



**INTERNATIONAL**

**FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

**5 on 5 / non-contact**

**2011**

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## Word from the editor

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The rule book 2011 is the first revised edition of the first ever international Flag Football rule book, published in 2009. It has a lot of editorial changes to clarify things or simply delete errors.

Important changes compared to the 2009 version are:

- Two possible national changes are added, the flags could be Velcro type and a mouthpiece could be only recommended.
- The possible national changes for Indoor are now listed and extended.
- Uniform attachments are illegal.
- Substitution for defense is possible till the snap.
- Illegal blitz signal is added.
- Only 2 blitzers can ask for the right of way.
- Illegal backward pass gets a loss of down.
- Jumping, diving, flag guarding and illegal kick are making the ball dead and administered as dead ball fouls.
- On a change of possession only a team not fouling before getting the last possession can keep the ball, otherwise the down will be replayed.
- The enforcement has been changed, the philosophy is part of rule 10.
- Rule 11 has been reduced to the minimum because an official's manual exists now.
- Interpretations have been added, maybe the most important thing.

The change of enforcement has been done, because this was the only real criticized point in the former edition. Main complaints have been, that some enforcements are not exactly fitting the situation and the enforcement is too much complex in general. This is a good example about the different directions of wishes the rules have to fulfill. After hours of thinking and rethinking and changing and rechanging it, I believe I found a solution what takes care of the complaints, brings a more equitable enforcement and is simpler than before. Hopefully I found the Jack of all trades. The new enforcement is not changing as much as it looks at the first moment. Even with the old enforcement, technical penalties have been enforced from the scrimmage line. And on the other hand the new exceptions with the worst spot principle (basic spot) will enforce fouls during the play from the spot of foul or end of play. So the changes are small in practice.

Thanks for assistance to:

Erwin Aigner (AUT), Jim Briggs (GBR), -Nick Inzerello (USA), Magnus Lauesgaard (DEN), Tsutomu Negishi (JPN), KK Park (KOR), Alexandre Roger (FRA), Rick Sowieta (CAN), Michael Ulicny (AUT) and all the people behind them.

Wolfgang Geyer (AUT)

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## Flag Football Rules

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IFAF Flag Football Rules are based on IFAF Tackle Football Rules.

To keep the Flag rules short and simple, a lot of things are not explained. Only important or special things have been determined and ruled. Even so this Flag Football Rules Book will cover everything to play Flag without knowing the Tackle rules. If there is a need for more information (e.g. specifications of ball) you will have to look in the Tackle Rules Book (e.g. R 1-3-1). As a coach or official, you need to understand the Tackle rules too.

**The Football Code is an integral part of the Flag rules.**

**The referee will decide according to the Tackle rules on any ruling which is not covered by this Rule Book.**

**Flag football is non-contact. Blocking, tackling and kicking are not allowed.**

The structure of these rules will follow Tackle Rules, but content and numbering is not corresponding.

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## National Changes

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For national competition games it is possible to change rules as follows:

- R 1-1-1 Field dimensions can be changed due to game site or age.  
Length (excluding end zones) can be shortened to a minimum of 40 yd (36,60 m) or lengthened to a maximum of 60 yd (54,90 m),  
End zones can be shortened to a minimum of 8 yd (7,30 m) and  
Width can be narrowed to a minimum of 20 yd (18, 30 m) or widened to a maximum of 30 yd (27,45 m).  
Safety area cannot be altered.  
It is possible either to reduce length and/or end zones and/or width or to extend length (end zones 10 yd) and/or width. It is not possible to reduce length and extend width or reverse.
- R 1-1-1 Minimum field markings are side lines, goal lines and end lines.
- R 1-1-1 Pylons or disk markers are only recommended.
- R 1-1-1 Down indicator is only recommended.
- R 1-1-1 Score board is only recommended.
- R 1-1-1 Team rosters can consist of more than 12 players.
- R 1-1-1 Teams can have players of different sex.
- R 1-1-4 Officials only recommended.
- R 1-2-1 Game balls need not to be leather.
- R 1-3-1 Flags need not to be pop-flags in youth games.
- R 1-3-1 Mouthpiece only recommended.
- R 3-2-1 Time can be changed due to competition or age.
- R 3-3-2 Time-Outs can be changed due to competition or age.

### Indoor Flag Football

Additional possible changes:

- R 1-1-1 Field dimensions can be changed as big as the game site allows.
- R 1-1-1 Marking of field will be made with pylons or disk markers.
- R 1-3-1 Shoes must have flat, not colored, not rubbing off soles.
- R 3-2-5 Clock stops only in the last minute of each half.
- R 5-1-1 Series of downs can be reduced to 3 downs.
- R 5-1-1 Middle line can be deleted (no first down possible).

**All other rules are conduct rules and may not be altered.**

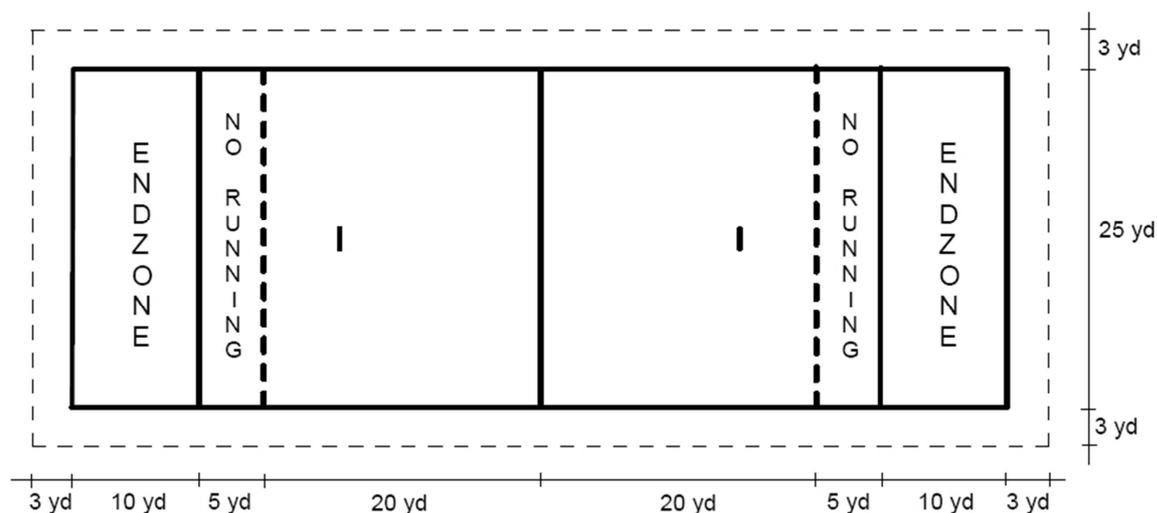
## Diagram of Field

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

### Field dimensions:

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

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



Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the lines (goal line is part of end zone), width of lines 4 inches (10 cm). The no-running lines should be dashed. The spot for the 2-point-try should be marked 12 yards (11,00 m) from the goal line in the middle of the width with 1 yard (0,9 m) length.

Safety area is 3 yd (2,75 m) outside the side lines and the end lines. The safety area need not be marked.

If two fields are next to each other the minimum distance in between is 6 yd (5,50 m).

### Field equipment:

Pylons or disk markers shall be placed at the corners of the 8 intersections of the side lines with the goal lines and end lines.

Disk markers can be placed at the intersections of the side lines with the middle line and no-running lines.

A down indicator shall be operated 2 yards outside of one side line.

A visible score board shall be operated near the field.

**RULE 1****Game, Field, Ball and Equipment****SECTION 1. General Provisions****ARTICLE 1. The Game**

The game shall be played between 2 teams of not more than 5 players each, on a rectangular field and with a regular ball. Details see Diagram of Field.

Team rosters consist of a maximum of 12 players (5 on the field with 7 substitutes). Teams may play with a minimum of 4 players. If less than 4 players are available, the game is forfeited by the side that is unable to field a team.

Teams can have only players of the same sex.

**ARTICLE 2. Winning Team and Final Score**

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

**ARTICLE 3. Supervision**

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

**ARTICLE 4. Team Captains and Coaches**

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

**SECTION 2. The Ball****ARTICLE 1. Specifications**

The ball shall be made of leather, new or nearly new with regular size, weight and pressure, no alterations should be made. Each team may use its own legal ball.

**ARTICLE 2. Special Sizes**

For women and youth games aged under 16 youth size balls (ex. TDY) should be used. Balls need not to be leather. For youth games aged under 13 junior size balls (ex. TDJ) should be used. Balls need not to be leather.

**SECTION 3. Equipment****ARTICLE 1. Mandatory Equipment**

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

- a. Players of a team shall wear jerseys of the same color and design. The jerseys must be full-length and tucked into the pants with contrasting Arabic numerals at least 6 inches (15 cm) in height on back. Jerseys must not be taped or tied in any manner.
- b. Players shall wear shorts or pants of the same color and design without pockets, press studs or clips. Players cannot tape or secure their shorts or pants to meet this regulation.
- c. Tightly fixed flag belts with sockets and 2 flags (pop-flags). Every effort must be made to keep one flag on each hip of the player. These flags by a size of 2 inch (5 cm) x 15 inch (38 cm) must not be altered or cut. The sockets must not be glued or changed in any way and placed to look downwards and outside. The flags must be clearly visible, hang down freely and must not be covered in any way by the player's uniform. The flags have to have different color from the pants. Players, who will deliberately manipulate their flags, will be ejected from the game.
- d. All players must wear an intra-oral mouthpiece of a visible color and with no part stick out more than 0,5 inch (1,25 cm).

**ARTICLE 2. Illegal Equipment**

- a. Shoes detached with cleats longer than 0,5 inch (1,25 cm), sharp pointed as spikes or made of any metallic material.
- b. Any kind of headwear or helmets (caps, hoods, bandanas, headbands or similar).
- c. Glasses not medical prescribed and not made out of nonbreaking material.
- d. Jewelry must be removed or covered up completely.
- e. Uniform attachments like towels or hand warmers.
- f. Adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or on a players person, clothing or attachment that affects the ball or an opponent.
- g. Any electronic, mechanical or other signal devices for the purpose of communicating with a coach.

**ARTICLE 3. Coaches Certification**

Before the game the head coach shall give a roster to the referee and certify that all players have the mandatory equipment and have been informed what constitutes illegal equipment.

**RULE 2****Definitions****SECTION 1. Areas and Lines****ARTICLE 1. The Field**

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

**ARTICLE 2. Field of Play**

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

**ARTICLE 3. End Zones**

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

**ARTICLE 4. No-Running Zones**

The No-Running Zones are the 5-yard areas at both ends of the field in front of the goal lines.

**ARTICLE 5. Goal Lines**

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

**ARTICLE 6. Middle Line**

In the middle between the goal lines is a middle line. The line to gain for a new series is in the middle of the field of play, so it is in the middle of the middle line, shortly named middle.

**ARTICLE 7. In Bounds, Out of Bounds**

The area enclosed by the side lines and end lines is in bounds and the area surrounding and including the side lines and end lines is out of bounds.

**ARTICLE 8. Team Area**

The team area is outside the safety area and between the no-running lines along the side line.

**SECTION 2. Team and Player Designations****ARTICLE 1. Offense and Defense**

The offense is the team in possession or the team to which the ball belongs, the defense is the opposing team.

**ARTICLE 2. Snapper**

The snapper is the offensive player who snaps the ball.

**ARTICLE 3. Quarterback**

The quarterback is the offensive player who first gets possession of the ball after the snap.

**ARTICLE 4. Passer**

The passer is the offensive player who throws a legal pass.

**ARTICLE 5. Runner**

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

**ARTICLE 6. Blitz**

The blitz is a defensive player who crosses the scrimmage line while the ball is live and before the quarterback has released the ball.

Blitzers can get the right of way, if they raise one hand clearly above the head at least during the last second before the snap. The rush has to be immediately after the snap, quick and straight near to the point where the quarterback receives the snap.

If a blitz is giving an invalid signal, rushing slow, aiming another spot or changing the direction during the rush, he loses the right of way.

**ARTICLE 7. Player Out of Bounds**

A player or ball is out of bounds when it touches anything out of bounds.

**ARTICLE 8. Disqualified Player**

A disqualified player is one who is declared ineligible for further participation in the game.

**ARTICLE 9. Home Team**

If both teams are away from home or at tournaments (more than 2 teams), first mentioned team will be the home team, second mentioned team will be the visiting team.

## SECTION 3. Down, Scrimmage and Play Classification

### ARTICLE 1. Down

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

### ARTICLE 2. Scrimmage Line

The scrimmage line for each team, when the ball is ready for play, is the yard line and its vertical plane that passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line and extends to the side lines.

### ARTICLE 3. Forward Pass Play

A legal forward pass play is the interval between the snap and when a legal forward pass beyond the scrimmage line is complete, incomplete or intercepted.

### ARTICLE 4. Running Play

A running play is any live ball action other than that during a legal forward pass play. Passes completed behind the line of scrimmage are legal and are running plays.

## SECTION 4. The Ball - Live or Dead

### ARTICLE 1. Live Ball

A live ball is a ball in play. A pass or fumble that has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight. A player is in possession, if he is holding or controlling a live ball.

### ARTICLE 2. Dead Ball

A dead ball is a ball not in play.

### ARTICLE 3. When Ball Is Ready for Play

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

## SECTION 5. Forward, Beyond and Forward Progress

### ARTICLE 1. Forward, Beyond

Forward, beyond or in advance of, as related to either team, denotes direction toward the opponent's end line. Converse terms are backward or behind.

### ARTICLE 2. Forward Progress

Forward progress is a term indicating the end of advancement by the ball carrier or airborne pass receiver of either team and applies to the position of the most forward point of the ball when it became dead between the end lines by rule.

## SECTION 6. Spots

### ARTICLE 1. Enforcement Spot

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

### ARTICLE 2. Dead ball Spot

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

### ARTICLE 3. Spot of the Foul

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

### ARTICLE 4. Out-of-Bounds Spot

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

## SECTION 7. Foul, Penalty and Violation

### ARTICLE 1. Foul

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

### ARTICLE 2. Penalty

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

### ARTICLE 3. Violation

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

### ARTICLE 4. Loss of a down

"Loss of a down" is an abbreviation meaning "loss of the right to repeat a down".

## SECTION 8. Shift, Motion

### ARTICLE 1. Shift

A shift is a simultaneous change of position by 2 or more offensive players after the ball is ready and before the snap.

### ARTICLE 2. Motion

A motion is a change of position by one offensive player after the ball is ready and before the snap.

## SECTION 9. Handling of the ball

### ARTICLE 1. Handoff

Handoff is successfully transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing.

### ARTICLE 2. Pass

A pass is any intentional act to throw the ball in any direction. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or intercepted by a player or the ball becomes dead.

### ARTICLE 3. Fumble

A fumble is any act other than passing or successful handing that result in loss of player possession. For the status of the ball it will be no difference, if the possession is lost intentional (pass or handoff) or unintentional (fumble), a live ball in flight will be considered as pass.

### ARTICLE 4. Possession

Possession means the firmly holding or controlling of a live ball.

### ARTICLE 5. Batting

Batting the ball is intentionally striking it or intentionally changing its direction with the hands or arms.

### ARTICLE 6. Kicking

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

## SECTION 10. Passes

### ARTICLE 1. Forward and Backward Pass

A forward pass is determined by the point where the ball first strikes anything beyond the spot of the pass. All other passes are backward passes, even if it is lateral (parallel to the scrimmage line).

A snap becomes a backward pass when the snapper releases the ball, even if it slips from the hand of the snapper.

### ARTICLE 2. Crosses Scrimmage Line

A legal forward pass has crossed the scrimmage line when it first strikes anything beyond the scrimmage line inbounds.

### ARTICLE 3. Catch, Interception

A catch is an act of firmly establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble is an interception. A player who leaves his feet to make a catch or interception must have the ball firmly in his possession when he first returns to the ground inbounds with any part of his body.

### ARTICLE 4. Sack

A sack is a flag pull at the quarterback before he releases the ball.

## SECTION 11. Holding, Blocking, Contact and Tackling

### ARTICLE 1. Holding

Holding is grasping an opponent or his equipment and not releasing it immediately.

### ARTICLE 2. Blocking

Blocking is obstructing an opponent without contact by moving into his way. An offense player moving in the line between a defense player and the runner or in the way of a blitzer is blocking. A player standing still (with the right of place) is not blocking, even if he is in between the runner and the opponent or in the way of a blitzer.

### ARTICLE 3. Contact

Contact is touching an opponent with impact. Touching without an effect is no contact.

### ARTICLE 4. Flag Pull

Flag pull is taking away one or more flags of an opponent with hand(s).

### ARTICLE 5. Flag Guarding

Flag guarding is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by covering the flag with any part of the body (hand, elbow or leg) or with the ball. Flag guarding is also leaning the upper body forward or stretching out a hand, with or without the ball, towards the opponent to make it more difficult for the defender to reach the flag.

## **SECTION 12. Jumping, Diving, Spinning**

### **ARTICLE 1. Jumping**

Jumping is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by jumping with one or both feet and leave the ground.

### **ARTICLE 2. Diving**

Diving is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by leaning his upper body forward with or without jumping.

### **ARTICLE 3. Spinning**

Spinning is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by turning his body at the vertical axis. Spinning is legal.

## **SECTION 13. Right of Place (RoP), Right of Way (RoW)**

### **ARTICLE 1. Right of place**

Right of place is given to a ~~still~~ standing player and opponents have to avoid contact. Standing means to remain at the spot and not moving in any direction, to make a move or jump for throwing or catching a pass at this spot does not give up the right of place.

### **ARTICLE 2. Right of way**

Right of way is given to a moving player and opponents have to avoid contact.

The right of place is more worth than the right of way.

**RULE 3****Periods and Time****SECTION 1. Start of Each Period****ARTICLE 1. First Half**

3 minutes before the scheduled starting time, the referee shall toss a coin at midfield in presence of the field captains from each team, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss.

The winner of the toss will put the ball in play first by a snap at its own 5 yard line; the loser shall designate which goal line his team will defend.

There are no kickoffs.

**ARTICLE 2. Second Half**

Between the first and second period, the teams shall defend opposite goal lines. The loser of the toss will put the ball in play by a snap at its own 5 yard line.

**ARTICLE 3. Extra Periods**

The tiebreaker system will be used when a game is tied after 2 halves and a winner has to be determined.

- a. After 2 minutes intermission, the referee shall declare which end of the field will be used for the extra downs and toss a coin at midfield as at the beginning of the game.
- b. The winner of the toss shall choose Offense or Defense, with the offense to start each period.
- c. No charged team timeouts will be granted.
- d. An extra period shall consist of 2 series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap at the middle line for a series of downs, except the defense scores during a period other than on the try.
- e. Each team retains the ball during a series until it scores, including extra points (1 or 2), or fails. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead; the series is ended even if there is a second change of possession.
- f. If after a period (with 2 series) the score is still tied, a new period will be played.
- g. The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winner.

**ARTICLE 4. Tournament Tie breaker system**

If 2 or more teams in a tournament have the same total percentage (win-tie-loss), the following steps will decide the order of the teams:

1. Head to head percentage.
2. Head to head net point differential.
3. Head to head gained points.
4. Total net point differential.
5. Total gained points.
6. Coin toss.

**SECTION 2. Playing Time****ARTICLE 1. Length of Play and Intermission**

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

**ARTICLE 2. Extension of Periods**

A period shall be extended until a down, free from live ball fouls, has been played. When a penalty is accepted or offsetting fouls occur during a down in which time expires, the down will be repeated.

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

**ARTICLE 3. Timing Devices**

Playing time and 25-Second-Clock shall be kept with a game clock that may be either a stop watch operated by an official or a game clock operated by an assistant under the direction of the appropriate official.

**ARTICLE 4. When Clock Starts**

The game clock shall be started when the ball is legally snapped.

**Exception: The game clock will start at the ready-for-play when it was stopped at referee's discretion.**

**ARTICLE 5. When Clock Stops**

The game clock shall be stopped when each period ends, for a charged team timeout, for an injury timeout or at referee's discretion.

Within the last 2 minutes of each period the clock will stop when:

1. To award a first down, also after a change of possession.
2. To complete a penalty.
3. A ball or runner goes out of bounds.
4. A pass becomes incomplete.
5. A score is made.
6. A charged timeout is granted.

The game clock shall not run during a try within the last 2 minutes, during an extension of a period or during an extra period.

## SECTION 3. Timeouts

### ARTICLE 1. How Charged

The referee shall declare a timeout when he suspends play for any reason. Each timeout shall be charged to one of the teams or designated as an official timeout. [S3]

### ARTICLE 2. Charged Team Timeouts

An official shall allow a charged team timeout when requested by any coach or inbound player when the ball is dead. Each team is entitled to 2 charged team timeouts during each half; they cannot be carried over to the next period.

### ARTICLE 3. Injury Timeout

In the event of an injured player any official may charge an official timeout, provided the player for whom the timeout is taken is removed from the game for at least one down.

### ARTICLE 4. Length of Timeouts

A charged team timeout shall not exceed 90 seconds (included are the 25 seconds after the ready for play).

**Note:** After 60 seconds the referee will notify the teams and declare the ball ready for play (R 3-3-5).

Other timeouts shall be no longer than the referee deems necessary to fulfill the purpose for which they are declared.

### ARTICLE 5. Referees Notification

The referee shall notify both teams 30 seconds before a charged team timeout expires and 5 seconds later shall declare the ball ready for play.

Unless a visual game clock is the official timepiece, the referee also shall inform all coaches when approximately 2 minutes of playing time remain in each half.

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**RULE 4**

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**Live Ball, Dead Ball**

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**SECTION 1. Live Ball - Dead Ball****ARTICLE 1. Dead Ball Becomes Alive**

For the next down the ball shall be put in play at the spot midway between the side lines on the line where the ball was when it became dead, a penalty brings it or a new series will be awarded.

After a dead ball is ready for play, it becomes a live ball when it is legally snapped. A ball snapped before it is ready for play or is illegally snapped remains dead.

**ARTICLE 2. Live Ball Becomes Dead**

A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound his whistle when:

- a. A live ball touching anything out of bounds.
- b. The ball or the runner goes out of bounds.
- c. Any part of the runner's body, except his hand or foot, touches the ground.
- d. A runner simulates placing his knee on the ground.
- e. A pass or fumble strikes the ground.
- f. A player becomes in possession of the ball with fewer than 2 flags or the flags are not positioned correctly and the player himself is responsible for it.
- g. A touchdown, touchback, safety or successful try occurs.
- h. A foul which makes the ball dead (jumping, diving, flag guarding, kicking and delay of pass) occurs.

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

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**RULE 5****Series of Downs**

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**SECTION 1. A Series: Started, Broken, Renewed****ARTICLE 1. When to Award Series**

A series of 4 consecutive scrimmage downs shall be awarded to the team that is next to put the ball in play by a snap at the begin of each period and after a score, safety, touchback or change of team possession. [S8]

A new series shall be awarded to the offense if:

- a. It is the first time of the series in legal possession of the ball ~~on or~~ beyond the middle ~~line~~ when the ball is declared dead. If a penalty brings the ball back behind the middle ~~line~~, no first down will be awarded again.
- b. If an accepted penalty mandates a first down.

A new series shall be awarded to the defense ~~on~~ her own 5 yard line if, after 4th down, the offense has failed to earn a first down.

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

**SECTION 2. Down and Possession after a Penalty****ARTICLE 1. Foul Before Change of Team Possession**

If a penalty occurred during a down and before any change of team possession, the ball belongs to the offense and the down shall be repeated, unless the penalty also involves loss of a down, mandates a first down, or leaves the ball ~~on or~~ beyond the middle ~~line~~.

**ARTICLE 2. Foul After Change of Team Possession**

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

**ARTICLE 3. Penalty Declined**

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

**ARTICLE 4. Foul Between Downs**

After a penalty incurred between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as that established before the foul occurred, unless enforcement for a foul leaves the ball ~~on or~~ beyond the middle ~~line~~ or a penalty mandates a first down.

**ARTICLE 5. Fouls by Both Teams**

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

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## **RULE 6**

## **Kicks**

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### **SECTION 1. Kicking**

#### **ARTICLE 1. Illegal Kicks**

A player shall not kick a ball, ~~this is illegal and a live ball~~ foul ~~that~~ causes the ball to become dead.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, administer as dead ball foul [S19].**

**RULE 7****Snapping and Passing the Ball****SECTION 1. The Scrimmage****ARTICLE 1. Ball Ready for Play**

- a. No player shall put the ball in play before it is ready for play. [S1]

**PENALTY - 5 yards [S19].**

- b. The ball shall be put in play within 25 seconds after the referee has declared the ball ready for play.

**PENALTY - 5 yards [S21].**

**ARTICLE 2. Starting With a Snap**

The ball shall be put in play by a legal snap in the middle between the side lines.

After the snapper touches the ball, the snapper may not lift the ball, move it forward or simulate the start.

Before the snap, the long axis of the ball must be at right angles to the scrimmage line.

A legal snap is handing or passing it backward from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous backward motion of the hand or hands and actually leaving the hand or hands in this motion. The snap need not be between the snapper's legs.

**PENALTY - 5 yards [S19].**

**ARTICLE 3. Offensive Team Requirements**

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

- a. After the snapper touches the ball and before the ball is snapped all players must be inbounds and behind their scrimmage line.
- b. All players of the offensive team must come to an absolute stop and remain stationary in their positions for at least 1 full second before the ball is snapped or a motion starts.
- c. No offensive player shall make a false start or make a movement that simulates the beginning of a play.
- d. When the snap starts, one player may be in motion, but not in motion toward his opponent's goal line.

**PENALTY - 5 yards [S19].**

- e. The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage, unless he has released the ball and it has been returned to him.
- f. When the ball is on or inside the 5-yard line going towards the opponent's end zone (no-running-zone), the offense has to make a forward pass play. If the quarterback or runner get deflagged behind the scrimmage line before a forward pass play has happened, it is no penalty for a run play within the no-running-zone.

**PENALTY - 5 yards [S19].**

- g. The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw the ball after receiving the snap. If this limit exceeded the ball becomes dead.

**PENALTY - Loss of down at the scrimmage line [S21 + S9].**

**ARTICLE 4. Defensive Team Requirements**

- a. After the snapper touches the ball and Before the ball is snapped all players must be inbounds and behind their scrimmage line

b. After the ball is declared ready for play no defense player may touch the ball.

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

**PENALTY - 5 yards [S18].**

- d. At the snap, all blitzers have to be 7 or more yards away from their scrimmage line. All other defensive players have to stay behind their scrimmage line until the ball has been handed off, faked handed off or passed from the quarterback.

e. A maximum of 2 blitzers can ask for the right of way. If more players raise their hand, all of them are losing the right of way and it is an illegal signal. There is no need for them to rush, it is only a request for the right of way. On the other hand, there is no need for a ask to be allowed to rush without the right of way.

f. A player who is less than 7 yards away from their scrimmage line cannot raise his hand to simulate being a blitzier.

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

**ARTICLE 5. Handing the Ball**

An Offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage.

- a. No player may hand the ball to a teammate except an offense player who is behind his scrimmage line.
- b. No snapper may receive a forward handoff.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot [S19].**

## SECTION 2. Passes and Fumble

### ARTICLE 1. Backward pass

A runner may pass the ball backward at any time, if he is behind his scrimmage line and there was no change of possession.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down if by offense before team possession changes, enforced from the basic spot [S35 + S9].**

### ARTICLE 2. Complete Pass or Fumble

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

When a fumble is caught by a teammate, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the fumbling team at the spot of the fumble.

### ARTICLE 3. Incomplete Pass or Fumble

Any pass or fumble is incomplete if the ball touches the ground when not firmly controlled by a player. It also is incomplete when a player leaves his feet and receives the pass but first lands on or outside a boundary line. [S10]

When a forward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the previous scrimmage line, this is the dead ball spot.

When a backward pass or fumble is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the spot of the last possession, this is the dead ball spot.

### ARTICLE 4. Illegal Touch

All inbound players (including the quarterback) are eligible to touch, bat or catch a pass or fumble. The quarterback is only allowed to catch a pass, if the ball has been touched by any other player before.

No offense player who goes out of bounds by himself during a down shall touch a pass inbounds or while airborne.

If an offense player is forced out of bounds and immediately returns to the field of play, he is still eligible.

**PENALTY - Loss of down at the scrimmage line [S9].**

## SECTION 3. Forward Pass

### ARTICLE 1. Legal Forward Pass

A player may make one forward pass during each scrimmage down before team possession changes, provided the pass is thrown from a point behind the scrimmage line.

### ARTICLE 2. Illegal Forward Pass

A forward pass is illegal:

- If thrown by an offense player who is beyond the scrimmage line when he releases the ball.
- If thrown after a runner has gone beyond the scrimmage line.
- If it is the second forward pass by the offense during the same down.
- If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down if by offense before team possession changes, enforced from the basic spot [S35 + S9].**

### ARTICLE 3. Pass Interference

Pass interference rules apply only during a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the scrimmage line. Physical contact is required to establish interference.

Pass interference is contact that interferes with an opponent player when the ball is in the air. It is the responsibility of the defensive players to avoid the opponents.

It is not pass interference when 2 or more eligible players are making a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to touch, bat or catch the pass. Eligible players of either team have equal rights to the ball.

**PENALTY - Offense pass interference: 10 yards from the previous scrimmage line and loss of down. [S33 + S9]**

**Defense pass interference: Automatic first down at the spot of foul. [S33 + S8] If the spot of foul is in the end zone of the defense, the ball will be spotted at the 2 yard line.**

Note: Contact on a pass play before the pass has been thrown or if the pass does not cross the scrimmage line, is a contact foul (R 9-2-1).

**RULE 8****Scoring****SECTION 1. Value of Scores****ARTICLE 1. Scoring Plays**

The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown - 6 Points [S5]

Successful Try from 5 yd - 1 Point [S5]

Successful Try from 12 yd - 2 Points [S5]

Defense Touchdown on a Try - 2 Points [S5]

Safety - 2 Points (points awarded to opponent) [S6]

Safety on a Try - 1 Point (points awarded to opponent) [S6]

**SECTION 2. Touchdown****ARTICLE 1. How Scored**

A touchdown shall be scored when:

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

**SECTION 3. Try Down****ARTICLE 1. How Scored**

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

~~If the defense scores a touchdown, after a change of possession, the value will be 2 points. If the offense scores a safety, after a change of possession, the value will be 1 point.~~

**ARTICLE 2. Opportunity to Score**

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

- a. The ball shall be put in play by the team that scored a 6-point touchdown. If a touchdown is scored during a down in which time expires, the try shall be attempted. ~~The scoring team has to decide if it will go for 1 or 2 points before the ready for play.~~
- b. ~~The try, which is a scrimmage down,~~ begins when the ball is ready for play.
- c. The snap will be midway between the side lines on the opponent's 5-yard (1 point) or 12-yard (2 points) line.
- d. The try ends when either team scores or the ball is dead by rule.
- e. Penalties will require repeating the try or results in a score or end the try.  
~~If the try will be repeated after a penalty, it is still worth the same value as before. No change of decision (1 or 2 points) will be made before the try ends.~~

**ARTICLE 3. Next Play**

After a try, the ball shall be put in play by the opponent ~~on~~ its own 5-yard line.

**SECTION 4. Safety****ARTICLE 1. How Scored**

It is a safety when:

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

**ARTICLE 2. Snap After a Safety**

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

**SECTION 5. Touchback****ARTICLE 1. When Declared**

It is a touchback when:

- a. The ball becomes dead behind a goal line, except from ~~an~~ incomplete pass ~~or fumble~~ ~~from outside the end zone~~, and the attacking team ~~of this goal line~~ is responsible for the ball being there.
- b. A defense player intercepts a pass ~~or fumble~~ and the original momentum carries him into the end zone.

**ARTICLE 2. Snap After a Touchback**

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

**RULE 9****Conduct of Players****SECTION 1. Contact Fouls****ARTICLE 1. Initiating Contact**

- a. No player or coach shall contact an opponent or official.
- b. No player may step, jump or stand on another player.
- c. No player may hold another player.
- d. All players have the right of place. Opponents have to avoid contact.
- e. The runner is in charge to avoid contact with the opponent players.
- f. All offense players have the right of way as long as the ball has been thrown or a runner crosses the scrimmage line. Defense players have to avoid contact.
- g. All eligible blitzers have the right of way to the quarterback and offense players have to avoid contact.  
Note: If there is no contact, it still could be a block by the offense player.

**PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot [S38].**

**ARTICLE 2. Targeting an Opponent**

- a. Even with the right of way no player shall target an opponent and contact him.
- b. No player shall try to attack a ball in possession or take away the ball from the runner.

**PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot [S38].**

**ARTICLE 3. Game Interference**

- a. No substitute or coach may interfere in any way with the ball, a player or an official while the ball is in play.

**PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot [S38].**

- b. Participation by 6 or more players is illegal participation.

**PENALTY - 10 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line, enforced from the basic spot [S28].**

**SECTION 2. Noncontact Fouls****ARTICLE 1. Unsportsmanlike Acts**

- a. Use of abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning.
- b. If a player is neither returning the ball to the next spot nor leaving it near the dead ball spot.

**PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot [S27].**

**ARTICLE 2. Unfair Acts**

- a. No player shall block an opponent.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot [S43].**

- b. No player shall jump or dive, this foul causes the ball to become dead.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, administer as dead ball foul [S51].**

- c. No runner shall commit flag guarding, this foul causes the ball to become dead.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, administer as dead ball foul [S52].**

- d. No player shall pull a flag from an opponent other than the runner or an opponent who fakes to be the runner.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot [S52].**

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

**PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line [S27].**

- f. No player wearing illegal equipment or missing mandatory equipment shall be permitted to play. A player with a bleeding wound must leave the field.

Players have to leave the field immediately after ordered to do so by an official.

**VIOLATION - Charged timeout [S3]. Penalty – 5 Yards, if no timeout left [S21].**

**SECTION 3. Substitutions****ARTICLE 1. Substitution Procedures**

- a. Any number of legal substitutes for the offense team may enter the game for replacing a player after the ball is dead and before the snapper touches the ball.
- b. Any number of legal substitutes for the defense team may enter the game for replacing a player after the ball is dead and before the ball is snapped.

**PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line [S19].**

**RULE 10****Penalty Enforcement****SECTION 1. General****ARTICLE 1. Flagrant Fouls**

A flagrant foul is a foul which endangers a player to injury and requires disqualification. [S47]

**ARTICLE 2. Unfair Tactics**

If a team refuses to play or repeatedly commits fouls that can be penalized only by halving the distance or commit an obviously unfair act not specifically covered by the rules, the referee may take any action he considers equitable, including assessing a penalty, disqualify a player or coach, awarding a score, or suspending or forfeiting the game.

**SECTION 2. Penalties Completed****ARTICLE 1. How and When Completed**

A penalty is completed when it is accepted, declined or cancelled. Any penalty may be declined by a team captain or coach, but a disqualified player must leave the game.

When a foul is committed, the penalty shall be completed before the ball is declared ready for play.

Only team captains and coaches may ask the referee questions about rule clarification.

**ARTICLE 2. Simultaneous With Snap**

A foul that occurs simultaneously with a snap is considered as occurring during that down, the spot of foul is the scrimmage line.

**ARTICLE 3. Live Ball Fouls by the Same Team**

When 2 or more live ball fouls by the same team are reported to the referee, the referee shall explain the alternative penalties to the field captain of the offended team, who then may elect only one of these penalties.

**ARTICLE 4. Offsetting Fouls**

a. If live ball fouls by both teams are reported to the referee, the fouls offset and the down is replayed.

Exceptions:

1. When there is a change of team possession during a down, and the team last gaining possession had not fouled before last gaining possession, it may decline offsetting fouls and thereby retain possession after completion of the penalty for its foul.

2. When a live ball foul is administered as a dead ball foul, it does not offset and is enforced in order of occurrence.

b. When there is a change of team possession during a down, and the team last gaining possession had fouled before last gaining possession, the foul offset the play and the down is replayed.

**ARTICLE 5. Dead ball Fouls**

Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in order of occurrence.

**ARTICLE 6. Interval Fouls**

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

**SECTION 3. Enforcement Procedures****ARTICLE 1. Basic Spot**

The basic spot is the scrimmage line.

Exceptions:

1. For offense fouls behind the scrimmage line, the basic spot is the spot of the foul.

2. For defense fouls when the dead ball spot is beyond the scrimmage line, the basic spot is the dead ball spot.

3. For fouls after a change of possession the basic spot will be the dead ball spot. Only if the foul is on the last related run from the team ending with possession and behind the dead ball spot, the basic spot is the spot of foul.

**ARTICLE 2. Procedures**

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

The enforcement spot for dead ball fouls is the next scrimmage line.

Dead ball fouls by both teams offset and the down counts.

Fouls during or after a touchdown or try:

1. Fouls by the no scoring team during a touchdown, enforced on the try.

2. Fouls after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play on the try, enforced on the try.

3. Fouls by the no scoring team during a try, enforced on the next snap.

4. Fouls after a try, enforced on the next snap.

**ARTICLE 3. Half-Distance Enforcement**

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

## Philosophy of Enforcement

Technical fouls are enforced from the scrimmage line.

*Illegal snap, delay of game (the ball remains dead).*

*Delay of pass, illegal touch, encroachment, false start, illegal motion, illegal run play, offside, disconcerting signals, illegal blitz, illegal blitzer signal, side line interference, illegal substitution.*

Fouls of the runner with keeping the ball will make the ball dead and the penalty is enforced from the dead ball spot.

*Jumping, diving, flag guarding, illegal kick.*

Illegal (forward and backward) passes are not making the ball dead to enable the defense an interception, but include a loss of down to avoid keeping the down by a foul.

Fouls during the play will be enforced from the basic spot.

*Illegal handoff, illegal forward pass, illegal backward pass, blocking, illegal flag pull, illegal contact, targeting, game interference, illegal participation, unsportsmanlike.*

The basic spot is a 2 & 1 principle of the worst spot. For offense fouls it means worst choice between scrimmage line and spot of foul. For defense fouls it means the worst choice between dead ball spot and scrimmage line.

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

Fouls before a change of possession from the team last in possession will offset the play and the down will be replayed (“dirty hands principle”).

Fouls after a change of possession will be enforced from the dead ball spot, the worst spot principle between spot of foul and dead ball spot will be used only on the last run (“clean hands principle”).

Offense pass interference is enforced from the scrimmage line and includes a loss of down.

Defense pass interference is a spot foul and includes an automatic first down.

**RULE 11****The Officials Duties****SECTION 1. General Duties****ARTICLE 1. Jurisdiction of Officials**

The officials jurisdiction begins with the coin toss and ends when the referee declares the score final. [S14]

**ARTICLE 2. Number of Officials**

The game shall be played under the supervision of 2 (R and FJ), 3 (R, FJ and LM) or 4 (R, FJ, LM and BJ) officials.

**ARTICLE 3. Responsibilities**

- a. Each official is responsible for knowing the number of the down, granting timeouts, declaring the ball dead, determining scores, determining fouls, using proper signals and mastering playing rules.
- b. All officials are responsible for decisions involving the application of a rule, its interpretation or enforcement.
- c. Each official shall drop a marker and record each foul he observes.
- d. Each official has specific duties prescribed in the Flag Football Officials Manual but has equal responsibility and jurisdiction in matters of judgment.
- e. All officials shall wear a uniform and equipment prescribed in the Flag Football Officials Manual.

**ARTICLE 4. Equipment**

Officials shall wear a uniform prescribed in the current Flag Football Officials Manual. A prescribed uniform also includes: a whistle, a marker to designate fouls, a marker to record important field locations, a game card for recording fouls and a down recorder.

**SECTION 2. Referee (R)****ARTICLE 1. Position**

The initial position of the referee is behind and to the side of the offensive backfield.

On 2-men crew, the referee is positioning and working like a Linesman.

**ARTICLE 2. Basic Responsibilities**

- a. The referee has general oversight and control of the game and will conduct a thorough pregame conference for the crew, is the sole authority for the score and his decisions upon rules and other matters pertaining to the game are final.
- b. The referee inspects the field and reports irregularities to game management, coaches and other officials.
- c. The referee has jurisdiction over player equipment.
- d. The referee shall indicate that the ball is ready for play, after determining the officials are ready and shall direct the clock, started on the snap. The referee shall time the 25-second count, count the number of charged timeouts, award new series of downs and administer penalties.
- e. The referee shall administer penalties, being sure that both captains understand the procedure and outcome.
- f. The referee shall observe the relative position of the ball determine if a new series of downs is awarded.
- g. The referee is responsible for the number of timeouts charged to each team, and shall notify the field captain and coach when that team has used its final timeout of a half.
- h. The referee shall notify both head coaches if visual timing devices become inoperative and of any disqualifications.
- i. The referee will count the number of offense players.
- j. After the snap, the referee determines the play behind the scrimmage line around the ball.  
The referee is responsible for coverage of the quarterback.

**SECTION 3. Linesman (LM)****ARTICLE 1. Position**

The initial position of the linesman is on the scrimmage line at the side line with the down indicator.

**ARTICLE 2. Basic Responsibilities**

- a. The linesman is responsible for the operation of the down indicator. He instructs an assistant who operate the down indicators outside the side line opposite the press box. The down indicator marks the footballs position.
- b. The linesman will count the number of offense players and keeps count of the downs.
- c. The linesman has jurisdiction over the scrimmage line and his sideline.
- d. As the ball passes the scrimmage line on his side of the field, the linesman determines the play around the ball.  
The linesman indicates forward progress on his side to the referee.

## SECTION 4. Field Judge (FJ)

### ARTICLE 1. Position

The initial position of the field judge is 7 yards deep at the side line opposite to the down indicator.

### ARTICLE 2. Basic Responsibilities

- a. The field judge is responsible for timing the game or supervising the game clock operator.
- b. The field judge will count the number of defense players.
- c. The field judge has jurisdiction over his sideline.
- d. As the ball passes the scrimmage line on his side of the field, the field judge determines the play around the ball.  
The field judge indicates forward progress on his side to the referee.

## SECTION 5. Back Judge (BJ)

### ARTICLE 1. Position

The initial position of the back judge is 7 yards deep at the side line with the down indicator.

### ARTICLE 2. Basic Responsibilities

- a. The back judge (on 4-men-crew) is responsible for timing the game or supervising the game clock operator.
- b. The back judge will count the number of defense players.
- c. The back judge observes receivers on deep routes and is ruling on long passes and the status of the ball in his area.  
The back judge indicates forward progress on deep plays to the referee.

## Summary of Penalties

**LEGEND:** "O" refers to officials signal number; "R-S-A" is the rule with section and article number, E refers to the enforcement spot.

	O	R-S-A	E
<b>AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN (AFD)</b>			
Defense pass interference (at the spot of foul) .....	33	7-3-3	SF
<b>LOSS OF A DOWN (LOD)</b>			
Delay of pass .....	21	7-1-3	SL
Illegal touch .....	9	7-2-4	SL
Illegal backward pass [also 5 yards] .....	35	7-2-1	BS
Illegal forward pass [also 5 yards] .....	35	7-3-2	BS
Offense pass interference [also 10 yards] .....	33	7-3-3	SL
<b>LOSS OF 5 YARDS</b>			
Illegal kick .....	19	6-1-1	DB
Illegal snap .....	19	7-1-1	DB
Delay of game .....	21	7-1-1	DB
Illegal snap .....	21	7-1-2	DB
Encroachment .....	19	7-1-3	SL
False start .....	19	7-1-3	SL
Illegal motion .....	19	7-1-3	SL
Illegal run play .....	19	7-1-3	SL
Offside .....	18	7-1-4	SL
Disconcerting signals .....	18	7-1-4	SL
Illegal blitz .....	18	7-1-4	SL
Illegal blitz signal .....	18	7-1-4	SL
Illegal handoff .....	19	7-1-5	BS
Illegal backward pass [also LOD] .....	35	7-2-1	BS
Illegal forward pass [also LOD] .....	35	7-3-2	BS
Blocking .....	43	9-2-2	BS
Jumping or Diving .....	51	9-2-2	DB
Flag guarding .....	52	9-2-2	DB
Illegal Flag pull .....	52	9-2-2	BS
Side line interference .....	27	9-2-2	SL
Illegal Substitution .....	19	9-3-1	SL
<b>LOSS OF 10 YARDS</b>			
Offense Pass interference [also LOD] .....	33	7-3-3	SL
Illegal contact .....	38	9-1-1	BS
Targeting .....	38	9-1-2	BS
Game interference .....	38	9-1-3	BS
Illegal participation .....	28	9-1-3	BS
Unsportsmanlike .....	27	9-2-1	BS
<b>CHARGED TIMEOUT</b>			
Player with wearing illegal equipment not leaving field .....	3	9-3-2	DB
Player with missing mandatory equipment not leaving field .....	3	9-3-2	DB
Player with bleeding wound not leaving field .....	3	9-3-2	DB
<b>LOSS OF HALF DISTANCE</b>			
If distance penalty exceeds half the distance to the goal line .....	-	10-2-3	-

## Official Flag Football Signals

<p>S 1</p>  <p>Ball ready for play</p>	<p>S 3</p>  <p>Timeout</p>	<p>S 5</p>  <p>Touchdown</p>	<p>S 6</p>  <p>Safety</p>
<p>S 8</p>  <p>First Down</p>	<p>S 9</p>  <p>Loss of down</p>	<p>S 10</p>  <p>Incomplete pass</p>	<p>S 14</p>  <p>End of period</p>
<p>S 18</p>  <p>Offside Defense Illegal Blitz</p>	<p>S 19</p>  <p>False start Illegal procedure</p>	<p>S 21</p>  <p>Delay of game Delay of pass</p>	<p>S 27</p>  <p>Unsportsmanlike conduct</p>
<p>S 28</p>  <p>Illegal participation</p>	<p>S 33</p>  <p>Pass Interference</p>	<p>S 35</p>  <p>Illegal forward pass Illegal backward pass</p>	<p>S 38</p>  <p>Illegal contact</p>
<p>S 43</p>  <p>Illegal block</p>	<p>S 47</p>  <p>Disqualification</p>	<p>S 51</p>  <p>Jumping Diving</p>	<p>S 52</p>  <p>Flag guarding Illegal Flag pull</p>

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## INTERPRETATIONS

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A rule interpretation, or approved ruling (AR), is an official decision on a given statement of facts. It serves to illustrate the spirit and application of the rule.

### AR 1-3-2 Illegal Equipment

I. One or more players of a team are using very wide pants or skirts.

RULING: Illegal equipment. This kind of pant or skirt is not necessary for playing. It is obvious, that the players trying to gain an advantage.

### AR 5-1-1 New Series

I. 2 & middle at the 19-yd-line, the run is stopped at the middle line. The ball is spotted with its nose reaching 1 inch into the 4 inch wide middle line.

RULING: No first down, the middle of the field of play is at the middle of the middle line. Would the ball reach 3 inch into the middle line, it would be a first down.

II. 1 & goal at B's 19-yd-line, the quarterback gets sacked at As 23-yd-line.

RULING: 2 & goal at As 23-yd-line, no new first down possible.

Next play: Team A completes a pass at B's 13-yd-line.

RULING: 3 & goal at B's 13-yd-line, no new series will be awarded.

### AR 7-1-4 Blitz

I. A defense player (#46), positioned 6 yd away from the scrimmage line, raises his hand.

RULING: Penalty for illegal blitz signal.

Try to inform the player before the snap with: "Number 46 you are just 6 yd away from the scrimmage line." If the player is adjusting his position before the snap, there will be no penalty.

If the player is blitzing without adjustment, he has no RoW to the quarterback and it is a penalty.

II. A defense player, positioned 7 yd away from the scrimmage line, raises his hand for a split of a second or raises his hand before the snapper touches the ball or raises his hand just at shoulder level.

RULING: It is an invalid signal (R 2-2-6). If the player is blitzing, he has no RoW to the quarterback, but no penalty. Inform the player before the next down to give a clear signal.

III. 3 or more blitzers are giving a clear signal for getting the RoW.

RULING: Penalty for illegal blitz signal. No blitzer will get the RoW.

### AR 7-2-3 Backward pass

I. 2 & middle at the 3-yd-line. The quarterback throws a backward pass from his end zone out of bounds to avoid a sack.

RULING: No penalty, but it is a safety.

II. 2 & middle at the 3-yd-line. The quarterback throws a backward pass from the 1-yd-line out of bounds to avoid a sack.

RULING: No penalty. Next play 3 & middle at the 1-yd-line.

### AR 7-3-1 Forward pass

I. 2 & middle at the 3-yd-line. The quarterback throws a forward pass from his end zone to the ground to avoid a sack.

RULING: No penalty, there is no intentional grounding in flag. Next play 3 & middle at the 3-yd-line.

II. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws a high forward pass from behind the scrimmage line and catches his own pass for a 10 yd completion.

RULING: Penalty for illegal touch, the quarterback can catch his own pass only after another player has touched it (R 7-2-4). Next play 3 & middle at the 7-yd-line.

III. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws a forward pass from behind the scrimmage line, the ball get deflected by another player (defense or offense) and returns to his hands.

RULING: No penalty for illegal touch, the quarterback can advance the ball (R 7-2-4).

IV. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback scrambles to avoid the blitzers runs to the 10-yd-line and throws a complete pass to the 21-yd-line.

RULING: Penalty for illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the scrimmage line and a LOD. Technically there is a second penalty for illegal run, but with the same yardage from the same spot without a LOD it is not a good option for the defense (R 7-1-3).

V. Two opposing players get in possession of a pass while both are off the ground, and both players return to the ground inbounds.

RULING: Simultaneous catch, the ball is awarded to the passing team (R 2-10-3).

VI. An airborne player receives a pass. He grasps the ball firmly in his hands, and as he is returning toward the ground, the nose of the football touches the ground before any part of his body. He retains his firm control of the ball and it does not come loose, the player hits the ground inbounds.

RULING: Complete pass.

VII. An airborne player receives a pass. He grasps the ball firmly in his hands and any part of his body touches the ground inbound. Immediately upon hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and in a second effort the receiver still being inbounds regains control of the ball.

RULING: Complete pass.

VIII. An airborne player receives a pass. He grasps the ball firmly in his hands and the ball or any part of his body touches the ground inbound. Immediately upon hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and touches the ground.

RULING: Incomplete pass. An airborne receiver must maintain control of the ball if going to the ground in the process of completing a catch.

#### **AR 8-3-2 Penalty on a Try**

I. On a 1-point try is an accepted penalty and the try will be repeated from the 7-yd-line.

RULING: Offense can make a pass or run play for 1 point.

II. On a 2-point try is an accepted penalty and the try will be repeated from the 7-yd-line.

RULING: Offense can make a pass or run play for 2 points.

III. On a 1-point try is an accepted penalty and the try will be repeated from the 2,5-yd-line.

RULING: Offense can make only a pass play for 1 point.

IV. On a 2-point try is an accepted penalty and the try will be repeated from the 2,5-yd-line.

RULING: Offense can make only a pass play for 2 points.

#### **AR 8-4-1 Safety**

I. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. A blitzers grabs the pants of the quarterback behind the scrimmage line. The quarterback throws an incomplete forward pass.

RULING: Penalty for holding enforced from the 7-yd-line. Next play 2 & middle at the 17-yd-line.

II. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback holds the ball in front of the flag as the defender try to pull it. The defender misses the flag and then the quarterback throws a complete pass for 14 yd.

RULING: The penalty for flag guarding will make the ball dead, safety.

#### **AR 9-1-1 Right of Place, Right of Way**

I. A defense player is lining up close to the scrimmage line in front or next to a receiver (man coverage).

RULING: The receiver has to avoid contact for the first steps, because the defender has the RoP. When the defender starts to move he loses the RoP and has to give the offense room for the pass route.

II. A defense player is lining up close to the scrimmage line in front of a receiver. At the snap he moves immediately inside and collides with the receiver also going towards the middle.

RULING: Illegal contact from defense. As he moved he lost the RoP and is in charge of the collision. The receiver has to avoid the place where the defender stands, but not to anticipate where defense will move.

III. A defense player is playing his zone looking to the quarterback. An offense player is running cross the field and hit him from behind by purpose.

RULING: Targeting from offense. Even with the right of way, offense is not allowed to target and hit an opponent. (R 9-1-2)

IV. A defense player is squeezing the runner towards the side line. The runner tries to stay inbounds by keeping his lane and contacts the defender.

RULING: Illegal contact from the runner. The runner has to avoid contact, he has no RoW.

V. Two defense players squeeze the runner in between them. The runner tries to hit the gap between the both defenders and contacts the defender(s).

RULING: Illegal contact from the runner. The runner has to avoid contact even when this stops the play.

#### **AR 9-1-1 Blitz**

I. After the snap a blitzer, who has given a clear signal, is running quick towards the quarterback and a receiver on an in route has to run around him.

RULING: No penalty. A receiver has to give the blitzer the RoW. If there would have been no signal from the blitzer, it would be a defense foul for blocking.

II. After the snap a blitzer, who has given a clear signal, is running quick towards the quarterback and a receiver on an in route is blocking or contacting him.

RULING: Penalty for blocking (5 yd) or illegal contact (10 yd) against the offense. The offense players have to calculate the blitzer's lane(s).

III. After the snap a blitzer, who has given a clear signal, is running slow towards the quarterback and a receiver on an in route has to run around him or contact him.

RULING: Penalty for blocking against the defense. A blitzer has the RoW only if he rushes quickly (R 2-2-6), the offense players have to have the chance to calculate the blitzer's lane(s).

IV. A blitzer, who has given a clear signal, is rushing towards the quarterback and as the quarterback starts to roll out the blitzer changes his direction.

RULING: The blitzer is losing the RoW when he is changing the direction. He has to take care not to block a receiver after he changed his rushing lane.

V. A blitzer, who has given a clear signal, is rushing into the still standing snapper.

RULING: Penalty for targeting (10 yd) against the defense. The RoP is more worth than the RoW (R 2-13-2).

VI. A blitzer, who has given a clear signal, is rushing towards the scrimmage line but stops before he crosses it.

RULING: No penalty. The blitzer must not cross the scrimmage line, but he loses the RoW at the stop and has to avoid the offense players afterwards.

VII. A receiver is crossing the lane of the blitzer, who has given a clear signal. The blitzer tries to avoid contact but still runs into the receiver.

RULING: Penalty for illegal contact (10 yd) against the offense.

VIII. A receiver is crossing the lane of the blitzer, who has given a clear signal. The blitzer tries not to avoid contact and runs into the receiver.

RULING: Penalty for blocking (5 yd) against the offense and penalty for targeting (10 yd) against the defense, the fouls will offset.

IX. The blitzer stops in front of the quarterback after the ball is released and touches him with the hands at the hip.

RULING: No penalty for the touch, because contact has to have an impact.

X. The blitzer stops in front of the quarterback after the ball is released and pushes him with the hands at the hip, the quarterback has to make 2 steps to regain balance.

RULING: Penalty for illegal contact defense.

XI. The blitzer stops as the quarterback releases the ball, the natural throwing movement with a step forward brings the quarterback in contact with the blitzer.

RULING: No penalties for the contact, both players are standing and have the RoP.

XII. The blitzer jumps straight in the air as the quarterback starts to release the ball, the quarterback makes 3 steps forward after he has thrown and contacts the blitzer.

RULING: Penalty for illegal contact offense. The blitzer has the RoP even if he jumps. If the momentum of the jump would carry the blitzer into the quarterback, it would be a defense foul.

XIII. The blitzer jumps forward to deflect the ball as the quarterback starts to release the ball and touches the ball before it left the hand of the quarterback or touches the arm of the quarterback after the ball left his hand.

RULING: Penalty for targeting, because the point of attack was a ball in possession of a runner (R 9-1-2).

#### **AR 9-2-2 Flag pulling**

I. A runner is waving his hands near his hips as a close defender tries a flag pull. There is no contact but the defender misses the flag.

RULING: Penalty for flag guarding. There has to be no contact to disadvantage the defense, a hand (or ball) waving in front of the flag makes it more difficult to reach it.

II. A runner is waving his hands near his hips as a far defender tries a desperate flag pull. There is no contact and the defender misses the flag by far.

RULING: No penalty. There has to be made a serious attempt to make an action of the runner to avoid a flag pull.

III. A runner is running towards a defender and before they meet he bends his upper body forward.

RULING: Penalty for diving (R 2-12-2). The defender has to avoid the head and body of the runner what makes it more difficult for him.

IV. A runner is running towards a defender and just before they meet he stretches out the ball to get an extra yard before get deflagged.

RULING: Penalty for flag guarding. The defender has to avoid the ball what makes it more difficult for him.

V. A runner is chased by a defender and just before he gets caught he stretches out the ball to get an extra yard before get deflagged.

RULING: No penalty. For the flag pull from behind it makes no difference for the defender.

VI. A blitzer pulls the flag of the quarterback just a split of a second after the ball has been thrown.

RULING: No penalty for illegal flag pull. The defense has the right of a serious attempt.

VII. After the quarterback has thrown the ball, the blitzer continuous the rush and pull the flag.

RULING: Penalty for illegal flag pull. This disables the quarterback to run with the ball if he will get it back on a trick play.

VIII. The defender pulls the flag right at the moment as the receiver touches the ball, but he muffs the ball and makes the completion in a second attempt.

RULING: No penalty for illegal flag pull. The defender can expect the completion, what makes the receiver to a runner, and need not to wait for the catch.

#### **AR 10-2-4 Offsetting fouls**

I. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws a complete pass or interception to the 15-yd-line. Before the catch the snapper blocks the blitzer at the 10-yd-line and a defender blocks a receiver at the 20-yd-line.

RULING: Offsetting penalties, the down will be replayed.

II. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws an interception at the 15-yd-line which is returned to the 6-yd-line. Before the catch the snapper blocks the blitzer at the 10-yd-line and on the return the blitzer blocks the snapper at the 12-yd-line.

RULING: The defense can decline offsetting penalties and keep the ball. Basic spot enforcement, 1 & goal from the 17-yd-line.

III. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws a pass which is intercepted at the 15-yd-line and returned to the 6-yd-line. Before the catch a defender blocks a receiver at the 10-yd-line.

RULING: The foul offsets the play, the down will be replayed.

#### **AR 10-3-1 Basic Spot Enforcement Offense fouls**

I. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops into the end zone and get sacked in the end zone. The snapper blocks the blitzer at the 10-yd-line.

RULING: Basic spot is the scrimmage line, enforced from the 7-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 3,5-yd-line. Declining will bring a Safety.

- II. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and get sacked at the 1-yd-line. The snapper blocks the blitz in the end zone.  
 RULING: Basic spot is in the spot of foul, enforced in the end zone, Safety. Declining will bring a 3 & middle at the 1-yd-line.
- III. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and get sacked at the 1-yd-line. The snapper blocks the blitz at the 5-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is the spot of foul, enforced from the 5-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 2,5-yd-line. Declining will bring a 3 & middle at the 1-yd-line.
- IV. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and the pass is completed at the 15-yd-line. The snapper blocks the blitz at the 5-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is the spot of foul, enforced from the 5-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 2,5-yd-line. Declining will bring a 3 & middle at the 15-yd-line.
- V. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and the pass is completed at the 15-yd-line. The snapper blocks a defender at the 20-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is the scrimmage line, enforced from the 7-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 3,5-yd-line. Declining will bring a 3 & middle at the 15-yd-line.
- VI. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and the pass is completed and the offense scores a touchdown. The snapper blocks a defender in the opponents end zone.  
 RULING: Basic spot is the scrimmage line, enforced from the 7-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 3,5-yd-line.
- VII. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and the pass is incomplete. The snapper blocks the blitz at the 5-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is the spot of foul, enforced from the 5-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 2,5-yd-line. Declining will bring a 3 & middle at the 7-yd-line.
- VIII. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and the pass is incomplete. The snapper blocks the blitz at the 10-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is the scrimmage line, enforced from the 7-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 3,5-yd-line. Declining will bring a 3 & middle at the 7-yd-line.

**AR 10-3-1 Basic Spot Enforcement Defense fouls**

- I. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops into the end zone and gets sacked in the end zone. A defender blocks the snapper at the 10-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is in the scrimmage line, enforced from the 7-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 12-yd-line.
- II. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and gets sacked at the 1-yd-line. A defender blocks the snapper at the 5-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is in the scrimmage line, enforced from the 7-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 12-yd-line.
- III. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and the pass is completed at the 15-yd-line. A defender blocks the snapper on a screen route in the end zone.  
 RULING: Basic spot is in the dead ball spot, enforced from the 15-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 20-yd-line.
- IV. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and the pass is completed at the 15-yd-line. A defender blocks a receiver at the 20-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is in the dead ball spot, enforced from the 15-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 20-yd-line.
- V. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line, the pass is completed and the offense scores a touchdown. A defender blocks the snapper at the 10-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is in the dead ball spot (opponents goal line), enforced on the try, the score counts.
- VI. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback drops to the 1-yd-line and the pass is incomplete. A defender blocks the snapper at the 10-yd-line.  
 RULING: Basic spot is in the scrimmage line, enforced from the 7-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 12-yd-line.

VII. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. A blitzer grabs the pants of the quarterback behind the scrimmage line, but the quarterback still throws a complete pass at the 12-yd-line.

RULING: Penalty for illegal contact (holding) enforced from the 12-yd-line. Next play 2 & middle at the 22-yd-line.

VIII. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. A defender grabs the pants of the runner at the 12-yd-line and the run is stopped at the 17-yd-line.

RULING: Penalty for illegal contact (holding) enforced from the 17-yd-line. Next play 1 & goal at B's 23-yd-line.

#### **AR 10-3-1 Basic Spot Enforcement Change of Possession**

I. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws an interception at the 21-yd-line and the return ends at the 12-yd-line. After the change of possession, the snapper holds (illegal contact) the runner at the 18-yd-line.

RULING: Basic spot is in the dead ball spot, enforced from the 12-yd-line. 1 & goal at the 6-yd-line.

II. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws an interception at the 21-yd-line and the return ends at the 12-yd-line. After the change of possession, the snapper illegal contact a team mate of the returner at the 10-yd-line.

RULING: Basic spot is in the dead ball spot, enforced from the 12-yd-line. 1 & goal at the 6-yd-line.

III. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws an interception at the 21-yd-line and the return ends at the 12-yd-line. After the change of possession, a team mate of the returner blocks the snapper at the 18-yd-line.

RULING: Basic spot is in the spot of foul, enforced from the 18-yd-line. 1 & goal at the 23-yd-line.

IV. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws an interception at the 21-yd-line and the return ends at the 12-yd-line. After the change of possession, a team mate of the returner blocks the snapper at the 10-yd-line.

RULING: Basic spot is in the dead ball spot, enforced from the 12-yd-line. 1 & goal at the 17-yd-line.

V. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws an interception at the 21-yd-line and the returner fumbles at the 12-yd-line, the snapper catches the ball and runs to the 20-yd-line. After the first change of possession, a team mate of the snapper holds the returner at the 18-yd-line.

RULING: The foul offsets the play, the down will be repeated (R 10-2-4). 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line.

VI. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The quarterback throws an interception at the 21-yd-line and the returner fumbles at the 12-yd-line, the snapper catches the ball and runs to the 20-yd-line. After the second change of possession, a team mate of the snapper blocks an opponent at the 18-yd-line.

RULING: Basic spot is in the spot of foul, enforced from the 18-yd-line. 1 & middle at the 13-yd-line.

#### **AR 10-3-3 Half-Distance Enforcement**

I. 2 & middle at the 7-yd-line. The offense commits a false start.

RULING: Penalty enforced from the 7-yd-line. 2 & middle at the 3,5-yd-line.

II. 3 & goal at the 9-yd-line. The defense commits an offside.

RULING: Penalty enforced from the 9-yd-line. 3 & goal at the 4,5-yd-line.