



Lee's Summit Football Association Spring Season NFL Flag Rule Book



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Welcome

Parents, Coaches, Players & Supporters,

Similar with past spring seasons the league's goals are to keep our players active during the offseason, develop skills and to promote the learning of alternate positions. To support these goals, scoring is not kept during the spring season and coaches are highly encouraged to allow all players to participate in positions which they may not be accustomed to. Additionally, spring rules are modified from fall rules to promote the enhancement of football skills.

The spring season is also a time when LSFA focuses on our next generation of referees. These future leaders are generally high school aged and have varying degrees of experience. The spring is a dedicated time for them to hone their skills as well as for the league to test different rules to support the fall program. Please keep this in mind when interacting with our young officials and support us by offering them lots of encouraging support!

2018 is our first season of adopting the NFL Flag framework. LSFA has kept many of the same rules; but, have tailored others to better suite our league and facilities. Teams participating in NFL Flag regional or national tournaments are advised to download the official NFL Flag rulebook for tournament play. If you were to have additional questions after reviewing the rule book, please direct these to admin@lsfootball.org.

Thank you for your continued support and participation in LSFA!

Lee's Summit Football Association



RULES

Disclaimer: Official NFL Flag rules have been tailored for LSFA's use. Teams participating in NFL Flag regional or national tournaments should visit www.nflflag.com to obtain official rules for tournament play.

Rules not directly addressed within this rule book will follow normal NFHS guidelines.

I. Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball on the 35-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross the 20-yard line. Once a team crosses the 20-yard line, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts on the 35-yard line (**note, play only occurs in one direction during the spring season**).
5. If the offensive team fails to cross the 20-yard line, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from the 35-yard line.
6. All possession changes start on the offense's 35-yard line.



II. Terminology

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Boundary Lines | The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines. |
| Line of Scrimmage | (LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field. |
| Line-to-Gain | The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score. |
| Rush Line | An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage. |
| Offense | The team with possession of the ball. |
| Defense | The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball. |
| Passer | The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback. |
| Rusher | The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass. |
| Downs (1-4) | The offensive team has four attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score. |
| Live Ball | Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete. |
| Dead Ball | Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play. |
| Whistle | Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game. |
| Inadvertent Whistle | Official’s whistle that is performed in error. |
| Charging | An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest. |
| Flag Guarding | An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm. |
| Shovel Pass | A legal pitch attempted beyond the line of scrimmage. |
| Lateral | A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier. |
| Unsportsmanlike Conduct | A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language. |

III. Eligibility

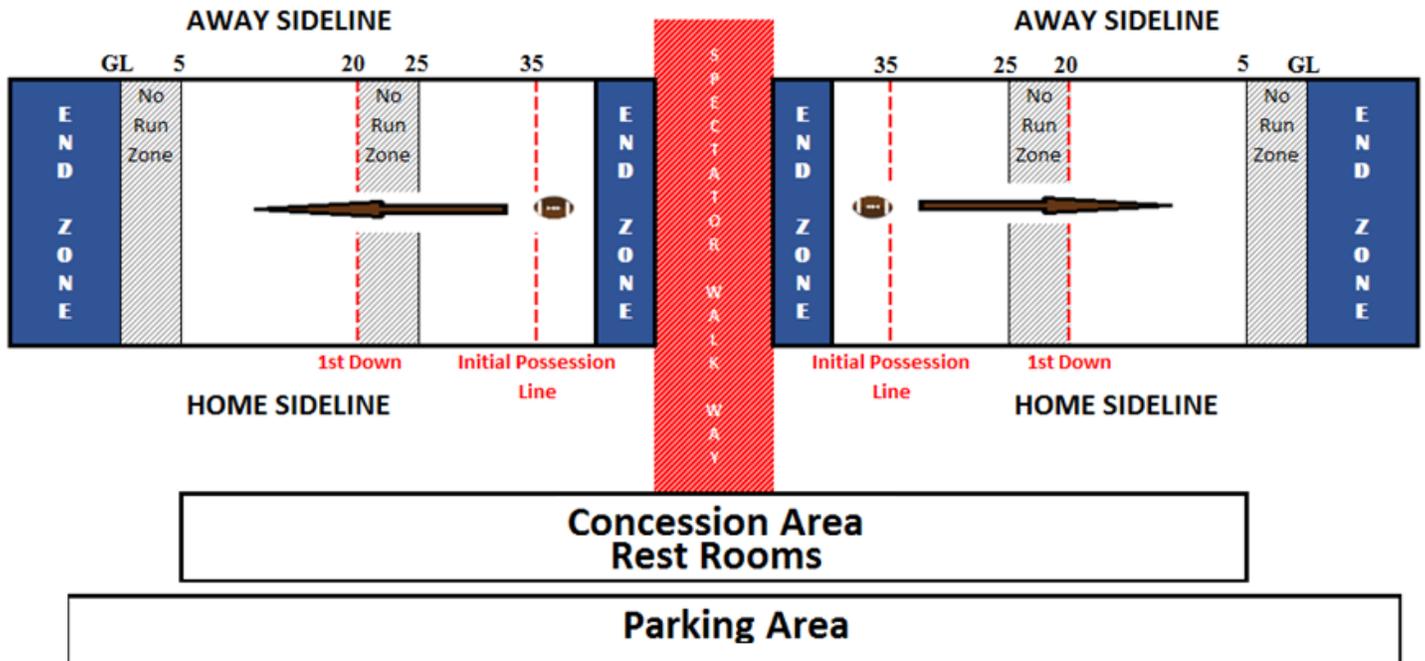
1. All players' legal guardians must agree to the online waiver form submitted during registration at www.lsfootball.org
2. Additional eligibility requirements are outlined within the LSFA Formation Guidelines posted at www.lsfootball.org.

IV. Equipment

1. The league provides each player with an official flag belt and NFL FLAG team jersey. Teams will use footballs provided by the league. Pee Wee size balls will be used for K - 3rd grade games; whereas, junior size balls will be used for 4th - 7th grade games.
2. Players must wear shoes. Cleats may be worn; but, must be rubber molded.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
4. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
5. Players' game jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants.
6. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.
7. Mouthpieces are not furnished by the league but must be worn at all times during game play and at practices.



V. Field



1. The field dimensions are regulation width (53 1/3 yards) by 40 yards with a 5-yard end zone behind the offense and a 10-yard scoring end zone. There is also a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones precede each line-to gain by 5 yards. First down markers will be positioned at the 20-yard line.
2. Games will be played from the 35-yard line to the end zone. Two games will be played, going in opposite directions, on each field. The walking path/spectator area will be between the 45-yard lines.
3. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays and the **ball must be thrown beyond the line-of-scrimmage**.
4. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
5. Home teams will be on the sidelines closest to the concession stands; whereas, away teams will be furthest away from the concession stands. Fans MUST sit on the same side of the field as the team they are rooting for resides. Referees will not be allowed to start any games until both teams and their fans are on the appropriate sidelines.
6. COACHES/PLAYERS AREA – Coaches and players NOT on the field must stay between the 10-yard line and the 30-yard line on their sideline.
7. Yard Markers: The home team will supply 2 persons to run the yard markers. A coach is not allowed to work the yard markers and coach at the same time.

VI. Rosters

1. The home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
2. NUMBER OF PLAYERS: The maximum number of players on the field per team is seven (7), and the minimum is six (6) players. There is no maximum number of players per team.

VII. Timing

1. Games are two 20-minute halves. Clock stops occur only for timeouts or injuries.
2. TIMEOUTS: Each team is allowed two (2) timeouts per half. Timeouts will not carry over into the second half. Timeouts will be one minute in length.
3. TIME OF THE GAME: The time for each half will be kept by the OFFICIAL. The official is responsible for letting both teams know when there is 10 minutes, 5 minutes, and 2 minutes remaining in the half.
4. HALFTIME: There will be a halftime lasting three (3) minutes.
5. PLAY CLOCK: The offensive team has 30 seconds in which to snap the ball once the referee has spotted the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
6. 5 Second Call: The referee will count from 1 to 5 aloud once the ball is snapped. The QB will have 5 seconds in which to hand off or throw the ball. If the 5 second call occurs the play is ruled dead (at the previous spot).
7. PLAYING TIME: It is the coaches responsibility to allow each player to play as close to half of the game time as possible. Ideally, this is 10 minutes per half; but, times could differ depending upon the number of players on a team. It is the head coach's responsibility to ensure this is tracked. Failure to comply could lead to disciplinary action by the league.
8. PLAYER TARGETS: Each player on a team must be targeted as a receiver or ball carrier at least ONCE per game. It is the head coach's responsibility to ensure this is tracked. Failure to comply could lead to disciplinary action by the league.

VIII. Scoring

1. SCORING – Scores will not be kept, but teams can attempt an extra point pass play (from the 5-yard line) or run or pass play (from the 10-yard line) after a score. Extra point kicks are not allowed during the spring season.
2. Safeties – If the defensive team causes a safety (the ball carrier is downed in the end zone or intentional grounding by the QB) the defense will be awarded the ball and begin offensive play from the 35-yard line.

IX. Coaches

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to LSFA FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
2. Coaches are allowed on the field and to interact with play as outlined in the Grade League Rule Exceptions section.
3. Coaches are responsible to address and be responsible for their fans. If a coach requires assistance, then a field monitor or Executive Board member should be requested to assist.
4. Coaches SHOULD NOT directly interact with opposing coaches during the game. Questions or issues should always be conducted through the referee.
5. Disputes are handled by the LSFA Executive Board and are not to be handled between individual coaches.



X. Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The snap must occur between the center's legs and be received by the QB.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground
 - i. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is not dead but must be picked up by the QB for the play to resume. Note, the 5 second count continues to occur while the snap is on the ground.
 - ii. There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.
 - b. If a ball carrier or receiver loses possession of the ball and a defender catches the ball prior to ball contacting the ground. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier or receiver's feet were at the time that possession was lost. Note, this rule should not be confused with a deflected or tipped pass where the ball carrier has not yet gained possession which would be ruled as an interception.
 - c. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
 - d. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - e. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - f. If any other part of a ball-carrier's body other than the feet or hands contacts the ground. knee or arm hits the ground.
 - g. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
 - h. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - i. The 5 second call by the referee occurs.
 - j. Inadvertent whistle.
 - k. An interception occurs.

XI. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. The player's front foot will measure forward progress.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - a. The QB may handoff to the center but it may not be done between the legs of the center
4. Laterals are allowed; but, may only be conducted on the first exchange of the ball from a QB to another player. Laterals cannot occur within a no-run zone.
5. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
6. Any player who receives a handoff or a lateral may throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage if the play is not within a no-run zone.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
 - a. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
10. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
11. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
12. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
13. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

XII. Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage.
2. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage; otherwise, the quarterback will be ruled down at the spot the pass was thrown.
3. Shovel passes are allowed; but, must be received beyond the line of scrimmage in a no-run zone.
4. The quarterback has a five-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the five seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 5-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 5-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

XIII. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball. Interceptions are not returnable; the play will be whistled dead by the referee when an interception occurs. The defensive team which made the interception will be awarded the ball and will begin on offense on the 35-yard line.

XIV. Rushing the Passer

1. The referee will position approximately 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and directly across from the center prior to the start of play.
2. To be eligible to rush the passer prior to the quarterback releasing the ball:
 - a. Up to two (2) rush players may rush the passer.
 - b. The rush players must lineup parallel to and within arm's reach of the referee.
 - c. Only one player can occupy the "rush" space on each side of the referee.
 - d. The rush defender must be stationary when the ball is snapped.
 - e. A player occupying the "rush" space does not have to rush; but, is eligible.
 - f. The eligible rusher must rush perpendicular to (directly towards) the line of scrimmage. Once the rusher reaches the line of scrimmage or when the quarterback releases the ball the rusher can redirect their rush in any direction.
 - i. A legal rush is:
 1. Any rush directly towards the line of scrimmage by an eligible rusher from the rush spots on either side of the referee
 2. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been released by the quarterback.
 3. If an eligible rusher leaves the rush spot early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush spot, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 4. If an eligible rusher leaves the rush spot early and the ball is handed off or thrown before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally continue to rush.
 - ii. A penalty may be called if:
 1. The rusher leaves the rush spot before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down).
 2. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5 yards from line of scrimmage and replay of down).
 3. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush spot crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down).
3. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback
4. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.

5. Once the ball is released by the quarterback, the seven-yard rush rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
7. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear straight path to the line of scrimmage. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**
8. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage or if intentional grounding occurs. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when their flag is pulled or when an intentional grounding occurs.
 - a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

XV. Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive from the front or the side only to pull flags (no diving from behind). Defenders cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier’s possession at any time.
4. If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender’s access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

XVI. Formations

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to six players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - b. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
 - c. If a player shifts prior to the snap of the ball they must be set for one second prior to the snap occurring.
2. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to the quarterback, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine what constitutes offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will determine severity at their discretion and either give one warning or eject the coach or player.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
 - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - c. Compliment **ALL** players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
 - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
 - b. Dispose of **ALL** trash in designated trash cans.
 - c. Sit on the side of the field their team is located

8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
 - a. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - b. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

XVIII. Penalties

i. General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except spot fouls.
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
5. Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

XVIV. Grade League Rule Exceptions

To assist the grade divisions with successful gameplay and the enhancement of critical skills, the following rules have been adopted during the spring season:

Quarterback Play:

K/1st Grade Division:

1. The quarterback in the K/1st grade division will be a coach of the team or parent/guardian of a player.
 - a. The Coach/QB may be in “shot-gun” formation or directly under center.
 - b. The Coach/QB IS NOT permitted to move with the ball other than to take a step during the act of making a pass or a handoff.
 - c. The Coach/QB IS NOT allowed to intentionally conceal the ball from the defense (no huddle of players with the Coach/QB conducting a secret handoff, the Coach/QB cannot turn their back to the defense to conceal the ball, etc.
 - d. Once the Coach/QB has passed/handed the ball to a player, the Coach/QB may not touch the ball again.
 - e. The Coach/QB is restricted to throw passes 10 yards or shorter
 - f. Only six (6) eligible receivers are allowed on offense with a Coach/QB

2nd Grade – 7th Grade Divisions: QB play will be conducted by a player. The QB is allowed to move behind the line of scrimmage after the snap; but, is not allowed to advance the ball past the line of scrimmage as a runner.

On Field Coaches:

K/1st Grade & 2nd Grade Divisions:

1. Up to 2 coaches can be on the field to assist their team on offense and defense.
 - a. On field coaches must be 10 yards behind their deepest player prior to the ball being snapped (exception allowed for the Coach/QB in the K/1st grade division).
 - b. On field coaches MUST REMAIN SILENT and/or REFRAIN FROM MAKING GESTURES to influence play once the quarterback starts the cadence (note, coaches on the sideline are allowed to communicate and make gestures to players on the field). Examples of on field coach infractions include; but, are not limited to:
 - i. Directing a player through pointing
 - ii. Communicating: “run”, “wrong way”, “throw to Tommy”, “no”, “yes”, etc. to a player after the offensive cadence has begun

3rd Grade – 7th Grade Divisions: Coaches are restricted to the sidelines between and during game play (exceptions include timeout periods, to tend to injury, to assist with equipment issues and as directed by the referee).

Rushing the Passer:

K/1st Grade & 2nd Grade Divisions:

1. Are not allowed to rush the passer.

3rd Grade – 7th Grade Divisions:

1. Are allowed to rush the passer with up to 2 players from the marked rush zones. See section XIV Rushing the Passer for full details.

Running Plays:

Definition: A running play is any play that does NOT have a forward pass that crosses the line of scrimmage in the air

K/1st – 3rd Grade Divisions:

1. Teams may advance the ball with a running play. Running plays are allowed on any down, except for when the ball is within 5-yards of a 1st down or end zone (NO RUN ZONE).

4th Grade – 7th Grade Divisions:

1. Teams are NOT allowed to perform any running plays. This includes laterals and forward passes caught behind the line of scrimmage. The only play allowed in these divisions is a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage.

Grade League Rule Exceptions Summary

| | Coach QB | 2 On Field Coaches | Rushing the Passer | Running Plays |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| K/1 st Grade | YES | YES | NO | YES |
| 2 nd Grade | NO | YES | NO | YES |
| 3 rd Grade | NO | NO | YES | YES |
| 4 th grade | NO | NO | YES | NO |
| 5 th Grade | NO | NO | YES | NO |
| 6 th Grade | NO | NO | YES | NO |
| 7 th Grade | NO | NO | YES | NO |

Point After Touchdowns (PATs):

K/1st – 3rd Grade Divisions:

1. A team can elect to do a pass only play from the 5-yard line or a pass or run play from the 10-yard line.

4th Grade – 7th Grade Divisions:

1. All PATs will be pass only from the 10-yard line.