

# RULE 9

## Conduct of Players and Others Subject to Rules

### SECTION 1. Personal and Interference Fouls

#### Flagrant Fouls

ARTICLE 1. Before the game, during the game and between periods, all flagrant fouls require disqualification. Team B disqualification personal fouls require first downs if not in conflict with other rules.

#### Persons Subject to the Rules Restrictions

ARTICLE 2. No person subject to the rules shall commit a personal foul before the game, during the game or between the periods. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul.

- a. No person subject to the rules shall strike an opponent with the knee; strike an opponent's helmet (including the face mask), neck or face or any other part of the body with an extended forearm, elbow, locked hands, palm, fist or the heel, back or side of the open hand, or gouge an opponent. **(A.R. 9-1-2:I and II)**
- b. No person subject to the rules shall strike an opponent with his foot or any part of his leg that is below the knee.
- c. There shall be no tripping (**Exception:** The runner).
- d. There shall be no clipping. **(A.R. 9-1-2:III)**

#### **Exceptions:**

1. When offensive players are on the line of scrimmage at the snap within a rectangular area centred on the middle lineman of the offensive formation and extending five yards laterally and three yards longitudinally in each direction, they may legally clip in the rectangular area.
  - (a) A player in the rectangular area may not block an opponent with the force of the initial contact from behind and at or below the knee (**Exception:** Against the runner).
  - (b) A player on the line of scrimmage within the rectangular area may not leave the zone and return and legally clip.
  - (c) The rectangular area exists until the ball is touched outside the area or the ball is outside the area after a fumble or muff from inside the area.
2. When a player turns his back on a potential blocker who has committed himself in intent and direction of movement.
3. When a player attempts to reach a runner or legally attempts to recover or catch a fumble, a muff, a backward pass, a kick or a touched forward pass, he may push an opponent below the waist at or to the buttocks. (**Exception:** Rule 9-3-3-c-3). **(A.R. 6-3-1:III)**
4. When an eligible player behind the neutral zone pushes an opponent below the waist

at or to the buttocks to get to a forward pass. (**Exception:** Rule 9-3-3-c-5).

- e. Blocking below the waist is permitted except as follows: (**A.R. 9-1-2:IV-XI**)
1. Offensive linemen at the snap positioned more than seven yards from the middle lineman of the offensive formation are prohibited from blocking below the waist toward the original position of the ball in or behind the neutral zone and within ten yards beyond the neutral zone.
    - (a) Backs at the snap positioned with the frame of their body completely outside the frame of the body of the normal tackle (second player from the snapper) position in either direction toward a sideline, or in motion at the snap, are prohibited from blocking below the waist toward the original position of the ball in or behind the neutral zone and within ten yards beyond the neutral zone. The frame of the body does not include arms or legs extended sideways. (**A.R. 9-1-2:XXVI**)
    - (b) During a scrimmage down, defensive players are prohibited from blocking an eligible Team A receiver below the waist beyond the neutral zone unless attempting to get at the ball or runner. A Team A receiver remains eligible until a legal forward pas is no longer possible by rule.
  2. During a down in which there is a free kick or scrimmage kick from a scrimmage kick formation, all players are prohibited from blocking below the waist except against the runner.
  3. After any change of team possession all players are prohibited from blocking below the waist except against the runner.
  4. A Team A player behind the neutral zone and in position to receive a backward pass shall not be blocked below the waist or contacted by way of a personal foul. (**A.R. 9-1-2:XXV**)
- f. No player shall tackle or run into a receiver when a forward pass to him obviously is not catchable. This is a personal foul and not pass interference.
- g. There shall be no *piling* on, falling on, or throwing the body on an opponent after the ball becomes dead. (**A.R. 9-1-2:XII**)
- h. No opponent shall tackle or block the runner *when he is clearly out of bounds* or throw him to the ground after the ball becomes dead. (**A.R. 9-1-2:XIII**)
- i. There shall be no *hurdling*. (**Exception:** The runner may hurdle an opponent.)
- j. No player shall run into or *throw himself* against an opponent obviously out of the play either before or after the ball is dead. (**A.R. 9-1-2:XIX and XX**)
- k. No player shall continuously contact an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (**Exception:** by or against the runner).
- l. No player intentionally shall use his helmet (including the face mask) to butt or ram an opponent in an attempt to punish him. (**A.R. 9-1-2:XVI**)
- m. There shall be no *spearing*. (**A.R. 9-1-2:XVII**)
- n. No player shall strike a runner with the crown or the top of his helmet in an attempt to punish him.
- o. No defensive player shall charge into a passer or throw him to the ground when it is obvious the ball has been thrown. This is roughing the passer, and the penalty is added to the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down. (**Exception:** A defensive player who is blocked by a Team A player(s) with a force so that he has no opportunity to avoid contact with the passer. However, this does not relieve the defensive player of responsibility for personal

fouls as described in rule 9-1-2-a). (A.R. 2-30-4:I and II) (A.R. 9-1-2:XIV, XXVII and XXVIII) (A.R. 10-2-2:XXXIII, XXXV-XXXVI)

- p. There shall be no chop blocking.
- q. No defensive player, in an attempt to gain an advantage, may step, jump or stand on an opponent. No defensive player who runs forward from beyond the neutral zone and leaps from beyond the neutral zone in an obvious attempt to block a field goal or try may land on any player(s). It is not a foul if the leaping player was originally lined up within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped.
- r. When a team is in scrimmage kick formation, a defensive player may not initiate contact with the snapper until one second has elapsed after the snap. (A.R. 9-1-2:XXII-XXIV)

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot and a first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules [S24, S34, S38, S39, S40, S41, S45 or S46]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

- s. No player shall grasp the face mask or any helmet opening of an opponent. The open hand may be used legally on the mask. (A.R. 9-1-2:XV)

**PENALTY – Live-ball foul, basic spot. Defensive team: five yards for incidental grasping [S45]; 15 yards for twisting, turning or pulling, and first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules. Offensive team: 15 yards from the basic spot. All dead-ball fouls: 15 yards from the succeeding spot and a first down for a Team B foul if not in conflict with other rules [S7, S38 and S45]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47]. When in question, it is twisting, turning or pulling.**

- **Approved Ruling 9-1-2**

- I. A player (a) strikes an opponent with the knee or (b) projects the knee before contact with an opponent (most apt to occur when the player is meeting a blocker). **RULING:** (a) Personal foul, “kneeing.” Penalty — 15 yards from the basic spot, or from the previous spot if foul by Team A occurs behind the neutral zone. First down if by Team B. Disqualify if flagrant. (b) Personal foul, “meeting with the knee.” Penalty — 15 yards from the basic spot, or from the previous spot if foul by Team A occurs behind the neutral zone. First down if by Team B. Disqualify if flagrant (9-1-2-a). In both situations, safety if the foul by Team A occurs behind Team A’s goal line. [Cited by 9-1-2-a]
- II. A Team B player uses an extended forearm to strike a blow to the helmet of the runner while attempting to tackle. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty- 15-yards from the basic spot and first down. Disqualify if flagrant (9-1-2-a). [Cited by 9-1-2-a]
- III. When two players of opposing teams fall to the ground, the body of one lies across the back of the legs of the other. **RULING:** Not necessarily a violation of the clipping rule. No official should declare a clipping foul unless he observes the block from its inception (9-1-2-d). [Cited by 9-1-2-d]
- IV. A1, an end, is positioned 11 yards to the outside of the middle lineman of the offensive formation at the snap. B2 is between the original position of A1 and the sideline. A1 blocks B2 away from the position of the ball at the snap. The block by A1 is below the waist. **RULING:** Legal block (2-23-1-i and 9-1-2-e). [Cited by 9-1-2-e]
- V. A1, a quarterback, at the snap is forced to run out of his protecting pocket and scramble back and forth across the field. A2, a wide receiver, positioned 12 yards outside the middle lineman of the offensive formation, moves downfield and then returns toward the neutral zone. A2 then blocks B2 at the neutral zone and below the waist toward the ball at the snap. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty — 15 yards from basic spot (2-23-1-i and 9-1-2-e). [Cited by 9-1-2-e]
- VI. On a run or pass option play, A2, a wide receiver at the snap, is positioned 12 yards outside the middle lineman of the offensive formation. He moves downfield and then returns

toward the neutral zone. A2 then blocks B2 eight yards beyond the neutral zone and below the waist toward the ball at the snap. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty —15 yards basic spot (2-23-1-i and 9-1-2-e). [Cited by 9-1-2-e]

- VII. A1, a flanker, positioned to the left side of a formation, runs a deep reverse to the right side after receiving the ball from a teammate. A2, a spread end, at the snap is positioned 10 yards outside the middle lineman of the offensive formation on the right side of the formation. A2 blocks B2, a defensive end. The block by A2 occurs behind the neutral zone. The block by A2 is below the waist and toward the ball at the snap. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty —15 yards from previous spot (9-1-2-e). [Cited by 9-1-2-e]
- VIII. A1, a flanker, positioned to the left side of a formation, runs a deep reverse to the right side after receiving the ball from a teammate. A2, a spread end, at the snap is positioned 10 yards outside the middle lineman of the offensive formation on the right side of the formation. A2 blocks B2, a defensive end, toward the ball. The block by A2 occurs one yard beyond the neutral zone. The block by A2 is below the waist. **RULING:** Illegal block (2-23-1-i and 9-1-2-e). Penalty —15 yards from the basic spot (2-23-1-i and 9-1-2-e). [Cited by 9-1-2-e]
- IX. A1, a wingback, positioned 10 yards outside the middle lineman of the offensive formation, goes in motion toward the ball before the snap. At the snap his motion has carried him past the snapper. After the snap, A1 blocks B2. The block by A1 is below the waist away from the ball at the snap. **RULING:** Legal block (2-23-1-i and 9-1-2-e). [Cited by 9-1-2-e]
- X. A2, a flanker, at the snap is positioned 10 yards outside the middle lineman of the offensive formation. He moves toward the sideline and blocks a defensive halfback below the waist. **RULING:** Legal block (2-23-1-i and 9-1-2-e). [Cited by 9-1-2-e]
- XI. A1, a wingback, at the snap is positioned 10 yards outside the middle lineman of the offensive formation and five yards behind the neutral zone. After the snap, A1 blocks B2 toward the ball at the snap. The block by A1 is below the waist and behind the neutral zone. **RULING:** Illegal block. Penalty —15 yards from previous spot (2-23-1-i and 9-1-2-e). Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line. [Cited by 9-1-2-e]
- XII. After the ball is dead, a player throws himself on a prostrate opponent who does not have the ball. **RULING:** Personal foul —Penalty —15 yards from succeeding spot and first down if by a Team B player and not in conflict with other rules. "Piling on" applies to a runner or to any other opponent who is prostrate when the ball becomes dead (9-1-2-g). [Cited by 9-1-2-g]
- XIII. After the ball is dead, a player forces an obviously stopped runner or other opponent backward several yards and grounds him roughly. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty —15 yards from the succeeding spot and first down if by a Team B player and not in conflict with other rules. [Cited by 9-1-2-h]
- XIV. A defensive player charges into the passer who is standing still or fading back after the ball has obviously been thrown. **RULING:** Roughing the passer. Penalty —15 yards from the basic spot and first down or the penalty will be added to the end of the last run under certain circumstances (9-1-2-o). [Cited by 9-1-2-o]
- XV. A defensive player, during a live ball, twists, turns or pulls the face mask or any opening of the opponent's helmet. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty —15 yards from previous or basic spot and first down (9-1-2-s). [Cited by 9-1-2-s]
- XVI. A player, during a live ball, rams an opponent with his helmet or face mask. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty —15 yards from the basic spot, or from the previous spot if foul by Team A occurs behind the neutral zone. First down if by Team B. Safety if the foul by Team A occurs behind Team A's goal line. [Cited by 9-1-2-l]
- XVII. B2, a defensive back, spears A1 while A2 is running with the ball. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty —15 yards from the basic spot and a first down (9-1-2-m). [Cited by 9-1-2-m]
- XVIII. A1, a runner, strikes tackler B6 with his extended forearm just before being tackled. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty —15 yards from the basic spot, or from the previous spot if foul occurs behind the neutral zone. Disqualification if flagrant. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line.

- XIX. A21 catches a legal forward pass for a touchdown. Clearly after the score, A21 is tackled by B40. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty enforced on the try down or the succeeding kickoff. No Team B player shall tackle or run into any player who has obviously scored (4-1-3-c). [Cited by 9-1-2-j]
- XX. On the return of a scrimmage kick, B2 is tackled and the ball becomes dead on Team B's 30-yard line. After the ball becomes dead, B6 vigorously pushes A2 in the back above the waist. **RULING:** Dead-ball, personal foul. Penalty —15 yards from the succeeding spot. Team B's ball, first and 10 on Team B's 15-yard line. [Cited by 2-3-4-a, 9-1-2-j]
- XXI. A6 is advancing the ball. During the run, A12 vigorously blocks B2 with a rough push in the back above the waist. **RULING:** Illegal block in the back. Penalty —10yards from the basic spot. [Cited by 2-3-4-a, 9-3-3-c]

### **Roughing or Running into Kicker or Holder**

ARTICLE 3. a. When it is obvious that a scrimmage kick will be made, no opponent shall run into or rough the kicker, or holder of a place kick. (**A.R. 5-2-2:I**) (**A.R. 9-1-3:I, III and VI**)

1. Roughing is a personal foul that endangers the kicker or holder.
2. Running into the kicker or holder is a foul that occurs when the kicker or holder is displaced from his kicking or holding position but is not roughed. (**A.R. 9-1-3:II**)
3. Incidental contact with a kicker or holder is not a foul.
4. The kicker and holder must be protected from injury, but contact that occurs when or after a scrimmage kick has been touched is not roughing or running into the kicker or holder.
5. The kicker of a scrimmage kick loses protection as a kicker when he has had a reasonable time to regain his balance. (**A.R. 9-1-3:IV**)
6. A defensive player legally blocked into the kicker or holder by a member of the kicking team is not exempt from fouls for running into or roughing the kicker or holder. A defensive player illegally blocked into the kicker or holder by a member of the kicking team is exempt from fouls for running into or roughing the kicker or holder.
7. When a player, other than one who blocks a scrimmage kick, runs into or roughs the kicker or holder it is a foul.
8. When in question whether the foul is “running into” or “roughing”, the foul is “roughing”.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot for running into the kicker or holder [S30]. 15 yards from the previous spot and also first down for roughing the kicker or holder [S38 and S30]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

b. A kicker or holder simulating being roughed or run into by a defensive player commits an unsportsmanlike act. (**A.R. 9-1-3:V**)

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the previous spot [S27].**

c. The kicker of a free kick may not be blocked until he has advanced 5 yards beyond his restraining line or the kick has touched a player, an official or the ground.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the previous spot [S40].**

• **Approved Ruling 9-1-3**

- i. A1 plans to punt from behind his line of scrimmage, but misses the ball, after which he is contacted by B1. **RULING:** Team A fumble. There is no kicker until the ball is actually kicked, and B1 is therefore not guilty of roughing the kicker (9-1-3-a). [Cited by 9-1-3-a]

- II. A1 kicks the ball, after which B1, unable to stop his attempt to block the kick, runs into the kicker or holder. **RULING:** Penalty —Five yards from previous spot. Roughing and 15 yards and first down if in question whether the foul is “running into” or “roughing” (9-1-3-a-2). [Cited by 9-1-3-a-2]
- III. A1, from a nonscrimmage kick formation, makes a quick, unexpected kick so suddenly that B1 cannot avoid contact. **RULING:** This is not roughing or running into the kicker, since the rule applies only when it is reasonably obvious that a kick will be made (9-1-3-a). [Cited by 9-1-3-a]
- IV. B1 runs into player A1 who has kicked the ball and has had a reasonable time to regain his balance. **RULING:** Not a foul by B1 unless ruled as running into or throwing himself against an opponent obviously out of the play (9-1-2-j and 9-1-3-a-5). [Cited by 9-1-3-a-5]
- V. After B1 runs into the kicker, A25, the kicker simulates being roughed. **RULING:** Offsetting fouls (9-1-3-b). [Cited by 9-1-3-b]
- VI. Kicker A1, in a scrimmage kick formation, moves laterally two or three steps to recover a faulty snap, or recovers a snap that went over his head, and then kicks the ball. He is contacted by B2 in an unsuccessful attempt to block the kick. **RULING:** A1 does not automatically lose his protection in either case. A1 is entitled to protection as in any other kicking situation. When it becomes obvious that A1 intends to kick (in a normal punting position), defensive players must avoid him. [Cited by 9-1-3-a]

### Illegal Interference

ARTICLE 4. a. No substitute, coach, authorised attendant or any person subject to the rules other than a player or official, may interfere in any way with the ball or a player while the ball is in play.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the enforcement spot most advantageous to the offended team. The referee may enforce any penalty he deems equitable including awarding a score [S27].**

b. Participation by 12 or more players is illegal participation. (A.R. 9-1-4:I-V)

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the previous spot [S28].**

c. No person not subject to the rules may interfere in any way with the ball or a player while the ball is in play.

d. When anything other than persons subject to the rules and those not subject to the rules interferes in any way with a player or the ball in play, it is illegal interference.

**PENALTY – The referee may replay the down or take any action he deems equitable, including awarding a score [S27].**

e. No player who is not on his team’s roster form may participate.

1. A head coach may request a coach’s conference with the referee if he believes an opposition player is not on the roster (Rule 3-3-4-e). If the player is on the roster, the coach’s team will be charged a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. (A.R. 9-1-4:VI-IX)

**PENALTY – Disqualification [S47].**

#### • Approved Ruling 9-1-4

- I. Team A, with 12 men on the field, snaps at its own 40-yard line and throws a complete or incomplete forward pass. **RULING:** Illegal participation. Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot (9-1-4-b). [Cited by 9-1-4-b]
- II. Team A, with 12 men on the field, snaps at its own 40-yard line and punts the ball, which goes out of bounds at Team B’s 10-yard line. **RULING:** Illegal participation. Penalty — 15 yards from the previous spot with Team A retaining the ball. (9-1-4-b). [Cited by 9-1-4-b]

- III. Team A, with 12 men on the field, snaps the ball at its own 40-yard line. The play makes 10 yards to midfield. **RULING:** Illegal participation. Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot (9-1-4-b). [Cited by 9-1-4-b]
- IV. Team B has 12 men on the field when Team A snaps at its own 40-yard line and punts the ball, which goes out of bounds at Team B's 10-yard line. **RULING:** Illegal participation on Team B. Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot (9-1-4-b). [Cited by 9-1-4-b]
- V. With fourth down and 30 yards to gain on Team A's 40-yard line, A1's scrimmage kick is out of bounds at the Team B four-yard line. Team B has 12 players participating. **RULING:** Illegal participation on Team B. Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot but it is not an automatic first down. Fourth and 15. The clock starts on the snap. [Cited by 9-1-4-b]
- VI. After the ball is dead, a Team B player requests a coach's conference because his coach believes that A99, who participated in the previous down, is not on his team's roster. **RULING:** The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify him. If A99 is on the form, charge Team B with a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. [Cited by 3-5-2-c, 9-1-4-e-1]
- VII. A Team A player leaves the field and A99 enters the field to replace him and communicates with a teammate or an official, enters the huddle, or is positioned in an offensive formation. A Team B player requests a coach's conference because his coach believes that A99 is not on his team's roster. **RULING:** The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify him. If A99 is on the form, charge Team B with a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. [Cited by 3-5-2-c, 9-1-4-e-1]
- VIII. During a down, an official observes player A99 who he believes is not on his team's roster form. **RULING:** Referee's timeout when the ball is dead. The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify him. If A99 is on the form, the game continues. [Cited by 3-5-2-c, 9-1-4-e-1]
- IX. After the ball is dead, a Team B player requests a coach's conference because his coach believes that A18 and A99, who participated in the previous down, are not on their team's roster. After checking the roster form, the referee discovers that A18 is on the form but A99 isn't. **RULING:** Disqualify A99. Team B will not be charged for the coach's conference since at least part of their appeal was upheld. (Rule 9-1-4-e-1) [Cited by 9-1-4-e-1]

### Game Administration Interference

- ARTICLE 5. a. While the ball is in play, coaches, substitutes and authorised attendants in the team area may not be between the sidelines and coaching line.
- b. The procedure for enforcement of Rule 9-1-5-a is as follows:
1. Any game official may stop the clock to give a side line warning. [15]
  2. The head coach is informed by a game official that he is receiving a first or second warning because the area between the sideline and coaching line has been violated by coaches, players or persons authorised in the team area.
  3. Each official will record the time and period of each warning.
  4. After a second warning, a game official will notify the head coach that he has had two warnings and that the next infraction will result in a 5-yard penalty.
  5. After a 5-yard penalty, a game official will notify the head coach that he has had two warnings and a 5 yard penalty, and will receive a 15-yard penalty for the next infraction.

**PENALTY – Five yards after two official warnings from a game official and 15 yards for each additional foul. Penalise as dead-ball fouls [S7 and S29].**

## SECTION 2. Noncontact Fouls

### Unsportsmanlike Acts

ARTICLE 1. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct or any act that interferes with orderly game administration on the part of players, substitutes, coaches, authorised attendants or any other persons subject to the rules, before the game, during the game or between periods.

#### a. Specifically prohibited acts and conduct include:

1. No player, substitute, coach or other person subject to the rules shall use abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning to an opponent, to game officials or to the image of the game, including but not limited to:
  - (a) Pointing the finger(s), hand(s), arm(s) or ball at an opponent, or imitating the slashing of the throat.
  - (b) Taunting, baiting or ridiculing an opponent verbally.
  - (c) Inciting an opponent or spectators in any other way, such as simulating the firing of a weapon or placing a hand by the ear to request recognition.
  - (d) Any delayed, excessive, prolonged or choreographed act by which a player (or players) attempts to focus attention upon himself (or themselves).
  - (e) Obviously altering stride as an unopposed runner approaches the opponent's goal line, or diving into the end zone when unopposed.
  - (f) Removal of a player's helmet before he is in the team area (**Exceptions:** Team, media or injury timeouts; equipment adjustment; through play; between periods; and during a measurement for a first down).
  - (g) Punching one's own chest or crossing one's arms in front of the chest while standing over a prone player.
  - (h) Going into the stands to interact with spectators, or bowing at the waist after a good play.
2. No person subject to the rules, except players, officials and eligible substitutes, shall be on the field of play or end zones during any period without permission from the referee. If a player is injured, attendants may come inbounds to attend him, but they must obtain recognition from an official.
3. After a score or any other play the player in possession immediately must return the ball to an official or leave it near the dead-ball spot. This prohibits:
  - (a) Kicking, throwing, spinning or carrying (including off of the field) the ball any distance that requires an official to retrieve it.
  - (b) Throwing the ball high into the air. out of the field. (c) Any other unsportsmanlike act or actions that delay the game.

**PENALTY – 15 yards [S7, S27] from the succeeding spot. Penalise as a dead-ball foul. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be disqualified Attempting to advance the ball during a take-a-knee play is a flagrant act and requires disqualification. [S47].**

#### b. Other prohibited acts include:

1. During the game, coaches, substitutes and authorised attendants in the team area shall not be on the field of play or outside the 25-yard lines without permission from the referee unless legally entering or leaving the field (**Exception:** Rules 1-2-4-h and



3-3-8-c).

2. No disqualified player shall enter the field of play or end zones" .

- (a) No person or mascot subject to the rules, except players, officials and eligible substitutes, shall be on the field of play or end zones during any period without permission from the referee. If a player is injured, attendants may come inbounds to attend him, but they must obtain recognition from an official.
- (b) No substitute(s) may enter the field of play or end zones for purposes other than replacing a player(s) or to fill a player vacancy(ies). This includes demonstrations after any play (**A.R. 9-2-1:1"**).
- (c) Persons subject to the rules, including bands, shall not create any noise that prohibits a team from hearing its signals. (Rule 1-1-6)

**PENALTY – 15 yards [S7, S27] from the succeeding spot. Penalise as a dead-ball foul. Flagrant offenders, if players or substitutes, shall be disqualified [S47].**

• **Approved Ruling 9-2-1**

- I. Team B scores a touchdown on a kickoff return, and substitutes from the Team B area, with no intention of entering the game, run to the end zone to congratulate the runner.  
**RULING:** Unsportsmanlike act. Penalty —15 yards, enforced on the try or the succeeding kick off.

**Unfair Tactics**

ARTICLE 2. a. No player shall conceal the ball in or beneath his clothing or equipment or substitute any other article for the ball.

b. No simulated replacements or substitutions may be used to confuse opponents. No tactic associated with substitutes or the substitution process may be used to confuse opponents. (**A.R. 9-2-2:I-VII**)

c. No equipment may be used to confuse opponents (Rule 1-4-2-e). (**A.R. 9-2-2:II**)

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the previous spot. [S27]. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47].**

d. No player may play with cleats more than ½-inch in length (Rules 1-4-5-e and 1-4-5-f).

**PENALTY – Disqualification for the remainder of the game and the team’s next game [S27, S47]. Penalize as a dead-ball foul at the succeeding spot, and Team B fouls do not require a first down. Team timeout.**

**VIOLATION – Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b [S23, S3 or S21]. If the disqualification occurs during the last game of a season, players with eligibility remaining will serve the next-game disqualification during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

e. The referee will notify (in writing) his assigning agent of all disqualifications for illegal cleats. The assigning agency becomes responsible for implementation of the penalty.

• **Approved Ruling 9-2-2**

- I. After the ball is declared ready for play, Team A goes into a formation with two players split wide on both sides of the snapper and two other Team A linemen adjacent to the snapper with seven men all legally on the scrimmage line. All four backfield players are legally in the backfield. Team A sends in two substitutes who take positions on the line of scrimmage adjacent to the two split offensive linemen on the opposite side of the field from their team bench. This leaves Team A with nine players on the line of scrimmage and four backfield players all legally in position. Immediately and before the snap, two Team A linemen nearest their team’s bench leave the field and are off at the snap. Seven players are on the line of scrimmage, five of whom are Team A linemen

- numbered 50 to 79. **RULING:** Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot This is a simulated replacement of a player to confuse the opponents. [Cited by 9-2-2-b]
- II. On fourth down at Team B's 12-yard line, A1 enters the field with a kicking shoe while his 11 teammates are in the huddle. A1 kneels and measures the distance from the neutral zone to the kicking spot. While his teammates are leaving the huddle, A1 leaves the field with the shoe. Team A quickly runs a play from scrimmage. **RULING:** Team A foul. Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot. There shall be no simulated replacement of a player to confuse the opponents, and a player who communicates must remain in the game for one down. [Cited by 9-2-2-b, 9-2-2-c]
  - III. A1 leaves the field during a down. Team A huddles with 10 players. Substitute A12 enters and A2 simulates leaving the field, but sets near the sideline for a "hide-out" pass. **RULING:** Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot. This is a simulated replacement of a player to confuse opponents. [Cited by 9-2-2-b]
  - IV. Between scrimmage downs, one or more Team B substitutes enter the field. Before the snap for the next down, more than 11 Team B players intentionally stay on the field as long as possible (over three seconds) to disguise the defensive personnel, the type of defense and the pass coverage. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul on team B, illegal substitution. Penalty —5 yards from the succeeding spot. [Cited by 3-5-2-c, 9-2-2-b]
  - V. While a team is legally set to attempt a field goal, the potential holder for the kick goes toward his team area asking for a shoe. A shoe is thrown on the field and the player, in motion toward his team area, turns toward the goal line. The ball is snapped to the player in the kicking position, who throws a pass to the player who had turned upfield after asking for a shoe. **RULING:** Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot. [Cited by 9-2-2-b]
  - VI. Team A, with 12 players in the vicinity of the huddle,(within 10 yards) breaks the huddle and two players start toward the sideline and Team A's bench. **RULING:** Dead-ball foul. Penalty —Five yards from the succeeding spot. [Cited by 9-2-2-b]
  - VII. Team A is lined up in scrimmage kick formation and has been set for one second. One of the offensive backs shouts to and motions to A40, the blocker on the right wing, to get off the field. At the snap, A40 is in legal motion toward his sideline. A40 turns downfield and becomes a pass receiver. **RULING:** Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot. This is a tactic associated with the substitution process to deceive opponents. [Cited by 9-2-2-b]

## Unfair Acts

ARTICLE 3. The following are unfair acts:

- a. If a team refuses to play within two minutes after ordered to do so by the referee.
- b. If a team repeatedly commits fouls that can be penalised only by halving the distance to its goal line.
- c. If an obviously unfair act not specifically covered by the rules occurs during the game.

**PENALTY – The referee may take any action he considers equitable, including assessing a penalty, awarding a score, or suspending or forfeiting a game. (A.R. 4-2-1:II)**

## Contacting an Official

ARTICLE 4. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game by persons subject to the rules is a foul.

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul. 15 yards and disqualification [S7, S27 and S47].**

## SECTION 3. Blocking, Use of Hand and Arm

### Who May Block

ARTICLE 1. Players of either team may block opponents provided it is not forward-pass interference, interference with opportunity to catch a kick, or a personal foul. (*Exception:* Rule 6-1-2-h).

### Interfering for or Helping the Runner

- ARTICLE 2. a. The runner or passer may use his hand or arm to ward off or push opponents.
- b. The runner shall not grasp a teammate; and no other player of his team shall grasp, push, lift or charge into him to assist him in forward progress.
- c. Teammates of the runner or passer may interfere for him by blocking but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner while contacting an opponent.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the basic spot [S44].**

### Use of Hand or Arm by Offense

ARTICLE 3. a. A teammate of a runner or a passer legally may block with his shoulders, his hands, the outer surface of his arms or any other part of his body under the following provisions.

1. The hand(s) shall be:
  - (a) In advance of the elbow.
  - (b) Inside the frame of the opponent's body (*Exception:* When the opponent turns his back to the blocker). (**A.R. 9-3-3:VI and VII**)
  - (c) At or below the shoulders of the blocker and the opponent (*Exception:* When the opponent squats, ducks or submarines).
  - (d) Apart and never in a locked position.
2. The hand(s) shall be open with the palm(s) facing the frame of the opponent or closed or cupped with the palms not facing the opponent. (**A.R. 9-3-3:I-IV, VI-VIII**)

**PENALTY – 10 yards from the basic spot. (*Exception:* Offensive team illegal use of hands fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) [S43].**

- b. Holding or illegal obstruction by a teammate of the runner or passer applies to Rule 9-3-3-a:
1. The hand(s) and arm(s) shall not be used to grasp, pull or encircle in any way that illegally impedes or illegally obstructs an opponent.
  2. The hand(s) and arm(s) shall not be used to hook, clamp or otherwise illegally impede or illegally obstruct an opponent. (**A.R. 9-3-3:I**)

**PENALTY – 10 yards from the basic spot. (*Exception:* Offensive team holding fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) [S42].**

- c. A block in the back is illegal (**A.R. 9-1-2:XXI**) (**A.R. 9-3-3:VII**) (**A.R. 9-3-4:III**) (**A.R. 10-2-2:XXXIV**)

*Exceptions:*

1. When offensive players are on the line of scrimmage at the snap within a rectangular area centred on the middle lineman of the offensive formation and extending five yards laterally and three yards longitudinally in each direction, they may legally block in the back in the rectangular area.
  - (a) A player on the line of scrimmage within this blocking zone may not leave the zone and return and legally block in the back.
  - (b) The blocking zone exists until the ball is touched outside the zone or the ball is outside the zone after a fumble or muff from inside the zone.
2. When a player turns his back on a potential blocker who has committed himself in intent and direction of movement.
3. When a player attempts to reach a runner or legally attempts to recover or catch a fumble, a muff, a backward pass, a kick or a touched forward pass, he may push an opponent in the back above the waist. **(A.R. 6-3-1:III)**
4. When the opponent turns his back to the blocker under Rule 9-3-3-a-1-b.
5. When an eligible player behind the neutral zone pushes an opponent in the back above the waist to get to a forward pass.

**PENALTY – 10 yards from the basic spot. (Exception: Offensive team illegal block fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line) [S43].**

- d. The following acts by the teammate of the runner or passer are illegal:
  1. The hand(s) and arm(s) shall not be used to deliver a blow. **(A.R. 9-3-3:IV)**
  2. Continuous contact to an opponent’s helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (Rule 9-1-2-k).

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot. (Exception: Offensive team personal fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line) [S38]. Disqualification if flagrant [S47].**

- e. A player on the kicking team may:
  1. During a scrimmage kick play, use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off an opponent attempting to block him when he is beyond the neutral zone.
  2. During a free kick play, use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off an opponent who is attempting to block him.
  3. During a scrimmage kick play or a free kick play, when he is eligible to touch the ball, legally use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to push an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball.
- f. An eligible player of the passing team legally may use his hand(s) and/or arm(s) to ward off or push an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball after a legal forward pass has been touched by any player or official. (Rules 7-3-5, 7-3-8, 7-3-9 and 7-3-11).

• **Approved Ruling 9-3-3**

- I. While a legal forward pass is in flight, a Team A player behind his scrimmage line uses holds an opponent. **RULING:** If the pass is completed, incompleting or intercepted, the penalty is 10 yards from the previous spot. safety if foul occurs behind Team A’s goal line (9-3-3-a and 9-3-3-b). [Cited by 9-3-3-a-2, 9-3-3-b-2]
- II. A teammate of the passer or runner, while charging across the neutral zone, contacts an opponent with his hands and arms not parallel to the ground or his hands cupped or closed but with the palms not facing the opponent. **RULING:** Legal use of hands (9-3-3-a). [Cited by 9-3-3-a-2]

- III. A teammate of the passer or runner, behind the neutral zone, has his arms parallel to the ground and contacts an opponent above the shoulders. **RULING:** Illegal use of hands, penalise 10 yards (9-3-3-a) or 15 yards for personal foul, previous-spot enforcement. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line. enforcement (9-3-3-d). [Cited by 9-3-3-a-2]
- IV. A teammate of the passer or runner delivers a blow with the hand(s) closed to an opponent below the shoulders. **RULING:** Personal foul. Penalty —15 yards, basic-spot enforcement, (9-3-3-d) or previous-spot enforcement if foul occurs behind the neutral zone. Safety if foul occurs behind Team A's goal line. [Cited by 9-3-3-a-2, 9-3-3-d-1]
- V. A2's hands contact defensive player B2 in a legal block. B2 spins to avoid blocker A2 whose hands then contact B2's back. **RULING:** Legal (9-3-3-a-1-b Exception).
- VI. A2's hands contact defensive player B2's back when B2 spins to avoid A2. A2 keeps his hands on B2's back while B2 advances toward the passer. **RULING:** Legal block (9-3-3-a-1-b Exception). [Cited by 9-3-3-a-1-b, 9-3-3-a-2]
- VII. A2's hands contact defensive player B2 when B2 spins to avoid blocker A2, whose hands then contact B2's back. After A2's hands lose contact with B2, A2 advances and pushes B2 in the back. **RULING:** Illegal block in the back. Penalty —10 yards, basic-spot enforcement, (2-3-4 and 9-3-3-a-1-b) or previous-spot enforcement if foul occurs behind neutral zone. (Rule 2-3-4). Safety if foul occurs behind Team A's goal line. [Cited by 2-3-4-a, 9-3-3-a-1-b, 9-3-3-a-2, 9-3-3-c]
- VIII. A1 in, beyond or behind the neutral zone contacts an opponent with open hand or hands closed or cupped and palms not facing the opponent. **RULING:** Legal block (9-3-3-a-2). [Cited by 9-3-3-a-2]

### Use of Hands or Arms by Defense

ARTICLE 4. a. Defensive players may use hands and arms to push, pull, ward off or lift offensive players when attempting to reach the runner.

- b. Defensive players may not use hands and arms to tackle, hold or otherwise illegally obstruct an opponent other than a runner.

**PENALTY – 10 yards from the basic spot [S42].**

- c. Defensive players may use hands and arms to push, pull, ward off or lift offensive players obviously attempting to block them. Defensive players may ward off or legally block an eligible pass receiver until that player occupies the same yard line as the defender or until the opponent could not possibly block him. Continuous contact is illegal. (**A.R. 9-3-4:I, II and IV**)

**PENALTY – Five, 10 or 15 yards from the basic spot [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- d. When no attempt is being made to get at the ball or the runner, defensive players must comply with Rules 9-3-3-a, 9-3-3-b, 9-3-3-c and 9-3-3-d.

**PENALTY – Five, 10 or 15 yards from the basic spot [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- e. When a legal forward pass crosses the neutral zone during a forward pass play and a contact foul that is not pass interference is committed, the enforcement spot is the previous spot. This includes Rule 9-3-4-c. (**A.R. 7-3-9:II**) (**A.R. 9-3-4:I and II**)

**PENALTY – Five, 10 or 15 yards from the basic spot, plus first down if the foul occurred against an eligible receiver prior to the pass being touched [S38, S42, S43 or S45].**

- f. A defensive player legally may use his hand or arm to ward off or block an opponent in an attempt to reach a loose ball (Rule 9-1-2-d Exceptions 3 and 4 and Rule 9-3-3-c Exceptions 3 and 5):
  - 1. During a backward pass, fumble or kick that he is eligible to touch.

2. During any forward pass that crossed the neutral zone and has been touched by any player or official.
- g. A defensive player may not continuously contact an opponent's helmet (including the face mask) with hand(s) or arm(s) (*Exception:* Against the runner).

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot and a first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules [S38].**

• **Approved Ruling 9-3-4**

- I. During a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone, B1 holds eligible A1, who is beyond or behind the neutral zone. The pass is not catchable by A1. **RULING:** Team B foul. Penalty —10 yards and first down, basic-spot enforcement. [Cited by 9-3-4-c, 9-3-4-e]
- II. Before a forward pass, which crosses the neutral zone, is thrown, Team B holds eligible A1, who is beyond the neutral zone. **RULING:** Team B foul. Penalty —10 yards and first down, basic-spot enforcement. [Cited by 9-3-4-c, 9-3-4-e]
- III. B20 intercepts A10's legal forward pass on his 10-yard line. During the runback, B40 pushes A80 in the back above the waist at Team B's 24-yard line. B10's run ends at the 50-yard line. **RULING:** Team B foul, illegal block in the back. Penalty —10 yards from the spot of the foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 from its 14-yard line. [Cited by 9-3-3-c]
- IV. B50, in an attempt to reach the kicker, pulls lineman A60 by the shoulders and (a) releases A60 as he goes by or (b) continues to hold A60. **RULING:** (a) Legal. (b) Holding. Penalty —10 yards, previous spot enforcement. [Cited by 9-3-4-c]

### Player Restrictions

ARTICLE 5. a. No player may position himself with his feet on the back or shoulders of a teammate before the snap.

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul, 15 yards from the succeeding spot [S27].**

- b. No defensive player, in an attempt to block, bat or catch a kick, may:
  1. Step, jump or stand on a teammate. (Rule 9-1-2-q).
  2. Place a hand(s) on a teammate to get leverage for additional height.
  3. Be picked up by a teammate.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the previous spot [S27].**

### When Ball is Loose

ARTICLE 6. When the ball is loose, no player shall hold an opponent, illegally block an opponent in the back, grasp an opponent's face mask or any helmet opening, illegally use his hands or commit a personal foul.

**PENALTY – Five, 10 or 15 yards from the basic spot (*Exception:* These offensive team fouls behind the neutral zone are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind Team A's goal line) (Rules 10-2-2-c, 10-2-2-d, 10-2-2-e and 10-2-2-f) [S38, S42 or S45].**

## SECTION 4. Batting and Kicking

### Batting a Loose Ball

ARTICLE 1. a. While a pass is in flight, any player eligible to touch the ball may bat it in any direction (*Exception:* Rule 9-4-2).

- b. Any player may block a scrimmage kick in the field of play or the end zone.
- c. No player shall bat other loose balls forward in the field of play or in any direction if the ball is in the end zone. (*Exception:* Rule 6-3-11). (**A.R. 6-3-11:1**) (**A.R. 9-4-1:I-XI**) (**A.R. 10-2-2:IV**)

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot and loss of down if not in conflict with other rules [S31 and S9]. [*Exception:* No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick is beyond the neutral zone (Rules 10-2-2-c, 10-2-2-d, 10-2-2-e and 10-2-2-f)].**

- **Approved Ruling 9-4-1**

- I. Team A attempts a field goal from the Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes out of bounds in the end zone. **RULING:** Foul, safety (9-4-1-c). [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- II. Team A attempts a field goal from the Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team A. **RULING:** Foul, touchdown (9-4-1-c). [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- III. Team A attempts a field goal from the Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team B. **RULING:** Foul, safety (9-4-1-c). [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- IV. Team A attempts a field goal from the Team B's 30-yard line. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the field of play. **RULING:** Foul, safety. The ball remains alive, and Team A may elect the result of the play (9-4-1-c). If Team A recovers, does not score and accepts the penalty, enforcement is at the previous spot. [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- V. Team A attempts a conversion on the try with a kick from placement. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes out of bounds in the end zone. **RULING:** Foul, half the distance from the previous spot, PAT Exception (10-2-2-e-3-a). [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- VI. Team A attempts a conversion on the try with a kick from placement. A Team B player in the end zone leaps above the crossbar and bats the ball in flight. The ball goes into the end zone and is recovered by Team A. **RULING:** Foul, award Team A two points. [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- VII. Team A attempts a field goal, and B23, in the end zone, goes above the cross bar and catches the ball. **RULING:** Legal play (9-4-1-c). [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- VIII. Team A's fumble in flight is batted forward by B1, and the ball goes out of bounds behind Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Batting a fumble in flight does not add a new impetus. Basic spot enforcement ((9-4-1-c). [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- IX. Team A's backward pass in flight is batted forward by B1, and the ball goes out of bounds behind Team A's goal line. **RULING:** Safety. A pass may be batted in any direction and the impetus is charged to Team A's pass (8-5-1-a and 9-4-1-c). [Cited by 8-5-1-a, 9-4-1-c]
- X. A free kick is muffed in flight by a Team B player in his end zone. While the ball is loose in the end zone, a Team B player bats the ball out of the end zone. **RULING:** Illegally batting a kick in the end zone. Penalty —15 yards from the previous spot (9-4-1-c). [Cited by 9-4-1-c]
- XI. After intercepting Team A's forward pass on Team B's 20-yard line, B1 fumbles at the Team

B 38-yard line and B2 illegally bats the loose ball at the 30-yard line. The ball goes forward and out of bounds. **RULING:** Team B foul. Penalty —15-yards from the spot of the foul. Team B's ball, first and 10 at the 15- yard line. No loss of down is included in the penalty since Team B is awarded a new series after penalty enforcement (5-1-1-e-1). [Cited by 10-1-1-d, 9-4-1-c]

### **Batting a Backward Pass**

ARTICLE 2. A backward pass in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team in an attempt to gain yardage.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot (Rule 10-2-2-c). [S31].**

### **Batting Ball in Possession**

ARTICLE 3. A ball in player possession may not be batted forward by a player of that team.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot (10-2-2-c). [S31].**

### **Illegally Kicking a Ball**

ARTICLE 4. A player shall not kick a loose ball, a forward pass or a ball being held for a place kick by an opponent. These illegal acts do not change the status of the loose ball or forward pass; but if the player holding the ball for a place kick loses possession during a scrimmage down, it is a fumble and a loose ball; if during a free kick, the ball remains dead. (A.R. 8-7-2:VII)

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot and loss of down if not in conflict with other rules (Rules 10-2-2-c, 10-2-2-d, 10-2-2-e and 10-2-2-f) [S9 and S31]**  
*(Exception: No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick is beyond the neutral zone).*

## **SECTION 5. Fighting**

ARTICLE 1. a. Before the game, squad members in uniform and coaches shall not participate in a fight (Rule 2-32-1).

During the first half, players shall not participate in a fight.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot or the succeeding spot, first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules, and disqualification for the remainder of the game [S7, S27, S38 and S47].**

b. During the half-time intermission, squad members in uniform or coaches shall not participate in a fight.

During the second half, players shall not participate in a fight.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the basic spot or the succeeding spot, first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules, and disqualification for the remainder of the game and the first half of the next game [S7, S27, S38 and S47]. For fights that occur in the last game of a season, squad members in uniform, coaches and players with eligibility remaining will serve fight-related suspensions during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

c. During either half, coaches and substitutes shall not leave their team area to participate in a fight, nor shall they participate in a fight in their team area.

**PENALTY – 15 yards from the succeeding spot, first down for Team B fouls if the first down is not in conflict with other rules, and disqualification for the**



**remainder of the game and for the next game [S7, S27 or S38, and S47]. For fights that occur in the last game of a season, squad members in uniform, coaches and players with eligibility remaining will serve fight-related suspensions during the first game of the next season for which they are eligible.**

- ARTICLE 2. a. If the squad member, coach or player is disqualified for fighting a second time during that season, he shall be disqualified for that game and suspended for the remainder of the season.
- b. If a second fighting suspension occurs in the final game of a season, he shall be suspended for the first game of the next season for which he is eligible. This suspension is considered to be his first fight of that season.

ARTICLE 3. The referee will notify (in writing) his assigning agent of all disqualifications for fighting. The assigning agency becomes responsible for implementation of the penalty.