2025-2026



7v7 Flag Football Rules and Regulations

Intramural Activities

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**Intramural Activities – Flag Football Rules**

# Rule 1: The Game, Field Players, and Equipment

## Section 1: General Provisions

### The Game

The game shall be played between two (2) teams of seven (7) players each. A minimum of five (5) players are required to start the game and avoid a default; three (3) to avoid forfeit. The game may be continued with less than 4 players as long as the team has a chance to win.

### Supervision

The game shall be played under the supervision of two (2) to four (4) officials. The officials are Referee, Back Judge, Line Judge, and Field Judge.

### Persons Subject to Rules

Players, nonplayers, and spectators affiliated with the team are subject to the Rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

### Referee’s Authority

The Referee shall have authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sporting behavior, on any situation not specifically covered in the Rules. The Referee’s decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

## Section 2: Equipment

### The Ball

The official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber covered and meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure and markings. The Referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at their discretion. During the game, each team shall use a legal ball of their choice when in possession.

### Ball Spotters

Two (2) soft and pliable ball spotters shall be used. One (1) orange in color will mark Team A’s scrimmage line. One (1) yellow in color will mark Team B’s scrimmage line. The ball spotters will always be one (1) yard apart.

## Section 3: Required Player Equipment

### Jersey

Each team shall wear contrasting colored jerseys, without pockets, that have a number on either the front or back. Jerseys must be either:

1. Long enough so they remain tucked into the pants/shorts
2. Short enough so there is enough space between the jersey and waistline.

### Pants/Shorts

Pants or shorts should be a different color than the flags.

### Flag Belt

Each player shall wear a one-piece, quick release flag belt on their waist. Each team’s flags must be different colors.

### Shoes

Shoes can either be cleat or cleatless. If a player is wearing cleats, they must be rubber and non-abrasive. Rubber cleats with tipped metal material are legal.

## Section 4: Optional Player Equipment

### Gloves

Players may wear gloves made of non-abrasive materials.

### Headwear

1. Players may wear a knit or stocking cap with no bill.
2. Players may wear a headband made of nonabrasive material.
3. Players may wear a soft rubber hat.

### Pads

Players may wear soft pliable pads on the lower leg, knee, and ankle. Soft and unyielding padded compression shorts and shirts are legal apparel.

### Mouth and Tooth Protectors

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

### Play Book

1. Players may carry a play book inside their clothing made of nonabrasive material, and it must not be visible. If carried on the field, a player must keep the play book on them rather than throw it on the ground.
2. Players may wear a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band with plays.

### Sunglasses

Players may wear pliable and non-rigid sunglasses.

### Face Shield

Players may wear a face shield molded to the face with no protrusions to protect against facial injury.

## Section 5: Illegal Player Equipment

Any player wearing illegal equipment is not permitted to play. This applies to any equipment that, in the opinion of the Referee, is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment that will always be declared illegal include the following:

1. Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots. **EXCEPTION**: Face Shield
2. Jewelry. **EXCEPTION**: any jewelry worn for medical or religious purposes shall be taped down to avoid damage or injury – stud earrings may also be taped down (IM Staff will provide tape). Any fitness tracker/watch may be worn during a game as long as it is covered by pre-wrap and tape so to create a less abrasive material (IM Staff will provide the pre-wrap and tape).
3. Pads or braces worn above the waist. Casts worn above or below the waist.
4. Shoes with ceramic, screw-in, detachable cleats, or any projecting metal. EXCEPTION: Screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat.
5. Shirts/jersey that do not remain tucked in and/or have a hood.
6. Pants or shorts with belts, belt loops, pockets, or exposed drawstrings.
7. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered by both sides and all edges overlapped, and all hard substances covered by a closed-cell, slow recovery rubber.
8. Equipment that includes any sort of electronic communication.
9. Exposed metal on clothes or player.
10. Towels attached to the player’s waist.

# Rule 2: Definitions of Playing Terms

## Section 1: Ball Status; Dead, Live, and Loose

### Dead Ball

A dead ball is a ball not in play. The ball is dead during the interval between downs.

### Live Ball

A live ball is a ball in play. A ball becomes live when the ball is legally snapped, and a down is in progress.

### Loose Ball

A loose ball is a pass, fumble, or kick. A loose ball that has not yet touched the ground is in flight. A grounded loose ball is one that has touched the ground. Any loose ball continues to be a loose ball until a player secures possession of it or until it becomes dead by Rule, whichever comes first.

### When the Ball is Ready for Play

A dead ball is ready for play when the Referee sounds the whistle and signals ready for play.

## Section 2: Catch, Interceptions, Simultaneous Catch, and Touching

### Catch

Establishing player possession of a live ball that is in flight by first contacting the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball.

1. If one (1) foot first lands in bounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception even though a subsequent step of fall takes the receiver out of bounds.
2. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception.
3. It is not a catch or interception if a player’s initial contact with the ground causes a loss of player possession and either the ball contacts the ground or the player is out of bounds prior to regaining player possession.

### Interception

An interception is the catch of an opponent's fumble or pass. Players are permitted to advance the ball if intercepted.

### Recovery

A recovery is gaining possession of a live ball after it strikes the ground.

### Simultaneous Catch or Recovery

A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch or recovery in which there is join possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds.

### Touching

Catching is always preceded by touching the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance. Touching refers to any contact with the ball.

## Section 3: Down and Between Downs

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

## Section 4: Encroachment

When a player is illegally in the neutral zone. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until they are on their side of the neutral zone.

## Section 5: Forward Progress

### Runner

Forward progress is the end of advancement of the ball toward the opponent’s goal in ta runner’s possession, and it determines the dead-ball spot.

### Airborne Player

When an airborne player makes a catch, forward progress is the furthest point of advancement after they possess the ball if contacted by a defender.

## Section 6: Foul and Flagrant Foul

### Foul

A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.

### Flagrant Foul

A foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.

## Section 7: Fumble

Loss of player possession other than by handing, passing, or punting the ball.

## Section 8: Handing the Ball

Transferring of player possession from one teammate to another without throwing or punting it.

## Section 9: Legal and Illegal Kicks

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

## Section 10: Loss of a Down

Loss of the right to repeat the down.

## Section 11: Muff

An unsuccessful attempt to catch a ball, with the ball being touched in the attempt.

## Section 12: Neutral Zone

The neutral zone is from the forward point of the football one (1) yard to the other team’s scrimmage line and extended to each sideline. It is established when the ball is marked ready for play.

## Section 13: Penalty

A result imposed by Rule against a team or team member that has committed a foul.

## Section 14: Removing the Flag Belt

### Flag Belt Removal

When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the ball is declared dead, and the down shall end. If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a 1-hand touch between the shoulders and knees constitutes capture. A player may leave their feet to remove the flag belt.

### Contact

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

## Section 15: Screen Blocking

Legally obstructing an opponent without using any part of the body to initiate contact.

## Section 16: Shift

The action of one (1) or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

## Section 17: Spots

### Basic Spot

A point of reference for penalty enforcement. (See 10-2)

### Enforcement Spot

The point from which a penalty is enforced.

### Dead Ball Spot

The spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by Rule. EXCEPTIONS: See 7-6-4B, 7-6-5B, and 8-8-1A.

### Inbounds Spot

The intersection of the hash marks and the yard line:

1. Through the forward point of the ball when the ball becomes dead in a side zone; or
2. Through the forward point of the ball on the sideline between the goal lines when a loose ball goes out of bounds; or
3. Through the spot under the forward point of the ball in the possession of a runner when they cross the plane of the sideline and go out of bounds.

### Out-of-Bounds Spot

Where the ball becomes dead because of going out of bounds.

### Post Scrimmage Kick Spot

Where the kick ends. The receiving team retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the post scrimmage kick spot when a post scrimmage kick foul occurs. The post scrimmage kick spot is the 14-yard line for kicks that result in a touchback. Fouls by the receiving team behind the scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

### Previous Spot

Where the ball was last snapped.

### Spot of a Foul

Where the foul occurs. If a foul occurs out of bounds, the spot of the foul is at the intersection of the nearer hash marks and the yard line extended on which the foul occurs.

### Spot where a Run Ends

1. Where the ball becomes dead if the runner does not lose possession or if the runner’s fumble/backward pass from beyond the scrimmage line touches the ground or goes out of bounds behind the spot of the fumble/backward pass; or
2. Where the player loses possession if their run is followed by their fumble/backward pass that touches the ground or goes out of bounds beyond the spot of the fumble/backward pass, their illegal forward pass, or their fumble/backward pass beyond the scrimmage line is intercepted; or
3. The spot of the catch of recovery when the momentum rule is in effect.

### Succeeding Spot

Where the ball would be snapped if a foul had not occurred. When a foul occurs during a down in which a touchdown is scored, as in 10-2-10, the succeeding spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the succeeding spot after each Try.

## Section 18: Tagging

Placing one (1) hand anywhere between the shoulders and knees, including hand and arm, of an opponent with the ball. The tagger may leave their feet to make a tag. Pushing, striking, slapping, and holding are not permitted. If the player trips the runner in their attempt to make a diving tag, it is a foul.

# Rule 3: Periods, Time Factors, and Substitutions

## Section 1: Start of Each Half

### Coin Toss

At least five (5) minutes before the game, the Referees will conduct a Captain’s Meeting where they will explain rules and expectations, as well as complete a coin toss. The captain winning the coin toss will have the first choice of options for the first half or will defer their option to the second half. Options are as follows:

1. To choose whether their team will start on offense or defense.
2. To choose the goal line their team will defend.

### Forfeit Time

Game time is forfeit time.

## Section 2: Game Time

### Playing Time

Playing time shall be 40-minutes, divided into two (2) halves of 20-minutes each. The clock will run continuously for the first 20-minutes of the first half, unless stopped for a charged timeout, officials' timeout, or injury. The clock will stop in the last two (2) minutes of the second half. Half-time will be five (5) minutes. Play at the beginning of each half will start the offense’s 14-yard line.

### Extension of Halves

A half shall be extended by an untimed down if one (1) of the following occurred during the down in which time expires:

1. There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted, except for:
	1. Unsportspersonlike or nonplayer fouls
	2. Fouls that specify a loss of down
	3. Fouls on a scoring play that are enforced following the Try
	4. Fouls for which enforcement by rule result in a safety.
2. There was a double foul
3. There was an inadvertent whistle
4. If a touchdown was scored, the Try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the 4th period and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

If (A), (B), or (C) occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated. **NOTE: the period shall not be extended further when the defense fouls during a successful try and the offended team accepts the results of the play with enforcement of penalty from the succeeding spot.**

### Last Two (2) Minutes

During the final two (2) minutes of the second half, the clock will stop for one of the following reasons:

1. Incomplete legal or incomplete illegal forward pass – clock restarts on the snap.
2. Out of bounds – clock restarts on the snap.
3. Safety – clock restarts on the snap.
4. Team time-out – clock restarts on the snap.
5. First down – clock restart is dependent on the previous play.
6. Touchdown – clock restarts on the snap (after the Try and onside conversion).
7. Penalty and administration – clock restart is dependent on the previous play.
8. **EXCEPTION 1**: Delay of game foul is accepted – clock restarts on the snap
9. **EXCEPTION 2**: Any foul occurs – offended team may elect to restart the clock on the snap.
10. Officials' time-out – clock restarts at their discretion.
11. Touchback – clock restarts on the snap.
12. Team A (the team that is snapping the ball) is awarded a new series – clock restart is dependent on the previous play.
13. Team B is awarded a new series – clock restarts on snap.
14. Either team is awarded a new series following a legal punt – clock restarts on the snap.
15. Team attempting to conserve time illegally (includes intentional grounding and a backwards pass thrown intentionally out of bounds) - clock restarts on the ready.
16. Team attempting to consume time illegally – clock restarts on the snap.
17. Inadvertent whistle – clock restarts on the ready.

## Section 3: Tie Game

### Regular Season

During the regular season, there will be no overtime period.

### Playoffs

If a game ends in a tie during playoffs, overtime will continue until a winner is determined. There will only be one (1) coin flip during overtime. ALL OVERTIME PERIODS ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE. The end zone used is at the discretion of the Referees.

Unless moved by penalty, each team will start first down and goal from the 10-yard line. The team will have four (4) downs to score, unless awarded a first down automatically, or a penalty allows for repeating the down. If the defense intercepts a pass or recovers a fumble and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the series is over. Each team is entitled to one (1) timeout per overtime period.

### Fouls and Penalties

Fouls and penalties will be administered similarly to the regular game. Team A (the team snapping the ball) shall be awarded a new series of four (4) downs when an automatic 1st down foul is accepted. Dead ball fouls following a touchdown are penalized on the Try. Dead ball fouls following a successful Try will be penalized form the succeeding spot, Team B’s 10-yard line, if accepted.

## Section 4: Time-Outs

### How Charged

The Referee shall declare a time-out when they suspend play for any reason. Each time a time-out shall be charged to either the Referee or one of the teams.

### Officials Time-Out

The Referee shall declare an official’s time-out when an excess time-out is allowed for an injured player. The Referee may declare an official’s time-out for any contingency not covered elsewhere by the Rules. If a time-out is for repair or replacement of player equipment that becomes illegal through play and is considered dangerous to other players, the time-out is charged to the Referee.

### Charged Time-Outs

Each team is entitled to two (2), 1-minute charged time-outs per half. Other timeouts may be longer only if the Referee deems it necessary.

### Protest Timeouts

When a team requests a charged time-out to protest a call made or not made by Referees, the Referee and the team captain will meet to discuss the misinterpretation or misapplication. The protest must be made prior to the time the ball becomes live following the play to be reviewed unless the half has officially ended. If the Referee changes their ruling, it is an official’s time-out. If the ruling is not changed, it is a charged time-out. If the team has used its available time-outs, a delay of game penalty will be assessed.

### Notification

The Referee shall notify both teams five (5) seconds before a charged time-out expires. When all two (2) time-outs have been charged per half, the Referee shall notify both captains, coaches is applicable, and all officials.

### Injured Player

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

### Concussion

Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game, and Intramural Staff will carry out the ARC Concussion Protocol.

## Section 5: Delay of Game

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

1. Failure to snap within 25-seconds after the ball is declared ready for play.
2. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.
3. Deliberately advancing the ball after it is declared dead.

## Section 6: Illegally Conserving or Consuming Time

When a team attempts to conserve or consume time illegally, the Referee shall order the clock started or stopped. If the kicking team delays kicking the ball, as described in 6-1-4, the Referee may also reset the clock to the time of the previous snap and start the clock on the snap. When a foul occurs with less than two (2) minutes remaining in either half, the offended team will have the option to start the game clock on the snap.

## Section 7: Substitutions

### Eligible Substitutions

Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball is snapped. An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from their team area. A replaced player must leave the field immediately at the sideline nearest their team area prior to the ball being snapped.

### Legal Substitutions

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

# Rule 4: Ball in Play, Dead Ball, and Out of Bounds

## Section 1: Ball in Play - Dead Ball

### Dead Ball Becomes Live

A dead ball, after having been declared ready for player, becomes a live ball when it is snapped legally.

### Ball Declared Dead

A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound their whistle or declare it dead when one (1) of the following occurs:

1. The ball goes out of bounds
2. Any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground
3. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful Try is made
4. The ball strikes the ground following 1st touching by the Kicking Team
5. The Kicking Team catches a punt that is beyond the neutral zone or when an untouched punt comes to rest on the ground, and no player attempts to secure it.
6. A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
7. A backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players. A snapped ball that hits the ground before or after getting to the intended receiver is dead at the spot where it hits the ground
8. A forward pass is legally completed, or a loose ball is caught by a player on, above, or behind the opponent’s goal line.
9. A runner has a flag belt removed legally by an opponent. A flag belt is removed when the clip is detached from the belt, the belt is torn into more than one (1) piece, or the flag is torn off the belt (flag only).
10. A runner is legally tagged (flag only)
11. A runner is legally tagged with one (1) hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm (touch only)
12. A passer is deflagged/tagged prior to releasing the ball
13. A muff of a punt strikes the ground.
14. The Kicking Team’s punt breaks the plan of the Receiving Team’s goal line.
15. Team B (the team not snapping the ball) secures possession during a Try or overtime.
16. An official sounds their whistles inadvertently during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined and the status of the ball is as follows:
	1. The ball is in player possession. The team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
	2. The ball is loose from a fumble, backwards pass, illegal kick, or illegal forward pass. The team in possession may elect to put the ball in player where possession was lost or replay the down.
	3. The ball is in flight during a legal forward pass or a punt. The ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.

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

## Section 2: Succeeding Spot

### Placement of Dead Ball

When the ball becomes dead between the hash marks, play is resumed at the dead ball spot. If the ball becomes dead in a side zone, place the ball at the nearest hash mark at the corresponding yard line.

### Anywhere Between Hash Marks

Before the ready for play signal, Team A (the team snapping the ball), may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the hash marks for the start of each half; for a Try; following a touchback, safety, Try, and awarded catch after a punt; for the start of each series in overtime.

## Section 3: Out of Bounds

### Player Out of Bounds

A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or official, that is on or outside the sideline or end line.

### Player in Possession Out of Bounds

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

### Loose Ball Out of Bounds

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

# Rule 5: Series of Downs, Number of Downs, and Team Possession After Penalty

## Section 1: A Series – How Started, How Broken, How Renewed

### A Down is a Unit

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

### Series of Downs

Team A (the team snapping the ball) shall have foul (4) consecutive downs to advance to the next zone. Any down may be repeated or lost if provided by the Rules.

### Zone Line-to-Gain

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

### Awarding a New Series

A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the opponents moves the ball into the next zone; or an accepted penalty against the opponents involves an automatic 1st down; or after enforcement of a penalty against Team A (the team snapping the ball), the ball is in advance of the zone line-to-gain; or either team has obtained legal possession of the ball as a result of a punt, touchback, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone advance of the ball.

### Incorrect Down

Until a new series is awarded, the Referee shall have authority to correct an error in the number of downs.

## Section 2: Down and Possession After a Penalty

### Penalty Resulting in a 1st Down

After a penalty that leaves the ball in the possession of a team beyond its zone line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a 1st down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be 1st down with the next zone line-to-gain.

### Foul Before Change of Team Possession

Following a distance penalty between the goal lines that occurs during a down and before any change of team possession during that down, the ball belongs to Team A (the team snapping the ball). The down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves loss of a down or leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain. If the penalty involves loss of down, the down shall count as one (1) of the four (4) in that series.

### Foul After Change of Team Possession

Following a distance penalty for a foul committed after team possession has changed during that down, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The down and distance established by the penalty shall be 1st down with zone line-to-gain.

### Penalty Declined

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

### Rule Decisions Final

A Rules decision may not be changed after the ball is next legally snapped.

# Rule 6: Kicking the Ball

## Section 1: Punt

### Legal Punt

A legal punt is a kick made in accordance with the Rules. Quick punts are illegal.

### Punt

Prior to marking the ball ready for player on 4th down, the Referee must ask the Team A (team snapping the ball) captain if they want to punt. The Referee must announce this decision both teams and all officials. The Team A captain may declare a punt on any down. After such announcement, the ball must be punted.

**EXCEPTION:** If (a) a timeout is called, (b) the period ends, (c) a foul occurs, or (d) an inadvertent whistle is blown any time prior to or during this down after the captain captain’s decision that results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down again, the Referee must ask the captain whether or not they want to punt and communicate this decision with the other team captain.

### Crossing the Scrimmage Line

Neither the kicking team nor receiving team may enter the neutral zone until the ball is punted.

### Punting the Ball

After receiving the snap, the kicker must punt the ball immediately in a continuous motion.

### After Being Punted

Once the ball is punted, any receiving player may block the kick. **If the blocked punt hits the ground, it is dead at that spot.** If the punt is blocked by any receiving player behind the kicking team’s scrimmage line and then caught by a kicking team player behind their scrimmage line (1st ball spotter – orange), the kicking team may run and/or throw a pass. The receiving team may advance the punt anywhere in the field of play. A kicking team player cannot punt the ball to themselves or any other kicking team player. The kicking team may punt the ball only once per down.

### Punt Crosses the Kicking Team’s Scrimmage Line

When a punt that has clearly crossed the kicking team’s scrimmage line (1st ball spotter – orange), touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team. If it hits a receiving team player and then is caught in the air, it can be advanced by the receiving team. If the ball hits a receiving team player beyond their scrimmage line and is then caught by the kicking team beyond the receiving team’s scrimmage line, the ball is dead, belongs to the kicking team, and a new series begins for the kicking team.

### 1st Touching

If any kicking team player touches a punt after it crosses their scrimmage line (orange ball spotter) and before it is touched there by any receiving player, it is referred to as “1st touching”. The receiving team may take the ball at that spot or may choose to have the ball put in play as determined by the action that follows 1st touching. The right of the receiving team to take the ball at the spot of 1st touching by the kicking team is cancelled if the receiving team touches the punt and thereafter during that down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

### Punt Out of Bounds Between the Goal Lines or at Rest

If a punt goes out of bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest untouched in the field of play and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.

### Punt Behind the Goal Line

When a punt breaks the plane of the receiving team’s goal line, it is a touchback unless the receiving team chooses the spot of 1st touching by the kicking team.

## Section 2: Kick Catching Interference

While any punt is in flight beyond the kicking team’s scrimmage line (orange ball spotter), the kicking team shall not touch the ball or receiving team, not obstruct the receiving team’s path to the ball, unless the punt has been touched by the receiving team. The kicking team may catch, touch, muff, or bat a punt in flight beyond their scrimmage line, if not receiving player is in position to catch the ball.

## Section 3: Signals

Players shall ignore any signals given by the kicking or receiving team. The ball remains live.

# Rule 7: Snapping, Handing, and Passing the Ball

## Section 1: The Scrimmage

### The Start

All plays must be started by a legal snap next to the orange ball spotter, which is on or between the hash marks. The ball may be moved with approval by the Referee due to poor field conditions.

Once the ball is live, the Referee will count to three (3), during which time the defensive team must wait to rush the Quarterback. The count is nullified if:

1. The offensive teams runs the ball (running play) - this includes if the Quarterback runs out of the pocket.
2. The ball is based prior to the (3) second count.

### Ball Responsibility

Team A players (the snapping team) are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down. The snapper will bring the ball to the scrimmage line (orange ball spotter). A small towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.

### Stances

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

## Section 2: Prior to the Snap

### Encroachment

Following the ready for play signal and until the snap, no defensive team player may encroach or touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or interfere with them in any other way. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals or shifting through the zone. After the snapper has placed their hand(s) on the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line place, except the snapper’s right to be over the ball.

### False Start

No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of play. An infraction of this Rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment shall be cancelled.

### Snap

The snapper, after assuming position for the snap at the offensive scrimmage line (orange balls potter) and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of player until it is snapped. An infraction of this provision may be penalized, whether or not the ball has been snapped, and the penalty for any resultant encroachment foul by an opponent shall be cancelled.

When over the ball, the snapper shall have their feet behind their scrimmage line (orange ball spotter). The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground/towel/orange ball spotter with a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s). The ball shall leave the hand(s) in this motion. There is not Rule restriction regarding placement of the long axis of the ball at right angles to the offensive team’s scrimmage line.

### Disconcerting Act

No defensive player shall use disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offensive team’s signals.

## Section 3: Position and Action During the Snap

### Legal Position

Anytime on or after the ball is marked ready for play, each offensive player must be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap.

### Minimum Line Players

The snapper is the only offensive player required to be on their scrimmage line (orange ball spotter) at the snap.

### Motion

Only one (1) offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent’s goal line at the snap. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of their feet, body, head, or arms.

### Direct Snap

The player who receives the snap must be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive team’s scrimmage line (orange ball spotter). The distance is determined by the point at which the ball is first touched following the snap. The snapper may not snap the ball to themself.

### Shift

In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, or arms for at least one (1) full second before the snap.

## Section 4: Handing the Ball

Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.

## Section 5: Running the Ball – Co-Rec Rule

An offensive runner who is identifies as male cannot advance the ball through their line of scrimmage (orange ball spotter). There are no restrictions:

1. Once the ball has been touched by any player beyond the offensive or kicking team scrimmage line.
2. During a run by a runner who identified as a female.
3. After a change of team possession.
4. After a legal forward pass.

## Section 6: Backward Pass and Fumble

### When Legal

A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble anytime except if intentionally thrown out of bounds to conserve time. The Referee will start the clock on the ready for player.

### Caught or Intercepted

A backward pass or fumble in flight may be caught or intercepted by any other player inbounds and advanced. A player may not throw an untouched backward pass to themself.

### Simultaneous Catch by Opposing Players

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

### Out of Bounds

A backward pass or fumble that touches the ground is dead. If the backward pass/fumble goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball belongs to the offensive team:

1. At the out-of-bounds spot if it is behind the spot of the pass or fumble, or
2. At the spot of the pass or fumble if it goes out of bounds beyond the spot of the pass or fumble. If out of bounds behind the goal line, it is a touchback or safety.

### Ball Dead When It Hits the Ground

A backward pass or fumble that touches the ground is dead. If the backward pass/fumble touches the ground in the field of play, the ball belongs to the offensive team:

1. At the spot where it touches the ground if it is behind the spot of the pass or fumble, or
2. At the spot of the pass or fumble if it touches the ground beyond the spot of the pass or fumble.

If the fumble/backward pass touches the ground in either end zone, it is a touchback or a safety.

## Section 7: Legal and Illegal Forward Pass

### Legal Forward Pass

All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer’s feet are on or behind the plane of the offensive team’s scrimmage line (orange ball spotter) when the ball leaves the passer’s hand. Only one (1) forward pass can be thrown per down.

### Illegal Forward Pass

A forward pass is illegal:

1. If the passer’s foot is beyond the plane of the offensive team’s scrimmage line (orange ball spotter) when the ball leaves their hand
2. If the passer catches their untouched forward pass
3. If there is more than one (1) forward pass per down
4. If thrown after a team possession has changed
5. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out of bounds to save loss of yardage or conserve time.

**EXCEPTION:** When the QB catches the snap from the center and IMMEDIATELY throws the ball into the ground to stop the clock, it is not a foul. This play is legal provided the QB is not trying to avoid a loss of yardage.

### Illegal Reception – Co-Rec Rule

1. The term “open” means any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player. The term “closed” means a player who identifies as male may NOT complete a forward pass to any other player who identifies as male. NOTE: all illegal forward pass fouls are classified as fouls during a running play. Thus, illegal forward passes do not change the open/closed status of a down.
2. The 1st down of each half or overtime possession shall be open. The 1st down of a new series following a team change of possession shall be open.
3. If the crew of officials erroneously indicate the open/closed status of a down, the player is nullified, and the down will be repeated.
4. During the offensive team’s possession there may not be two (2) consecutive legal forward pass completions from a player who identifies as male to a receiver who identifies as male. This Rule applies to the Try.
5. If a passer who identifies as a male completes a legal forward pass to a receiver who identifies as a male, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a passer who identifies as a female or a receiver who identifies as a female for positive yards. The spot where the ball becomes dead by Rule must be beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line. There is NO foul for a receiver who identifies as female being tagged or deflagged behind the offensive team’s scrimmage line. The next legal forward pass completion remains closed.
6. A legal forward pass caught jointly by teammates who identify as male and female is considered a reception by the female player.
7. There are no other restrictions concerning a passer who identifies as male completing legal forward passes to a receiver who identifies a female, or a female to female, or female to male.
8. If a receiver who identifies as male catches a pass from a passer who identifies as a male on a closed play, it is a foul for Illegal Reception. Whether the penalty is accepted or declines, the next down shall remain closed.
9. Any other foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether next legal forward pass completion is open or closed.

### After Illegal Forward Pass

When an illegal forward pass touches the ground or goes out of bounds, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team at the spot from where the pass was thrown, unless a new series of downs has been created. In such a case, the ball belongs to the passing team if, after enforcement of the penalty, did not make the next zone line-to-gain and the foul occurred during the 4th down. If a player catches an illegal forward pass, the ball continues in play until declared dead.

## Section 8: Completed or Intercepted Passes

### Pass Caught or Intercepted

A forward pass is completed when caught by a member of the passing team inbounds. A forward pass is intercepted when caught by a member of the opposing team inbounds. It is counted as a completion or interception as long as the 1st part of the receiver to make contact with the ground after the catch, usually one (1) foot, touched inbounds.

### Simultaneous Catch by Opposing Players

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

## Section 9: Incomplete Pass

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

## Section 10: Forward Pass Interference

### Interference

During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the offensive team’s scrimmage line (orange ball spotter), contact that interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the offensive team’s scrimmage line is pass interference unless it occurs when two (2) or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged/tagged prior to touching a forward pass thrown beyond the offensive team’s scrimmage line.

### Offensive Pass Interference

After the ball is snapped and until the pass has been touched by any player there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the offensive team’s scrimmage line.

### Defensive Pass Interference

After the pass is thrown and until the pass has been touched by any player there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the offensive team’s scrimmage line while the pass in in flight.

### Not Interference

Contact by the defensive team that is obviously away from the direction of the forward pass is not pass interference but may be a personal foul.

### Catchable/Uncatchable

Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on offensive and defensive forward pass interference.

# Rule 8: Scoring Plays and Touchback

## Section 1: Communication

If there is ever a disagreement regarding the current or final score, the Referee will make the final decision after consulting with the other officials and, if available, the scorekeeper.

## Section 2: Mercy Rule

### Two (2) Minute Warning

If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the two-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over

### After Two (2) Minute Warning

If a team scores during the last two minutes of the second half causing a score difference of 19 or more points, the game shall be over.

### Halftime Mercy Rule

The game will end at halftime or any point thereafter if one team reaches a lead of 45+ points.

## Section 3: Player Responsibility

The player scoring must raise their arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not able to be deflagged and the official determines the flag has been secured illegally, the score is disallowed, the offending team is penalized, and the player is disqualified.

## Section 4: Touchdown Value = Six (6) Points

It is a touchdown when a runner advances from the field of play so that the ball penetrates the vertical plan of the opponent’s goal line. It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player while the ball is on or behind the opponent’s goal line.

## Section 5: Try Value – One (1), Two (2), or Three (3) Points

### Referee’s Responsibility and Team’s Choice

The Referee must speak to the coach or captain, asking them whether the Try shall be from the three (3), 10-, or 20-yard line. Once the offensive team coach/captain makes the choice, they may change the decision only when an offensive or defensive charged time-out is taken. The value of the Try may not be changed if a dead ball foul occurs after the ready for play signal, or if a live ball foul occurs during the Try. The Referee will ask the scoring coach/captain where they would like the ball placed on or between the hash marks. Enforcement of yardage penalties does not change the value of the Try. The point(s) shall be awarded if the Try results in what would have been a touchdown.

### One (1), Two (2), or Three (3) Points

An opportunity to score one (1) point from the three (3) yard line, two (2) points from the 10-yard line, or three (3) points from the 20-yard line by running or passing only shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown.

### Try Begins and Ends

The Try begins when the ball is marked ready for play. The Try ends when B secures possession, the Try is successful, or the ball becomes dead by Rule. The defensive team cannot score during the Try.

### Next Play

After a Try, the ball shall be snapped by the opponent of the scoring team at their own 14-yard line, unless moved by penalty, to begin overtime, or if an onside conversion is elected.

## Section 6: Momentum, Safety, and Touchback

### Safety Value = Two (2) Points

It is a Safety when one of the following occurs:

1. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across their own goal line, and it becomes dead there in their team’s possession. This includes when a player’s fumble or backward pass from inside their own endzone lands or foes out of bounds between the goal lines. **EXCEPTION:** Momentum Rule: When a defensive player intercepts their opponent's forward pass, fumble, or backward pass, or a receiving team player catches or recovers a punt between their five (5) yard line and the goal line and their original momentum carries them into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in their team’s possession behind the goal line, the ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where possession was gained.
2. A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across their goal line and the ball subsequently becomes dead there in their team’s possession. This includes when the ball is declared dead on or behind their goal line. However, it does not apply to a legal forward pass that becomes incomplete.
3. A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in their end zone; ow throws an illegal forward pass from their end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation that leaves them in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.
4. After a safety, the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their own 10-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

### Touchback

It is a touchback when one (1) of the following occurs:

1. The kicking team’s punt breaks the plane of the receiving team’s goal line.
2. The ball is out of bounds behind the goal line (except from an incomplete forward pass), when the ball becomes dead in the possession of a player on, above, or behind the player’s own goal line, or when the ball becomes dead not in possession on, above, or behind the team’s own goal line and the attacking team is responsible.
3. After a touchback, the ball shall be snapped from the nearest 10-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

# Rule 9: Conduct of Players and Others

## Section 1: Unsportspersonlike Conduct

### Noncontact Act

No player or nonplayer shall commit noncontact acts during a period or intermission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Refusal to comply with or abide by the request or decision of an official
2. Intentionally kicking at the ball, other than during a punt
3. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or with permission of the Referee
4. Participate while wearing illegal player equipment
5. Refusal to abide by IM Staff sideline directions such as moving off the sideline, and ensuring spectators are not on the sidelines with players.

### Dead Ball Fouls

When the ball becomes dead in the possession of a player, they shall not:

1. Intentionally kick the ball
2. Spike the ball into the ground, or
3. Throw the ball high into the air

### Prohibited Acts

There shall be no unsportspersonlike conduct by players or nonplayers. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Attempting to influence a decision by an official
2. Disrespectfully addressing an official
3. Indicating objections to an official’s decision
4. Holding an unauthorized conference, or being on the field illegally
5. Using profanity or taunting, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures
6. Intentionally contacting a game official – Ejection
7. Leaving the sideline and entering the field during an altercation – Ejection

### 2nd Unsportspersonlike Foul

The 2nd Unsportspersonlike foul by the same player or nonplayer will result in ejection. If a nonplayer receives a penalty, it will get charged to the team captain of the team they are associated with.

### Ejection

If a player or nonplayer is ejected from a game due to unsportspersonlike conduct, they must leave the field and schedule a meeting with the Program Manager in order to be eligible to return (refer to our *Conduct Policy*). If an ejected player refuses to leave, IM staff may contact Campus Safety and declare the game forfeited.

### 4th Unsportspersonlike Foul

The 4th unsportspersonlike foul by the same team results in their forfeiture of the game.

## Section 2: Unfair Acts

No player shall use verbiage or commit any act not in accordance with the spirit of fair play for the purpose of confusing the opponent.

## Section 3: Personal Fouls

### Restrictions

No player or nonplayer shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. Any player or nonplayer commits a personal foul when they take any of the following actions:

1. Strips or attempts to strip the ball from a runner by punching, striking, or grabbing the ball. **NOTE:** Any player who controls a pass with both feet off the ground becomes a runner when the 1st part of the player touches the ground.
2. Throws the runner to the ground
3. Hurdles an opponent
4. Contacts an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead
5. Makes contact of any nature with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary including using fists, locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to the Rules
6. Drives or runs into an opponent
7. Positions their body on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage
8. Tackles the runner by grasping or encircling with the hand(s), or arm(s) and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football – Ejection.
9. Fights an opponent (ejection). **NOTE: each player who participates in the fight will be** **assessed one flagrant personal foul for fighting.**
10. Nonplayers interfering with sideline officials and not abiding by IM staff directives.

### Roughing the Passer

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

### Screen Blocking

An offensive screen block may occur anywhere on the field and shall take place without contact. The screen blocker is recommended to have their hands and arms at their sides or behind their back when screen blocking. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact that displaces an opponent during a screen block is illegal. A blocker may use their hand(s) or arm(s) to break a fall or retain their balance.

### Screen Blocking Fundamentals

A player who screens shall not do any of the following:

1. Initiate contact when blocking s stationary opponent from any direction
2. Prevent an opponent from avoiding contact by (1) taking a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent or (2) taking a position within 1 or 2 steps of moving opponent so that the opponent cannot stop or change direction before contact.
3. After taking a legal position, move to maintain it, unless the screener moves in the same direction and path as the opponent. If a screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, they have committed a foul.

### Interlocked Blocking

Teammates of a runner or passer may legally screen block, but they shall not use interlocked blocking such as grasping or encircling one another in any manner.

### Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense

Opponents must go around the offensive player’s screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to displace the opponent. A defender may use their arms or hands to break a fall or retain their balance.

## Section 4: Runner

### Flag Belt Removal

1. Players must have possession of the ball before they can be deflagged legally by an opponent.
2. When a runner loses their flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently, or on purpose, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a two (2) hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees by an opponent.
3. In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally by a player, play should continue with the option of a penalty on the play.
4. An opponent intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal.
5. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage, including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts, is illegal.
6. A nonplayer deflags or interferes with a runner. Guarding the Flag Belt

A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to cause contact between the runner and an opponent that denies the opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. Examples of flag guarding include, but are not limited to:

1. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt
2. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt
3. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt.

### Stiff Arm

The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a “stiff arm” extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag/tag.

### Help the Runner

The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled, or pushed by a teammate.

### Obstruct the Runner

An opponent shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or making a legal tag.

### Charge

A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in their path nor attempt to run between two (2) opponents or between an opponent and a sideline, unless the space is such as to provide reasonable chance for them to go through without contact. If a runner in their progress has established a straight line path, they may not be crowded out of that path, but if an opponent is able to legally establish a defensive position in that path, the runner must avoid contact by changing directions.

## Section 5: Batting and Kicking

### Batting a Loose Ball

Players shall not bat a loose ball other than a pass or fumble in flight. **EXCEPTION 1**: A backward pass in the flight shall not be batted or thrown forward by the passing team. **EXCEPTION 2**: The kicking team may bat at a grounded or an airborne punt beyond the kicking team’s scrimmage line toward their own goal line.

### Batting a Ball in Player Possession

A ball in player possession shall not be batted forward by a player of the team in possession.

### Illegal Kicking

No player shall intentionally kick a ball other than a punt.

## Section 6: Illegal Participation

The following actions are considered illegal participation:

1. If an injured player is not replaced for at least one (1) down; unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs.
2. To use a player, replaced player, or substitute in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap.
3. For an ejected player to reenter the game.
4. For a replaced player or substitute to hinder an opponent, touch the ball, influence the play, or otherwise participate.
5. If, prior to change of possession, an offensive player or kicking team player goes out of bounds and returns inbounds during the down to participate, unless blocked out of bounds by an opponent. If a player is blocked out of bounds by an opponent and returns inbounds during the down, they shall return at the first opportunity. During the down, no player shall intentionally go out of bounds and return to the field, intentionally touch the ball, influence the play, or otherwise participate.
6. When any player, replaced player, or substitute enters during a down.

# Rule 10: Enforcement of Penalties

## Section 1: Procedure After a Foul

### Definitions

A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. Types of fouls are listed below:

1. **Dead Ball**: A foul that occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before the ball is next legally snapped.
2. **Live Ball**: A foul that occurs during a down.
3. **Simultaneous with the Snap**: An act that becomes a foul when the ball is snapped.

### Captain’s Choice

When a foul occurs during a live ball, the Referee shall, at the end of the down, notify the captains. They shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to them the number of ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. The captain’s choice of options may not be revoked; Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted.

### Dead Ball Foul

When a foul occurs during a dead ball either between downs or before a snap, the officials shall not permit the play to become live. The penalty for any foul between downs, any nonplayer foul, or any unsportspersonlike foul, is enforced from the succeeding spot. If a dead ball foul occurs after time expires for either half, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot (where the ball would have next been snapped if a foul had not occurred).

### Live Ball/Dead Ball Foul

When a live ball foul by one (1) team is followed by a dead ball foul by the opposing team, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. When the same team commits a live ball foul by one (1) or more dead ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

### Establishing the Zone Line-to-Gain

1. On a live ball foul, mark off the penalty yardage first then establish the zone line-to-gain
2. Penalties for fouls with succeeding spot enforcement that occur prior to the ready for play signal shall be administered before setting the zone line-to-gain down box for a new series. NOTE: During overtime, the zone line-to-gain down box for a new series.
3. Penalties for fouls with succeeding spot enforcement that occur after the ready for play signal shall be administered after setting the zone line-to-gain down box for a new series. NOTE: During overtime, the zone line-to-gain is always the goal line.

## Section 2: Types of Play and Basic Enforcement Spots

### Live Ball Fouls

Any live ball foul is penalized according to the All-But-One Enforcement Principle, except as follows:

1. A foul that occurs simultaneously with the snap is penalized from the previous spot.
2. A nonplayer foul, unsportspersonlike foul, or dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.
3. A foul by the kicking team during a punting down (other than Kick Catching Interference of Illegally Consuming Time) may be penalized from the succeeding spot, at the receiving team’s option, when the kicking team will not be next to put the ball in play.

### All-But-One Enforcement Principle

Enforcement philosophy is based on the premise that a team is given the advantage of the distance that is gained without the assistance of a foul. It is assumed that the only foul that would give this aid is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot. Therefore, all fouls but this one, which is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot, are penalized from the basic spot. This one (1) foul is penalized from the spot of the foul.

### Two (2) Types of Plays

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

### Loose Ball Play

A loose ball play is action during one (1) of the following:

1. A punt, other than post scrimmage kick fouls
2. A legal forward pass
3. A backward pass (including the snap), illegal kick, or fumble made by the offensive team from on or behind their scrimmage line (orange ball spotter) and prior to a change of team possession. The run or runs which precede such legal pass, punt, or fumble.

If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot (2-25-7).

**EXCEPTION 1**: The penalty for roughing the passer on a completed forward pass will be enforced from the dead ball spot when the run ends beyond the offensive team’s scrimmage line and no change of possession has occurred.

**EXCEPTION 2:** A post scrimmage kick (PSK) foul is a receiving team foul that occurs on the receiving team’s side of the neutral zone prior to the end of the kick during a punt that ends beyond the neutral zone and the kicking team does not have possession of the ball when the kick ends. The PSK spot is the spot where the kick ends. The receiving team retains the ball after a penalty enforcement from the PSK spot when a PSK foul occurs. The receiving team's fouls behind the PSK spot are spot fouls. The spot where the kick ends is the receiving team’s 10 if the kick ends in the receiving team’s end zone.

**EXCEPTION 3**: Kick Catching Interference, 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a1st down, or 10 yards from the previous spot and replay the down.

### Running Play

A running play is any action that is not a loose ball play. There are two (2) running plays:

1. Behind the line, it includes
	1. A run that is not followed by a loose ball behind the line or
	2. A run that is followed by an illegal pass from behind the line
2. Beyond the line, it includes any run.

If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the run ends (2-25-9)

## Section 3: Special Enforcements

### Automatic 1st Down Fouls

Fouls by the defensive team that give the offensive team an automatic first down are **Roughing the Passer** and **Tampering with the Flag Belt**.

### Dead Ball Fouls

Penalties for dead ball fouls are enforced separately and in the order of occurrence. Dead ball fouls are not coupled with live ball fouls or other dead ball fouls to create a double or multiple fouls, Where there are 10-yard dead fouls (or live ball fouls treated as dead ball fouls) committed by each team prior to penalty administration, each 10 yard foul will cancel a 10-yard foul on the other team. Any remaining 10-yard fouls will be enforced. Any 5-yard penalty dead ball fouls will be enforced separately and in order of occurrence and would never cancel out a 10-yard foul.

### Double Foul

It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls (other than unsportspersonlike or nonplayer) during the same down in which

1. There is no change if team possession
2. There is a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to the final change of possession, or
3. There is a change of team possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent’s foul.

In (A), (B), (C), the penalties cancel, and the down is replayed.

**EXCEPTION 1**: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of team possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul(s) (other than nonsportspersonlike or nonplayer). This exception is commonly referred to as the principle of “clean hands”. **NOTE: This Rule does not apply to double fouls during a Try or overtime period.**

**EXCEPTION 2**: PSK foul. The receiving team must decline the kicking team’s fouls (other than unsportspersonlike or nonplayer).

### Goal Line

For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot, which is now the basic spot, is on or behind the offended team’s goal line, any measurement is from the succeeding spot or goal line.

### Half the Distance

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

### Last Play of the Second Half or Overtime

Succeeding spot fouls that occur: (a) during the last play of the game, (b) during the last play of an overtime period, or (c) dead ball fouls that occur after the last play of a game or overtime period can be carried over to overtime, unless a touchdown is scored on that play, in which case the penalty can be only enforced on the Try.

### Loss of Down Fouls

Loss of down fouls by the **offensive team**: **Illegal Backward Pass**, **Illegal Forward Pass**, **Intentional Grounding**, **Illegal Reception**, **Tampering with the Flag Belt.**

### Multiple Fouls

When two (2) or more live ball fouls (other than unsportspersonlike or nonplayer) are committed during the same down by the same team, one (1) penalty may be chosen by the offended team.

### Safety

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

### Touchdown

1. If there is foul by the scoring team (other than unsportspersonlike or nonplayer) during a down that results in a touchdown, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score.
2. If an opponent of the scoring team commits a foul (other than unsportspersonlike or nonplayer) during a down in which a touchdown is scored, and there *was not* a change of team possession during the down, the offensive team may accept the results of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced either on the Try or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.
3. If an opponent of the scoring team commits a foul (other than unsportspersonlike or nonplayer) during a down in which a touchdown is scored and there *was* a change of team possession during the down, and such foul occurs after the change of team possession, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and choose to have the foul enforced either on the Try or after the Try, at the succeeding spot
4. If either team commits an unsportspersonlike or nonplayer foul during the down in which a touchdown is scored, the opponent may accept the results of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced either on the try or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.

### Try

1. If either team commits a dead ball foul following a touchdown and prior to the initial ready for play on a Try, the offended team has the option of enforcing the penalty on the Try or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.
2. If there is a foul by the offensive team (other than unsportspersonlike or nonplayer) during a down that results in a successful Try, acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If the foul carries a loss of down, the Try is not replayed.
3. If there is a foul by the defensive team during a successful Try, the penalty may be enforced at the succeeding spot.
4. If a double foul occurs, the down is repeated.

### Fouls by the Kicking Team During Punts

When the kicking team fouls during a punt (other than Kick Catching interference or Illegally Consuming Time), the receiving team may have the penalty enforced at either the previous spot or the succeeding spot, provided the kicking team will not be next to put the ball in play.