

NIRSA

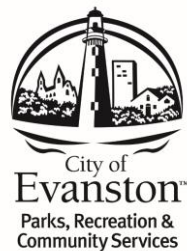
Flag & Touch Football Rules Manual

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

Section 1: General Provisions

Article 1. The Game – Men, Women and Evanston Recreation Division (ERD)

The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each.

Article 2. Team Captains.

Each coach shall designate to the referee the team captain or captains. If more than one player is designated, a speaking captain must be selected to make all decisions. The captain's first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.

Article 3. Persons Subject to the Rules.

Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, and other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game, and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

Section 2: The Field

Article 1. Zone Markings.

The field shall be a rectangular area with lines and zones shown in the accompanying diagram. The width of the field should be lined at 20 yard intervals from goal line to goal line.

Article 2. Inbounds/Out-of-Bounds.

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

Article 3. Pylons.

Numbered cones shall be placed at the inside corner of each of the intersections of the sideline with the goal lines and the end lines, and at the intersections of the end lines and inbounds line extended.

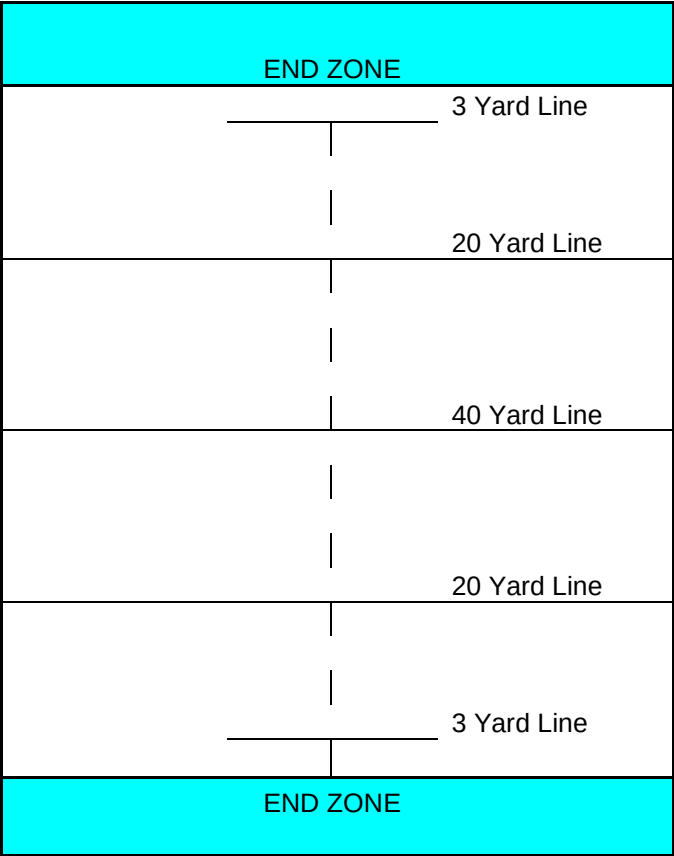
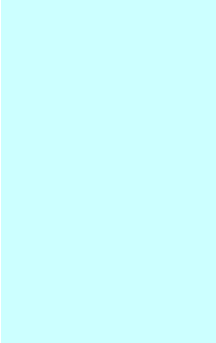
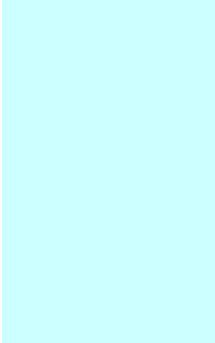
Article 5. Ball Spotters.

One ball spotter (rubber disk or cone) is required. The ball spotter will be the line of scrimmage to know where the ball will be placed after each down.

The Field

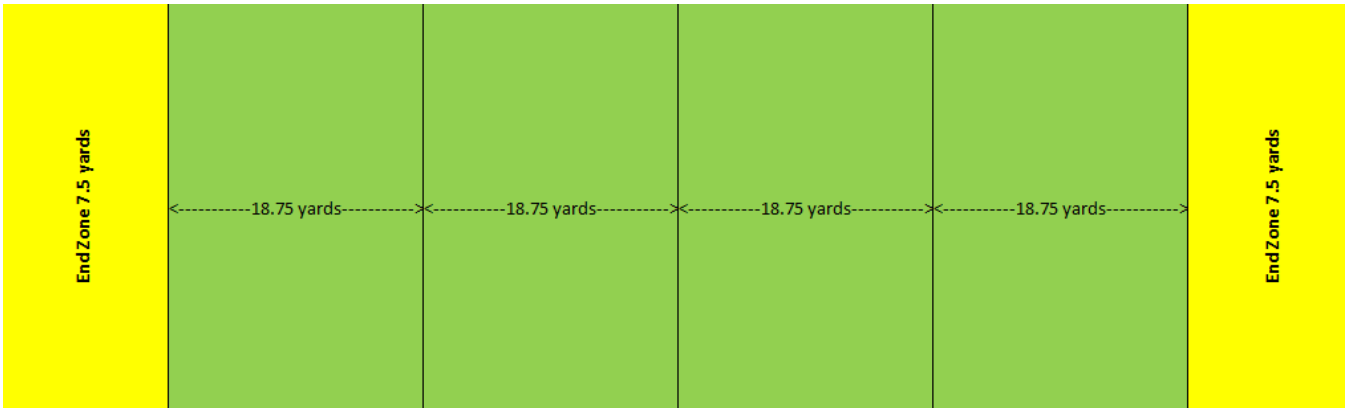
End Line

Goal Line



Goal Line

End Line



Robert Crown Field Set-Up

Please note the endzone is only 7.5 yards

Section 3: Player Equipment-Required

Article 1. Jersey.

Players of opposing teams should wear contrasting colored jerseys (ERD will provide jerseys.)

- A. Long enough so they remain tucked in the pants/shorts during the entire down.

Article 2. Flag Belt.

Each player must wear a one piece belt at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. The flags should be a minimum of 2 inches wide and 14 inches long. The flags must be of a contrasting color to their opponent's flags. (ERD will provide all flags for games. Teams may NOT use their own flags for games). **Penalty:** Dead Ball Foul. Failure to have flag belt legally attached prior to the snap, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

Article 3. Shoes.

Each player must wear shoes. They must be made of soft, pliable upper material (canvas, leather, or synthetic) which covers the foot attached to a composition bottom. (Metal cleats are NOT allowed in the ERD league).

Section 4: Player Equipment-Optional

Article 1. Ace Bandage.

Players may use an ace bandage no more than two turns thick in any given area. It can be anchored at each end by tape not to exceed two turns.

Article 2. Gloves.

Players may wear gloves which must consist of a soft, pliable and non-abrasive material.

Article 3. Headwear.

Players may wear the Navy Watch-Style knit or stocking cap. The cap may have no bill. It can have a knit ball on top.

Article 4. Knee Pads.

Players may wear soft, pliable basketball or wrestling knee pads on the leg, knee, and/or ankle.

Article 5. Mouth and Tooth Protector.

It is strongly recommended that a mouth piece be worn by all players.

Section 5: Player Equipment (Illegal)

Article 1.

A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play. This applies to any equipment which, in the opinion of the Referee, is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment or substances which shall always be declared illegal include:

- A. Headgear containing any hard, unyielding, or stiff material, including billed hats.

- B. Jewelry
- C. Pads or braces worn above the waist (ERD exceptions may be made with the approval of league director or referee BEFORE the game starts).
- D. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats.
- E. Shirts or jerseys which do not remain tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt which does not remain tucked in.
- F. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges overlapped, and any other hard substance is covered with at least ½ inch of closed cell slow recovery rubber or other material of similar thickness and physical properties.
- G. Any slippery or sticky foreign substance on any equipment or exposed part of the body.
- H. Equipment which includes computers or any electronic or mechanical devices for communication.
- I. Towels attached at the player's waist (flag only).

RULE 2 | DEFINITIONS OF PLAYING TERMS

Section 1: Ball-Live, Dead, Loose, Possession

Article 1. Live ball.

A live ball is a ball in play and a dead ball is a ball not in play. A pass or fumble which has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight and therefore can be caught and advanced by either team.

Article 2. Loose ball.

A loose ball is a live ball not in player possession during:

- A. A running play.
- D. The interval after a legal forward pass is released, and before it becomes complete, incomplete or intercepted.

Article 3. When the ball is ready for play.

A dead ball is ready for play when the Referee:

- A. If time is in, sounds the 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".

Article 4. In possession.

"In possession" is an abbreviation meaning "in possession of a live ball". A player is in possession when he/she is holding or controlling the ball. A team is in possession:

- A. When one of its players is in possession.
- B. While a forward pass thrown by one of its players is in flight.
- C. When it was last in possession during a loose ball.

Section 2: Batting, Fumble, Muff, Touching Ball

Article 1. Batting.

Batting is intentionally striking or slapping with the hand or arm:

- A. A loose ball.
- B. A ball in player possession by a player of the team in possession.

Article 2. Fumble.

A fumble is a loss of player possession other than by handing, passing, or kicking the ball.

Article 3. Muff.

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

Article 4. Touching.

Touching refers to any contact with the ball.

Section 3: Catch, Interception, Simultaneous Catch

Article 1. Catch and Interception.

A catch is an act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble in flight is an interception. If a player attempts a catch or an interception while in the air, the player must contact the ground inbounds with the ball in his/her possession prior to touching out-of-bounds, unless an opponent's contact causes him/her to first touch out-of-bounds. Catching is always preceded by touching of the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance.

- A. If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception even though a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.
 - B. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception.
 - C. A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception.
- NOTE: If in doubt, it is a catch.

Article 2. Simultaneous Catch.

A catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players inbounds.

Section 4: 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.

Section 5: 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 legal snap or free kick and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.

Section 6: Encroachment

Article 1.

Encroachment is a term to indicate a player is illegally in the neutral zone. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until he/she is on his/her team's side of the neutral zone.

Section 7: Foul

Article 1.

A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. NOTE: If in doubt, it is not a foul.

Section 8: Goal Lines

Article 1.

Each goal line is a vertical plane separating the end zone from the field of play. The plane of the goal line extends beyond the sideline.

Section 9: Handing the Ball

Article 1.

Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing 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 and before assuming scrimmage formation prior to the snap. (All ERD offensive players must huddle prior to each play!)

Section 11: Hurdling

Article 1.

Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over a player who is on his/her feet. (Illegal in the ERD league).

Section 12: Loss of a Down

Article 1.

"Loss of a down" is an abbreviation meaning: "loss of the right to repeat the down".

Section 13: Passer

Article 1.

The passer is the player who has thrown a legal forward pass. He/she remains the passer while the ball is in flight or until he/she moves to participate in the play.

Section 14: Passes

Article 1. Passing.

Passing the ball is throwing it. In a pass, the ball travels in flight. A pass continues to be a pass until caught, intercepted, or the ball becomes dead. The initial direction determines whether a pass is forward or backward.

Article 2. Forward and Backward Pass.

A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. A backward pass that hits the ground is ruled the same as a fumble. It will be dead at the spot where it strikes the ground.

Section 15: Penalty

Article 1.

A penalty is a loss imposed by Rule upon a team which has committed a foul.

Section 16: Removing the Flag Belt

Article 1. Flag Belt Removal.

When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred. (ERD: If the flag falls off a runner who is in possession of the ball, the play is dead. If a flag falls off a player who is NOT in possession of the ball, he/she may finish the play without it, but if he/she attains the ball, it is immediately dead at the spot where he/she gets the ball.)

Article 2. Contact.

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

Section 17: Screen Blocking

Article 1.

Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without initiating contact with him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body (See Rule 9-4).

Section 18: Shift

Article 1.

A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

Section 19: Team & Player Designations

Article 1. Disqualified Player.

The disqualified player is one who becomes ineligible from further participation in the game.

Article 2. Line Player and Backfield Player.

A line player is any person on his/her scrimmage line when the ball is snapped; a backfield player is any person who is legally behind that line when the ball is snapped.

Article 3. Offensive and Defensive Team.

The offensive team is the team in possession, or the team to which the ball belongs. The defensive team is the opposing team.

Article 4. Player.

The player is any one of the participants in the game at any particular time.

Article 5. Runner.

The runner is the player in possession of a live ball or simulating possession of a live ball. Once a player catches or intercepts a pass, he/she becomes a runner.

Article 6. Snapper.

The snapper is the player who snaps the ball.

Article 7. Substitute.

A substitute is a team member who may replace a player.

Section 20: Tripping**Article 1.**

Tripping is the use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent, including the runner, below the knee.

Section 21. Yard Line**Article 1.**

A yard line is a line in the field of play parallel to the end line and between the goal lines.

RULE 3 | PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, SUBSTITUTIONS**Section 1: The Start of Each Period****Article 1. Coin Toss.**

1st half shall start with a (ERD: coin toss). 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. (ERD: Instead of a kickoff, the offense starts play with the ball on their 20 yard line.)

The captain winning the toss shall have the choice of options for the first half or shall defer their option to the second half. The options for each half shall be:

- A. To choose whether his/her team will begin on offense or defense.**
- B. To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.**

Article 2. Forfeit Time.

Game time is forfeit time. (ERD: We will make every effort not to forfeit. Players may be borrowed from the other team to play- but the spirit and purpose of the league is to play and have fun).

Section 2: Game Time

Article 1. Playing Time and Intermissions.

Playing time shall be 40 minutes, divided into two halves of 20 minutes each. The intermission between halves shall be 5 minutes. (ERD: Running clock until last 1 minute of each half).

Article 2. Shortening Periods.

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

Article 3. Extension of Periods.

A half may be extended by an untimed down when, during the last timed down, one of the following occurred:

- A. If there was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted.
- B. If there was a double foul.
- C. If there was an inadvertent whistle and the down is to be replayed.
- D. If a touchdown was scored, the try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the 2nd half and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

If (A), (B), or (C) occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated.

Article 4. First 19 Minutes.

The clock will start when the ball is legally snapped. It will run continuously for the first 19 minutes of each half unless it is stopped for a:

- A. Team time-out – starts on the snap.
- B. Referee's time-out – starts on the ready for play.

Article 5. One Minute Warning.

Approximately 1 minute before the end of each half the Referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in that half. Whether the clock starts depends on the previous play. The Back Judge will announce to the captains the remaining time and status of the clock after every play during the final 1 minute.

Article 6. Last 1 Minute.

During the final 1 minute of each half clock will stop for a:

- A. Incomplete pass-starts on the snap.
- B. Out-of-bounds-starts on the snap.
- C. Score (touchdown or safety)-starts when the ball is snapped.
- D. Team time-out-starts on the snap.
- E. First down-dependent on the previous play.
- F. Penalty and administration-dependent on the previous play. (Exception: Delay of game-starts on the snap).
- G. Referee's time-out-starts at his/her discretion.
- H. Touchback-starts on the snap.

- I. Change of possession-dependent on the previous play.
- J. Team attempting to conserve time illegally-starts on the ready.
- K. Team attempting to consume time illegally-starts on the snap.
- L. Inadvertent whistle-starts on the ready.

Article 7. Correct Timing Errors.

The Referee shall have authority to correct obvious timing errors if discovery is prior to the second live ball following the error unless the period has officially ended.

Section 3: Time-Outs

Article 1. How Charged.

The Referee shall declare a time-out when he/she suspends play for any reason. Each time-out shall be charged to either the Referee or one of the teams. (ERD: 2 time-outs per team, per half.)

Article 2. Referee's Time-Out.

The Referee shall declare an official's time-out whenever a touchdown, touchback, or safety is made; when an excess time-out is allowed or when the game clock is stopped to complete a penalty.

Article 3. Discretionary Time-Out.

The Referee may declare an officials time-out for any contingency not covered elsewhere by the Rules. If a time-out is for repair or replacement of player equipment which becomes illegal through play and is considered dangerous to other players, the Referee shall charge himself/herself. The Referee shall charge himself/herself when an injured player is designated.

Article 4. Charged Time-Outs.

Each team is entitled to 2 charged time-outs during each half. Successive charged time-outs may be granted each team during a dead ball period. If the ball is dead and a team has not exhausted its charged time-outs, the Referee shall allow a time-out and charge that team.

Article 5. Length of Time-Outs.

A charged time-out requested by any player which is legally granted shall not exceed one minute. Other time-outs may be longer only if the Referee deems it necessary to remove an injured player.

Article 6. Injured Player.

An injured or apparently injured player who is discovered by an official while the ball is dead and the clock is stopped, shall be replaced for at least 1 down unless halftime or overtime intermission occurs.

A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player.

Section 4: Delays

Article 1. Delaying the Start of a Half.

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 (flag only).** Penalty: Delay of Half, 10 yards from the spot of the ball (20 yard line).

Article 2. Delay of Game.

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

- A. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.
- B. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
- C. A Coach-Referee Conference after all permissible charged time-outs for the coach's team have been used, and during which the Referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule and no change results.

Penalty: Delay of Game, 5 yards from the spot of the snap.

Article 3. Unfair Tactics.

The Referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever, in his/her opinion; either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by tactics obviously unfair. Penalty: Delay of Game, 5 yards.

Play. As the game clock is running near the end of a period, A stalls and allows the 25 second count to expire. **Ruling.** Delay of game penalty and the Referee shall order the clock started on the next snap.

Section 5: Substitutions

Article 1. Eligible Substitutions.

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 replace players off the field before the ball becomes alive. An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from his/her team area. A replaced player must leave the field at the sideline nearest his/her team area prior to the ball being snapped. Penalty: Substitution Infraction, 5 yards. If it is a dead ball foul, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

Article 2. Legal Substitutions.

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 unless a dead ball foul occurs, there is a charged time-out, or a period ends. Penalty: Substitution infraction, 5 yards from previous spot.

RULE 4 | BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT-OF-BOUNDS

Section 1: Ball in Play-Dead Ball

Article 1. Dead Ball Becomes Alive.

A dead ball, after having been declared ready for play, becomes a live ball when it is snapped legally.

Article 2. Ball Declared Dead.

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

- A. When it goes out-of-bounds.
- B. When any part of the runner other than a hand(s) or foot touches the ground.

Play. QB A-1 rolls out and slips, but regains his/her balance as the ball in contact with his/her hand touches the ground. **Ruling.** Play continues as a ball in possession is considered part of the hand.

- A. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try is made.
- B. When, during a try, Team B obtains possession of the ball.
- C. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- D. When a backward pass or fumble by a player touches the ground. A ball snapped from scrimmage, which hits the ground before or after getting to the intended receiver, is dead at the spot where it hits the ground. NOTE: If in doubt, the snap close to the ground remains alive.
- E. When a forward pass is legally completed, or a loose ball is caught by a player on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line.
- F. **When a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player. A flag belt is removed when the clip is completely detached from the belt.**
- G. When a passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball. NOTE: If in doubt as to the release or not, the ball is released.

Play. QB A-1 is tagged or deflagged when: a) his/her arm is moving forward in an attempt to throw the ball; or b) the ball has already left the hand. **Ruling.** In (a), A-1 is down at the spot of the tag or deflag. In (b), the ball remains alive, since the ball left the passer's hand before he/she was tagged or deflagged.

- H. When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, when:
 - 1. The ball is in player possession-the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
 - 2. The ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass, illegal kick, or illegal forward pass-the team in possession may elect to out the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
 - 3. During a legal forward pass, the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.

If a foul occurs during any of the above downs, an accepted penalty shall be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, disregard the inadvertent whistle.

Section 2: Out-of-Bounds

Article 1. Player Out-of-Bounds.

A player or other person is out-of-bounds when any part of him/her touches anything, other than another player or a game official which is on or outside the sideline or end line.

Article 2. Player in Possession Out-of-Bounds.

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 a sideline or end line.

Article 3. Loose Ball Out-of-Bounds.

A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official, which is out-of-bounds.

RULE 5 | SERIES OF DOWNS, NUMBER OF DOWN, AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

Section 1: A Series-How Started, How Broken, Renewed

Article 1. A Down is a Unit.

A down is a unit of the game which starts with a legal snap and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is any period when the ball is dead.

Article 2. Series of Downs.

A team, in possession of the ball, shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone by scrimmage. Any down may be repeated or lost if provided by the Rules.

Article 3. Zone Line-to-Gain.

The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless the 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 zone line-to-gain. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.

Article 4. Awarding a New Series.

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 moves the ball into the next zone; or an accepted penalty against the opponents involves an automatic first down; or either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, touchback, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.

Section 2: Down & Possession After a Penalty

Article 1. Penalty Resulting in First Down.

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

Play. Fourth and 5 from Team A's 15 yard line. A-1 throws an illegal forward pass beyond the Team A scrimmage line: (a) at A's 23 yard line and the ball hits the ground. (b) at A's 26 yard line and the ball hits the ground. **Ruling.** In (a), Team B's ball in Team A's 18 yard line, first down and goal to go. Since the 5 yard penalty put Team A 2 yards short of the zone line-to-gain on fourth down, the loss of down awards the ball to Team B. In (b), A is penalized 5 yards and loss of down which puts the ball on the 21

yard line-first down and 19. Even though an illegal forward pass carries a loss of down, since the 5 yard penalty enforcement places the ball beyond the 20 yard line, it is a first down for Team A.

Article 2. Foul Before Change of Team Possession.

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.

Article 3. Foul After Change of Team Possession.

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 line-to-gain.

Play. B-4 intercepts a pass by A-1 and returns it to the Team A 25 yard line. During the run by B-4, B-2 makes illegal contact with A-6 at the Team a 29 yard line. **Ruling.** B is penalized 10 yards utilizing the all-but-one principle from the Team A 29 yard line-the spot of the foul. It is B's ball, first down and 19. Team B obtained the ball with "clean hands".

Article 4. Penalty Declined.

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

Article 5. Foul Between Downs.

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 (Meaning- unless the penalty gives team A 1st down).

Article 6. Foul Between Series.

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

Play. Team A's protected scrimmage kick goes out-of-bounds at B's 25 yard line after which Team B player commits illegal contact. **Ruling.** This is a dead ball foul. First down and 25 on the Team B 15 yard line.

Article 7. Fouls by Both Teams.

If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated. Exception: If each team fouls during a down in which there is 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 declines all penalties for its opponent's fouls, other than unsportsmanlike. This is known as the "clean hands" rule on double fouls.

Article 8. Rule Decisions Final.

No rule decision may be changed after the ball is legally snapped or free kicked.

RULE 6 | SNAPPING, HANDLING, AND PASSING THE BALL

Section 1: The Scrimmage

Article 1. The Start.

All plays from scrimmage must be started by a legal snap from a point on the inbounds line, unless the rules provide for a free kick.

Article 2. Stances.

Players may use a 2, 3, or 4 point stance.

Section 2: Prior to the Snap

Article 1. Encroachment.

Following the ready for play and until the snap no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or in any other way interfere with them. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals, or shifting through the zone. After the snapper has placed his/her hands on the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball. Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Encroachment, 5 yards from the previous spot (S7 and S18). During the interval between scrimmage downs when two or more consecutive encroachment fouls are committed by defensive team, the penalty will be 10 yards for the second encroachment foul.

Play. After the ball is marked ready for play by the Referee, to give Team A a first down. **Ruling.** Dead ball foul for encroachment, 5 yards. The penalty is declined by Team A. Team B is informed by the Referee that if this occurs again during the same dead ball interval, a 10 yard penalty will be enforced, if accepted.

Article 2. False Start.

No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of a play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment shall be cancelled. Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.

Article 3. Snap.

The snapper, after assuming 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. When over the ball the snapper shall have his/her feet behind his/her scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange). Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.

Section 3: Position and Action During the Snap

Article 1. Minimum Line Players.

The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap. The remaining players must be either on their scrimmage line or behind their backfield line. All players must be inbounds. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards. NOTE: If in doubt, the player is on the scrimmage line.

Article 2. Motion.

One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line. If such player starts from their scrimmage line, that player must be at least 5 yards behind that line when the ball is snapped. If such player starts in motion from their backfield, that player may not be in motion toward the opponent's goal line when the ball is snapped. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head, or arms. The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap. Penalty: Illegal Motion, 5 yards.

Play. After a huddle all A players come to the stop and remain stationary for a full second, the (a) A-2 goes in motion legally and the ball is snapped (b) A-1 goes in motion legally as A-2 moves to a new position in the backfield, sets and the ball is snapped. **Ruling.** (a) legal. (b) illegal motion (2 players in motion), live ball foul, 5 yards.

Article 3. The Snap

ERD: The ball must be snapped off the ground. It may be between the legs or from the side. Shot gun snaps ARE permitted.

Article 4. Shift.

In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players 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 snap. Penalty: Illegal Shift, 5 yards. (ERD: Note! This is DIFFERENT from legal motion!)

Play. Following a huddle or shift one offensive player takes a preliminary position, then advances or drops into final position. **Ruling.** Such movement constitutes a shift; all players must hold their final positions for one second before the snap.

Section 4: Handling the Ball

Article 1. Backward.

A player may hand the ball backward at any time. A handoff is only considered complete when the receiving player fully possesses the ball. Simply tapping, touching, or redirecting the ball without gaining full possession does not constitute a handoff.

Article 2. Forward.

During a scrimmage down, a Team A player may hand the ball forward behind the line only:

- A. To any line player who has clearly faced his/her goal line by moving both feet in a half-turn and is at least 1 yard behind the line when he/she receives the ball.
- B. To a teammate who, at the snap, was behind his/her scrimmage line or on an end of his/her line and was not the snapper.

Penalty: Illegal handing, 5 yards and loss of down if by Team A before possession changes during a scrimmage down.

Section 5: Backward Pass and Fumble

Article 1. Anytime.

A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at anytime except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or to avoid being deflagged/tagged. Penalty: Illegal Pass, 5 yards and loss of down. Referee will start the clock on the ready for play. **NOTE: If in doubt, the pass is backward.**

Article 2. Caught or Intercepted.

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

Article 3. Out-Of-Bounds.

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. If out-of-bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.

Article 4. Ball Dead When It Hits Ground.

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.

Section 6: Legal and Illegal Forward Pass

Article 1. Legal Forward Pass.

All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. The QB has 5 seconds to make a play. If QB still has the ball in his/her hands after 5 seconds the play is blown dead and a loss of down. If during a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind Team A's scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer's hand. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down. NOTE: If in doubt, the passer is behind the Team A scrimmage line.

Play. A-1 runs with the ball beyond the scrimmage line and throws a backward pass from Team A's 31 yard line which is first touched and caught by A-6 at Team A 33 yard line. **Ruling.** Legal play. The initial direction of a pass determines whether the pass is forward or backward. While a backward pass may have its flight path altered by wind or forward player momentum and subsequently be caught beyond the point of release, this does not change the status of the pass.

Article 2. Illegal Forward Pass.

A forward pass is illegal:

- A. If the passer's foot is beyond Team A's scrimmage line when the ball leaves his/her hand.
- B. If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
- C. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.
- D. If a passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass. (You can't pass to yourself- UNLESS another player touches it before you do!)
- E. If there is more than one forward pass per down.

Penalty: 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down if by Team A before possession changes during a scrimmage down. NOTE: If in doubt, the pass is legal.

Article 3. After Illegal Forward Pass.

When an illegal forward pass touches the ground or goes out-of-bounds the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team, at the spot from where the pass was thrown, unless a new series of downs has been created. In such a case the ball belongs to the passing team if, after the enforcement of the penalty, the ball is left in advance of the zone line-to-gain, or belongs to the opponents if the ball, after the penalty, did not make the next zone line-to-gain and the foul occurred during the fourth down. If a player catches an illegal forward pass, the ball continues in play until declared dead.

Section 7: Completed or Intercepted Passes

Article 1. Pass Caught or Intercepted.

A forward pass is completed when caught by a member of the passing team inbounds. A forward pass is intercepted when caught by a member of the opposing team inbounds. It is counted as a completion or interception as long as the first part of the person to make contact with the ground after the catch, usually one foot, touches inbounds.

Article 2. Simultaneously Catch by Opposing Players.

If a legal forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team that snapped the ball at the spot of the catch.

Section 8: Incomplete Pass

Article 1. Becomes Dead.

When a legal forward pass touches the ground or anything out-of-bounds, it becomes dead.

Section 9: Forward Pass Interference

Article 1. Contact.

During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange), contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange) is pass interference unless it occurs when 2 or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged/tagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange).

Play. A-1 throws a legal forward pass toward A-5 who is beyond Team A's scrimmage line. Before A-5 touches the pass, B-2 deflags A-5. **Ruling.** Defensive pass interference.

Article 2. Offensive Pass Interference.

After the ball is snapped, and until it has been touched by a receiver, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange). Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.

Article 3. Defensive Pass Interference.

After the ball is thrown, and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange) while the ball is in flight. Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot, automatic first down. If the pass interference by either player is intentional or unsportsmanlike, his/her team shall be penalized an additional 10 yards.

Play. B-1 defending against a legal forward pass beyond Team A's scrimmage line, waves his/her arms in the face of A-2 who is attempting to catch the pass. **Ruling.** Defensive pass interference.

RULE 7 | SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACK

(See ERD Rule, Section III)

Section 1: Momentum, Safety, and Touchback

Article 1. Safety = 2 Points.

It is a safety when:

- A. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his/her possession;

EXCEPTION: When a Team B player intercepts a forward pass between his/her 5 yard line and the goal line and his/her original momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his/her team's possession or it goes out-of-bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where the pass was intercepted or was caught. This is known as the momentum rule.

- B. A player forces a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her goal line by his/her pass, fumble, snap, muff, or bat and the ball subsequently becomes dead there in his/her team's possession. This includes when the ball is declared dead on or behind their goal line. However, it does not apply to a legal forward pass which becomes incomplete.
- C. A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from his/her end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves him/her in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.

Play. A-1 after receiving the snap in his/her end zone, is deflagged/tagged with the ball above the goal line, its forward point in the field of play. **Ruling.** Safety. The entire ball has to be in the field of play when taking it out of your own end zone.

- D. Afterwards. When a safety is scored the ball belongs to the defending team at its own 20 yard line and that team shall put the ball in play there. NOTE: If in doubt, it is a touchback.

Article 2. Touchback.

It is a touchback when:

- A. The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except from an incomplete forward pass), when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player on, above or behind the player's own goal line, or when the ball becomes dead not in possession on, above, or behind the team's own goal line, and the attacking team is responsible.

Play. B-1 intercepts a pass in his/her end zone: (a) runs for a touchdown; or (b) runs around in his/her end zone and is deflagged. **Ruling.** In (a) Touchdown. Other than a kick, a player can run the ball out of his/her end zone. In (b) Touchback. A's force put the ball into B's end zone.

Play. A-1 running for an apparent touchdown fumbles the ball on the Team B 3 yard line. The ball lands in the Team B end zone. **Ruling.** Touchback. The force which out the ball in the end zone was a fumble. **(ERD Ruling: Dead ball on B 3 yard line. A fumble is dead where it hits the ground. Possession is A's unless they are out of downs).**

- B. **Afterwards.** The team whose goal line is involved shall put the ball in play on the inbounds line on the 20 yard line by a snap after a touchback.

Note: Teams cannot score points by a field goal attempt.

RULE 8 | CONDUCT OF PLAYERS & OTHERS

Section 1: Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Article 1. Non-contact Player Acts.

No player shall commit non-contact acts during a period or intermission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A. Any acts of unfair play.
 - B. Using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with Team A's signals or movements.
 - C. Intentionally kicking at the ball, other than during a legal kick.
 - D. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or with permission of the Referee.
 - E. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player. (Disqualification).
 - F. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand, or fist at any opposing player. (Disqualification).
- Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. If flagrant in 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D, the offender shall be disqualified. In Article 1E and 1F the offender shall be disqualified.

Article 2. Dead Ball Player Fouls.

When the ball becomes dead in possession of a player, he/she shall not:

- A. Intentionally kick the ball.
- B. Spike the ball into the ground.
- C. Throw the ball high into the air.

- D. Fail to return the ball to the huddle
Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified.

Article 3. Prohibited Acts.

There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or others subject to the Rules. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.
- B. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
- C. Indicating objections to an official's decision.
- D. Holding an unauthorized conference, or being on the field illegally.
- E. Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
- F. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game by a person subject to the Rules (Disqualification).
Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified. In Article 3F the offender shall be disqualified.

Play. Team A substitutes voice their disapproval using abusive language concerning a judgment call by the Back Judge. **Ruling.** The Referee should call an "Official's time-out." Inform Team A captain that such behavior is unacceptable, and tell the captain to communicate this information to his/her bench. If such behavior is exhibited again during the game, penalize 10 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. It is imperative that the officials stop such behavior the first time it occurs. Team A and Team B are here to play the game, not to officiate it. When the officials accept the game assignment, they must be strong and ready to take control.

Section 2: Unfair Acts

Article 1.

If a team refuses to play within two minutes after being ordered 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/she considers equitable, including awarding of a score. For refusal to play, or for repeated fouls, the Referee shall, after one warning, forfeit the game to the opponent's.

Section 3: Personal Fouls

Article 1. Player Restrictions.

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

- A. Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- B. Trip an opponent.
- C. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
- D. Throw the runner to the ground.
- E. Hurdle any other player.
- F. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.

- G. Make any contact with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary of any nature including using fists, locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to Rule.
- H. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
- I. Clip an opponent.
- J. Position himself/herself on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- K. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling with the hand(s) or arm(s) and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football (Disqualification).
Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified. In Article 1K the offender shall be disqualified.

Play. B-2, moving toward A-1 who has the ball in his/her possession: (a) grabs/strips the ball from A-1, or (b) tries to knock the ball out of A-1's hands. **Ruling.** In (a) and (b) this is a personal foul penalty. B must go for the flag belt or the tag.

Play. A-1, running for a score, dives into the end zone: (a) breaks the plane with the ball without contacting any Team B player or: (b) charges into B-3 at the 1 yard line or: (c) charges into B-4 in the end zone after crossing the goal line. **Ruling.** In (a) the score counts. (ERD: it doesn't count because diving is not allowed. Illegal Procedure) In (b) a 10 yard penalty is assessed against Team A from the 1 yard line. In (c) the score counts and Team A will be assessed a 10 yard penalty on the try.

Play. A-3 muffs a legal forward pass and B-2 pushes A-3 out of the way in an attempt to secure the ball. **Ruling.** Personal foul for illegal contact, penalize 10 yards.

Article 2. Roughing the Passer.

Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear that the ball has been thrown. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass. Roughing the passer restrictions do not apply if the forward pass is thrown from beyond Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange). Penalty: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards, automatic first down.

(ERD: When the defender gets within reaching distance (about 1 yard) of the passer, he/she MUST go after the FLAG, not the ball!)

Play. B-3 rushing, jumps to block a pass thrown by A-1 (no closer than 1 yard in front of the passer) and : (a) blocks the ball and, avoiding unnecessary contact, brushes A-1; or (b) is unsuccessful in blocking the pass and charges into A-1; (c) blocks the ball and charges into A-1 or (d) contacts passer A-1's hand or arm. **Ruling.** In (a), no call is made; in (b), (c), and (d) roughing the passer, 10 yards and an automatic first down. If the defender contacts the passer's hand or arm, whether or not he/she touches the pass, it is roughing the passer.

Section 4: Blocking

Article 1. Offensive Screen Blocking.

The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or

body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

Play. A-2, a blocking back, extends his/her arms from his/her side while screen blocking but causes no contact. **Ruling.** The officials must determine if A-2 gained an **advantage**. If so, penalize 10 yards; however, if no advantage was gained, do not penalize. Once the down has ended, inform A-2 about proper arm position. If A-2 then continues to extend his/her arms, penalize.

Article 2. Screen Blocking Fundamentals.

A player who screens shall not:

- A. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
 - B. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
 - C. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take his/her stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
 - D. After assuming his/her legal screening position move to maintain it, unless he/she moves in the same direction and path as his/her opponent. If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, he/she has committed a personal foul.
- Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

Article 3. Blocking and Interlocked Interference.

Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

Article 4. Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense.

Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A blocker may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

Section 5: Runner

Article 1. Guarding the Flag Belt.

Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes:

- A. Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent the opponent from deflagging.
 - B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
- Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards.

Play. A-1 catches the snap from center A-2, fakes a handoff to A-3, then places the ball on his/her hip (bootleg), rolls out, and throws a forward pass. **Ruling.** If B-1 could not reach the flag belt because A-1

had placed the ball on the belt, then penalize; however, if a B player was not close enough to deflag A-1, then do not penalize. Advantage versus disadvantage is the key.

Article 2. Stiff Arm.

The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a “stiff arm” extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag/tag. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

Article 3. Helping the Runner.

The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate. Penalty: Helping Runner, 5 yards.

Article 4. Obstruction of Runner.

The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or making a legal tag. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

Play. A-1 running toward B-2, who is attempting to deflag A-1: (a) goes around B-2 to avoid being deflagged; (b) deliberately runs through B-2 making no attempt to avoid contact; or (c) ducks his/her head while contacting B-2. **Ruling.** In (a), play is legal. In (b) and (c), Team A personal foul, 10 yards. If B-2 is stationary, A-1 must go around. The charge/block principles used in basketball apply.

Section 6: Batting and Kicking

Article 1. Batting a Free Ball.

Players shall not bat a loose ball other than a pass or fumble in flight. A backward pass in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team. A ball in player possession shall not be batted forward by a player of the team in possession. Penalty: Illegal Batting, 10 yards.

Article 2. Illegal Kicking.

No player shall intentionally kick a ball. Penalty: Illegal Kicking, 10 yards.

Section 7: Illegal Participation

Article 1. Blocked or Pushed Out-Of-Bounds.

Prior to a change of possession, no player of A or B shall go out-of-bounds and return during the down unless blocked out-of-bounds by an opponent. If a player is blocked out-of-bounds by an opponent and returns inbounds during the down, he/she shall return at the first opportunity. During the down, no player shall intentionally go out-of-bounds and return.

Article 2. Hinder an Opponent.

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

Article 3. It is Illegal Participation:

- A. To have 8 or more players participating at the snap.
 - B. If an injured player is not replaced for at least one down; unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs. (ERD: Or there are no subs for him/her).
 - C. To use a replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap.
 - D. For a player to be lying on the ground to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap.
 - E. For a disqualified player to reenter the game.
- Penalty: Illegal Participation, 10 yards

Play. QB A-1 throws a legal forward pass to A-2. A-2 steps on the sideline, returns and touches the pass. **Ruling.** Illegal Participation, 10 yards.

Section 8: Flag Belt Removal

Article 1.

There are basic rules which are established for flag football because of legal or illegal removal of the flag belt.

- A. Players must have possession of the ball before they can be legally deflagged.
- B. When a runner with the ball loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose. (ERD: The ball is dead at the place where it completely fell off- or would be difficult for the defense to pull (ex- it got tangled in the runner's clothes or legs) If the defense loses their flag, they may still play, but if they gain legal possession of the ball, the play is dead at the spot where that happens.)
- C. A defensive player intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.
- D. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards from the previous spot, and player disqualification. If by Team A, loss of down. If by Team B, automatic first down.

Play. A-1 tampers with his/her flag belt and scores a touchdown with or without any B player having a chance to deflag A-1. **Ruling.** The official pulls A-1's flag belt and finds it has been tampered. Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yard penalty, loss of down from previous spot, A-1 is disqualified, and the touchdown is disallowed.

Play. A-1 carries the ball when B-1 and B-2 attempt to deflag A-1. B-1 and B-2 touch or grasp the flag belt momentarily. A-1 continues to run a few steps and flag belt falls to the ground. **Ruling.** A-1 is down where the original deflag was attempted. B-1 and B-2 are deemed have caused the deflag.

Play. B-2 deflags/tags A-4 after the passed ball is touched by A-4 and : (a) the ball is muffed then caught by A-4; or (b) the ball is muffed then intercepted by B-2; or (c) the ball is muffed then touched by B-2 and finally caught by A-4. **Ruling.** In (a), (b), and (c), the ball is (ERD: dead- no tagging in this league). The ball becomes dead when the runner is tagged/deflagged legally.

RULE 9 | ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

Section 1: Procedure After a Foul

Article 1. Captain's Choice.

When a foul occurs during a live ball, the Referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains. He/she shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him/her 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 if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. A captain's choice of options may not be revoked.

Article 2. Dead Ball Foul.

When a foul occurs during a dead ball either between down or prior to a free kick or snap, the officials shall not permit the ball to become alive. The penalty for any foul between downs, any nonplayer foul, or any unsportsmanlike foul, is enforced from the succeeding spot. If a dead ball foul occurs after time expires for any period, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot. The succeeding spot is where the ball would next be snapped or free kick if a foul had not occurred.

Article 3. Live Ball/Dead Ball Foul.

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. When the same team commits a live ball foul followed by one or more dead ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

Article 4. Establish Zone Line-to-Gain.

On a live ball foul mark off the penalty yardage first, then establish the zone line-to-gain. However, with a dead ball foul, establish the zone line-to-gain first, and then mark off the penalty yardage.

Play. Third and 2 on A 18. A-2 runs to the A 26. a) A-2 flag guards at the A 25 and is deflagged at the A 35; or b) A-2 is deflagged at the A 26. The referee calls an unsportsmanlike conduct foul on A-2. **Ruling.** a) Penalize Team A 10 yards for flag guarding. A's ball third and 5 on A 15. b) Penalize Team A 10 yards for the dead ball foul from the A 26, first and 24 in A 16. **The zone line-to-gain has been reached legally since there are no live ball fouls.** The Referee will signal first down, establish a new zone line-to-gain, the 40, then penalize the dead ball foul from the succeeding spot, the A 26.

Section 2: Types of Play and Basic Enforcement Spots

Article 1. Live Ball Fouls.

Any live ball foul is penalized according to the all-but-one enforcement principle except:

- A. A foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick is penalized from the previous spot.
- B. A nonplayer foul, unsportsmanlike foul, or dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.

Article 2. All-But-One Enforcement.

Enforcement philosophy is based on the fact that a team is given the advantage of the distance which is gained without the assistance of a foul. It is assumed that the only foul which would give this aid is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot. Therefore, all fouls but this one, that is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot, are penalized from the basic spot. This one foul is penalized from the spot of the foul (See Figure 1).

Article 3. Two Types of Plays.

Whenever the ball is alive, 1 of 2 types of plays is in progress, either a loose ball play or a running play. The type of play has no significance unless a foul occurs. If a foul does occur, the officials must know whether it was during a loose ball play or a running play. This determines the basic spot of enforcement.

Article 4. Loose Ball Play.

A loose ball play is action during:

- A. A legal forward pass.
- B. A backward pass, including the snap, or fumble made by Team A from on or behind his/her scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange).
- C. The run or runs which precedes such a legal pass, kick or fumble.

If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot, either the spot of the snap or the free kick (See Figure 3).

Play. First and 11 on A 29. QB A-1 throws a legal forward pass. While the pass is in flight: (a) A-2 illegally contacts a Team B player on the Team A 25 yard line; or (b) B-1 illegally contacts a Team A player on the Team A 25 yard line. **Ruling.** In (a) if accepted, penalize from the Team A 25 yard line, first and 25 on A 15. The penalty is enforced at the spot of the foul since the offense fouled behind the basic spot which is the previous spot or where the ball was snapped. In (b) if accepted, penalize from the Team A 25 yard line first and 1 on A 39. Defensive fouls during a loose ball play are enforced from the previous spot.

Article 5. Running Play.

A running play is any action which is not a loose ball play.

- A. Behind the line it includes:
 - 1. A run which is not followed by a loose ball behind the line.
 - 2. A run which is followed by an illegal pass from behind the line.
- B. Beyond the line it includes any run. A run ends when a runner loses possession, but related running play continues until the ball becomes dead or some player again gains possession.

If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends:

- A. Where the ball becomes dead if the runner does not lose possession.
- B. Where the player loses possession if his/her run is followed by his/her fumble or pass.
- C. At the spot of the catch when the momentum rule is in effect.

Section 3: Special Enforcements

Article 1. Half the Distance.

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 between the enforcement spot and the goal line.

Article 2. Safety/Goal Line.

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 its goal line which is now the basic spot, it is a safety. For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot which is now the basic spot, is on or behind the offended team's goal line any measurement is from the goal line.

Article 3. Disqualified Player.

A disqualified player must be removed.

Article 4. Forfeiture of Game.

A Referee's decision to forfeit a game is final.

Article 5. Foul on a Score.

If there is a player foul by the offensive team, other than unsportsmanlike, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a player foul by the defensive team, other than unsportsmanlike, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try, the offensive team must decline the penalty to accept the score.

Play. QB A-1 runs for a touchdown. Cornerback B-1 illegally holds A-1 during the run. **Ruling.** Team A must decline the holding foul to score the touchdown. The same ruling applies on a try.

Article 6. Foul Prior to a Try-for-Point.

When a foul occurs after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play for the try, the enforcement is at the succeeding spot where the ball will be next snapped for the try-for-point, usually the 3 or 10 yard line.

Play. QB A-1 scores a touchdown and then spikes the ball. **Ruling.** The touchdown counts. The Referee will ask the Team A captain whether they wish to go for a 1 or 2 point try-for-point. Once the Team A captain makes a decision, penalize Team A 10 yards on the try from the 3 or 10 yard line.

Article 7. Double Foul.

It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike, during the same live ball period in which:

- A. There is no change of team possession.
- B. 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.
- C. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

In (A), (B), and (C) the penalties cancel and the down is replayed.

EXCEPTION: 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 is not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul(s), other than unsportsmanlike. This exception is commonly referred to as the principle of "clean hands".

Play. K-1 kicks off, R-1 catches the ball and throws an illegal forward pass from his/her 26 yard line. R-2 catches the pass and K-2 holds R-2 prior to the tag/deflag. **Ruling.** The Referee will present the following options to the R captain: (1) if you accept the holding foul by K-2, it is a double foul, and the ball will be re-kicked; (2) if you want to keep the ball, you must decline the holding foul by K-2. The Referee would then mark off 5 yards to R's 21 yard line, R's ball, first and 19.

Article 8. Multiple Live Ball Fouls.

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 is administered from the succeeding spot as a dead ball foul.

Article 9. Multiple Dead Ball Fouls.

Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. 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.

Article 10. Loss of Down Fouls.

Fouls by Team A which includes loss of down are:

- A. Illegally Handing the Ball Forward.
- B. Illegal Forward Pass.
- C. Forward Pass Interference.
- D. Illegally Secured Flag Belt.

Article 11. Automatic First Down Fouls.

Fouls by Team B which give Team A an automatic first down are:

- A. Forward Pass Interference.
- B. Roughing the Passer who has thrown from behind the Team A scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange).
- C. Illegally Secured Flag Belt.

SECTION I:

NIRSA Modifications for Youth Leagues

Rule 1-3-1: Ball Specifications – The Pee Wee size 5 ball will be used for 2nd/3rd leagues and the Junior size 6 ball will be used for 4th/5th grade leagues .

Rule 6-1-1: Putting the Ball in Play – The ball shall be placed at the Team A 20 yard line to begin each half and following a touchdown, punt, safety or score, unless moved by penalty. NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO KICKOFFS.

Rule 6-3-2: Protected Scrimmage Kick (Punt) – Prior to making the ball ready for play on 4th down, the referee must ask Team A captain if he/she wants to turn over possession of the ball to Team B. If YES, the referee will inform Team B and place the ball at Team B's 20-yard line. It will be first down for Team B. If NO, Team A will run their play in an attempt to make a first down. NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO PUNTS.

SECTION II:

Evanston Recreation House Rules

General

1. 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders ONLY can play. 4th graders may play on the 5th grade team. 5th graders MAY NOT play on the 4th grade team. 4th graders playing on the 5th grade team MAY NOT also play on the 4th grade team. 3rd graders playing on the 4th grade team MAY NOT also play on the 3rd grade team. Special permission for children with special circumstances may be arranged with the league coordinator.
2. All players must play a minimum of 20 minutes.
3. **Forfeit Time: We will make every effort to play. If there are at least 8 players present, we will play. Teams may be asked to lend their opponent players so that there are enough players on each team. Coaches and players are expected to comply. Refusal will be considered poor sportsmanship and teams could be penalized on their next scheduled game because of this! We're here to play!**
4. A game consists of two (2) twenty (20) minute halves. Running time will be used until the last 1 minute of each half. During the last 1 minute of each half, the clock will stop on all dead balls and will restart on the snap.
5. Time Outs: 2 per half, 1 minute each.
6. Half Time: 5 minutes long.
7. NO overtime. If a game is tied after regulation, the game is over.
8. Molded Rubber Spikes will be allowed. NO Metal or Hard Plastic

SECTION III:

Offense & Defense

1. All offensive players must huddle prior to each play.
2. **ADVANCING THE BALL:** The quarterback (receiver of the snap) may NOT run the ball over the line of scrimmage. He/She must pass or lateral **within 5 seconds**, or the play is blown dead as an incomplete pass with loss of down. Ball is spotted at same position as before play.
3. **If the flag of a ball carrier falls off without being pulled, the ball is dead at that spot it hits the ground. If a player holds his/her flag on, it's not flag guarding unless a defender is within reaching distance.**
4. **Snapping the Ball:** The ball must be snapped off the ground. The ball may be snapped between the legs or from the side. Direct snaps and shot gun snaps are permitted.
5. **NO RUSHING THE QUARTER BACK:** There is NO direct rush (crossing the line of scrimmage) of the quarterback by the defense. However, once the quarterback passes, hands off, or laterals the football, the defense may pursue anywhere.
6. The defensive player must have at least 1 foot in contact with the ground when attempting to pull a flag. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.

7. No diving. Players may not dive either offensively or defensively. For our purposes, diving is leaping head-first without probability of landing on one's feet. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.

Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. Extra Point:
 - Run/pass (5) yards out = 1 point if converted)
 - Run/pass (10) yards out = 2 points if converted)
3. No Field Goals

SECTION IV:

Sportsmanship: Coaches, Players, and Fans

Coaches are expected to treat each player as an individual, treat each other fairly, to practice and teach sportsmanlike attitudes, to teach basic football skills, to teach players how to win and most important how to lose and to allow players to have fun.

Coaches are expected to respect the officials. Any physical contact with an official could result in legal charges being brought.

Players are expected to respect the officials, the opposing team, their teammates and their coaches.

Fans are expected to treat all players fairly, to root for their team NOT against the opposing team, to be supportive of the coaches and to have fun watching their children play.

Unsportsmanlike conduct WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

TIEBREAKER RULES

1. Head-to-Head Record
 - If two teams are tied, the team that won the matchup(s) between them gets the higher seed.
2. Point Differential in Head-to-Head Games
 - Only between the tied teams.
3. Overall Point Differential (with a Cap)
 - Margin of victory capped at +14 points per game.
4. Total point differential across the season.
5. Fewest Points Allowed across the season.
6. Most Points Scored across the season.
7. Coin Flip