



RIVER'S EDGE ADULT MEN'S 7ON7 RULES

SECTION 1: FLAG BELTS

Article 1. Teams must supply their own flags.

Article 2. Bring extra flags and belts. Your participation is subject to having the correct and working flags.

Article 3. Having the correct and legal flags is solely the responsibility of the participant. If you are not certain if your flags are legal or allowed, it is your duty to confirm with the officials or director prior to game start in order to avoid consequences of illegal equipment.

Article 4. Altered or tampered flags could result in an ejection or forfeit. No shortening, cutting, using a cloth material or other substrate different from the traditional vinyl material (at the discretion of the officials), etc.

Article 5. Youth size flags may not be worn in adult leagues! Adult flags must be no less than 14" long as measured from the bottom of the popper or flag belt when there is no popper present and no less than 1 3/4" wide. (Failure to Wear Proper Equipment – 5-yards, loss of down)

Article 6. Flags must be a contrasting color to a player's pants/shorts. Contrasting is at the official's discretion.

Article 7. Flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding. Flags must be evenly distributed on the belt. Belts must be snug around the waist to avoid rotating.

Article 8. If a player chooses to wear a hand towel, or any other object, on their waist it will be treated as part of the flag belt.

Article 9. If a ball carrier starts the play wearing an incomplete, improperly worn, or improperly secured flag belt, or no flag belt at all, they must be downed by one-hand touch.

Article 10. The person taking the snap is an exception to this rule, they must take the snap wearing a flag belt.

Article 11. If a player is legally or illegally deflagged during a play and then comes into possession of the football later during the same play, they must be downed by one-hand touch.

Article 11. All players on the field are eligible receivers at the snap regardless of possible uniform violations.

Article 12. A missing flag violation will not delay the game or stop a live play

SECTION 2: MISCELLANEOUS UNIFORM AND GEAR ISSUES

Article 1. Some type of team jersey is required; the minimal standard is similar-colored shirts. Teams must carry two colored shirts, a dark color and a light color. They do not have to be official uniforms, the light colored one can be a white T-shirt. During the regular season, if both teams are wearing the same color, the home team will need to change into a different color. The lower seed in the playoffs will be required to change into a different color.

Article 2. Players must ensure their jerseys are long enough to remain tucked in during the entire play or short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline. (Jerseys should never cover the flag belt).

Article 3. When a shirt is untucked at the snap a hold will not be called on the defender that is making a fair and legal attempt at the ball carrier's flag. It is the player's responsibility to check their equipment before each snap. A player's flag belt should be worn to have a flag on each hip and one on the tailbone.

SECTION 3: TIME OUTS AND CLOCK PROTOCOL

Article 1. Officials may stop the clock as needed.

Article 2. Team timeouts are 30 seconds. After 30 seconds the official will audibly place the offense on a 25-second play clock. No timeouts in the first half.

Article 3. Halftime is one minute.

SECTION 4: COIN TOSS

Article 1. Game officials will confirm with team captains during the coin toss that the teams are in correct and legal uniforms (pockets, flags, contrasting colors, unyielding materials, etc.).

Article 2. Referee will issue the first warning about unsportsmanlike conduct, excessive rough play, and language.

Article 3. First possession is decided using a coin toss. The head official will ask the 'calling captain' their choice of "heads" or "tails". The head official will then confirm the call. The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:

- Begin on offense
- Begin on defense
- Designate which goal their team will defend
- Defer their choice to the second half

Article 6. The loser of the coin toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. Before the start of the second half, the choice of options shall be reversed. If a team captain does not attend the coin toss, the opposing team will win the toss.

Article 7. In order to keep to schedule, the game clock shall start one minute after the coin toss formalities have concluded, regardless of if the teams have taken the field or not.

SECTION 5: GENERAL OFFENSE

Article 1. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless they are the only player in motion.

Article 2. All players must substitute from their sideline only. This allows the defense to be aware of their presence and avoids deceptive plays by the offense.

Article 3 The ball must be snapped between the center's legs.

Article 4. It is a false start if any player on offense enters the neutral zone before the snap.

Article 5. The offense may not act or move in a manner that, in the judgement of the covering official, is clearly intended to cause the defense to encroach. Verbalizing play-calls or snap counts alone are not acts or moves that should be considered unless they are in conjunction with other acts or moves. The speed, abruptness, down and distance and if any player pretends to have the ball or otherwise simulate action at the snap will be considerations.

Article 6. Direct snaps are legal to any player not on the line-of-scrimmage.

Article 7. The ball will be declared dead if any portion of the ball carrier's body other than their hands and feet (knee, elbow, buttocks, ball-in-hand, etc.) touches the ground.

Article 8. The offense is responsible for retrieving the ball and returning it to an official or to the line of scrimmage at the end of each play.

SECTION 6: FUMBLES AND MUFFS

Article 1. Fumbles are a "dead ball" when they hit the ground. If a lateral, muffed or fumbled ball is intercepted before becoming dead it remains a "live ball".

Article 2. Forward fumbles that hit the ground will be marked where the ball carrier's feet were when he/she lost control and not the spot where the ball hit the ground.

Article 3. Muffed snaps will be marked where the ball hit the ground.

RUNNING / JUMPING / DIVING

Article 1. Ball carriers are allowed to leave their feet, jump, and spin as evasive maneuvers in order to advance the ball as long as they do not put another player's safety at risk. Not every insignificant jump or small hop constitutes a safety issue and player safety risk is at the

discretion of each official. Jump cuts or leaping between two defenders is allowed if they do not initiate noteworthy contact with the defender or put another player's safety at risk.

Article 2. Ball carriers may not hurdle over another player. Ball carriers may not dive, lunge, or fall forward in a perceived intentional manner in order to advance the ball or achieve a line-to-gain. This is a judgment call by the game officials.

Article 3. Ball carriers may extend the ball out in front of them to gain additional yardage.

Article 4. Diving by the defense to capture a ball carrier's flag is legal.

Article 5. Ball carriers must make every effort to avoid a defender who has established a stationary position.

Article 6. Runners may leave their feet to avoid collision or falling on another player.

Article 7. Passers may jump vertically to throw the ball over a defender.

Article 8. The offense may use multiple backward hand-offs or laterals.

SECTION 7: FLAG GUARDING INCLUDING STIFF-ARMING

Article 1. The ball carrier's flags must be accessible to the defense throughout the play. Flags may not be tucked in pants, tucked under jerseys, worn improperly, looped around the waist belt, or knotted.

Article 2. Flag guarding is the act of a ball carrier denying a defender the opportunity to capture their flag in any physical way. The ball carrier shall not flag guard by flailing of arms, using their hands, arms, elbows or extremely dipped shoulders to deny the opportunity of an opponent to remove a flag.

Article 3. The ball carrier may not swat a defender's hands away nor pin the flag against their body using the ball or hands. An official may call flag guarding if they feel that a ball carrier's natural running motion gave the ball carrier a decisive advantage over the defender and the running motion caused part of the ball carrier's body to block a de-flagging attempt.

Article 4. What constitutes flag guarding is up to the official's judgment. We recommend you carry the ball with your hands held high on the body to avoid flag guarding. This is one of the most difficult transitions for traditional football players. Flag guarding shall not be called if there is no defensive player within reasonable distance to capture the flag.

Article 5. The ball carrier may bend at the knees to dip low, side cut, skip, or take short hops. Extreme low dips (sometimes called a "duck-walk") are legal and do not constitute flag guarding in themselves, as long as the flag carrier's flags are still exposed and the defensive player isn't physically impeded (i.e. the ball carrier isn't using his arms, hands, shoulder, ball, etc. to impede the defender. Normally flag guarding can be avoided while "duck-walking" when the ball carrier keeps his hands and elbows high on the body (ex: at shoulder-level). Examples of flag guarding:

- stiff arming
- pinning the flag
- swatting

- using the ball as a stiff arm

Article 6. No penalty will be called if a ball carrier simultaneously flag guards as the defender pulls the flag.

Article 7. Tampering with the flag in any way to gain advantage is illegal.

SECTION 8: PASS PLAYS

Article 1. Only one forward pass per play. Once the ball has passed the line-of-scrimmage it cannot be returned to behind the line-of-scrimmage and thrown forward legally.

Article 2. If any portion of the passer's body is behind the line-of-scrimmage it is a legal pass.

Article 3. All players are eligible to receive a pass unless they have stepped out-of-bounds of their own accord. Players may re-establish themselves in the field of play and catch the ball if another player has touched the ball first.

Article 4. Any offensive player who receives either a forward or backward handoff behind scrimmage can pass the ball from behind the line-of-scrimmage.

Article 5. Backward passes are allowed.

Article 6. If the passer's flag has been pulled while the passer still has the ball in their hand, it is a sack. There is no allowance given for the passer's arm being in motion at the time of the sack. Ball in hand at all equals a sack.

SECTION 9: INTENTIONAL GROUNDING

Article 1. A passer may not throw the ball into the ground to avoid a loss of yardage or conserve time.

Article 2. An exception to this rule is it is legal to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball to the ground immediately (spiking) after receiving snap from the "shot-gun" formation. The spike must be fluid and immediate after the snap or it is intentional grounding.

Article 3. A pass may not be intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an offensive receiver.

Article 4. Passers may not throw the ball out-of-bounds to stop the clock as in NFL or NCAA games.

Article 5. Intentional grounding can occur anywhere behind the line of scrimmage.

SECTION 10: CATCHES

Article 1. A pass is completed when an offensive player simultaneously places at least one foot inbounds and momentarily maintains possession of the ball.

Article 2. Simultaneous catches between a defensive and offensive player go to the offense.

Article 3. In the event of a bobbled catch, i.e., the ball is batted about by the receiver in an attempt to catch it, and the intended receiver is de-flagged before taking full possession there is no penalty for early flag pull.

Article 4. Whether or not a ball is tipped or touched in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls anywhere on the field (roughing, personal fouls, illegal contact, etc.).

Article 5. If a receiver steps out-of-bounds of their own accord and is the first to touch a pass, it is illegal touching. The play will be allowed to continue to a dead ball situation (5-yards from previous and a loss of down, if accepted).

Article 6. If the ball comes out of the receiver's grasp due to contact with the ground or while going to the ground the pass is incomplete.

SECTION 11: GENERAL DEFENSE

Article 1. Stripping or attempting to strip the ball from a player's hand, including the quarterback, is illegal.

Article 2. Defensive teams may not simulate the offensive team's signals or cadence. (Unsportsmanlike)

Article 3. There are no "free plays" for the offense. After the head official blows the ready-for-play whistle and the snapper puts their hand(s) on the ball, no player may enter the neutral zone until the ball is moved to start the snap. Entering the neutral zone before the snap is known as "offside" or encroachment which causes the play to be immediately blown dead and the offending team is penalized five yards.

Article 4. If a defensive team intentionally commits a penalty in order to achieve a specific goal and the penalty is declined, any subsequent attempts to continue committing the penalty will result in a 10-yard unsportsmanlike penalty and automatic first down for the offense.

- Example: Offense has the ball 2nd down and 3 yards to gain prior to a first down. Defense intentionally jumps offsides to try and get offense to accept a first down and long line to gain. If offense declines, and defense immediately attempts the same penalty again, an additional unsportsmanlike penalty will be enforced.

SECTION 12: ROUGHING

Article 1. Defensive players must make a concerted effort to avoid charging into the quarterback.

Article 2. In general, defensive players may not "crash" the quarterback's throwing arm, shoulder or body even if the ball is touched first. This rule applies to holders and kickers as well.

Article 3. It is a quarterbacks right to step into a throw, and the rushers duty to avoid contact. If contact is significant and forceful at the discretion of the officials, whether attempting to go for the flag or not, it may be deemed roughing the passer.

Article 4. An insignificant "brush-by" may be allowed by the referee but is not guaranteed.

Article 5. Making contact with the quarterback while blocking a pass or attempting to block a pass may result in a roughing the passer penalty.

Article 6. Whether or not a ball is tipped in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls (roughing, personal fouls, etc.).

Article 7. A roughing penalty will not be enforced if a quarterback initiates contact with a defensive player while in the throwing motion; for example, during the passer's follow through the player's arm makes contact with an opponent's hand, arm, or shoulder. In this instance the impetus of the contact is the action of the quarterback and not the defender. This is a judgment call.

SECTION 13: FLAG PULLING MECHANICS

Article 1. Flag football is a finesse game versus the brute strength game of traditional tackle football.

Article 2. Flag pulling is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball. Legal flag pulls must begin with the hands leading toward the opponent's hips and flags.

Article 3. No player shall make any contact with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness. (This is a judgement call)

Article 4. No player has the right to over-aggressively 'body up', 'wrap up', 'play through', 'bull rush', charge, spear or lead with a shoulder against an opponent even to capture a flag. Players must play to capture the flag, not to commit Illegal Personal Contact.

Article 5. Pushing out on the sidelines is not permitted unless the defense was making a fair, legal, and reasonable attempt to pull the ball carrier's flags, i.e., the defender's hands were aimed low at the ball carrier's hips and flags and not high up on the body.

Article 6. Pushing, striking, holding, slapping or tripping while attempting to pull a flag is not permitted.

Article 7. A defensive player may not pull the flag of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

Article 8. Any defensive player who removes the flag from an offensive ball carrier is encouraged to show good sportsmanship and hold the flag above their head to assist the officials in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

Article 9. Players may be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct for throwing, spiking, obscuring, or delaying the ball carrier in recovering their pulled flag.

Article 10. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play the de-flagging reverts to a one hand touch of the runner between the shoulder and the knees.

Article 11. When a ball carrier flag guards and a defensive player pulls the ball carrier's flag simultaneously, no penalty will be called for flag guarding.

Article 12. If a defensive player physically contains, tackles, or attempts to tackle the ball carrier (e.g., bear hugs, holds, wrestles with, obstructs, pushes the ball carrier out-of-bounds, tackles, or attempts to tackle, etc.) without making a clear, legal attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag, the offensive team will be awarded 10-yards from the spot of foul and an automatic first down.

Article 13. This type of action could result in a score awarded if the foul occurred inside the final line-zone-to-gain or the covering official reasonably believes the foul is the only thing that prevented the ball carrier from scoring. (Teaching point: Play the flag not the ball carrier's body or ball as in traditional tackle football).

SECTION 14: INTERCEPTIONS

Article 1. Interceptions may be returned. In the event of an interception, the intercepting team must secure the ball with "clean hands," i.e., they must not have committed a foul before or simultaneous to the interception.

Article 2. If the intercepting team gained the interception with "clean hands" they will be awarded a first down where the ball becomes dead (flag pull, stepping out-of-bounds, fumbled, etc.)

Article 3. The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull, or the ball carrier left the field-of-play.

Article 4. Fouls by the intercepting team after an interception will be assessed from the spot of the foul. Fouls by the intercepted team after the interception will be assessed at the end of the run.

SECTION 15: MARKING THE SPOT

Article 1. The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull or the ball carrier left the field-of-play.

Article 2. A ball spotter / ball marker or line judge shall be used to mark the line-of-scrimmage.

Article 3. When a ball carrier's flag accidentally falls off — but not as a result of any action by the defense — that player will be downed by one-hand touch.

Article 4. Flag guarding is notionally and effectively the end of the play. However, the play will be allowed to come to its natural dead-ball situation without the whistle being blown.

Article 5. If a defensive player initiates, contact with a ball carrier while making an attempt to capture the ball carrier's flag and that force causes the ball carrier backward prior to the flag

being captured 'forward progress' will be awarded as long as the ball carrier does not make a move under their own power to continue the play.

Article 6. If the ball is intercepted in the end zone and intercepting team fouls in the end zone prior to the ball being brought back into the field (example: flag guarding) the result of the play will be a touchback and the foul will be administered from the touchback spot. This will not result in a safety.

Article 7. If the entire ball is brought back into the field of play and then a foul occurs anywhere on the field, including the end zones, the penalty will be administered from the spot of the foul.

SECTION 16: CONTACT ABOVE THE SHOULDERS

Article 1. Safe play is our utmost concern. Officials will penalize any noteworthy contact above the shoulders (head, neck, or face) between players, even if accidental.

SECTION 17: HOLDING

Article 1. Holding is a judgement call. Officials will penalize any noteworthy hold that provides a significant unfair advantage. A simple tug or momentary grasp may not necessarily constitute holding. Holding is an attempt to gain a physical advantage by using hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or restraining an opponent. Be aware defenders will be given the benefit of the doubt if the ball carrier's shirt is untucked.

SECTION 18: ILLEGAL PERSONAL CONTACT

Article 1. No player may make contact with an opponent that is judged to be unnecessary or provokes rough-play or retaliation.

Article 2. In the judgement of the game official, when one player uses enough force to knock another to the ground by pulling, tripping, bear-hugging, charging, sweeping, flinging, shoving, 'bodying-up' etc. Whether or not the player goes to the ground is irrelevant.

Article 3. It is possible for a player(s) to go to the ground, and it is not considered Illegal Contact, such as unintentional collision, i.e., the runner and defender meeting in the same space during the play, when a defender is making a fair, safe and reasonable attempt to capture the ball carriers' flag and the ball carrier is making a fair, safe and reasonable attempt to avoid the defender. Simply stated, two solid objects tried to occupy the same space at the same time.

Article 4. If a defender trips or compresses a ball carrier while pursuing the offensive player from the rear (typically seen in break-away plays), even if the defender is making a fair and reasonable attempt to capture the ball carrier's flag, the defender will be called for Illegal Contact. The defender is obliged to make a fair, SAFE and reasonable attempt.

Article 5. Safety is paramount.

Article 6. Incidental contact between opponents that does not grant either player an advantage should not be penalized.

SECTION 19: COOL DOWN PERIOD

Article 1. Before, or instead of, disqualification or ejection an official may order (but is not required to) a player a “cool down” period if the official chooses.

Article 2. Players should think of this ‘cool down’ as a warning before being ejected and be thankful for it.

Article 3. This period will consist of five plays and will be tracked by the official that ordered the ‘cool down’.

Article 4. The player must be off the field for five plays regardless. A score or other event does not release the player back to the field. They must stay off the field for five plays.

SECTION 20: UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Article 1. Disrespect toward an official, coach, spectator or another player will constitute unsportsmanlike conduct.

Article 2. Players shall not ‘showboat’, taunt, spike the ball or flag belt toward an opponent, or be excessive in any way, to include using force against or verbally attack or harass another player.

Article 3. Celebrations are fine but keep them short, conservative and not directed at an opponent.

Article 4. Use of inflammatory words or gestures is prohibited.

Article 5. If unsportsmanlike conduct occurs during a live play and the team did not score on that play, the penalty will be assessed from the new line-of-scrimmage, i.e., will be added to or subtracted from the end of the play.

SECTION 21: FIGHTING

Article 1. Fighting will lead to immediate ejection, possible suspension or lifetime exclusion.

Article 2. Fighting is any act or attempt to act by a player or non-player to strike or engage a player or non-player in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempting to or striking with the arms, hands, legs, feet, or foreign object whether or not there was contact.

Article 3. Any player who comes off the sideline to participate in a fight will be disqualified or ejected.

Article 4. If either team leaves the bench during a fight the game will be forfeited immediately

SECTION 22: BENCH FOULS / WARNINGS

Article 1. Teams may incur bench fouls for a variety of reasons to include but not limited to:

- Players or non-players interfering with play or an official
- Disrespect toward officials or other players or non-players
- Players or non-players in the designated restricted zone during a live play
- Non-players on the field of play
- Teams not remaining in the designated team box
- Coaches on the field or becoming entangled in a live play

SECTION 23: INADVERTENT WHISTLE

Article 1. If an official blows an inadvertent whistle, they will declare the ball dead where the ball was at the time the inadvertent whistle. The team against which the action offended may have the option of accepting the play (i.e., the yards gained and the down advances) or replaying the down from the original line-of-scrimmage.

Article 2. If the ball was in the air when the inadvertent whistle occurred, it will be returned to the line-of-scrimmage and the down will be replayed.

Article 3. If a penalty marker is thrown prior to an inadvertent whistle, an accepted penalty will be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, the inadvertent whistle is disregarded.

Article 4. When an inadvertent whistle is triggered by an unfair act, or an act used to deceive or confuse a game official the officiating crew may use their collective judgement to fairly adjudicate the situation. It may result in yardage awarded, a score granted, and/or the guilty player disqualified, etc. It is solely up to the officiating crew to decide.

SECTION 24: UNFAIR ACTS RULE

Article 1. Neither team shall commit act(s) which, in the judgment of the game officials, tends to make a travesty of the game. Article 2. The head official may enforce any penalty or remedy any situation with anything he/she considers equitable — including the award of a first down, a line-zone-to gain, a replay, a score, forfeiture, removal of forfeiture or any administrative issue or situation or not covered specifically covered in these rules.

SECTION 25: LAST PLAYER RULE AND PENALTY

Article 1. If the last defensive player physically contains the ball carrier (e.g., bear hugs, flagrantly holds, pushes the ball carrier out-of-bounds above the hip, tackles, attempts to tackle, etc.) without making a clear, legal attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag or commits illegal contact, the offensive team will be awarded at least one line-zone-to-gain distance from the spot of foul and an automatic first down.

Article 2. In the spirit of the Unfair Acts Rule: Officials have the discretion to award a score if a flagrant foul occurred inside the final line-zone-to-gain (past midfield) or they reasonably believe a foul is the only thing that prevented the ball carrier from scoring. require there must be total agreement of all game officials that saw the foul.

SECTION 26. THE GAME

Article 1. The game shall be played between two teams of no more than seven (7) players each, on a rectangular field with a properly shaped, sized and inflated ball.

Article 2. A team may legally play with no fewer than six (6) players.

Article 3. A coin toss determines 1st possession. The team can elect to have offense, defense, defer or direction. Choice in the 2nd half will be awarded to the team that did not have the choice 1st half. In order to keep to schedule, the game clock shall start one minute after the coin toss formalities have concluded, regardless of if the teams have taken the field or not.

Article 4. The game is ended, and the score is final when the referee declares the game complete.

Article 5. The game is conducted under the supervision of two officials.

Article 6. To start the game, half, or after a touchdown, the offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has four plays to advance to midfield.

Article 7. If a team fails to secure a first down, the defense will take control of the ball at the 5-yard line.

SECTION 27. ATTIRE

Article 1. All members of the same team must wear the same color jersey.

Article 2. Jerseys must be tucked in. The midriff shirt is legal, if in the judgment of the referee, it does not hinder the defense from pulling the flag. No article of clothing may cover any portion of a player's flag. Officials should warn violators of this between plays. If a shirt/jersey becomes untucked during a play, it must be re-tucked before the next play.

SECTION 28. GAME CLOCK FORMAT

Article 1. The clock is 40 minutes long. Two 20-minute halves and a 1-minute halftime. The first half clock is set to 20 minutes. The second half clock is set to 19 minutes. If the score of the game is within 9 points, 1 minute will be added on the official's stopwatch in the second half.

Article 2. The play clock is 25 second and starts once the official marks the ball ready for play. (Delay of Game penalty if exceed 25 seconds)

Article 3. Each team shall have one (1) time out in the second half. No timeouts in the first half.

Article 4. After a team time-out, the game clock will start at the snap of the ball.

Article 5. Because the game clock is a continuous click, it does not stop during P.A.T. attempts or on change of possessions.

Article 6. The one-minute bonus time clock (in the second half) will stop for team time-outs, official time-outs and out of bounds.

Article 7. The on-field captain or quarterback may request the amount of time left in the game from the officials at any time. Officials will be expected to give the correct time.

Article 8. A “stop-clock” will be in effect in the last minute of the second half, unless the point differential is greater than 9 points in the last minute of the second half.

SECTION 29. MERCY RULE

Article 1. At the one-minute warning of the second half, if the score difference is 9 points or more, a pro clock will not be initiated and the game will end. Same applies if a team scores during the 1 minute to create a 9 or more-point lead.

OFFENSE

SECTION 31. GENERAL

Article 1. Any number of players may be on the offensive or defensive L.O.S. at the snap. Defense line aligned from A gap to A gap must be one (1) yard off the ball at the snap.

Article 2. There will be free substitution as long as players being substituted for are off the field prior to the next snap OR player is out of the area of play and is departing the field in haste.

Article 3. Two or more offensive players may be shifting their position at the same time prior to the snap. Their movement may be in any direction, but they must become set for one full count before the ball is snapped or before another player can go in motion prior to the snap. (5 yards)

Article 4. Only one player is allowed to be in motion at the snap and his movement must be parallel or away from the L.O.S. and must be continuous. (5 yards)

Article 5. Any stance is permitted. Any number of players may be on the offensive or defensive L.O.S. at the snap. No defensive player may be within 1 yard of the ball if lined up directly in front of the center or within one yard of the ball if lined up to the side of the center at the snap. (5 yards)

Article 6. Offsides shall be called if either the offense or the defense passes over the plane of their L.O.S. before the ball is snapped. A false movement of the football by the center shall constitute offensive encroachment. These are dead ball fouls, and the play shall be immediately whistled dead before play begins and 5 yards automatically marked off against the encroaching team.

Article 7. No direct snap may be taken at any time. The snap must travel a minimum of 2 yards between the Center’s legs to be legal (either backwards or sideways).

SECTION 32: BLOCKING on the LOS

Article 1. Contact blocking is allowed between the shoulders and waist only (a.k.a. “inside the frame”). Blocking in the back is not allowed.

Article 2. Blockers must be on their feet before, during and after contact is made with their opponents.

Article 3. No contact of any kind is allowed above the shoulders of an opponent. Illegal blocks include:

- Leading with the shoulder
- Low/chop/cut blocks: An attempt by a player to block an opponent at the thigh level or lower.
- Crack-back block: A blind-side block on a player by an opponent who starts downfield and then cuts back toward the original spot of the ball to make contact.
- Blind-side block: Engaging an opponent who does not see the blocker approaching with anything other than fully extended arms and open palms.
- Clipping: A player hitting an opponent from behind.
- Tripping: A player using their leg or foot to stop an opponent's forward motion.
- Hook or hug block: A player gaining advantage of an opponent by turning or detaining the opponent by illegally tackling or using arms around the body, waist, shoulders or arms.
- Rolling blocks: A player on the ground attempting to block or engage an opponent by moving or turning over and over on an axis.
- Dive blocks: A player leaving their feet to engage an opponent.
- Making contact with an opponent while swinging or flipping hands, arms or elbows.
- Slapping, punching, or swinging at an opponent with hands, arms or elbows.
- Grabbing or holding an opponent's jersey while blocking.
- Interlocking of blocker's fingers or hands.
- Laying on a downed defender

Article 4. Swim moves (a player using a maneuver similar to a freestyle swimming stroke to get past an opponent) are legal. However, if the swim move results in contact to an opponent above the shoulder (neck, head, or face) it is illegal.

Article 5. Downfield blocking for the ball carrier is not allowed. Screen blocking only downfield.

Article 6. Two-on-one blocking is permitted as long as both blockers are engaging the opponent above the waist.

Article 7. If a player turns to expose their back, it is not an illegal block as long as their opponent maintains contact with the player from the initial block.

SECTION 33. SCREEN BLOCKING

Article 1. Only screen blocking is permitted. Screen Blocking shall be defined as obstructing the rusher's path to the quarterback or ball carrier, as long as it is done behind the L.O.S., with any part of the body except head, hips, and legs. There can be no independent movement of the elbows.

Article 2. Screeners must have his thumbs hooked in his pants and holding the flag belt with each hand or the screener must hold his arms behind his back with arms locked together in some manner. A screener may not leave his feet to screen or use a screen to imitate any form of contact with the rusher. The screeners feet must be set and planted when in proximity with the rusher. The screener may not set his screen within the 1-yard halo of the defender.

Article 3. The main responsibility of avoiding contact lies with the rusher, however the screener may not step into the rusher or initiate contact in any way.

Article 4. Moving screens shall be penalized from the end of run (E.O.R.) or the point of infraction (P.O.I.), whichever hurts the offensive team the most. If the illegal screen is judged to have caused excessive contact, it will be penalized 10 yards and loss of down.

SECTION 34. PASSING

Article 1. There can be only one forward pass per play.

Article 2. The quarterback or any player receiving the snap, hand-off or lateral behind the line of scrimmage can run at any time, at any point on the field.

Article 3. There is no arm in motion, if the ball is in hand when the quarterback's flag is pulled then it will be ruled a sack.

Article 4. Interceptions may be returned.

Article 5. The rusher may not have any contact with the QB (no hitting the QB arm or knocking the ball out of the QB hand).

Article 6. If ANY part of the players body is behind the LOS it is a legal pass

SECTION 34. RECEIVING

Article 1. All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the quarterback, if the ball has been pitched or handed off in the backfield.

Article 2. Players must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.

SECTION 35. RUNNING

Article 1. Teams may handoff (unlimited), pitch, or throw back in the backfield. UNLIMITED laterals or throwbacks behind the LOS are allowed for the player to remain eligible to pass.

Article 2. Pitching (backwards/laterally) is allowed downfield (unlimited). Handoffs are allowed in front or behind. A handoff DOES NOT count as a lateral/throwback.

Article 3. A forward pass DOES NOT have to cross the LOS to be a legal play.

Article 4. Ball is spotted where the ball is at the time of the flag pull. The ball must break the plane of the midfield or goal line to be considered a first down or touchdown.

Article 5. Players may NOT open hand block down field in any form. Screen blocking only.

DEFENSE

SECTION 36. RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

Article 1. A rusher must be one yard off the line of scrimmage and one yard outside of the center (not head up) in order to rush the A gap.

Article 2. A rusher may not run over a screen blocker. The rusher may not pull the screener toward him or push the screener away from him

Article 3. If the rusher touches the quarterback in the head in his attempt to block the pass a penalty will be called. This will also go for striking the passer's arm when in a forward motion while attempting to block a pass. Roughing the passer will be called when the rusher, if while attempting to de-flag the quarterback or block a pass, lets his momentum carry him into the passer. Defensive player may not have any contact with the passer when he is passing.

Article 4. The defense may rush as many players as it wishes.

SECTION 37. PASS COVERAGE

Article 1. Contacting receivers is allowed within 5 yards of the LOS.

Article 2. Pass interference normally occurs above the waist; entangled feet are not considered pass interference. Incidental contact is not considered pass interference.

Article 3. A player may "find" their opponent by reaching out and placing a hand on them as long as touching does not delay, impede, twist, or turn their opponent. This is not considered pass interference.

Article 4. A player may use their arms or hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver's view (face guarding) of the ball without turning their own head to play the ball as long as noteworthy contact is not made with the receiver.

Article 5. If defensive pass interference occurs in the end zone the ball will be placed on the one-yard line, automatic first down.

Article 6. Interceptions may be returned. Interceptions in the end zone that are not returned to the field of play will result in a touchback and the ball will be spotted on the 5-yard line.

Article 7. Contact away from the direction of the pass is not considered pass interference but may be considered illegal contact.

Article 8. Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference. The benefit of the doubt is given to the receiver. Examples of pass interference include:

- Shoving or pushing off to create separation.
- Playing through the back.
- Hook and turn: grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.
- Arm bars, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.
- Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched, commonly seen through "pick plays"