



## **The Carpenter Center Flag Football League**

### 5v5 NON-CONTACT FLAG FOOTBALL

#### Official League Rules 2024

#### General Information

Carpenter Center Flag Football is an Adult Sports Division of Scottsbluff/Gering Parks and Recreation. The Carpenter Center 5v5 Non-Contact Flag Football League utilize USA Flag style rules with the following exceptions and modifications.

**Note: All situations not specifically covered in the rulebook shall be acted upon by the Program Coordinator, and all such action taken shall be final.**

- 1) The Carpenter Center Flag Football League reserves the right to re-classify a team at any point in the season to maintain a fair balance of competition. Previous season records (if applicable) will be utilized to assist in classifying teams.
- 2) Designated Team Captains are responsible for communicating league rules, scheduling updates to team members, conflicts, questions, and any other concerns. Managers are also responsible for the conduct of his/her team during league and tournament play. A player can be suspended indefinitely for improper conduct on or off the field if a unanimous vote is taken by all Designated Team Captains (DTC).
- 3) The Carpenter Center Flag Football League Participant Conduct Guidelines apply to any player, manager, coach, or spectator affiliated with the team. Effective March 2024, violations will be classified using a tiered system found on pages 22 - 24 of this document.
- 4) The Carpenter Center Flag Football League strives to provide game officials and site supervisors that are professional, knowledgeable, and courteous. Please contact The Carpenter Center Flag Football Leagues Program Coordinator with any concerns or feedback regarding team performances and the functionality and efficiency of the program as a whole.

## **Game Schedules, Inclement Weather & Make-Up Games**

- 1) Game schedules can be found online at <https://carpentercenter.net/adult-flag-football-1>
- 2) The Carpenter Center Flag Football League will inform teams of the status of games when/if bad weather is imminent. Messages will not be sent until 4 or 4:30 PM to make proper and unanimous decisions. Updates will be made as necessary. Please, do NOT call the Carpenter Center Office asking if games are cancelled... The Carpenter Center Flag Football League Program Director will contact each DTC accordingly.
- 3) Officials and field supervisors work together to officially cancel game(s). In the event a game is delayed, teams are required to wait (at the complex) for a minimum of 20 minutes. Games may be resumed prior to 20 minutes. After a 20-minute waiting period, a decision will be made by the field supervisor and officials. If your team leaves prior to instructions given by the field supervisor and games continue, your team will forfeit accordingly.
- 7) Game cancellations will also be posted to the Carpenter Center website and Facebook page and communicated directly to the DTC. All suspended/cancelled games will be made up, as long as there are a proper number of players/teams to makeup efficiently. Make-up games may be scheduled at any time, including weekends or when fields are available on weeknights. Make-up times will be discussed and communicated with each DTC, Program Director and officials.
- 8) The Carpenter Center Flag Football League team registrations are non-refundable.
- 9) DTC will be responsible to collect and pay each week to week referee fee of \$20 weekly (not per game, but WEEKLY). Essentially, this works out to be \$2 a player weekly. If the referee fees are not paid and collected prior to the first game of the week, teams will subsequently forfeit accordingly.
- 10) If a team does not have at LEAST 5 players, this will result in a forfeit.

### Exception

- If there is a free agent is available AND agrees to join a team for one or more games.

- 11) All teams must notify the Carpenter Center Flag Football League Program Director at (308-641-5445) or [programs@carpentercenter.us](mailto:programs@carpentercenter.us) of their forfeit no later than 4 PM on gameday.

## 12) No Call No Show Forfeit

- When a team fails to show up for their assigned game without notification.

1<sup>st</sup> offense – This will result in a forfeit and a \$20 team fine.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – The team will automatically be removed from the league with no refund, no explanation needed, and no communication expected.

13) Upon a team's third forfeit during the regular season, the team is automatically dropped from the league with no refund.

14) Officials will not officiate forfeited games (obviously)... Teams will be allowed the use of the field until 10 minutes prior to the start of the next scheduled game OR if BOTH of the teams for next scheduled game are present, that game will go forward at that time.

15) A forfeited game will be scored 28-0

## **Uniform and Equipment**

1) Players may not wear hard, unyielding, or stiff material items that in the view of the officiating crew may present a hazard to other players.

2) Players are highly encouraged to wear a mouthpiece and utilize cleats while on the field (cleats with exposed metal are never allowed), BUT this is NOT required.

3) For safety reasons, it is preferred that players wear pants or shorts that do not have pockets, belt loops, zippers, or exposed draw strings (if zippers, zip up – if exposed draw strings, tuck them in). Sweat pants or shorts acceptable... All attire decisions are subject to change at the game official's discretion.

4) All equipment that is provided is the sole property of the Carpenter Center Flag Football League and will NEED to be returned at the end of each competition. If equipment/property is not returned, the team/player will be fined \$20 for each piece of equipment/property that is missing.

5) Altered or tampered flags could result in an ejection or forfeit. No shortening, cutting, etc.

9) Some type of team jersey is required; the minimal standard is similar-colored shirts.

10) It is recommended that teams carry two colored shirts, a darker color and a lighter color... They do NOT have to be official uniforms, the light colored one can be a white T-shirt. If both teams are wearing the same color, there will be a coin toss for selection of

color, and the losing team will need to change into a different color... If there are not backup uniforms/jerseys the game will be played as is and each time will have to make due or decide to forfeit if necessary or out of hand.

11) Jerseys should never cover the flag/belt.

12) Flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding and result in a 10 yard un-sportsman like foul.

13) If a player chooses to wear a hand towel, or any other object, on their waist it will be treated as part of the flag belt.

14) Footballs must be pebble grained leather or rubber covered and meet the recommendations of size and shape of a regulation football.

15) Adult men's teams must use a regulation size ball.

16) Adult women's teams may use a regulation, intermediate or junior size ball.

17) Players may wear eye protection to include prescription glasses or flexible sunglasses.

18) Players may wear a face shield molded to the face with no protrusions to protect against facial injury.

19) Jewelry, in the judgement of a game official, that might endanger other players must be removed before play.

20) Players may wear stocking style or baseball style caps.

21) Hoodies can be worn, but they can not be pulled by the opposing team while on the field-of-play.

22) Players may wear a headband made of non-abrasive material. Rubber or elastic bands may be used in hair. During female played games, it is NOT acceptable to pull hair at any point or for any reason.

23) Players may tape forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear soft gloves, elbow pads, shin guards, and knee pads. Unyielding items such as braces, casts, or anything with exposed metal are not allowed.

24) If a ball carrier is wearing an incomplete, improperly worn, or improperly secured flag belt, or no flag belt at all, they may not advance the ball after taking possession of it and will be ruled down where they took possession of the ball. For example: They may catch a pass but not advance it.

25) The person taking the snap is an exception to this rule, they may take the snap and advance the ball or otherwise participate in a play and will be downed by one-hand touch.

26) All players on the field are eligible receivers at the snap regardless of possible uniform violations.

27) A missing flag violation will not delay the game or stop a live play.

## SECTION 1. THE FIELD

Article 1. Standard dimensions of the field are 40 yards long by 20 yards wide with 10-yard endzones.

## SECTION 2. THE GAME

Article 1. Minimum 4 players to start a game. May only have up to 5 players on the field at any one time.

Article 3. A coin toss determines 1st possession. The team can elect to have offense, defense, defer or direction. Choice in the 2nd half will be awarded to the team that did not have the choice 1st half.

Article 4. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has 4 plays to cross mid-field. Once a team crosses mid-field, they have 4 plays to score. If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field, the ball changes possession. If the offense does not score, the ball changes possession. All drives start from the 5-yard line with the exception of an interception.

Article 5. No blocking is allowed. No intentional contact is allowed. There must be a center present to initiate the snap of the ball to the quarterback.

Article 6. Scoring team can opt to accept an automatic 1 point conversion (no attempt) or go for 2 points from opponents 10 yard line.

## SECTION 3. ATTIRE

Article 1. Teams must have the same color shirts or have an alternative color (one dark color/one light color) or have complete and proper matching uniforms/jerseys all together. They do NOT have to be official uniforms, but certainly can be official uniforms/jerseys. If both teams are wearing the same color, there will be a coin toss, and the losing team will need to change into a different color. Failure to provide a secondary uniform or unwillingness to change will result in a forfeit.

## SECTION 4. GAME CLOCK FORMAT

Article 1. Game clock is 50 minutes long. Two 25-minute halves and a quick 5-minute halftime. The clock will run continuously, but the game clock will stop in the final minute of each half on dead balls.

Article 2. Each team has one 30 second timeouts PER HALF. If a time out is called after a TD the clock will not run until the change of possession and the offense snaps their ball.

Article 3. The play clock is 20 seconds from the end of the previous play.

## SECTION 5. GAME CLOCK

Article 1. The clock will run continuously unless a team timeout is used or play is stopped by an official (deal with an injury, referee conference, game management purposes, etc.)

Article 2. The head official will give a verbal two-minute warning (for rule specific changes inside 2 minutes – clock stops on dead balls within last 1 minute) in the first half.

Article 3. The clock will run during point-after-touchdown attempts (PATs) unless either team opts to use a team timeout.

Article 5. The two-minute warning will stop the clock in the second half if the score difference is 8 points or less. The head official will give a verbal two-minute warning as close as possible to the actual marks but will not interrupt a live play. Clock stops on dead balls within last 1 minute if the point difference is 8 points or less.

## OFFENSE

### SECTION 1. RUNNING

Article 1. The quarterback may only run if the defense rushes (5 second count) and breaks the line of scrimmage or unless the ball has been thrown back, handed, or pitched back to him or her after he/she has changed the possession of the ball.

Article 2. Teams may handoff (unlimited), pitch, or throw back in the backfield. UNLIMITED laterals or throwbacks behind the LOS are allowed for the player to remain eligible to forward pass.

Article 3. Pitching (backwards/laterally) is allowed downfield (unlimited). Handoffs are allowed forward or backwards when behind the line of scrimmage, and only backwards beyond the line of scrimmage. A handoff DOES NOT count as a lateral/throwback.

Article 4. A forward pass DOES NOT have to cross the LOS to be a legal play.

Article 5. Ball is spotted where the ball is at the time of the flag pull. The ball must break the plane of the midfield or goal line to be considered a first down or touchdown.

Article 6. Players may NOT block down field in any form.

## SECTION 2. PASSING

Article 1. The quarterback has 5 seconds to pass the ball if there is no rush. If the ball is not thrown within 5 second, the defense can begin the rush (the quarterback can then run the ball).

Article 2. Once the ball is handed off or pitched backwards the 5 second count stops. If the defensive team rushes, then there is no 5 second count.

Article 3. There is no arm in motion, if the ball is in hand when the quarterback's flag is pulled then it will be ruled a sack.

Article 4. Interceptions may be returned.

Article 5. The rusher may not have any contact with the QB (no hitting the QB arm or knocking the ball out of the QB hand), only a flag can be pulled.

Article 6. If ANY part of the players body is behind the LOS it is a legal pass

## SECTION 3. RECEIVING

Article 1. All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the quarterback, if the ball has been pitched or handed off in the backfield.

Article 2. Players must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.

## DEFENSE

### SECTION 1. RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

Article 1. Players that blitz/rush the quarterback must be at the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

Article 2. The offense must avoid interfering with the rusher if he or she has established a lane (no blocking).

### SECTION 2. PASS COVERAGE

Article 1. Contacting/blocking receivers is not allowed.

Article 2. Pass interference normally occurs above the waist; entangled feet are not considered pass interference. Incidental contact is not considered pass interference.

Article 3. A player may “find” their opponent by reaching out and placing a hand on them as long as touching does not delay, impede, twist, or turn their opponent. This is not considered pass interference.

Article 4. A player may use their arms or hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver’s view (face guarding) as long as noteworthy contact is not made with the receiver.

Article 5. If defensive pass interference occurs in the end zone the ball will be placed on the one-yard line, automatic first down.

Article 6. Interceptions may be returned. Interceptions in the end zone that are not returned to the field of play will result in a touchback and the ball will be spotted on the 5-yard line.

Article 7. Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference. The benefit of the doubt is given to the receiver. Examples of pass interference include:

- Shoving or pushing off to create separation.
- Hook and turn: grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.
- Arm bars, extending/locking elbow, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.

## SCORING

### SECTION 1. POINTS

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Point After Touchdown:
  - (PAT) Automatic free 1 point, no play ran, no attempt needed.
  - 2 points from the 10-yard line, run, pass (no rush allowed)

o Interceptions on 2 point conversions result in dead ball (not returnable, turnover)

- Safety: 2 points

### SECTION 2. POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN (PAT)

Article 1. Following a touchdown, once the scoring team has informed an official of which point conversion choice they want to settle for, the decision cannot be changed UNLESS the scoring team uses a team timeout.

Article 2. If a penalty occurs during an extra point attempt, the penalty will be assessed but the extra point value remains the same.

Article 3. Decisions cannot be changed after a penalty.

Article 4. Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct, personal fouls, or roughing penalties during a successful touchdown attempt will be assessed at half the distance to the goal during the PAT attempt. All other defensive penalties may be declined by the offense and the score will stand.

Article 5. Dead ball fouls committed by the offense that do not carry a loss-of-down penalty (false start) may result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.

Article 6. Fouls by the offense during a successful PAT attempt that carry a loss-of-down penalty (flag guarding, illegal advancement, illegal forward pass, etc.) will result in the PAT being no good and automatic turnover.

Article 7. Fouls committed by the offense in unsuccessful PAT attempts will be declined by the defense and the PAT will be “no good” and will not be replayed.

Article 8. Fouls by the defense during an unsuccessful PAT attempt will result in a retry/replay.

### SECTION 3. OVERTIME EXTRA POINT SHOOT-OUT

Article 1. A coin flip determines first possession, 1 timeout per OT, OT is 1 5-minute period. If the receiving team scores, game is over and the receiving team wins... If receiving team does NOT score and defense holds them to a turnover, game is over and defensive team wins.

Article 2. Teams will go in reverse order if more than 1 OT is required. Article 1 rule remains in effect.

- Additional OT's is 1 5-minute period. If the receiving team scores, game is over and the receiving team wins... If receiving team does NOT score and defense holds them to a turnover, game is over and defensive team wins.

Article 3. Extra points (1 or 2) are not needed, if the offensive team score, they automatically win. If the defensive team holds them to a turnover, they automatically win. No need for extra points.

### SECTION 4. MERCY RULE

Article 1. If a team is up by 25+ points or more at the end of the first half, the game will be over.

<b>PENALTY CHART</b>			
<b>Penalty</b>	<b>Yardage</b>	<b>Penalty Assessment</b>	<b>Result</b>
Flag Guarding	5	Spot of foul	Loss of down
Illegal Advancement	5	Spot of foul	Loss of down
Illegal Forward Pass	5	Previous spot	Loss of down
Offensive Pass Interference	5	Previous spot	Loss of down
Defensive Pass Interference	10 or spot foul	10 from Previous spot or spot foul (whichever the offense chooses)	Automatic 1st down
Personal Foul/Unnecessary Roughness	15	End of the play or previous spot	<b>By the Offense:</b> Loss of down <b>By the Defense:</b> Automatic 1st down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15	End of the play or previous spot	<b>By the Offense:</b> Loss of down <b>By the Defense:</b> Automatic 1st down

<b>Penalty</b>	<b>Yardage</b>	<b>Penalty Assessment</b>	<b>Result</b>
Roughing the Passer	10	Previous spot	Automatic 1st down
Delay of Game	5	Dead ball – Previous spot	Replay down**
False Start	5	Dead ball – Previous spot	Replay down**
Offsides	5	Previous spot	Replay down**
Illegal Rush	5	Live ball – Previous Spot	Automatic 1st down
Encroachment	5	Dead ball – Previous spot	Automatic 1st down
Cool Down Period	0	No foul	Player must sit out 5 plays
Illegal Shift or Illegal Motion	5	Previous spot	Loss of Down
Stripping or Attempted Stripping	5	Spot of the foul	Automatic 1st down
Illegal Contact	5	Previous spot or spot of the foul	<b>By the Offense:</b> Loss of down <b>By the Defense:</b> Automatic 1st down
Early Flag Pull	5	Previous spot	Automatic 1st down
Illegal Participation	5	Previous spot	<b>By the Offense:</b> Loss of down <b>By the Defense:</b> Automatic 1st down
Illegal Blocking	5	Spot foul or from previous spot if behind LOS	Loss of down
Holding	5	Spot of the foul	Automatic 1st down
Impeding the rusher	5	Previous spot	Loss of down
Charging	5	Spot of the foul	Loss of down
Last Man Rule	15 or TD	Spot of the foul	Automatic 1st down or TD if inside the 5 yard line

## Clock Mechanics

- 1) Time outs are 30-seconds (1 per team, per half).
- 2) Game officials may stop the clock at their discretion.
- 3) The offense has a 25-second play clock to snap the ball before a delay of game penalty is assessed.
- 4) Teams will receive one courtesy warning (5 second) before a delay of game penalty is enforced.

## Time Outs and Clock Protocol

- 1) Officials may stop the clock as needed.
- 2) Team timeouts are 30 seconds. After 30 seconds the official will audibly place the offense on a 25-second play clock.
- 3) Timeouts do not roll over from the first half.
- 4) Halftime is five minutes.
- 5) Team captains are encouraged to yell “clock?” or “clock check?” in lieu of “time?” to avoid confusion when requesting a team timeout.

## Coin Toss

- 1) Designated Team Captains (DTC) (from each team) are required to meet in the middle of the field, shake hands and control their team(s).
- 2) Game officials will confirm with Designated Team Captains (DTC) during the coin toss that the teams are in correct and legal uniforms (flags, contrasting colors, unyielding materials, etc.).
- 3) Referee will issue the first warning about unsportsmanlike conduct, excessive rough play, language, etc.
- 4) First possession is decided using a coin toss.
- 5) The head official will ask the ‘calling captain’ their choice of “heads” or “tails”. The official will ask the opposing team to repeat and confirm the choice before flipping the coin. The head official will then confirm the call.
- 6) The Designated Team Captain (DTC) winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:

- Begin on offense

- Begin on defense

7) The Designated Team Captains (DTC) losing the toss shall choose:

- Which goal their team will defend

8) At the start of the second half, the team that did not receive the ball initially in the first half, will then receive the ball at the start of the second half.

9) If the Designated Team Captain of one team does not attend the coin toss, the opposing team will automatically win the toss.

10) In order to keep to schedule, the game clock shall start almost immediately after the coin toss formalities have concluded, regardless if the teams have taken the field or not.

#### OFFENSE

1) Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless they are the only player (1 at a time) in motion.

3) It is a dead ball foul if any player on offense enters the neutral zone before the snap (neutral zone infraction).

4) The ball CAN be, but does NOT have to be snapped between the center's legs.

5) Direct snaps are legal to any player not on the line-of-scrimmage.

6) The ball will be declared dead if any portion of the ball carrier's body other than their hands and feet (knee, elbow, buttocks, ball in hand, etc.) touches the ground.

7) The offense is responsible for retrieving the ball and returning it an official or to the line of scrimmage at the end of each play.

8) For safety reasons, when relaying the ball please use short underhand tosses.

#### Fumbles and Muffs

1) Fumbles are a "dead ball" when they hit the ground (Fumbles not allowed).

2) If a lateral, muffed, or fumbled ball is intercepted before becoming dead it remains a "live ball".

3) Forward fumbles that hit the ground will be marked where the ball carrier's feet were when he/she lost control and not the spot where the ball hit the ground.

4) Muffed snaps will be marked where the ball hit the ground.

## Running / Jumping / Diving

- 1) Ball carriers are allowed to leave their feet, jump, and spin as evasive maneuvers in order to advance the ball as long as they do not put another player's safety at risk.
- 2) Not every insignificant jump or small hop constitutes a safety issue and player safety risk is at the discretion of each official.
- 3) Jump cuts or leaping between two defenders is allowed if they do not initiate noteworthy contact with the defender or put another player's safety at risk.
- 4) Ball carriers may not hurdle over another player (play will be called dead at the spot of occurrence).
- 5) Ball carriers may not dive, lunge, or fall forward in a perceived intentional manner in order to advance the ball or achieve a line-to-gain. This is a judgment call by the game officials.
- 6) Ball carriers may extend the ball out in front of them to gain additional yardage (without diving).
- 7) Diving by the defense to capture a ball carrier's flag is legal.
- 8) Ball carriers must make every effort to avoid a defender who has established a stationary position.
- 9) Runners may leave their feet to avoid collision or falling on another player.
- 10) Passers may jump vertically to throw the ball over a defender.
- 11) The offense may use multiple backward hand-offs or laterals.

## Flag Guarding including Stiff-Arming

- 1) The ball carrier's flags must be accessible to the defense throughout the play.
- 2) Flag guarding is the act of a ball carrier denying a defender the opportunity to capture their flag in any physical way. Stiff arm is considered flag guarding and is illegal.
- 3) Flags may not be tucked in pants, tucked under jerseys, worn improperly, looped around the waist belt, or knotted.
- 4) The ball carrier shall not flag guard by flailing of arms, using their hands, arms, elbows, or extremely dipped shoulders to deny the opportunity of an opponent to remove a flag.
- 5) The ball carrier may not swat a defender's hands away nor pin the flag against their body using the ball or hands.

6) What constitutes flag guarding is up to the official's judgment. We recommend you carry the ball with your hands held high on the body to avoid flag guarding. This is one of the most difficult transitions for traditional football players.

7) Flag guarding shall not be called if there is no defensive player within reasonable distance to capture the flag.

8) The ball carrier may bend at the knees to dip low, side cut, skip, or take short hops.

9) Tampering with the flag in any way to gain advantage is illegal.

13) Examples of flag guarding: stiff arming, pinning the flag, swatting, using the ball as a stiff arm, etc.

#### Pass Plays

1) Only one forward pass per play.

2) Once the ball has passed the line-of-scrimmage it cannot be returned to behind the line-of-scrimmage and thrown forward legally.

3) If any portion of the passer's body is behind the line-of-scrimmage it is a legal pass.

4) A passer may jump vertically to throw the ball over a defender. This does not constitute illegal advancement.

5) All players are eligible to receive a pass unless they have stepped out-of-bounds of their own accord.

6) Players may re-establish themselves in the field of play and catch the ball if another player has touched the ball first.

7) Any offensive player who receives either a forward or backward handoff behind scrimmage can pass the ball from behind the line-of-scrimmage.

8) Backward passes are allowed.

9) If the passer's flag has been pulled while the passer still has the ball in their hand it is a sack. There is no allowance given for the passer's arm being in motion at the time of the sack. Ball in hand at all equals a sack.

10) A spike must be fluid and immediate after the snap or it is intentional grounding.

5) Passers may throw the ball out-of-bounds to stop the clock as in NFL or NCAA games.

## Catches

- 1) A pass is completed when an offensive player simultaneously places at least one foot inbounds and momentarily maintains possession of the ball.
- 2) Simultaneous catches between a defensive and offensive player go to the offense.
- 3) In the event of a bobbled catch... Example – A ball is batted about by the receiver in an attempt to catch it, and the intended receiver is de-flagged before taking full possession there is no penalty for early flag pull, if the receiver maintains possession, the pass is complete, but the receiver is down instantly. If the ball is dropped, obviously this results in an incomplete catch.
- 4) Whether or not a ball is tipped or touched in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls anywhere on the field (roughing, pass interference, personal fouls, illegal contact, etc.).
- 5) If a receiver steps out-of-bounds of their own accord and is the first to touch a pass, it is illegal. The play will be allowed to continue to a dead ball situation (5-yards from previous and a loss of down, if accepted).
- 6) If the ball comes out of the receiver's grasp due to contact with the ground or while going to the ground the pass is incomplete.

## DEFENSE

- 1) Stripping or attempting to strip the ball from a player's hand, including the quarterback, is illegal.
- 2) Defensive teams may not simulate the offensive team's signals or cadence.  
(Unsportsmanlike)
- 3) There are no "free plays" for the offense. After the head official blows the ready-for-play whistle and the snapper puts their hand(s) on the ball, no player may enter the neutral zone until the ball is moved to start the snap. Entering the neutral zone before the snap is known as "offside" or encroachment which causes the play to be immediately blown dead and the offending team is penalized five yards.

## Roughing:

- 1) Defensive players must make a concerted effort to avoid charging into the quarterback.
- 2) In general, defensive players may not "crash" the quarterback's throwing arm, shoulder, or body even if the ball is touched first.

- 3) An insignificant “brush-by” may be allowed by the referee but is not guaranteed.
- 4) Contacting the quarterback while blocking a pass or attempting to block a pass may result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- 5) Whether or not a ball is tipped in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls (roughing, pass interference, personal fouls, etc.).
- 6) A roughing penalty will not be enforced if a quarterback initiates contact with a defensive player while in the throwing motion; for example, during the passer’s follow through the player’s arm contacts an opponent’s hand, arm, or shoulder. In this instance the impetus of the contact is the action of the quarterback and not the defender. This is a judgment call.
- 7) It is a personal foul if the quarterback’s follow through hand or arm makes significant contact with an opponent’s head, neck, or face (Personal Foul, Contact above the Shoulders).

#### Flag Pulling Mechanics

- 1) Flag football is a finesse game versus the brute strength game of traditional tackle football.
- 2) Flag pulling is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball.
- 3) Legal flag pulls must begin with the hands leading toward the opponent’s hips and flags.
- 4) No player has the right to over-aggressively ‘body up’, ‘wrap up’, ‘play through’, ‘bull rush’, charge, spear, or lead with a shoulder against an opponent even to capture a flag.
- 5) Pushing out on the sidelines is not permitted unless the defense was making a fair, legal, and reasonable attempt to pull the ball carrier’s flags, i.e., the defender’s hands were aimed low at the ball carrier’s hips and flags and not high up on the body.
- 6) Pushing, striking, holding, slapping, tripping, or pulling hair while attempting to pull a flag is not permitted.
- 7) Defenders may dive when attempting to pull flags.
- 8) A defensive player may not pull the flag of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- 9) Any defensive player who removes the flag from an offensive ball carrier is encouraged to show good sportsmanship and hold the flag above their head to assist the officials in locating the spot where the capture occurred.
- 10) Players may be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct for throwing, spiking, obscuring, or delaying the ball carrier in recovering their pulled flag.

11) If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play the de-flagging reverts to a one-hand touch of the runner between the shoulder and the knees.

12) When a ball carrier flag guards and a defensive player pulls the ball carrier's flag simultaneously, no penalty will be called for flag guarding.

13) If a defensive player physically contains, tackles, or attempts to tackle the ball carrier (bear hugs, holds, wrestles with, obstructs, pushes the ball carrier out-of-bounds, tackles, or attempts to tackle, etc.) without making a clear, legal attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag, the offensive team will be awarded 15-yards from the spot of foul and an automatic first down or the 5 yard line if within 15 yards of endzone.

### Pass Coverage

1) Pass interference normally occurs above the waist; entangled feet are not considered pass interference.

2) Incidental contact is not considered pass interference.

3) A player may "find" their opponent by reaching out and placing a hand on him/her as long as touching does not delay or impede him/her. This is not considered pass interference.

4) Contact away from the direction of the pass is not considered pass interference.

5) Examples of pass interference include:

- Shoving or pushing off to create separation.

- Playing through the back.

6) Hook and turn: grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.

7) Not playing the ball: the defender is looking at the receiver and contact materially impedes the receiver.

8) Arm bars, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.

9) Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched, commonly seen through "pick plays" are illegal.

10) Cutting off the path of a receiver by being in front of them and slowing down or being beside them and "riding" them off their path to the ball is allowed.

11) Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference.

7) A player may use their arms or hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver's view (face guarding) of the ball without turning their own head to play the ball as long as contact is not made with the receiver.

#### Interceptions

- 1) Interceptions may be returned (unless occurs within the endzone).
- 2) In the event of an interception, the intercepting team must secure the ball with "clean hands," i.e., they must not have committed a foul before or simultaneous to the interception.
- 3) If the intercepting team gained the interception with "clean hands" they will be awarded a first down where the ball becomes dead (flag pull, stepping out-of-bounds, fumbled, etc.)
- 4) The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull, or the ball carrier left the field-of-play.
- 5) Fouls by the intercepting team after an interception will be assessed from the spot of the foul.
- 6) Fouls by the intercepted team after the interception will be assessed at the end of the run.

#### Point After Touchdown (PAT)

- 1) Following a touchdown, once the scoring team has informed an official of which point conversion choice, they want to settle for, the decision cannot be changed unless the scoring team uses a team timeout.
- 2) If a penalty occurs during an extra point attempt, the penalty will be assessed but the extra point value remains the same.
- 3) Decisions cannot be changed after a penalty.
- 4) Unsportsmanlike conduct and personal fouls during successful touchdown attempts will be assessed at half the distance to the goal during the PAT attempt or on the receiving team possession. All other defensive penalties may be declined by the offense and the score will stand.
- 5) Dead ball fouls committed by the offense that do not carry a loss-of-down penalty (false start, offside, etc.) will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.

- 6) Fouls by the offense during a PAT attempt that carry a loss-of-down penalty (flag guarding, illegal advancement, illegal forward pass, etc.) will result in the PAT being “no good” and the attempt will not be repeated.
- 7) Fouls committed by the offense in unsuccessful PAT attempts will be declined by the defense and the PAT will be “no good” and will not be replayed.
- 8) Fouls simultaneous to the snap (illegal shift, illegal motion, illegal formation, etc.), if accepted, will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.
- 9) Fouls by the defense during an unsuccessful PAT attempt will result in a retry after the options are administered. The offense may opt to accept or decline penalty yardage before the retry.
- 10) Interceptions on a PAT can NOT be returned by the defense and the play will be called dead at the time/spot of the interception.

#### Safeties

- Occur when the ball becomes dead in the offense’s end zone or the offense commits a foul in their end zone. Examples include:

1. A player in possession of the ball has their flag pulled in the end zone.
2. The ball carrier going out-of-bounds behind the goal line.
3. The ball is snapped out of the end zone.
4. The offense commits a foul inside the end zone

#### OVERTIME

- 1) Only one coin toss is allowed during overtime regardless of the number of overtime periods played.
- 2) If additional overtimes are played (more than one), possession will alternate from team to team based on who received the ball in first OT.
- 3) For winning the coin toss, a team may choose offense or defense and the losing team will select which endzone they defend.
- 4) OT will consist of one 5 minute period. If the offensive team scores, that will conclude the game and the offense wins... If the defensive team holds the offense to a no score and/or a turnover, that will conclude the game and the defense wins.
- 5) Each team is allowed one 30 second timeout per each overtime period.

6) Interceptions are returnable in overtime for two points, even if the intercepting team does not score, this would be a turnover and the defensive team would win.

7) Penalties are administered as if during regulation time of the game.

8) The goal line shall always be the line-to-gain in overtime, regardless of the number of overtimes played.

#### Ending the Game

1) The game may not end with a penalty.

2) Penalties that occur on or at time expired in either half, will extend the half or game. The down must be replayed to next dead ball.

3) Offsetting penalties will not extend the half or game, game will conclude on offsetting penalties.

#### OFFICIATING

1) Officials aim to assist teams to avoid penalties (preventative officiating). Cautions and teaching points are appropriate most times.

2) Prior to a snap, officials can require and warn players to adjust their flags to their proper alignment. Repeated warnings of this nature can result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.

3) Officials can perform random checks of flags to test for tampering.

4) Officials must highly endeavor to announce down and distance before any snap. While it always the team captain's responsibility to be game aware, the officiating crew should always endeavor to keep captains informed.

5) No penalty or penalty flag stops a live play.

6) When an official throws a penalty flag it should be left on the ground until the ball becomes dead and penalty enforcement is complete.

7) It is not the mission of the game officials to flag every small, nuanced infraction of traditional football unless it produces a significant unfair advantage.

8) Officials are encouraged to use the "preventive style" of officiating which allows officials to talk to, remind and help players avoid violations whenever feasible.

9) When throwing the ball to an official please use short underhand tosses.

10) Officials do not have to call everything they see but they must see everything they call.

11) Game officials may not use any recording or replay in making any decision relating to the game.

12) Officials must not tolerate taunting, baiting, and unsportsmanlike acts. They often lead to more problems during the game.

13) Safety issues are an official's judgement call.

#### Marking the Spot

1) The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull or the ball carrier left the field-of-play.

2) When a ball carrier's flag accidentally falls off — but not as a result of any action by the defense — that player will be downed by one-hand touch.

4) If a defensive player initiates contact with a ball carrier while making an attempt to capture the ball carrier's flag and that force causes the ball carrier backward prior to the flag being captured 'forward progress' will be awarded as long as the ball carrier does not make a move under their own power to continue the play.

#### Penalty Enforcement

1) Penalties are assessed for live balls before dead balls.

2) Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

3) Fouls simultaneous to the snap (illegal shift, illegal motion, illegal formation, etc.), if accepted, will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed. Officials shall not stop these plays but rather play them out because the foul occurred "simultaneous to the snap" and not before the snap.

4) An official shall have the authority to rectify an error and correct a down until the series has ended.

5) Penalties associated with automatic first downs: An offended team may accept the automatic first down portion of a penalty but decline the yardage portion of the penalty enforcement or they may accept both the yardage and the automatic first down.

## Pace of Play

- 1) Officials will hustle but not hurry. They must control the game and not let an anxious team set the pace.
- 2) If a snap occurs before the officials are ready, ready-to-play whistle or announcement, the ball will be blown dead and the quarterback issued a warning for the first offense. For the second offense a delay of game penalty will be incurred.
- 3) Officials may stop the clock as they see fit in order to administer a fair, controlled contest.

## Personal Foul, Contact above the Shoulders

Safe play is our **UTMOST** concern. Officials will penalize any noteworthy contact at or above the shoulders (head, neck, or face) between players, even if accidental.

## Holding

Holding is a judgement call. Officials will penalize any noteworthy hold that provides a significant unfair advantage. A simple tug or momentary grasp may not necessarily constitute holding... Holding is an attempt to gain a physical advantage by using hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or restraining an opponent.

## Cool Down Period

- 1) Before, or instead of, disqualification or ejection an official may order (but is not required to) a player a “cool down” period if the official chooses.
- 2) Players should think of this “cool down” as a warning before being ejected and appreciate it.
- 3) This “cool down” period will consist of 5 plays (sitting out/cooling down) and will be tracked by the official that ordered the “cool down”.
- 4) The player must be off the field for 5 plays regardless of the situation... A score or other event does not release the player back to the field. They **MUST** stay OFF the field for 5 plays.

## Disqualifications and Ejections

- 1) Disqualifications, Ejections and Unsportsmanlike Conduct are the only three penalties that cannot be declined. They are **completely** the option of the game officials.
- 2) The difference between disqualification (out of the game) and ejection (out of the game and **MUST** leave the premises) is completely the determination of the presiding referee and may not be appealed.

- 3) Disqualifications are normally reserved to address lower-level transgressions.
- 4) A disqualification will last for the remainder of the contest the player was disqualified for.
- 5) A disqualified player may play in the next scheduled contest.
- 6) An ejected player may NOT play in the next scheduled contest. They MUST leave the current game (where ejection occurred) and leave the premises for the remainder of the night.
- 7) Any official may disqualify a player. To eject a player, official(s) and program director(s) must unanimously agree to the ejection.
- 8) Ejections / disqualifications may occur for:
  - a) A second unsportsmanlike or personal foul on a single player
  - b) Any act deemed egregious by the head official
  - c) Disrespectfully addressing or intentionally touching a game official
  - d) Four unsportsmanlike and /or personal fouls by one team (forfeiture)
  - e) Fighting

#### Fighting

- 1) Fighting will lead to immediate ejection, possible indefinite suspension after review via game official(s) and program director(s).
- 2) Fighting is any attempt by a player or non-player to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with the arms, hands, legs, feet, or other weapons/items, whether there is or is not contact.
- 3) Any player who comes off the sideline to participate in a fight will be disqualified or ejected as well.
- 4) If both/either team leaves the bench during a fight the game will be forfeited immediately.

#### Bench Fouls

- 1) Teams may incur bench fouls for a variety of reasons to include but not limited to:
  - a) Players on the sidelines or spectators interfering with play or an official
  - b) Disrespect toward officials or other players or non-players

- c) Players or non-players in the designated restricted zone during a live play
- d) Non-players on the field of play
- e) Teams not remaining in the designated team box

#### Inadvertent Whistle

- 1) If an official blows an inadvertent whistle they will declare the ball dead where the ball was at the time the inadvertent whistle. The team against which the action offended may have the option of accepting the play (i.e., the yards gained and the down advances) or replaying the down from the original line-of-scrimmage.
- 2) If the ball was in the air when the inadvertent whistle occurred it will be returned to the line-of-scrimmage and the down will be replayed.
- 3) If a penalty marker is thrown prior to an inadvertent whistle, an accepted penalty will be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, the inadvertent whistle is disregarded.
- 4) When an inadvertent whistle is triggered by an unfair act or an act used to deceive or confuse a game official the officiating crew may use their collective judgement to fairly adjudicate the situation. It may result in yardage awarded, a score granted, and/or the guilty player disqualified, etc. It is solely up to the officiating crew to decide.

#### Last Player Rule and Penalty

- 1) If the last defensive player physically contains the ball carrier (e.g., bear hugs, flagrantly holds, pushes the ball carrier out-of-bounds, tackles, attempts to tackle, etc.) without making a clear, legal attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag, the offensive team will be awarded at least one line-zone-to-gain distance from the spot of foul and an automatic first down.
- 2) In the spirit of the Unfair Acts Rule: Officials have the discretion to award a score if a flagrant foul occurred inside the final line-zone-to-gain or they reasonably believe a foul is the only thing that prevented the ball carrier from scoring.

#### Playoff Format

- 1) Spring and Fall Seasons – Teams with top 4 at the end of the regular season will be placed in a single elimination bracket.
- 2) Head-to-head regular season results, best records will advance to playoffs... If teams are tied, an extra day can be arranged to have a tie breaking game scheduled (if necessary).

## League Championship Awards

1) Team trophy/plaque (1) will be given to the team that wins the season ending tournament.

## The Carpenter Center Flag Football League Conduct Guidelines:

The Carpenter Center Flag Football League Participant Conduct Guidelines apply to all/any player, manager, coach, or spectator affiliated with the team. Effective Fall 2024

### Violation(s)

- I. Alcohol is not permitted inside recreation centers.
- II. Alcohol is not permitted on fields.
- III. Dogs and other pets must be on leash and under control/owner supervision at all times.
- IV. Dogs and other pets are not allowed on the playing fields at any time.
- V. Glass and kegs are prohibited.
- VI. Marijuana use is prohibited.
- VII. Smoking on the field or sidelines is prohibited.
- VIII. Littering is prohibited.
- IX. No-call/No-show forfeits will be documented and count as a loss.
- X. Offensive music is prohibited (Music is a privilege, if someone asks to change the music, please do so out of respect to others).
- XI. Roster and line-up violations including but not limited to - failure to complete team roster, use of players currently rostered on another team in the same league, playoff use of players who have not participated in a minimum of two regular season games.

The Carpenter Center Flag Football League

The City of Terrytown

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