

PlayAmericanFootball.ae UAE Adult Flag football Rulebook (Feb 2024)

The most important aspect of the rules is to avoid any significant and impactful contact to keep all players as safe as possible.

One of the goals is to keep the rules as short and simple as possible. Consequently, the rulebook does not cover every combination of situations that might happen in a game. Players, coaches and officials are requested to interpret the rules according to the principles supporting them.

The Flag Football Code

Introduction

The Flag Football Code is a code of ethics and should be carefully read and observed. The code is a guide to players, coaches, officials and others responsible for the benefit of the game. Flag Football is a non-aggressive, non-contact, but still competitive sport. Fairness, sportsmanship and conduct are expected from players, coaches, officials and others associated with the game.

There is no place for unfair tactics, unsportsmanlike conduct or acts that are intended to intentionally cause injury or disrespect. A coach or player who attempts to gain an advantage by deliberately circumventing or disregarding the rules is unsuitable for Flag Football.

The rule book attempts to prohibit all form of unnecessary contact, unfair tactics and unsportsmanlike conduct; however, rules cannot cover every potential situation. Only through the best efforts of coaches, players and officials, can the highest ethical standards be maintained.

Coaching ethics

Deliberately teaching players to violate the rules is indefensible. The coaching of intentional contact, aiming or interference will break down rather than aid in the building of the character of players. Such instruction is not only unfair to opponents but is demoralizing to the players entrusted to a coach's care and has no place in the game.

In the relationship with players under their care, the coaches should always be aware of the tremendous influence they have, both for better and worse. Coaches should never place the value of a win above that of the character and ethics of their players. The safety and welfare of their players should always be uppermost in their mind, and they must never be sacrificed for any personal prestige or selfish glory.

In teaching the game of Flag Football, the coach must realize that certain rules exist that are designed to protect the player and provide common standards for determining a winner and a loser. Any attempt to circumvent these rules, to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or acts of deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct, have no place in the game, nor has any coach guilty of teaching these any right to call themselves a coach. The coach should set the example for winning without boasting and losing without bitterness. A coach who conducts themselves according to these principles need have no fear of failure, for in the final analysis, the success of a coach can be measured in terms of the respect they have earned from their players and their opponents.

Sportsmanship

A player or coach who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct and whether or not they escape being penalized, they bring discredit to the good name of the game. Players, coaches and officials should emphasize the elimination of initiating contact against an opponent.

Feigning an injury for any reason is unethical. An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules. Talking to a teammate, opponent or official in any manner that is demeaning, vulgar, abusive or "trashy" or intended to incite a physical response or verbally put an opponent down is illegal.

Coaches are urged to discuss this conduct frequently and support all officials' actions to control it. When officials impose a penalty or make a decision, they are simply doing their duty as they see it. They are on the field to uphold the integrity of the game of Flag Football and their decisions are final and conclusive and should be accepted by players and coaches.

To address uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the game, or to engage in conduct that might incite players or spectators against the officials is a violation of the rules and must be considered conduct unworthy of any participant in the sport.

Principles

The most important principle of the rules is to avoid any significant and impactful contact.

The first important aspect of this principle is to make the flags an easy target. The runner is restricted from using anything other than legal flags and legal tactics (e.g. spinning) to restrict an opponent's access to their flags. In return the flag puller must take all reasonable steps to minimize contact during the act of removing the flag from an opponent.

The second important aspect of this principle is right of place and right of way, which determine who is charged with avoiding contact. As a general rule, priority is given to the offense up to the point before the ball is passed or handed off and to the defense thereafter. Conversely, the responsibility to avoid contact lies with the opposing player.

Some other principles are:

A blitzer sacrifices their stance by raising one hand until the ball is snapped in order to be given right of way. The offense should calculate the blitzer's lane in order to give them right of way and avoid interfering with them.

The runner has to calculate the defender's action in order to avoid contact.

If the blitzer does not raise their hand, they lose their right of way. This should however not be used with intent to block the path of the blitzer. Routes may be run as planned however if there seems to be intent to always run in the identified blitzers path, based on post snap movement to the point that it seems intentional, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty can be called.

Limitations to backwards passes are in place to avoid playing a game similar to Rugby.

Penalties and their enforcement are not perfect. It is a balance between practical simplicity and fair perfection.

Equipment

Gaining an advantage by using wide pants or camouflaging flags is unfair. Using pants with stripes or different colors, or flags which do not contrast clearly with the player's pants, disadvantages the opponent. Any attempt to gain an advantage by using illegal equipment shall be penalized by the officials and coaches and players should be aware of how this reflects on their character.

A team with perfect equipment (jerseys, pants and flags) by rule should be respected more than one which sacrifices adherence to the rules for the sake of aesthetics.

Right of Way

Right of way (and right of place) is established to give both sides the possibility to play a fair game and avoid unnecessary contact. This right should not be abused in order to provoke contact, or by aiming at an opponent forcing them to react, or by intentionally restricting the room an opponent has to move as permitted by rule. Avoiding interference with the legal actions of an opponent is demanded and expected. Intentionally contacting an opponent, even with right of way, will be penalized.

Flag Football 5 on 5 (regular field 50 x 25 yd) *STANDARD STYLE*

Flag Football has a lot of additional definitions (no-running zones, middle, blitzer, shielding, contact, aiming, flag pulling, flag guarding, jumping, dipping, spinning, diving, right of place, right of way) and respective rules. On the other hand, there are no helmets, protective padding, kicks (kickoff, punt, field goal), blocking or tackling. All of this makes Flag Football a similar, but distinct, sport with more speed and less injuries. Overall, there is a general understanding that Flag Football is a speedy pass-orientated sport.

Dimensions of Fields

The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions and lines as indicated in the diagram.

The surface of the playing field must be solid, level and free of any obstacles.

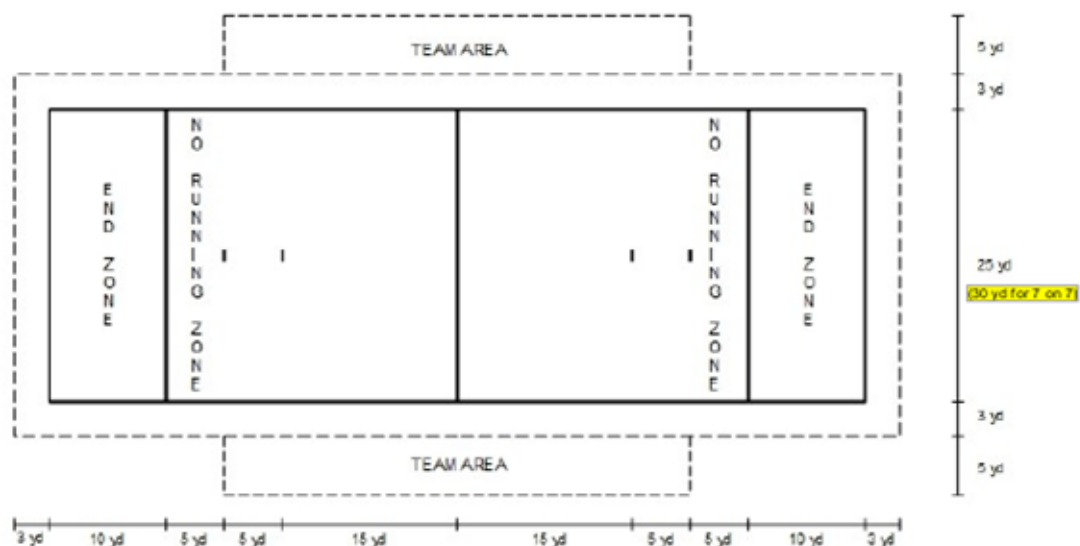
Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the lines. The goal line is part of the end zone.

Flag Football:

Field of play: length 50 yd (45,75 m), additional end zones 10 yd (9,15 m), width 25 yd (22,90 m).

Total required space for one field including safety area: 76 yd (69,55 m) x 31 yd (28,40 m).

Width of lines: 4 inches (10 cm). If temporary lines are being used, they must be flat, solid and securely fixed to the ground with flat headed spikes.



Pylons or disk markers shall be placed at the 8 intersections of the side lines with the goal lines and end lines. Disk markers may be placed at the intersections of the side lines with the middle line and at the intersection of the longitudinal axis of the field with the safety area.

The safety area shall be 3 yd (2,75 m) outside the side lines and end lines, and needs to be on same level as the field of play and in the same condition. The safety area and team areas need not be marked but shall be observed by all participants. If two fields are next to each other the minimum distance between them is 6 yd (5,50 m) without team areas.

RULE 1 Game, Field, Ball and Equipment

SECTION 1. General Provisions

ARTICLE 1. The Game

The game shall be played between 2 teams of not more than 5 players each, on a rectangular field and with a regulation ball. For details see Dimensions of Fields. Teams may play with less players on the field. If more than 1 player to the regular number is missing, the game is forfeited by the side that is unable to field a team.

Team rosters consist of a maximum of 12 players (5 on the field with 7 substitutes).

ARTICLE 2. Winning Team and Final Score

Each team shall be allowed opportunities to advance the ball across the other team's goal line by running or passing it. The teams shall be awarded points for scoring according to rule and the team having the higher score at the end of the game, including extra periods, shall be the winner.

ARTICLE 3. Supervision

The game shall be played under the supervision of 2 or more officials.

ARTICLE 4. Team Captains and Coaches

Each team shall designate to the Referee no more than 2 players as its captains and no more than 2 coaches.

Only these captains and coaches may ask the Referee questions about rule clarifications, make decisions for the team or request a challenge.

SECTION 2. The Ball

ARTICLE 1. Specifications

The ball shall be made of four panels of pebble-grained leather in natural tan color with eight equally spaced lacings and new or nearly new with no alterations.

Game balls will be provided by the league.

For men's or mixed games, regular size balls shall be used.

For women's games, youth size balls shall be used.

For youth games aged under-16, youth size balls shall be used. Balls need not be leather.

For youth games aged under-13, junior size balls shall be used. Balls need not be leather.

ARTICLE 2. Sizes

The ball shall be an ellipsoid spheroid of regulation dimensions and inflated to a pressure of between 12.5 and 13.5 psi (0,85 – 0,95 bar).

Dimensions	Regular	Youth	Junior
Length	11.00 to 11.50 inches (27,9 – 29,2 cm)	10.50 to 11.00 inches (26,7 – 27,9 cm)	10.25 to 10.75 inches (26,0 – 27,3 cm)
Length circumference	27.00 to 28.00 inches (68,6 – 71,1 cm)	26.00 to 27.00 inches (66,0 – 68,6 cm)	25.00 to 26.00 inches (63,5 – 66,0 cm)
Diameter	6.25 to 6.75 inches (15,9 – 17,2 cm)	6.00 to 6.50 inches (15,2 – 16,5 cm)	5.75 to 6.25 inches (14,6 – 15,9 cm)
Cross circumference	20.00 to 21.00 inches (50,8 – 53,3 cm)	19.00 to 20.00 inches (48,3 – 50,8 cm)	18.00 to 19.00 inches (45,7 – 48,3 cm)
Weight	14 to 15 ounces (400 – 425 g)	12 to 13 ounces (340 – 370 g)	11 to 12 ounces (310 – 340 g)

SECTION 3. Equipment

ARTICLE 1. Mandatory Equipment

Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colors. If the teams are using similar jerseys, the home team has the option which team has to change jerseys.

Players of a team shall wear tightly fixed flag belts with pop-sockets and 2 identical flags. Every effort shall be made to keep one flag on each side of the players waist. The sockets shall be placed facing outwards and downwards. The flags shall be clearly visible, hang down freely and must not be covered in any way by the player's uniform and all colors must be contrasting with the color of the pants. The flags and sockets may not be greased, glued or altered in any way. Players deliberately manipulate their flags is not allowed.

If an intra-oral mouthpiece is worn it shall be of a visible, non-white color and with no part extending more than 0.5 inch (1,25 cm) out of the mouth. The use of a mouthpiece is strongly recommended.

ARTICLE 2. Flag Specifications

The flags and sockets each shall be made of the same material in the same color without sharp edges.

All flags for league play will be provided by the league. Use of personal flags are not allowed.

ARTICLE 3. Illegal Equipment

- a. Shoes with cleats longer than 0.5 inch (1,25 cm), sharpened or pointed in any way or made of any metallic material.
- b. Any kind of shoulder pads, helmets or head wear (such as caps with hard edges/brims or similar).
- c. Any kind of protectors which endanger other players (e.g. sharp-edged knee braces).
- d. All kinds of glasses and frames made from breakable material which could splinter.
NOTE: Certified sport glasses made of synthetic material under standard specifications are available.
- e. Jewelry shall be removed or covered up completely.
- f. Uniform attachments like towels or hand warmers.
- g. Adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or to a player's person, clothing or attachment that affects the ball or an opponent.
- h. Any electronic, mechanical or other signal devices for the purpose of communicating with a coach or other person.

RULE 2 Definitions

SECTION 1. Areas and Lines

ARTICLE 1. The Field

The field is the area within the safety area and the space above.

ARTICLE 2. Field of Play

The field of play is the area within the boundary lines (side lines and end lines) other than the end zones.

ARTICLE 3. End Zones

The end zones are the 10-yard areas at both ends of the field between the end lines and the goal lines.

ARTICLE 4. No-Running Zones

The no-running zones are the 5-yard areas at both ends of the field in front of the goal lines.

ARTICLE 5. Goal Lines

Goal lines, one for each team, shall be established at opposite ends of the field of play. The goal lines and goal line pylons are in the end zone. Each goal line is part of a vertical plane which separates the end zone from the field of play and extends beyond the side lines. A team's goal line is the one it is defending.

ARTICLE 6. Middle Line

Midway between the goal lines is the middle line. The middle of the middle line is the line to gain for a new series of downs and is hereafter called middle for short.

ARTICLE 7. In Bounds and Out of Bounds

The area enclosed by the side lines and end lines is in bounds and everywhere else (including the side lines and end lines themselves) is out of bounds.

SECTION 2. Team and Player Designations

ARTICLE 1. Offense (O) and Defense (D)

The offense is the team which puts the ball in play by a snap. The defense is the opposing team. A player of the offensive team is either a snapper, a runner or a receiver. A player of the defensive team is either a blitzer, rusher or defender.

ARTICLE 2. Snapper

The snapper is the offensive player who snaps the ball.

ARTICLE 3. Quarterback

The quarterback is the offensive player who first gets possession of the ball after the snap. They are also the first runner.

ARTICLE 4. Passer

The passer is a runner who throws a legal pass.

ARTICLE 5. Runner

The runner is a player in possession of a live ball.

ARTICLE 6. Blitz

A defender who lines up with all parts of their body more than 7 yards away from the scrimmage line at the snap can establish themselves as a blitzer with a legal signal by raising one hand clearly above the head at least during the last second prior to the snap. This grants them right of way which

supersedes the general right of way for the offense, because they are pursuing the runner. The rush of a blitzer shall be immediately after the snap, quick and straight towards the point where the quarterback receives the snap in order to retain the right of way. If a blitzer is rushing late, slowly, towards a different spot, changing direction during the rush or just does not rush the quarterback, the player loses the right of way but still can participate as any other defender. If a blitzer is forced to change direction due to an offensive foul (shielding), the blitzer will not lose their right of way for a further direct rush to the point where quarterback received the snap. A defender who does not give a signal and legally crosses the scrimmage line is a rusher and does not have right of way.

ARTICLE 7. Out of Bounds

A player is out of bounds when any part of their body touches anything out of bounds except another player or official. The ball not in player possession is out of bounds when it touches anything out of bounds.

ARTICLE 8. Disqualified Player

A disqualified player is one who has been declared ineligible from further participation in the game.

SECTION 3. Down, Scrimmage and Play Classification

ARTICLE 1. Down

A down is the part of the game that starts with a legal snap after the ball is ready for play and ends when the ball becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead. A play is the action between the 2 teams during a down.

ARTICLE 2. Scrimmage Line (SL)

When the ball is made ready for play the scrimmage line for each team is the vertical plane that passes through the point of the ball closest to its own goal line and extends to the side lines. A player has crossed the scrimmage line if any part of the body has been beyond their respective scrimmage line.

ARTICLE 3. Forward Pass Play

A legal forward pass play is the interval between the snap and when a legal forward pass beyond the scrimmage line is completed or intercepted. Also, any forward pass from behind the scrimmage line becoming incomplete or touched by the defense is considered as a forward pass play.

ARTICLE 4. Running Play

A running play is any live ball action other than that during a legal forward pass play. Passes or pitches/tosses completed behind the scrimmage line are not allowed and will result in a dead ball.

SECTION 4. The Ball Live or Dead

ARTICLE 1. Live Ball

A live ball is a ball in play. A pass that has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight.

ARTICLE 2. Dead Ball

A dead ball is a ball not in play.

ARTICLE 3. When Ball is Ready for Play

A dead ball is ready for play when the ball is placed on the ground and the Referee blows the whistle.

SECTION 5. Forward, Beyond and Forward Progress

ARTICLE 1. Forward and Beyond

Forward, beyond or in advance of denotes the direction toward the opposing team's end line. Backward or behind denotes the direction towards a team's own end line.

ARTICLE 2. Forward Progress

Forward progress is a term indicating the end of advancement by the runner or airborne pass receiver of either team and applies to the most forward point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule between the end lines (dead ball spot).

SECTION 6. Spots

ARTICLE 1. Enforcement Spot

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

ARTICLE 2. Dead Ball Spot (DB)

The dead ball spot is the point at which the ball becomes dead.

ARTICLE 3. Spot of Foul (SF)

The spot of the foul is the point at which that foul occurs. If out of bounds, it is the adjacent spot on the side line. If behind the goal line, the foul is in the end zone.

ARTICLE 4. Out-of-Bounds Spot

The out-of-bounds spot is the point at which the ball becomes dead due to of being out of bounds.

SECTION 7. Foul, Penalty and Violation

ARTICLE 1. Foul

A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed by rule. A flagrant foul is a rule infraction that places an opponent in danger of injury.

ARTICLE 2. Penalty

A penalty is a result imposed by rule against a team that has committed a foul and may include one or more of the following: loss of yardage, loss of down, automatic first down or disqualification. If the penalty involves loss of a down, the down shall count as 1 of the 4 in that series.

ARTICLE 3. Violation

A violation is a rule infraction for which no penalty is prescribed, it does not offset a foul.

ARTICLE 4. Loss of Down (LOD)

“Loss of Down” is an abbreviation meaning “loss of the right to repeat a down”. A loss of down will be only applied if the foul is by the offense prior to a change of team possession.

ARTICLE 5. Automatic First Down (AFD)

“Automatic First Down” is an abbreviation meaning “award the offense a new series”.

An automatic first down will be only applied if the foul is by the defense prior to a change of team possession.

SECTION 8. Shift and Motion

ARTICLE 1. Shift

A shift is a simultaneous change of position by 2 or more offensive players after the ball is made ready for play and before the snap. The shift ends when all players have been stationary for 1 full second.

ARTICLE 2. Motion

A motion is a change of position by one offensive player after the end of a shift and before the snap. The player in motion (no more than 1) must turn their shoulders to the scrimmage line before the ball is snapped. The player’s motion may continue during the snap as long as their shoulder are turned.

SECTION 9. Handling of the Ball

ARTICLE 1. Hand-off

A hand-off is a successful transfer of possession from one teammate to another that does not involve a pass. A fake hand-off is any movement of the runner with the hands towards a nearby teammate that simulates a transfer of possession. A faked pass (pump or simulated pitch) or the runner turning the body towards a teammate without movement of the hands is not a fake hand-off.

ARTICLE 2. Pass

A pass is any intentional act to throw the ball in any direction or drop it to the ground. A pass is identified by a period where the ball is not in any player’s possession. A pass starts with the final release after firm control during an intentional movement of the hand or arm. A pass continues to be a pass until it is completed to a player or the ball becomes dead.

ARTICLE 3. Fumble

A fumble is any act other than passing or successful handing that result in loss of player possession. A fumble can only occur after a player gains possession of a ball. A fumbled ball will result in a dead ball at the spot where the ball hit the ground and the play will end.

ARTICLE 4. Possession

Possession means firmly holding or controlling a live ball.

A change of team possession (COP) occurs when a team runs out of downs, after a punt or an opponent gains possession of the ball through an interception.

ARTICLE 5. Batting

Batting the ball is intentionally striking it with the hands or arms. Batting is illegal.

ARTICLE 6. Kicking

Kicking the ball is intentionally striking it with the knee, lower leg or foot and is illegal.

SECTION 10. Passes

ARTICLE 1. Forward and Backward Pass

A pass is forward if the ball first touches anything beyond the spot where the ball is released. All other passes are backward passes, even if it is lateral (parallel to the scrimmage line). Lateral or backward passes are not allowed and will result in the end of the play.

ARTICLE 2. Crosses Scrimmage Line

A legal forward pass has crossed the scrimmage line when it first touches anything beyond the scrimmage line in bounds.

ARTICLE 3. Catch and Interception

A catch is the act of firmly establishing and maintaining control of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble is an interception. A player who leaves the ground to make a catch or interception must have the ball firmly controlled when first returning to the ground with any part of the body touching the ground in bounds and then maintain complete and continuous control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground to complete the pass. If the player loses control of the ball and the ball touches the ground before the process of the catch is completed then it is not a catch.

ARTICLE 4. Sack

A sack is the removal of a flag (flag pull) from the quarterback behind the scrimmage line who is in possession of a live ball. A player is in possession of the ball until the ball is completely released.

SECTION 11. Holding, Shielding, Contact and Aiming

ARTICLE 1. Holding

Holding is grasping an opponent or their equipment, not releasing immediately and impacting the opponent.

ARTICLE 2. Shielding

Shielding is obstructing an opponent without contact by moving into their path. A moving player without right of way who impedes an opponent from running a pass route, getting to the runner or impedes a legal blitz is guilty of shielding.

A player standing still (with the right of place) is not shielding, even if the player is obstructing an opponent.

ARTICLE 3. Contact

Contact is touching an opponent with impact. Touching with no impact is not a foul.

ARTICLE 4. Aiming

Aiming is to target and initiate contact with an opponent or to run into an opponent, even with right of way. Aiming is any deliberate or avoidable contact with force against an opponent, even in an attempted flag pull or while playing the ball during a pass. Aiming is to attack a ball in possession or take away the ball from the runner.

SECTION 12. Flag Pulling, Flag Guarding, Jumping, Dipping, Spinning and Diving

ARTICLE 1. Flag Pull

A flag pull is the removal of one or more flags from an opponent with one or more hands. The defender has the right to move towards the runner and attack the flags.

ARTICLE 2. Flag Guarding

Flag guarding is an attempt by the runner to avoid a flag pull by covering the flag with any part of the body (hand, arm or leg) or with the ball or waving the hand below the hip in front of the flag before the flag pull attempt.

Flag guarding is also stretching out a hand, with or without the ball, towards the opponent to make it more difficult for the defender to reach the flag.

ARTICLE 3. Jumping

Jumping is an attempt by the runner to avoid a flag pull by pushing off the ground and thus raising the level of the flags significantly compared to regular running. Jumping is a type of flag guarding and illegal.

ARTICLE 4. Dipping

Dipping is an attempt by the runner, with continuous movement, to avoid a flag pull by extra bending of the knees and lowering the level of the flags significantly compared to regular running. Dipping is legal.

ARTICLE 5. Spinning

Spinning is an attempt by the runner to avoid a flag pull by rotation of the body along the vertical axis. Spinning is legal if the height of the flags is not significantly raised. Spinning combined with dipping is legal, combined with jumping or diving is illegal.

ARTICLE 6. Diving

Diving is an attempt by the runner to avoid a flag pull or make the approach to the flag more difficult by leaning the upper body forward while leaving their feet, while landing on their feet or the ground. Diving is a type of flag guarding and is illegal, be that to advance the ball, extend to get a first down or tough down.

SECTION 13. Right of Place and Right of Way

ARTICLE 1. Right of Place (ROP)

Right of place is given to any stationary players who maintains normal player posture and make no significant movements in any horizontal direction to change their position. A purely vertical movement, including a lift from the ground, in order to throw or catch a pass does not mean that a previously established right of place has been lost.

Right of place supersedes right of way when determining who is guilty of a foul.

ARTICLE 2. Right of Way (ROW)

Right of way is given to a player according to rule who has established a direction of movement in a regular manner and does not alter that direction.

A player with right of way has a higher privilege when determining who is guilty of a foul than all other players except those with right of place.

RULE 3 Periods and Timing

SECTION 1. Start of Each Period

ARTICLE 1. First Half

3 minutes prior to the scheduled start time, the Referee shall toss a coin at midfield in presence of the captains from each team, first designating the captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. The winner of the toss will choose to put the ball in play first by a snap at its own 5-yard line in either the first half or the second. The other team will elect which side to defend.

ARTICLE 2. Second Half

In the second half, the teams shall defend the opposite goal line to the one they defended in the first half. The team who did not first put the ball in play in the first half, shall put the ball in play by a snap at its own 5-yard line.

ARTICLE 3. Overtime (Tie Breaker)

The tiebreaker system shall be used when a game is tied after 2 halves IF the competition mandates a winner needs to be determined (tournament play)

a. After a 2 minute intermission, the Referee shall toss a coin at midfield as at the beginning of the game. The winner of the coin toss will choose to start each following period on offense or defense. The other team will elect which end of the field will be used.

b. No charged team timeouts shall be granted.

c. The first extra period shall consist of 2 series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap at the middle line for one series of downs (no first down at middle). Should the defense score during the first series, other than on the try, then the extra period is over.

d. Each team retains the ball during its series until it scores (including try downs for 1 or 2 points) or exhausts its series of downs. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead. The series is then ended even if there is a second change of team possession during that down.

e. If after the first period (with 2 series including tries) the score is still tied, the second and following periods consist of series with each team playing a 1-point try from the 5-yard line. The overtime ends when the score after a period is no longer a tie or the defense scores during the first series of a period.

f. The team scoring the greater number of points during overtime shall be declared the winner.

SECTION 2. Playing Time

ARTICLE 1. Length of Play and Intermission

The total playing time shall be 40 minutes, divided into 2 halves of 20 minutes each, with a 2 minute intermission between halves.

ARTICLE 2. Extension of Periods

A period shall be extended until a down has been played which is free from live ball fouls (without loss of down) for which the penalty is accepted. If offsetting fouls occur during a down in which time expires, the down will be repeated.

No period shall end until the ball is dead and the Referee declares the period ended. [S14]

ARTICLE 5. Referee's Notification

The Referee shall inform all coaches when 2 minutes or less of playing time remain in a half and the ball is or becomes dead next. The game clock shall be stopped for this purpose.

The final 2 minutes of the second half of the game will not be played with a running clock.

Incomplete passes, play

ers that run out of bounds and defensive penalties will stop the clock.

RULE 4 Live Ball and Dead Ball

SECTION 1. Live Ball - Dead Ball

ARTICLE 1. Dead Ball becomes Alive

For the next down the ball shall be put in play at the spot midway between the side lines, laterally in line with the spot where the ball was when it became dead by rule, or at the spot where the ball has been placed following completion of an accepted penalty or to award a new series. After a dead ball is made ready for play it becomes a live ball with the start of a legal snap.

A ball snapped before it is made ready for play or is illegally snapped remains dead.

A foul before the ball is snapped (delay of game, encroachment, false start) will cause the ball to remain dead.

ARTICLE 2. Live Ball becomes Dead

A live ball becomes dead by rule and an official shall sound a whistle when:

- a. The ball is out of bounds.
- b. The runner is out of bounds.
- c. Any part of the runner's body except their hand or foot touches the ground.
- d. A runner simulates placing the knee on the ground.
- e. A pass or fumble (forward or backward) strikes the ground.
- f. A fumbled ball.
- g. A player with fewer than 2 flags is in possession of the ball.
- h. A player with flags not positioned correctly is in possession of the ball and the player themselves is responsible.
- i. A touchdown, touchback, safety or successful try occurs.
- j. A foul which causes the ball to become dead (e.g. illegal kick or delay of pass) occurs.

On an inadvertent whistle by an official, the ball becomes dead and the team in possession may elect either to put the ball next in play where it was declared dead or to replay the down.

RULE 5 Series of Downs

SECTION 1. A Series: Started, Broken, Renewed

ARTICLE 1. When to Award Series

A series of 4 consecutive scrimmage downs shall be awarded to the team that is next to put the ball in play by a snap at the beginning of each half and after a score (including try), safety, touchback or change of team possession. A new series shall be awarded to the offense if:

- a. It is in legal possession (following the application of any accepted live ball penalty) of the ball beyond the middle when the ball is declared dead and it is the first time in this series that has happened. If a subsequent play or penalty brings the ball back behind the middle and the ball is then advanced across the middle line for a second time during the same series, no new first down shall be awarded.
- b. An accepted penalty results in or mandates a first down.

A new series shall be awarded to the defense on its own 5-yard line if the offense has failed to score or earn a new first down and elects to punt. If the offense attempts to "go for it" on fourth down and fails, there will be a turnover on downs and the defense will get the ball at the spot of the previous play.

A new series shall be awarded to the defense at the dead ball spot after an interception.

SECTION 2. Down and Possession after a Penalty

ARTICLE 1. Foul Before Change of Team Possession

If a penalty is accepted for a foul that occurred during a down before any change of team possession, the ball belongs to the offense and the down shall be repeated, unless the penalty involves loss of a down, mandates a first down or leaves the ball beyond the middle.

ARTICLE 2. Foul After Change of Team Possession

If a penalty is accepted for a foul that occurred during a down after change of team possession, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The next down shall be a first down after enforcement of the penalty.

ARTICLE 3. Penalty Declined

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

ARTICLE 4. Foul Between Downs

If a foul occurs between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as that established before the foul occurred, unless enforcement of the penalty leaves the ball beyond the middle or the penalty mandates a first down.

ARTICLE 5. Fouls by Both Teams

If offsetting fouls occur during a down, the previous down shall be repeated.

RULE 6 Kicks

SECTION 1. Kicking

ARTICLE 1. Illegal Kick

The runner may not intentionally kick the ball. This foul causes the ball to become dead.

PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down, enforced from the spot of foul.

RULE 7 Snapping and Passing the Ball

SECTION 1. The Scrimmage

ARTICLE 1. Ball Ready for Play

- a. No player shall put the ball in play before it is ready for play.

NOTE: If the ball is snapped after the ball declared ready but before all the officials are ready, any official shall stop the play immediately without penalty and the Referee will order the down to be replayed. The Referee shall take care only to declare the ball ready for play if all officials are ready and in position.

PENALTY - Ball remains dead, 5 yards, enforced from the dead ball spot.

- b. The ball shall be put in play within 40 seconds after the Referee has declared the ball ready for play. 25 seconds during tournament play.

PENALTY - Ball remains dead, 5 yards, enforced from the dead ball spot.

ARTICLE 2. Starting with a Snap

After the snapper touches the ball, the snapper may not lift the ball, move it forward or simulate the start of the snap. Before the snap, the long axis of the ball shall be at right angles to the scrimmage line. A legal snap is handing or passing the ball backward from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous backward motion of the hand or hands that results in losing possession of the ball. The snap need not be between the snapper's legs.

PENALTY - Ball remains dead, 5 yards, enforced from the dead ball spot.

ARTICLE 3. Offensive Team Requirements

There is no minimum number of players on the scrimmage line at the snap.

a. After the snapper touches the ball and before the ball is snapped all offensive players shall be in bounds behind their scrimmage line (encroachment).

b. The first and each following shift must be completed before the snap starts.

c. No offensive player shall make a false start or make any abrupt movement that simulates the beginning of a play.

PENALTY - Ball remains dead, 5 yards, enforced from the dead ball spot.

d. When the snap starts, one offensive player may be in motion as long as their shoulders have already turned towards the scrimmage line, however not be moving toward the opponent's goal line. When the snap starts and 2 or more players are moving, it is an illegal shift.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.

e. The quarterback cannot run with the ball beyond the scrimmage line, unless the ball has been solely possessed by another player and returned to them or touched by a defender while in flight.

f. When the ball is snapped on or inside the 5-yard line going towards the opponent's end zone (no-running zone), the offense shall make a forward pass play. If the quarterback or runner gets deflagged behind the scrimmage line before a forward pass play has been completed, there is no foul for an illegal run play.

PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down, enforced from the scrimmage line.

g. The quarterback has 7 seconds to pass or hand-off the ball after the snap. If this limit is exceeded, the ball becomes dead at the scrimmage line.

PENALTY - Loss of down at the scrimmage line.

ARTICLE 4. Defensive Team Requirements

a. Before the ball is snapped all defenders shall be in bounds and behind their scrimmage line (offside).

b. After the ball is declared ready for play no defender shall touch the ball until after the snap is complete.

c. No defender shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play.

d. A maximum of 2 players may establish themselves as a blitz. If a player who signals is less than 7 yards from the scrimmage line or if a player is giving an invalid signal or if more than 2 players simultaneously keep their hand raised after the snapper has touched the ball, it is a foul for illegal signal.

PENALTY - Ball remains dead, 5 yards, enforced from the dead ball spot. [S18]

e. Any defender who has all parts of the body more than 7 yards away from the scrimmage line at the snap may cross the scrimmage line multiple times until the ball is dead. There is no requirement for a player requesting right of way to establish as blitzer and any player (> 7 yards) may rush the quarterback during the play.

f. All defenders less than 7 yards away from their scrimmage line at the snap shall stay behind their scrimmage line until the ball has been handed off, fake handed off or passed by the quarterback.

PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line, enforced from the scrimmage line. [S18]

ARTICLE 5. Handing the Ball

a. The offense may hand off the ball multiple times as long as both involved players are behind the scrimmage line, provided the ball has not been carried beyond the scrimmage line and it is prior to any change of team possession.

b. No snapper shall receive a forward hand-off.

PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down, enforced from the spot of foul. [S19]

SECTION 2. Passes and Fumbles

ARTICLE 1. Backward Pass

Backwards passes are not allowed be that from the quarterback or running back after a hand off. A backwards pass will result in a dead ball from the original scrimmage line.

If a backwards pass is made after a player has crossed the scrimmage line, this will result in a penalty.

PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down, enforced from the spot of foul.

ARTICLE 2. Complete Pass

Any pass caught by an eligible player touching the ground in bounds is completed and the ball continues in play unless completed in the opponent's end zone.

ARTICLE 3. Incomplete Pass

Any pass is incomplete if the ball touches the ground when not firmly controlled by a player. It also is incomplete when a player jumps and receives the pass but first lands on or outside a boundary line. When a forward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the previous scrimmage line, which is the dead ball spot.

When a backward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the spot of the last player's possession, which is the dead ball spot.

ARTICLE 4. Fumble

When a fumble hits the ground or is touched by a teammate of the runner (fumbler) without being touched by an opponent before, the ball is dead and belongs to the fumbling team at the spot where the fumbler lost possession, this is the dead ball spot. If the fumbler or an opponent gains possession before the ball hits the ground, the ball continues in play.

RULE 8 Scoring

SECTION 1. Value of Scores

ARTICLE 1. Scoring Plays

The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown 6 points.

Successful try from 5 yd - 1 point.

Successful try from 10 yd - 2 points.

Defense touchdown on a try - 2 points.

Safety - 2 points (points awarded to opponent).

Safety on a try - 1 point (point awarded to opponent).

SECTION 2. Touchdown

ARTICLE 1. How Scored

A touchdown shall be scored when:

- a. The ball in possession of a runner advancing from the field of play penetrates the plane of the opponent's goal line.
- b. A player catches a pass in the opponent's end zone.

SECTION 3. Try Down

ARTICLE 1. How Scored

The points shall be scored according to the point values if the try results in what would be a touchdown or safety.

ARTICLE 2. Opportunity to Score

A try is an extra down with the opportunity for either team to score 1 or 2 points.

- a. The ball shall be put in play by the team that scored a 6-point touchdown. If a touchdown is scored during a down in which time expires the try shall be attempted. The scoring team shall decide to go for 1 or 2 points prior to the ball being declared ready for the try.
- b. The try begins when the ball is made ready for play.
- c. The snap shall be midway between the side lines on the opponent's 5-yard line (1 point) or 10-yard line (2 points).
- d. The try ends when either team scores or the ball becomes dead by rule.
- e. Accepted penalties will require either repeating the try or the try results in a score or the end of the try. If the try will be repeated after a penalty, it is still worth the same value as before. No change of decision (1 or 2 points) is possible before the try ends.

ARTICLE 3. Next Play

After a try, the ball shall be put in play by the opponent on its own 5-yard line, if no penalty will be enforced.

SECTION 4. Safety

ARTICLE 1. How Scored

It is a safety when:

- a. The ball becomes dead with any part on or behind the goal line, except for an incomplete pass or fumble from outside the end zone, and the team defending this goal line is responsible for the ball being there.
- b. An accepted penalty for a foul leaves the ball on or behind the offending team's goal line.

ARTICLE 2. Snap After a Safety

After a safety, the ball shall be put in play by the scoring team at its own 5-yard line.

SECTION 5. Touchback

ARTICLE 1. When Declared

It is a touchback when:

- a. The ball becomes dead with any part on or behind the goal line, except for an incomplete pass or fumble from outside the end zone, and the team attacking this goal line is responsible for the ball being there.
- b. A defender intercepts a pass between the own 5-yard line and their goal line and their original momentum carries the player into the end zone and the ball remains in the end zone where it becomes dead.

ARTICLE 2. Snap After a Touchback

After a touchback, the ball shall be put in play by the defending team at its own 5-yard line.

RULE 9 Conduct of Players

SECTION 1. Contact Fouls

ARTICLE 1. Illegal Contact (IC)

- a. No player shall intentionally contact an opponent or an official.
- b. No player shall step, jump or stand on another player.
- c. No player shall hold another player.
- d. All stationary players have the right of place and opponents shall avoid contact.
- e. The runner has no right of way and is fully charged with avoiding contact with opponents. If runner and defender contribute equally to the contact, the foul is by the offense.
- f. All offensive players have the right of way as long as a legal forward pass is still possible and defenders shall avoid contact. When the forward pass is in the air all players have the right to play the ball, but not by aiming (playing through) an opponent. If receiver and defender contribute equally to an illegal contact, the foul is by the defense.

g. All blitzers rushing according to the rule have the right of way and offensive players shall avoid contact.

NOTE: If there is no contact, it still could be a shield by the offensive player.

h. No player shall commit aiming.

PENALTY - 10 yards, also loss of down, enforced from the basic spot. Automatic first down for fouls by defense.

ARTICLE 2. Game Interference

No substitute or coach shall contact or interfere in any way with the ball, a player or an official during the game.

PENALTY - 10 yards, also loss of down, enforced from the basic spot. Automatic first down for fouls by defense.

SECTION 2. Non-Contact Fouls

ARTICLE 1. Unsportsmanlike Acts

a. Use of abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engaging in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning.

b. If a player is neither returning the ball to the next spot nor leaving it near the dead ball spot.

c. If a player is neither immediately returning a pulled flag to the opponent nor leaving it near the spot where it has been pulled. It is preferable for players to return the flag to the opponent.

PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the dead ball spot, administered as a dead ball foul.

ARTICLE 2. Unfair Acts

a. No player shall shield an opponent. (see Shielding section)

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

b. No runner shall commit jumping or diving. (see Jumping and Diving section)

PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down, enforced from the spot of foul.

c. No runner shall commit flag guarding. (see Flag Guarding section)

PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down, enforced from the spot of foul.

d. No player shall pull a flag from an opponent other than the runner, an opponent who simulates being the runner or when an opponent has touched the ball in flight.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

e. No player shall intentionally kick a pass or a fumble.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

f. Participation by more than 5 players of one team is illegal.

PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line, enforced from the scrimmage line.

g. Coaches and substitutes may not be outside the team area during a down.

PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line, enforced from the scrimmage line.

h. No player wearing illegal equipment or missing mandatory equipment shall be permitted to play.

A player with a bleeding wound shall leave the field. Players shall leave the field immediately after being ordered to do so by an official.

VIOLATION - Charged timeout for the offending team.

Penalty - 5 yards, if no timeouts remain.

SECTION 3. Substitutions

ARTICLE 1. Substitution Procedures

Any number of legal substitutes may enter the game to replace teammates after the ball is dead. The offense may substitute until the snapper touches the ball. The defense may substitute until the ball is snapped.

- a. After the ball has been snapped, no substitute from either team shall enter the field of play. PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line, enforced from the scrimmage line.
- b. No offensive player shall enter or leave the field of play after the snapper has touched the ball.
- c. No simulated replacements or substitutions may be used to confuse opponents. No tactic associated with substitutes or the substitution process may be used to confuse opponents. PENALTY - Ball remains dead, 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line. [S22]

ARTICLE 6. Interval Fouls

Penalties for fouls that occur between periods are enforced from the start of the next series.

SECTION 3. Enforcement Procedures

ARTICLE 1. Basic Spot (BS)

The basic spot is the scrimmage line with the following exceptions:

- a. For offense fouls behind the scrimmage line, the basic spot is the spot of foul.
- b. For defense fouls when the dead ball spot is beyond the scrimmage line, the basic spot is the dead ball spot.
- c. For fouls after a change of team possession the basic spot will be the dead ball spot. If the foul is on the last related run from the team ending up in possession and the foul is behind the dead ball spot, the basic spot is the spot of foul.
- d. For fouls after a change of team possession, committed by a team in their own end zone, before the ball is brought out of this end zone, the enforcement spot is the Touchback spot (own 5-yard line).

ARTICLE 2. Procedures

The enforcement spot for live ball fouls is the previous scrimmage line if not otherwise stated in the penalty. The enforcement spot for dead ball fouls is the next scrimmage line.

Fouls during or after a touchdown or try:

1. Fouls with a 10 yard penalty by the non-scoring team during a touchdown are enforced on the try. (Half the distance) Other fouls by the non-scoring team are declined by rule.
2. Fouls after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play on the try are enforced on the try.
3. Fouls with a 10 yard penalty by the non-scoring team during a successful try are enforced on the next new series. Other fouls by the non-scoring team are declined by rule.
4. Fouls with a 10 yard penalty by the non-scoring team after a change of team possession during a try will be enforced on the next new series. Other fouls are declined by rule.
5. Fouls after a try are enforced on the next new series.

No distance penalty, including tries, shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.

Philosophy of Enforcement

A simplified quick guide (“rules of thumb”) to help to understand the rules.

The exact enforcement shall be done according to rule.

Illegal Contact and Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls are 10 yards, non-contact fouls are 5 yards. A loss of down is enforced only with live ball fouls, automatic first downs will be enforced always.

Fouls prior to the snap mean the ball remains dead and will be enforced from the dead ball spot (scrimmage line).

Illegal snap, delay of game, encroachment, false start, offside, disconcerting signal, illegal blitzer signal

Technical fouls will be enforced from the scrimmage line.

Delay of pass, illegal touching, illegal motion, illegal blitz, side line interference, illegal participation, illegal substitution

Fouls which can be committed only by the runner will be spot fouls and include loss of down.

Illegal kick, illegal run, illegal run play, Illegal hand-off, illegal (forward and backward) pass,

jumping, diving, flag guarding, backward pass batted forward by an offensive player Fouls during the play will be enforced from the basic spot.

Shielding, illegal flag pull, intentionally kicking a pass, pass interference, illegal contact, game interference.

The basic spot will be the worst of the scrimmage line and the spot of foul for offense fouls and the worst of the scrimmage line and the dead ball spot for defense fouls.

Unsportsmanlike acts will be enforced as dead ball fouls.

Live ball fouls by both teams during the play will offset and the down will be replayed.

Exception: The team last in possession can decline offsetting penalties and keep the ball if it has not fouled before getting the ball. The foul of the team last in possession will be enforced. (“clean hands principle”)

Fouls after a change of team possession will be enforced from the dead ball spot. The worst spot principle between spot of foul and dead ball spot will be used only for fouls during the last run. Fouls in their own end zone after a change of possession will be enforced from the Touchback spot.

If the distance between enforcement spot and goal line is less than double the penalty, the ball will be placed halfway to the goal line.