



General Rules

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General Governing Philosophy:

- 1) We declare the Flag Football World Championship Tour (FFWCT) the self-appointed national governing organization of the sport of flag football through common consent of our participating teams.
- 2) We are aware that many leagues play with a variety of rule books that differ from the FFWCT, however the FFWCT is the ultimate governing body for all forms and styles of the sport.
- 3) Our officials administer the rules of this league not any other organization (*past or present*).
- 4) When more details are needed than are outlined in our abridged FFWCT Rule Book(s), game officials will defer to the most current National Federation of High Schools Rule Book.
- 5) 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.
- 6) Order of tie breakers to determine seeding for playoffs are as follows: Overall record, head to head: (only applies if every team with the same record played each other directly), point differential, points against, points scored, battle points, registration date, coin toss.

Required Personal Conduct:

- 1) Players, coaches and spectators must keep their comments profanity free.
- 2) Disrespectful language, racist, sexist, homophobic remarks, obscene gestures/behavior, and bullying are prohibited.
- 3) Foul play will not be tolerated.
- 4) Any staff member that hears or sees anything that leads them to believe an infraction of the required personal conduct outline has been committed the person responsible may be dismissed for the rest of the tournament.
- 5) Fighting will lead to an immediate ejection for the remainder of the tournament, possible suspension or even a lifetime exclusion.

Required Team Conduct:

- 1) For the safety of our officials and their ability to administer the game all team personnel must remain at least two yards off the sidelines and inside the designated team boxes.
- 2) Coaches may signal or call-in plays during the play clock but must be out-of-bounds before the snap. Coaches on the field-of-play during game play will be assessed a timeout.
- 3) After all touchdowns and successful PAT attempts, the ball carrier must report to an official who will ensure the flag was not tampered with by pulling the flag from the ball carrier.
- 4) If teams cannot agree on a sideline to occupy the Referee will conduct a coin toss and assign sidelines.
- 5) Officials may require that boom-boxes or other noise producing devices be turned off or eliminated as they interfere with the game official's ability to communicate and administer the game.

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6) Teams are required to clean up their garbage after contests.

Roster Rules:

- 1) Rosters must be completed through the registration system.
- 2) Team captains must invite players by entering their email address or sending them the invite link.
- 3) Players must accept the invite, register themselves and accept the waiver in order to be eligible to participate.
- 4) If the team captain is also playing, they must register themselves as a player on the roster and accept the waiver.
- 5) If the team captain is not playing, their spot on the roster does not count toward the roster maximum.
- 6) Failure to complete your roster will result in a forfeit and removal from the event without refund.
- 7) Players may not play in more than one division of a single format. If you are on a roster for 4v4 PRO, you may not play in 4v4 Comp or Rec, but you could play in 5v5 Non-Contact Rec. Age specific divisions are excluded, so you may play in one O35 or U24 division of the same style.
- 8) Transgender players may play on the team that matches the gender on their state or federal issued identification document.
- 9) Players 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.
- 10) If a player is found playing on a team illegally, the team will forfeit the game the illegal player participated in.
- 11) All game fees, referee fees, and fines must be paid if forfeiting teams drop out of league, pool, or tournament play.

Playoffs:

During tournament play the number of teams that advance to playoff rounds will be determined by the number of teams in each bracket.

Lightning Protocol:

- 1) Practice and competitions will be suspended immediately when lightning is detected within 10 miles.
- 2) All athletes and spectators should seek safe shelter during severe weather (but not under trees).
- 3) Play shall not resume for at least 30 minutes after the last sight of lightning or sound of a thunderclap.
- 4) Three long blasts from an air horn, car horn, or whistle will be the signal it is safe to continue play.

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 protective mouthpiece while on the field-of-play.
- 3) For safety reasons, players must wear pants or shorts that do not have pockets, belt loops, zippers, or exposed draw strings. Pants or shorts with pockets that have been professionally sewn-shut are allowed

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at the game official's discretion. Pants or shorts cannot be tapped or turned inside out unless the shorts are double lined.

4) Teams must supply their own flags. The specific type for each style and event will be communicated on the FFWCT website (<https://ffwct.com/flag-football-tournaments/>).

5) **Having the correct and legal flags is solely the responsibility of the participant.** *Caution: Bring extra flags and belts, event organizers may not have flags for sale and have no means in which to replace or repair damaged flags.* **Your participation is subject to having the correct and working flags.**

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

7) Youth size flags may not be worn in adult leagues. Adult flags must be no less than 14" long as measured from the bottom of the popper or flag belt when there is no popper present and no less than 1 3/4" wide. (Failure to Wear Proper Equipment – 5-yards, repeat the down)

8) Flags cannot be the same/similar color as a player's pants/shorts. Similar is at the official's discretion.

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

10) Teams must carry two colored shirts, a dark color and a light 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, and the losing team will need to change into a different color.

11) Players must ensure their jerseys are long enough to remain tucked in during 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).

12) When a shirt is untucked at the snap a hold will not be called on the defender that is 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.

13) Flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

14) Flags must be evenly distributed on the belt. Suction cups must face down and away from the body. Belts must be snug around the waist to avoid rotating.

15) 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.

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

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

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

19) Players must wear shoes. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed.

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

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

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

23) Player's finger nails must be trimmed or taped over to protect opponents. Alternatively, players may wear gloves to protect their opponents.

24) Players may wear knit or stocking-style caps.

25) Hoodies must be tucked inside the jersey while on the field-of-play.

26) Soft-shelled helmets designed for flag football players (e.g., the EliteTek brand), may be worn.

27) Baseball-style caps must be removed or turned around backward.

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- 28) Players may wear a headband made of non-abrasive material. Rubber or elastic bands may be used in hair.
- 29) 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.
- 30) Officials will endeavor to identify missing, incomplete or improperly worn flag belts prior to the snap and announce for example “number X, down on possession”.
- 31) The player with the missing flag violation must fix the issue during the next dead ball situation or leave the field until they have done so.
- 32) 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.
- 33) 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.
- 34) All players on the field are eligible receivers at the snap regardless of possible uniform violations.
- 35) A missing flag violation will not delay the game or stop a live play.

Clock Mechanics (length of games and stop-clock procedures vary by style):

- 1) Game time is forfeit time.
- 2) To avoid a forfeit, teams may use team timeouts to ‘buy’ time.
- 3) Time outs are 30-seconds.
- 4) Game officials may stop the clock at their discretion.
- 5) The offense has a 25-second play clock to snap the ball before a delay of game penalty is assessed.
- 6) Teams will receive one courtesy warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- 7) Length of games and stop-clock procedure vary by style, please refer to individual style rules books.
- 8) When officials go to the ‘stop clock’ or ‘pro-clock’ mechanic the clock will stop / start as listed below:
 - a. Defense gains possession of the ball: on the following snap unless it is a PAT attempt
 - b. Either side is awarded a first down after a punt / on the snap
 - c. Inadvertent whistle / at the ready
 - d. Incomplete passes / on the snap
 - e. Intentional grounding / at the ready
 - f. Offense achieves a first down / clocks stops till referee whistles the ready to play whistle
 - g. Out-of-bounds plays with a player in possession of the ball / on the snap
 - h. Loose ball out-of-bounds / on the ready
 - i. Penalty administration (other than Delay of Game) / depends on previous play
 - j. Delay of game / on the snap
 - k. Referee timeout / at the Referee’s discretion
 - l. Safety / when the receiving team take possession of the ball to attempt a return
 - m. Team timeout / on the snap
 - n. Injury / when player is removed from field (depending on the status of clock on previous play)
 - o. Touchback / on the snap

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p. Touchdown / on the next snap after the PAT attempt. PATs are untimed downs during ‘stop/pro clock mechanics’.

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 two minutes.
- 5) Team captains are encouraged to yell “clock?” or “clock check?” in lieu of “time?” to avoid confusion when requesting a team timeout.
- 6) Event directors may enter the field of play during any dead ball situation to address matters they believe should not wait till half-time or the end of the game by calling a ‘director’s time-out’.

Coin Toss:

- 1) Team captains are required to bring their game ball(s) to the coin toss for inspection.
- 2) Game officials will confirm with team captains during the coin toss that the teams are in correct and legal uniforms (pockets, flags, contrasting colors, unyielding materials, etc.).
- 3) Referee will issue the first warning about unsportsmanlike conduct, excessive rough play, and language.
- 4) During tournament play “Home” or “Away” will be determined using either a strength of play record (“seeding”) or randomly (“draft-style”).
- 5) First possession is decided using a coin toss.
- 6) 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.
- 7) The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:
 - a. Begin on offense
 - b. Begin on defense
 - c. Designate which goal their team will defend
 - d. Defer their choice to the second half
- 8) The loser of the coin toss shall make a choice of the remaining options.
- 9) Before the start of the second half, the choice of options shall be reversed.
- 10) If a team captain does not attend the coin toss, the opposing team will win the toss.
- 11) In order to keep to schedule, the game clock shall start one minute after the coin toss formalities have concluded, regardless if the teams have taken the field or not.

Challenge Procedure:

- 1) Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.

- 2) Generally, officials are happy to answer quick response and general questions during the game if they do not impede the game. The priority is to spot the ball then address questions without impeding the play clock.
- 3) If a captain or head coach believes an official has made a procedural error they may call for a timeout. If the head official agrees that there has been a procedural error (e.g., wrong down, incorrect penalty yardage, etc.) the procedural error will be addressed and the timeout will not be charged.
- 4) The challenge must be made to an official before the next snap.
- 5) In the event the captain or head coach loses a procedural challenge and the captain's team did not possess a legal team timeout a fifteen-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be assessed.
- 6) Only procedural issues may be addressed, not an official's judgment call or no-call.
- 7) If the protesting team is unsatisfied with the ruling of the challenge on the field and would like to elevate the challenge to a league director / head of officials, they may do so.
- 8) If the protest is ultimately lost, the protesting team will lose all remaining timeouts of that half. If the protesting team does not have any timeouts left in the half they will lose all of the timeouts in the following half.
- 9) If the team doesn't possess any timeouts at all they will be assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

OFFENSE:

- 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.
- 2) For specific divisions, 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"). 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.
- 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 must 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.
- 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:

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- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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) An official may call flag guarding if they feel that a ball carrier's natural running motion gave the ball carrier a decisive advantage over the defender and the running motion caused part of the ball carrier's body to block a de-flagging attempt.
- 7) 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.
- 8) Flag guarding shall not be called if there is no defensive player within reasonable distance to capture the flag.
- 9) The ball carrier may bend at the knees to dip low, side cut, skip, or take short hops.
- 10) Extreme low dips (sometimes called a "duck-walk") are legal and do not constitute flag guarding in themselves, as long as the flag carrier's flags are still exposed and the defensive player isn't physically impeded (i.e. the ball carrier isn't using his arms, hands, shoulder, ball, etc. to impede the defender. Normally flag guarding can be avoided while "duck-walking" when the ball carrier keeps his hands and elbows high on the body (ex: at shoulder-level).
- 11) No penalty will be called if a ball carrier simultaneously flag guards as the defender pulls the flag.
- 11) Tampering with the flag in any way to gain advantage is illegal.

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12) 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.

Intentional Grounding:

- 1) A passer may not throw the ball into the ground to avoid a loss of yardage or conserve time.
- 2) An exception to this rule is it is legal to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball to the ground immediately (spiking) after receiving either a direct hand-to-hand snap or from the "shot-gun" formation for styles that do not allow hand-to-hand snaps.
- 3) The spike must be fluid and immediate after the snap or it is intentional grounding.
- 4) A pass may not be intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an offensive receiver.
- 5) Passers may not throw the ball out-of-bounds to stop the clock as in NFL or NCAA games.
- 6) Intentional grounding can occur anywhere behind the line of scrimmage.

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, 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.
- 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 touching. 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.

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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) To assist defensive players to avoid unnecessary contact with the passer the covering official will endeavor, but is not required, to announce "balls away" when the ball has left the quarterback's hand.
- 3) In general, defensive players may not "crash" the quarterback's throwing arm, shoulder or body even if the ball is touched first. This rule applies to holders and kickers as well.
- 4) An insignificant "brush-by" may be allowed by the referee but is not guaranteed.
- 5) Making contact with the quarterback while blocking a pass or attempting to block a pass may result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- 6) 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.).
- 7) 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 makes contact with 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.
- 8) 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 or tripping 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.

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- 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 (e.g., 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 at least one line-zone-to-gain or 15-yards (offended team's choice) from the spot of foul and an automatic first down.
- 14) This type of action can result in a score awarded if the foul occurred inside the final line-zone-to-gain or the covering official reasonably believes the foul is the only thing that prevented the ball carrier from scoring. (Teaching point: Play the flag not the ball carrier's body or ball as in traditional tackle football).

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:
 - a. Shoving or pushing off to create separation.
 - b. Playing through the back.
 - c. Hook and turn: grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.
 - d. Not playing the ball: the defender is looking at the receiver and contact materially impedes the receiver.
 - e. Arm bars, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.
 - f. Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched, commonly seen through "pick plays".
 - g. 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.
- 6) 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.
- 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.

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- 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 attempt 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. 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. They will still be attempting a 1-point PAT but it will be from the 8-yard line.
- 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 1 ½-yard line) or on the kickoff. 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 any PAT can be returned by the defense for two points regardless of PAT point attempted.

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:

- a. Fumbles in, or out of your opponent’s end zone (sides and end line).
- b. A player in possession of the ball has their flag pulled in the end zone.
- c. The ball carrier going out-of-bounds behind the goal line.
- d. The ball is snapped out of the end zone.
- e. 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.

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- 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).
- 3) For winning the coin toss, a team may choose offense, defense, or direction the overtime periods will be played.
- 4) See refer to individual styles rule books specifics for overtime details.
- 5) Kicking for points in overtime is allowed at the 8v8 / 9v9 levels if goal posts are available.
- 6) Each team is allowed one timeout per each overtime period.
- 7) Interceptions are returnable in overtime for two points.
- 8) Penalties are administered as during the regular game.
- 9) The goal line shall always be the line-to-gain in overtime, regardless of the number of overtimes played.

Ending the Game / Forfeits:

- 1) The game may not end with a penalty unless it is declined.
- 2) Penalties by the offense that include a loss of down with time expired in either half (i.e., there is no time on the clock) will not extend the half or game.
- 3) Offsetting penalties will not extend the half or game.
- 4) Forfeits that occur prior to game will be recorded as 28-0 for 4v4 and 5v5 games and 17-0 for 7/8/9 player formats. Forfeits that occur during the game will be recorded at these scores or the actual score of the game at the time of the forfeit, whichever is the larger differential.

OFFICIATING:

- 1) Officials should aim to assist teams to avoid penalties (preventative officiating). Cautions and teaching points are appropriate at 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. It is permissible for the covering official to pick up and move the flag to a more accurate spot, if needed.
- 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) A ball spotter, ball marker, or line judge shall be used to mark the line-of-scrimmage. We recommend a non-trip hazard object like a soft, pliable indoor hockey puck or similar item. The marker will be placed along the line-of-scrimmage.
- 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.
- 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.
- 5) 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

Establishing Zone-Line-to-Gain:

- 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.
- 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.
- 3) To determine if a first down was achieved on any given running or passing play, the official will mark off any un-administered live-ball penalty yards before making the determination.

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- 4) If a penalty awards an automatic first down (e.g., roughing the passer) and the original line-to-gain was not achieved after the yardage was resolved, the original line-to-gain will remain in effect.

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 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. Be aware defenders will be given the benefit of the doubt if the ball carrier's shirt is untucked.

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 be thankful for it.
- 3) This period will consist of five plays and will be tracked by the official that ordered the "cool down".
- 4) The player must be off the field for five plays regardless. A score or other event does not release the player back to the field. They must stay off the field for five 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. The yardage portion of the penalty may be declined but infraction itself cannot.
- 2) The difference between disqualification and ejection 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 sit out at least one game.
- 7) Any official may disqualify a player. To eject a player all officials 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 suspension or lifetime exclusion.
- 2) Fighting is any act or attempt to act by a player or non-player to strike or engage a player or non-player in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempting to or striking with the arms, hands, legs, feet, or foreign object whether or not there was contact.
- 3) Any player who comes off the sideline to participate in a fight will be disqualified or ejected.
- 4) If either team leaves the bench during a fight the game will be forfeited immediately.

Bench Fouls:

Teams may incur bench fouls for a variety of reasons to include but not limited to:

- 1) Players on the sidelines or spectators interfering with play or an official
- 2) Disrespect toward officials or other players or non-players
- 3) Players or non-players in the designated restricted zone during a live play
- 4) Non-players on the field of play
- 5) Teams not remaining in the designated team box

Unfair Acts Rule:

- 1) Neither team shall commit any act which, in the judgment of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game.
- 2) The head official on each field may enforce any penalty or remedy any situation with anything he/she considers equitable -- including the award of a first down, a line-zone-to gain, a replay, a score, forfeiture, etc. -- for any situation not specifically covered in these rules.

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:

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- 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. To evoke this rule we require there must be total agreement of all game officials that saw the foul. (IAW Rule 9-9-5 NFHS).