



# RULEBOOK

## 2026

---

## CHANGES FOR 2025-2026

---

3-2-5 (b) Clock Stoppages- Touchdowns

---

## POINT OF EMPHASIS 2025-2026

---

1-4-3 (a) Required Game Equipment- One flag on each side and one flag in the center of the back

2-10-2 (c) Excessive Contact

9-6-6 Short line to gain situations

---

## Rule 1. THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT

---

### Section 1. The Game

**ART. 1** The game shall be played between two (2) teams of seven (7) players each. Four (4) players per team are required to start a game and to avoid a forfeit. The game may continue with less than four players until it is obvious that there is no chance to win.

**ART. 2** Shall be played with a minimum of 2 officials and not exceeding 4 officials. The officials are: Referee, Line Judge, Back Judge, and Field Judge. It is strongly recommended that a minimum of 3 officials be used. Positions and responsibilities are found in the FHSAA Officials' Manual.

**ART. 3** Each Head Coach and Captain(s) shall be designated to the Referee. If a team has more than one captain; a speaking captain must be designated.

**ART. 4** Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, athletic trainers, and others associated with the team are subject to the rules of the game, and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

**ART. 5** The Referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The Referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

**ART. 6** The game officials shall assume authority for the contest 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time, or as soon they are present. The officials' jurisdiction extends through the Referee's declaration of regulation or overtime. The game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports required by the FHSAA.

**ART. 7** The game officials have the authority to make decisions for infractions of the rules. The use of any replay or any type of visual or audio electronic monitoring equipment by game officials in making any decision relating to the game is strictly prohibited.

### Section 2. The Field and Field Equipment

**ART. 1** No hard and unyielding rigid fixtures (e.g., trees, poles, fences, bleachers) shall be located within 5 yards of the side-line or 10 yards of the end lines, unless covered with at least 1/2" of closed cell, slow recovery rubber or other material of the same minimum thickness and having similar physical properties. NOTE: If in doubt, consider the safety of all paramount to the game.

**ART. 2** The field shall be 40 yards in width and contain four (4) twenty (20) yard zones with a ten (10) yard end zone on each end of the field. NOTE: In case of space limitations, distances of field length and width can be modified. However, end zone length must always be 10 yards. If the field length is modified, shorten all 4 zones equally so they are the same length. NOTE: When zones are shortened, the 3 and 10 yard Try lines remain the same. The 14-yard lines must be located 6 yards from the nearest zone line.

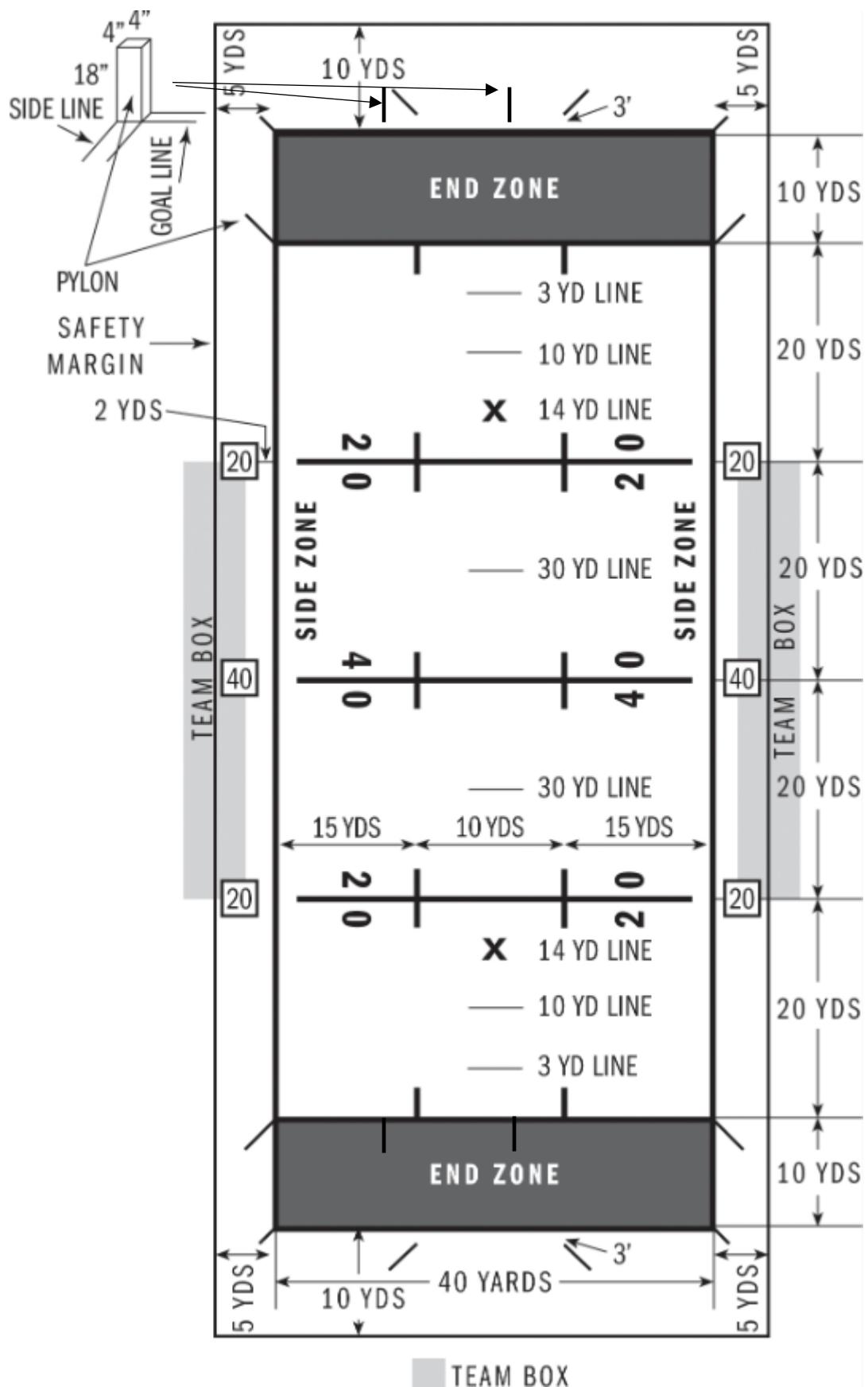
**ART. 3** Yard line markers constructed of soft, pliable materials, if placed on the ground, should be no closer than 2 yards to the sideline to mark the Goal Lines, 20-Yard Line Zone Lines to Gain, and the 40-Yard Line Zone Line to Gain.

**ART. 4 Lines and Other Markings**

- a. Lines shall be marked with a non-caustic, nontoxic material designed for marking fields such as powdered gypsum, calcium carbonate, and liquid aerosol paint. It is recommended these lines be white. Neither lime, hydrated lime, nor other chemical derivatives of lime, nor caustic material of any kind may be used for marking flag football fields.
- b. Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the boundary marks, such marks being out of bounds.
- c. Yard lines shall be marked at the 20-yard lines and the 40-yard line. These lines constitute the Zone Lines to Gain (ZLTG).
- d. Goal lines shall be marked to delineate each end zone and the entire width of the goal line shall be part of the end zone so the edge toward the field of play and its vertical plane is the actual goal line.
- e. The goal line shall extend from sideline to sideline.
- f. A one (1) yard long line, 4 inches wide, should be marked at each end of the field at the three and ten-yard lines in the middle of the field. These lines shall be used for the extra point following a touchdown.
- g. An "X" should be marked at the 14 yard line in the middle of the field on both ends. The "X" shall have a height of one (1) yard and be four (4) inches in width.
  - a. This is where a new series begins to start each half and following a score.
- h. End lines and sidelines shall be continuous lines at least four (4) inches wide.
- i. All other field dimension lines should be marked four (4) inches in width.
- j. Hash marks shall be 6' long and 4" wide and intersect with the 20- and 40-yard lines.
  - a. Additional hash marks shall be 3' long and 4" wide and shall touch the goal line and extend into the field of play.
  - b. Shall be marked for the Zone Line to Gain
- k. Field numbers, if used, should be white in color, 6' in height and 4" in width, with the tops of the numbers five (5) yards from the sidelines.
- l. On each side of the field a team box shall be designated for the players and nonplayers.
  - a. The team box is located two (2) yards off the sideline and extends from the 20-yard line to 20-yard line.
  - b. If teams cannot agree on a sideline, the Referee shall assign teams to a team box. Both team boxes may be located on the same side of the field.
  - c. When both team boxes are on the same side of the field the team box for each team will be from the 20-yard line to the 35-yard line on either side of the midfield area.
- m. Decorative markings in the end zones shall be no closer than two (2) feet from the boundary and the goal lines.
  - a. Decorative markings in the field of play shall not obstruct the yard lines or hash marks.
- n. A 4-inch-wide restraining line shall be placed around the outside of the field at least two (2) yards from the sidelines and end lines, as an extension of the line limiting the team box, except in situations where the total playing enclosure does not permit the restraining line. It is recommended that the restraining line be marked by placing 12-inch long lines, separated at 24-inch intervals.
- o. Field orientation and slope: It is recommended that fields be laid out in a north/south orientation and that there be a slope of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " per foot from the center of the field to each sideline on a natural grass field.

**ART. 5... Pylons** - Soft, flexible pylons (four (4) inches square, eighteen (18) inches high, either orange, red, or yellow in color and does not create a risk) shall be placed at the inside corner of the intersections of the sideline with the goal lines and the end lines, and at the intersections of the end lines and hash marks extended. The 4 pylons located at the hash marks extended shall be positioned 3' beyond the end line.

**Art. 6... Down Box** – A down box shall be used to indicate the number of the next down and placed at the zone line-to-gain needed for a first down. The down box shall be positioned two (2) yards out-of-bounds and operated under the jurisdiction of the Referee in a 2-person crew and the Line Judge in any crew of more than two. During the TRY, the down box shall display the point value (1, 2, or 3) declared by A and be placed two (2) yards out-of-bounds at the goal line. NOTE: The Home team is responsible for providing the down box and is responsible for providing a down box operator.



TEAM BOX

**Art. 7... Ball Spotters** – Two ball spotters (rubber discs) are required. One color shall mark the offensive scrimmage line. The second spotter of a different color shall mark the defensive scrimmage line and shall be placed one yard away from the offensive scrimmage line.

**NOTE:** It is recommended that officials have 2 sets. Each association can require more if needed.

NOTE: In the event the game Referee does not have spotters, officials should use two bean bags for this purpose.

### **Section 3. Required Game and Player Equipment**

**ART. 1... Football** - The official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber covered and shall meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation YOUTH size.

- a. Teams may use the football of their choice as long as it meets the proper size and shape.
- b. Each team shall provide their own legal game ball to participate.
- c. Each team is expected to provide a ball handler who will have a spare football ready in the event the one in use cannot be quickly put back into play.
- d. During the FHSAA State Series, beginning with District Playoffs, teams must use the FHSAA official football (Wilson GST Speedskin Heir Women's Ball).
- e. The Referee shall decide whether the ball meets specifications.

**ART. 2... Uniforms** – Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting solid-colored jerseys, without pockets, numbered on the front and rear.

- a. The jersey must be long enough so that it remains tucked in.
- b. Players of the visiting team shall wear WHITE jerseys.
- c. Players of the home team shall wear DARK jerseys in a color that contrasts with white.
  - a. It is recommended that each participating team bring to the competition site two sets of jerseys (one dark, one light) with identical numbers.

**PENALTY:** Administrative 10-yard penalty to start the game

- d. Each jersey must be numbered on the front and back using Arabic numbers 0-99.
  - a. Numbers must be the same color on the front and back of the jersey.
    - i. The number on the front of the jersey must be a minimum of 6 inches in height and centered.
    - ii. The number on the back of the jersey must be a minimum of 8 inches in height and centered.
    - iii. Numbers must be of solid color contrasting with the color of the shirt.
    - iv. The number may have a contrasting color border, which shall not exceed 1/4 inch.
    - v. The color and style of the number shall be the same on the front and back.
  - b. No players on the same team shall wear identical numbers.

**ART. 3... Pants/Shorts** – Each player shall wear pants/shorts without any belt(s), belt loops, or exposed drawstrings.

- a. No pockets of any type are permitted. Pockets cannot be covered "taped".
- b. May not have stripes resembling the color of flags that are being worn.

**ART. 4... Flag Belt** - Each player shall wear a 1-piece quick release belt, without any twists or knots, flat against the waistline with 3 flags permanently attached.

- a. 1 flag on each side and 1 in the center of the back.
- b. The flags shall be a minimum of 2" wide and 14" long when measured from the top edge of the belt.
- c. The flags should be of a contrasting color to the opponent's flags.
- d. The belt must have a spring-loaded clip.
  - i. The main body of the flags must be of a completely contrasting color to the shorts. (I.e. Shall not be dark on dark or light on light)
  - ii. Main color must comprise of at least 1/2" of all edges of the Team names located on the flag and are the same color of the shorts shall not exceed a size of more than 1" wide and 10" long.

- iii. Bordering around a team name cannot exceed more than 1/4" wide.
- iv. Team logos located on a flag shall not exceed 1".
- e. Flag belts cannot match the color of the shorts or jersey.

Note: If the flags are not located on each hip and the tailbone, then the player must change to an appropriate size belt that meets the rule.

**PENALTY:** Live Ball Foul. Failure to have the flag belt legally attached at the snap, 5 yards from the previous spot.

**ART. 5... Mouth and Tooth Protector** - A mouthpiece shall be properly worn by all players.

**PENALTY:** Dead Ball Foul, Delay of Game, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

**ART. 6... Shoes** - shall be made of a canvas, leather, or synthetic material which covers the foot attached to a firm sole of leather, rubber, or composition material which may have cleats or be cleatless. Cleats are limited to studs or projections which do not exceed 1/2" in length and are made with nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material which does not chip or develop a cutting edge.

**PENALTY:** Failure to wear required equipment - Dead Ball Foul. 5 yards.

#### **Section 4. PLAYER EQUIPMENT OPTIONAL**

**ART. 1... Sunglasses/Prescription glasses** - Players may wear prescription glasses and sunglasses. Players must have sunglasses and prescription glasses secured at all times while on the field. Sunglasses must be shatter proof/resistant.

**ART. 2... Elastic Bandage** – Players may wear an elastic bandage that has no more than two (2) turns of thickness in any given area. The elastic bandage can be anchored at each end by athletic tape not to exceed two (2) turns.

**ART. 3... Gloves** – Players may wear gloves which must consist of a soft, pliable, non-abrasive material and non-sticky.

**ART. 4... Headwear** – Players may wear knit stocking caps, or elastic headbands.

- a. Hats may not have a bill.
- b. Knit caps may have a knit ball on top.
- c. Headbands and wristbands shall be white, black, beige or the predominant color of the jersey and shall be the same color for each item and all participants.
- d. A headband is any item that goes around the entire head. It shall be a circular design. If worn, only one headband is permitted, it shall be worn on the forehead/crown, it shall be nonabrasive and unadorned.
  - i. NOTE: no bandanas
- e. Rubber or cloth elastic bands may be used to control hair (but may not be worn on the wrist). Hard items, including, but not limited to, beads barrettes, bobby pins and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened to the head and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates or opponents are allowed.
- f. Players may wear a soft rubber hat.
- g. Hair shall be controlled so that it does not interfere with flag belt.

**ART. 5... Pads** – Players may wear soft, pliable pads on the leg, knee, and/or ankle. Soft and yielding compression shorts and shirts are legal apparel.

#### **ART. 6... Play Books**

- a. Players may carry a play book inside their clothing made of a yielding material only.
  - 1. Play books are not to be visible while the ball is live.
  - 2. A player must keep the play book.
  - 3. Throwing or tossing the play book to the ground is prohibited.
- b. Players may wear a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band that contains plays and play cards.
  - 1. These play card bands may be worn on the wrist, forearm, or upper arm (bicep area).

**ART. 7... Face Shield** – Players may wear a face shield molded to the face with no protrusions, to protect against facial injury.

#### **Section 5. GAME AND PLAYER EQUIPMENT (ILLEGAL)**

**ART. 1...** Prior to the start of the game, the head coach shall be responsible for verifying to the Referee that all players on his/her team are legally equipped and in compliance with the rules. The coach will also attest that his/her players will exhibit good sportsmanship. Any questions regarding legality of player equipment shall be resolved by the Referee.

**ART. 2...** Each player shall properly wear the mandatory equipment while the ball is live.

**ART. 3...** When any required player equipment is missing or when illegal equipment is found on any incoming substitute or player, correction shall be made before participation. An official's time-out shall be declared to permit prompt repair of equipment which becomes illegal or defective through use.

**ART. 4...** 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, confusing, or inappropriate. Types of equipment or substances which shall always be declared illegal include:

- a. Jewelry. NOTE: Religious and medical alert items are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.
- b. Pads or braces worn above the waist.
- c. Casts
- d. Shoes with metal, ceramic, detachable cleats, or any projecting metal. EXCEPTION: Screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat.
- e. Shirts or jerseys which do not remain tucked in.
  1. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt which does not remain tucked inside the jersey.
  2. Tear-away jerseys or jerseys that have been altered in any manner which produces a knot-like protrusion or creates a tear-away jersey.
  3. Jerseys that have an opening more than 4" below the armpit.
- f. Pants or shorts with any belt(s), belt loops, pocket(s), or exposed drawstring(s)
  1. NOTE: Drawstrings are to be tucked into the pants/shorts.
- g. 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  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of closed cell slow recovery rubber or other material of similar thickness and physical properties.
- h. Towels or other items attached at the player's waist (only the flag belt may be attached at the waist of a player).
- i. Any slippery or sticky foreign substance on any equipment or exposed body part.
- j. Electronic or mechanical devices, including computers and cellular phones, designed for communication. Electronic communication is strictly forbidden.
- k. Exposed metal on clothes or person. This includes "O" or "D" rings used to secure flag belts.
  1. Including earrings, nose and facial piercings, any type of beads used in the hair.
- l. Flags that can be detached from the flag belt.
- m. Hand warmers worn around the waist.

**PENALTY:** Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards

## **Section 6. Coaches' Equipment**

**ART. 1...** Communication devices including but not limited to audio recorder, Local Area Network (LAN) phones and/or headsets, mobile phones, tablets, still photograph(s), film, analog or digital video, and/or internet depictions may be used by coaches and nonplayers but shall not be used to communicate with a player or players except during a sideline conference during a team or official's timeout.

NOTE: The FHSAA may authorize the use of a drum by a team composed of deaf or partially deaf players in order to establish a rhythmic cadence following the ready-for-play signal.

Authorization must be obtained in advance by a school and the head coach must notify the Referee prior to the contest, and show an FHSAA authorization, that a drum will be used.

## **Section 7. Missing or Improperly Worn Player Equipment**

**ART. 1...** Each player shall properly wear the mandatory equipment while the ball is live. When a required player equipment is missing or worn improperly, an official's time-out shall be declared. If the missing or improperly worn equipment is detected during the down or subsequent deadball action related to the down without being directly attributable to a foul by an opponent or if a player is wearing otherwise legal equipment in an illegal manner, the player shall be replaced for at least one down, unless halftime intermission or an overtime intermission occurs. If proper and legal equipment has become improperly worn through use but prompt repair is possible and does not delay the ready-for-play for more than 25 seconds, such repair may be made without replacing the player for at least one down.

---

## **Rule 2. DEFINITIONS OF PLAYING TERMS**

---

### **Section 1. BALL – DEAD, LIVE, LOOSE AND READY FOR PLAY**

**ART. 1...** **Dead Ball** - A dead ball is a ball not in play. The ball is dead during the interval between downs.

**ART. 2...** **Live Ball** - A live ball is a ball in play. A ball becomes live when the ball is legally snapped and a down is in progress.

**ART. 3...** **Loose Ball** - A loose ball is a pass, fumble, the snap or a kick. A loose ball that has not yet touched the ground is in flight. A grounded loose ball is one that has touched the ground. Any loose ball continues to be a loose ball until a player secures possession of it or until it becomes dead by rule, whichever comes first.

**ART. 4...** **Ready for Play** - A dead ball is Ready for Play when the Referee sounds the whistle and signals "Ready for Play" (S1).

- a. The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play following the Ready for Play signal.

### **SECTION 2: BATTING**

**ART. 1...** **Batting** - Batting is intentionally slapping, striking or redirecting the ball with the arm or hand.

### **SECTION 3: CATCH, INTERCEPTION, SIMULTANEOUS CATCH, AND TOUCHING**

**ART. 1...** **Catch** – A catch is an act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight and first contacting the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball.

- a. If one (1) 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 a kneeling, prone, or supine inbounds player is a completion or interception.

- c. It is not a catch or interception if an airborne player's initial contact with the ground causes a loss of player possession and either the ball contacts the ground or the player is out-of-bounds prior to regaining player possession. NOTE: If in doubt, it is to be ruled a catch.

**ART. 2...Interception** – An interception is the catch of an opponent's fumble or pass.

**ART. 3...Recovery** – A recovery is gaining possession of a live ball after it strikes the ground.

**ART. 4...Simultaneous Catch or Recovery** – A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch or recovery in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds.

**ART. 5...Touching** – Catching is always preceded by touching the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance. Touching refers to any contact with the ball.

#### **SECTION 4: DOWN, BETWEEN DOWNS, AND LOSS OF DOWN**

**ART. 1... Down** – A down is a unit of the game which starts, after the ball is "Ready for Play," with a legal snap and ends when the ball next becomes dead.

- a. The ball becomes dead when a player is deflagged.
  - a. Deflagged is having the flag belt removed.

**ART. 2... Between Downs** – Between downs is the interval before or after a play during which the ball is dead.

**ART. 3... Loss of Down** – "Loss of Down" means the loss of the right to repeat the down.

#### **SECTION 5: ENCROACHMENT**

**Art. 1... Encroachment** – Encroachment is a term to indicate a defensive player is illegally in the neutral zone during the time interval starting when the ball is declared "Ready for Play" and until the ball is snapped.

- a. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until she is on her team's side of the neutral zone.

#### **SECTION 6: FAIR CATCH**

**ART. 1...** There is NO fair catch under FHSAA Rules. The ball remains live.

#### **SECTION 7: FIELD AREAS**

**ART. 1... Field** – The field is the area within the boundary lines and the end lines.

**ART. 2... Field of Play** – The field of play is the area within the boundary lines and the goal lines.

**ART. 3... Side Zones** – The side zones are the areas bounded by the sidelines, the hash marks, and the goal lines.

**ART. 4... End Zones** – The end zones are 10 yards in depth and are located at each end of the field between the goal line and the end line. The goal line is in the end zone and a team's end zone is the one it is defending.

#### **SECTION 8: FIGHTING**

**ART. 1...** Fighting is any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage in a combative manner unrelated to the game of flag football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s), or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.

## **SECTION 9: FORWARD PROGRESS**

**ART. 1... Runner-** Forward progress is the end of advancement of the ball toward the opponent's goal in the runner's possession, and it determines the dead-ball spot.

**ART. 2... Airborne Player-** When an airborne player makes a catch, forward progress is the furthest point of advancement after they possess the ball if contacted by a defender.

## **SECTION 10: FOULS AND PENALTIES**

**ART. 1... Foul** – A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. NOTE: If in doubt, it is not a foul.

### **ART. 2... Types of Fouls**

- a. Dead Ball Foul - a foul that occurs when the ball is dead.
- b. Double Foul - one or more live ball fouls on each team (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike)
- c. Excessive Contact – a foul that occurs outside of normal game play/fouls (but does not reach the level of a flagrant foul).
  - a. A player who receives 3 excessive contact penalties shall be disqualified for the remainder of that game.
- d. Flagrant Foul – a foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury, and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive in conduct.
- e. Live Ball – a foul which occurs during a down.
- f. Multiple – two or more live ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team at such a time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.
- g. Non-Player or Unsportsmanlike – a non-contact foul while the ball is dead or during the down which is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.
  - a. NOTE: An unsportsmanlike or nonplayer foul can occur at any time, but is enforced as a DEAD BALL FOUL.
- h. Player – a foul (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) by a player in the game, hereinafter referred to as a foul.
- i. Post-Scrimmage Kick – a foul by R (other than illegal substitution or participation) when the foul occurs:
  - 1. During a declared scrimmage kick play.
  - 2. Beyond the neutral zone.
  - 3. Before the end of the kick.
  - 4. And, K will not be next to put the ball in play.
- j. Simultaneous with the Snap – an act which becomes a foul when the ball is snapped.

## **SECTION 11: FUMBLE AND MUFF**

**ART. 1... Fumble** – A fumble is a loss of player possession other than by handing, passing, or punting the ball.

**ART. 2... Muff** - A muff is the touching of a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession.

- a. If the muff occurs on a forward pass and the ball hits the ground, it is an incomplete pass.
- b. If the muff is on a backward pass or handoff and the ball hits the ground, it is dead at that spot and the down counts.
- c. If the muff is on a punt and the receiver muffs an attempted catch and the ball hits the ground, it is dead at that spot and belongs to Team R.
- d. If the potential kicker of a punt muffs the ball or misses it altogether and the ball hits the ground it is dead at that spot and belongs to the receiving team.

## **SECTION 12: GOAL LINE**

**ART. 1...Goal Line** – 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 13: HANDING THE BALL**

### **ART. 1...Handing the Ball**

- a. Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one player to a teammate in such a way that the ball is still in contact with the first player when it is touched by the teammate. Handing the ball is not a pass. Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of an attempted handing is a fumble and the ball becomes dead at the spot where it hits the ground.
- b. Forward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when the entire ball is beyond the yard line where the runner is positioned.
- c. Backward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when any part of the ball is on or behind the yard line where the runner is positioned.
- d. Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time anywhere on the field.

## **SECTION 14: HUDDLE**

**ART. 1...Huddle** – A huddle is two (2) or more offensive players grouped together before assuming scrimmage formation prior to the snap.

## **SECTION 15: HURDLING**

**ART. 1...Hurdling** – Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump (hurdle) with one or both feet or knees foremost over a player who is contacting the ground with no part of her body, except one or both feet.

## **SECTION 16: INTERCEPTION**

**ART. 1...Interception** – An interception is the catch of an opponent's pass, muff, or fumble before it hits the ground.

## **SECTION 17: KICKS**

**ART. 1...Kicker** – The kicker is any player who legally punts. The kicker is a runner until that player actually punts the ball.

**ART. 2...Legal and Illegal Kicks** – A legal kick is a punt by a player of the team in possession when such a kick is declared by the team in possession and when a kick is permitted by rule.

- a. Any declared and legal punt continues to be a punt until it is caught by a player or becomes dead.
- b. Any punt that is untouched continues to be a kick and continues to be live after it hits the ground. This grounded punt may be recovered by the receiving team and advanced.
- c. A grounded punt that has been touched prior to hitting the ground is dead at that spot where it hits the ground and belongs to the receiving team.
- d. A grounded punt that is touched after becoming grounded and then hits the ground again is dead at that spot and belongs to the receiving team.

Kicking the ball in any other manner, i.e., not declaring a punt, is illegal.

**ART 3... Punt** - A punt is a declared kick made by K under restrictions which prohibits either team from advancing beyond their scrimmage lines until the ball is punted. A player becomes a kicker when her knee, lower leg, or foot makes contact with the ball before it strikes the ground.

- a. Rushing the punter is prohibited.

## **SECTION 18: LIVE BALL**

**ART. 1...Live Ball** – A live ball is in play.

- a. A ball becomes live when the ball is legally snapped and a down is in progress.
  1. If the defense intercepts a live ball (except on a try or in overtime) the ball continues to be live and may be advanced.
- b. An interception of a live ball on a try causes the ball to become dead and Team B takes over with a new series.
- c. An interception of a live ball during overtime causes the ball to become dead and ends the series.

## **SECTION 19: NEUTRAL ZONE**

**ART. 1...Neutral Zone** - The neutral zone is the area between the offensive and defensive lines of scrimmage that has been established by the spot markers and extends to each sideline.

- a. The neutral zone is established when the ball is marked ready for play.

## **SECTION 20: OUT OF BOUNDS**

**ART. 1...Player Out of Bounds** - A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official that is on or outside the sideline or end line.

**ART. 2...Ball 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 that is on or outside the sideline or end line.

**ART. 3...Loose Ball Out of Bounds** - A loose ball in flight is out of bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official that is out of bounds.

## **SECTION 21: PASSER**

**ART. 1...Passer** – The passer is the player who throws a legal forward pass.

- a. This player remains the passer while the ball is in flight or until the passer moves to participate in the play.

## **SECTION 22: PASSES**

**ART. 1...Pass** – Passing the ball is throwing it. In a pass the ball travels in flight.

- a. A pass continues to be a pass until caught, intercepted, or the ball becomes dead.
- b. The initial direction determines whether a pass is forward or backward.

**ART. 2...Forward Pass** – A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line.

**ART. 3... Backward Pass** – A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end line.

### **ART. 4... Passes Live and Dead**

A forward pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground.

- a. A backward pass (or fumble) that hits the ground is ruled dead at that spot.

## **SECTION 23: PENALTY**

**ART. 1...** A penalty is a result imposed by Rule against a team or team member that has committed a foul.

## **SECTION 24. POSSESSION**

**ART. 1...** A ball in player possession is a live ball held or controlled by a player after it has been handed or snapped to her, or after she caught or recovered it.

- a. A ball in team possession is a live ball that is in player possession or one that is loose following loss of such player possession.
- b. A live ball is always in possession of a team.
- c. A change of possession occurs when the opponent gains player possession during the down.

## **SECTION 25. REMOVING THE FLAG BELT - DEFLAGGING**

**ART. 1...** When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the ball is declared dead and the down shall end.

- a. If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a 1 hand tag (see 2.30.1) between the shoulders and knees, including arms and hands, constitutes capture.
- b. A player may leave her feet to remove the flag belt.

**ART. 2... Contact** - In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, an opponent may contact the body, but not the face, neck, or any part of the head of the runner with their hands.

- a. An opponent may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.

## **SECTION 26. SCREEN BLOCKING**

**Art. 1... Screen blocking** - legally obstructing an opponent without using any part of the body to initiate contact.

## **SECTION 27. SCRIMMAGE**

### **Art. 1... Scrimmage Line**

- a. The scrimmage line for A is the yard line and its vertical plane which passes through the forward point of the ball.
- b. The scrimmage line for B is the yard line and its vertical plane which passes 1 yard from the point of the ball nearest its own goal line.
- c. B's scrimmage line may extend into their end zone.

## **SECTION 28. SHIFT**

**Art. 1...** A shift is the action of 1 or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

## **SECTION 29. SPOTS**

### **Art. 1... Basic Spot**

- a. Is a point of reference for penalty enforcement.

### **Art. 2... Enforcement Spot**

- a. Is the point from which a penalty is enforced.

### **Art. 3... Dead Ball Spot**

- a. Is the spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule.
  - i. **EXCEPTION:** See 8-6-1B EXCEPTION

### **Art. 4... Inbounds Spot**

- a. Is the intersection of the hash marks and the yard line:
  - i. Through the forward point of the ball when the ball becomes dead in a side zone.

- ii. Through the forward point of the ball on the sideline between the goal lines when a loose ball goes out of bounds.
- iii. Through the spot under the forward point of the ball in the possession of a runner when she crosses the plane of the sideline and goes out of bounds.

#### **Art. 5... Out-of Bounds Spot**

- a. Where the ball becomes dead because of going out of bounds.

#### **Art. 6... Post Scrimmage Kick Spot**

- a. The post scrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. R retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the post scrimmage kick spot when a post scrimmage kick foul occurs. Fouls by R behind the post scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

#### **Art. 7... Previous Spot**

- a. Where the ball was last snapped.

#### **Art. 8... Spot of a Foul**

- a. Is where the foul occurs.
- b. If a foul occurs out of bounds, the spot of the foul is at the intersection of the nearer yard line and the yard line extended on which the foul occurs.

#### **Art. 9... Spot Where a Run Ends**

- a. Spot where a run ends is:
  - i. Where the ball becomes dead if the runner does not lose possession or if the runner's fumble/backward pass from beyond the scrimmage line lands behind the spot of the fumble/backward pass.
  - ii. Where the player loses possession if their run is followed by her fumble or a backward pass that touches the ground or goes out of bounds beyond the spot of their fumble/backward pass or which goes into the opponent's end zone, their illegal forward pass, or their fumble/backward pass beyond the scrimmage line that is intercepted. **EXCEPTION:** If the runner fumbles into the opponent's end zone from the field of play, the result is a touchback.
  - iii. The spot of the catch or recovery when the momentum rule is in effect.

#### **Art. 10... Succeeding Spot**

- a. Is where the ball would next be snapped if a foul had not occurred. When a foul occurs during a down in which a touchdown is scored, as in 10-3-10, the succeeding spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the succeeding spot after the Try.

### **SECTION 30. TAGGING**

#### **Art. 1... Tagging** - is placing 1 hand anywhere between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, of an opponent with the ball.

- a. The tagger may leave her feet to make the tag.
  - 1. If the player trips the runner in her attempt to make a diving tag, it is a foul.
  - 2. Excessive contact is not permitted.

## **SECTION 31. TEAM DESIGNATIONS AND PLAYERS**

### **Art. 1... Teams.**

- a. A is the team which snaps the ball.
- b. The opponent of A is B.
- c. A player of A is A-1 and teammates are A-2 and A-3.
- d. Other abbreviations:
  - a. B-1 for a player of B.
  - b. K-1 for a player of the kickers.
  - c. R-1 for a receiver.

**Art. 2... Disqualified Player** - A disqualified player is a player who is ineligible to compete for the remainder of the game.

### **Art. 3... Offensive and Defensive Team.**

- a. The offensive team is the team in possession or the team to which the ball belongs.
- b. The defensive team is the opposing team.

### **Art. 4... Player and Nonplayer.**

- a. A player is any one of the participants in the game.
- b. A nonplayer is a coach, athletic trainer, other attendant, a substitute, or a replaced player who does not participate by touching the ball, hindering an opponent, or influencing the play.

**Art. 5... Runner** - The player in possession of a live ball or simulating possession of a live ball. Once a player catches or intercepts a pass, she becomes a runner.

**Art. 6... Snapper** - The player who snaps the ball. She is a line player.

**Art. 7... Substitute** - Is a team member who may replace a player.

---

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

---

## **SECTION 1. START OF EACH HALF**

**Art. 1. Forfeit Time** - Game time is forfeit time.

**Art. 2... Coin Toss** – A coin toss will be held three (3) minutes before the start of the game.

- a. The visiting captain shall give a “heads” or “tails” choice before the coin toss.
- b. The Referee will then toss the coin in the presence of the opposing captains.
- c. All officials shall be present for the coin toss.
- d. Captain Choices
  - 1. The captain winning the toss shall have a choice of options for the 1st half or shall defer (S10) her option to the 2nd half.
  - 2. The options for each half shall be:
    - a. To choose whether her team will start on offense or defense.
    - b. To choose the goal her team will defend.
  - 3. The captain, not having the 1st choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.

**Art. 3... Change Periods** - Between the 1st and 2nd and between the 3rd and 4th periods, the teams shall change goals.

- a. Team possession, number of the next down, and the zone line-to-gain remain unchanged.

**Art. 4... Start 1st and 3rd Periods** - Unless moved by penalty or field dimensions have been shortened, the ball shall be snapped on the Team A 14-yard line to start the 1st and 3rd periods.

## **SECTION 2. GAME TIMING**

**Art. 1... Playing Time and Intermissions** - Playing time shall be 48 minutes, divided into 4 periods of 12 minutes each.

- a. The intermission between the 2nd and 3rd periods shall be 5 minutes.
- b. When overtime is used, there will be a 3-minute intermission.
- c. NOTE: Timing rules may be modified due to institutional program needs.

**Art. 2... Interrupted and Shortened Games.**

- a. If a thunderstorm or electrical storm occurs in the area prior to the start of or during any outdoor contest, the officials must immediately contact the principal or his/her designee of each school involved in the contest to determine if the contest should be played as scheduled, delayed or suspended or postponed. If the principal or his/her designee of either of the schools involved requests that the contest be interrupted or postponed, with the exception of FHSAA State Championship Series events, the officials must immediately honor such request. If the principal or his/her designee of only one of the competing schools is available, with the exception of FHSAA State Championship Series events, his/her request must be honored. The FHSAA administrative staff, State Finals host and officials shall manage any inclement weather situations at the FHSAA State Finals events.
- b. Safety is paramount. The safety and welfare of all concerned is of paramount importance. In no case may an official deny a request by a principal or his/her designee to delay, suspend or postpone an outdoor contest due to inclement weather or imply that the contest will be forfeited as a result of such request.
- c. Wait at least 30 minutes prior to resuming play. If subsequent thunder is heard or lightning is seen after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count will begin.
- d. In the event a game must be suspended because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the game can end at the mutual discretion of the coaches and/or school administration, if one team is leading by 28 or more points and one-half of the game has been played. If less than one-half of the game has been played, the game can be restarted from the suspension of play.

**Art. 3... Extended Periods** - A period shall be extended by an untimed down (S1), if one of the following occurred during a down in which time expires:

- a. There was a foul (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer fouls, fouls for which enforcement by Rule result in a safety, or fouls which specify loss of down) by either team and the penalty is accepted.
- b. For loss of down fouls, any score by the team which fouled is cancelled.
- c. There was a double foul.
- d. There was an inadvertent whistle.
- e. If a touchdown was scored, the Try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the 4th period and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.
- f. If (A), (B), or (C) occurs during the untimed down (S1), the procedure is repeated.

NOTE: The period shall not be extended further 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.

**Art. 4... Game Timer** - It is recommended that playing time be kept on a stopwatch operated by the Back Judge (Referee or Line Judge).

**Art. 5... Clock Stoppages** – At the snap to start each quarter, the 12:00 clock will run continuously except for:

- a. Fouls and penalty enforcement
- b. Touchdown & Onside conversion- clock will start on the snap of Team B's next series of downs. Once the margin of victory reaches 19 or more the clock will run. At any point if the margin of victory falls back below 19 points the clock will stop after a touchdown.
- c. Charged and officials time-outs and water break (district/county policy)
- d. At the 2-minute alert at the end of both halves, the clock will resume at the snap and stop only for each 1<sup>st</sup> down, incomplete pass, penalty enforcement, score and turnover. At the 2-minute alert, the clock will remain stopped after scores until the opponent's snap. The clock will resume running status based on the last play if stopped.

**Art. 6... 2 Minute Alert** - Approximately 2 minutes before the end of the 2nd and 4th periods.

- a. The Referee shall stop the clock and inform both teams of the playing time remaining in that period.  
NOTE: This is not a timeout, and no timeout privileges are allowed.
- b. The clock starts on the snap.
- c. The Back Judge or Referee will announce to the captains the remaining time and status of the clock after every play during the final 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th periods.

**Art. 7... Last 2 Minutes Procedures** - During the final 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th periods the clock will stop for the following and start on the snap unless noted:

- a. Incomplete pass.
- b. Out-of-bounds.
- c. Score (Touchdown, Safety or Onside conversion) - clock will start on the snap of Team B's next series of downs.
- d. Team time-out.
- e. First down – dependent on the previous play.
- f. Penalty and administration – dependent on the previous play (EXCEPTIONS: Delay of game foul is accepted – starts on the snap, foul under 2 minutes the offended team can choose to have the clock to start on the snap if it was to start on the ready for play).
- g. Referee's time-out – starts at his/her discretion.
- h. Touchback
- i. A is awarded a new series – dependent on the previous play.
- j. B is awarded a new series.
- k. Either team is awarded a new series following a legal punt.
- l. Change of possession
- m. Team attempting to conserve time illegally (includes intentional grounding and a backward pass thrown intentionally out of bounds) – starts on the ready.
- n. Team attempting to consume time illegally.
- o. Inadvertent whistle.

**Art. 8... Correct Timing Errors** - The Referee shall have authority to correct obvious timing errors if discovery is prior to the 2nd live ball following the error unless the period has officially ended.

**Art. 9... Mercy Rule** – At the Two-Minute Alert in the second half, if one team is ahead by 19 or more points, the game is over.

**Art. 10... Ending a Period** - Following delay to ensure:

- a. No foul has occurred.
- b. No obvious timing error has occurred.
- c. No request for a coach-Referee conference has occurred.
- d. No other irregularity has occurred.

The Referee shall hold the ball in 1 hand overhead (S14) to indicate the period has officially ended.

### **SECTION 3. TIE GAME**

**Art. 1... Mandatory Meeting** - If a game ends with a tie score, the officials shall bring all players and coaches of both teams to the center of the field.

- a. They shall discuss the tie breaker procedures and answer all questions prior to the coin toss.
- b. After this meeting, the captains will stay while the remaining players and coaches return to their respective team box.

**Art. 2... Coin Toss** - A coin will be tossed by the Referee to determine the options as in the start of the game.

- a. The visiting captain shall call the toss.
- b. There will be only 1-coin flip during the overtime.
  - i. If additional overtime periods are played, captains will alternate choices.

**NOTE:** For example, the loser of the coin toss gets first choice in the second overtime period and the winner of the coin toss gets first choice in the third overtime period, etc.

- c. The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense, or direction.
- d. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options.
- e. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line.

**Art. 3... Tie Breaker** - Unless moved by penalty, each team shall start 1st and goal from B's (see 2-31-1) 10-yard line.

- a. The object will be to score a touchdown.
- b. An overtime period consists of a series of four downs by each team unless team A scores or Team B secures possession.
- c. If the score is still tied after 1 period, play will proceed to a 2nd period or as many as are needed to determine a winner.

**Art. 4... Tie Breaker Procedure** - If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, they will declare for a 1, 2, or 3-point TRY. The opponent, however, still has a chance to tie or win the game. B will get a possession of the ball, first and goal at the 10-YARD LINE following the TRY attempt (unless moved by penalty).

- a. If the first team which is awarded the ball is intercepted by Team B, THE BALL BECOMES DEAD.
  - i. Team B is awarded a new series, first and goal at the 10-YARD LINE.
- b. If A, which is awarded the ball, first fails to score after four downs, B will be awarded a new series, first and goal at the 10-YARD LINE.
  - i. If B subsequently scores, there is no need to attempt a TRY, the game is over.
- c. Each team is entitled to 1 time-out only, during the entire overtime.

NOTE: At no point during overtime is a team required to go for a certain point value.

**Art. 5... Fouls and Penalties** - Are administered similar to the regular game.

- a. A shall be awarded a new series of 4 downs when an automatic 1st down foul is accepted.
- b. Dead ball fouls following a touchdown are penalized on the Try.
- c. Dead ball fouls following a successful Try will be penalized from the succeeding spot, the B 10-yard line, if accepted.

NOTE: **The goal line shall always be zone line-to-gain in overtime, regardless of the number of overtimes played.**

### **SECTION 4. TIME-OUTS**

**Art. 1... How Charged** - The Referee shall declare a time-out when he/she suspends play for any reason.

- a. Each time-out shall be charged either to the Referee or 1 of the teams.

- b. Time-outs cannot be carried over to the second half or overtime.

**Art. 2... Charged Time-Outs** - Each team is entitled to 3 charged time-outs during each half.

- a. Successive charged time-outs may be granted to each team during a dead ball period.

**Art. 3... Official's Time-Out** - The Referee shall declare an official's time-out when an excess time-out is allowed for an injured player.

- a. The Referee may declare an official's time-out for any contingency not covered elsewhere by the Rules.
- b. 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 declare a timeout.

**Art. 4... Length of Time-Outs** - A charged time-out requested by any player, player coach, or head coach which is legally granted shall be 1 minute and can be shortened if both teams are ready.

- a. A warning whistle shall be blown 15 seconds prior to the expiration of the 1-minute timeout.
- b. Other time-outs may be longer only if the Referee deems it necessary.

## **SECTION 5: CONFERENCES**

**ART. 1... Coach-Referee Conference** – Takes place when the Referee confers with the Head Coach, or acting Head Coach, at the sideline in front of the team box in the field of play.

- a. May be used when a team requests a timeout for a misapplication or misinterpretation of the rules.
- b. If the ruling is not changed, it is a charged timeout.
  - 1. If the team has used its available timeouts, a delay of game penalty will be assessed.
- c. If the ruling is changed, the timeout becomes an Official's Timeout, and the team is not charged with a timeout.

**ART. 2... Authorized Team Conference** – There are two (2) types of authorized team conferences, generally referred to as a Timeout or Officials' Timeout:

- a. Sideline Conference – One or more team members and one or more coaches meet directly in front of the team box within 5 yards of the sideline, or
- b. Between the Hash Conference – One coach on the field confers with no more than 7 players at the team huddle between the hash marks.

## **SECTION 6: INJURED PLAYERS**

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

- a. A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has any amount of blood on her uniform or on the player shall be considered an injured player.

**ART. 2... Concussion** - Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional.

## **SECTION 7: DELAYS**

**ART. 1... Delay of Game** - The ball must be put in play promptly and legally. Any action or inaction by either team which tends to prevent this is delay of game. This includes:

- a. Failure to snap within 25 seconds after the ball is declared ready for play.
- b. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.
- c. Failure to properly wear legal or required player equipment when the ball is about to become live. **NOTE: This includes the proper wearing of a mouthpiece.**

- d. Deliberately advancing the ball after it is declared dead.
- e. Not retrieving the ball at the end of a play by the team in possession.
- f. 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:** Dead Ball Foul, Delay of Game, 5 yards from the succeeding spot (S7 and S21).

## **SECTION 8. CONSERVING OR CONSUMING TIME**

**ART. 1... Illegally Conserving or Consuming Time** - When a team attempts to conserve or consume time illegally, the Referee shall order the clock started or stopped. When a penalty is accepted with less than two minutes remaining i.e. either half, the offended team will have the option to start the game clock on the snap. NOTE: If in doubt, apply conserving/consuming time.

**ART. 2... Legally Conserving Time** – It is legal for the player receiving the snap to immediately throw the ball to the ground at her feet (spike) to stop the clock in the last 2 minutes of each half.

## **SECTION 9. SUBSTITUTIONS**

**ART. 1... Eligible Substitutions** - No substitute shall enter during a down. All substitutions must enter during a dead ball period.

- a. Any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball is snapped.
- b. An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from her team area.
- c. A replaced player must leave the field immediately at the sideline nearest her team area prior to the ball being snapped.
- d. An entering substitute shall be on her team's side of the neutral zone when the ball is snapped.
- e. An entering substitute is not considered for encroachment until she is on her team's side of the ball.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Substitution, 5 yards (S22). If it is a dead ball or nonplayer foul, 5 yards from the succeeding spot (S7 and S22).

**ART. 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 penalty is accepted, a dead ball foul occurs, there is a charged time-out, or a period ends.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Substitution, Dead Ball Foul, 5 yards from the succeeding spot (S7 and S22).

---

## **RULE 4. BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, AND OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

---

### **SECTION 1. BALL IN PLAY – DEAD BALL**

**ART. 1... Dead Ball Becomes Live** - A dead ball, after having been declared ready for play, becomes a live ball when it is snapped legally.

**ART. 2... Ball declared dead** - A live ball becomes dead, and an official shall sound his/her whistle or declare it dead when:

- a. It goes out-of-bounds.

- b. Any part of the runner other than a hand(s) or foot (feet) touches the ground.
- c. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful Try is made.
- d. The ball hits the ground following first touching by K or R.
- e. K catches a punt which is beyond the neutral zone.
- f. When an untouched punt comes to rest.
- g. A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- h. A backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players. A ball snapped, 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, a snap close to the ground remains live.
- i. When a forward pass is completed for a touchdown, or a loose ball is caught by a player on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line.
- j. A runner is legally tagged with 1 hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm.
- k. A passer is deflagged/tagged prior to releasing the ball. NOTE: If in doubt, the ball is released.
- l. A muff of a punt strikes the ground.
- m. K's punt breaks the plane of R's goal line.
- n. B secures possession during a Try or overtime.
- o. When the prosthetic device becomes dislodged from a player who is in possession of the ball.

**ART. 3... Inadvertent Whistle** – An official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, when:

- a. If a foul occurs during any down, an accepted penalty shall be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, disregard the inadvertent whistle.
- b. Following an inadvertent whistle on a play in which the penalty for a foul is declined, or there is no foul the following shall occur:
  - 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 put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
  - 3. During a legal forward pass or a punt – the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.

NOTE: There is no time added to the game clock during a down with an inadvertent whistle.

## **SECTION 2. INBOUNDS SPOT**

**ART. 1... Placement of dead Ball** - When the ball becomes dead between the hash marks, play is resumed at the dead ball spot. If the ball becomes dead in a side zone, place the ball at the nearest hash mark at the corresponding yard line.

**ART. 2... Anywhere Between the Hash Marks** - Before the ready for play signal, A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the hash marks for the following situations:

- a. For the start of each half.
- b. For a Try.
- c. Following a touchback.
- d. Following a Safety.
- e. Following a Try.
- f. For the start of each series in overtime.

### **SECTION 3. OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

**ART. 1... Player Out-of-Bounds** - A player or other person is out-of-bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or official, who is on or outside the sideline or end line.

**ART. 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 official, which is on or outside the sideline or end line.

**ART. 3... Loose Ball Out-of-Bounds** - A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or official, who is out-of-bounds.

**ART. 4... Airborne Player** – An airborne player is considered inbounds or out of bounds based upon their location when they were last in contact with the ground.

---

## **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** - 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** - Each team receives four (4) downs to pass the zone line-to-gain or goal line. Any down may be repeated or lost as 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 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** - To start each half, following a score, except for a Safety, and following a touchback a team's new series will start from the Team A 14-yard line.

- a. A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team advances the ball into the next zone following:
  1. a play free from penalty;
  2. a penalty against the opponent moves the ball into the next zone;
  3. an accepted penalty against the opponents involves an automatic first down;
  4. after enforcement of a penalty against A, the ball is in advance of the zone line-to-gain;
  5. either team obtaining legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, punt, touchback, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.
- b. If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated.

**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 was not prior to the final change of possession and it declines all penalties for its opponent's fouls, other than unsportsmanlike.

**Art. 5... Incorrect down** - Until a new series is awarded, the Referee shall have the authority to correct an error in the number of downs.

## **SECTION 2. DOWN AND POSSESSION AFTER A PENALTY**

**Art. 1... Penalty resulting in a 1st 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 1st down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be 1st down with next zone line-to-gain.

**Art. 2... Foul Before Change of Team Possession** - Following a distance penalty between the goal lines which occurs during a down and before any change of team possession during that down, the ball belongs to A. 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 1 of the 4 in that series.

**Art. 3... Foul After Change of Team Possession** - Following a distance penalty for a foul committed after team possession has changed during that down, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The down and distance established by that penalty shall be 1st down with zone line-to-gain.

**Art. 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.

**Art. 5... Rule Decisions Final** – Once the ball is next legally snapped, a Ruling may not be changed.

---

## **RULE 6. KICKING**

---

### **SECTION 1. PUNT (ALSO REFERRED TO AS SCRIMMAGE KICK)**

**Art. 1... Legal Punt** - A kick made in accordance with the Rules.

- a. Quick punts are illegal.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Kick, 10 yards (S31).

**Art. 2... Punt** - Prior to making the ball ready for play on 4th down, the Referee must ask the Team A coach if he/she wants to punt and allow for defensive substitutions before ready to play.

- a. The Referee must announce this decision to all A and B players and all officials (S43).
- b. The A coach may declare a punt on any down.
  - a. After such announcement, the ball must be punted.
  - b. EXCEPTIONS:
    - i. A or B time-out is called
    - ii. The period ends
    - iii. A foul occurs any time prior to or during this down after the Team K coaches decision which results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down again.
  - c. If any these events occur, the Team A coach must declare if Team A will punt or go for the first down on a play from scrimmage and the Referee will announce this decision as outlined above.

**Art. 3... Formation, Snap and Punting the ball** - Neither K nor R may enter the neutral zone until the ball is punted. Movement towards the line of scrimmage by teams prior to the ball being punted is allowed as long as they do not cross into the neutral zone prior to the ball being kicked.

- a. There is no stipulation that Team R must have any players on the defensive line of scrimmage at the snap
- b. The kicker must be at least two (2) yards behind the line of scrimmage when receiving the snap.

- c. The kicker must kick the ball within 5 seconds of receiving the snap.
- d. Failure to kick ball within 5 seconds will result in the play being whistled dead.

**PENALTY:** Delay of game, 5 yards from the succeeding spot

**PENALTY:** Second offense will result in a loss of down, change of possession from succeeding spot

**Art. 4... After the ball is Punted:**

- a. Team R players may advance the punt anywhere in the field of play.
- b. A K player may not punt the ball to herself or any other K player.
- c. K may punt the ball only once per down.
- d. Any kick caught by the kicking team behind the line of scrimmage, untouched by R, cannot be advanced.
- e. Any blocked punt that hits the ground behind the K's scrimmage line is dead and belongs to Team R.
- f. If the punt is blocked behind K's line of scrimmage by any R player and is in flight behind K's scrimmage line and then caught by any K player behind K's scrimmage line, K may run and/or throw a pass.
  - 1. In this instance, K must reach the next Zone Line-to-Gain in order to be awarded a new series. If K does not reach the next Zone Line-to-Gain and is deflagged, the ball belongs to R.
- g. A punt that is blocked by the receiving team beyond Team R's line of scrimmage and caught behind K's line of scrimmage can be advanced and will result in a new series for Team K regardless of whether the next Zone Line-to-Gain is reached.
  - 1. This is due to the fact that R touched the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.

NOTE: If in doubt, a punt blocked by R is blocked behind K's scrimmage line.

**PENALTY:** Illegal kicking, 10 yards.

**Art. 5... Punt Crosses K's Scrimmage Line:**

- a. When a punt that has clearly crossed the scrimmage line touches a player from either team and hits the ground, it is dead and belongs to R.
- b. If it hits an R player and is then caught in the air by R, it can be advanced.
- c. If the ball, touched by R, is caught by K beyond R's scrimmage line, the ball is dead, belongs to K, and a new series begins for K.

**Art. 6... First Touching** - If any K player touches a punt after it crosses K's scrimmage line and before it is touched by any R player, it is referred to as "1st touching."

- a. If, after 1st touching, the ball is still airborne, R may catch and advance, but may take the ball at the spot of 1<sup>st</sup> touching as determined by the action which follows 1st touching.
- b. The right of R to take the ball at the spot of 1<sup>st</sup> touching is cancelled if R touches the punt and thereafter during the down commits a foul, or if the penalty is accepted for any foul during the down.
- c. If, after 1st touching, the ball hits the ground, it is dead and belongs to Team R at that spot.

**Art. 7... Punt Out of Bounds or Behind the Goal Line:**

- a. If a punt goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest inbounds untouched and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.
- b. A punt that breaks the goal line plane is dead and results in a TOUCHBACK - unless R chooses the spot of 1st touching by K.
  - 1. Team R's ball, first and ten at the 14-yard line – unless moved by penalty.
  - 2. A punt that breaks the goal line plane CANNOT be run out of the end zone. It is a dead ball.

**Art. 8... Kick Catching Interference** - While any punt is in flight beyond K's scrimmage line (1st ball spotter), K shall not touch the ball or R, nor obstruct R's path to the ball, unless the punt has been touched by R.

- a. K may catch, touch, muff, or bat a punt in flight beyond K's scrimmage line if no R player is in position to catch the ball.

**PENALTY:** Kick Catching Interference, 10 yards (S33).

**Art. 9... Signals** - Players shall ignore any signals given by R or K. The ball remains live.

- a. If K attempts to catch the punt and muffs the catch and the ball hits the ground, it is dead and belongs to Team R at that spot.

**NOTE:** There is no FAIR CATCH in FHSAA Flag Football – the ball remains live.

---

## RULE 7. SNAPPING, HANDING, AND PASSING THE BALL

---

### **SECTION 1. THE SCRIMMAGE**

**Art. 1... Ball Responsibility** - It is the responsibility of the offense to retrieve and control the ball after the previous play and to bring it to the line of scrimmage. On change of possession when the opposition will begin a new series, it is that team's responsibility to bring in a new ball and to bring it to the line of scrimmage.

- a. Team in possession is responsible for retrieving the ball after a down.
- b. The snapper will bring the ball from the huddle to the A scrimmage line (1st ball spotter).
- c. A small towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.

**Art. 2... The Start** - All plays must be started by a legal snap next to the ball spotter, which is on or between the hash marks.

- a. The ball may be moved with approval by the Referee due to poor field conditions.

**Art. 3... Stances** - Players may use a 2-, 3-, or 4-point stance.

### **SECTION 2. PRIOR TO THE SNAP**

**Art. 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 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. NOTE: During the interval between downs, when a second, or more, encroachment foul is committed by B, the penalty will be 10 yards for the second, and any subsequent, encroachment fouls.

**Art. 2... False Start** - No Team A player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of a play.

- a. 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, False Start, 5 yards from the succeeding spot

**Art. 3... Snap** - The snapper, after assuming position for the snap at the A scrimmage line (1st ball spotter) 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.

- a. An infraction of this provision may be penalized, whether or not the ball is snapped, and the penalty for any resultant encroachment foul by an opponent shall be cancelled.
- b. When over the ball, the snapper shall have her feet behind her scrimmage line (1st ball spotter).
- c. The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground/towel/ball spotter with a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s).
- d. The ball shall leave the hand(s) in this motion.
- e. There is no Rule restriction regarding placement of the long axis of the ball at right angles to the A scrimmage line.

NOTE: The snapper may have one or both knees on the ground during the snap.

**PENALTY:** Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Snap, 5 yards from the succeeding spot (S7 and S19).

### **SECTION 3. POSITION AND ACTION DURING THE SNAP**

**Art. 1... Legal Position** - Anytime on or after the ball is marked ready for play, each A player must momentarily be at least 5 yards inbounds before the snap.

NOTE: If a B player covers an A player positioned within 5 yards of the sideline, it is not a foul.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Formation, 5 yards (S19).

**Art. 2... Minimum Line Players** - The snapper is the only A player required to be on their scrimmage line (1st ball spotter) at the snap.

**Art. 3... Motion** - Only 1 A player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the snap.

- a. Other A players must be stationary in their positions without movement of their feet, body, head, or arms.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Motion, 5 yards (S20).

**Art. 4... Direct Snap** - The player who receives the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the A scrimmage line (1st ball spotter).

- a. Direct snaps are illegal.
- b. The snapper may not snap the ball to herself.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Formation, 5 yards (S19).

**Art. 5... Shift** - Following a huddle or a shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, head, or arms for at least one full second before the snap.

- a. It is legal, after the offense is stationary for one second for an offensive player to go in motion.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Shift, 5 yards (S20).

### **SECTION 4. HANDING THE BALL**

**Art. 1... No Restrictions** - Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.

## **SECTION 5. PASSING AND RUSHING**

### **Art. 1... No Restrictions**

- a. There are no restrictions on the Quarterback. The Quarterback may pass the ball or run the ball.
- b. There are no restrictions on the Rusher(s). Team B may rush as many players as it chooses, and rusher(s) may rush immediately at the snap but must avoid contact with their opponents.

## **SECTION 6. BACKWARD PASS AND FUMBLE**

**Art. 1... When Legal** – A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble anytime except if intentionally thrown out of bounds to conserve time.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass or fumble and loss of down (S35 and S9)

**Art. 2... Caught or Intercepted**- A forward or backward pass or fumble in flight may be caught or intercepted by any other player inbounds and advanced. A player may not throw an untouched backward pass to themselves.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down if by A before possession changed during a scrimmage down (S35 and S9)

**Art. 3... Simultaneous Catch by Opposing Players** – If a forward or backward pass or fumble in flight is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams inbounds, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the offensive team.

**Art. 4... Out of Bounds**- A backward pass or fumble that goes out of bounds is dead. If the backward pass/fumble goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball belongs to the offensive team:

- a. At the out-of-bounds spot if it is behind the spot of the pass or fumble.
- b. At the spot of the pass or fumble if it goes out of bounds beyond the spot of the spot of the pass or fumble.
  1. **EXCEPTION:** If the runner fumbles into the opponent's end zone from the field of play, the result is a touchback.

**Art. 5... Ball Dead When It Hits the Ground**- A backward pass or fumble that touches the ground is dead. If the backward pass/fumble touches the ground between the goal lines, the ball belongs to the offensive team:

- a. At the spot where it touches the ground if it is behind the spot of the pass or fumble, or
- b. At the spot of the pass or fumble if it touches the ground beyond the spot of the pass or fumble.
  1. **EXCEPTION:** If the runner fumbles into the opponent's end zone from the field of play, the result is a touchback.

## **SECTION 7. LEGAL AND ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS**

**Art. 1... Legal Forward Pass** – All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.

- a. During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are on or behind the plane of A's scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter) when the ball leaves the passer's hand.
- b. Only 1 forward pass can be thrown per down.

**NOTE:** If in doubt, the passer is behind the A scrimmage line.

**Art. 2... Illegal Forward Pass** – A forward pass is illegal:

- a. If the passer's foot is beyond the plane of A's scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter) when the ball leaves her hand (S35 and S9).
- b. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage (S36 and S9).
  - 1. **EXCEPTION:** Immediately upon receiving the snap, the passer may immediately throw the ball into the ground to stop the clock (spike the ball), provided the passer is not trying to avoid a loss of yardage.
- c. If thrown after team possession has changed (S35).
- d. If a passer catches her untouched forward pass (S35 and 9).
- e. If there is more than 1 forward pass per down (S35).

**PENALTY:** Illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down if by A before possession changes during a scrimmage down (S35 and S9).

**NOTE:** If in doubt, the pass is legal.

**Art. 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.

- a. In such a case the ball belongs to the passing team if, after 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 4<sup>th</sup> down.
- b. If a player catches an illegal forward pass, the ball continues in play until declared dead.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Forward Pass, spot foul, 5 yards and loss of down if by Team A before possession changes during a down (S35 and S9). If foul is committed by Team B after change of possession, spot foul 5 yards (S35) and new series for Team B after enforcement.

## **SECTION 8. COMPLETED OR INTERCEPTED PASSES**

**Art. 1... Pass Caught or Intercepted** – A forward pass is completed when caught by a member of the passing team inbounds.

- a. A forward pass is intercepted when caught by a member of the opposing team inbounds.
- b. If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception although subsequent steps or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.
- c. An interception by a Team B player in Team B's end zone on a play that is not a TRY, in regulation, remains live and can be run out of the end zone.
- d. A player may, while jumping in the air to attempt a catch, redirect the ball forward provided she has not yet touched the ground.

## **SECTION 9. INCOMPLETE PASS**

**Art. 1... Touches the Ground** – When a forward pass touches the ground or anything out-of-bounds, it becomes dead.

## **SECTION 10. FORWARD PASS**

**Art. 1... Interference** – During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses A's scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter) contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond A's scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter) 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.

- a. It is pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged/tagged prior to touching a forward pass thrown beyond A's scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter).

**PENALTY (c):** Illegal Flag Pull, 10 yards from the previous spot (S38).

**Art. 2... Offensive Pass Interference** – After the ball is snapped, and until the pass has been touched by any player, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond A's scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter).

**PENALTY:** Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot (S33).

**NOTE:** Contact is required for pass inference to be called.

**Art. 3... Defensive Pass Interference** – After the pass is thrown, and until the pass has been touched by any player, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond A's scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter) while the pass is in flight.

**PENALTY:** Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot (S33).

**NOTE:** Contact is required for pass inference to be called.

**Art. 4... Unsportsmanlike** – If the pass interference by either player is intentional or unsportsmanlike, her team shall be penalized an additional 10 yards.

**PENALTY:** Unsportsmanlike Conduct, succeeding spot foul, 10 yards (S27).

#### **Art. 5... Not Interference**

- a. Contact by B which is obviously away from the direction of the forward pass is not pass interference but may be a personal foul.
- b. Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on offensive and defensive forward pass interference.

**NOTE:** Face Guarding without contact is not a foul.

---

## RULE 8. SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACK

---

### **SECTION 1. COMMUNICATION**

**Art. 1... Teams and Officials** – The Referee will communicate the current score to the A and B captains, head coaches, and all officials after each touchdown, Try and safety.

- a. If there is a disagreement regarding the current or final score, the Referee will make the final decision after consulting with the other officials and, if available, the scorekeeper.

### **SECTION 2. FORFEITED GAME**

**Art. 1... Forfeited Score** – The score of a forfeited game shall be: Offended Team-1, Opponent-0. If the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score stands.

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

### **SECTION 3. PLAYER RESPONSIBILITY**

**Art. 1... Player Responsibility** – The player scoring must raise her arms and a teammate shall deflag the scorer with an official closely observing.

- a. If the player is not able to be deflagged and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the score is disallowed, the offending team is penalized, and the player is disqualified.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards from the previous spot (S38 and S47). If by A, loss of down (S9). If by B, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down (S8).

### **SECTION 4. TOUCHDOWN**

**Art. 1... Touchdowns** – A touchdown shall be scored when a legal forward pass is completed, or a fumble or backward pass is caught behind the opponent's goal line, or when a player is legally in possession of the ball and the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the opponent's goal line.

- a. All touchdowns are six (6) points.

### **SECTION 5. TRY = 1, 2, OR 3 POINTS**

**Art. 1... Referee's Responsibility and Team's Choice** – The Referee must speak to the coach only, asking him/her whether the Try shall be from the 3, 10, or 20-yard line.

- a. Once team A makes the choice, they may change the decision only when an A or B charged time-out is taken.
- b. However, this decision cannot be changed once either team commits a foul.
- c. The Referee will ask the scoring captain where she would like the ball placed on or between the hash marks.
- d. Enforcement of yardage penalties does not change the value of the Try.
- e. The point(s) shall be awarded if the Try results in what would have been a touchdown.
- f. If a double foul occurs during the TRY attempt down, the down shall be replayed. When a distance penalty is incurred by the offense during a successful TRY, the down will be repeated if the penalty is accepted, however; if the penalty by the offense carries a loss of down, the try has ended and will not be repeated.
- g. The Line-to-Gain Box, operated outside the sideline, shall be placed at the goal line during the TRY and the number on the box will display the number of points the Team A is attempting.

**Art. 2... 1, 2, or 3 Points** – An opportunity to score points are based on where the team chooses to place the ball.

- a. During the Try the opportunity to score one (1) point from the 3-yard line, or two (2) points from the 10-yard line, or three (3) points from the 20-yard line shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown.

**NOTE:** If a touchdown is scored on the last timed down of the 4<sup>th</sup> period, the Try is not attempted, unless it will affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

### **Art. 3... Try Begins and Ends**

- a. The Try ends when the tray is successful, B secures possession, or the ball becomes dead by rule.
- b. B cannot score during the Try.

**Art. 4... Next Play** – After a Try, the ball shall be snapped by the opponent of scoring team at their own 14-yard line if an onside conversion is not elected, the 30-yard line if an onside conversion is elected, unless moved by penalty or to begin overtime.

## **SECTION 6. MOMENTUM, SAFETY AND TOUCHBACK**

### **Art. 1... Safety**

- a. A Safety is worth two (2) points.
- b. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in her team's possession.

**EXCEPTION:** Momentum Rule – When a defensive player intercepts her opponent's forward pass, fumble, backward pass, or an R player catches a punt between her 5-yard line and the goal line and her original momentum carries her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in her team's possession behind the goal line, the ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where possession was gained.

- c. A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across her goal line and the ball subsequently becomes dead there in 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.
- d. A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted, and measurement is from a spot in her end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from her end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves 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.
- e. After a safety, the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their own 30-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

### **Art. 2... Touchback** - It is a touchback when:

- a. K's punt breaks the plane of R's goal line.
- b. 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.
- c. Punts breaking the plane of R's goal line are dead upon breaking the plane and cannot be returned out of the end zone.
- d. During a Try, it is a touchback if Team B intercepts the ball in its own end zone. The ball is dead. Team B may not advance the ball out of the end zone. The Try is over.
- e. After a touchback, the ball shall be snapped from the nearest 14-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

**NOTES:** If in doubt, it is a touchback

- a. If in doubt, the out-of-bounds punt near the goal line is a touchback.
- b. Teams cannot score points by a field goal attempt.

## **SECTION 8. ONSIDE CONVERSION**

### **Art. 1... When Allowed**

- a. A team may elect to attempt an onside conversion at any time during the game if they score a touchdown unless they are leading by 19 or more points following the Try.

### **Art. 2... Referee's Responsibility and Team's Choice**

- a. The referee must speak to the coach or captain immediately following the Try, asking them whether they would like to attempt an onside conversion from the 20-yard line. Once the coach/captain makes the choice, they may change the decision only when an A or B charged time-out is taken. Possession will be retained by A if the onside conversion is converted by reaching the 40-yard line.

### **Art. 3... Onside conversion Begins and Ends**

- a. The onside conversion begins when the ball is marked ready for play. The onside conversion ends when B secures possession, the onside conversion is successful, or the ball becomes dead by rule.
- b. If the conversion is successful, the referees must blow their whistle as soon as the 40-yard line has been reached and the play becomes dead immediately.
- c. Neither team can score during the onside conversion.

### **Art. 4... Next Play**

- a. After a successful onside conversion, the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their own 30-yard line, unless moved by penalty. After an unsuccessful onside conversion, the ball shall be snapped by the opponent of the touchdown-scoring team at their opponent's 30-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

## **SECTION 9. FORCE AND RESPONSIBILITY**

**Art. 1... Force** – The force imparted by a player who punts, passes, snaps, or fumbles the ball shall be considered responsible for the ball's progress in any direction even though its course is deflected, or reversed, after striking the ground or after striking a player of either team.

- a. The initial force is considered expended, and a new force is provided if a loose ball is illegally kicked or batted or it is contacted again after coming to rest.

**Art. 2... Responsibility** – The team responsible for a ball being on, above, or behind a goal line is the team whose player:

- a. Carries the ball to or across that goal line.
- b. Imparts to the ball an impetus which forces it to or across that goal line.
- c. Incurs a penalty which leave the ball on or behind the goal line.

---

## **RULE 9. CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS**

---

### **SECTION 1. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

**Art. 1... Players, Coaches and Bench Personnel** – Players and coaches are expected to exhibit exemplary sportsmanship before, during, and after each game.

### **SECTION 2. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

**Art. 1... Noncontact Acts** – No player or nonplayer shall commit noncontact acts during a period or intermission.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- a. Refusal to comply or abide by the request or decision of an official.
- b. Using words similar to the offensive audibles and quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A's signals or movements.
- c. Intentionally kicking at the ball, other than during a punt.
- d. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or with permission of the Referee.
- e. Participate while wearing illegal player equipment.
- f. Being outside the team box, but not on the field, during a live ball.

**NOTE:** During a dead ball, coaches can be a maximum of 2 steps on the field for coaching purposes only.

**PENALTY:** Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards (S27) (S7 and S27 if dead ball). If flagrant in 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D, the offender shall be disqualified (S47). In article 1F the 1<sup>st</sup> offense is a warning (S15), the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense is 5 yards (S7 and S29), and each subsequent offense is 10 yards (S7, S29, and S27).

**Art. 2... Dead Ball Fouls** – When the ball becomes dead in possession of a player, she shall not:

- a. Intentionally kick the ball.
- b. Spike the ball into the ground.
- c. Throw the ball high into the air.

**PENALTY:** Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards (S7 and S27), and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified (S47).

**Art. 3... Prohibited Acts** – There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players or nonplayers.

Examples, but are not limited to:

- a. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.
- b. Refusal to comply or abide by the request or decision of an official.
- c. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
- d. Indicating objections to an official's decision.
- e. Holding an unauthorized conference or being on the field illegally.
- f. Using profanity, taunting, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures.
- g. Intentionally kicking or swinging and arm or fist at any opposing player (Disqualification).
- h. Intentionally contacting a game official (Disqualification).
- i. Leaving the team box and entering the field during a fight (Disqualification).

**PENALTY:** Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards (S27) (S7 and S27 if dead ball), and if flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified (S47). In article 3G, H, and I the offender will be disqualified.

**Art. 4... Second Unsportsmanlike Foul** – The 2<sup>nd</sup> unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or nonplayer results in disqualification.

### **SECTION 3. EJECTIONS**

**Art. 1... Player Ejection**

- a. If a player or nonplayer is ejected from a game due to unsportsmanlike conduct, she may be allowed to remain on the bench.
- b. If the ejected player or nonplayer creates a problem for the game officials from the bench area, the official shall have the coach/school administrator escort the individual away from the field area.
  - 1. The player/non-player must be chaperoned.

**Art. 3... Coach/Bench Personnel Ejection** – If a coach or other adult team-related person is ejected from a game due to unsportsmanlike conduct, he/she will be told to leave the field area.

- a. The field area is defined as “out of sight, out of sound.”
- b. If the ejected coach or other team-related adult refuses to leave after a reasonable amount of time, the Referee will inform the captain and remaining coach(es) that the game will be forfeited.
- c. In the event that the ejected coach is the only administrative adult, he/she by rule must leave the field which will result in the game being declared ended at that point.

## **SECTION 4. UNFAIR ACTS**

**Art. 1... Refusal to Play or Halving the distance** – If a team refuses to play within 2 minutes after being ordered by the Referee, 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 the awarding of the score.

- a. For refusal to play, or for repeated fouls, the Referee shall, after 1 warning, forfeit the game to the opponents.

**Art. 2... Unfair Acts** – No player or nonplayer shall use verbiage or commit any act not in accordance with the spirit of fair play for the purposes of confusing the opponent.

**PENALTY:** Unfair Act, 10 yards (S38)

## **SECTION 5. PERSONAL FOULS**

**Art. 1... Restrictions** – No player or nonplayer shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission.

- a. Any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul.
- b. No player or nonplayer shall:
  1. Strip or attempt to strip the ball from a runner by punching, striking, or grabbing it (S38). **NOTE:** Any player who controls a pass with both feet off the ground becomes a runner when the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the person touches the ground.
  2. Throw the runner to the ground (S38).
  3. Hurdle any other player (S38).
  4. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead (S38).
  5. Make contact of any nature with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary including using fists, locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to Rule (S38).
  6. Drives or runs into an opponent (S38).
  7. Position herself on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage (S38).
  8. Fling or throw a flag belt after deflaging the runner in a taunting or violent manner (S38).
  9. 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 (S38 and S47) (Ejection).
  10. Fight an opponent (S38 and S47) (Ejection).

**NOTE:** Each player who participates in the fight will be assessed 1 flagrant personal foul for fighting.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards, if excessive contact, the offender shall be warned and after the third excessive contact penalty by the same player it will lead to a disqualification, and if flagrant, the offender will be ejected (S47). In b9 and b10, the offender will be ejected.

**Art. 2... Roughing the Passer** – Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally.

- a. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as she is considered out of the play after the pass.
- b. Roughing the passer restrictions do not apply if the forward pass is thrown from beyond A's scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter). However, this could be a personal foul.

**PENALTY:** Roughing the Passer, 10 yards and a first down from the dead ball spot when the dead ball spot (end of run) is beyond the neutral zone and A has possession of the ball at the end of the down and there has been no change of team possession, otherwise 10 yards and an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down (S34 and S8).

**Art. 3... Screen Blocking** – The offensive screen block shall take place without contact.

- a. The screen blocker shall have her hands and arms at her side or behind her back when screen blocking.
- b. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.
- c. A blocker may use her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain her balance.
- d. A player must be on her feet before, during and after screen blocking.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards (S38)

**Art. 4... 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 moving opponent that 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 her stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
- d. After assuming her legal screening position move to maintain it unless she moves in the same direction and path as her opponent. If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, she has committed a personal foul.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards (S38)

**Art. 5... Blocking and Interlocked Interference** – Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for her by screen blocking but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards (S38)

**Art. 6... Use of Hands or Arms by the defense** – Opponents, including rushers, must go around the offensive player's screen block.

- a. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to displace the opponent.
- b. A defender may use her arms or hands to break a fall or retain her balance.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards (S38)

## **SECTION 6. RUNNER**

**Art. 1... Flag Belt Removal** – Players must have possession of the ball before they can be deflagged legally by an opponent.

- a. When a runner loses her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues.
  1. The deflagging reverts to a 1 hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, by an opponent.
- b. In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally by a player, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, Illegal Flag Pull 10 yards (S38).

- c. An opponent intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, Illegal Flag Pull 10 yards (S38).

- d. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards from the previous spot, and player disqualification (S38 and S47). If by A, loss of down (S9). If by B, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down (S8).

- e. A nonplayer deflags or interferes with a runner.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards (S38) The Referee will award a touchdown (S5) and disqualify (S47) the nonplayer.

**Art. 2... Guarding the Flag Belt** – Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball where contact occurs between the runner and an opponent that denies the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Examples of flag guarding include, but are not limited to:

- a. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt.
- b. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt.
- c. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt.

**PENALTY:** Flag Guarding, 10 yards (S24).

**Art. 3... Stiff Arm** – The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm.

- a. This includes the use of a “stiff arm” extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag/tag.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards (S38).

**Art. 4... Helping the Runner** – The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled, or pushed by a teammate.

**PENALTY:** Helping the Runner, 5 yards (S44).

**Art. 5... Obstruct the Runner** – An opponent 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 (S42).

**Art. 6... Charge** – A runner shall not charge into nor contact any player in her path nor attempt to run between two (2) players or between any player and a sideline unless the space is such as to provide a reasonable chance for her to go through without contact.

- a. If a runner in her progress has established a straight-line path, she may not be crowded out of the path, but if an opponent is able to legally establish a defensive position in that path, the runner must avoid contact by changing direction.
- b. In any situation in which the positioning of at least two defensive players in front of the offensive ball carrier or any other offensive player does not allow a clear unobstructed forward path, a ball carrier or offensive player may not take a forward path that causes contact or creates a situation in which contact is unavoidable. When in doubt, foul on the offense.

## **POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

In short line to gain situation (goal to go or short first down) it is the offense's responsibility to avoid a formation and/or direct motion of players that will lead to contact between offensive and defensive players (ball carrier or other offensive players lining up in direct proximity of a defender). Ball carrier and/or offensive player is not legally able to establish a straight-line path if the immediate path of the ball carrier is forward and directed at or between two opponents. It is the responsibility of the ball carrier (and other offensive players) to avoid contact with a defender regardless of if the defender has established position or not. When in doubt, foul on the offense.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards (S38).

**Art. 7... Spinning/Diving/Jumping-** are allowed but subject to rules regarding illegal contact.

## **SECTION 7. BATTING AND KICKING**

**Art. 1... Batting a Loose Ball** – Players shall not bat a loose ball other than a pass or fumble in flight.

- a. EXCEPTION 1: A backward pass in flight shall not be batted or thrown forward by the passing team.
- b. EXCEPTION 2: K may bat a grounded or an airborne punt beyond the K scrimmage line toward their own goal line.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Batting, 10 yards (S31).

**Art. 2... Batting a Ball in Player Possession** - A ball in player possession shall not be batted forward by a player of the team in possession.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Batting, 10 yards (S31).

**Art. 3... Illegal Kicking** – No player shall intentionally kick a ball other than a punt.

**NOTE:** An illegal kick shall be treated like a fumble.

**PENALTY:** Illegal kicking, 10 yards (S31).

## **SECTION 8. ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION**

**Art. 1... 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 1 down, unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs.
- c. To use a player, replaced player, or substitute in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap.
- d. For a disqualified player to re-enter the game.
- e. For a replaced player or substitute to hinder an opponent, touch the ball, influence the play, or otherwise participate.
- f. If, prior to a change of possession, an A or K player goes out-of-bounds and returns inbounds during the down to participate, 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, she shall return at the first opportunity. During the down, no player shall intentionally go out-of-bounds and return to the field, intentionally touch the ball, influence the play, or otherwise participate.
- g. When any player, replaced player or substitute enters during a down.

**PENALTY:** Illegal Participation, 10 yards (S28).

---

## RULE 10. ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

---

### **SECTION 1. PROCEDURE AFTER A FOUL**

**Art. 1... Definitions** – A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.

a. Types of fouls are:

1. Dead Ball: A foul which occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before the ball is next legally snapped.
2. Live Ball: A foul which occurs during a down.
3. Simultaneous with the Snap: An act which becomes a foul when the ball is snapped.
4. Double Foul – One or more live ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed by each team at such time that the penalties offset.
5. Flagrant – A foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury, and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive in word or conduct.
6. Multiple Foul – Two or more live ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team at such a time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.
7. Nonplayer or Unsportsmanlike – a non-contact (other than unintentional contact as specified in 9.1) foul while the ball is dead or during the down which is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.
8. Player Foul – A foul (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) by a player in the game
9. Post-Scrimmage Kick Foul – a foul by a Team R player (other than illegal substitution or illegal participation) when the foul occurs:
  - i. During a scrimmage kick (punt) play.
  - ii. During a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the neutral zone.
  - iii. The foul occurs beyond the neutral zone.
  - iv. Before the end of the kick.
  - v. And, Team R will be next to put the ball in play.

**Art. 2... Captain's Choice** – When a foul occurs during a live ball, the Referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains.

- a. He/she shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to her the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice.
- b. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined.
- c. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance.
- d. The Captain's choice of options may not be revoked.
- e. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted.

**Art. 3... Dead Ball Foul** – When a foul occurs during a dead ball either between downs or before a snap, the officials shall not permit the ball to become live.

- a. If accepted, the penalty for any foul between downs, any nonplayer foul, or any unsportsmanlike foul, is enforced from the succeeding spot.

**EXCEPTION:** 10-3-10 and 10-3-11

- b. 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 if a foul had not occurred.

**Art. 4... 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.

- a. When the same team commits a live ball foul followed by 1 or more dead ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

**Art. 5... Establishing the Zone Line-to-Gain** - On a live ball foul mark off the penalty yardage first then establish the zone line-to-gain.

- a. Penalties for fouls with succeeding spot enforcement which occur prior to the ready for play signal shall be administered before setting the zone line-to-gain down box for a new series.
- b. Penalties for fouls with succeeding spot enforcement which occur after the ready for play signal shall be administered after setting the zone line-to-gain down box for a new series.

**NOTE:** During overtime, the zone line-to-gain is always the goal line.

**Art. 6... Double and Multiple Fouls** – It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, during the same live ball period in which:

- a. There is no change of team possession, unless all fouls committed by Team R, are post-scrimmage kick fouls, or
- b. There is a change of team possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession unless all fouls committed by Team R are post-scrimmage kick fouls, or
- c. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul at any time during the down.

NOTE: In (a), (b) or (c) the penalties cancel, and the down is replayed.

## **SECTION 2. TYPES OF PLAYS AND BASIC ENFORCEMENT SPOTS**

**Art. 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 is penalized from the previous spot.
- b. A nonplayer foul, unsportsmanlike foul, or dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.
- c. The basic spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the succeeding spot for fouls by K during a punting down (other than kick catch interference) when K will not be next to put the ball in play.

**Art. 2... All-But-One Enforcement Principle** – Enforcement philosophy is based on the premise that a team is given the advantage of the distance which is gained without 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, which is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot, are penalized from the basic spot. The All-But-One Principle applies in the following situations:

- a. Fouls by the offense behind the end of the run on a running play which ends beyond A's scrimmage line.  
EXECPTION: If A's foul is in the field of play behind A's scrimmage line, it is penalized from the previous spot.
- b. Fouls by the offense after a change of possession
- c. Post-scrimmage kicks fouls behind the post-scrimmage kick spot.

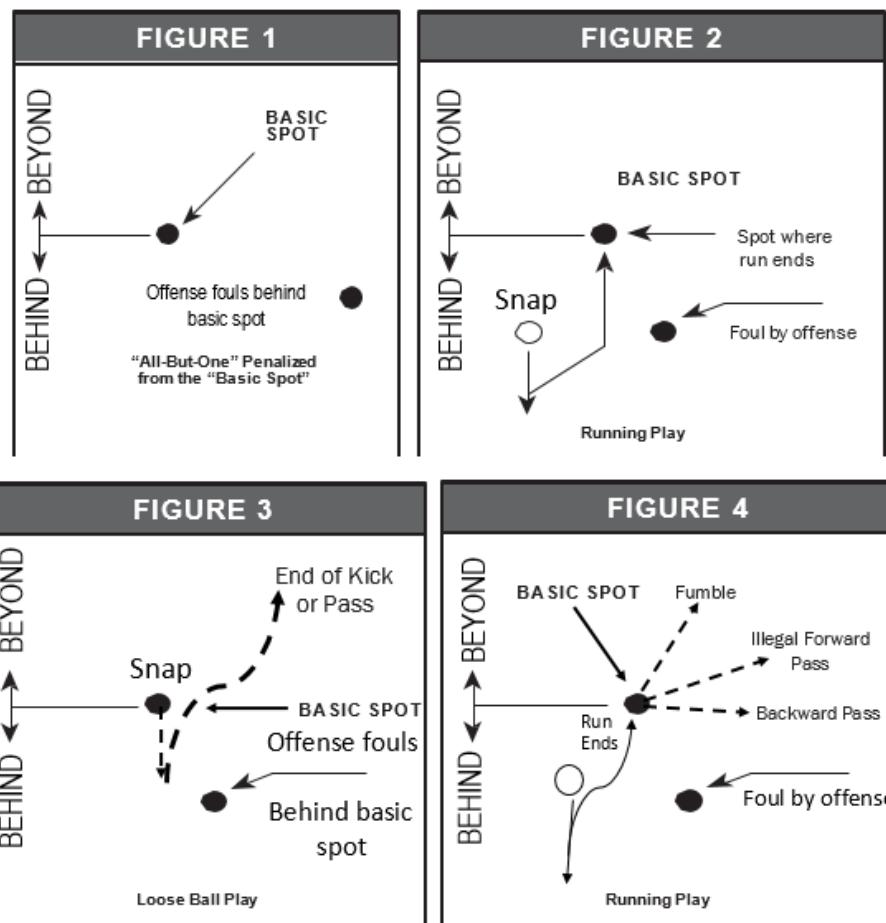
**Art. 3... Two Types of Plays** – Whenever the ball is live, 1 of 2 types of plays is in progress, either a loose ball play or a running play.

- a. The type of play has no significance unless a foul occurs.
- b. If a foul does occur, the officials must know whether it was during a loose ball play or during a running play.
- c. This determines the basic spot of enforcement.

**Art. 4... Loose Ball Play** - A loose ball play is action during:

- a. A punt, other than post scrimmage kick fouls.
- b. A legal forward pass.
- c. A backward pass (including the snap), illegal kick, or fumble made by A from on or behind their scrimmage line (1<sup>st</sup> ball spotter) and prior to a change of team possession.
- d. The run or runs which precedes such legal pass, punt or fumble.

## BASIC ENFORCEMENT SPOTS



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 gained without assistance of a foul. It is assumed that the only foul which would give this assistance 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 unless the spot is otherwise specified by rule.

This one foul is penalized from the spot of the foul.

Whenever the ball is live, one of two 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, game officials must know if the foul was committed during a LOOSE-BALL PLAY or a RUNNING PLAY.

This knowledge is necessary to determine the basic spot of enforcement unless the spot is otherwise specified by rule.

A LOOSE-BALL PLAY is action during 1.) a scrimmage kick (punt), 2.) a legal forward pass, 3.) a backward pass (including the snap), 4.) an illegal kick, 5.) a fumble by A in or behind the neutral zone prior to a change of team possession.

A LOOSE-BALL PLAY includes the run, or runs, which precede such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass, or fumble.

If a foul occurs during a LOOSE-BALL PLAY, the basic spot is the previous spot unless the rules specify otherwise, such as for Roughing the Passer.

**Art. 5... Running Play** – A running play is any action that 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.
- c. If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the run ends:
  1. Where the ball becomes dead if the runner does not lose possession.
  2. Where the player loses possession of her illegal forward pass, fumbles into the opponent's end zone, or backward pass beyond the scrimmage line that is intercepted.
  3. As the spot of the catch when the momentum rule is in effect.

### **SECTION 3. SPECIAL ENFORCEMENTS**

**Art. 1... Automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down Fouls** – Fouls by B which give A an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down (S8) are Roughing the Passer and Illegally Secured Flag Belt.

**Art. 2... Dead Ball Fouls** – Penalties for dead ball fouls are enforced separately and in the order of occurrence.

- a. Dead ball fouls are not coupled with live ball fouls or other dead ball fouls to create double or multiple fouls.
- b. Where there are 10-yard dead ball fouls (or live ball fouls treated as dead ball fouls) committed by each team prior to penalty administration, each 10-yard foul will cancel a 10-yard foul on the other team.
- c. Any remaining 10-yard fouls will be enforced.
- d. Any 5-yard dead ball fouls will be enforced separately and in order of occurrence and would never cancel with a 10-yard foul.

**Art. 3... Double Foul** – It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during the same down 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 team 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 1: “Clean hands principle”** – *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 team possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul(s) (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer).*

**NOTE:** This rule does not apply to double fouls during a Try or overtime period.

**EXCEPTION 2: PSK foul. R must decline the K fouls (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer).**

**Art. 4... Goal Line** – 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 succeeding spot or goal line.

**Art. 5... 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.

- a. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.

**Art. 6... Last Play of Period** – Succeeding spot fouls that occur:

- a. During the last play of the game;
- b. During the last play of an overtime period; or
- c. Dead ball fouls which occur after the last play of a game or overtime period.

These fouls can be carried over to a succeeding overtime period unless a touchdown is scored on that play, in which case the penalty can only be enforced on the Try.

**Art. 7... Loss of down Fouls** – Loss of down (s9).

- a. Illegal Backward Pass.
- b. Illegal Forward Pass.
- c. Intentional Grounding.
- d. Tampering with Flag Belt.
- e. Live-ball foul by A during an onside conversion.

**Art. 8... Multiple Foul** – When 2 or more live ball fouls (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) are committed during the same down by the same team, only 1 penalty may be chosen by the offended team.

**Art. 9... Safety** – 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.

**Art. 10... Touchdown:**

- a. If there is a foul by the scoring team (including unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during a down which results in a touchdown, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score.
- b. If an opponent of the scoring team commits a foul (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during a down in which a touchdown is scored, and there was not a change of team possession during the down, A may accept the result of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced either on the Try, or after Try, at the succeeding spot.
- c. If an opponent of the scoring team commits a foul (including unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during a down in which a touchdown is scored, and there was a change of team possession during the down, and such foul occurs after the change of team possession, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced either on the Try, or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.

**NOTE:** In B, and C unless moved by penalty, the succeeding spot will be the 14-yard line if an onside conversion is not elected, the 30-yard line if an onside conversion is elected, or the 10-yard line in overtime.

**Art. 11... Try:**

- a. If either team commits a dead ball foul following a touchdown and prior to the initial ready for play on a Try, the offended team has the option of enforcing the penalty on the Try, or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.
- b. If there is a foul by A (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during a down which results in a successful Try, acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If the foul carries a loss of down, the Try is not replayed.
- c. If there is a foul by B during a successful Try, the penalty may be enforced at the succeeding spot.
- d. If a double foul occurs, the down is replayed.

**NOTE:** In A, and C above, unless moved by penalty, the succeeding spot will be the 14-yard line if an onside conversion is not elected, the 30-yard line if an onside conversion is elected, or the 10-yard line in overtime.

**Art. 12... Onside Conversion:**

- a. If either team commits a dead ball foul following a Try and prior to the initial ready for play on an onside conversion, the penalty will be enforced after the onside conversion, at the succeeding spot.
- b. If there is a live-ball foul by A (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during a down that results in a successful onside conversion, acceptance of the penalty nullifies the conversion. The foul carries a loss of down and the onside conversion is not replayed.
- c. If there is a foul by B during a successful onside conversion, the penalty may be enforced from the succeeding spot.
- d. If a foul by Team B occurs during an unsuccessful onside conversion attempt the penalty enforcement will be assessed as if the 40-yard line is the goal line with no penalty exceeding half the distance to the 40.
- e. If a double foul occurs, the down is replayed.

<b>Loss of 5 yards</b>	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Official's Signal</b>
1 Failure to Wear Required Player Equipment	1	3	6	23
2 Delay of Game (Dead Ball)	3	4	5	7, 21
3 Illegally Consuming Time	3	9	1	22
4 Illegal Substitution	3	9	2	22
5 Illegal Procedure	6	1	3,4	19
6 Punt Formation and Snap	7	3		19
7 Punting the Ball	6	1	4	19
8 Encroachment (Dead Ball)	7	2	1	7, 18
9 False Start (Dead Ball)	7	2	2	7, 19
10 Illegal Snap (Dead Ball)	7	2	3	7, 19
11 Illegal Motion	7	3	3	20
12 Illegal Shift	7	3	5	20
13 Intentionally Throwing a Backward Pass or Fumble Out-of-Bounds (Loss of Down if by A)	7	5	1	35, 9
14 Illegal Forward Pass (Loss of Down if by A)	7	6	2	35, 9
15 Intentional Grounding (Loss of Down)	7	6	5	36, 9
16 Help the Runner	9	6	4	44

<b>Loss of 10 yards</b>	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Official's Signal</b>
1 Illegal Player Equipment	1	5	4	27
2 Quick Punt	6	1	1	31
3 Kick Catching Interference	6	2	1	33
4 Two or More Encroachment Fouls During the Interval Between Downs	7	2	1	7, 18
5 Offensive Pass Interference	7	9	2	33
6 Defensive Pass Interference	7	9	3	33
7 Illegally Secured Flag Belt on a Touchdown or Try (Loss of Down if by A) (Automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down if by B)	8	3	1	47, 38, 9
8 Unsportsmanlike Player Conduct	7	9	4	27
9 Spiking, Kicking, or throwing the Ball During a Dead Ball	9	2	2	7, 27
10 Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Players and Nonplayers	9	2	3	27
11 Strip or Attempt to Strip the Ball	9	5	1	38
12 Throw Runner to the Ground	9	5	1	38
13 Hurdle any Player	9	5	1	38
14 Contact Before or After the Ball is Dead	9	5	1	38
15 Unnecessary Contact of any Nature	9	5	1	38
16 Dive or Run into an Opponent	9	5	1	38
17 Position Upon Shoulders or Body of a Teammate	9	5	1	38
18 Tackle the Runner	9	5	1	38, 47
19 Fighting an Opponent	9	5	1	38, 47

20	Roughing the Passer (Automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> Down)	9	5	2	34, 8
21	Illegal Offensive Screen Blocking	9	5	3	38
22	Interlocked Interference	9	5	5	38
23	Defensive Use of Hands	9	5	6	38
24	Illegal Flag Belt Removal	9	6	1	38
25	Guarding the Flag Belt	9	6	2	24
26	Stiff Arm	9	6	3	38
27	Obstruct or Hold the Runner	9	6	5	42
28	Batting a Loose Ball	9	7	1	31
29	Illegal Kicking	9	7	3	36
30	Illegal Participation	9	8	1	28
31	Illegal Substitute/Replaced Player	9	8	1	28
32	Pretended, Unfair Substitution	9	8	1	28

<b>Disqualification Associated with Certain 10-yard Penalties</b>		<b>Rule</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Official's Signal</b>
1	Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Player Conduct	9	2	1	47
2	Flagrant Spiking, Kicking, or Throwing the Ball	9	2	2	47
3	Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Players and Nonplayers	9	2	3	47
4	Intentionally Contacting an Official	9	2	3	47
5	Flagrant Personal Fouls	9	5	1	47
6	Tackle the Runner	9	5	1	47
7	Fighting an Opponent	9	5	1	38, 47
8	Intentional Tampering with Flag Belt-A (Loss of down)	9	6	1	38, 9
9	Intentional Tampering with Flag Belt-B (Automatic 1 <sup>st</sup> down)	9	6	1	38, 8