

H.P.F.F.

Halton-Peel Flag Football

Created for H.P.F.F. – Version 4.0

May 5, 2009

Summary of 2009 Rule Changes

Section/Rule:	Change/clarification
Rule 1.1	Clarify Kick-off is from 45 yard line, or 10 yards/meters from center (not 40 yd line)
Rule 2.10	Eliminate need for all players to be stationary when ball is placed on ground, as this technicality is not value-add to the game. You must still have 5 players on the line prior to the snap, and there cannot be any forward motion by any player when ball is snapped. Early crossing of line of scrimmage (ie before snap) or forward motion will remain as illegal procedure.
Rule 5.7	Correct placement of ball after Safety is scored to be 35 yard line not 30 yard line.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Information3

 The Flag Football Code3

 Coaching Ethics3

 Talking To an Opponent4

 Talking To Officials.....4

 Holding4

 Sportsmanship.....4

 Rules Summary4

 Scoring6

 Game Procedures6

 Punts.....7

Rules and Regulations7

 General Information.....7

 Rule 1 – Kick-off7

 Rule 2 – Scrimmage.....9

 Rule 3 – Passing.....10

 Rule 4 – Flagging.....12

 Rule 5 – Scoring.....14

 Rule 6 – Punts15

 Rule 7 – Timing and Time Outs16

 Rule 8 – Pass Interference.....18

 Rule 9 – Equipment19

 Rule 10 – Field Dimensions.....21

 Rule 11 – Procedures22

 Rule 12 – Live Ball/Dead Ball.....22

 Rule 13 – Penalties.....24

 Rule 14 – Application of Penalties28

 Rule 15 – General30

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Flag Football Code

Only the highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. There is no tolerance for unfair tactics, unsportsmanlike conduct or manoeuvres deliberately designed to inflict injury.

The Code of Ethics states:

- a) The Flag Football Code shall be an integral part of this code of ethics and should be carefully read and observed.
- b) To gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules brands a coach or player as unfit to be associated with flag football.

Rules alone cannot accomplish fair play. Only the continued best efforts by coaches, players, officials and all friends of the game can preserve the high ethical standards set by the game of football. Therefore, as a guide to players, coaches, officials and others responsible for the welfare of the game, the committee publishes this following code:

Coaching Ethics

Instruction of intentional holding, feigning injury, interference or intentional roughing is unethical and is a violation of the rules. This coaching method is unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly by the league executive. The goal is to help build the players confidence and character so that there is mutual respect for the game and each participant. Such instruction is not only unfair to one's opponent but is demoralizing to those players that have put their trust into a coach's care. **IT HAS NO PLACE IN THE GAME.** The following are unethical practices:

- a) Changing numbers during the game to deceive the opponent.
- b) Using non-therapeutic drugs in the game of football. This is not in keeping with the aims and purposes of amateur athletics and is prohibited.
- c) Feigning an injury for the purpose of gaining additional, undeserved time for one's team. An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules. Such tactics cannot be tolerated among sportsmen of integrity.
- d) Kicking oversized slick footballs to your opponents with the sole purpose of making it difficult to handle properly.

Talking To an Opponent

Talking to an opponent in any manner that is demeaning, vulgar, abusive or “trashy” or intended to incite a physical response or verbally put an opponent down is illegal. Coaches are urged to discuss this conduct frequently and support all officials’ actions to control it.

Talking To Officials

When an official imposes a penalty or makes a decision, he/she simply is doing their duty as they see it. They are on the field to uphold the integrity of the game of flag football, and their decisions are final and conclusive and should be accepted by players and coaches. For a coach to address, or permit anyone on the bench to address, uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the progress of a game, or to indulge in conduct that might incite players and spectators against the officials, is a violation of the rules of the game and must likewise be considered conduct unworthy of a member of the coaching profession.

Holding

Illegal use of the hand or arm is unfair play, eliminates skill and does not belong in the game. All coaches and players should thoroughly understand the rules of proper offensive and defensive use of hands. Holding is a frequently called penalty. It is important to emphasize the severity of the penalty.

Sportsmanship

The football player who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct and, whether or not they escape being penalized; they bring discredit to the good name of the game, which is their duty as a player to uphold.

Rules Summary

Flag Football is played with seven on-field players per team. The team that has possession of the ball is termed the offence and the team that doesn’t is called the defence. The offence has four downs to obtain 15 yards, keep possession of the ball and attempt to score. If they fail to gain 15 yards and a first down, the ball goes to the defence and they, in turn, become the offence and have four downs to obtain 15 yards, keep possession of the ball and attempt to score. All measurements can be in yards or in meters.

The kicking team is determined by a coin toss conducted prior to the game. The winner of the coin toss can elect to be the Home team or the Visiting team. In the first half, the visiting team is given the option to receive the kick-off, to kick off, or to defend an end of the field. The home team then selects the remaining option. The home team has the first choice of options at the beginning of the second half.

To begin a game, a team will kick off from their own kick-off line, which is 10 yards back from the centre of the field (their own 45-yard line on a regulation 110 yard field). To begin the series of four downs, the ball is placed on the ground at the point the ball carrier was flagged on the kick-off. This marks the line of scrimmage. All offensive players must take a position on or behind the line of scrimmage. All defensive players must take a position at least one yard from the line of scrimmage on the opposite side. A player designated as the centre will then begin the play by snapping the ball between the legs to the quarterback who must receive the ball at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage. A minimum of 5 players on the offence must be on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. All players on the offence, except the centre, are allowed to be in motion after the ball is set and prior to the snap. Movement at the snap by offensive players can only be laterally, or toward their goal line. Receivers are not permitted to cross the line of scrimmage until after the snap.

The game is mainly a passing game with all players on the offence being eligible receivers. There is no blocking permitted. The play is terminated when a defender flags the ball carrier.

During scrimmage plays the defence will have one or more players, called the rusher(s), pursue the quarterback after the ball is snapped. The rusher has specific rules, which govern this position. They include being at least five yards away from the line of scrimmage and within five yards to the left or right of the rushing bag at the time the ball is snapped. The rusher must also take a position such that no part of the centre's body lies directly between the rusher and the quarterback. In turn, the rules grant the rusher a direct and unobstructed path to the quarterback after the ball is snapped. No one is permitted to block or obstruct the rusher in any way. Teams may use more than one rusher on a play. All rushers have the right to a clear and direct path to the quarterback provided they adhere to the rusher rules stated above. The first player on the defence to cross the line of scrimmage must have started from a point five yards from the line of scrimmage.

The officials use beanbags to mark the line of scrimmage; the rusher's starting point and the first down line. Officials will place these bags at the appropriate spot prior to the start of each play. A different coloured bag must be used to designate the first down mark.

Teams are permitted only one forward pass on each scrimmage play. There are no forward passes permitted on kick-off or punt returns. Teams may lateral the ball among team mates as many times as they wish during a play. A lateral is a pass in which the ball travels parallel to, or in the direction of, the passer's dead ball line. An attempted lateral that results in the ball going forward to a team mate is illegal and is ruled an offside pass when caught by a team mate or when it strikes the ground.

There are no fumbles in flag football. All fumbles are blown dead as soon as the ball strikes the ground. Only two types of muffs are allowed. One is when the quarterback muffs the exchange from centre and the other is when a player muffs the kick-off in an

onside or offside direction. When a ball is fumbled or muffed, including an incomplete attempted lateral or hand-off, the play is blown dead and the ball is placed at the point where it first touched the ground, if in an onside direction, or at the point it was last touched, if in an offside direction, i.e. in the least advantageous position for the team that causes the fumble/muff.

If a ball carrier touches the ground with any part of his/her body, other than his/her feet, the play is whistled dead at that point. The only exceptions are in the case when a quarterback is receiving a snap, and punt returner is receiving a punt or when a kick-off returner is receiving a kick-off. In each of these cases they may have a hand or knee down (third point down) and still be allowed to get to their feet and continue the play.

Scoring

Points are awarded for touchdowns, converts and safety touches.

A touchdown is scored when a team gets the ball into the opponent's end zone by running with the ball across the goal line or by gaining possession of the ball in the end zone through a completed pass from a team mate. Touchdowns count for six points. After a touchdown, the scoring team has the choice of attempting a one point convert from the five-yard line or a two point convert from the ten-yard line. All converts must be passing or running plays. Kicking is not permitted on convert attempts. A safety touch counts for two points and is awarded to a team when their opponents cause the ball to go into their own end zone and the play is ruled dead prior to the ball being brought out of the end zone.

Game Procedures

A game is usually divided into four quarters of fifteen minutes each. The clock runs continuously during the quarters except for time outs and special timing provisions in the last two minutes of the second and fourth quarters. During the last two minutes of these quarters, the clock will be stopped during certain circumstances, which are described in the rules. At the end of the first and third quarters, teams change ends and downs and yardage continue. At the end of the second quarter there is a rest period of an agreed upon length and the third quarter begins with a kick-off. Each team has two 60-second time outs per half, which, if not used, cannot be carried over to the next half. In addition there will be one 30-second time out at each two-minute warning. Officials may call time outs to deal with measurements, rule explanations, or injuries. A team must have a minimum of six players in team sweaters, with their flag belt and flags on the field, at the designated starting time, to begin a game or it will forfeit the game.

Punts

Teams may punt the ball on any play and in doing so they give up possession of the ball to the receiving team. A player may only punt the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. The members of the punting team must be at least two yards from the ball when it is first touched by a member of the receiving team. Failure to do so will result in a ten yard “no yards” penalty. If the ball touches the punt receiver then goes forward or backwards and hits the ground, the play will be whistled dead. If a punt is blocked by the defensive team, the play is dead when the ball hits the ground or is caught by a member of the kicking team and the non-kicking team takes possession at the point the ball was blocked regardless of what down it was at the time.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

General Information

Participants in the game of Flag Football must consider the safety of all players in the game. Aggressive play must be tempered with control in order to avoid unnecessary bodily contact and the potential of injury to opponents. Players who show no regard for this concept will be penalized for the unnecessary contact they cause. Sportsmanship and consideration for the well being of others is an integral part of the game of Flag Football. The rules of Flag Football exist to ensure that no team creates an unfair advantage over the other team. Therefore, infractions such as interference, tripping, unnecessary roughness, contacting the passer or punter, obstruction, offside and objectionable conduct fouls will be called by the officials when committed by players during a game. It is imperative that all participants display sportsmanship during a game. Arguing, obscene language, threats to players, officials, or spectators bring disgrace to the sport and will not be tolerated.

Rule 1 – The Kick-off

- 1.1. To begin a game, a team will kick off from their own 45-yard line or, if it is a non-regulation field, 10 yards back from the centre line. When the official blows the whistle to signal the kick-off, the kicking team has 20 seconds to kick the ball or be penalized 10 yards for delay of game. This procedure is also used following a touchdown if the non-scoring team elects to receive the kick-off.
- 1.2. The ball is normally kicked off from a tee, which cannot raise the lowest part of the ball more than two inches off the ground. If a tee is not used, the ball can be held on the ground by a member of the kicking team. The ball must be placed between the hash marks or, if there are no hash marks, at least 20 yards in from the nearest sideline.

- 1.3. On a kick-off all players of the receiving team must be at least 20 yards from the kick-off line at the time the ball is kicked. Members of the kicking team must stay behind the kick-off line until the ball is kicked. Failure to do so will result in a five-yard offside penalty if accepted.
- 1.4. To be a legal kick-off the ball must travel 20 yards towards the receiving team's dead ball line before it is touched by a member of the kicking team. It is an illegal procedure penalty if the ball is touched by a member of the kicking team prior to it traveling 20 yards downfield or if it does not travel the 20 yards downfield, unless it is touched first by a member of the receiving team. If a member of the kicking team is the first person to touch the ball before it travels 20 yards the receiving team has two options:
 - a) It can take possession of the ball where it was downed.
 - b) It can force the kicking team to re-kick 5 yards back from the previous kick.
- 1.5. Members of the kicking team can touch the ball, or down it, after it travels 20 yards and before it is touched by a member of the receiving team. The kicking team does not have to "give yards" on a kick-off. The kicking team cannot normally recover their own kick unless it first touched by a member of the receiving team, goes into the air and is caught by a member of the kicking team prior to the ball touching the ground.
- 1.6. When a kick-off goes out of bounds without touching a member of the receiving team, the receiving team has two options:
 - a) It can take the ball where it went out of bounds.
 - b) It can force the kicking team to re-kick 5 yards back from the previous kick.
- 1.7. If the ball hits a player on the receiving team then hits the ground in a forward direction the ball is live to the receiving team only and can be advanced by any onside player. If the ball is muffed in an onside direction, it can be picked up and advanced by any player on the return team. The muffed ball can be touched down by a member of the kicking team and the ball will be dead at that spot with possession to the return team.
- 1.8. At most times during a game, the player with the ball cannot have a 'third point down' and the play is dead if they are not on their feet. One exception is when a kick-off returner is receiving a kick-off. That player may have a 'third point down' and still get to their feet and continue with the return.

Rule 2 – The Scrimmage

- 2.1. A huddle is not compulsory except in the following circumstances: after any time out; after a change in possession; after a change of ends at the end of a period. The offensive team has 20 seconds to snap the ball after the referee has blown the play in. Failure to do so will result in a five-yard time count penalty.
- 2.2. Teams are allowed to have a partial huddle where some players are huddled and others are not, however, “sleeper” plays are illegal and subject to an illegal procedure penalty. The officials will call a “sleeper” play when the offence deliberately attempts to deceive the defence as to which players are legally on the field.
- 2.3. To begin a play from scrimmage, the ball must be placed on the ground, between the hash marks, and then snapped through the legs of the centre to the quarterback, who is defined as the first player to touch the ball after it is snapped. The quarterback must receive the snap at least five yards behind the centre. Prior to the snap, the centre must position the ball between the legs next to the beanbag that marks the line of scrimmage. Failure to comply with these rules will result in a five-yard illegal procedure penalty.
- 2.4. Hand-offs and fake hand-offs are permitted. A forward hand-off behind the line of scrimmage is legal, but it is considered a forward pass.
- 2.5. The first person to cross the line of scrimmage from the defence must be at least five yards away from the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. For a person to be granted the special rights attributed to a rusher they must line up outside the feet of the opposing centre, not directly in front of that player. Also, the rusher must line up within five yards on either side of the rusher’s bag. Lining up improperly causes a loss in rusher rights. The rusher must be allowed a clear and direct path to the quarterback. Obstructing any legal rusher’s path to the quarterback by blocking or by interfering with their approach is a 10 yard penalty for impeding the rusher (if accepted) with down repeated. The defence may have more than one rusher. These rules apply to all eligible rushers.
- 2.6. Once the centre sets the ball on the ground for the snap, the rusher is not permitted to change sides and maintain rushing privileges with the centre unless the quarterback goes in motion prior to the snap of the ball.
- 2.7. Any player crossing the line of scrimmage and rushing the passer may attempt to block or bat the ball from the passer’s hand, but there cannot be contact on or above the shoulder. If contact on or above shoulder is made, a 15-yard penalty will be assessed for unnecessary roughness.

- 2.8 If the rusher should pass the rushing bag before the snap and continue on and cross the line of scrimmage without first returning to a position behind the rushing bag the rusher is offside. If any defensive player who is lined up closer than 5 yards from scrimmage crosses the line of scrimmage before the rusher he/she is also guilty of being offside. A defender who is within one yard of scrimmage at the time the ball is snapped is guilty of offside as well. The penalty is 5 yards (if accepted) with down repeated.
- 2.9. To permit the centre to participate in the play, no opponent is permitted to line up within three yards directly in front of the centre and remain there after the snap. Players are not allowed to cross the line of scrimmage to listen to the opponent's huddle. These infractions would result in a five-yard illegal procedure penalty unless refused by the opponents.
- 2.10. Prior to the snap by the centre, there must be a minimum of five players on the offensive line of scrimmage. Players (including the quarterback) can not be moving toward the line of scrimmage at the time the ball is snapped, but they are permitted to move laterally. The quarterback must be at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage when he/she receives the snap. An infraction of any of the above will result in the play being whistled dead and a five-yard illegal procedure penalty assessed with no loss of down.
- 2.11. If the referee announces the incorrect down prior to the snap, any challenge to this declaration must be issued before the next play is run or else the incorrect down will stand and downs will continue as if no mistake had been made.

Rule 3 – Passing

- 3.1. All players are eligible to receive a forward pass. There can be only one forward pass on each scrimmage play. A forward pass is one where the ball is intentionally thrown or handed towards the opponent's goal line. A forward pass is legal, if it is the first pass thrown (either overhand or underhand) and must originate from behind the line of scrimmage. A forward pass cannot be legally thrown on a kick-off return or punt return.
- 3.2. A pass is considered complete if the player has possession and control of the ball (i.e. stops rotation and demonstrates an ability to exert influence over its direction). Such control must also be demonstrated prior to going out of bounds. To be considered in bounds the receiver must touch the ground in bounds with some part of the body prior to any part of the body touching an out of bounds area. The boundary lines, which mark the outer limits of the field, are considered to be out of bounds.
- 3.3. If a receiver could have landed in bounds but was pushed out of bounds by an opponent, the catch will be awarded to the receiver. It is the official's judgment as

to whether the receiver could have landed in bounds and in control of the ball had the push not taken place.

- 3.4. A pass or lateral caught simultaneously by players on opposite teams will be awarded to the team that had the possession prior to the pass or lateral.
- 3.5. A player who bobbles the ball and is flagged while bobbling the ball will be considered to be flagged if and when he/she finally gains possession of the ball. The ball will come back to the point where the receiver was first flagged by the opponent.
- 3.6. Players can lateral the ball at any time during play. A lateral pass is a pass that travels parallel to, or in the direction of, the passer's dead ball line. An onside lateral that hits the ground is dead and the ball is placed at the point where it first contacted the ground. An attempted lateral that results in the ball going forward is illegal and is ruled an offside pass. If a player attempts an offside pass the ball is placed at the point where the pass originated. This is true whether the ball is caught by a team mate or hits the ground. An offside pass remains live until it touches the ground or is caught by a team mate. As long as the ball is in the air, it is live to the team not in possession at the time of the pass.
- 3.7. When an offensive player makes a lateral pass behind the line of scrimmage and the ball then touches the ground before or after it is touched by the intended receiver, it is dead at that point. This is ruled a sack. The play is also ruled dead when a ball carrier drops the ball. If this happens behind the line of scrimmage this, too, is considered a sack. However, a quarterback is permitted one muff of the snap from centre on each play and still allowed to continue with the play.
- 3.8. A pass is incomplete when the ball touches the ground, the goal post, an official, or lands out of bounds.
- 3.9. A receiver may "spin" (360 degrees) at any time to advert a defender, however, the player cannot maintain a continuous spinning motion down the field. Spinning your body into a defender may result in an unnecessary roughness penalty. This will be up to the referee's discretion.
- 3.10. Where a forward pass is deliberately thrown by an offensive player and the player has crossed the line of scrimmage, the play will be whistled dead if the ball is caught by a team mate. While in the air the ball is live to the defence only. The play will be ruled an offside pass and the passer will be credited with the yards gained before it occurred.
- 3.11. When the passer deliberately throws a pass to an area where there is no receiver in an obvious attempt to avoid a loss of yards, the team will be penalized for intentionally grounding the ball. The penalty is a loss of down at the point the ball

was thrown. However, the quarterback can throw a ball at his/her feet (i.e. spike the ball) immediately after accepting the snap in the last two minutes of a half to stop the clock. Such an action will result in a loss of down.

- 3.12. If a pass is intercepted in the end zone, no points are awarded and the team that intercepted the ball is awarded first down on their own 10-yard line.
- 3.13. If a ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body apart from their feet i.e., a 'third point down', the play is whistled dead at that point. If this occurs behind the line of scrimmage it is a sack. This rule does not apply to the quarterback receiving the snap, a punt returner receiving a punt or a kick-off returner receiving a kick-off. In these cases the player may get up and continue the play.

Rule 4 - Flagging

- 4.1. Spinning is not considered flag guarding.
- 4.2. A ball carrier must not guard his/her flags by running with hands below the waist in such a manner as to prevent a defender from reaching any of his/her flags even if the blockage occurred as a result of a natural running motion.
- 4.3. Guarding a flag, by a ball carrier is a 10-yard penalty which is applied from the point of the foul and the play is whistled dead at that point. If first down had been achieved before the flag guarding took place a first down will be credited. If a quarterback or any other offensive player guards their flags behind the line of scrimmage, the play will be whistled dead and a 5 yard penalty will be applied from the point of the infraction. Players must take responsibility for making sure no part of their uniform (including their pants, draw strings, jersey, etc.) hangs below their waste at the time of the snap. Infractions of this type will be subject to a 5-yard illegal procedure penalty.
- 4.4. A team mate cannot obstruct an opponent's selected, direct path to the ball carrier. Play is allowed to continue but once it is blown dead a 10-yard obstruction penalty (if accepted) will be applied from the point that the ball was held at the time of the infraction with a loss of down. If first down had been achieved before the obstruction took place a first down will be credited.
- 4.5. A defender is not permitted to hold on to any part of the ball carrier or his/her uniform when reaching in for the flag. If the hold is minor and does not impede the progress of the ball carrier, it is applied as a five yard, minor holding penalty from the point of the infraction, if accepted. There is no repeat of the down. If the

- hold had an impact on the ball carrier's progress, it is considered to be a major holding penalty and is assessed as a live ball ten-yard penalty (if accepted) from the point of the infraction and an automatic first down is awarded. In either case, play is allowed to continue until the ball carrier is flagged. A defender is not allowed to initiate contact with the ball carrier in order to slow the progress of the ball carrier even while attempting to pull the flag. If the defender first established a position in front of the ball carrier without being the initiator of any contact he/she is not guilty of holding. However, a 15-yard personal foul penalty should be levied against the defender if he/she does not give the ball carrier sufficient room (even if he/she does not initiate the contact) to change direction when she moves into the ball carrier's established path and a severe collision results. If sufficient room is given and the ball carrier charges into the defender the ball carrier should be assessed this penalty.
- 4.6. The deliberate stripping of the football, or latching onto it, when it is clearly in possession of the ball carrier has an impact similar to that of a major (10 yard) hold and this infraction is treated in the same manner.
 - 4.7. A player not in possession of the ball cannot be flagged. If a ball-carrier is flagged prematurely, that player can be stopped by a tag but a 10-yard penalty will be applied from the point where the ball was when the infraction took place without repeating the down or the non-offending team may choose to decline the penalty and take the gain.. At any point if a player is flagged prematurely or loses their flag, the player can then be stopped by a tag.
 - 4.8. A ball carrier cannot simply charge into a defender or crash through a group of defenders in order to get past them. The resulting contact would be a 15-yard personal foul penalty. Jumping, in and of itself, is not considered to be flag guarding or illegal.
 - 4.9. A defender who knocks the ball carrier out of bounds while attempting to pull the flag will be assessed a ten-yard holding penalty unless the attempt to flag their opponent proved successful. Excessive force while doing so will result in a 15-yard roughing penalty.

Rule 5 – Scoring

- 5.1. A touchdown counts as 6 points; a convert from the five-yard line is 1 point; a convert from the 10-yard line is 2 points and a safety touch is 2 points.

- 5.2. A touchdown is scored by carrying the ball into the opponent's end zone or by catching the ball in the opponents' end zone prior to it touching the ground. The ball is considered to be in the end zone when any part of the ball touches or crosses the plane of the goal line.
- 5.3. After a touchdown is scored, the scoring team may try a convert attempt. The scoring team will choose to attempt a 1-point convert from the five-yard line, or a 2-point convert from the ten-yard line. Converts are attempted by passing or running, no kicking is allowed. If there is a penalty on a convert attempt, the scoring team is not permitted to change its choice if there is a repeated attempt.
- 5.4. On a convert attempt, the ball is scrimmaged in the centre of the appropriate yard line. If there are goal posts on the field the scoring team has the right to move the ball to either hash mark (20 yards in from either sideline) even if a 2-point conversion is selected.
- 5.5. After a convert attempt, the non-scoring team may elect to have the scoring team kick off from their own 45-yard line or the non-scoring team may elect to kick off from their own 45-yard line or 10 yards from centre field on a non-regulation field.
- 5.6. A safety touch is awarded to a team when the offence causes the ball to go into their own end zone and the play is ruled dead prior to the ball being brought out of the end zone. A ball is considered to be in the end zone unless the entire ball is out of the end zone. A safety touch is awarded if the offence commits obstruction or flag guarding, attempts an offside pass or fails to complete an onside pass while the ball is in the end zone, as long as they had caused the ball to go into their own end zone in the first place. An onside lateral that originates outside the end zone and hits the goal post in flight is ruled a safety touch.
- 5.7. After a safety touch, the non-scoring team will kick off from the non-scoring team's 35-yard line or 20 yards from centre field on a non-regulation field.
- 5.8. No points are awarded on a punt or kick-off that goes into the end zone. If the receiving team fails to run the ball out of the end zone the ball will be scrimmaged on the receiving team's 10-yard line.

Rule 6 – Punts

- 6.1. For a ball to be considered a punt it must be deliberately dropped and then kicked with the foot before the ball touches the ground.

- 6.2. Any player may punt the ball, as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is legally punted, the punting team gives up possession of the ball.
- 6.3. After a punt, players of the punting team cannot touch the ball or be touched by the ball until an opponent touches the ball. They must also be at least two yards away (a halo) from the ball when it is first touched by an opposing player. Failure to do so will result in a ten yard “no yards” penalty from the point the ball was first touched.
- 6.4. Any player on the receiving team can catch a punt and advance it. There is no blocking permitted on a punt return. If a player on the receiving team attempts to catch a punt and the ball touches the player then hits the ground, the play is dead when the ball hits the ground and it is placed at the point where it hit the ground, if in an onside direction, or where it was first touched, if in an offside direction. If a player on the kicking team catches, muffs or is struck by a punted ball, the play is dead as soon as the ball is caught or strikes the ground.
- 6.5. A punt returner with a ‘third point down’ while receiving the punt, may get to their feet and continue to advance the ball.
- 6.6. A punt is considered blocked by the opposing team when a player of that team strikes the ball and the ball travels in the direction of, or parallel to, the punting team’s dead ball line and hits the ground or is caught by a player of the punting team. The play is ruled dead and the non-punting team will take possession of the ball at the point the ball was blocked.
- 6.7. If a punt is deflected by a member of the receiving team and the ball travels in the direction of the receiving team’s dead ball line, the punt is legal and the play continues. The deflection is ignored and “yards” must be given by members of the kicking team.
- 6.8. When a punted ball hits the ground behind the line of scrimmage or behind the kicker’s goal line, the play is dead. If this occurs in the field of play, the opposing team will take possession of the ball at the point the ball hits the ground unless it was blocked in which case they will take possession at the point where it was blocked. If this occurs in the end zone the opposing team will be awarded a safety touch.
- 6.9. When a punt is blocked in the field of play, the non-punting team is considered to be in possession. If the punt is blocked in the end zone, the punting team is considered to be in possession.
- 6.10. If a player accidentally or deliberately kicks the ball with the foot or leg without having had control of the ball in the hand, the ball becomes an onside or offside pass depending on its direction and will remain live until it hits the ground.

Rule 7 – Timing & Time outs

- 7.1. The head referee will keep the official time for the game.
- 7.2. Time will run continuously during the first and third quarters and during the first 13 minutes of the second and fourth quarters, except when stopped for a declared time out.
- 7.3. The official must stop the clock when 2 minutes remain in each half, or at the end of the play that took the clock inside the two-minute mark. There will be a 30 second time out and both teams must huddle before the subsequent play. The clock will start again on the snap. During this last 2 minutes of a half the official who is the keeping time will call out the time remaining and the status of the clock (running or stopped) before each play.
- 7.4. During the last two minutes of each half, the clock will stop for the following: (The clock restarts on the snap except where noted.)
 - a) Any team or officials time out.
 - i) Any applied penalty. (However, after an offside pass in advance of, or behind, (i.e. a second forward pass), the line of scrimmage, the clock will continue to run.)
 - ii) If the penalty is declined, the clock will start when the play is whistled in.
 - b) Any incomplete forward pass.
 - c) Anytime a player, in possession of the ball, goes out of bounds.
 - d) When the quarterback spikes the ball. The quarterback is allowed to stop the clock by spiking the ball provided that this act occurs immediately upon receiving the snap and in one deliberate motion to throw the ball to the ground. This will not be ruled a sack. Taking a knee is a sack and the clock will be operated accordingly. The quarterback is not permitted to use this exemption in an attempt to deceive the defence. This deception would be ruled as objectionable conduct.
 - e) After a touchdown or safety touch. Clock starts when receiving team touches the ball on the ensuing kick-off or on the snap if the kick-off went out of bounds.
 - f) After a change of possession.
 - g) While the bags are being reset after a first down is gained by the offence. The clock will start when the play is whistled in.
 - h) After any loss of yardage by the offence (unless due to an offside pass as noted above in 7.4b). The bags will be reset and the clock will start when the

play is whistled in. (If the loss is due to the application of a penalty for a spot foul which has occurred in the offensive backfield, such as intentional grounding, flag guarding, blocking, etc., the clock will start on the snap).

- 7.5. Each team is allowed two team time outs per half and these time outs do not carry over from the first half to the second. In addition, the officials will call one 30-second time out per half when there are two minutes remaining to play.
- 7.6. Any on field player can request a time out during a dead ball situation.
- 7.7. The referee will notify each team when there are 15 seconds remaining in the time out. A time out may be shortened if both teams agree.
- 7.8. All offensive players must huddle after any time out is called or be penalized for illegal procedure.
- 7.9. After a time out the clock will start on the snap of the subsequent play. If the subsequent play is a kick-off, the clock will not start until a player on the receiving team touches the ball. If the ball goes out of bounds on the kick-off, the clock will start on the snap of the next play.
- 7.10. A team may not call consecutive time outs without running a play between them or they will be called for illegal procedure.
- 7.11. The referee may stop the clock at any time that it is deemed necessary by any official. The clock will start when the ball is snapped or when touched by a player on the receiving team following a kick-off.
- 7.12. The clock is stopped when a safety touch is scored. The clock starts when the ensuing kick-off is touched by the receiving team or on the snap if the kick-off goes out of bounds.
- 7.13. If the referee stops the clock to take a time out as a result of an injury, the injured player must be removed from the game for at least one play. In order to ensure that the use of an injury does not particularly benefit a team in the last two minutes of a half, that team will be charged with a time out. If they do not have a time out, 25 seconds can be run off the clock at the discretion of their opponent. If there are fewer than 26 seconds left in the half, one more legal play will be permitted. If the injury occurs as the result of a penalty committed against the injured player, the injured player must leave the game for at least one play if the clock was stopped but his/her team will not be charged with a time out and the opposing team will not have the option of running 25 seconds off the clock.
- 7.14. A 'Mercy Rule' is to be applied when there are two minutes remaining in the game. At that time, if one team is leading by more than 18 points, the game is declared final. This rule is subject to change under tournament policies. If there is

a difference of less than 19 points in the scores at this time, the game will continue until such time as the difference in the score becomes greater than 18 points or until time elapses.

- 7.15. If the game is tied after regulation, and a winner must be determined, a series of convert attempts will be used to determine a winner. Tournament and league policies must specify the procedure for these overtime situations.

Rule 8 - Pass Interference

- 8.1. Pass interference is defined as one player taking away the positional advantage of another player. A player who significantly hinders the opponent's opportunity to gain or retain position to catch or intercept a legal forward pass is guilty of pass interference. This can occur:
- a) Through direct contact whereby one player makes contact with an opponent and causes the opponent to move off stride or away from the opponent's intended direction.
 - b) When a player steps into the established path of an opponent, causing the opponent to slow down or change direction.
 - c) During a deliberate attempt to block the opponent from reaching the arrival point of the ball.
 - d) When a player is prematurely flagged while attempting to catch a pass, even if the pass is not caught.
- 8.2. Face guarding/screening is also considered pass interference even though it does not involve contact. This penalty should be called when the defender has their back to the ball when it is in flight and raises a hand in front of the face of the intended receiver without turning to look at the ball. The ball striking the raised hand or any part of this defender's body does not negate the penalty.
- 8.3. A pass interference penalty should be called anytime a player is denied the opportunity of catching the ball through the illegal actions of an opposing player while the ball is in flight. However, the official can rule that the ball had little chance of being touched by the player interfered with and assess a penalty of 10 yards for obstruction, illegal use of hands, or pass interference remote to the play. When it is clear that the offended player had no possible chance of coming anywhere near the ball, even if interference had not taken place, then this penalty should not be called.
- 8.4. Both offensive and defensive players can be called for pass interference. If the defence commits pass interference the offence is awarded the ball at the point of

the infraction (as if the pass was completed), or ten yards in advance of the point of last scrimmage, and is awarded an automatic first down. If the offence commits pass interference the result is a turnover. If this occurs on fourth down, the defence has the option of accepting the penalty and declaring the pass incomplete thereby taking possession on the previous line of scrimmage.

- 8.5. If defensive interference occurs in the defending team's end zone, the next play begins at the one-yard line.

Rule 9 - Equipment

- 9.1. Teams may use their own football during the game, or if they agree, one game ball may be used by both teams. Each league or tournament can set its own specifications regarding the dimensions and type of football to be used based on the age and skill of the participants. No team or player is permitted to make alterations to the natural surface of the ball being used and the ball must be inflated to manufacturer's specifications. Teams who do not comply with these rules will be penalized ten yards for objectionable conduct. Only leather and composite regulation balls will be allowed in a game. Women must use a Junior or Youth size ball and Men must use a full size ball, made by any manufacturer. Women may not kick a full size ball.
- 9.2. Players are not permitted to use adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or on a player's person, clothing or attachments that affects the ball or an opponent (exception: eye shade). Players who do so will be penalized ten yards for objectionable conduct and must leave the game until it is removed.
- 9.3. The proper use of regulation mouth guards and flag belts is mandatory. If a player does not have a flag belt, the player must leave the game for at least one play and their team will be assessed a 10-yard objectionable conduct penalty. If a player is not properly using, or does not have a regulation mouth guard, the player must leave the game for at least one play and the team will be assessed a 10-yard objectionable conduct penalty. If it becomes obvious that this is not a memory lapse but that the same player persists in attempting to deliberately deceive the officials into thinking they are using a mouth guard then the player will be ejected and the team penalized for objectionable conduct.
- 9.4. If two teams are using similar sweaters, the winner of the coin toss has the option to change sweaters. Uniforms cannot contain any equipment that would cause injury to himself or herself or another player. This includes, but is not limited to, any plastic or metal items. For instance, hair could be held in place with a fabric fastener but not with an uncovered metal or plastic clip or plastic holder. The referee will be the final authority on equipment that may be injurious to participants or on any equipment or devices that are not covered in the rules.

- 9.5. Jewellery must be removed prior to the start of the game. If it is not possible to remove the jewellery it must be covered up completely. Medical bracelets may be worn but they must be fastened securely so as not to cause injury. The referee will have the final decision as to the acceptability of equipment. A player who fails to comply must leave the game for at least one play and the team penalized for objectionable conduct.
- 9.6. It is not mandatory to wear cleated shoes, but shoes with heels are not acceptable. Spikes or similar sharp pointed type shoes such as track spikes, metal baseball cleats, or golf shoes are not permitted. If cleated shoes are worn, there is no minimum or maximum number of cleats to be worn, but the cleats must be a part of the natural design of the shoe. Rugby shoes with steel toes or shoes with metal cleats, spikes or sharp objects that are not a part of the shoe are illegal. Players found wearing such shoes will be ejected from the game and their team will be penalized for objectionable conduct.
- 9.7. If a player is wearing any other unacceptable equipment, the player must leave the game for at least one play and the team will be assessed an objectionable conduct penalty. The player must remove the equipment before returning. If the player returns to the game with the unacceptable equipment, the team will be penalized for objectionable conduct.
 - 9.7.1 Knee braces may be worn but must be completely covered by pants or tensor bandages such that no part of the brace is exposed to allow a finger to be placed between any edge of the brace and the leg.
- 9.8. If a participant has incurred a wound that is bleeding, or if there is enough blood on a participant, or on the participant's uniform to such an extent that it may be transferred to another individual, the participant must leave the playing field until the problem is resolved to the satisfaction of the referee. The team may substitute for the player.
- 9.9. Players are not permitted to have any item extending below their flag belt, other than the three flags. This includes, but is not limited to; play cards, drawstrings, any excess length of the belt itself, hand warmers, etc. Where players have items extending below their flag belt at the time the ball is snapped, the team will be assessed a five yard illegal procedure penalty. The offending player or players must leave the field for one play.
- 9.10. Players must not wear shorts or pants that have pockets, zippers, press-studs, tears or clips of any kind. Players cannot tape or secure their shorts or pants to meet this regulation. Players who are not wearing appropriate shorts or pants, or who are wearing jewellery that hasn't been covered with tape will be assessed a 10 yard objectionable conduct penalty, and must leave the game for at least one play.

- 9.11. Only **Sonic FLAG-A-TAG Belts** with 3 flags can be used at any sanctioned flag football event. Every effort must be made to keep one flag on each hip and one in the middle of the back. These flags must not be altered or cut, and the sockets must not be glued or changed in any way. Players caught with a tampered belt of flags, will be ejected from the game. They will also face possible further discipline from the tournament organizing committee. The Sonic flag belts and 3 flags must be clearly visible and must not be covered in any way by the player's uniform. Players must make their flags visible to the defenders by ensuring that their shirts are tucked into their shorts/pants.
- 9.12. All radio devices must be completely covered by the team sweater and must be located on the quarterback's back, at least 6 inches above the flag belt. The earpiece must be removed and tucked into the sweater before the ball is snapped. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a 10-yard objectionable conduct penalty and that player must leave the game for at least one play.

Rule 10 – Field Dimensions

- 10.1. A regulation field is 110 yards long and 54 yards wide with 10 yard deep end zones at each end.
- 10.2. The beanbags will be marked in the middle of the field.
- 10.3. A non-regulation field can be 80 yards, 90 yards or 100 yards but must meet the width and end zone standards.
- 10.4. Goal posts are not required for the game of flag football. If they are present, they must be padded to prevent injury. Goal posts cannot be in the field of play.
- 10.5. Team benches should be a minimum of two yards back from the sideline. If they are located on the same side of the field the bench area will be between the 10 and 45-yard lines. If on opposite sides of the field, the bench area will run between the 45 yard lines and the coaching box will run between the 10-yard lines. Players must stay in their bench area when off the field or be penalized ten yards for objectionable conduct.
- 10.6. The boundary lines on the field must be marked at least one yard inside any obstructions, including any track, and the lines are considered to be out of bounds. Only the captains are permitted to discuss rule applications, request measurement, and choose options on penalty applications. Only a captain can appeal a referee's decision. All requests and questions from a team may only be directed to the officials through a captain.

Rule 11 – Procedures

- 11.1. Each team may have a maximum of seven players on the field during play. A team cannot play with less than six players on the field during the game. If a team has more than seven players on the field during a play, the team will be penalized ten yards for illegal substitution.
- 11.2. Substitute players may enter the field only when the play is dead. Substitutes must enter from the bench side and players leaving the field must go directly to the bench area. Substitutes may not enter the field after the offence has broken its huddle or after the kicker has begun the approach to the ball on a kick-off. A player who enters the field to communicate a play to a team mate must remain on the field for the next play. The penalty for violating these rules is ten yards for illegal substitution.
- 11.3. Teams are permitted a maximum of four captains per game. Only an on-field captain is permitted to discuss rule applications with the referee, to request measurements, and to choose options on penalty applications.
- 11.4. Beanbags are used to mark the line of scrimmage, the rusher's line and the first down marker. Each bag should be at least 4" square. Two bags are of the same color - one for the line of scrimmage and one for the rusher's position, and the third bag, indicating the first down marker, must be of a different color.
- 11.5. If there is an inadvertent whistle by the officials on a play, the play will stand if the whistle did not affect the outcome of the play. If the whistle affected the outcome, the team that was affected can let the play stand as of the whistle, or repeat the play from the point of last scrimmage. If it is not possible to determine who was adversely affected, the play will be repeated.
- 11.6. If the ball touches an official during play, it will be treated as if the ball touched the ground during the play and the appropriate ruling will be made.

Rule 12 - Live Ball/Dead Ball

- 12.1. If the ball hits the goal post the play is whistled dead.
 - a) If it is a kick-off and the ball hits the goal post the ball is placed at the receiving team's 10-yard line.
 - b) If it is a punt from the field of play, the ball is placed at the 10-yard line. If it is punted from the teams' own end zone, it is a safety touch.
 - c) If it is a forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage, the play is dead and the ball comes back to the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
 - d) If it is an onside lateral by the offence and the ball hits the goal post in flight, it is a safety touch.

- 12.2. If a ball lies motionless on the ground for three seconds and there is no attempt to play the ball, the play shall be whistled dead.
- 12.3. Players are not allowed to extend the ball in their hand to gain additional yards while the play is live. There is a five-yard penalty for doing so and the ball is considered dead at the point the extension began. If the flag is not pulled on the play, the play should be blown dead and the penalty assessed.
- 12.4. Players who have possession of the ball are not permitted to dive forward in an effort to gain additional yards. The penalty is 15 yards and the ball is considered dead at the point the dive began.
- 12.5. When the play is live and a member of the defensive team deliberately flags the ball carrier, the play will be whistled dead. The official must see the pulled flag for the whistle to be blown.
- 12.6. Contact in the neck, head, or face area of the ball carrier is considered to be unnecessary, and will be called as a 15-yard personal foul unless the contact was the result of the actions of the ball carrier.
- 12.7. Once a ball carrier is on the ground, or any part of his/her body other than his/her feet touches the ground, the play is whistled dead with the exception of a quarterback receiving a snap or a kick-off returner or a punt returner receiving a kick.
- 12.8. If the quarterback mishandles the snap or the snap travels over the quarterback's head without being touched, the ball is live to the quarterback only. If a second player should handle the muffed snap the play should be blown dead at that point with the new line of scrimmage placed there and loss of down. The quarterback is considered to be the first player to touch the ball after the snap. In this situation, the rusher may flag the quarterback to end the play only if the quarterback touched the ball before being flagged. The rusher may down the ball to end the play.

Rule 13 - Penalties
(Alphabetical Listing)

Delay of Game - This is a 10-yard penalty. It is called when the kicking team on a kick-off does not kick the ball within the allotted twenty seconds, when a team is deliberately delaying the game, or when a team does not have six players to begin the game.

Deliberate Grounding of the Ball - If a player deliberately grounds the ball to avoid being flagged, the ball will be placed at the point the passer released the ball with the loss of that down. The exception is when the quarterback spikes the ball for the purpose of stopping the clock in the last 2 minutes of a half.

Diving - The ball carrier is not allowed to dive with the ball in order to gain extra yards. This will be considered a 15-yard personal foul and is applied as a dead ball foul from the point where the dive began.

Extension - The ball carrier is not allowed to extend the ball with the arms in an effort to gain extra yards. This is applied as a dead ball foul from the point of the torso of the ball carrier when the extension took place. It is a five-yard penalty.

Flag Guarding - Any player in possession of the ball that uses any part of their arm, hand etc. to block the defender from obtaining their flag will have the play blown dead at the point of the infraction and a 10 yard penalty assessed with loss of down. If a first down was gained before the infraction occurred, it will stand. Flag guarding behind the line of scrimmage will be assessed as a 5-yard penalty from the point of the infraction. Flag guarding in the end zone is a safety touch.

Flagging Fouls – A defender cannot hold on to a ball carrier or his/her uniform while flagging the ball carrier. This can be a 10-yard live ball foul or a 5-yard (minor hold) foul. Neither can a defender “bat” the ball out of a ball carrier’s hand once possession has been clearly established in order to stop play. This is also considered to be holding. A defender is not allowed to initiate bodily contact with the ball carrier for the purpose of slowing or stopping his/her progress. This will be assessed as a 10-yard hold or as a 15-yard roughing penalty depending upon the severity. When an opponent knocks a ball carrier out of bounds in an attempt to flag and no flag is pulled, this, too, is considered a holding penalty. With the exception of the 5 yard minor hold all holding infractions (if accepted) are live ball fouls and the team is penalized 10 yards from where the infraction occurred and an automatic first down is awarded. A minor hold, if accepted, will result in a five-yard mark-off from the point of the infraction with loss of down.

Illegal Participation - If a defensive player illegally enters the field from the bench area to become the eighth defensive player on the field while play is in progress and affects the outcome of the play, this player is guilty of illegal participation and the opponents

will be awarded a touchdown and the player ejected from the game. If a fan illegally participates in the game and a touchdown would have been scored without the participation, then the touchdown must be awarded. If the fan did not affect the outcome of the play, the play stands. If the fan affected the outcome of the play, the team has the option to repeat the play from the point of last scrimmage.

Illegal Procedure – Illegal procedure occurs when:

- a) An offensive player attacks the line as the ball is being snapped or crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the ball being snapped.
- b) The centre does not snap the ball between his/her legs.
- c) The quarterback does not receive the snap 5 yards back of the line of scrimmage.
- d) There are fewer than 5 players on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
- e) A player has improper equipment hanging below his/her waste at the time of the snap.
- f) If a defensive player makes contact with an offensive player on the offensive side of the ball before the snap.

In each case, a 5-yard illegal procedure penalty is assessed with no loss of down.

Illegal Re-Entry - A player is not permitted to leave the field of play during a play, return to the field of play, and then directly participate in the play. The penalty is 10 yards for illegal re-entry. When this occurs:

- a) by the offence on a kick-off, the penalty is applied at the spot the ball was held when the infraction took place.
- b) by the offence on a scrimmage play, if a first down was not made, the penalty is applied at the point of last scrimmage, down repeated. If a first down was made prior to the infraction, the penalty is applied at the point of foul and the down is not repeated.
- c) by the offence on a convert, no score is allowed and no repeated attempt is given.
- d) by the defence on a kick-off, the penalty is applied at the spot the ball was held when the infraction took place.
- e) by the defence on a scrimmage play, the offence has the option to apply the penalty at the point of last scrimmage with the down repeated or at the point the ball was held at the time of the infraction and downs continue.
- f) by the defence on a convert attempt, if the foul occurred in the end zone, the point or points are awarded. If the foul occurred in the field of play, the

penalty is applied at the point of last scrimmage and a repeat attempt is given.

- g) after a change of possession on a scrimmage play, the penalty is applied at the spot the ball was held at the time of the infraction.
- h) on any play when a score would have been made without the illegal re-entry, then the score is awarded.

Illegal Substitution - This occurs when a player illegally enters the field. Players are not allowed to enter the field on a scrimmage play after the offence breaks its huddle or, if there is no huddle, after the official signals no more substitutions. On a kick-off, players cannot legally enter the field after the kicker begins the approach to the ball. If a team has more than seven players on the field during a play, it is illegal substitution. A 10-yard penalty (if accepted) will be assessed from the line of scrimmage with loss of down for illegal substitution.

Illegal use of Hands - Offensive or defensive players are not permitted to grab the goal posts in order to change direction or take an unfair advantage. Penalty is 10 yards for illegal use of hands.

Major Foul - These are acts that threaten the safety of participants and will result in the ejection of the player responsible. They include: deliberate tripping of an opponent; striking or attempting to strike an opponent; deliberately aggressive and excessive contact on the quarterback's hand or arm while blocking or batting a pass and any attempt to injure a participant in the game. Major fouls are 25 yard fouls and considered to be dead ball fouls except for the following: roughing the passer, roughing the kicker, tripping the ball carrier, roughing the ball carrier or the intended receiver on the last play of a half.

No Yards - This occurs when the punting team encroaches within the two yard restraining zone on a punt. Members of the punting team must not come within a two-yard radius of the punt returner prior to the touching of the ball by the receiving team. This is a 10-yard penalty (if accepted) to be applied from the point the ball was first touched by the receiving team.

Objectionable Conduct - These penalties are applied as 10-yard dead ball fouls. The following actions are considered to be objectionable conduct fouls: the use of profane language, taunting opposing players, throwing the opponent's flag, demeaning remarks made to opposing players, persistent arguments to officials, deliberately delaying the game, baiting an opponent, faking an injury or contact to draw a penalty or delay the game, or any action which brings disrepute to the game.

Obstruction - Defensive players are not allowed to use their hands to hold up an opponent, or knock them off stride in order to prevent them from running their pass route. An offensive player is not allowed to prevent a defender from pursuing a potential receiver by blocking or obstructing an opponent's established path while in pursuit of that potential receiver (pick play). These are live ball fouls and a 10-yard penalty (if accepted) is applied from the previous line of scrimmage and the down is repeated. An offensive player is not allowed to obstruct a defender who is in pursuit of the ball carrier by causing him/her to slow down or change direction. Contact does not have to occur. The play is not whistled dead until the ball carrier has been flagged. The penalty (if accepted) is 10 yards with loss of down and is assessed from the point where the ball was when the infraction occurred. If a first down was gained before the infraction, it will stand. Players are permitted to take a stationary position on the field in order to avoid being called for obstruction, provided there is sufficient time given to allow the opponent to adjust. This rule does not apply to the centre who is obliged to move out of the direct path of a legally positioned rusher on a scrimmage play. The penalty for obstructing a rusher (if accepted) is 10 yards with the down repeated.

Offside - If a defensive player encroaches in the one-yard neutral zone as the ball is snapped, it will result in a 5-yard offside penalty. The neutral zone extends one yard back from the line of scrimmage on the defensive side of the ball. If the first defensive player to cross the line of scrimmage did not rush from at least five yards away from the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap or after the snap, an offside penalty will be called.

Offside Pass - The ball is brought back to the point the pass originated and downs continue.

Pass Interference - If the defence commits it, the ball is awarded to the offence at the point of the foul, or 10 yards from the point of last scrimmage, and an automatic first down is awarded to the offence. Flagging a receiver before they have possession of the ball is also pass interference. If the offence commits pass interference possession is awarded to the defence. If the foul by the offence occurs on fourth down the defence may declare the pass incomplete. (If the defence commits pass interference in the end zone on a convert attempt, the convert will be awarded. If the offence commits pass interference, no repeat attempt is given.)

Personal Fouls - These are acts of roughness or unfair play. Players must control their momentum and try to avoid collisions with opponents. A shove or roughing when flagging the ball carrier shall be considered a personal foul. A defender who steps into the path of ball carrier at the last moment and without providing sufficient space for the ball carrier to avoid a collision is guilty of a personal foul if the resulting contact is considered to be too rough. Charging, lowering the shoulders, crashing through, elbowing or throwing the body into a group of defenders by the ball carrier is considered to be a

personal foul. Personal fouls are 15-yard penalties and can be accepted as live or dead ball fouls at the option of the non-offending team. In either case, first down is not automatic.

Time Count Violation - The offensive team has 20 seconds after the play is blown in by the referee to snap the ball. Failure to do so results in a five-yard time count violation penalty, which is applied from the point of last scrimmage with no loss of down.

Rule 14 – Application of Penalties

- 14.1. A penalty can be refused by the non-offending team. However, if there is an ejection given by the referee that player must leave the game. The clock will start on the whistle in the last two minutes of a half if the penalty is refused.
- 14.2. If the non-offending team refuses a penalty, the play stands and downs continue. If the penalty is accepted, the referee will explain the options to the non-offending team's captain. Once a team has given its choice to the referee, it cannot be changed. If they have been given the wrong options by the referee, they must appeal to the referee prior to the ball being put into play on the next down or kick-off.
- 14.3. If a team commits two or more live ball fouls during the same play, the non-offending team can only accept to apply one of the fouls. However, the non-offending team may have an option to apply one of the live ball fouls as a dead ball foul.
- 14.4. If there is more than one dead ball foul called against the same team during one play, all fouls can be applied. If each team commits a dead ball foul on the same play, only the difference in yardage will be applied. If each team commits a live ball foul during the same play, the down is repeated.
- 14.5. The application of a penalty will not result in the ball being placed closer than the one-yard line. When a single fixed distance penalty is applied inside the opposing team's thirty-yard line, the ball cannot be brought more than half the distance to the goal line. If the fixed distance penalty is applied from outside the opposing team's thirty-yard line, it cannot bring the ball closer than the fifteen yard line. If the normal penalty yardage was applied and the ball would have reached the goal line due to the penalty, a first down will be awarded to the offence.
- 14.6. On a fourth down play, the offence cannot be awarded a first down by the application of a dead ball foul. Possession changes to the defence and the penalty is applied.
- 14.7. If the defence commits a live ball foul that results in a first down being awarded by the application of the penalty yardage, the first down cannot be taken away if

the offence commits a dead ball foul on the play. The first down would be awarded and the penalty yardage for the dead ball foul would then be applied. It would be first down and fifteen after the application of the dead ball foul.

- 14.8. If a team commits a dead ball penalty on a play that results in a touchdown or on a convert attempt, the non-penalized team has the option to apply the penalty on the convert attempt or the repeated convert attempt, if there is one, or on the subsequent kick-off.
- 14.9. If a team accepts a live ball foul that occurs on the last play of the quarter (other than an offside pass, obstruction by the offence, or flag guarding), there will be one more play given to the team that has possession. Dead ball fouls that occur on the last play of a quarter will be applied in the next quarter. When the defence commits an infraction on the last play of a half there will be one more play if the penalty is accepted?
- 14.10. Fixed distance penalties are applied in the following manner unless a previous rule states otherwise:
 - a) If the foul occurs before the ball is put into play, as the ball is put into play, or before a first down is gained, the penalty will be applied at the point the ball was last put into play and the down will be repeated.
 - b) If the foul occurs after a first down has been gained, the penalty will be applied from the spot the ball was held at the time of the infraction. The offence will be awarded a first down.
 - c) If a foul is committed after the offence loses possession of the ball, the penalty will be applied from the spot the ball was held at the time of the infraction. A first down will be awarded to the team that has possession of the ball. If the penalty was called when the ball was in the air as the result of a kick-off or punt, the penalty will be applied at the point the ball is first touched by the receiving team.

Rule 15 – General

- 15.1. If a team refuses to start or continue a game at the request of the referee, the referee can award the game to the non-offending team after two warnings to the captain of the offending team. If the game is tied or the offending team is leading at the time, the game will be forfeited by a score of 1-0. If the non-offending team is winning at the time, the score will count.

- 15.2. If there are goal posts on the field and the ball is scrimmaged within the offensive team's twenty-yard line, the ball must be moved to the closest hash mark.
- 15.3. If a team scrimmages within five yards of the opposing team's goal line and there are goal posts on the field, the ball must be scrimmaged at the closest hash mark.
- 15.4. The referee will decide on any on-field ruling, which is not covered by this Rule Book.