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## INTRODUCTION TO FLAG ELITE

Welcome to the Flag Elite Championship Series, a proud division of the Elite Championship Series. Our mission is to deliver a competitive, high-energy experience for players and coaches of all levels, while creating an environment where sportsmanship and fun remain at the heart of every game. We encourage everyone to enjoy themselves, play hard, and respect the spirit of the sport. To ensure fairness and consistency across all events, we ask that all participants adhere to the rules and guidelines outlined in this rule book. Let's compete with passion, play with integrity, and represent Flag Elite with pride. If you're interested in becoming part of the Flag Elite Championship Series or exploring a potential partnership for your league, brand, or tournament, visit [www.flagelite.com](http://www.flagelite.com) to learn more!

## INTRODUCTION TO ELITE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

Elite Championship Series, based in Florida—widely regarded as the best state for tournaments and team travel—is a premier multi-sport competition platform bringing together top athletes and teams from across the country. With established divisions in Flag Football and 7v7 Football, and exciting expansions coming soon—including Basketball, Lacrosse, and a 5v5 Big Man Circuit—the Elite Championship Series is redefining youth and amateur sports competition. Our mission is to deliver high-level, well-organized events that showcase talent, foster growth, and create unforgettable experiences for players, coaches, and families alike.

Organizations looking to take their programs to the next level can choose to affiliate or sanction with Flag Elite, gaining access to valuable benefits such as ranking points, national bids, and event marketing support.

## FIELD DIAGRAMS

Total Length of Field – 60 yds (54yds-64yds if needed)

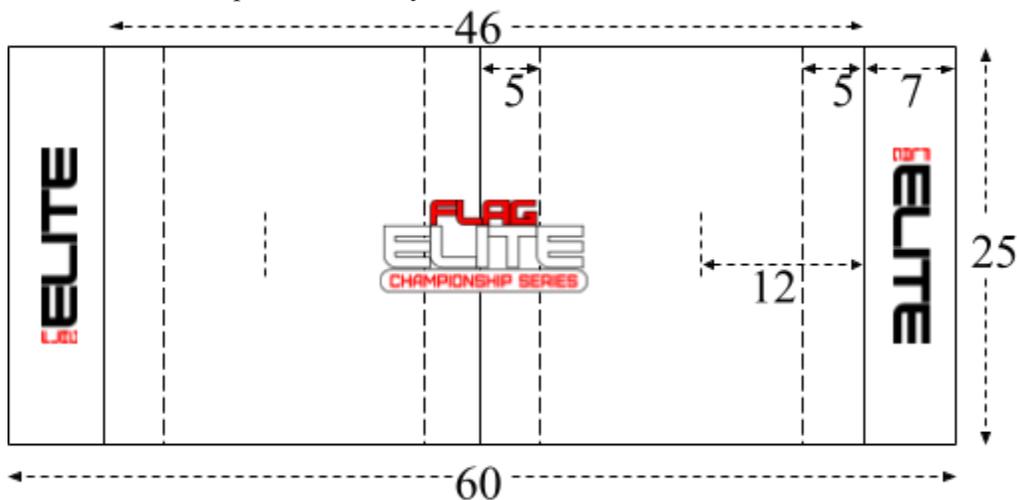
Total Width of Field – 25 yds (23yds-27yds if needed)

No Run Zones (Before half field and end zones) – 5 Yds

End Zone Length – 7 Yds (5yds-9yds if needed)

Length of Each Half – 23 Yds (20yds-25yds if needed)

Length from End Zone to 2-point line – 12 yds





## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

All of our 5v5 flag football formats are built on a shared foundation of general rules that promote consistency and clarity across every age group we offer. These core rules are designed to create a uniform experience, making it easier for both players and officials to adapt and transition between different ages of play.

Start by reviewing the general rules, as they apply universally to all divisions. Then, be sure to read the age-specific rule adjustments in their respective sections for the unique details and guidelines.

## **APPROVED FOOTBALL SIZES**

- 8U and below: Pee-wee or mini football, junior, and youth size ball allowed
- 9U-13U: Junior and youth size ball allowed
- 14U: Youth size ball (with option of using regulation high school sized ball)
- Adult: Size 9 “Official size football” (High school sized ball)

## **RULE 1: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **SECTION 1. GENERAL GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY**

1.1. At Flag Elite Championship Series (FE), we recognize that many leagues use different rulebooks. However, we believe our rules strike the right balance—promoting fair competition while still allowing players and coaches to enjoy the game and have fun.

1.2. Officials will enforce the rules established by Flag Elite Championship Series only, regardless of any other league or organization’s guidelines, past or present. If further clarification is needed beyond what is outlined in the FE Rule Book(s), officials will reference the latest National Federation of State High Schools Rule Book.

1.3. The ball will be marked at the spot where it was located at the moment the flag was pulled or when the ball carrier stepped out of bounds.

1.4. Tie-breakers for playoff seeding will be determined in the following order: overall record, head-to-head results (only if all tied teams have played each other), point differential, points against, points scored, battle points, registration date, and finally, a coin toss.

### **SECTION 2. REQUIRED PERSONAL CONDUCT**

2.1. Players, coaches, and spectators are expected to refrain from using profanity. Disrespectful language, including racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks, as well as obscene gestures, inappropriate behavior, or bullying, are strictly prohibited.

2.2. Foul play will not be accepted. Any staff member who witnesses or hears something that suggests a violation of the personal conduct guidelines may result in the responsible individual being dismissed from the tournament for the remainder of the event.

2.3. Fighting will result in immediate ejection from the tournament for the remainder of the event, and may lead to a suspension or even a lifetime ban.

2.4. Alcohol, intoxicants, weapons, and pets are strictly prohibited at the tournament locations.



### SECTION 3. REQUIRED TEAM CONDUCT

- 3.1. To ensure the safety of our officials and their ability to effectively administer the game, all team personnel must stay at least two yards away from the sidelines and remain within the designated team boxes.
- 3.2. Coaches may signal or call in plays during the play clock but must be out of bounds before the snap. Coaches found on the field of play during the game will result in a timeout being assessed to their team.
  - 3.2.1 Youth Adjustment - Coaches (1 Coach per Team) in the 8U and under divisions are permitted on the field to assist players with their position alignment and mentoring. Offense only (no coaches allowed on the field while on defense). At the snap, on-field coaches must be 5 yards behind the quarterback. Coaches may not direct or coach after the ball is snapped and during live play. If a referee determines that a coach has interfered with a play, the coach may be penalized with a flag and, depending on the severity of the interference, may also face ejection.
- 3.3. A referee may, at any time, request a player to remove their flags from their belt to verify that they have not been tampered with.
- 3.4. Teams must position themselves on the opposite sideline from their opponent. A team playing back-to-back games on the same field will have priority for their sideline until they no longer have a game scheduled there.
- 3.5. If teams are unable to agree on which sideline to occupy, the Referee will conduct a coin toss to determine and assign the sidelines.
- 3.6. Officials may require boom boxes or other noise-producing devices to be turned off or removed if they interfere with the officials' ability to communicate and effectively administer the game.
- 3.7. Teams are responsible for cleaning up any garbage after their contests.

### SECTION 4. ROSTER RULES

- 4.1. Rosters must be completed through the registration system. Team captains or coaches must invite players by entering their email addresses or sending them the invite link. Players must accept the invite, register themselves, and agree to the waiver to be eligible to participate.
- 4.2. If the team captain is also playing, they must register themselves as a player on the roster and accept the waiver. If the team captain is not playing, their spot on the roster does not count toward the roster maximum.
- 4.3. Failure to complete your roster will result in a forfeit and may lead to removal from the event without a refund.
- 4.4. Players are prohibited from playing on different teams/leagues. However, a player may participate in multiple age brackets if their team/league competes in different age brackets and the player meets the age requirements and is rostered for each age bracket.
- 4.5. Players over 18 must have a valid I.D. or copy of their I.D. with them at all times. In the event of a Roster Protest this is the only form accepted as proof of identity.
- 4.6. The max number of players on a roster is 12.



4.7. The max number of coaches on a roster is 2.

4.7.1 Youth Adjustment - Max number of coaches on a roster is 3.

## SECTION 5. PLAYOFFS

5.1. During tournament play, the number of teams advancing to the playoff rounds will be based on the number of teams in each bracket. In most tournaments, all teams will advance to the playoffs. However, if there is a large number of teams in the bracket, some teams may not qualify for the playoffs.

## SECTION 6. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING PROTOCOL

6.1. Practice and competitions will be immediately suspended if lightning is detected within 10 miles. All athletes and spectators must seek safe shelter during severe weather (but not under trees). Play will not resume until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder. Three long blasts from an air horn, car horn, or whistle will signal when it is safe to continue playing.

## **RULE 2: UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

### SECTION 1. SAFETY

1.1. Players may not wear hard, unyielding, or stiff items that, in the judgment of the officiating crew, could pose a hazard to other players.

1.2. It is mandatory that all players wear a protective mouthpiece and soft-shell helmet while on the field-of-play. Players will be asked to leave the field of play or take a knee for the play is caught without either.

1.3. Players must wear pants or shorts that do not have pockets, belt loops, zippers, or exposed drawstrings. Pants or shorts with pockets that have been professionally sewn shut are allowed at the discretion of the game official. Pants or shorts cannot be taped or turned inside out unless they are double-lined.

### SECTION 2. FLAG BELTS

2.1. Teams must supply their own flags. All flag and flag belts must be either Shruumz, Sonic Flag-a-Tag or Flag Elite designed flags.

2.1.1 - Youth Adjustment - Teams must wear NFL Youth, Youth Shruumz, or Sonic Flag-a-Tag flags (if custom flags are worn, they must be of equal dimensions as Sonic flags). Flags will not be allowed that have been altered (cut, taped, etc.). Mushroom Flags are not allowed for youth.

2.2. Bring extra flags and belts, as event organizers may not have flags for sale and are unable to replace or repair damaged flags. Your participation is contingent upon having the correct and functioning flags.

2.3. It is the sole responsibility of the participant to ensure they have the correct and legal flags. If you are unsure whether your flags are legal or allowed, it is your duty to confirm. Check [www.flagelite.com](http://www.flagelite.com) or check with an official or director before the game starts to avoid consequences related to illegal equipment.



- 2.4. Altered or tampered flags may lead to ejection or forfeit. This includes modifications such as shortening, cutting, using cloth material, or any other material different from the standard vinyl (at the discretion of the officials and director).
- 2.5. Youth-size flags are not permitted in adult leagues. Adult flags must be at least 14" long, measured from the bottom of the popper and no less than 1 3/4" wide.
- 2.6. Flags must be a contrasting color to a player's pants or shorts. The determination of contrast will be at the official's discretion.
- 2.7. Flags must be positioned on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructing flags will be considered flag guarding. Flags should be evenly distributed on the belt, with suction cups facing down and away from the body. Belts must be snug around the waist to prevent rotation.
- 2.8. 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.
- 2.9. If a ball carrier starts the play wearing an incomplete, improperly worn, or improperly secured flag belt, or no flag belt at all, they may not advance the ball after gaining possession. The play will be ruled dead at the spot where they took possession of the ball. For example, they may catch a pass but cannot advance it.
- 2.10. If a player loses their flags during a play and later gains possession of the ball on that same play, they must be downed by a one-hand touch.
- 2.11. A missing flag violation will not delay the game or stop a live play.

### SECTION 3. MISCELLANEOUS UNIFORM AND GEAR ISSUES

- 3.1. A team jersey is required, with the minimum standard being shirts of similar colors. Teams must have two shirts/jerseys, one dark and one light in color. These do not need to be official uniforms; for example, the light-colored shirt can be a white T-shirt. If both teams are wearing the same color, a coin toss will be conducted, and the losing team will need to change into a different color.
- 3.2. Players must ensure their jerseys are long enough to remain tucked in throughout the entire play, or short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline. Jerseys should never cover the flag belt.
- 3.3. When a shirt is untucked at the snap, a hold will not be called on the defender making a fair and legal attempt at the ball carrier's flag. It is the player's responsibility to check their equipment before each snap.
- 3.4. Footballs must be pebble-grained leather or rubber-covered and must conform to the recommended size and shape of a regulation football.
  - Adult men's teams are required to use regulation-size football.
  - Adult women's teams may use regulation, intermediate, or junior-size football.
- 3.5. Players must wear close-toed shoes. Cleats with exposed metal are strictly prohibited.
- 3.6. Players may wear eye protection to include prescription glasses or flexible sunglasses.
- 3.7. Jewelry that, in the judgment of a game official, may pose a danger to other players must be removed before play.
- 3.8. Players must trim their fingernails or tape them over to prevent injury to opponents. Wearing gloves is a good alternative.



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

3.10. Officials will make an effort to identify missing, incomplete, or improperly worn flag belts before the snap and will announce, for example, "Number X, take a knee." The player with the flag violation must take a knee and correct the issue during the next dead ball situation or leave the field until it is resolved.

## **RULE 3: CLOCK MECHANICS**

### **SECTION 1. GENERAL TIMING PROCEDURES**

1.1. If a team is not ready to play when the referee starts the game, the unready team may incur a penalty, up to and including a forfeit.

1.2. Each team has two 30 second timeouts PER GAME. 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.

1.3. The offense has a 25-second play clock to snap the ball before a delay of game penalty is assessed.

1.4. The tournament clock is 25 minutes long. Two 12-minute halves and 1-minute halftime.

1.5. In the first half the clock will run continuously during the 12 minutes of the first half unless a timeout is used or play is stopped by an official (e.g.) dealing with an injury, challenge referee conference, game management purposes, etc. (Note: The clock will run during point-after-touchdown attempts (PATs) in the first half unless either team opts to use a team timeout.)

1.6. In the second half the clock will run continuously for the first 11 minutes unless a team timeout or an official's time out is used. The head official will give a verbal one-minute warning as close as possible to the actual marks but will not interrupt a live play.

1.7. At the one-minute mark the game will go to 'stop clock' mechanics. The one-minute warning will only stop the clock in the second half if the score difference is 10 points or less.

1.8. When officials go to the 'stop clock' mechanic the clock will stop / start as listed below:

- Defense gains possession of the ball / on the snap
- Either side is awarded a first down after a punt / on the snap
- Inadvertent whistle / at the ready
- Incomplete passes / on the snap
- Intentional grounding / at the ready
- Offense achieves a first down / at the ready
- Out-of-bounds plays with a player in possession of the ball / on the snap
- Intentional loose ball initiated beyond the line of scrimmage that goes out-of-bounds / on the ready (judgement call)
- Penalty administration (other than Delay of Game) / depends on previous play
- Delay of game / on the snap
- Referee timeout / at the Referee's discretion
- Safety / when the receiving team take possession of the ball to attempt a return
- Team timeout / on the snap
- Injury / when player is removed from field (depending on the status of clock on previous play)



- Touchback / on the snap
- Touchdown / on the next snap after the PAT attempt. PATs are untimed downs during ‘stop clock mechanics.
- Onside Plays are untimed downs.

## SECTION 2. TIME OUTS AND CLOCK PROTOCOL

- 2.1. Team timeouts are 30 seconds. After 30 seconds the official will audibly place the offense on a 25-second play clock. Timeouts do not roll over from the first half.
- 2.2. Coaches are encouraged to yell "clock?" or "clock check?" instead of "time?" to avoid confusion when requesting a team timeout.
- 2.3. Event directors may enter the field of play during any dead ball situation to address issues they believe require immediate attention by calling a ‘Director’s Timeout.’

## **RULE 4: STARTING THE GAME**

### SECTION 1. COIN TOSS

- 1.1. Team captains must bring their game ball(s) to the coin toss for inspection by the officials.
- 1.2. During the coin toss, game officials will confirm with team captains that all players are in proper and legal uniforms, including checks for pockets, flags, contrasting colors, prohibited materials, and other equipment requirements.
- 1.3. First possession is determined by a coin toss. The head official will ask the designated calling captain to choose “heads” or “tails,” and then request the opposing team to repeat and confirm the choice. After flipping the coin, the official will announce the result. The captain who wins the toss may choose one of the following options:
  - Start on offense
  - Start on defense
  - Choose which goal to defend
  - Defer their choice to the second half
- 1.4. The loser of the coin toss will choose from the remaining options. Before the start of the second half, the selection order will be reversed. If a team captain does not attend the coin toss, the opposing team will automatically win the toss.

### SECTION 2. BASIC RULES OF PLAY

- 2.1. Minimum 3 players to start a game. May only have up to 5 players on the field at any one time.
- 2.2. The referee will issue the first warning about unsportsmanlike conduct, excessive rough play, and language. In extreme cases the player(s) will be flagged.
- 2.3. During tournament play, the Home and Away designation will be determined based on team seeding with the higher seed being the home team.
- 2.4. To maintain the tournament schedule, the game clock will begin one minute after the coin toss formalities are completed, regardless of whether the teams are on the field and ready to play.



2.5. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has **three plays** to cross mid-field. Once a team crosses mid-field, they have three 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.

*2.5.1 Youth Adjustment - The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has **four plays** to cross mid-field. On 4th down, teams have 5 seconds to declare to go for it or punt. A punt will put the receiving team starting on their own 5-yard line. Once a team crosses mid-field, they have **three 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 or failed 4th down conversion, where defense takes over at the spot.*

2.6. No blocking is allowed. No intentional contact is allowed.

## **RULE 5: CHALLENGE PROCEDURE**

### SECTION 1. RULE CHALLENGES

1.1. **ONLY THE HEAD COACH CAN ADDRESS THE GAME OFFICIALS.** Officials will generally answer brief and general questions during the game, provided it does not interfere with the flow of play. The officials' first priority is to spot the ball, then address questions without delaying the play clock.

1.2. If a captain or head coach believes an official has made a procedural error (e.g., incorrect down, wrong penalty yardage), they may call for a timeout. If the head official agrees that a procedural error has occurred, it will be corrected, and the timeout will not be charged. The challenge must be made to the official before the next snap.

1.3. If a captain or head coach loses a procedural challenge and their team does not have a legal timeout available, a fifteen-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be assessed.

1.4. Only procedural issues may be addressed, not an official's judgment call or no-call.

## **RULE 6: OFFENSE**

### SECTION 1. GENERAL OFFENSE

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

1.2. No offensive player may begin a play closer than five yards from a sideline unless they were momentarily at least 9-yards from a sideline (this is sometimes referred to as "inside the numbers" or "checking in").

1.3. All players must substitute from their sideline only. This allows the defense to be aware of their presence and avoids deceptive plays by the offense.

1.4. The ball must be snapped between the center's legs.

1.5. It is a false start if any player on offense enters the neutral zone before the snap.

1.6. The offense may not act or move in a manner that, in the judgement of the covering official, is clearly intended to cause the defense to encroach. Verbalizing play-calls or snap counts alone are not acts or moves that should be considered unless they are in conjunction with other acts or moves. The



speed, abruptness, down and distance and if any player pretends to have the ball or otherwise simulate action at the snap will be considerations.

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

1.8. The ball is declared dead when any part of the ball carrier's body -other than their hands or feet- touches the ground. This includes the knee, elbow, buttocks, or if the ball touches the ground while in their hand.

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

1.10. The quarterback may not run unless the ball has been thrown back, handed or pitched to him or her in the backfield.

1.11. 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 pass.

1.11.1 Youth Adjustment - 10U and younger may lateral once behind the LOS per play. They may not lateral or pitch at any time past the LOS.

1.12. 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.

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

1.14. If the ball is placed on the "Back" of ANY player, the player MUST run the ball (no give and go to the QB on the back)

1.15. No run zones are located 5 yards before mid-field and 5-yards before the end zone. You may not run the ball in the no run zone (5-yards before the first down and end zone), only forward passes are allowed.

1.15.1 Youth Adjustment - The no run zone does not apply to the 6U & 7U divisions. They may run the ball at any time.

1.16. The 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.

1.17. The quarterback has 7 seconds to pass the ball, or initiate a handoff, if there is no rush. If the ball is not delivered, then the play is dead. After the ball is ruled dead, it is returned to the line of scrimmage.

1.18. Once the ball is handed off or pitched backwards the 7 second count stops. If the defensive team rushes, then there is no 7 second count.

1.19. 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.

1.20. Interceptions may be returned.

1.21. The rusher may not have any contact with the QB (no hitting the QB arm or knocking the ball out of the QB hand).

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

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

1.24. Players may NOT block downfield in any form.



- 2.1. Fumbles are a “dead ball” when they hit the ground. If a lateral, muffed or fumbled ball is intercepted before becoming dead it remains a “live ball”.
- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3. Muffed snaps will be marked where the ball hits the ground.

### SECTION 3. RUNNING / JUMPING / DIVING

- 3.1. Ball carriers are permitted to leave their feet, jump, and spin as evasive maneuvers to advance the ball, provided they do not endanger the safety of other players. Minor jumps or hops do not automatically constitute a safety concern; player safety is assessed at the discretion of each official. Jump cuts or leaping between defenders are allowed as long as the ball carrier does not initiate significant contact or create an unsafe situation for other players.
- 3.2. Ball carriers are not allowed to hurdle over other players. They also may not dive, lunge, or intentionally fall forward to gain additional yardage or reach the line-to-gain. This will be determined at the discretion of the game officials.
- 3.3. Ball carriers may extend the ball out front of them to gain additional yardage.
- 3.4. Diving by the defense to capture a ball carrier’s flag is legal.
- 3.5. Ball carriers must make every effort to avoid a defender who has established a stationary position.
- 3.6. Runners may leave their feet to avoid collision or falling on another player.
- 3.7. Passers may jump vertically to throw the ball over a defender.

### SECTION 4. FLAG GUARDING INCLUDING STIFF-ARMING

- 4.1. The ball carrier's flags must remain clearly accessible to the defense at all times during the play. Flags cannot be tucked into pants, hidden under jerseys, worn incorrectly, wrapped around the belt, or tied in any way.
- 4.2. Flag guarding occurs when a ball carrier physically prevents a defender from pulling their flag. This includes actions such as flailing arms, using hands, arms, elbows, or excessively dipping the shoulders to block a defender’s attempt to remove the flag.
- 4.3. The ball carrier is not allowed to swat at a defender’s hands or use the ball or their hands to pin the flag against their body. Officials may call flag guarding if they determine that the ball carrier’s natural running motion created an unfair advantage and obstructed the defender’s attempt to pull the flag.
- 4.4. Whether or not flag guarding has occurred is left to the official’s judgment. To help avoid a penalty, players are encouraged to carry the ball with their hands held high on the body. This can be a challenging adjustment for athletes transitioning from traditional football. Flag guarding will not be called if no defender is within a reasonable distance to attempt a flag pull.



4.5. The ball carrier is allowed to bend at the knees to dip low, make side cuts, skip, or take short hops. Even extreme low movements—often referred to as a “duck-walk”—are legal and do not qualify as flag guarding on their own, as long as the flags remain clearly visible and the defender is not physically impeded. This means the ball carrier must avoid using their arms, hands, shoulders, or the ball to block access to the flags. Flag guarding can typically be avoided during these movements by keeping the hands and elbows high on the body, such as at shoulder level. Examples of flag guarding include:

- stiff arming
- pinning the flag
- swatting
- using the ball as a stiff arm

4.6. No penalty will be called if a ball carrier simultaneously flags guards as the defender pulls the flag.

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

## SECTION 5. PASS PLAYS

5.1. Only one forward pass per play. Once the ball has passed the line-of-scrimmage it cannot be returned to behind the line-of-scrimmage and thrown forward legally.

5.2. If any portion of the passer’s body is behind the line-of-scrimmage it is a legal pass.

5.3. All players are eligible to receive a pass unless they have stepped out-of-bounds of their own accord. Players may re-establish themselves in the field of play and catch the ball if another player has touched the ball first.

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

5.5. Backward passes are allowed.

5.6. 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.

5.7. If there is no rusher on a play, the quarterback has 7 seconds to pass the ball. If the ball is not thrown, then the play is dead and the next offensive play will be played from the original LOS.

## SECTION 6. INTENTIONAL GROUNDING

6.1 Intentional grounding is allowed.

## SECTION 7. CATCHES

7.1. A pass is completed when an offensive player simultaneously places at least one foot inbounds and momentarily maintains possession of the ball.

7.2. Simultaneous catches between a defensive and offensive player go to the offense.

7.3. In the event of a bobbled catch, i.e., the 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.

7.4. 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, personal fouls, illegal contact, etc.).



7.5. If a receiver steps out-of-bounds of their own accord and is the first to touch a pass, it is illegal touching. The play will be allowed to continue to a dead ball situation (5-yards from previous and a loss of down, if accepted).

7.6. 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.

## **RULE 7: DEFENSE**

### SECTION 1. GENERAL DEFENSE

1.1. Stripping or attempting to strip the ball from a player's hand, including the quarterback, is illegal.

1.2. Defensive teams may not simulate the offensive team's signals or cadence. (Unsportsmanlike)

1.3. The offense is not granted "free plays." Once the head official signals ready-for-play and the snapper places their hands on the ball, no player is allowed to enter the neutral zone until the snap begins. Doing so is considered offside or encroachment, which results in the play being stopped immediately and a five-yard penalty assessed against the offending team.

1.4. If the defense intentionally commits a penalty to gain a strategic advantage and the offense declines it, any repeated attempts to commit the same penalty will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and an automatic first down for the offense.

1.5. Players that blitz/rush the quarterback must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

1.5.1 Youth adjustment - There is no rushing the quarterback in 6U & 7U divisions. A defensive player may not cross the LOS until a legal handoff or pitch is executed.

1.6. The 7 yards will be measured off by a referee.

1.7. Players that are not 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped may not enter into the backfield until there is a change of possession.

1.8. The blitz/rusher is allowed a direct lane to the quarterback as long as he or she rushes from either side of the center or outside the bunch formation. The offense must avoid interfering with the rusher if he or she has established a lane. Officials will announce LANE or NO LANE for rushers/blitzers prior to the snap. This is a judgement call/decision based on the spacing between the players in the offensive formation.

1.9. The rush of a blitz/rusher has to 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 blitz/rusher is rushing late, slowly, aiming at another 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 defensive player.

1.10. Contacting receivers is not allowed

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

1.12. 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.

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



- 1.14. If defensive pass interference occurs in the end zone the ball will be placed on the one-yard line, automatic first down.
- 1.15. Interceptions may be returned. Other players on defense must not run with the interceptor. 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.
- 1.16. Contact away from the direction of the pass is not considered pass interference but may be considered illegal contact.
- 1.17. Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference. The benefit of the doubt is given to the receiver.

## SECTION 2. ROUGHING

- 2.1. Defensive players must make a concerted effort to avoid charging into the quarterback.
- 2.2. In general, defensive players are not allowed to make contact with the quarterback's throwing arm, shoulder, or body, even if they touch the ball first. This rule also applies to holders and kickers.
- 2.3. A quarterback has the right to step into their throw, and it is the rusher's responsibility to avoid making contact. If the contact is considered significant and forceful, regardless of whether the rusher is attempting to pull the flag, officials may rule it as roughing the passer.
- 2.4. An insignificant "brush-by" may be allowed by the referee but is not guaranteed.
- 2.5. Making contact with the quarterback while blocking a pass or attempting to block a pass may result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- 2.6. Whether or not a ball is tipped in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls (roughing, personal fouls, etc.).
- 2.7. A roughing the passer penalty will not be called if the quarterback initiates contact with a defender during their throwing motion—for example, if the passer's arm makes contact with a defender's hand, arm, or shoulder on the follow-through. In this case, the contact is considered to be caused by the quarterback's action, not the defender's. This is a judgment call made by the officials.

## SECTION 3. FLAG PULLING MECHANICS

- 3.1. Flag football is a finesse game versus the brute strength game of traditional tackle football.
- 3.2. Flag pulling is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball. Legal flag pulls must begin with the hands leading toward the opponent's hips and flags.
- 3.3. No player shall make any contact with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness.
- 3.4. No player is permitted to over-aggressively "body up," wrap up, play through, bull rush, charge, spear, or lead with the shoulder against an opponent—even when attempting to pull a flag. Players must focus on capturing the flag, not engaging in illegal personal contact.
- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. Pushing, striking, holding, slapping or tripping while attempting to pull a flag is not permitted.
- 3.7. A defensive player may not pull the flag of a player who is not in possession of the ball.



- 3.8. 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.
- 3.9. Players may be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct for throwing, spiking, obscuring, or delaying the ball carrier in recovering their pulled flag.
- 3.10. 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.
- 3.11. 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.
- 3.12. If a defender physically restrains or tackles the ball carrier without making a clear and legal attempt to pull the flag, the offense will be awarded either a 15-yard penalty or one line-zone-to-gain (at the offense's discretion), along with an automatic first down from the spot of the foul.
- 3.13. If this type of foul occurs inside the final line-zone-to-gain, or if the covering official believes the foul was the only reason the ball carrier didn't score, a touchdown may be awarded. Remember: the focus should be on pulling the flag, not making contact with the ball carrier's body or the ball, as in traditional tackle football.

#### SECTION 4. PASS COVERAGE

- 4.1. Pass interference normally occurs above the waist; entangled feet are not considered pass interference. Incidental contact is not considered pass interference.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. Contact away from the direction of the pass is not considered pass interference. Examples of pass interference include:
- Shoving or pushing off to create separation.
  - Playing through the back.
  - Hook and turn: grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.
  - Not playing the ball: the defender is looking at the receiver and contact materially impedes the receiver.
  - Arm bars, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.
  - Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched, commonly seen through "pick plays".
  - 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.
- 4.4. Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference.
- 4.5. A player is allowed to use their arms or hands to intentionally block a receiver's view of the ball (face guarding) without turning their head to play the ball, as long as no physical contact is made with the receiver.

#### SECTION 5. INTERCEPTIONS

- 5.1. Interceptions are returnable. Upon an interception, all other players on the intercepting (defensive) team must immediately stop and remain in place. If any players continue to move and are deemed by the



referee to have interfered with the return, the intercepting team may be penalized for interference and the ball may be placed at the spot of the foul.

5.2. 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.

5.3. Fouls by the intercepting team after an interception will be assessed from the spot of the foul. Fouls by the intercepted team after the interception will be assessed at the end of the run.

## RULE 8 - SCORING

Touchdown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 points</li> </ul>
Point After Touchdown (PAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 point from the 5-yard line (no-run zone in effect)</li> <li>• 2 points from the 12-yard line, run, pass (outside of no-run zone)</li> <li>• Interceptions returned on PAT's are worth 2 points</li> </ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 points</li> </ul>

### SECTION 1. POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN (PAT)

1.1. Following a touchdown, once the scoring team has informed the official of their chosen point conversion attempt, the decision cannot be changed unless the scoring team calls a timeout.

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

1.3. Decisions cannot be changed after a penalty. For example, if the offense attempts a 1-point PAT and is penalized five yards for a false start, they cannot change their mind and go for a 2-point PAT.

1.4. Unsportsmanlike conduct and personal fouls during successful touchdown attempts will be assessed at half the distance to the goal during the PAT attempt (e.g., 2-point PAT attempts will be spotted at the 5-yard line and 1-point attempts at the 2 ½-yard line) or on the kickoff. All other defensive penalties may be declined by the offense and the score will stand.

1.5. 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.

1.6. 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.

1.7. 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.

1.8. Fouls simultaneous to the snap (illegal shift, illegal motion, illegal formation, etc.), if accepted, will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.

1.9. 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.



1.10. Interceptions on any PAT can be returned by the defense for two points regardless of PAT point attempted.

## SECTION 2. SAFETIES

2.1. Terminologies and Designations – Team A is the team that initiates the snap, while Team B is the opposing team that begins the play on defense. A safety occurs when the ball becomes dead in the offense's (Team A's) end zone or when Team A commits a foul in their own end zone. A team's end zone is the one it is defending, and the goal line is considered part of the end zone. Examples include:

- Grounded fumbles in or out of Team A's end zone (sidelines and end line).
- A player in possession of the ball has their flag pulled in the end zone (except after a change-of-possession).
- The ball carrier going out-of-bounds behind the goal line (except after a change-of-possession).
- The ball is snapped out of the end zone.

2.2. Team B Exceptions:

- A flag pull immediately after an interception by Team B in the end zone is a touchback, not a safety. A Team B player going out-of-bounds behind the goal line immediately after an interception in the end zone is a touchback, not a Safety.
- If the ball is intercepted by Team B in the end zone and Team B fouls in the end zone prior to the ball being brought back into the field-of-play (example: flag guarding) the result of the play is a touchback and the foul will be administered from the touchback spot. This will not be safe.
- If the ball is intercepted Team B between the 5-yard line and the goal line and the player's momentum takes them into the end zone where the ball becomes dead in Team B's possession or Team B fouls in the end zone (example: flag guarding) the ball belongs to Team B and the penalty will be assessed from the spot where it was intercepted. It is a touchback. It is not safe.

## **RULE 9: OVERTIME**

### SECTION 1. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- 1.1. Only one coin toss is allowed during overtime regardless of the number of overtime periods played.
- 1.2. If additional overtimes are played, the captains will alternate choices (for example: the winner of the overtime coin toss chooses defense. If there is another overtime period the loser of the overtime coin toss now gets to choose).
- 1.3. For winning the coin toss, a team may choose offense, defense, or direction the overtime periods will be played.
- 1.4. Each team will get 3 plays from the half field line to score. If team A has the ball first on offense and Team B intercepts the ball on the first series and returns it for a touchdown, the OT is over and Team B has won. If Team A does not score on their drive then Team B will need to score to win.
- 1.5. Each team is allowed one timeout for the entire overtime period(s).
- 1.6. Penalties are administered as during the regular game.



## SECTION 2. YOUTH ADJUSTED OVERTIME PROCEDURES

- 2.1. A coin flip determines first possession, 1 timeout per OT period
- 2.2. Teams will go in reverse order if more than 1 OT is required
- 2.3. Teams can elect to go for 1 or 2 points
- 2.4. The winner will be determined once the value of the extra point exceeds the other team's attempt.

## **RULE 10: OFFICIATING**

### SECTION 1. MERCY RULE

- 1.1. Mercy Rule: During round robin games, when a twenty-eight (28) point differential is reached with 5 minutes or less on the clock, or if there is a nineteen (19) point deficit with 60 seconds or less time remaining, the contest shall be declared over.

### SECTION 2. ENDING THE GAME / FORFEITS

- 2.1. The game or half may not end with a defensive penalty unless it is declined.
- 2.2. Offsetting penalties will not extend the half or game.
- 2.3. Forfeits declared before the start of a game will be recorded as a 21-0 result. If a forfeit occurs during the game, the score at the time of the forfeit will stand—unless the point differential is less than 21. In that case, the score will be adjusted to reflect a 21-point difference by reducing the forfeiting team's score.
- 2.4. A forfeit will not be official until issued by a field marshal.
- 2.5. Teams and/or players participating in multiple age groups (Which are not guaranteed to be scheduled separately) are required to have enough players to participate to avoid a forfeit and no rescheduling or holding the game up will be administered.
- 2.6. It is each team's responsibility to have enough players present at the time of the coin toss to avoid a forfeit, regardless of delays in other divisions running behind schedule.
- 2.7. No period or half can end if there is an obvious timing error or any other irregularity has occurred and verified.
- 2.8. Four unsportsmanlike and / or personal fouls by one team will result in a forfeiture.

### SECTION 3. MARKING THE SPOT

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. A ball spotter / ball marker or line judge shall be used to mark the line-of-scrimmage (LOS). It is the responsibility of the offense to place the flat cone on the LOS.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. Flag guarding is notionally and effectively the end of the play. However, the play will be allowed to come to its natural dead-ball situation without the whistle being blown.
- 3.5. 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.

3.6. If the ball is intercepted in the end zone and intercepting team fouls in the end zone prior to the ball being brought back into the field (example: flag guarding) the result of the play will be a touchback and the foul will be administered from the touchback spot. This will not result in a safety.

3.7. If the entire ball is brought back into the field of play and then a foul occurs anywhere on the field, including the end zones, the penalty will be administered from the spot of the foul.

#### SECTION 4. PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

\*\*All penalties inside of 2 minutes of BOTH halves remain the same except:

- Defensive delay of game (+ 15 yards Unsportsmanlike & AFD)
- Intentional Offensive delay of game (-15 yards Unsportsmanlike & LOD + clock stops)
- Offensive Pre-snap penalties – yardage + LOD + clock stops

Penalty	Yardage	Penalty Assessment	Result
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	By the Offense: Loss of down By the Defense: Automatic 1st down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15	End of the play or previous spot	By the Offense: Loss of down By the Defense: Automatic 1st down
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**
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	By the Offense: Loss of down By the Defense: Automatic 1st down
Early Flag Pull	5	Previous spot	Automatic 1st down
Illegal Participation	5	Previous spot	By the Offense: Loss of down By the Defense: 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

\*\* LOD, if 2 min or less in either half

- 4.1. Penalties are assessed for live ball fouls in the order they occurred before dealing with dead ball fouls.
- 4.2. Live ball and dead ball fouls do not offset one another.
- 4.3. Officials may accept or decline penalties on a coach's behalf if they are obvious. However, the coach has the last word.
- 4.4. There is no limit of how many dead ball fouls can be enforced.
- 4.5. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal when the yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- 4.6. Fouls simultaneous to the snap, if accepted, will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.
- 4.7. An official shall have the authority to rectify an error and correct a down until the series has ended.
- 4.8. Yardage portions of any penalty may be declined.



4.9. Disqualifications, Ejections and Unsportsmanlike Conduct are the only three penalties that cannot be declined.

4.10. The loss-of-down aspect of a penalty has no significance following a change of possession or if the line to gain is reached after the enforcement.

#### SECTION 5. ESTABLISHING ZONE-LINE-TO-GAIN

5.1. For live ball fouls, the penalty yardage will be marked off first, then the next line-to-gain (first-down marker) will be established.

5.2. On a change of possession, all live-ball penalties will be administered prior to determining the next line-to-gain. Once that line is established all dead ball penalties will be administered.

#### SECTION 6. PACE OF PLAY

6.1. Officials will hustle but not hurry. They must control the game and not let an anxious team set the pace. Please keep a consistent and brisk pace throughout the game to ensure teams get the maximum amount of playing time possible.

6.2. 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 earned.

6.3. Officials may stop the clock as they see fit in order to administer a fair, controlled contest.

#### SECTION 7. HOLDING

7.1. Holding is a judgment call made at the discretion of the officials. Only holds that provide a significant and unfair advantage will be penalized. Minor tugs or brief contact may not necessarily be considered holding. Holding involves using the hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle, or otherwise restrain an opponent to gain a physical advantage. Note that defenders will typically be given the benefit of the doubt if the ball carrier's shirt is untucked.

#### SECTION 8. ILLEGAL PERSONAL CONTACT

8.1. No player may make contact with an opponent that is judged to be unnecessary or provokes rough-play or retaliation.

8.2. In the judgement of the game official, when one player uses enough force to knock another to the ground by pulling, tripping, bear-hugging, charging, sweeping, flinging, shoving, 'bodying-up' etc. Whether or not the player goes to the ground is irrelevant.

8.3. A player going to the ground does not automatically constitute Illegal Contact. Incidental or unintentional collisions—such as when a defender and ball carrier meet in the same space during the play—are permitted, provided both players are making fair, safe, and reasonable attempts: the defender to pull the flag, and the ball carrier to avoid contact.

8.4. If a defender trips or compresses a ball carrier while pursuing from behind—commonly seen during breakaway plays—they will be penalized for Illegal Contact, even if attempting to pull the flag. Defenders



are required to make a fair, safe, and reasonable attempt to capture the flag without compromising the ball carrier's safety.

8.5. Player safety is our top priority. Any significant contact above the shoulders—including the head, neck, or face—will be penalized, regardless of whether it is accidental or intentional.

8.6. Incidental contact between opponents that does not grant either player an advantage should not be penalized.

## SECTION 9. COOL DOWN PERIOD

9.1. 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.

9.2. Players should think of this 'cool down' as a warning before being ejected and be thankful for it.

9.3. This period will consist of one drive.

## SECTION 10. DISQUALIFICATIONS AND EJECTIONS

10.1. Disqualifications, Ejections and Unsportsmanlike Conduct are the only three penalties that cannot be declined. They are completely the option of the game officials. The yardage portion of the penalty may be declined but infraction itself cannot.

10.2. The difference between disqualification and ejection is completely the determination of the presiding referee and may not be appealed.

10.3. Disqualifications are normally reserved to address lower-level transgressions.

10.4. A disqualification will last for the remainder of the contest the player was disqualified for and may play in the next scheduled contest.

10.5. A player who is ejected is automatically suspended from their next scheduled game and must sit out at least one additional contest. Further suspension may be imposed at the discretion of the officials, depending on the severity of the infraction.

10.6. Any official may disqualify a player.

10.7. To eject a player all officials must agree and it must be reported to the Field Director prior to play resuming.

10.8. Ejections / disqualifications may occur for but are not limited to:

- A second unsportsmanlike or personal foul on a single player
- Any act deemed egregious by the head official
- Disrespectfully addressing or intentionally touching a game official
- Four unsportsmanlike and /or personal fouls by one team (forfeiture)
- Fighting of any kind, with punches thrown, or involving yourself with a fight in order to escalate the situation without control.

10.9. If an ineligible player (ex: not on the roster, previously disqualified or previously ejected) is discovered by any means (ex: observation, challenge, etc.) participating in a live ball play that team will forfeit the game and the Unfair Act is assessed to the head coach.



## SECTION 11. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- 11.1. Disrespect toward an official, coach, spectator or another player will constitute unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 11.2. Spiking the ball or flag, or displaying excessive behavior directed at an opponent, will be considered Unsportsmanlike Conduct. Showboating and taunting—while subject to the Official's discretion—are also not permitted and may result in penalties.
- 11.3. Celebrations are encouraged. Keep them short and not directed at an opponent, coach or opponent's sideline.
- 11.4. Use of inflammatory words or gestures is prohibited.
- 11.5. If unsportsmanlike conduct occurs during a live play and the team did not score on that play, the penalty will be assessed from the new line-of-scrimmage, i.e., will be added to or subtracted from the end of the play.

## SECTION 12. FIGHTING

- 12.1. Fighting could lead to immediate ejection, possible suspension or lifetime exclusion.
- 12.2. Any player who comes off the sideline to participate in a fight will be disqualified or ejected.
- 12.3. If either team leaves the bench during a fight the game will be forfeited immediately.

## SECTION 13. INADVERTENT WHISTLE

- 13.1. If an official blows an inadvertent whistle, they will declare the ball dead where the ball was at the time of 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.
- 13.2. 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.
- 13.3. 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.
- 13.4. 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.

## SECTION 14. LAST PLAYER RULE AND PENALTY

- 14.1. If the last defensive player physically contains the ball carrier (e.g., bear hugs, flagrantly holds, pushes the ball carrier out-of-bounds above the hip, tackles, attempts to tackle, etc.) without making a clear, legal attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag or commits illegal contact, the offensive team will be awarded at least one line-zone-to-gain distance from the spot of foul and an automatic first down. 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. To evoke this rule, we require there must be total agreement of all game officials that saw the foul.