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## Purpose of YMCA Sports

The sports program is designed to be an aid and tool in the development and growth of the participants. The YMCA is not a building, athletic fields or a staff it is an association of people, a “fellowship of people united by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ for the purpose of developing Christian personalities and building a Christian society”. The YMCA is not just a sports association; however the YMCA does use sports as one of its programs to foster growth in spirit, mind and body. The attainments of exceptional athletic skills and the winning of games, though important, are secondary – the molding of future men and women is the goal.

## Purpose of YMCA Flag Football

The activities around flag football are merely a vehicle by which we as concerned adults, utilize Christian models to work with young people. The program purpose is:

1. Develop and build self esteem;
2. Develop and teach physical skills, fitness and health;
3. Develop social skills and relationship among participants;
4. Support and strengthen family life;
5. Develop responsibility, decision making and leadership;
6. Create a unique and enjoyable leisure family activity.

## YMCA Pledge and Procedures

Before each game the referees will instruct each team to line up shoulder-to-shoulder facing the opposing team. The referee will then ask the teams to repeat the YMCA pledge after reciting one line at a time.

Win or lose, I pledge before God	Coach
To play the game as well as I know how,	OOOOOOOOOOOO
To obey the rules, to be a good sport	Ref
At all times, and to improve myself	XXXXXXXXXXXXX
In spirit, mind and body.	Coach

The referee will then thank the team, give them any pre-game instructions and be able to inform the coaches of necessary information. When this is done, the teams may move to their bench area and take their position on the field.

3. Illegally Secured Belt on Touchdown (Loss of Down)
4. Unsportsmanlike Player Conduct
5. Spiking, Kicking, Throwing or Not Returning Ball to Referee

### Loss of 5 Yards

Any other penalty not defined above will be a loss of 5 yards

### Automatic Disqualification

1. Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Behavior by ANYONE!
2. Intentionally Kicking, Swinging an Arm, Hand or Fist at a Player
3. Flagrant spiking, kicking, throwing the Ball
4. Intentionally Contacting an Official
5. Flagrant Personal Foul
6. Tackle the Runner
7. Tampering with Flag Belt

## First Aid

1. Coaches and parents are responsible for providing first aid to their own team and child.
2. Cover open sores/lesions prior to the game.
3. A team member who has an open wound will be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered.
4. If medical care or treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual would not have to leave the game. The official judges the length of time that is considered reasonable.
5. Suggested guidelines for providing first aid:
  - A. Wear gloves when contact with blood or other body fluids is anticipated.
  - B. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces with soap and water if in contact with blood or body fluids.
  - C. The bloodied portion of the uniform must be properly disinfected or the uniform changed before the individual may participate.
  - D. Clean all blood contaminated surfaces and equipment with a solution of 1:10 bleach and water or other disinfectant.
  - E. Articles contaminated with blood or body fluids should be properly disinfected or disposed as soon as possible. Disposed means place contaminated material in a plastic bag, seal the bag, then dispose of material.

### 5... KICK CATCH INTERFERENCE

R may choose a 5 yard penalty from the previous spot with K retaining the football and the down replayed or they may accept an awarded catch at the spot of the foul.

### 6... FOUL ON A SCORE

If there is a player foul by the offensive team, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during a down, which results in a successful touchdown or try, the acceptance of the penalty, nullifies the score. If there is a player foul by the defensive team, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during a down, which results in a successful touchdown or try, the penalty is automatically declined.

**PLAY.** QB A-1 runs for a touchdown, cornerback B-1 illegally holds A-1 during the run.

**RULING.** The holding foul is automatically declined, score the touchdown. The same ruling would apply on a try.

### 7... FOUL PRIOR TO A TRY

When a foul occurs after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play for the try, the enforcement is at the succeeding spot where the ball will be next snapped for the try, usually the 3 or 10 yard line.

**PLAY.** QB A-1 scores a touchdown and the spikes the ball.

**RULING.** The touchdown counts. The referee will ask the Team A captain whether they wish to go for a 1 or 2. Once the captain makes the decision, penalize Team A 10 yards on the try from the 3 or 10 yard line.

### 8... DOUBLE FOUL

It is double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during the same live ball period in which:

- A. There is no change of team possession.
- B. There is a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to the final change of possession.
- C. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

### 9... MULTIPLE LIVE BALL FOULS

When two or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team, only one penalty may be chosen except when a foul for unsportsmanlike or non-player conduct occurs. In such cases, the penalties for the unsportsmanlike or non-player fouls are administered from the succeeding spot as a dead ball foul.

### 10... MULTIPLE DEAD BALL FOULS

Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. Dead ball fouls are not coupled.

## SUMMARY OF FOULS AND PENALTIES

### Loss of 10 Yards

1. Personal Fouls
2. Forward Pass Interference – Defensive (Automatic First Down)

## “NOW YOU’RE A COACH”

For your players, you, the coach are the single most important adult leader. You will help the players have fun, learn skills, develop sportsmanship and discuss values in a meaningful way.

### ❑ You will:

- Contact players and parents;
- Conduct parent/players meeting;
- Look at yourself and explore your own motivations, values and goals;
- Listen to and share with other adult leaders;
- Recruit players through your children to complete your roster; if needed
- Set practice days with start and finish times, plus locations;
- Explain your discipline procedures for behavior problems, missed practice, etc., (nothing severe unless cleared by sports director)
- Stress parental and player conduct while at the field;
- Inform parents about flag football equipment; shorts, shoes, ball, etc.
- Require clean uniforms for every game;
- Stress the need for players to maintain good school grades;
- Get parents involved
- Verify your roster, making sure info is correct
- Question and answer period

### ❑ Conduct Practice Sessions:

- Get to know your players;
- Help them set goals and work towards them;
- Lead discussions by asking questions and introducing problems and situations for players to deal with;
- Teach flag football skills and physical fitness;
- Build Teamwork
- Enjoy yourself and let your players know it;
- Be organized.

### ❑ Game Responsibilities

- See that your players are present and ready to play;
- Pre-game warm-ups;
- Introduce yourself to the game official and opposing coach;
- Control yourself, players and parent behavior during and after the game;
- Coach and encourage your team during the game, Do Not Try and officiate the game from the field or sideline!!!!!!!!!!!!!! If you would like to officiate call the sports office at 817.801.1400.

## RAINOUT POLICY

### Saturdays

If it is raining on game day, no decision will be made prior to 8:00am. At that time, the decision for all morning games will be made. Every effort will be made to play the games as scheduled. Please call the YMCA of Arlington Sports Department Rainout Line 817-459-8614 for the status of your game. At 12:00pm, a decision will be made for the remainder of the day. Please call the YMCA of Arlington Sports Department Rainout Line 817-459-8614 for the status of your game.

### Sundays

The decision for Sunday afternoon games will be made at 11:00am. Every effort will be made to play the games as scheduled. Please call the YMCA of Arlington Sports Department Rainout Line 817-459-8614 for the status of your game. The Sports Department is closed on Sundays.

### Weeknights

The decision for weeknight games will be made at 4:00pm. Every effort will be made to play the games as scheduled. Please call the YMCA of Arlington Sports Department Rainout Line 817-459-8614 for the status of your game.

### Rescheduling Rainout Games

Coaches, please contact the YMCA Sports Department 817-801-1400 or visit our website at [www.ymca-arlington.org](http://www.ymca-arlington.org) after 2 business days of your rainout to receive your rescheduled game; **the Sports Department will not contact you for games that have been rescheduled due to a rainout.**

Once the game has started, the official or site supervisor will be in charge of canceling the game. At least half of the game must be played in order to be considered a complete game. The YMCA will reschedule all games that are cancelled due to rainouts. Coaches, please instruct your parents about this policy. Utilize a phone bank upon notification of your game.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE/TEAM ORGANIZATION**

**YMCA Sports Department:** The Sports Director or the YMCA Sports staff person is responsible for overseeing the program administration, coordinates activities, promotes the program, trains the volunteers, and tries to make everyone's experience positive.

**Site Supervisor:** The Site Supervisor is the on site person to facilitate YMCA communication and make things happen in a positive manner.

B. A non-player foul, unsportsmanlike foul or dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.

### **2... ALL-BUT-ONE ENFORCEMENT PRINCIPLE**

Enforcement philosophy is based on the fact that a team is given the advantage of the distance, which is gained without assistance of a foul. It is assumed that the only foul, which would give this aid, is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot. Therefore, all fouls but this one, that is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot, are penalized from the basic spot. This one foul is penalized from the spot of the foul.

### **3... TWO TYPES OF PLAYS**

Whenever the ball is alive, 1 or 2 types of plays is in progress, either a loose ball play or a running play. The type of play has no significance unless a foul occurs. If a foul does occur, the officials must know whether it was during a loose ball play or during a running play. This determines the basic spot of enforcement.

### **4... LOOSE BALL PLAY**

A loose ball play is action during:

- A. A free kick or protected scrimmage kick.
- B. A legal forward play.
- C. A backward pass, including the snap or fumble made by A from on or behind his/her scrimmage line
- D. The run or runs, which precede such legal pass, kick or fumble.

If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot, either the spot of the snap or the free kick.

## ***SECTION 3: SPECIAL ENFORCEMENTS***

### **1... HALF THE DISTANCE**

A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.

### **2... SAFETY/GOAL LINE**

If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind its goal line, which is now the basic spot, it is a safety.

**PLAY.** Team B intercepts a pass in their own end zone, Team A commits an illegal contact foul and Team B is then de-flagged.

**RULING.** Option for Team B – decline the illegal contact foul and accept a touchback or accept the illegal contact foul and it will be first and 10 on the B 10, measured from the goal line.

### **3... DISQUALIFIED PLAYER**

A disqualified player must be removed.

### **4... FORFEIT OF GAME**

A referee's decision to forfeit a game is final.

## **RULE 10. ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES**

### ***SECTION 1: PROCEDURE AFTER A FOUL***

#### **1... CAPTAIN'S CHOICE**

When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both coaches. The referee shall inform the coach of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him/her the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance.

#### **2... DEAD BALL FOUL**

When a foul occurs during a dead ball either between downs or prior to a free kick or snap, the officials shall not permit the ball to become alive. The penalty for any foul between downs, any non-player foul or any unsportsmanlike foul, is enforced from the succeeding spot. If a dead ball foul occurs after time expires for any period, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot. The succeeding spot is where the ball would next be snapped or free kicked if a foul had not occurred.

#### **4... ESTABLISH ZONE LINE-TO-GAIN**

On a live ball foul mark off the penalty yardage first, then establish the zone line-to-gain. However with a dead ball foul, establish the zone line-to-gain first and then mark off the penalty yardage.

**PLAY.** Third and 2 on A's 18, A-2 runs to the A 26. (a) A-2 flag guards at the A 25 and is de-flagged at the A 35; or (b) A-2 is de-flagged at the A 26. The referee calls an unsportsmanlike conduct foul on A-2.

**RULING.** (a) Penalize Team A 10 yards for flag guarding, A's ball third and 5 on A 15. (b) Penalize Team A 10 yards for the dead ball foul from the A 26, first and 24 on A 16. The zone line-to-gain has been reached legally since there are no live ball fouls. The referee will signal first down, establish a new zone line-to-gain, the 40, then penalize the dead ball foul from the succeeding spot, the A 26.

### ***SECTION 2: TYPES OF PLAY AND BASIC ENFORCEMENT SPOTS***

#### **1... LIVE BALL FOUL**

Any live ball foul is penalized according to the all-but-one enforcement principle except:

- A. A foul, which occurs simultaneously with a snap or free kick is penalized from the previous spot.

**Coaches/Assistant Coaches:** Each team has one volunteer coach and as many assistants coaches as needed. All persons accepting responsibility in the program must accept and carry out the rules and regulations of the program, strive to teach good sportsmanship, good health habits, good citizenship, and exercise the type of personal behavior which will set a good example for the children. Every safety precaution must be observed at all times. Abuse or embarrassment of any player or team will not be tolerated.

**Parents:** Each team's coach will meet with the parents of their players during the first week of practices to explain the program, define what is expected of the children and promote sportsmanship.

**Registration:** Each child must complete and turn in his/her fees and registration signed by a parent/guardian to the YMCA prior to participation in any practice session or game.

**Roster Limits:** Each team shall have a minimum of 7 players and a maximum of 10 on the roster unless approved by the Program Director.

## **GAME DAY**

**Game schedules and rescheduling:** The sports department does all scheduling of league games. No changes in time or date are permitted without authorization from the sports department.

**Starting the Game:** There must be seven roster players on the field at game time in order to start the game. If a team does not have the seven roster players at game time, alternatives may be used to allow a game to be played. Only registered players from the same division may participate. Coaches allowing non-registered players to participate in any game or practice maybe subjected to dismissal.

**Protest. No protest will be accepted.** Disagreements made during a game must be corrected on the spot. Show respect for the game and each other, lets make this a positive experience for the kids.

**Equipment.** Only equipment provided by the YMCA of Arlington will be used for games, unless approved by the sports department

**Conduct.** No razzing or harassing of referees or other team members is permitted. Spectators at games must be kept under control by coaches. Failure to maintain control of players and spectators may result in the cancellation of the game as recommended by the site supervisor.

**Awards.** The YMCA does not encourage the purchase of trophies by parents or coaches. However, if some type of recognition is given it must be on an equal basis and agreed upon by all the parents. In no case will any team be allowed to present trophies at any YMCA game site.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

The YMCA understands the necessity of a coach permitted to discipline a player. The YMCA will allow this only in regards to disruptive behavior and practice absences. If the coach elects to utilize this disciplinary option as a teaching method, he/she must abide by the following procedures:

NOTE: This action is to deter a habitual action, not a single unavoidable circumstance.

1. Clearance with the Sports Director at the YMCA.
2. Discuss the situation with the child's parents.
3. Notify the opposing coach prior to commencement of the game, if needed.
4. Clearance is for one game only. Each offense must be processed.

## **EJECTED**

If a player, coach, or fan is ejected from a game, the head coach must notify the Sports Director within 48 hours. Failure to report an ejection may result in further action taken against the head coach. The player, coach or fan will be placed on probation for the remainder of the season and will receive a one game suspension to be served at the next game. If the same player, coach, or fan endures a second ejection during the season he/she could face the possibility of being suspended for the remainder of the season depending on the nature of the offense. The YMCA of Arlington Sports Department will not issue refunds to any player, coach, or fan ejected from a game or any one involved in a suspended game or season.

## **RULE 1. GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS & EQUIPMENT**

### ***SECTION 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS***

#### **1...THE GAME**

The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each.

#### **2... SUPERVISION**

The game shall be played under the supervision of 2 officials. The officials are: Referee and Line Judge.

- A. If an injured player is not replaced for at least one down; unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs.
- B. To use a replaced player substitute in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap or free kick.
- C. For a player to be lying on the ground to deceive opponents or immediately before the snap or free kick.
- D. For a disqualified player to re-enter the game.

**Penalty:** Illegal Participation, 10 yards.

## ***SECTION 8: FLAG BELT REMOVAL***

### **1... BASIC TENETS**

There are basic rules, which are established for flag football because of legal or illegal removal of the flag belt.

- A. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be de-flagged.
- B. When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play stops.
- C. In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.
- D. A defensive player intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.
- E. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials or other such acts are illegal. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from the previous spot and player disqualification. If by Team A, loss of down. If by Team B, an automatic first down.

**PLAY.** A-1 tampers with the flag belt and scores a touchdown with or without any B player having a chance to de-flag A-1.

**RULING.** The official pulls A-1's flag belt and finds it has been tampered with. Personal Foul, 10 yard penalty, loss of down from previous spot, A-1 is disqualified and the touchdown is disallowed.

**PLAY.** A-1 carries the ball when B-1 and B-2 attempt to de-flag A-1. B-1 and B-2 touch or grasp the flag belt momentarily. A-1 continues to run a few steps and the flag belt falls to the ground.

**RULING.** A-1 is down where the original de-flag was attempted. B-1 and B-2 are deemed to have caused the de-flag.

**RULING.** If B-1 could not reach the flag belt because A-1 had placed the ball on the belt, then penalize; however, if B-1 was not close enough to de-flag A-1, then do not penalize. Advantage versus disadvantage is the key.

### **2... STIFF ARM**

The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a “stiff arm” extended to ward off an opponent attempting to de-flag. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

### **3... HELPING THE RUNNER**

The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate. Penalty: Helping Runner, 10 yards.

### **4... OBSTRUCTION OF RUNNER**

The defensive player shall not hold, grasp or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards.

**PLAY.** A-1 running toward B-2 who is attempting to de-flag A-1; (a) goes around B-2 to avoid being de-flagged; (b) deliberately runs through B-2 making no attempt to avoid contact; or (c) ducks his/her head while contacting B-2.

**RULING.** In (a) no call, in (b) and (c), Team A personal Foul, 10 yards.

## ***SECTION 6: BATTING AND KICKING***

### **1... BATTING A FREE BALL**

Players shall not bat a loose ball other than a pass or a fumble in flight. A backward pass in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team. A ball in player possession shall not be batted forward by a player of the team in possession. **PENALTY:** Illegal Batting, 10 yards.

### **2... ILLEGAL KICKING**

No player shall intentionally kick a ball other than as a free kick or a protected scrimmage kick. **PENALTY:** Illegal kicking, 10 yards.

## ***SECTION 7: ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION***

### **1... BLOCKED OR PUSHED OUT-OF BOUNDS**

Prior to a change of possession, no player of A or K shall go out-of-bounds and return during the down unless blocked out-of-bounds by an opponent. If a player is blocked out-of-bounds by an opponent and returns inbounds during the down, he/she shall return at the first opportunity. During the down, no player shall intentionally go out-of-bounds and return.

### **2... HINDER AN OPPONENT**

No replaced player or substitute shall hinder an opponent, touch the ball, influence the play or otherwise participate.

### **3... ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION**

It is illegal participation:

### **3... TEAM CAPTAINS**

Each coach shall designate to the referee the team captain or captains. If more than one player is designated, a speaking captain must be selected to make all the decisions. The captain’s first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.

### **4... PERSONS SUBJECT TO THE RULE**

Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, **spectators**, and other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

## ***SECTION 2: THE FIELD***

### **1... ZONE MARKINGS**

The field shall be a rectangular area with lines and zone markings. However, in case of facility limitations, distances of field length and width can be modified. The width of the field should be lined at 15 yard intervals from goal line to goal line. These zone markings may be changed according to field dimensions.

### **2... INBOUNDS/OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

The lines bounding the sidelines and the end zones are out-of-bounds in their entirety, and the inbounds area is enclosed within the lines. The entire width of each goal shall be a part of the end zone.

### **3... TEAM AREA**

On each side of the field a team area is designated for the teams, coaches and authorized team attendants. This team area shall be located 2 yards from the sideline and between the 15 yard lines. When the playing area is modified, so should the team area. If teams cannot agree on a sideline, the referee will conduct a coin toss.

## ***SECTION 3: GAME EQUIPMENT***

### **1... THE BALL**

The official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber and meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure. PeeWee division will play with a PeeWee size ball. Junior division will play with a junior size ball. Seniors division will play with a Youth size ball. The final approval of the game ball will be left up to the official’s discretion.

### **2... DOWN MARKER**

A down marker shall be used to indicate the number of the down and placed at line of scrimmage. It shall be positioned 2 yards out-of-bounds and operated under the jurisdiction of the Line Judge for 3 and 4 person crew and the referee for a 2 person crew.

## **SECTION 4: PLAYER EQUIPMENT**

### **1... JERSEY**

Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys, without pockets, numbered on the rear. The visiting team is responsible for avoidance of similarity of colors, but if in doubt, the referee may request either team to change. Jerseys must be either:

- A. Long enough so they remain tucked in the pants/shorts during the entire down OR
- B. Short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline. The referee will use a fist to measure the distance between the waistline and the bottom of the jersey.

### **2... PANTS/SHORTS**

Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belts, belt loops, pockets or exposed drawstrings. The pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags.

### **3... FLAG BELT**

Each player must wear a one piece belt, without any knots, at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. The flags should be a minimum of 2 inches wide and 14 inches long.

**EXAMPLE:** A-1 breaks huddle not wearing a flag belt or the jersey is untucked as the 25 second count is running: (a) the referee informs A-1 of the problem as A-1 secures a flag belt or tucks in the jersey the 25 second count expires: or (b) the referee points out the problem to A-1 who refuses to acquire a flag belt or to tuck in the jersey. Ruling. In (a) penalize A for a delay of game. In (b), penalize A for unsportsmanlike conduct.

### **4... SHOES**

Shoes shall be made of canvas, leather or synthetic material, which covers the foot attached to a firm sole of leather, rubber or composite material, which may have cleats or be cleatless. Among the items that do not meet these requirements are gymnastic slippers, tennis shoes cut so protection is reduced, ski and logger boots and other apparel not intended for football use. Cleats are limited to studs or projections that do not exceed ½ inch in length and are made with non-abrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material that does not chip or develop a cutting edge.

## **SECTION 5: PLAYER EQUIPMENT-OPTIONAL**

### **1... ACE BANDAGE**

Players may use an ace bandage no more than two turns thick in any given area. It can be anchored at each end by tape not to exceed two turns.

### **2...GLOVES**

Players may wear gloves which must consist of a soft pliable and non-abrasive material.

## **2... SCREEN BLOCKING FUNDAMENTALS**

A player who screens shall not:

- A. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
- B. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
- C. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screened may take his/her stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
- D. After assuming his/her legal screening position move to maintain it, unless he/she moves in the same direction and path as his/her opponent. If the screened violates any of these provisions and contact results, he she has committed a personal foul. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

## **3... BLOCKING AND INTERLOCKED INTERFERENCE**

Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner. **PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards.

## **4... USE OF HANDS OR ARMS BY THE DEFENSIVE**

Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A blocker may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards.

## **SECTION 5: RUNNER**

### **ART 1... GUARDING THE FLAG BELT**

Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag Guarding includes:

- A. Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
- B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
- C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner, this places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.

**PENALTY:** Flag Guarding, 10 Yards.

**PLAY.** A-1 catches the snap from center A-2, fakes a hand-off to A-3, then places the ball on his/her hip, rolls out and throws a forward pass.

- I. Position him/herself on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- J. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football.

**PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 10 yards. If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified.

**PLAY.** B-2 moving toward A-1 who has the ball in his/her possession (a) grabs/strips the ball from A-1, or (b) tries to knock the ball out of A-1's hands.

**RULING.** In (a) and (b) this is a personal foul penalty. B must go for the flag belt.

**PLAY.** A-1, running for a score, dives into the end zone: (a) breaks the plane with the ball without contacting any Team B player, or (b) charges into B-3 at the 1 yard line, or (c) charges into B-4 in the end zone after crossing the goal line.

**RULING.** In (a) the score counts. In (b) a 10 yard penalty is assessed against Team A from the 1 yard line. In (c) the score counts and Team A will be assessed a 10 yard penalty on the try.

**PLAY.** A-3 muffs a legal forward pass and B-2 pushes A-3 out of the way in an attempt to secure the ball.

**RULING.** Personal foul for illegal contact, penalize 10 yards.

## **2... ROUGHING THE PASSER**

Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass. Roughing the passer restrictions do not apply if the forward pass is thrown from beyond Team A's scrimmage line.

Penalty: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards, automatic first down.

**PLAY.** B-3 rushing, jumps to block a pass thrown by A-1 and; (a) blocks the ball and avoiding unnecessary contact, brushes A-1; (b) blocks the ball and charges into A-1; or (c) contacts passer A-1's hand or arm.

**RULING.** In (a) no call is made; in (b) and (c) Roughing the Passer, 10 yards and an automatic first down. If the defender contacts the passer's hand or arm, whether or not he/she touches the pass, it is roughing the passer.

## **SECTION 4: BLOCKING**

### **1... OFFENSIVE SCREEN BLOCKING**

The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at the side or behind the back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during and after screen blocking. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

### **3...HEADGEAR**

Players may wear the navy watch – style knit or stocking cap that may not have a bill. It can have a knit ball on top. Players may wear a headband no wider than 2 inches and made of non-abrasive material, unadorned single-colored cloth, elastic, fiber, soft leather or rubber. Rubber or cloth elastic bands may be used to control hair.

### **4... KNEE PADS**

Players may wear soft, pliable basketball or wrestling knee pads on the leg, knee and/or ankle.

### **5... MOUTH AND TEETH PROTECTOR**

It is strongly recommended that a mouth piece be worn by all players.

## **SECTION 6: PLAYER EQUIPMENT-ILLEGAL**

### **1...ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT**

A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play. This applies to any equipment, which, in the opinion of the referee, is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment or substances, which shall always be declared illegal include:

- A. Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats or items containing exposed knots.
- B. Jewelry.
- C. Pads or braces worn above the waist.
- D. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in or detachable cleats. Exception: Screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat, not the shoe.
- E. Shirts or jerseys, which do not remain tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt or shirt, which does not remain tucked in. Tear – away jerseys or jerseys that have been altered in any manner, which produces a knot-like protrusion or creates a tear-away jersey.
- F. Pants or shorts with any belts, belt loops, or exposed drawstrings.
- G. Leg and knee braces are made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges overlapped and any other hard substance is covered with at least ½ inch of closed cell slow recovery rubber or other material of similar thickness and physical properties.
- H. Any slippery or sticky foreign substance on any equipment or exposed part of the body.
- I. Equipment, which includes computers or any electronic or mechanical devices for communication.
- J. Towels attached at the players waist. (FLAG ONLY)

**SECTION 7: PLAYERS--  
EQUIPMENT MISSING/ILLEGAL**

When any player equipment is missing or when illegal equipment is found on any incoming substitute or player, correction must be made before participation. An official time-out shall be declared to permit prompt repair of equipment, which becomes illegal or defective through use.

**RULE 2. DEFINITIONS OF PLAYING TERMS**

**SECTION 1: BALL-LIVE, DEAD, LOOSE, POSSESSION**

**1... LIVE BALL**

A live Ball is a ball in play and a dead ball is a ball not in play. A pass or fumble, which is not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight and therefore can be caught and advanced by either team.

**2... LOOSE BALL**

A loose ball is a live ball not in player possession during:

- A. A running play
- B. A scrimmage or free kick before possession is gained or the ball is dead by rule.
- C. The interval after a legal forward pass is released and before it becomes complete, incomplete or intercepted.

**3... WHEN THE BALL IS READY FOR PLAY**

A dead ball is ready for play when the referee:

- A. If time is in, sounds the whistle and signals "ready for play".
- B. If time is out, sounds the whistle and signals either "start the clock" or "ball ready for play".

**4... IN POSSESSION**

"In possession" is an abbreviation meaning "in possession of a live ball". A player is in possession when he/she is holding or controlling the ball. A team is in possession when:

- A. When one of its players is in possession.
- B. While a punt or place kick is being attempted.
- C. While a forward pass thrown by one of its players in flight.
- D. When it was last in possession during a loose ball.

**SECTION 2: BATTING, FUMBLE MUFF, TOUCHING  
BALL**

**1... BATTING**

Batting is intentionally slapping or striking the ball with the hand or arm.

G. Fighting an opponent.

H. Leaving the team area and entering the playing area during a fight.

Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. If flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified. In article 2F, 2G and 2H the offense is automatic disqualification. **PLAY.** Team A substitutes voice their disapproval using abusive language concerning a judgment call by the Back Judge.

**RULING.** The referee should call an "officials time-out". Inform Team A coach that such behavior is unacceptable, and tell the coach to communicate this information to his/her bench. If such behavior is exhibited again during the game, penalize 10 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. It is imperative that officials stop behavior the first time it occurs. Team A and B are present to play the game, not officiate it. When the officials accept the game assignment, they must be strong and ready to take control.

**3... SECOND UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL**

The second unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or non-player results in disqualification.

**SECTION 2: UNFAIR ACTS**

If a team refuses to play within two minutes after being ordered by the referee or if play is interfered with by an obviously unfair or unsportsmanlike act not specifically covered by the rules, or if a team repeatedly commits fouls, which can be penalized only by having the distance to its goal line, the referee may enforce any penalty he/she considers equitable, including the awarding of a score. For refusal to play or for repeated fouls, the referee shall, after one warning, forfeit the game to the opponents.

**SECTION 3: PERSONAL FOULS**

**1... PLAYER RESTRICTIONS**

No player shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. No Player Shall:

- A. Punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- B. Trip an opponent.
- C. Throw the runner to the ground.
- D. Hurdle any other players.
- E. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
- F. Make any contact with an opponent, which is deemed unnecessary of any nature including using fists, locked hands, elbows or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to the rules.
- G. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
- H. Clip an opponent.

his/her team's possession or it goes out-of-bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where the pass was intercepted or the kick was caught. This is known as the momentum rule.

**PLAY.** A-1 after receiving the snap in his/her end zone, is de-flagged with the ball above the goal line, it's forward point in the field of play.

**RULING.** Safety. The entire ball has to be in the field of play when taking it out of your own end zone.

### **2... AFTERWARDS**

When a safety is scored, the ball belongs to the defending team at its own 15 yard line and that team shall put the ball in play by a punt or free kick.

### **3... TOUCHBACK**

It is a touchback when:

- A. R downs a scrimmage or free kick while the ball is on or behind R's goal line..

## **RULE 9. CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS**

### ***SECTION 1: UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT***

#### **1... NON-CONTACT PLAYER ACTS**

No player shall commit non-contact acts during a period of intermission. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A. Any acts of unfair play.
- B. Using disconcerting words or acts prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with team A's signals or movements.
- C. Intentionally kicking at the ball, other than during a legal kick.
- D. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or with permission of the referee.
- E. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player.
- F. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing players. (Disqualified)  
Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified.

#### **2... PROHIBITED ACTS**

There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches or others subject to the rules. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.
- B. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
- C. Indicating objections to an official's decision.
- D. Holding an unauthorized conference or being on the field illegally.
- E. Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
- F. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game by persons subject to the rules.

#### **2... FUMBLE**

A fumble is a loss of player possession other than by handling, passing or kicking the ball.

#### **3... MUFF**

A muff is an unsuccessful attempt to catch a ball, the ball being touched in the attempt.

#### **4... TOUCHING**

Touching refers to any contact with the ball.

### ***SECTION 3: CATCH INTERCEPTION, SIMULTANEOUS CATCH***

#### **1... CATCH AND INTERCEPTION**

A catch is an act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble in flight is an interception. If a player attempts a catch or an interception while in the air, the player must contact the ground in bounds with the ball in his/her possession prior to touching out-of-bounds, unless an opponent's contact forced him/her out-of-bounds. Catching is always preceded by touching of the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance.

If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception even though a subsequent step falls out-of-bounds.

- A. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception.
- B. A loss of ball simultaneously while returning to the ground is not a catch or interception. NOTE: If in doubt, it is a catch.

**PLAY.** QB A-1 throws a forward pass, which is low and near the ground to receiver A-2.

**RULING.** The official must visibly see the ball strike the ground to rule incomplete. If an official does not see the ball hit the ground, it will be ruled a completed pass.

**PLAY.** A pass from QB A-1 is near the sideline and receiver A-2, moving toward the goal line, leaps and possesses the pass at the 3 yard line. B-1 attempts to intercept the ball and A-2 and B-2 make illegal contact with each other so that A-2's first contact with the ground is out-of-bounds at the 3 yard line.

**RULING.** Completed pass. A-2 would have landed inbounds if the contact has not occurred.

#### **2... SIMULTANEOUS CATCH**

A catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players inbounds.

#### ***SECTION 4: CLIPPING***

Clipping is running or diving into the back or throwing or dropping the body across the back of the leg or legs of an opponent or pushing an opponent in the back.

#### ***SECTION 5: DOWN AND BETWEEN DOWNS***

A down is a unit of the game which starts, after the ball is ready to play, with a legal snap or free kick and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.

#### ***SECTION 6: ENCROACHMENT***

Encroachment is a term to indicate a player is illegally in the neutral zone. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until he/she is on his/her team's side of the neutral zone.

#### ***SECTION 7: FIGHTING***

Fighting is an attempt by a player or non-player to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to: attempts to strike an opponent with the arms, hands, legs or feet, whether or not there is contact.

#### ***SECTION 8: FOULING***

A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. NOTE: If in doubt, it is not a foul.

#### ***SECTION 9: GOAL LINES***

Each goal line is a vertical plane separating the end zone from the field of play. The plane of the goal line extends beyond the sideline.

#### ***SECTION 10: HANDLING THE BALL***

Handling the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing or kicking it.

#### ***SECTION 11: HUDDLE***

A huddle is two or more offensive players grouped together after the ball is ready for play and before assuming scrimmage formation prior to the snap.

#### ***SECTION 12: HURDLING***

Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over a player who is on his/her feet.

#### ***2... REFEREE'S RESPONSIBILITY AND DEFENSE SCORES 2 POINTS***

The referee must speak to the field captain only, asking him/her whether the try shall be from the 3 or 10 yard line. Once the team captain makes the choice, he/she may change the decision only when a time-out is taken. A team's choice cannot be changed if a penalty should occur. Enforcement of yardage penalties does not change the value of the try. The points shall be awarded if the try results in what would have been a touchdown. If Team B intercepts a pass or fumble during the try and returns it for a touchdown, they score 2 points. **PLAY.** Team A scores a touchdown and elects to attempt a 1 point conversion. Then after calling a charged time-out, decides to change and attempt a 2 point conversion.

**RULING.** Legal.

#### ***3... FOUL DURING TRY***

If a double foul occurs during the down, the down shall be replayed.. When a distance penalty is incurred by Team A during a successful try, the down will be repeated, if accepted. However, if Team A penalty carries a loss of down, the try has ended and will not be repeated. No points are scored for Team A, if accepted.

**PLAY.** Team A during a try throws 2 forward passes, which result in a score.

**RULING.** Since the penalty carries a loss of down, the try by Team A has ended with no points scored.

#### ***SECTION 3: FORCE AND RESPONSIBILITY***

##### ***1... RESPONSIBILITY***

The team responsible for a ball being on, above or behind the goal line is the team whose player carries the ball to or across that line; or incurs a penalty, which leaves the ball on or behind the line.

##### ***2... FORCE***

The force imparted by a player who kicks, passes, snaps or fumbles, the ball shall be considered responsible for the ball's progress in any direction even though it's course is deflected or reversed, after striking the ground or after striking a player of the other team. However the initial force is considered expanded and a new force is provided if a loose ball is illegally kicked or batted or it is contacted again after coming to rest.

#### ***SECTION 4: MOMENTUM, SAFETY AND TOUCHBACK***

##### ***1... SAFETY***

A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his/her team's possession.

Exception: When a Team B player intercepts a forward pass or catches a scrimmage kick or free kick between his/her 5 yard line and the goal and his/her momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in

**PLAY.** A-1 throws a legal forward pass toward A-5 who is beyond Team A's scrimmage line. Before A-5 touches the pass, B-2 de-flags A-5.

**RULING.** Defensive Pass Interference.

### **2... OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE**

After the ball is snapped, and until it has been touched by a receiver, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line.

Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 5 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.

### **3... DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE**

After the pass is thrown, and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line while the ball is in flight. Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot, automatic first down. If the pass interference by either player is intentional or unsportsmanlike, his/her team shall be penalized an additional 10 yards.

**PLAY.** B-1 defending against a legal forward pass beyond Team A's scrimmage line, waves his/her arms in the face of A-2 who is attempting to catch the pass.

**RULING.** Defensive pass Interference.

## **RULE 8. SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACK**

### ***SECTION 1: TOUCHDOWN***

#### **1... TOUCHDOWN VALUE**

All touchdowns are 6 points.

#### **2... HOW SCORED**

A touchdown shall be scored when a legal forward pass is completed or a fumble or backward pass is caught on or behind the opponent's goal line or when a player is legally in possession of the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the opponent's goal line.

#### **3... PLAYER RESPONSIBILITY**

The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the player is not de-flagged with one pull and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. The player maybe disqualified.

Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from the previous spot. If by team A, loss of down. If by Team B, automatic first down.

### ***SECTION 2: THE EXTRA POINT (TRY)***

#### **1... 1 OR 2 POINTS**

An opportunity to score 1 point from the 3 yard line or 2 points from the 10 yard line shall be granted the team scoring a touchdown. While time is out there shall be one scrimmage play, unless changed by penalty.

## ***SECTION 13: KICKS***

### **1... FREE KICK**

A free kick is a kick made under restrictions, which prohibits either team from advancing beyond the established restraining lines until the ball is kicked.

### **2... KICKER**

The kicker is any player who punts or place kicks. The kicker is a runner until he/she actually kicks the ball. Players of his/her team are known as kickers and any opponent is a receiver.

### **3... KICKOFF**

A kickoff is a free kick, which starts each half. It must be a place kick.

### **4... LEGAL AND ILLEGAL KICKS**

A legal kick is a punt by a player of the team in possession when such a kick is permitted by rule. Kicking the ball in any other manner is illegal. Any kick continues to be a kick until it is caught by another player or becomes dead.

### **5... PLACE KICK**

A place kick is kicking the ball from a fixed position either on the ground or on a tee with a maximum height of two inches. The ball may be held in position by any player of the kicking team.

### **6... PROTECTED SCRIMMAGE KICK**

A protected scrimmage kick is made by team A under restrictions, which prohibits either team from advancing beyond their scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked.

### **7... PUNT**

A punt is kicking the ball by the player who drops it and kicks it before it strikes the ground.

### ***SECTION 14: LOSS OF A DOWN***

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

### ***SECTION 15: NEUTRAL ZONE***

The neutral zone is from the forward point of the football one yard to the team B scrimmage line and extended to each sideline. It is established when the ball is ready for play.

### ***SECTION 16: PASSER***

The passer is the player who has thrown a legal forward pass. He/she remains the passer while the ball is in flight or until he/she moves to participate in the main play.

## ***SECTION 17: PASSES***

### **1... PASSING**

Passing the ball is throwing it. In a pass, the ball travels in flight. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught, intercepted or the ball becomes dead. The initial direction determines whether a pass is forward or backward.

### **2... FORWARD AND BACKWARD PASS**

A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction towards the opponent's end line. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. A backward pass or fumble that hits the ground is ruled the same. It will be declared dead at the spot where it strikes the ground.

## ***SECTION 18: PENALTY***

A penalty is a loss imposed by rule upon a team, which has committed a foul.

## ***SECTION 19: REMOVING THE FLAG BELT***

### **1... FLAG REMOVAL**

When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

### **2... CONTACT**

In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands. A defensive player may not hold, push or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.

## ***SECTION 20: SCREEN BLOCKING***

Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without initiating contact with him/her with any part of the screen blockers body.

## ***SECTION 21: SCRIMMAGE***

### **1... SCRIMMAGE**

A scrimmage is the interplay of two teams during a down in which play begins with a snap and ends when the ball becomes dead.

### **2... SCRIMMAGE LINE**

The scrimmage line for team A is the yard line and its vertical plane, which passes through the forward point of the ball. The scrimmage line for team B is the yard line and its vertical plane, which passes one yard from the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. Team's B scrimmage line may extend into their

**PLAY.** A-1 throws a short forward pass: (a) A-1 catches; or (b) the ball is tipped by A-4 or B-3, then A-1 catches; or (c) A-6 catches a pass and throws a backward pass to A-1.

**RULING.** In (a) illegal forward pass. In (b) and (c) play is legal as another player touched the ball before A-1 again possessed it. However, Team A cannot throw a second forward pass during the down.

### **3... AFTER ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS**

When an illegal forward pass touches the ground or goes out-of-bounds the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team, at the spot from where the pass was thrown, unless a new series of downs has been created. In such a case the ball belongs to the passing team if, after the enforcement of the penalty, the ball is left in advance of the zone line-to-gain or belongs to the opponents, if the ball, after penalty, did not make the next zone line-to-gain and the foul occurred during the fourth down. If a player catches an illegal forward pass, the ball continues in play until declared dead.

## ***SECTION 7: COMPLETED OR INTERCEPTED PASSES***

### **1... PASS CAUGHT OR INTERCEPTED**

A forward pass is completed when caught by a member of the passing team inbounds. A forward pass is intercepted when caught by a member of the opposing team inbounds. It is counted as a completion or interception as long as the first part of the person to make contact with the ground after the catch, usually one foot, touches the ground.

### **2... SIMULTANEOUS CATCH BY OPPOSING PLAYERS**

If, a forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team that snapped the ball at the spot of the catch.

## ***SECTION 8: INCOMPLETE PASSES***

### **1... BECOMES DEAD**

When a forward pass touches the ground or anything out-of-bounds, it becomes dead.

## ***SECTION 9: FORWARD PASS INTERFERENCE***

### **1... CONTACT**

During a scrimmage in which a legal forward pass crosses Team A's scrimmage line, any contact, which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond team A's scrimmage line is pass interference unless it occurs when 2 or more eligible receivers make simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is de-flagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond team A's scrimmage line.

#### **4... OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

A backward pass, which goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines belong to the team last in possession at the out-of-bounds spot. If out-of-bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.

#### **5... BALL DEAD WHEN IT HITS THE GROUND**

A backward pass or fumble, which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless lost on downs.

**PLAY.** A-1 running with the ball at Team B's yard line slips and fumbles the ball into the end zone.

**RULING.** Touchback. B's ball, first and 15 on B 15.

### ***SECTION 6: LEGAL AND ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS***

#### **1... LEGAL FORWARD PASS**

All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. During a scrimmage down and before team possession is changed a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind the scrimmage line when the ball leaves his/her hands. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down. NOTE: If in doubt, the passer is behind the scrimmage line.

**PLAY.** A-1 runs with the ball beyond the scrimmage line and throws a backward pass from Team A's 31 yard line.

**RULING.** Legal play. The initial direction of a pass determines whether the pass is forward or backward. While a backward pass may have its flight path altered by wind or forward player momentum and subsequently be caught beyond the point of release, this does not change the status of the pass.

**PLAY.** QB A-1 throws a legal forward pass, which is controlled by airborne A-2. Prior to returning to the ground, A-2 throws the ball forward or backward to A-3 who runs for a touchdown.

**RULING.** Legal play. The pass remains a pass until A—2 lands on the ground for a completion. Since A-2 is airborne he/she may bat or throw the pass in any direction.

#### **2... ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS**

A forward pass is illegal:

- A. If the passer's foot is beyond Team A's scrimmage line when the ball leaves his/her hand.
- B. If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
- C. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.
- D. If a passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass.

Penalty: Illegal Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down if by Team A before possession changes during a scrimmage down. NOTE: If in doubt, the pass is legal.

end zone. An offensive player is on his/her scrimmage line when facing his/her opponent's goal line with the line of his/her shoulders approximately parallel thereto and with his/her head or foot breaking the plane of the imaginary line drawn through the waistline of the snapper and parallel to the scrimmage line.

#### **3... BACKFIELD LINE**

To be legally in the backfield a team player's head must not break the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the nearest player, except the snapper, on the scrimmage line.

### ***SECTION 22: SHIFT***

A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who, after a huddle or taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

### ***SECTION 23: TEAM AND PLAYER DESIGNATIONS***

#### **1... DISQUALIFIED PLAYERS**

The disqualified player is one who becomes ineligible from further participation in the game.

#### **2... LINE PLAYER AND BACKFIELD PLAYER**

A line player is any person on his/her scrimmage line when the ball is snapped. A backfield player is any person who is legally behind that line when the ball is snapped.

#### **3... OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE TEAM**

The offensive team is the team in possession, or the team to which the ball belongs. The defensive team is the opposing team.

#### **4... PLAYER**

The player is any one of the participants in the game at any particular time.

#### **5... RUNNER**

The runner is the player in possession of a live ball or simulating possession of a live ball. Once a player catches or intercepts a pass, he/she becomes a runner.

#### **6... SNAPPER**

The snapper is the player who snaps the ball.

#### **7... SUBSTITUTE**

A substitute is a team member who may replace a player.

#### **8... TEAM A AND B**

Team A is the team, which puts the ball in play. The opponent of Team A is Team B. A player of A is A1 and teammates are A2 and A3. Other abbreviations are B1 for a player of B, K1 for a player of the kickers and R1 for one of the receivers.

### ***SECTION 24: TRIPPING***

Tripping is the use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent, including the runner, below the knee.

## **RULE 3. PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, SUBSTITUTIONS**

### ***SECTION 1: THE START OF EACH PERIOD***

#### **1... COIN TOSS**

Each half shall start with a kickoff. Three minutes before the start of the game the referee shall toss a coin in the presence of the opposing field captains. The visiting captain shall call the fall of the coin. The captain winning the toss shall have a choice of options:

- A. To choose whether his/her team will kick or receive.
- B. To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The captain, not having the first choice of options, shall exercise the remaining option.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, teams will switch direction. The team that received the 1<sup>st</sup> half will kick the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.

#### **2... FORFEIT TIME**

Game time is forfeit time.

### ***SECTION 2: GAME TIME***

#### **1... PLAYING TIME AND INTERMISSIONS**

Playing time shall be 40 minutes, divided into 4 quarters of 10 minutes each. The intermission between halves shall be 5 minutes. When overtime is used, there will be a 3 minute intermission. Timing rules may be modified due to program constraints.

#### **2... SHORTENING PERIODS**

Before the start of the game, if darkness threatens, playing time may be shortened by mutual agreement of the field captains and the referee. Anytime during the game, the playing time of any remaining periods may be shortened by mutual agreement of the opposing captains and the referee.

#### **3... EXTENSION OF PERIODS**

A half must be extended by an un-timed down, except for unsportsmanlike conduct or non-player fouls, if during the timed down, one of the following occurred:

- A. There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted.
- B. There was a double foul.
- C. There was an inadvertent whistle and the down is to be replayed.
- D. There was a touchdown scored. The extra point try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half and the points would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

#### **5... SHIFT**

In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head or arms for at least one full second before the snap.

Penalty: Illegal Shift, 5 yards.

**PLAY.** Following a huddle or shift one offensive player takes a preliminary position, then advances or drops into final position.

**RULING.** Such movement constitutes a shift; players must hold their final positions for one second before the snap.

### ***SECTION 4: HANDLING THE BALL***

#### **1... BACKWARD**

Any player may hand the ball backward at anytime.

#### **2... FREE KICK DOWN**

During a free kick down, a player may not hand the ball forward to a teammate.

#### **3... FORWARD**

During a scrimmage down, a Team A player may hand the ball forward behind the line of scrimmage only:

- A. To any line player who has clearly faced his/her goal line by moving both feet in a half-turn and is at least 1 yard behind the line when he/she receives the ball.
- B. To a teammate who, at the snap, was behind his/her scrimmage line or on an end of his/her line and was not the snapper.

Penalty: Illegal Handling, 5 yards and loss of down if by Team A before possession changes during a scrimmage down.

### ***SECTION 5: BACKWARD PASS AND FUMBLE***

#### **1... ANYTIME**

A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble anytime except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time.

Penalty: Illegal Pass, 5 yards from spot of the pass and loss of down. Referee will start the clock on the ready for play. NOTE: If in doubt, the pass is backward.

#### **2... CAUGHT OR INTERCEPTED**

A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted in flight inbounds by any player and advanced.

#### **3... SIMULTANEOUS CATCHING BY OPPOSING PLAYERS**

If a backward pass or fumble in flight is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the offensive team.

### **3... SNAP**

The snapper, after assuming position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play until it is snapped. An infraction of this provision may be penalized, whether or not the ball is snapped, and the penalty for any encroachment or contact foul by an opponent shall be cancelled. When over the ball snapper shall have his/her feet behind his/her scrimmage line, the snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hands. The ball must be snapped directly to the quarterback position. The ball shall leave the hands in this motion. Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

#### **NOTE:**

**The snapper cannot “snap” the ball to the QB and the QB just touch the ball with the snapper keeping it and running with it. NO SNAPPER SNEAKS.**

## ***SECTION 3: POSITION AND ACTION DURING THE SNAP***

### **1... LEGAL POSITION**

Anytime at or after the ball is ready for play, each Team A player must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.

### **2... MINIMUM LINE PLAYERS**

The offensive team must have at least 4 players on the scrimmage line. All players must be inbounds.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards. Note: If in doubt, the player is on the scrimmage line.

### **3... MOTION**

One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head or arms. The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.

Penalty: Illegal Motion, 5 yards.

**PLAY.** After a huddle all Team A players come to a stop and remain stationary for a full second, then (a) A-2 goes in motion legally and the ball is snapped, (b) A-2 goes in motion legally with 3 people on the line and the ball is snapped.

**RULING.** (a) Legal. (b) Illegal Motion, Live Ball Foul, 5 yards.

### **4... DIRECT SNAP, DEEP SNAP, SIDE SNAP**

All snaps are legal as long as it complies with the previous statements of snapping rules. NOTE: Each team can do whichever snap is best for their team.

### **4... GAME TIMER**

It is recommended that playing time be kept on a football timer operated by the Back Judge.

### **5... FIRST HALF**

The clock will start on the kickoff when the ball is legally touched. It will run continuously for the first half unless it is stopped for a:

- A. Touchdown – starts on the kick (after the try).
- B. Safety – starts when the free kick is legally touched, other than the first touching.
- C. Team time-out – starts on the snap.
- D. Referee's time-out – starts on the ready for play.

### **6... TWO MINUTE WARNING**

Approximately 2 minutes before the end of each half the referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the two minute warning.

### **7... LAST TWO MINUTES**

During the final two minutes of each half there will be a two minute warning given. At this point, there will be 7 plays made and then the half will be over.

Kickoffs and extra points will be considered as a play.

### **8... CORRECT TIMING ERRORS**

The referee shall have authority to correct obvious timing errors if discovery is prior to the second live ball following the error unless the period has officially ended.

### **9... ENDING OF A PERIOD**

Following delay to insure:

- A. No foul has occurred.
- B. No obvious timing error has occurred.
- C. No request for a coach – referee conference has occurred.
- D. No other irregularity has occurred.

The referee shall hold the ball in one hand overhead to indicate the period has officially ended.

## ***SECTION 3: TIE GAME***

### **1... PRE-TOSS**

In case of a game ending in a tie score, the officials must bring all players and coaches of both teams to the center of the field. They will discuss the tie breaker procedures and answer all questions prior to the coin toss. After this meeting the field captains will stay while the remaining players and coaches return to the sidelines.

### **2... THE COIN TOSS**

A coin will be flipped by the referee to determine the options, as discussed in the start of the game. The home team captain shall call the toss. There will be only one coin flip during overtime. If additional overtime periods are played, field captains will alternate choices. The winner of the toss will choose offense,

defense or direction. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. ALL OVERTIME PERIODS ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE.

### **3... TIE BREAKER**

Unless moved by penalty, each team will start 1<sup>st</sup> and goal from the Team B 15 yard line. The object will be to score a touchdown. An overtime period consists of a series of 4 downs by each team. If the score is still tied after one period, play will proceed to a second period where each team will get one play to score or get as many yards as possible. Whatever team gets the most yards on one play, wins the tiebreaker. If the first team with the ball scores, the opponent will still have a chance to win the game. Unless moved by penalty, they will start at first and goal from the Team B 15 yard line. Extra points will be attempted and scored according to rule 8. If the defense intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will be placed at the Team B 15 yard line to begin their series of 4 downs, if available. Each team is entitled to one time out per over time period with no “carry-overs”.

### **4... FOULS AND PENALTIES**

They are administered similar to the regular game. Team A shall be awarded a new series of 4 downs when an automatic first down foul is accepted. Dead ball fouls, following a touchdown, are penalized on the try. Live ball fouls committed by either team after Team B gains possession during a try or an overtime period shall be enforced at the succeeding spot. Dead ball fouls following a successful try will be penalized from the succeeding spot, the Team B 10 yard line, if accepted.

## ***SECTION 4: TIME-OUTS***

### **1... HOW CHARGED**

The referee shall declare a time-out when he/she suspends play for any reason. Each time-out shall be charged to the referee or one of the teams.

### **2... REFEREE'S TIME-OUTS**

The referee shall declare an official's time-out whenever a touchdown or safety is made; when an excess time-out is allowed or when the game clock is stopped to complete a penalty.

### **3... DISCRETIONARY TIME-OUTS**

The referee may declare an official's time-out for any contingency not covered elsewhere by the rules. If a time-out is for repair or replacement of player equipment, which becomes illegal through play and is considered dangerous to the other players, the referee shall charge him/herself. The referee shall charge him/herself where an injured player is designated.

### **4... CHARGED TIME-OUTS**

Each team is entitled to two charged time-outs during each half. Successive charged time-outs may be granted each team during dead ball period. If the ball

**RULING.** In (a), (b) and (c), Kick Catch Interference, 10 yards.

## ***SECTION 5: SIGNALS***

Players shall ignore any signals given by the kickers or receivers. The ball remains alive and there is no foul.

## **RULE 7. SNAPPING, HANDLING AND PASSING THE BALL**

### ***SECTION 1: THE SCRIMMAGE***

#### **1... THE START**

All plays from scrimmage must be started by a legal snap from a point on the inbounds line, unless the rules provide for a free kick.

#### **2... BALL RESPONSIBILITY**

The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a scrimmage down.

#### **3... STANCES**

Players may use a 2, 3 or 4 point stance.

### ***SECTION 2: PRIOR TO THE SNAP***

#### **1... ENCROACHMENT**

Following the ready for play and until the snap no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or in any way interfere with them. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals or shifting through the zone. After the snapper has placed his/her hands on the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball. Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Encroachment, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

**PLAY.** After the ball is marked ready for play by the referee, B-4 charges into the neutral zone beyond B's scrimmage line to give Team A a first down.

**RULING.** Dead ball foul for encroachment, 5 yards. The penalty is declined by Team A. Team B is informed by the referee that if this occurs again during the same dead ball interval, a 10 yard penalty will be enforced, if accepted.

#### **2... FALSE START**

No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start may include simulating a charge or start of play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment shall be cancelled. When over the ball snapper shall have his/her feet behind his/her scrimmage line, the snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hands. The ball shall leave the hands in motion.

Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from succeeding spot.

### **5... FIRST TOUCHING**

If any K player touches a protected scrimmage kick before or after it crosses K's scrimmage line and before it is touched there by a R player, it is referred to as "first touching". R may take the ball at that spot or may choose to have the ball put in play as determined by the action, which follows first touching. The right of R to take the ball at the spot of first touching by K is canceled if R touches the kick and thereafter during the down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

### **6... ELIGIBLE**

When a protected scrimmage kick, which has crossed K's scrimmage line touches a player from either team and then hits the ground the ball is dead and belongs to R. If the ball hits any R player and then is caught in the air, it can be advanced by R. If caught by K, the ball is dead and belongs to K.

**PLAY.** R-1 is attempting to catch a protected scrimmage kick, muffs the ball. K-3 catches the ball before it hits the ground and runs for a touchdown.

**RULING.** K's ball at the spot where the ball was caught. During a protected scrimmage kick, K cannot advance a muff by R. However, K can advance an airborne fumble by R because the kick has ended with possession.

### **7... KICK OUT-OF-BOUNDS BETWEEN THE GOAL LINES OR AT REST**

If a protected scrimmage kick goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest inbounds untouched and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the spot.

### **8... SCRIMMAGE KICK BEHIND THE GOAL LINE**

When any protected scrimmage kick touches anything while the kicked ball is on or behind the R's goal line (plane), it can be downed by R and is a touchback.

NOTE: R may run the kick out of the end zone.

## ***SECTION 4: KICK CATCH INTERFERENCE***

**1...** While any free kick or protected scrimmage kick is in flight beyond K's scrimmage line, K shall not touch the ball or R nor obstruct R's path to the ball. This prohibition does not apply if the act is after the kick has been touched by R. Penalty: Kick Catch Interference, 10 yards. R may choose a 10 yard penalty from the previous spot with K retaining the football and the down replayed or they may accept an awarded catch from the spot of the foul. **PLAY.** R-1 attempting to catch a protected scrimmage kick, touches the ball, which is then caught by K-1 before striking the ground.

**RULING.** Not interference. Protection against kick catch interference ceases when any R player touches the ball. It is dead where caught and belongs to K, first down and zone line-to-gain.

**PLAY.** A free kick is in flight and (a) K-1 touches the ball. (b) K-3 is in the path of R-2's attempt to catch the ball. (c) K-4 de-flags R-2 before he/she touches the ball.

is dead and a team has not exhausted its charged time-outs, the referee shall allow a time-out and charge that team or complete a coach-referee conference.

### **5... LENGTHS OF TIME-OUTS**

A charged time-out requested by any player, which is legally granted shall not exceed one minute. Other time-outs may be longer only if the referee deems it necessary to remove an injured player.

### **6... COACH-REFEREE CONFERENCE**

When a team requests a charged time-out for a rule interpretation, the referee will confer with the team captain or coach. The request must be made prior to the time the ball becomes alive following the play to be reviewed unless the period had officially ended. If the referee changes his/her ruling, it is an official's time-out. If the ruling is not changed, it is a charged time-out. If the team has used its available time-outs, a delay of game penalty will be assessed.

### **7... NOTIFICATION**

The referee shall notify both teams 5 seconds before a charged time-out expires. The team then has 25 seconds to put the ball in play. When two time-outs have been charged to a team in a half, the referee shall notify both field captains and both head coaches.

### **8... INJURED PLAYER**

An injured or apparently injured player, who is discovered by an official while the ball is dead and the clock is stopped, shall be replaced for at least 1 down unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs. A player who is bleeding or has an open wound or has excessive amount of blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player.

## ***SECTION 5: DELAYS***

### **1... DELAY OF GAME**

The ball must be put in play promptly and any action or inaction by either team, which tends to prevent this, is delay of game. This action legally includes:

- A. Failure to snap or free kick within 25 seconds after the ball is declared ready for play.
- B. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.
- C. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
- D. Coach-referee conference after all permissible charged time-outs for the coach's team have been used and during which the referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule and no change results.
- E. Failure to kick the ball immediately after receiving the snap on a protected scrimmage kick.

Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Delay of Game, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

## **2... UNFAIR TACTICS**

The referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever, in his/her opinion, either team is trying to conserve or consume play by unfair tactics.

Penalty: Delay of Game, 5 yards.

**PLAY.** As the game clock is running near the end of a period, A stalls and allows the 25 second count to expire.

**RULING.** Delay of game penalty and the referee shall order the clock start on the next snap.

## ***SECTION 6: SUBSTITUTIONS***

### **1... ELIGIBLE SUBSTITUTIONS**

No substitute shall enter during a down. Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players off the field before the ball becomes alive. An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from his/her team area. A replaced player must leave the field at the sideline nearest his/her team area prior to the ball being snapped.

Penalty: Substitution Infraction, 5 yards. If it is a dead ball foul, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

### **2... LEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS**

During the same dead ball interval, no substitutions shall become a player and then withdraw and no player shall withdraw and then re-enter as a substitute unless a dead ball foul occurs, there is a charged time-out or a period ends.

Penalty: Substitution Infraction, 5 yards from the previous spot.

## **RULE 4. BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

### ***SECTION 1: BALL IN PLAY -- DEAD BALL***

#### **1... DEAD BALL BECOMES LIVE**

A dead ball, after having been declared ready for play, becomes a live ball when it is snapped or free kicked legally.

#### **2... BALL DECLARED DEAD**

A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound their whistle or declare it dead:

- A. When it goes out-of-bounds.
- B. When any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground.

**PLAY.** QB A-1 rolls out and slips, but regains his/her balance as the ball in contact with his/her hand touches the ground.

**RULING.** Play continues as a ball in possession is considered part of the hand.

## **6... FREE KICK AT REST**

If an inbounds free kick comes to rest and no player of either team attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to R at the dead ball spot.

## **7... FREE KICK BEHIND THE GOAL LINE**

When a free kick touches anything while the kicked ball is on or behind R's goal line (plane), it can be downed by R and is a touchback. NOTE: R may run the kick out of the end zone.

## **8... FREE KICK NOT REPEATED UNLESS**

A free kick is not repeated unless a foul occurs prior to a change of possession and the penalty is accepted or there is a double foul.

## ***SECTION 2: FREE KICK OUT-OF-BOUNDS***

### **1... OUT-OF-BOUNDS BETWEEN THE GOAL LINES**

A free kick out-of-bounds between the goal lines, untouched inbounds by R or not last touched inbounds by R, is a foul.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot and rekick or R may put the ball in play where it went out-of-bounds.

### **2... OUT-OF-BOUNDS BEHIND GOAL LINE**

If a free kick goes out-of-bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback and the ball belongs to the team defending that goal line at their 15 yard line.

## ***SECTION 3: PROTECTED SCRIMMAGE KICK***

### **1... LEGAL KICK**

A legal protected scrimmage kick is a punt made in accordance with the rules. Quick kicks are illegal. Penalty: Illegal Kick, 10 yards.

### **2... PROTECTED SCRIMMAGE KICK**

Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the referee must ask the Team A captain if he/she wants a protected scrimmage kick. The referee must then communicate this decision to the Team B captain and the other officials. The Team A captain may request a protected scrimmage kick on any down. After such an announcement, the ball MUST be kicked. Exception: If (a) a Team A time-out is called, or (b) a foul occurs during this down after Team A's captain's decision, which results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down again, the referee must ask the Team A captain whether or not he/she wants a protected scrimmage kick and communicate this decision to Team B.

### **3... PROTECTED SCRIMMAGE KICK FORMATION**

Neither K nor R may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.

### **4... KICKING THE BALL**

After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.

## **RULE 6. KICKING THE BALL**

### ***SECTION 1: FREE KICK***

#### **1... PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY**

A free kick begins each half of a game and begins play following a safety. The ball shall be put in play by a place kick from some spot on or behind K's free kick line and on the inbound line. Unless relocated by penalty, K's free kick on kickoffs shall be its 15 yard line. A ball ready for kickoff must be placed on a legal 2" tee or held or placed on the ground or holder's toe. However, the sole of the holder's shoe must be in contact with the ground.

#### **2... FORMATION**

When the ball is legally kicked, all players of K must be inbounds and all players, except the holder and the kicker of a place kick, must be behind their free kick line.

Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal procedure, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

#### **3... FREE KICK LINES**

For any free kick formation K's free kick line shall be the yard line through the forward most point from which the ball may be kicked. R's free kick line shall be the yard line 15 yards beyond that point. It is encroachment for any player other than the kicker and the holder to be beyond the free kick line after the ball is ready for play until it is kicked.

Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Encroachment, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

#### **4... FIRST TOUCHING**

If any kicker touches a free kick before it crosses R's free kick line and before it is referred to as "first touching". R may take the ball at that spot or may choose to have the ball put in play as determined by the action, which follows first touching. The right of R to take the ball at the spot of the first touching by K is cancelled if R touched the kick and thereafter during the down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

**PLAY.** K-1 touches a rolling free kick before it reaches R's restraining line and the ball hits the ground.

**RULING.** The ball is dead where it hit the ground following K-1's touching. It is R's ball at the spot of first touching or where the ball was declared dead, whichever is most dangerous.

#### **5... RECOVERING OF A FREE KICK**

There are no onside kicks. K cannot recover an onside kick.

**PLAY.** (a) K-2 picks up a rolling free kick beyond R's restraining line and advances the ball. (b) Free kick hits R-2 in flight, bounces in the air, and K-2 catches it.

**RULING.** In both, the ball is dead where K-2 possesses it. Award the ball to R, first down and zone line-to-gain.

- C. When a touchdown, touchback, safety or successful try is made.
- D. When the ball strikes the ground following first touching by K.
- E. When a player of the kicking team catches a free kick or any muffed free kick or a protected scrimmage kick, which is beyond the neutral zone; when a free kick or an untouched protected scrimmage kick comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it.
- F. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- G. When a backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players. A ball snapped from scrimmage, which hits the ground before or after getting to the quarterback, is dead at the spot where it hits the ground. NOTE: If in doubt, the snap close to the ground remains alive.
- H. When a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player. A flag belt is removed when the clip is detached from the belt.
- I. When runners flag falls off.
- J. When a passer is de-flagged prior to releasing the ball. NOTE: If in doubt as to the release or not, the ball is released.

**PLAY.** QB A-1 is de-flagged when: (a) his/her arm is moving forward in an attempt to throw the ball; or (b) the ball has already left the hand.

**RULING.** In (a), A-1 is down at the spot of the de-flag. In (b), the ball remains alive, since the ball left the passers hand before he/she was de-flagged.

- K. When a muff of a free or protected scrimmage kick strikes the ground.
- L. When an official sounds the whistle inadvertently during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined when:
  - 1. The ball is in players possession – the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
  - 2. The ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass, illegal kick or illegal forward pass – the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
  - 3. During a legal forward pass or a free protected scrimmage kick – the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down is replayed.

If a foul occurs during any of the above downs, an accepted penalty shall be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, disregard the inadvertent whistle.

## ***SECTION 2: OUT-OF-BOUNDS***

### **1... PLAYER OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

A player or other person is out-of-bounds when any part of him/her touches anything, other than another player or game official, which is on or outside the sideline or end line.

### **2... PLAYER IN POSSESSION OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

A ball in player possession is out-of-bounds when the runner or the ball touches anything, other than another player or game official, which is on or outside a sideline or end line.

### **3... LOOSE BALL OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official, which is out-of-bounds.

## **RULE 5. SERIES OF DOWNS, NUMBER OF DOWNS AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY**

### ***SECTION 1: A SERIES – HOW STARTED, HOW BROKEN, RENEWED***

#### **1... A DOWN IS A UNIT**

A down is a unit of the game, which starts with a legal snap or legal free kick and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is any period when the ball is dead.

#### **2... SERIES OF DOWNS**

A team, in possession of the ball, shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone by scrimmage. Any down may be repeated if lost or provided by the rules.

#### **2... ZONE LINE-TO-GAIN**

The line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.

#### **3... AWARDED A NEW SERIES**

A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the opponents moves the ball into the next zone; or an accepted penalty against the opponents involves an automatic first down; or either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, free kick, protected scrimmage kick, touchback, pass interception or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.

## ***SECTION 2: DOWN AND POSSESSION AFTER A PENALTY***

### **1... FOUL DURING A FREE KICK**

When a scrimmage follows the penalty for a live ball foul committed during a free kick, the down and distance established by the penalty shall be first down with the next zone line-to-gain.

### **2... PENALTY RESULTING IN FIRST DOWN**

After a penalty which leaves the ball in possession of a team beyond its zone line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a first down, the down and distance established by the penalty shall be first down with the next zone line-to-gain.

### **3... FOUL BEFORE CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION**

After a distance penalty between the goal lines incurred during a down and before any change of team possession during that down, the ball belongs to Team A and the down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves loss of a down, or leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain. If the penalty involves loss of a down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series.

### **4... FOUL AFTER CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION**

After a distance penalty for a foul committed during a down and after team possession has changed during that down, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred and the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with next zone line-to-gain.

### **5... PENALTY DECLINED**

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

### **6... FOUL BETWEEN DOWNS**

After a distance penalty incurred between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as that established before the foul occurred unless enforcement for a foul by Team B leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain.

### **7... FOUL BY BOTH TEAMS**

If offsetting fouls occur during a down that down shall be repeated. Exception: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul was not prior to the final change of possession and it declines all penalties for its opponent's fouls, other than unsportsmanlike. This is known as the "clean hands" rule on double fouls.

### **8... RULE DECISIONS FINAL**

No rule decision may be changed after the ball is next legally snapped or free kicked.