroachment (dead-ball foul) – 5 yards

- 6.1.3** No offensive or defensive player shall be in the neutral zone or on the opponent's side of the neutral zone at the time of the snap.

NOTE: Snapper exception defined in Section 2.10.2

PENALTY: Offsides (live-ball foul) – 5 yards

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

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

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

PENALTY: Fall Start (dead-ball foul) – 5 yards

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

- 6.1.6 After gripping the ball following preliminary adjustment or prior to the snap and with the ball resting on the ground with the long axis at right angles to the line of scrimmage, the snapper may not:
- a) fail to clearly pause before the snap;
 - b) remove both hands or slide his hand(s) along the ball;
 - c) make any movement which simulates a snap;
 - d) lift or move the ball in other than a legal snap.

PENALTY: Snap Infraction (dead-ball foul) – 5 yards

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

Section 2 Position and Action During the Snap

- 6.2.1 There are no restrictions to the number of Team A that must be on the line of scrimmage.
- 6.2.2 Only one A player may be in motion at the snap and then only if such motion is not toward the line of scrimmage.

PENALTY: Illegal Formation (live-ball foul) – 5 yards

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

PENALTY: Illegal Shift (live-ball foul) – 5 yards

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

PENALTY: Illegal Snap (dead-ball foul) – 5 yards

- 6.2.5 At the snap, Team A players on the line of scrimmage must have both feet outside the outside foot of the player next to him.
- 6.2.6 No offensive or defensive player shall be in the neutral zone at the time of the snap.

Section 3 Handing and Advancing the Ball

- 6.3.1 Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.
- 6.3.2 During a down, Team A player may hand the ball forward only behind the line of scrimmage to a teammate. There may be an unlimited number of forward handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Team A may not hand the ball forward beyond the line of scrimmage. No player may hand the ball forward after a change of possession.

PENALTY: Illegal Forward Handing – 5 yards, loss of down

- 6.3.3** In each possession, Team A may use only one scrimmage running play, where the runner crosses the line of scrimmage. Any number of backward passes and hand-offs may be used before the runner crosses the line of scrimmage. If a shovel or a screen pass is used, its initial direction determines whether it is a forward pass, backward pass, or a run. **NOTE:** Any forward pass caught behind the line scrimmage and subsequently advanced is considered a run.
- 6.3.4** If more than one scrimmage running play is used during a series, play shall continue until the ball becomes dead by rule. All Team A progress beyond the line of scrimmage is negated. The ball will be spotted at the previous spot (spot of the snap) unless Team A controls the ball behind the previous spot or there was a change of possession. If Team A controls the ball behind the previous spot, the down counts and the ball is spotted at the end of the run. If there was a change of possession, a new series will be awarded. **NOTE:** Only one scrimmage running play is allowed per possession; the other downs must include a forward pass.

PENALTY: Illegal Procedure – Loss of down at the previous spot

Section 4 Fumble and Backward Pass

- 6.4.1** During any down, any player in possession may make a backward pass or may lose possession through a fumble. There is no limit to the number of backward passes that may be made, including backward passes beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 6.4.2** Any player that catches a fumble or backward pass before it hits the ground may advance. If a fumble or backward pass hits the ground, it becomes dead and is spotted where the ball touches the ground, unless the ball is fumbled forward, and then it is spotted where the runner loses possession. If a backward pass or fumble goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or becomes dead in-bounds or is caught simultaneously by opposing players, the ball belongs to the passing or fumbling team unless lost after 4th down. If a fumble or backward pass is out-of-bounds and becomes dead behind a goal line, the ball belongs to the team defending their goal and the result is either a touchback or safety.

Section 5 Forward Pass

- 6.5.1** Forward Pass Classification:
- a) **Legal Forward Pass:** From in or behind the neutral zone
 - b) **Illegal Forward Pass:** (Ball remains alive until declared dead by rule) From a point beyond B's side of the neutral zone or after team possession has changed during the down
 - c) **Completed Forward Pass:** Pass caught by any player or pass simultaneously caught by opposing players (ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team)
 - d) **Incomplete Forward Pass:** Pass which touches the ground; pass which goes out-of-bounds; pass possessed by a player who is in the

air but first touches the ground out-of-bounds (NOTE exception in Rule 7.5.4.)

- 6.5.2** It is a legal forward pass, if during a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a player of Team A throws the ball with both feet of the passer on his side of the line when the ball is released. Only one legal forward pass (including a forward shuffle or screen pass) is permitted per down.
- 6.5.3** An illegal forward pass includes:
- a) a pass from B's side of the line of scrimmage;
 - b) a pass after team possession has changed during the down;
 - c) any forward pass after a scrimmage running play has been established;
 - d) a second or subsequent forward pass thrown during a down.
 - e) Intentional Grounding: When the Quarterback, under pressure, throws the ball away to avoid a sack and: 1) the ball does not cross the line of scrimmage or 2) the ball is not thrown within the vicinity of an offensive player.
 - i. Vicinity is in the judgment of the referee.

PENALTY: Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards, loss of down

- 6.5.4** If the illegal forward pass as described in (a), (c), or (d) above occurs within one yard of the line of scrimmage, it is a 5-yard penalty and loss of down, but does not count as the team's scrimmage running play for that series. However, if the illegal forward pass clearly occurs beyond 1 yard from the line of scrimmage or if the illegal forward pass – as described in (c) above – is thrown after the ball has been advanced more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage, it shall count as the team's scrimmage running play for that series.
- 6.5.5** If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is complete, the ball may be advanced when caught by any player. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by opponents, the ball comes dead and belongs to the passer's team.
- 6.5.6** If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete, the ball becomes dead when the pass touches the ground or goes out-of-bounds. It is also incomplete when a player in the air possesses the pass and alights so that his first contact with the ground or with anything other than a player or game official is on or outside a boundary (first foot needs to be in-bounds). When contact by an opponent causes a receiver, who is airborne, to first contact the ground out-of-bounds, the pass is complete if the covering official judges that the receiver would have landed in-bounds if no contact had occurred. To complete the catch, the airborne player must have possession of the ball when he touches the ground. When an incompleteness occurs, the down counts unless the pass is after a series has ended. If the pass is legal and incomplete, the passer's team next snaps the ball (unless lost after a 4th down) from the spot of the previous snap. If the penalty for an illegal pass is accepted, measurement is from the spot of such pass. If the offended team

declines the distance penalty, it has the choice of having the down counted at the spot of the illegal pass; or if the illegal pass is caught or intercepted, of having the ball put in play as determined by the action which followed the catch.

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

6.5.8 No player of A or B shall interfere with an opponent beyond the line of scrimmage during any legal forward pass. For A, the restriction begins at the time of the snap, and for B, when the ball leaves the passer's hand. The restriction does apply even if the pass does not cross the line of scrimmage. It is interference if any player who is beyond the neutral zone interferes with an opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch, or bat a catchable forward pass.

PENALTY: Pass Interference– Ball placed at the spot of the foul (for A, if by B). *NOTE: If Pass Interference by either team's player is conspicuously intentional or unsportsmanlike, his team may be penalized another 10 yards. If the foul is flagrant, e.g. tackling a receiver before the ball is caught, the offending player may be ejected.*

EXCEPTIONS TO INTERFERENCE

1. Unavoidable contact occurs when two or more players are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch, or bat a catchable ball.
2. If the ball has been touched by A or B, restrictions end for all players.
3. If contact on A is immediately made by B and contact does not continue beyond the expanded neutral zone.
4. Defensive pass interference only occurs when contact beyond the neutral zone by a defensive player could prevent the opponent the opportunity of receiving a catchable forward pass. **NOTE:** *A catchable forward pass is an untouched legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone to an eligible player who has a reasonable opportunity to catch the ball. When in question, a legal forward pass is catchable.*
5. No player shall tackle or run into a receiver when a forward pass to him obviously is not catchable. This is a personal foul and not pass interference.

6.5.9 The passer may not pass to himself. He may catch his own forward pass if the ball first touches an opponent. The passer may not deliberately pass to an opponent to facilitate catching his own pass. If the passer catches his own pass after the ball first touches an opponent, the pass is ignored relative to allowing only one legal forward pass per down.

PENALTY: Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards, loss of down

- 6.5.10** It is illegal pass-play contact when any player who is beyond the neutral zone intentionally obstructs an opponent's opportunity to move freely about the field. For A, the restriction begins when the ball is snapped. For B, the restriction begins when the pass is in the air or when the Team A player occupies the same yard line as the Team B player or is beyond the defender. **NOTE:** A defender must use a legal block before the restriction.

PENALTY: Illegal Pass – Play Contact – 10 yards

RULE 7

SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACKS

Section 1 Value of Scores

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

Section 2 Touchdown

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

- 7.2.4 If during a touchdown-scoring play in which there is no change of possession, the opponent of the scoring team commits one or more fouls that carry a penalty of 10-yards, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or may choose to have the penalty enforced on the start of the subsequent drive (penalty enforced from the 15-yard line).
- 7.2.5 If during a touchdown-scoring play in which there is a change of possession, the opponent of the scoring team commits one or more fouls that carry a penalty of 5- yards after the change of possession, the foul(s) are automatically declined and the touchdown stands.
- 7.2.6 If during a touchdown-scoring play in which there is a change of possession, the opponent of the scoring team commits one or more fouls that carry a penalty of 10- yards after the change of possession, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or may choose to have the penalty enforced on the start of the subsequent drive (penalty enforced from the 15-yard line).

Section 3 Try-for-Point

- 7.3.1 After a touchdown, the scoring team is permitted a try-for-point where the ball is snapped from B's 5- or 10-yard line (as indicated by A) anywhere between the in- bound lines. Exception: If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the game during championship bracket play, the try-for-point shall not be attempted unless the point(s) could affect the outcome of the game. All tries-for-point shall be attempted during pool play.
- 7.3.2 The try-for-point begins when the ball is ready-for-play. It ends when the ball becomes dead or either team scores.
- 7.3.3 During a try-for-point, Team A may score 2 points from a play originating on the 10- yard line, or 1 point from a play originating from the 5-yard line. Either a running play or a pass play may be used to score during the try.
- 7.3.4 During a try-for-point, a team may score 1 point for a safety by their opponent under rules governing play at other times during the game.
- 7.3.5 Team A may change their decision to attempt a 1- or 2-point play after a team timeout is used. The defense shall be given notice of the decision and shall be allowed ample time for player substitution, if necessary.
- 7.3.6 If during a successful try Team A commits a loss of down foul, no point(s) are scored and there is no replay. If during a successful try Team B commits a foul, Team A is given the choice of accepting the penalty and replaying the down following measurement or accepting the results of the play and having the penalty administered from the succeeding spot. If A fouls (with no loss of down) during a successful try, the down is replayed after measurement.
- 7.3.7 If during an unsuccessful try-for-point, a foul by A occurs, there is no replay. If B fouls, the down is replayed after measurement.

- 7.3.8** If either team commits a dead ball foul prior to the try-for-point, the down is played after measurement.
- 7.3.9** If a double foul occurs during a try and there is no change of possession, or both teams foul before a change of possession, the down is replayed.
- 7.3.10** During a try, if either team fouls after a change of possession:
- a) Distance penalties against either team are declined by rule.
 - i. Exception: If there's a foul by A that directly affects the runner (holding, personal foul, tripping, etc.), then team B shall be awarded an attempt to try for 2 points from A's 10 yard line.
 - ii. Exception: If there's a foul by A that doesn't affect the runner, the penalty is assessed from the succeeding spot (the 15 yard line on the start of the next possession).
 - b) A score by a team committing a foul during the down is canceled.
 - c) If both teams foul during the down and Team B had not fouled before the change of possession, the fouls offset, the down is not repeated, and the try is over.
- 7.3.11** When a try-for-point is replayed, the snap may be from any point between the in- bounds lines on the yard line through the spot of the ball.
- 7.3.12** If team B intercepts a pass or fumble during the try and returns it for a touchdown, they score 2 points.
- 7.3.13** After the try-for-point, the non-scoring team takes possession of the ball at their 15- yard line, unless that spot is moved after enforcement of a penalty carried over from the previous touchdown scoring play or the try to the succeeding spot.

Section 4 Safety and Touchback

- 7.4.1** Responsibility for forcing the ball from the field of play across a goal line is attributed to the player who carries, snaps, passes, or fumbles the ball. The muffing or batting of a pass or fumble in flight is not considered a new force because the original force has not been spent.
- 7.4.2** It is a safety when:
- a) A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his own goal line and it becomes dead there in his team's possession.
Exception: when a Team B player intercepts a forward pass and the goal line and his original momentum carries him in to the end zone, where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession or it goes out-of-bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where the pass was intercepted.
 - b) a player who is either in the field of play or in his end zone, forces a loose ball from the field of play to or across his own goal line by his pass, fumble, snap, muff or bat and provided that the ball becomes dead there in his team's possession or the ball is out-of-bounds

when it becomes dead on or behind their goal line. This does not apply to a legal forward pass that becomes incomplete

- c) a player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his end zone or throws an illegal forward pass from his end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves him in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced in to the end zone by the passing team.

7.4.3 It is a touchback when B intercepts a forward pass in their end zone and the ball becomes dead there in B's possession (before B leaves the end zone).

7.4.4 The team whose goal line is involved should put the ball in play on its 15-yard line if a touchback; for a safety.

7.4.5 If a penalty resulting in a safety occurs on the last timed down of a period, the period is not extended.

Section 5 Tie Games and Overtime Procedure

7.5.1 During the regular season, games may end in a tie. If however, at the end of the playoff game, the teams have identical scores, the tie will be resolved by one or more series of unlimited downs. All game rules apply except:

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

When the score is tied at the end of the game, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a 3-minute intermission during which both teams may confer with their coaches. All officials and team captains will meet at midfield for the coin toss after the intermission. The winner of the toss will be given a choice of defense, offense or designating the end of the field to start the overtime. The loser of the toss will chose from the remaining options. Each team will be permitted to use one timeout during each overtime period (a series for A and a series for B). In overtime, each team is guaranteed one possession. Each possession starts at the

opponent's 10-yard-line. Series alternate until one team has scored more points than the other. If after two possessions each the score is still tied, teams must go for 2 points after scoring. The possessions alternate as follows: Series 1-3-5 etc.: Team A, followed by Team B; Series 2-4-6 etc.: Team B, followed by Team A. The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime plus those accumulated in regulation play shall be declared the winner. Note: An overtime is considered a new series. Therefore, no more than one scrimmage running play may be used per overtime series.

Section 6 Mercy Rule

7.6.1 If one team is ahead by 20 or more points at the two-minute warning, then the game is over.

RULE 8 **CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS**

Section 1 Helping the Runner

8.1.1 An offensive player shall not push, pull, or lift the runner.

PENALTY: Helping the Runner – 5 yds

Section 2 Illegal Use of Hands and Holding and Blocking

8.2.1 An offensive player shall not use a blocking technique:

a) that is not permissible by Rule 2.3.1.

PENALTY: Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yards

b) grasp or encircle any teammate to form interlocked interference

PENALTY: Interlocked Interference – 5 yards

c) use hands, arms or legs to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent

PENALTY: Holding – 5 yards

8.2.2 The runner may not grasp a teammate.

PENALTY: Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yards

8.2.3 The defensive player shall not use a technique which:

a) is not permissible by Rule 2.3.1.

PENALTY: Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yards

b) use his hands to add momentum to charge of a teammate

PENALTY: Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yards

c) use his hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle, or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent

PENALTY: Holding – 10 yards

8.2.4 A defensive player may not intentionally push or block a runner who is near the sideline. A defensive player shall not intentionally hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when trying to remove his flag (this includes tackling and body blocking). Grabbing for more than one flag by a defensive player may be considered illegal blocking if it appears that the deflagger is attempting to obstruct the forward progress of the runner.

PENALTY: Holding the Runner – 10 yards

8.2.5 No player shall intentionally deflag a player who is not a runner before the player receives the ball.

PENALTY: Illegal Deflagging – 10 yards

8.2.6 No player shall obstruct an opponent with an extended (non-flexed at the elbow – a.k.a. stiff-arm) hand and arm.

PENALTY: Illegal Use of Hands – 10 yards

8.2.7 The runner shall not use his hand(s) below his waist to protect his flag(s). While making initial contact with his opponent, the runner may not use his hand(s) below his waist to block an opponent.

PENALTY: Flag-guarding – 5 yards, loss of down

8.2.8 The runner shall not hurdle or lower his head to interfere with being deflagged. A runner may not lower his head more than halfway between his waist and shoulders.

PENALTY: Flag-guarding – 5 yards, loss of down

8.2.9 The runner shall not dive to avoid being deflagged.

PENALTY: Diving – 10 yards, loss of down

8.2.10 A runner may not charge into a potential deflagger. **NOTE:** A runner may spin to avoid being deflagged.

PENALTY: Personal Foul – 10 yards

8.2.11 No player may clip an opponent.

PENALTY: Illegal Blocking – 10 yards; Clipping – 10 yards

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

8.2.12 No player may block an opponent below the waist.

PENALTY: Illegal Blocking – 10 yards

8.2.13 No player may trip an opponent.

PENALTY: Tripping – 10 yards

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

PENALTY: Illegal Use of Hands – 5 yards

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

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

PENALTY: Illegal Blocking – 10 yards

Section 3 Illegal Personal Contact

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

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

PENALTY: Flagrant Personal Fouls – mandatory disqualification for the rest of the game and the team’s next game

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

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

PENALTY: Misconduct Towards an Official – 10 yds & possible disqualification

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

PENALTY: Personal Fouls – 10 yards

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

- 8.3.4** Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer who has thrown or is throwing a legal forward pass or a passer who is fading back or standing still because he is considered out of play after the pass. A defensive player may not forcibly contact the passer's arm above the elbow (from the elbow to the shoulder). If the quarterback's arm is hit below the elbow, it is up to the official whether it is roughing the passer, or if the defender was simply attempting to legally make a play on the ball.

PENALTY: Roughing the Passer – 10 yards and an automatic first down

- 8.3.5** Fighting with another player requires:
- a) disqualification from the current game
 - b) disqualification from the team's next scheduled game
 - c) possible current and future disqualification, to determined by the FLAG Flag Football board.
- 8.3.6** Misconduct towards an official requires:
- a) disqualification from the current game
 - b) disqualification from the team's next scheduled game
- 8.3.7** Striking an official requires:
- a) current disqualification
 - b) possible future disqualification, to determined by the FLAG Flag Football board.

Section 4 Non-contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct By Players

- 8.4.1** No player may act in an unsportsmanlike manner during the game or intermission. Examples include:
- j) abusive or insulting language or gestures
 - k) baiting acts or words or insignia worn which engenders ill will
 - l) using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A's signal or movements
 - m) intentionally kicking at any player or the ball or intentionally swinging an arm or fist at any player

- n) leaving the field between plays or using a “hide out play” by placing a player or players near the sideline to gain an advantage unless replaced or unless with the permission of the referee
- o) failing to place the ball, after it becomes dead, on the ground or immediately return it to a nearby official
- p) spiking the ball or throwing the ball in the air or from the field of play
- q) attempting to substitute a suspended player
- r) taunting an opponent

PENALTY: Unsportsmanlike Acts – 10 yards (enforced from the succeeding spot) & possible removal from game for (a) & (d). An Unsportsmanlike Act may be deemed excessive by the Head Referee – 25 yards (enforced from the succeeding spot) & possible removal from game.

8.4.2 A second unsportsmanlike conduct foul with a 10-yard penalty results in disqualification.

Section 5 Illegal Substitution

8.5.1 Any number of eligible substitutes may replace players, under the following conditions:

- a) The substitution must occur between downs. No substitute shall enter during a down.

PENALTY: Illegal Substitution (live-ball foul) – 5 yards

- b) A replaced player must be off of the field before the ball becomes live.

PENALTY: Illegal Substitution (live-ball foul) – 5 yards

- c) An offense may have 8 players in the huddle, so long as the 8th player exits the huddle, raises his/her hand while leaving the field, and clears the field before the ball is snapped. If this fails to happen, the result is a penalty for too many players on the field.

PENALTY: Illegal Substitution (dead-ball foul) – 5 yards

Section 6 Illegal Touching and Illegal Participation

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

PENALTY: Illegal Touching – Loss of down at the previous spot

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

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

PENALTY: Illegal Participation – 10 yards

- 8.6.3 It is illegal participation when:

- a) 8 or more players participate at the snap

PENALTY: Illegal Participation – 10 yards

- b) an injured player is not replaced for at least one down unless a half-time occurs

PENALTY: Illegal Participation – 10 yards

- c) using a replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretend substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before a snap

PENALTY: Illegal Participation – 10 yards

- d) for a disqualified player to reenter the game

PENALTY: Allowing a Disqualified Player – possible game forfeit

Section 7 Illegal Batting or Kicking

- 8.7.1 No player shall bat a loose ball other than a pass or a fumble in flight in which he is attempting to block in the expanded neutral zone. A backward pass behind the line of scrimmage and in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team. No player shall intentionally kick the ball. Kicking the ball means intentionally striking the ball with knee, lower leg or foot. **NOTE:** Any pass in flight may be batted in any direction, unless it is a backward pass behind the line of scrimmage batted forward by the passing team.

PENALTY: Illegal Kicking or Batting – 10 yards

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

PENALTY: Illegal Batting – 10 yards

Section 8 Non-contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Non-Players

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

- f) abusively or derisively harrying an opponent
- g) be outside the team box but not on the field

PENALTY: Non-player Fouls – 10 yards

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

PENALTY: Non-player Fouls – 5 yards; If repeated, infractions occur, 10 yards and/or disqualify the offending teammate

Section 9 Unfair Acts

- 8.9.1 No player or non-player shall hinder play by an obviously unfair act which has no specific rule coverage. Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game. **NOTE: Repeated fouls will cause the game to be forfeited.**

PENALTY; Unfair Acts – Enforces any penalty he/she considers equitable, including the award of a score.

RULE 9 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

Section 1 Procedure After a Foul

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

Section 2 Double and Multiple Fouls

- 9.2.1** It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player fouls, during the same live ball period during which there is no change of team possession; there is a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to the final change of possession; or there is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponents foul. The penalties cancel and the down is replayed.
- 9.2.2** If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul, other than unsportsmanlike.
- 9.2.3** When two or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team (multiple fouls), only one penalty may be measured, except when foul(s) for unsportsmanlike conduct occurs. In such cases, the penalty (or penalties) for unsportsmanlike conduct is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for the previous foul. When only one penalty is to be administered, the offended captain may choose which one it shall be, or he may decline all penalties.
- 9.2.4** If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession, then A may retain the ball. In this case, the team that was not last in possession has no penalty options until the team last in possession has made its penalty decision. After that decision by the team last in possession, the team not last in possession may decline or accept the penalty by the team last in possession or choose which foul to have enforced in the case that the team last in possession committed more than one foul following the change.
- 9.2.5** Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of their occurrence. A dead ball foul is not coupled with a live ball foul or another dead ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.
- 9.2.6** A foul during a try is not paired with a dead ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

Section 3 Types of Play and Basic Enforcement Spots

- 9.3.1** If a foul occurs during a down, the basic enforcement spot is fixed by the type of play. There are two types of play: loose ball play and running play. Loose ball play is action during a legal forward pass; a backward pass or fumble made by A from on or behind its scrimmage line. A loose ball also includes the run or runs which precede such a legal forward pass or fumble. A running play is any action not included in loose ball play.
- 9.3.2** If a foul occurs during loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot.

- 9.3.3** If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends. The run ends where the player loses possession if his run is followed by a fumble or pass. If the runner does not lose possession, his run ends where the ball becomes dead.
- 9.3.4** The basic spot is the previous spot:
- a) For a foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap.
 - b) For a foul which occurs during a loose ball play, as defined 10.3.1. See 10.5.1. for special enforcement on roughing the passer.
- 10.3.5** The basic spot is the succeeding spot:
- a) For an unsportsmanlike foul.
 - b) For a dead-ball foul.
 - c) For a nonplayer foul.
 - d) When the final result is a touchback.

Section 4 Administering Penalties

- 9.4.1** The penalty for any dead ball foul, any non-player foul or an unsportsmanlike foul is administered from the succeeding spot, unless the foul is committed by team B and is prior to the ready-for-play after a touchdown scoring play.
- 9.4.2** The penalty for a foul that occurs simultaneously with a snap is administered from the previous spot.
- 9.4.3** The penalty for a foul during a running play or loose ball play is administered from the basic spot, except:
- a) if a foul by either team occurs, except flag guarding by team A (see 10.4.3.c.), behind the line of scrimmage before a change of team possession, the penalty is administered from the previous spot;
 - b) if a foul by the offense (other than in 10.4.3.a. above) occurs behind the basic spot, the penalty is administered from the spot of the foul;
 - c) a flag guarding foul by team A is always enforced from the spot of the foul.
- 9.4.4** Any live ball foul is penalized according to the all-but-one enforcement principle (see below) except:
- a) a foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap (see 10.4.2.)
 - b) a foul by either team behind the line of scrimmage before a change of team possession (see 10.4.3.)
 - c) a foul by the opponents of the scoring team during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try-for-point

Section 5 Special Enforcements

- 9.5.1** The following fouls have special enforcement provisions and options for the offended team:
- a) Unfair acts.
 - b) A foul by the opponents of the scoring team on a successful try.
 - c) Fouls that occur during or after a touchdown scoring play.
 - d) Roughing the passer.
- 9.5.2** A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the ordinary distance penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the spot of enforcement to the goal line.
- 9.5.3** If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind the goal line, it is a safety. For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot is on or behind the offended team's goal line, any measurement is from the goal line.
- 9.5.4** The enforcement spot is the end of the last run for roughing the passer when the last run ends beyond the neutral zone and there has been no change of team possession.
- 9.5.5** A disqualified player must always be removed.

Section 6 Football Penalty Enforcement

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

PERTINENT FLAG FOOTBALL RULES	
Players and Equipment	Rule 1.4
Pass Rusher	Rule 2.1.6
Blocking and Deflagging Definition	Rule 2.3
Zones	Rule 2.8
Advancing the Ball	Rule 2.9
Catchable Forward Pass	Rule 2.12
Length of Periods	Rule 3.1
Starting and Stopping the Clock	Rule 3.3
Dead Ball	Rule 4.2.1
Deflagging	Rule 4.4
Position and Action During the Snap	Rule 6.2
Forward Pass	Rule 6.5
Overtime Procedure	Rule 7.5
Blocking	Rule 8.2
Illegal Personal Contact	Rule 8.3