

# RULE 14

## Football variants

### SECTION 1. Youth Football

#### General Principle

ARTICLE 1. Youth football shall be played under Rules 1 to 11 with the following changes.

#### Length of Periods (amendment to rule 3-2-1)

ARTICLE 2. The maximum total playing time in a game shall be 48 minutes, divided into four periods of 12 minutes each.

#### Blocking Below the Waist (replacement for rule 9-1-2-e)

ARTICLE 3. There shall be no blocking below the waist except 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 [S40].**

#### Scoring Plays (amendment to rule 8-1-1)

ARTICLE 4. The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown	6 Points
Field Goal	3 Points
Safety (points awarded to opponents)	2 Points
Successful Try Touchdown	2 Points
Successful Try Field Goal	2 Points
Successful Try Safety	1 Point

#### Free Kick Formation (exception to Rule 6-1-2-c)

ARTICLE 5. In 9-man football, at least three Team K players must be on each side of the kicker.

#### Offensive Team Requirements (exception to Rule 7-1-3-b-1)

ARTICLE 6. In 9-man football, at least five players on their scrimmage line, not less than three of whom shall be numbered 50 through 79. The remaining players must be either on their scrimmage line or legally positioned as a back.

#### Goals (exception to Rule 1-2-5-f)

ARTICLE 7. The following procedure will be adopted when one or both goals are missing or have been taken down, and the original posts are not available for a try or field goal attempt.

1. The game will be classed as a "no post" game and will be noted on the match report form as such.
2. The league will be notified.

**REPORT – No posts.****Tripping (exception to Rules 2-28-1 and 9-1-2-c)**

- ARTICLE 8. a. Tripping is intentionally using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent (including the runner) below the knees.
- b. There shall be no tripping (including against the runner).

**Persons Subject to the Rules Restrictions (addition to Rule 9-1-2)**

ARTICLE 9. If a player persistently commits personal fouls in a game, he shall be disqualified.

**PENALTY – Persistent offenders shall be disqualified.**

## SECTION 2. 5 on 5 football

**General principle**

ARTICLE 1. 5 on 5 football shall be played under Rules 1 to 11 with the following changes. Where a rule is in conflict with Rules 1 to 11 or clearly does not apply, the 5 on 5 rule takes precedence.

**The game**

- ARTICLE 2. a. The game shall be played between two teams of no more and no less than 5 players each.
- b. The number of players in a squad and the number of those permitted to be in uniform shall be determined by the organiser of the tournament.

**Supervision**

ARTICLE 3. The game shall be played under the supervision of one or more officials.

**The field**

ARTICLE 4. The field shall be a rectangular area of length 60 yards and width 30 yards. The goal line, the end line, midfield line, the 12-yard line (no more than 2 yards long and in the centre of the field) and the 5-yard line (as a hashed line) are the only lines permitted on the field.

- a. If both head coaches agree, hash marks 23 feet wide may be used. They may be marked on the field or their position indicated by pylons or cones placed at least 3 feet off the end line at each end of the field.
- b. Otherwise, an unmarked line running down the centre of the field from end line to end line shall be indicated by a pylon or cone placed at least 3 feet off the end line at each end of the field. At the end of every play, the ball's lateral position shall be relocated to the centre of the field.

**Goals**

ARTICLE 5. There shall be no goal posts.

### Line to gain

ARTICLE 6. There shall be no line to gain indicators. The use of a down box is recommended.

### The ball

ARTICLE 7. The ball shall be that mandated by the competition organiser and shall be appropriate for the age group of the competing teams. Teams may use their own footballs when they are in possession, provided that they are legal.

### Blitz

ARTICLE 8. The following definitions of a blitz and the no-run zone shall apply to these 5-on-5 rules only.

- a. A blitz is when a Team B player crosses the neutral zone:
  1. While the ball is live.
  2. Before a change of team possession.
  3. Before the player who receives the snap has handed off or passed the ball.
- b. Only one Team B player is eligible to blitz during a down. Prior to the snap, he must be lined up either:
  1. In a three or four-point stance, within one yard of the line of scrimmage, and immediately opposite the ball. If there is such a player, he is the only player eligible to blitz.
  2. In Team B's backfield, seven yards from the neutral zone.

**PENALTY – Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot.**

- c. If the player who receives the snap fakes a handoff or backward pass, fumbles and the ball touches the ground, or if the snap is muffed and touches the ground, any Team B player may blitz.
  1. Team B shall not engage in any tactic designed to confuse Team A as to the identity of the legal blitzer after the ball becomes live, or any other tactic that violates the spirit of this rule.

**PENALTY – Live-ball foul. Ten yards from the previous spot. Automatic first down for Team A if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant or persistent offenders, including coaches who sanction the use of such tactics, shall be disqualified.**

### No-run zone

ARTICLE 9. The no-run zone is established when the ball becomes dead and is located so that any part of the ball is either breaking the plane of or inside Team B's 5-yard line. When the line of scrimmage is in the no-run zone, Team A must throw a legal forward pass at some point during the down, unless the ball becomes dead behind the line of scrimmage.

**PENALTY – Loss of down at the previous spot.**

### Kicks

ARTICLE 10. There shall be no kicking of the football. If the ball is punted, place-kicked, or drop-kicked, it is dead. If a loose ball is kicked it remains live.

### **Game clock**

ARTICLE 11. The game clock is any device under the direction of the appropriate official used to time the duration of the game.

- a. The duration of the game may be varied by competitions.

### **30-second clock**

ARTICLE 12. The 30-second clock is any device under the direction of the appropriate official used to time the 30 seconds between the ready-for-play signal and the ball being put into play.

### **Start of each half**

ARTICLE 13. Each half shall start with a snap from the offensive team's 5-yard line.

- a. Before the game, the Referee shall toss a coin at midfield, in the presence of not more than two captains from each team and (if present) another game official, first designating the captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss.
- b. The winner of the coin toss has first possession. The loser chooses which end of the field to defend and shall have first possession in the second half. The winning captain may not defer his choice.

### **Playing time**

ARTICLE 14. a. The total playing time (excluding extra periods) shall be 30 minutes divided into two halves of 15 minutes each (unless varied according to Rule 14-2-11-a). The half-time interval shall be 2 minutes.

- b. The clock shall start on the first snap of the game.
- c. Outside the last two minutes of a half, the clock shall normally only be stopped for charged team timeouts, penalty enforcements, and changes of possession. The clock shall continue to run after a scoring play until the try down has been completed. The referee shall declare and charge himself with a timeout if an injured player requires one. He may also declare and charge himself with a timeout if there is a significant delay in spotting the ball for the next down, or for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules.
- d. After a charged team timeout or change of possession, the clock starts on the snap. After any other timeout, the clock starts on the ready-for-play signal.
- e. When the ball is dead and two minutes or less remain in a period, the referee shall order the clock stopped (if necessary) to inform the head coach and field captain of each team. The 30-second count must not be interrupted to give the two-minute warning. The clock shall start on the snap.
- f. After the two-minute warning, normal game timing applies. Refer to Rule 3.
- g. Competitions may adopt regulations for either normal game timing or a running clock (as defined in (a) to (e) above) for the entirety of the game. In either case, the referee shall still issue the two-minute warning.

### **Timeouts**

ARTICLE 15. a. Each team is entitled to two charged team timeouts during each half. During extra periods, each team shall have one charged timeout per period. Charged timeouts may not be retained into the succeeding half or extra period.

- b. Charged timeouts shall last no more than 60 seconds.

### **Putting the ball in play**

ARTICLE 16. The ball shall be put in play within 30 seconds of it being declared ready for play, unless play is suspended during that interval. If play is suspended, the 30-second count will start again. Consuming more than 30 seconds after the ball has been declared ready for play is an illegal delay.

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot.**

### **Downs**

ARTICLE 17. Team A has four downs to progress to the midfield line. If successful, they shall have a new series of four downs to score.

- a. At the start of a half, the team with the right to start the half takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- b. After a try down, the team that conceded the touchdown takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- c. After a safety, the team that scored the points takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- d. After a touchback, the team awarded the touchback takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- e. If Team A fails to achieve the line to gain after fourth down, Team B shall take possession at its own 5-yard line.

### **Backward passes and handoffs**

ARTICLE 18. Prior to a change of possession, the runner may pass the ball backwards or hand the ball in any direction, provided the handoff or pass is completed behind the neutral zone, except to throw the ball intentionally out of bounds to conserve time.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot.**

### **No Advance**

ARTICLE 19. Prior to a change of possession, the player who receives the snap may not advance the ball beyond the neutral zone until the ball has been in the possession of another player.

**PENALTY – Loss of down at the previous spot.**

### **Numbering and formations**

- ARTICLE 20. a. No two players shall wear the same number during any scrimmage down.
- b. Team A must have at least two players legally positioned on their scrimmage line when the snap starts. One other player may (if desired) be in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap. There are no restrictions on the position of the other players, provided they are on their side of the neutral zone.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot.**

### **Forward passes**

ARTICLE 21. The player who receives the snap for Team A may make one forward pass during each down before team possession changes, provided the pass is thrown from a point in or behind the neutral zone.

- a. The player who receives the snap has 7 seconds to give up possession of the ball. When he does so, the 7 second limit no longer applies. The ball is dead if the player who

receives the snap exceeds the 7-second limit. If in doubt, he has not exceeded the limit. (*Exception:* If the actions of an illegal blitzer cause the limit to be exceeded, the ball is dead but there is no foul for exceeding the limit.)

**PENALTY – Loss of down at the previous spot.**

- b. The passer may legally throw the ball away to avoid loss of yardage or a 7-second foul if the ball lands or would have landed in or past the neutral zone extended. If the ball does not reach the neutral zone, or would not have reached it, a receiver must have had a reasonable opportunity to catch the ball.

**PENALTY – Loss of down at the spot of the foul. Safety if the foul is behind Team A’s goal line.**

- c. No player shall throw an illegal forward pass as defined by Rule 7-3-2 (*Exception:* Rule 7-3-2-f does not apply).

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot and loss of down if by Team A before a change of possession.**

**Eligibility to touch a forward pass**

ARTICLE 22. At the snap, all players are eligible to touch a forward pass or receive a forward handoff. (*Exception:* The passer is not eligible to touch a forward pass until it is touched by another player.)

**Scoring**

ARTICLE 23. The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown	6 Points
Safety (points awarded to opponents)	2 Points
Successful Try Touchdown (from 5 yard line)	1 Point
Successful Try Touchdown (from 12 yard line)	2 Points
Successful Try Touchdown (scored by Team B)	2 Points

*NOTE:* The try will be from the 5-yard line unless the captain or coach of the scoring team informs the referee that it will be from the 12-yard line. This option must be chosen before the ready for play.

**Personal fouls**

ARTICLE 24. No person subject to the rules shall commit a personal foul before the game, during the game or between periods.

- a. There shall be no clipping at any time. (*Exception:* Against the runner)
- b. There shall be no blocking below the waist at any time. (*Exception:* Against the runner.)
- c. There shall be no blocking in the back at any time. (*Exception:* Against the runner.)

**PENALTY – 10 yards from the previous spot. Automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant or persistent offenders shall be disqualified. Safety for offensive team fouls behind its own goal line.**

**15-yard penalties**

ARTICLE 25. There are no 15-yard penalties. All penalties that in 11-man football carry a 15-yard penalty shall carry a 10-yard penalty in 5-man football.

### Penalty enforcement

ARTICLE 26. Any penalty may be declined, except for a false start penalty. Disqualified players must leave the game.

### Live-ball fouls

ARTICLE 27. If not otherwise specified in these rules, the enforcement spot for live-ball fouls before a change of possession is the previous spot. (*Exception:* Roughing the passer — if the pass is complete, the penalty is enforced from the end of Team A's run if it ends beyond the neutral zone.)

### Dead-ball fouls

ARTICLE 28. The enforcement spot for any dead-ball foul is the succeeding spot.

### Change of possession

ARTICLE 29. The enforcement spot for live-ball fouls after a change of possession is the spot of the foul. If this spot is behind a goal line, the penalty shall be enforced from the nearest 5-yard line.

### Half-distance

ARTICLE 30. No distance penalty shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.

### Relocated by penalty

ARTICLE 31. When an accepted penalty moves the ball over a marked line on the field:

- a. If the goal line is the line to gain and the ball is moved across the midfield line by penalty, the goal line is still the line to gain. If the ball is inside the no-run zone and is moved outside the no-run zone by penalty, Team A must throw a forward pass during any subsequent down until a down free from Team A fouls leaves the ball outside the no-run zone. This applies as soon as the dead-ball spot is ruled to be in the no-run zone.

### Enforcement On Try Down

ARTICLE 32. On the try:

- a. If Team A has elected to go for one point and commits a foul not carrying a loss of down for which the penalty is accepted, the try is repeated after enforcement. Team A may not run, nor elect a two-point attempt.
- b. If Team A elects to go for two points, and accepts a Team B penalty that does not result in an automatic score and leaves the ball inside the no-run zone, they may not run the ball, but a successful conversion will score two points.
- c. If Team A commits any foul carrying a loss of down for which the penalty is accepted, the try is over and any score during the down is cancelled.

### Sportsmanship

ARTICLE 33. a. There is no room for any acts of deliberately illegal tactics or blocking, "cheap shots" or any unsportsmanlike act by a player or coach. Foul play will not be tolerated. A player who persistently or flagrantly commits personal fouls shall be disqualified.

**PENALTY – Players or squad members in uniform who commit persistent personal fouls or one flagrant personal foul shall be disqualified.**

- b. "Trash talking" (any talking which is deemed offensive, insulting or abusive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators) or any other act of unsportsmanlike conduct is strongly discouraged. The officials are the sole arbiters of language or gestures that is offensive, insulting or abusive.

**PENALTY – 10 yards from the succeeding spot. Players or squad members in uniform who commit two unsportsmanlike fouls or one flagrant unsportsmanlike foul shall be disqualified. Coaches who sanction the use of unfair tactics, or who violate these sportsmanship rules, shall be disqualified.**

- c. Any person disqualified from a game will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Any person subject to the rules may be disqualified and may not participate further in the game in any official capacity.

### **Rosters**

ARTICLE 34. Both teams shall submit roster forms for any game they play in, subject to the rules of the competition. A common roster for games played in a tournament format is acceptable if allowed by competition rules. Persons subject to the rules who are required to appear on the roster form and do not shall be disqualified upon discovery.

**PENALTY – Disqualification**

### **Extra periods**

ARTICLE 35. If the score is tied after two periods, leagues or tournaments may mandate the use of extra periods. If not, the game is over and the result stands as a tie. Extra periods shall be based on the NCAA tiebreaker system detailed in Rule 3-1-3, with the following modifications.

- a. The referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of no more than two field captains from each team and (if present) another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. The winner of the toss may not defer his choice and shall choose one of the following options:
  1. Offense or defense to start the first series of the first extra period.
  2. Which end of the field shall be used for both series of that extra period.
- b. The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first extra period and shall have the first choice of the two options for subsequent even-numbered extra periods.
- c. An extra period shall consist of two series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap from the midfield line.
- d. Each team has four downs to score. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead and the series is over. Team A may only have a new series of downs if Team B commits a foul that mandates an automatic first down.
- e. Beginning with the third extra period, team scoring a touchdown must attempt a two point try. A one point try by Team A (although not illegal) will not score a point.
- f. Extra periods will continue to be played until there is a winning team.
- g. The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winning team.



## SECTION 3. 5 on 5 flag football

### General principle

ARTICLE 1. 5 on 5 flag football shall be played under Rules 1 to 11 with the following changes. Where a rule is in conflict with Rules 1 to 11 or clearly does not apply, the 5 on 5 flag rule takes precedence.

### The game

ARTICLE 2. a. The game shall be played between two teams of not more than 5 players and at least 4 players.

b. The number of players in a squad and the number of those permitted to be in uniform shall be determined by the the organiser of the competition.

### Medical requirement

ARTICLE 3. The minimum medical facilities during a game or competition are:

- a. A registered doctor, registered nurse, registered paramedic, registered physiotherapist or a first aider must be available. This person must not be a squad member and their identity must be made known to the officials.
- b. A first aid kit must be available.
- c. A telephone capable of use to summon the emergency services must be available.

### Supervision

ARTICLE 4. The game shall be played under the supervision of two or more officials.

### The field

ARTICLE 5. The field shall be a rectangular area of length between 60 and 80 yards and between 20 and 30 yards in width. The goal line, the end line, midfield line, the 12 yard line (no more than 2 yards long and in the centre of the field) and the 5 yard line (as a hashed line) are the only lines permitted on the field.

- a. An unmarked line running down the centre of the field from end line to end line shall be indicated by a pylon or cone placed at least 3 feet off the end line at each end of the field.

### Goals

ARTICLE 6. There shall be no goal posts.

### Line to gain

ARTICLE 7. There shall be no line to gain indicators. The use of a down box is recommended.

### The ball

ARTICLE 8. The ball shall comply with regulations set by the competition organiser and shall be appropriate for the age group of the competing teams. Teams may use their own footballs when they are in possession, provided that they are legal.

### **Blitz**

ARTICLE 9. Any Team B player located in Team B's backfield, seven yards from the neutral zone, may blitz during a down. Players lined up closer than seven yards to the neutral zone shall not blitz.

- a. A blitz is when a Team B player crosses the neutral zone:
  1. While the ball is live.
  2. Before a change of team possession.
  3. Before the player who receives the snap has handed the ball off or passed the ball.
- b. If the player who takes the snap fakes a handoff, all Team B players may blitz.

**PENALTY – Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot.**

### **Diving**

ARTICLE 10. A dive is an action where a player throws his body in any direction in an attempt to either avoid or make a tackle or to block a forward pass in the vicinity of the passer, and neither of his feet are contacting the ground.

- a. A player is allowed to 'lay out' or jump with both feet off the ground in a bona fide attempt to catch or defend a pass.
- b. If a player dives into the end zone in a bona fide attempt to score, it is a live-ball diving foul.
- c. If he dives into the end zone to taunt an opponent, it is unsportsmanlike conduct.

### **Flagrant foul**

ARTICLE 11. A flagrant foul is a rule infraction that involves an extreme or excessive breach of the rules, especially if it places a player in danger of injury.

### **No-run zone**

- ARTICLE 12. a. The no-run zone is established when the ball becomes dead and is located so that any part of the ball is either breaking the plane of or inside Team B's 5-yard line.
- b. When the line of scrimmage is in the no-run zone, Team A must throw a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone at some point during the down, unless the ball becomes dead behind the line of scrimmage.

**PENALTY – Loss of down at the previous spot.**

### **Shadow blocking**

- ARTICLE 13. a. A shadow block is when a player impedes the progress of an opponent without making contact with him.
- b. Players must respect the territorial rights of opponents. A player has the right to remain in his current position if stationary, and if moving he has the right to continue in the direction which he is moving without being impeded by an opponent. However, if he wishes to start moving from a stationary position, change direction while moving, or stop moving, he must not impede an opponent by doing so.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot.**

## **Mandatory equipment**

ARTICLE 14. a. All players must wear mouth guards.

- b. All players must wear two flags. One must be positioned on each hip. It is the responsibility of each player to make sure his/her flags are correctly positioned before the start of each down.
- c. Flags should be of a contrasting colour to the player's shirt and pants and attach to a belt at one end. They must hang freely from the belt and be fully visible to other players and officials. Belts must fit snugly to a player's body and be of the velcro or popper type.
- d. Flags shall be no less than 15 inches long and no more than 16 inches long from end to end, and no more than 2 inches wide.
- e. Jerseys must be tucked in at all times and must not in any way obscure or interfere with the flags.

**PENALTY – The player's team will be charged with a timeout.**

**PENALTY – If timeouts are exhausted: Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot.**

- f. If a player (or a team-mate of that player) deliberately causes his equipment to become illegal, it is a foul. Players must ensure that all their equipment is being worn correctly.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot.**

- g. Knee pads and hip pads may be worn if the field conditions merit them. This judgement shall be made by the competition organiser or their agreed representative.

## **Illegal equipment**

ARTICLE 15. The following is illegal equipment:

- a. Pants with pockets. Pockets may not be held shut by tape, a zipper, or any other device.
- b. Any form of head covering that is stiff or rigid, or has a stiff or rigid part (e.g. a peaked cap). A band to tie hair back, or an entirely soft covering to protect a player's head from sun or rain is legal.

**PENALTY – The player's team will be charged with a timeout.**

**PENALTY – If timeouts are exhausted: Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot.**

## **Kicks**

ARTICLE 16. There shall be no kicking of the football. The ball is dead immediately if it is kicked.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot.**

## **Game clock**

ARTICLE 17. The game clock is any device under the direction of the appropriate official used to time the duration of the game.

- a. The duration of the game may be varied by competitions.

## **30-second clock**

ARTICLE 18. The 30-second clock is any device under the direction of the appropriate official used to time the 30 seconds between the ready-for-play signal and the ball being put into play.

### **Start of each half**

ARTICLE 19. Each half shall start with a snap from the offensive team's 5-yard line.

- a. Before the game, the referee shall toss a coin at midfield, in the presence of not more than two captains from each team and another game official, first designating the captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss.
- b. The winner of the coin toss has first possession. The loser chooses which end of the field to defend and shall have first possession in the second half. The winning captain may not defer his choice.

### **Playing time**

ARTICLE 20. a. The total playing time (excluding extra periods) shall be 40 minutes divided into two periods of 20 minutes each (unless varied according to Rule 14-3-17-a). The interval at half-time shall normally be 2 minutes.

- b. The clock shall start on the first snap of the game.
- c. Outside the last two minutes of a half, the clock shall normally only be stopped for charged team timeouts, penalty enforcements, and changes of possession. The clock shall continue to run after a scoring play until the try down has been completed. The referee shall declare and charge himself with a timeout if an injured player requires one. He may also declare and charge himself with a timeout if there is a significant delay in spotting the ball for the next down, or for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules.
- d. After a charged team timeout or change of possession, the clock starts on the snap. After any other timeout, the clock starts on the ready-for-play signal.
- e. When the ball is dead and two minutes or less remain in a period, the referee shall order the clock stopped (if necessary) to inform the head coach and field captain of each team. The 30-second count must not be interrupted to give the two-minute warning.
- f. After the two-minute warning, normal game timing applies. Refer to Rule 3.
- g. Competitions may adopt regulations for either normal game timing or a running clock for the entirety of the game. In either case, the referee shall still issue the two-minute warning.

### **Timeouts**

ARTICLE 21. a. Each team is entitled to two charged team timeouts during each half.

During extra periods, each team shall have one charged timeout per period. Charged timeouts may not be retained into the succeeding half or extra period.

- b. Charged timeouts shall last no more than 60 seconds.

### **Putting the ball in play**

ARTICLE 22. The ball shall be put in play within 30 seconds of it being declared ready for play, unless play is suspended during that interval. If play is suspended, the 30-second count will start again. Consuming more than 30 seconds after the ball has been declared ready for play is an illegal delay.

**PENALTY – Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot.**

### **Ball dead**

ARTICLE 23. A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound his whistle or declare it dead:

- a. When a runner in possession of the ball has a flag removed by an opponent (or if it falls off), is out of bounds, or if any part of his body other than hands or feet touches the ground.
- b. When the flags or equipment of a runner in possession of the ball are illegal.
- c. When the player who receives the snap exceeds the 7-second limit.
- d. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try occurs, or when Team A completes an illegal forward pass in Team B's end zone.
- e. When a fumble, muffed snap, backward pass or forward pass hits the ground.
- f. When the ball is kicked.
- g. If an official inadvertently sounds his whistle or otherwise declares the ball dead during a down, the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down. If the ball was not in player possession, the down shall be replayed.

### **Spot of ball**

ARTICLE 24. When the ball is declared dead in player possession, his forward progress is marked by the location of the foot (touching the ground) closest to the opponent's end line when the ball became dead. If neither foot is touching the ground when the ball is declared dead, the spot shall be the last spot at which the runner's foot was touching the ground. The ball shall be laterally relocated to the centre of the field before the next snap.

### **Downs**

ARTICLE 25. The team in possession shall have four downs to progress to the half way line. If successful, they shall have a further four downs to score.

- a. At the start of a half, the team with the right to start the half takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- b. After a try down, the team that conceded the touchdown takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- c. After a safety, the team that scored the points takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- d. After a touchback, the team awarded the touchback takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- e. If Team A fails to achieve the line to gain after fourth down, Team B shall take possession at its own 5-yard line.

### **Backward passes and hand offs**

ARTICLE 26. Prior to a change of possession, any Team A player may pass the ball backwards or hand the ball (in any direction) at any time, provided the handoff or pass is completed behind the neutral zone, except to throw the ball intentionally out of bounds to conserve time.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot.**

## Loose ball

ARTICLE 27. If a loose ball strikes the ground as the result of a fumble, muffed snap or backward pass, it is dead and belongs to the team last in possession at the spot of the fumble or backward pass.

## Numbering and formations

ARTICLE 28. There are no restrictions on formations. Players may not participate in a down while wearing the same number as a teammate, but may wear any other legal number.

## Forward passes

ARTICLE 29. Team A may make one forward pass during each down before team possession changes, provided the pass is thrown from a point in or behind the neutral zone.

- a. The player who receives the snap has 7 seconds to give up possession of the ball. When he does so, the 7-second limit no longer applies. (*Exception:* If the actions of an illegal blitz cause the limit to be exceeded, the ball is dead but there is no foul for exceeding the limit.)

### **PENALTY – Loss of down at the previous spot.**

- b. The passer may legally throw the ball away to avoid loss of yardage or a 7-second foul. It is not a foul to intentionally ground the ball unless the passer conserves time by doing so.
- c. No player shall throw an illegal forward pass as defined by Rule 7-3-2 (*Exception:* Rule 7-3-2-f does not apply).

## Eligibility to touch a forward pass

ARTICLE 30. At the start of a down, all players are eligible to touch a forward pass or receive a forward handoff. (*Exception:* The passer is not eligible to touch a forward pass until it is touched by another player).

- a. No offensive player who voluntarily goes out of bounds during a down shall touch a legal forward pass in the field of play or end zones or while airborne until it has been touched by an opponent or official. If he was either shadow blocked or physically forced out of bounds by an opponent, he remains eligible unless he does not attempt to return inbounds immediately.

### **PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot**

## Scoring

ARTICLE 31. The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown	6 Points
Safety (points awarded to opponents)	2 Points
Successful Try Touchdown (from 5 yard line)	1 Point
Successful Try Touchdown (from 12 yard line)	2 Points
Successful Try Touchdown (scored by Team B)	2 Points

*NOTE:* The try will be from the 5-yard line unless the captain or Head Coach of the scoring team informs the referee that it will be from the 12-yard line. This option must be chosen before the ready-for-play signal.

## Touchdown

ARTICLE 32. A touchdown shall be scored when:

- a. A runner advancing from the field of play is legally in possession of a live ball when one of his feet is grounded in the opponent's end zone on or beyond the goal line.
- b. An eligible offensive player catches a legal forward pass in the opponent's end zone.
- c. The referee awards a touchdown under the provisions of Rule 14-3-35-g Penalty, Rule 9-1-5 Penalty or Rule 9-2-3.

## Safety

ARTICLE 33. A safety shall be scored when:

- a. A runner is legally in possession of the ball, is in his own end zone, and does not have one or both feet grounded in the field of play when the ball becomes dead.
- b. A runner or the ball is out of bounds inside his own end zone.
- c. The ball is either dead at or returned to a spot that is in the end zone after a fumble, muffed snap or incomplete backward pass (unless by a defensive player in his own end zone).

## Touchback

ARTICLE 34. A touchback is awarded when a defensive player catches an opponent's forward pass in his own end zone and the ball becomes dead there before the defensive player returns to the field of play.

## Contact fouls

ARTICLE 35. Flag football is a non-contact sport. Therefore:

- a. There shall be no contact between opponents. Incidental contact between opponents that neither advantages nor disadvantages either player is not a foul. Contact between players does not have to be deliberate in order to be a foul.
- b. There shall be no attempts to strip or steal the football or otherwise physically deprive the runner of possession. (*Exception:* Opponents who are simultaneously and legally making a bona fide attempt to catch a pass.)
- c. There shall be no holding. Defenders shall not hold the runner's body or clothing to assist in removing his flag.
- d. There shall be no diving or hurdling.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot. Automatic first down for Team B fouls if not in conflict with other rules. Flagrant or persistent offenders shall be disqualified.**

- e. The runner shall not use his hands or arms to guard his flags and by doing so prevent an opponent from removing them, even if the runner does so inadvertently.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot. Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified.**

- f. No player shall pull or otherwise interfere with the flags of any other player who is not the runner. (*Exception:* Defenders who are making a legal and bona fide attempt to tackle a player that they believe is the runner, and could not reasonably have known that their opponent did not have possession of the ball before they pulled the flag.)

**PENALTY – Five yards from the previous spot. Automatic first down if against an eligible receiver who does not catch the ball on a passing play. If the receiver catches the pass, the ball is dead at that spot. Five yards from the succeeding spot and an automatic first down.**

g. There shall be no forward pass interference (Rule 7-3-8).

**PENALTY – For Team A fouls: 5 yards from the previous spot and loss of down. For Team B fouls in the field of play: Team A's ball at the spot of the foul and an automatic first down. For Team B fouls in their own end zone: the referee shall award a touchdown to Team A.**

### **No Advance**

ARTICLE 36. a. Prior to a change of possession, the player who receives the snap may not advance the ball beyond the neutral zone until the ball has been in the possession of another player.

**PENALTY – Loss of down at the previous spot.**

b. If the player who receives the snap immediately hands the ball to the snapper, the snapper may not advance the ball beyond the neutral zone until the ball has been in the possession of another player.

**PENALTY – Loss of down at the previous spot.**

### **Penalty yardage**

ARTICLE 37. Any fouls not already mentioned that ordinarily carry a 10-yard or 15-yard penalty shall carry a 5-yard penalty.

### **Penalty enforcement**

ARTICLE 38. Any penalty may be declined, except for a false start penalty. Disqualified players must leave the game.

### **Enforcement spots**

ARTICLE 39. a. Except where specifically mentioned in these rules, the enforcement spot for all live-ball fouls before a change of possession is the previous spot.

b. The enforcement spot for any dead-ball foul is the succeeding spot.

c. The enforcement spot for all live-ball fouls after an interception is the spot of the interception. If this spot is in an end zone, enforcement is from the 5-yard line closest to the end zone.

### **Half-distance**

ARTICLE 40. No distance penalty shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. (*Exception:* Defensive pass interference.)

### **Relocated by penalty**

ARTICLE 41. When an accepted penalty moves the ball over a marked line on the field:

a. If the goal line is the line to gain and the ball is moved across the midfield line by penalty, the goal line is still the line to gain.

b. If the ball is inside the no-run zone and is moved outside the no-run zone by penalty, Team A must throw a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone during any subsequent down until a down free from Team A fouls leaves the ball outside the no-run



zone. This applies as soon as the dead-ball spot is ruled to be in the no-run zone.

### **Enforcement On Try Down**

ARTICLE 42. On the try:

- a. If Team A has elected to go for one point and commits a foul not carrying a loss of down for which the penalty is accepted, the try is repeated after enforcement. Team A may not run, nor elect a two-point attempt.
- b. If Team A elects to go for two points, and accepts a Team B penalty that does not result in an automatic score and leaves the ball inside the no-run zone, they may not run the ball, but a successful conversion will score two points.
- c. If Team A commits any foul carrying a loss of down for which the penalty is accepted, the try is over and any score during the down is cancelled.

### **Sportsmanship**

- ARTICLE 43. a. There is no room for any acts of deliberately illegal tactics or blocking, "cheap shots" or any unsportsmanlike act by a player or coach. Foul play will not be tolerated. A player who persistently or flagrantly commits contact fouls shall be disqualified.
- b. Any person disqualified from a game will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
  - c. Only the team captains and Head Coach may seek clarification on matters of rule. If the Head Coach wishes to discuss a rule in detail, the conference procedure in Rule 3-3-4-e must be used. No person subject to the rules shall question judgement calls at any time.
  - d. "Trash talking" (any talking which is deemed offensive, insulting or abusive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators) or any other act of unsportsmanlike conduct is strongly discouraged. The officials are the sole arbiters of language or gestures that is offensive, insulting or abusive.

**PENALTY – Five yards from the succeeding spot. Players or squad members in uniform who commit two unsportsmanlike fouls or one flagrant foul shall be disqualified.**

### **Rosters**

ARTICLE 44. Both teams shall submit roster forms for any game they play in, subject to the rules of the competition. A common roster for games played in a tournament format is acceptable if allowed by competition rules. Persons subject to the rule who are required to appear on the roster form and do not shall be disqualified upon discovery.

**PENALTY – Disqualification.**

### **Extra periods**

ARTICLE 45. If the score is tied after two periods, leagues or tournaments may mandate the use of extra periods. If not, the game is over and the result stands as a tie. Extra periods shall be based on the NCAA tiebreaker system detailed in Rule 3-1-3, with the following modifications.

- a. The referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of no more than two field captains from each team and (if present) another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. The winner of the toss may not defer his choice and shall choose one of the following options:
  1. Offense or defense to start the first series of the first extra period.

2. Which end of the field shall be used for both series of that extra period.
- b. The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first extra period and shall have the first choice of the two options for subsequent even-numbered extra periods.
- c. An extra period shall consist of two series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap from the midfield line.
- d. Each team has four downs to score. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead and the series is over. Team A may only have a new series of downs if Team B commits a foul that mandates an automatic first down.
- e. Beginning with the third extra period, team scoring a touchdown must attempt a two point try. A one point try by Team A (although not illegal) will not score a point.
- f. Extra periods will continue to be played until there is a winning team.
- g. The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winning team.