

FVTFL
TOUCH FOOTBALL RULE BOOK
2022



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TOUCH FOOTBALL RULES SUMMARY

Touch football is played with seven on-field players per team. The team that has possession of the ball is termed the offense and the team that doesn't is called the defense. The offense has three downs to obtain 10 yards, keep possession of the ball and attempt to score. If they fail to gain 10 yards and a first down, the ball goes to the defense and they, in turn, become the offense and have three downs to obtain 10 yards, keep possession of the ball and attempt to score.

To begin a game, a team will kick off from their own 35 yard line, or, if it is a non-regulation field, 10 yards back from the center line. The kicking team is determined by a coin toss conducted prior to the game. The winner of the coin toss can elect to take their option in the first or second half, the other team taking the other half's options. The options are to receive the kick-off, to kick-off, or to defend an end of the field.

To begin a series of three downs, the ball is placed on the ground at the point the ball carrier was touched on the kick-off. This is called the line of scrimmage. All offensive players must take a position behind the line of scrimmage. All defensive players must take a position at least 1 yard from the line of scrimmage. A player designated the center will then begin the play by snapping the ball between the legs to the quarterback who must receive the ball at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage. All players on the offense, except the center, are allowed to be in motion prior to the snap, but are not permitted to cross the line of scrimmage before the snap. All offensive players are eligible receivers. There is no blocking or interference permitted. The play is terminated when a defender touches the ball carrier with one hand. Two hand touches are permissible as long as there is no rough touch.

During scrimmage plays the defense will have one or more players, called the rusher, pursue the quarterback after the ball is snapped. The rusher has specific rules that govern this position. They include being at least 5 yards away from the line of scrimmage at the time the ball is snapped, and not lining up directly in front of the opposing center. In turn, the rules grant the rusher(s) a direct and unobstructed path to the quarterback after the ball is snapped. No one is permitted to block or obstruct the rusher in any way.

Teams may use more than one rusher on a play. All rushers have the right to a clear and direct path to the quarterback provided they adhere to the rusher rules stated above. The first player, on the defense, to cross the line of scrimmage must have started from a point 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.

Beanbags are used by officials to mark the line of scrimmage, the rusher's starting point, and the line to gain (the first down line). Officials will place these bags at the appropriate spot prior to the start of each play. A different coloured bean bag must be used to indicate the line to gain.

Teams are permitted only one forward pass on each scrimmage play. There are no forward passes permitted on a play after any kick. Teams may lateral the ball among teammates as many times as they wish during a play. A lateral pass is a pass in which the ball travels parallel to or in the direction (onside) of the passing team's dead ball line. An attempted lateral that results in the ball going forward to a teammate is ruled an offside pass when caught by a teammate or hitting the ground.

There are no fumbles in touch football. The ball is considered dead when it hits the ground during a scrimmage play, except on the initial center – quarterback exchange during the snap, or on a lateral to an offensive player that occurs behind the line of scrimmage and before a forward pass is thrown. In the latter case, in order for the ball to be considered live, it must touch an offensive player first before hitting the ground. If deflected by a defender, the offside pass is at the spot of the deflection, if it hits the ground after the deflection and before being touched by an offensive player.

SCORING

Points are awarded for touchdowns, converts, safety touches, and rouges.

A touchdown is scored when a team gets the ball into the opponent's end zone by running with the ball across the goal line or by gaining possession of the ball in the end zone through a completed pass. Touchdowns count for 6 points.

After a touchdown, the scoring team has the choice of attempting a one point convert from the 5 yard line, or a two point convert from the 10 yard line. All converts must be passing or running plays. Kicking is not permitted on convert attempts. The defensive team may intercept and run back a convert attempt to the offensive's end-zone, they will score the same point or points that the offense was attempting.

A safety touch counts for 2 points and is awarded to a team when their opponents cause the ball to go into their own end zone and the play is ruled dead prior to the ball being brought out of the end zone.

Rouges count for 1 point and are scored when the ball is kicked into the opposing team's end zone and they are unable to bring the ball out of the end zone.

GAME PROCEDURES

A game is usually divided into 4 quarters of 20 minutes each. The clock runs continuously during the quarters except for time outs and special timing provisions in the last 3 minutes of the second and fourth quarters. During the last three minutes of these quarters, the clock will be stopped during special circumstances, which are described in the rules. At the end of the first and third quarters, teams change ends, but downs and yardage continue. At the end of the second quarter there is a rest period of an agreed upon time (maximum 10 minutes) and the third quarter begins with a kick-off.

Each team has one 60 second and one 20 second time out per half, which, if not used, cannot be carried over the next half, or overtime. Officials may call time outs to deal with measurements, rule explanations, injuries, or any game administration.

A team must have a minimum of 5 players on the field, at the designated starting time, to begin a game or it will forfeit the game.

PUNTS

Teams may punt the ball on any play and in doing so they give up possession of the ball to the receiving team. When a ball is punted, members of the punting team must be at least 5 yards away from the ball when it is first touched by a member of the receiving team. Failure to do so will result in a 10 yard "no yards" penalty.

If the ball touches the punt receiver then goes forward and hits the ground, the play will be whistled dead and the ball is considered dead at the spot it was muffed forward. If the ball touches the punt receiver then hits the ground behind the punt receiver, the ball is still live.

If the defensive team blocks a punt, the play is dead when the ball hits the ground or is caught by a member of the kicking team, and the non-kicking team takes possession at the point the ball was blocked. A deflection of a punt is ignored.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Participants in the game of touch football must consider the safety of all players in the game. Aggressive play must be tempered with control in order to avoid unnecessary bodily contact and the potential of injuries to opponents. Players who show no regard for this concept will be penalized for the unnecessary contact they cause. Sportsmanship and consideration for the wellbeing of others is an integral part of the game of touch football.

The rules of touch football exist to ensure that no team creates an unfair advantage over the other team. Therefore infractions such as interference, tripping, unnecessary roughness, contacting the passer or punter, obstruction, offside, and objectionable conduct will be called by the officials when committed by players during a game. It is imperative that all participants display sportsmanship during a game. Persistent arguing, obscene gestures or language, threats to players, officials, or spectators bring disgrace to the sport and will not be tolerated.

The referee will be the sole authority over the fitness of the field, and may cancel the game if field conditions are dangerous, or if in the referee's estimation, the field will become damaged by continued play.

RULE 1 - THE KICKOFF

1.1

To begin a half, a team will kick off from their own 35 yard line, or if it is a non-regulation field, 10 yards back from the center line. When the official blows the whistle to signal the kickoff, the kicking team has 20 seconds to kick the ball or be penalized 10 yards for delay of game. This procedure is no longer used following a touchdown.

1.2

The ball is normally kicked off from a tee, which cannot raise the lowest part of the ball more than 2 inches off the ground. If a tee is not used, a member of the kicking team can hold the ball on the ground. The ball must be placed between the hash marks (24 yards in from either sideline).

1.3

On a kickoff all players of the receiving team must be at least 20 yards from the kickoff line at the time the ball is kicked. Members of the kicking team must stay behind the kickoff line until the ball is kicked. Failure to do so will result in a 5 yard illegal procedure penalty, or 10 yards up from the dead ball spot, at the option of the non-offending team. No player may enter the field of play once the kicker begins their approach to the ball; this is a 10 yard penalty for illegal substitution.

1.4

To be a legal kickoff the ball must travel 20 yards towards the receiving team's dead ball line before a member of the kicking team touches it. It is an illegal procedure penalty if the ball is touched by a member of the kicking team prior to traveling 20 yards downfield or if it does not travel 20 yards downfield, unless it is first touched by a member of the receiving team.

1.5

Members of the kicking team can touch or down the ball after it has traveled 20 yards and before it is touched by the receiving team. The kicking team does not have to "give yards" on a kickoff. The kicking team cannot recover their own kick unless they catch a muff or fumble before it hits the ground, or intercept a pass from the receiving team during the play.

1.6

If the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play untouched on a kickoff, it is an illegal procedure penalty on the kicking team. The receiving team now has no option, the ball must be scrimmaged at the R45 (20 yards back of the kickoff line), 1st & 10, NO OPTION

1.7

If the ball is kicked into the end zone and is not brought out of the end zone by the receiving team, a 1 point rouge will be awarded to the kicking team. If the ball is kicked over the dead ball line without touching anyone or anything in the field of play or the end zone, it is an illegal procedure penalty, same enforcement as 1.6 If a kickoff hits either a receiver or the ground, then the goalposts (padded and on goal line), no point is awarded, and the ball is scrimmaged on the 20 yard line. If the kickoff hits the goal posts in flight, no points are awarded and the ball is scrimmaged on the 25 yard line.

RULE 2 - THE SCRIMMAGE

2.1

A huddle is not compulsory except in the following circumstances: after any time out; after a change of possession; after a change of ends at the end of a period. The offensive team has 20 seconds to snap the ball after the referee has blown the play in. Failure to do so will result in a 5 yard time count penalty.

2.2

Teams are allowed to have a partial huddle where some players are huddled and others are not, however, "sleeper" plays are illegal and subject to an illegal procedure penalty. The officials will call a sleeper play when the offense deliberately attempts to deceive the defense as to which players are legally on the field. Any players who enter the field of play and announce or discuss the next play, must participate in that play, and cannot be substituted out, unless a team time out is called.

2.3

To begin a play from scrimmage, the ball must be placed on the ground, on the line of scrimmage, within 6 inches of the line of scrimmage bag, and then snapped through the legs of the center to the quarterback, who is defined as the first player to touch the ball after it is snapped. The center will be permitted to adjust the ball to a comfort level, but once the ball has been lifted to start the snap, the snap is considered to have started. On a wet or muddy field, the center does not have to actually place the ball on the ground prior to the snap. The quarterback must receive the ball at least 5 yards behind the center. Failure to meet any of these requirements is an illegal procedure penalty.

2.4

The first person to cross the line of scrimmage for the defense, usually referred to as the rusher, must be at least 5 yards from the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. The rusher must be allowed a clear and direct path to the quarterback. Members of the offense are not allowed to block or interfere with the rusher, to maintain this clear and direct path, the rusher must line up 1 yard outside the feet of the center, within 6 yards of either side of the center's feet. Lining up outside of this area causes a loss of the rusher's privileges. These rules apply if more than one rusher is used. Blocking or interfering with the rusher results in a 10 yard obstruction penalty against the offense.

2.5

Once the center sets the ball on the ground for the snap, the rusher is not permitted to change sides and still maintain rushing privileges with the center, unless the quarterback goes into motion prior to the snap.

2.6

To permit the center to participate in the play, no opponent is permitted to line up within 3 yards of the center and remain there after the snap. Players are not allowed to be across the line of scrimmage to listen to the opponents huddle. These infractions would result in a 5 yard illegal procedure penalty.

2.7

If both teams go offside as the ball is snapped, the play is whistled dead and the down is replayed with no penalty. If a player of either team goes offside before the snap, they may return to their side of the neutral zone before the snap without penalty, unless that player has made contact with a member of the opposite team (not the opposition making contact with the offending player), in which case the play is whistled dead and a 5 yard offside penalty is charged to the offender.

2.8

If the snap from the center hits the goal posts, or goes dead in the end zone, a safety touch is awarded to the defense.

RULE 3 - PASSING

3.1

All players are eligible to receive a forward pass. There can only be one forward pass on each scrimmage play. A forward pass is one in which the ball is intentionally thrown or handed towards the opponents goal line. A forward pass is legal, if it is the first pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. A forward pass cannot be thrown after the ball has been kicked. A forward pass cannot be thrown once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage, the penalty is enforced by having the ball dead at the point of the pass attempt, and this penalty can be declined by the opposition team. All tipped balls on legal forward passes are ignored, but a forward pass cannot be directed forward to a teammate, this is illegal.

3.2

A pass is considered complete if the player has possession and control of the ball prior to going out of bounds. To be considered in bounds the receiver must touch the ground in bounds with some part of the body prior to any part of the body touching an out of bounds area. The boundary lines, which mark the outer limits of the field, are considered to be out of bounds. Contact with the ground cannot cause an incomplete pass, as the criteria of stopping the rotation and influencing its subsequent direction must both be met beforehand.

3.3

If a receiver could have landed in bounds but was pushed out of bounds by an opponent, the catch will be awarded to the receiver. It is the official's judgment as to whether the receiver could have landed in bounds.

3.4

A pass caught simultaneously by players on opposite teams will be awarded to the team that had possession prior to the pass.

3.5

A player who bobbles the ball and is touched while bobbling the ball will be considered to be touched if and when he finally gains possession of the ball. The ball will come back to the point where the opponent first touched the receiver.

3.6

Players can lateral the ball at any time during a play. A lateral pass is a pass that travels parallel to, or in the direction of, the passer's dead ball line (on-side). An attempted lateral that results in the ball going forward and being caught by a teammate is illegal and is ruled an offside pass. If a player makes an offside pass, the ball comes back to the point the pass was initiated and the ball is dead. The opposing team can decline this penalty.

3.7

When an offensive player touches a lateral pass behind the line of scrimmage before any forward pass has been thrown and the ball then touches the ground, the ball is live to any onside player on the offense. The defense may touch the last offensive player to have touched the ball, or they may touch the loose ball and down it to end the play.

3.8

A pass is incomplete when the ball touches the ground, the goal post, or an official, or lands out of bounds.

3.9

When the passer deliberately throws a pass to an area where there is no receiver in an obvious attempt to avoid a loss of yards, the team will be penalized for grounding the ball. The penalty is a loss of down at the point the ball was thrown.

3.10

If a pass is intercepted and then goes dead in the end zone, no points are awarded and the team that intercepted the ball is awarded first down on their own 20 yard line.

3.11

If a forward pass or punt is blocked by the rusher and caught by the quarterback before it hits the ground, there can be no second forward pass attempt, as only one legal forward pass can be attempted during the play. The QB is still allowed to run with the ball and gain yards.

3.12

Any pass that hits the goal posts is considered to be immediately dead. If it was a legal forward pass, the play is over. If it was an illegal forward pass, all penalty applications may apply, and 1 or 2 points may be awarded. If it was an onside pass coming out of the end zone, 1 or 2 points will be awarded.

3.13

If a ball carrier throws the ball into the air to avoid a tag, then catches the ball, play is dead at the point the ball was first thrown into the air.

RULE 4 - SCORING

4.1

A touchdown counts as 6 points; a convert from the 5 yard line is 1 point; a convert from the 10 yard line is 2 points; and a rouge is 1 point.

4.2

A touchdown is scored by carrying the ball into the opponent's end zone prior to being touched by the oppositions, or by catching the ball (in bounds) in the opponent's end zone prior to it touching the ground. The ball is considered to be in the end zone when any part of the ball touches or crosses the plane of the goal line.

4.3

After a touchdown is scored, the scoring team may try a convert attempt. The scoring team will choose to attempt a 1 point convert from the 5 yard line, or a 2 point convert from the 10 yard line, or may choose not to attempt a convert at all. Once the scoring team has told the referee which convert attempt they will try, and the referee has informed the other team, there can be no changes in the choice. Converts are run or pass attempts; no kicking is allowed. Either team may score. If there is a penalty on a convert attempt, the offense is not permitted to change their choice if there is a repeat attempt.

4.4

On a convert attempt, the ball is scrimmaged in the center of the appropriate yard line. If there are goal posts on the goal line, the scoring team has the right to ask for the ball to be moved to either hash mark (24 yards from either sideline).

4.5

After a convert attempt or, if the convert attempt is declined, the defensive team will scrimmage the ball, 1st & 10, from their own 20 yard line.

4.6

A safety touch is awarded to a team when the other team causes the ball to go into their own end zone and the play is ruled dead prior to the ball being brought out of the end zone. If a player's momentum in handling an intercepted, punted, or kicked ball, causes them to enter their own end zone, the force that caused them to enter the end zone is considered to be the ball, not the player, and a safety touch will, by rule, not apply. A ball is considered to be in the end zone if any part of the ball still remains in the end zone.

4.7

After a safety touch, the scoring team can choose one of 3 options; to have the non-scoring team kick off from their own 35 yard line (20 yards back from center); to scrimmage the ball from their own 35 yard line; or to kick off from their own 35 yard line.

4.8

A rouge is scored when a team legally kicks the ball into the opponent's end zone and the ball is not brought out of the end zone. For a rouge to be scored on a kickoff, the ball must be touched, or it must land in the field of play or in the end zone prior to going out of bounds.

4.9

After a rouge is scored, the non-scoring team will scrimmage the ball, 1st and 10, from their own 35 yard line (20 yards back of center).

4.10

If the goal posts (padded) are on the goal line, and are hit by the ball, the following rules apply:

On a snap from center.....safety touch

On an onside pass into the end zone.....safety touch

A pass into or out of the end zone.....dead ball

A punt into the end zone.....no point, 1st & 10 on receiving teams 20 yd. line

A punt out of the end zone.....safety touch

A punt into the end zone that bounces backwards, hits post.....rouge

A punt into the end zone that hits a receiver or the ground, then post.....rouge

A kick off that touches the post in flight.....no point, 1st & 10 on 25 yd. line

A kick off that hits receiver or the ground, then post.....no point, 1st & 10 on 20 yd.

line

RULE 5 - PUNTS

5.1

For a ball to be considered a punt it must be deliberately dropped and then kicked with the foot or any part of the leg before the ball touches the ground.

5.2

Any player may punt the ball, even after catching a pass over the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is legally punted, the punting team gives up possession of the ball.

5.3

After a punt, players of the punting team cannot touch the ball or be touched by the ball until an opponent touches the ball. They must also be at least 5 yards away from the ball when it is first touched by an opposing player. Failure to do so will result in a 10 yard "no yards" penalty from the point the ball was first touched. If "no yards" takes place in the kicking teams end zone (even on a deflected or return punt), the receiving team has the following options; accept the penalty and the ball goes half the distance to the goal line from the point of last scrimmage, or accept the penalty and take the ball on the offending team's 5 yard line, or decline the penalty and be awarded a safety touch.

If “no yards” takes place in the receiving teams end zone, the receiving team has the following options; decline the penalty, give up 1 point and take the ball on their own 35 yard line, decline the penalty and take the result of the play, accept the penalty, take the ball on 20 yard line, then administer penalty(s) from that spot.

5.4

Any player on the receiving team can catch a punt and advance it. There is no blocking permitted on a punt return. If a player attempts to catch a punt and the ball touches the player then hits the ground, the play will be live if the ball goes in the direction of, or parallel to, the receiver’s dead ball line. If the receiver touches the ball and the ball goes forward and hits the ground, the play is dead (at the spot the receiver touched the ball) when the ball hits the ground.

5.5

A punt is considered blocked by the opposing team when a player of that team strikes the ball and the ball travels in the direction of, or parallel to, the punting team’s dead ball line and hits the ground or is caught by any player. If the ball hits the ground, the play is ruled dead and the non-punting will take possession of the ball at the point the ball was blocked. If any player catches the ball in the air, it is still live, the down continues, and yardage can still be gained by the offense, but neither team can throw a legal forward pass, by rule.

5.6

If a punt is deflected by the rusher, and the ball travels in the direction of the receiving team’s dead ball line, the punt is legal and the play continues. The deflection is ignored and “yards” must be given by members of the kicking team. If the deflection takes place in the end zone, “yards” must still be given.

5.7

When a punted ball hits the ground behind the line of scrimmage or behind the kicker’s goal line, the ball is dead. If this occurs in the field of play, the opposing team will take possession of the ball at the point the ball hits the ground. If this occurs in the end zone the opposing team will be awarded a safety touch if it is a scrimmage play, or a single point, if it is a return punt from the end zone.

5.8

When a punt is blocked in the field of play, the non-punting team is considered to be in possession. If the punt is blocked in the end zone, the punting team is considered to be in possession, meaning that if the blocked punt goes out the back or side of the end zone, a safety touch has been scored.

5.9

If a player accidentally or deliberately kicks the ball with the foot or leg without having had control of the ball in the hand (dribbled ball), the ball becomes an onside or offside pass depending on its direction and will remain live until it hits the ground or is caught by a teammate of the player who kicked the ball.

5.10

When a punt crosses the line of scrimmage, then bounces backwards behind the line of scrimmage, the play is not blown dead, all “no yards” penalties are still enforced. If the ball enters the kicking team’s end zone, it is, by rule, deemed to have never left the end zone, and if downed by the receiving team, a safety touch is awarded. If downed by the kicking team, the penalty is “no yards in the end zone, see rule 5.3 for options.

RULE 6 - TIMING AND TIME OUTS

6.1

The game usually consists of four 20 minute quarters. At the end of the first and third quarters, teams switch ends but downs continue. A quarter will end when the referee has no time left on the clock. If, at the end of the previous play, the referee has at least some time left on the clock, there will be at least one more play in the quarter. If there is a touchdown scored on the last play of a quarter, the convert will be attempted but there will be no subsequent kickoff in that quarter.

6.2

At the end of the second quarter, there is an agreed upon rest period (halftime), not to exceed 10 minutes, and the third quarter begins with a kickoff.

6.3

Time runs continuously in the 1st & 3rd quarters except for referee approved time outs. In the 2nd & 4th quarters, time runs continuously, except for time outs, for the first 17 minutes. During the last 3 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarters, there are special timing rules, which come into effect. The clock will be stopped in the following situations:

- A.** When a touchdown is scored: clock starts when the ball is snapped by the scored upon team, on the ensuing play from scrimmage.
- B.** When a safety touch is scored: clock starts on the snap of the subsequent play, or when the ball is touched on the following kickoff.
- C.** When a rouge is scored: clock starts on the snap on the subsequent play
- D.** On a change of possession: clock starts when the official blows the play in on the subsequent scrimmage play. If possession changes twice during the same play, the clock will continue to run.

E. On a penalty application: clock starts when the official blows the play in on the subsequent scrimmage play.

F. For a time count violation: clock starts on the snap on the subsequent play

G Team time out: clock starts on the snap on the subsequent play.

H Injury: the team with the injured player can use a team time out for the injury, allowing the injured player to remain in the game, and the clock will start on the snap of the subsequent play. If it does not use a team time out, the non-injured team has the option to remove 10 seconds from the clock prior to the start of the next play and the clock CONT'D will start on the snap of the subsequent play. If less than 10 seconds remains in the half, one play will remain.

6.4

Each team is allowed one 60 second and one 20 second time out per half, which, if not used in the one half, cannot be carried over to the next period. In overtime, each team is allowed one time out, only for a rule enquiry.

6.5

Any on field player can request a time out from any on field official. Time outs cannot be called during a play.

6.6

The referee will notify both teams when there are 10 seconds left in the time out. When the time out is over, the referee will blow the play in, and the offense has 20 seconds left to snap the ball, before a time count violation penalty will be called. A time out may be shortened if both teams agree.

6.7

All offensive players must huddle after a time out, change of possession, or at the change of quarter, or be penalized 5 yards for illegal procedure.

6.8

After a time out, the clock will not start until the snap of the ball on the subsequent play. If the subsequent play is a kickoff, the clock will not start until a player on the receiving team touches the ball. If the ball goes out of bounds on the kickoff the clock will start on the snap of the ball on the subsequent play.

6.9

If a team asks for a time out when none are left, and the clock is stopped, the offending team will be given a 10 yard delay of game penalty.

6.10

The referee may stop the clock when it is deemed necessary by any of the officials. The clock will then start after the referee whistles the next play in.

6.11

The clock is stopped when a delay of game penalty is applied. The clock will start when the ball is snapped or kicked off.

6.12

The clock is stopped after a safety touch is scored. The clock will start when the referee whistles in the subsequent play.

6.13

If the referee takes a time out for an injury to one of the players, the injured player must be removed for at least one play, unless either team calls a time out.

6.14

If the game is tied after regulation time and a winner must be declared, overtime can be played. Overtime involves the use of converts to break the tie; with each team being given 3 convert attempts, alternating on offense then defense. A coin toss will be held, the winner being given the option of offense or defense for the first play. The captains and referee will agree on which end zone will be used for the overtime. Before each attempt, the referee will ask the offense if they wish to attempt a 1 or 2 point convert, once that choice has been repeated to the defense, it cannot be changed. If at the end of the 6 convert attempts, the score is still tied, the teams will continue to alternate 1 attempt each until a winner can be determined. During overtime, the defense cannot score, any turnover is immediately dead.

6.15

If any time more than 3 minutes remains in a half (3:05 or 3:52) after a convert or regular scrimmage play, the clock will continue to run until exactly 3 minutes remain, then at the first dead ball period, the clock will stop and the 3 minute warning will be given, and all special timing rules will then apply.

RULE 7 - PASS INTERFERENCE

7.1

Pass interference is defined as one player taking away the positional advantage of another player. This can occur:

A through direct contact whereby one player makes contact with an opponent and causes the opponent to move off stride or away from their intended path.

B when a player steps into the intended and declared path of an opponent, causing the opponent to slow down or change direction.

C during a deliberate attempt to block the opponent from reaching the arrival point of the ball.

7.2

Pass interference is considered to be in the target area when the interference occurs while the ball is in the air, and the interference is preventing the opponent from playing the ball. All other pass interference is remote zone interference.

7.3

If a player is not playing the ball and extends the arms or waves a hand in an attempt to distract a receiver or block the vision of the receiver or to deflect the ball, that player is considered to have committed remote zone pass interference. If the ball is touched or if the receiver's direct line of vision is blocked, it is considered to be target zone pass interference.

7.4

If pass interference occurs and the official rules that the ball would not have been caught even without the interference, then the pass interference is considered to be remote zone.

7.5

Both offensive and defensive players can be called for pass interference. If the defense commits target zone interference, the offense is awarded the ball at the point of the foul, or 10 yards in advance of the play's line of scrimmage. If the offense commits target zone interference the defense is awarded the ball at the point of the foul. If either team commits remote zone interference, the penalty is 10 yards from the play's line of scrimmage, and the down is repeated.

7.6

If both opponents are in an equally favorable position and their feet tangle and one player goes down, there is no penalty, as no advantage was taken away.

RULE 8 - EQUIPMENT

8.1

Teams may use their own football during the game, or, if they agree, both teams may use 1 game ball. Each league or tournament can set its own specifications regarding the dimensions and type of football to be used. No team is permitted to make alterations to the natural surface of the ball being used. Teams doing so will be penalized for objectionable conduct.

8.2

Players are not permitted to use paste stickup on their hands or uniforms. Any players who do so will be penalized 10 yards for objectionable conduct and the removed from the game until all trace of the substance has been removed. Spray stickup may be used on player's hands only, not on the game ball.

8.3

If 2 teams are wearing similar uniforms, and one team has a 2nd set of a different colour, they must switch to that set. If not, the winner of the opening coin toss has the option as to which team must change. Uniforms cannot contain any equipment that would cause injury to any player. The referee will be the final authority on equipment that may be cause injuries or any equipment or devices that are not covered in the rules.

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8.4

Jewelry must be removed prior to the start of the game. If it is not possible to remove the jewelry it must be covered up completely. Medical bracelets may be worn but they must be fastened securely so as not to cause injury. The referee will have the final decision as to the acceptability of equipment.

8.5

It is not mandatory to wear cleated shoes, but shoes with heels are not acceptable. Spikes or similar sharp pointed cleats such as track, golf or metal baseball shoes are not permitted. If cleated shoes are worn, the cleats must be part of the natural design of the shoe.

8.6

If a player is wearing unacceptable equipment, jewelry, or shoes, the player must leave the game for at least one play and remove the equipment before returning. If the player returns to the game with the unacceptable equipment, the team will be penalized for objectionable conduct, and the player will be ejected. No padded headgear is allowed.

8.7

If a participant has incurred a wound that is bleeding or if there is enough blood on a player or their uniform to such an extent that it may be transferred to another individual, that player must leave the playing field until the problem is resolved to the satisfaction of the referee. A two minute grace period is given for that player to return, or they must be substituted.

8.8

The quarterbacks are the only players allowed to wear flak jackets. No players are allowed to wear unpadded casts or unprotected braces that have sharp points or hard obtrusions.

RULE 9 - PROCEDURES

9.1

The standard field is 110 yards long, 64 yards wide, with 10 yard end zones at each end. Hash marks should be 24 yards from either sideline. Centre field is at the 55 yard line. Boundary lines must be at least one foot inside any obstructions or curved tracks.

9.2

Goal posts are not required for the game of touch football. If they are present, they must be padded to prevent injury, or the field will be shortened to move the goalposts to at least the dead ball line. Goal posts on the goal line are, by rule, in the end zone.

9.3

The team benches are located on the same side of the field; 5 yards back from the sideline and between the 45 and 25 yard lines. Players must stay in their bench area when off the field or be penalized 10 yards for objectionable conduct, unless that player is injured during a play.

9.4

Each team may have a maximum of 7 players on the field during play. Teams must have a minimum of 5 players at the designated start time of the game, there is no wait time for extra players to arrive, and they will forfeit that game. If a team has more than 7 players on the field for any part of a play, it will be penalized 10 yards for illegal substitution.

9.5

Substitute players may enter the field only when the play is dead. Substitutes must enter from the bench area, and substituted players must go directly to the bench area, unless injured. Substitutes may not enter the field after the offense has broken the huddle, or after the kicker has begun their approach to the ball on a kickoff. A player who enters the field to communicate a play to a teammate must remain on the field for the next play. The penalty for violating these rules is 10 yards for illegal substitution. If a player or coach comes onto the field to attend to an injured player, and begins to discuss strategy with their team huddle or captain, a 10 yard objectionable conduct penalty will be applied.

9.6

Teams are permitted a maximum of 4 captains per game. Only the captains are permitted to discuss rule applications with the referee, or to choose options on penalty applications.

9.7

Beanbags are used to mark the line of scrimmage, the rusher's bag and the first down line-to-gain must be a different colour than the others.

9.8

If there is an inadvertent whistle by the officials on a play, the play will stand if the whistle did not affect the outcome of the play. If the outcome was affected by the whistle, the team that was affected can either let the play stand as of the whistle, or repeat the play from the original line of scrimmage. If it is not possible to determine who was adversely affected, the play will be repeated. If, in the opinion of the officials, a score would have been made, it can be awarded. If replayed, any dead ball fouls that occurred will still be penalized.

9.9

If the ball touches an official during the play, by rule it will be treated as if the ball touched the ground during the play, and the appropriate ruling will be made.

RULE 10 - LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL

10.1

If the ball hits the goalposts in play, it is whistled dead.

10.2

If a ball lies motionless on the ground for 3 seconds and there is no attempt to play the ball, the play shall be whistled dead. If the ball is in the end zone, there is no 3 second rule, the ball **MUST** be played, and can be downed by the kicking team in this case **ONLY**, without a foul.

10.3

Players are not allowed to extend the ball, in their hand, to gain additional yards while the play is live. There is a 5 yard penalty for doing so and the ball is considered dead at the point the extension began.

10.4

Players who have possession of the ball are not permitted to dive forward, in an effort to gain additional yards. The penalty is 15 yards and the ball is considered dead at the point the dive began. Diving into a crowd is a 25 yd. penalty and ejection.

10.5

When the play is live and a member of the defensive team deliberately touches the ball carrier, the ball, or any part of the ball carrier's equipment, the play will be whistled dead.

The official must see the touch for the whistle to be blown. The touch can be with 1 or 2 hands, but must not be unduly harsh. The touch must be made with the hand; a touch made by foot, knee, elbow, etc. is not a legal touch. If the defensive player made contact with the offensive player during an attempt to play a pass, that incidental body contact is ignored, and is **NOT** considered a touch, the play continues.

10.6

A touch in the neck, head, or face area of the ball carrier is considered unnecessary roughness, and will be called as a 15 yard penalty, unless the contact was the result of the actions of the ball carrier. A 5 yd. minor touch penalty can be called if contact was minor.

10.7

If a ball carrier's knee, elbow, head, or body touches the ground, the ball is immediately declared dead, and the play is over. EXCEPTIONS: taking a knee to play a kick, or muffed snap.

10.8

If the quarterback mishandles the snap or the snap travels over the quarterback's head and is touched by him, the ball is live to the offense only. The rusher can touch either the quarterback or the ball in this instance, and the play will be whistled dead at the spot of touching. If the quarterback did not touch the ball at all, only the ball can be touched, as, by rule, the first offensive player to touch the ball is ruled as the quarterback.

RULE 11 - PENALTIES

(Alphabetical listing)

Delay of Game - This is a 10 yard penalty. It is called when the kicking team on a kickoff does not kick the ball within the allotted 20 seconds, or when a team is deliberately delaying the game. A second Delay of Game penalty in a row will cause the ball to be given to the opposition, 1st & 10, at the current line of scrimmage or kick off line.

Deliberate Grounding of the Ball - if a passer deliberately grounds the ball to avoid a touch, the ball will be placed at the point the passer released the ball, with the loss of that down.

Diving - the ball carrier is not allowed to dive with the ball in order to gain extra yards. This will be considered a 5 yard penalty, if no opponents were in front of him, or a 15 or 25 yard penalty, and is applied from the point where the dive began.

Extension – the ball carrier is not allowed to extend the ball with the arms in an effort to gain extra yards. This is applied as a dead ball foul from the point of the torso of the ball carrier when the extension took place. It is a 5 yard penalty, but may be 15, if contact is made.

Illegal Participation – if a defensive player illegally enters the field while a play is in progress and affects the outcome of the play, the opponents will be awarded a touchdown and the player ejected from the game. If a fan illegally participates in the game and a touchdown would have been scored without that participation, then the touchdown must be awarded. If the fan did not affect the outcome of the play, the play stands. If the fan affected the outcome of the play, the team adversely affected has the option to repeat the play or accept the result of that play.

Illegal Re-entry – a player is not permitted to leave the field of play during a play, return to the field of play, and then participate in the play. The penalty is 10 yards for illegal re-entry.

A) By the receiving team on a kickoff - the penalty is applied at the spot the ball was held when the infraction took place.

B) By the offense on a scrimmage play – if a first down was not made, the penalty is applied at the point of last scrimmage, down repeated. If a first down was made prior to the infraction, the penalty is applied at the point ball held at the instant of the foul, 1st & 10. If the penalized player caught a pass, it can be ruled as an incomplete pass, option of the non-offending team.

C) By the offense on a convert – no score is allowed, no repeated attempt given

D) By the kicking team on a kickoff - the penalty is applied at the spot the ball was held when the infraction took place, or at the end of the run, team R option.

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E) By the defense on a scrimmage play - the offense has the option to apply the penalty at the point of last scrimmage with the down repeated or at the point the ball was held at the time of the infraction, downs continue.

F) By the defense on a convert attempt - if the foul occurred in the end zone, the convert is awarded. If the foul occurred in the field of play, the penalty is applied at the point of last scrimmage and the convert is repeated.

G) If the foul occurs after a change of possession of a scrimmage play - the penalty is applied at the spot the ball was held at the time of the infraction.

H) On any play, if a score would have been made without the illegal re-entry, then the score is awarded.

Illegal Substitution – this occurs when a player illegally enters the field. Players are not allowed to enter the field on a scrimmage play after the offense breaks the huddle or, if there is no huddle, after the referee blows the ready-for-play whistle. On a kickoff, players cannot legally enter the field after the kicker begins their approach to the ball. If a team has more than seven players on the field during a play, it is illegal substitution.

Illegal Use of Hands – players are not permitted to grab the goalposts or opponent in order to change direction or take an unfair advantage. Penalty is 10 yards for illegal use of hands.

Major Foul – acts that threaten the safety of participants and will result in the ejection of the player responsible. They include: deliberate tripping of an opponent; striking or attempting to strike an opponent, or diving into a group of players;; any attempt to injure a participant in the game. Major fouls are 25 yards (unrestricted) and ejection, and are considered to be dead ball fouls.

No Yards – this occurs when the punting team encroaches within the 5 yard restraining zone on a punt. Members of the punting team must not be within a 5 yard radius of the punt returner at the time of the touching of the ball by the receiving team. This is a 10 yard penalty, to be applied from the point the ball was first touched by the receiving team. If no yards in the end zone is accepted, no points are awarded, and the ball will be put into play on the 30 yard line, barring any other penalty. No yards in the kicking team's end zone, see Rule 5.3

Objectionable Conduct - these penalties are applied as 10 yard dead ball fouls. The following actions are considered to be O.C. ; the use of profane language, taunting, demeaning remarks made to officials or to opposing players, persistent arguments to officials, deliberately delaying the game, faking an injury or contact to draw a penalty or delay the game, or any action which brings disrepute to the game. O. C. Is ruled as a dead ball foul ONLY.

Obstruction – players are not permitted to block or obstruct an opponent's direct path to the ball or ball carrier. Contact does not have to occur for this penalty to be called. Penalty is 10 yards for obstruction. Players are permitted to take a stationary position in order to avoid being called for this penalty, providing it is taken in sufficient time to allow the opponent to adjust, this does not apply to the center who is obliged to move out of the direct path of the rusher on a scrimmage play.

Offside - if a player encroaches in the 1 yard neutral zone as the ball is snapped, it will result in a 5 yard offside penalty. The neutral zone extends 1 yard back from the line of scrimmage on the defensive side of the ball. If the first defensive player to cross the line of scrimmage did not rush from at least 5 yards away from the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap or after the snap, an offside penalty will be called. On a kickoff, the defense must be back 20 yards. Offside by either team on a kickoff is applied as either a live ball penalty, 5 yards, or dead ball penalty, 10 yards.

Offside Pass – any ball thrown or kicked towards or parallel to the opponent's goal line. The ball is brought back to the point the pass originated and downs continue.

Pass Interference - if the defense commits it in the target area, the ball is awarded to the offense at the point of foul or 10 yards in advance of the previous line of scrimmage, automatic first down. If the foul was in the defense's end zone the ball is placed on the 1 yard line, 1st down. If the offense commits it in the target area and the penalty is accepted, the defense is awarded the ball at point of foul, or if in the end zone, on B 20 yd. line, or can declare pass incomplete, ball is placed at point of last scrimmage. If it is in the remote area, by either team, the 10 yard penalty is applied from the previous line of scrimmage, down repeated. If the defense commits target zone P I, in the end zone, on a convert attempt, the convert will be awarded. If it is target zone P I in the field of play or if it is remote zone P I, the convert attempt can be repeated after the penalty is applied. If the offense commits P I, target or remote zone, no repeat of the convert attempt is given.

Time Count Violation - the offensive team has 20 seconds after the play is blown in by the referee to snap the ball. Failure to do so results in a 5 yard penalty that is applied from the point of last scrimmage, down repeated. If called in the last 3 minutes, 1st or 2nd down – loss of down, or 10 yd. penalty, option to Team B, if 3rd down, loss of 10 yards, clock starts on the snap.

Unnecessary Roughness - These are acts of roughness or unfair play. Players must control their momentum and try to avoid collisions with opponents. A shove, a heavy handed slap or a swinging arm slap when touching the ball carrier shall be considered a foul. If the rusher contacts the quarterback making ANY kind of contact on the QB's arm, shoulder, hand, neck or head while the QB is attempting to pass, or on a follow-through motion, is roughing the passer, unless the passer makes a sudden move into the rusher's path. Charging, elbowing, or diving by the ball carrier is also considered to be UR. UR fouls are 15 yards, and are dead ball fouls.

RULE 12 - APPLICATION OF PENALTIES

12.1

A penalty can be refused by the non-offending team. However, if there is an ejection given by the referee that player must leave the game. The non-offending team can always decline yardage for a penalty

12.2

If the non-offending team refuses a penalty, the play stands and downs continue. If the penalty is accepted, the referee will explain the options to the non-offending team's captain. Once a team has given their choice to the referee, it cannot change it, unless they were given the wrong options by the referee, in which case they must appeal to the referee prior to the ball being put into play on the next down or kickoff.

12.3

If a team commits 2 or more live ball fouls during the same play, the non-offending team can only accept one of those fouls.

12.4

If there is more than one dead ball foul called against the same team during one play, all fouls can be applied. If each team commits a dead ball foul on the same play, only the difference in yardage will be applied.

12.5

The application of a penalty will not result in the ball being placed closer than the 1 yard line. If the normal penalty yardage was applied and the ball would have reached the goal line due to the penalty, a first down may be awarded to the offense.

12.6

On a third down play, the offense may NOT be awarded a first down by the application of a dead ball foul. On a 3rd down offensive PI, the defense has the option of taking the ball at the original line of scrimmage. On any offensive PI, the defense has the option of declining the penalty and, regardless of the outcome of the play, having the ball placed on the original line of scrimmage, the down will not be repeated.

12.8

If the defense commits a live ball foul that results in a 1st down being awarded by the application of the penalty yardage, the 1st down cannot be taken away if the offense commits a dead ball foul on the play. The 1st down would be awarded and the penalty yardage for the dead ball foul would then be applied. It would be 1st & 10 after the application of the dead ball foul, unless the foul is committed after the bags have been reset and ready for play whistled in.

12.9

If a team commits a dead ball penalty on a play that results in a touchdown or on a convert attempt, the non-penalized team has the option to apply the penalty on the convert attempt or the repeated convert attempt(if there is one), or on the subsequent kickoff. The score cannot be taken away by a dead ball foul, no option to make it a live ball foul.

12.10

If a team accepts a live ball foul that occurs on the last play of the quarter (other than an offside pass or obstruction after a 1st down is gained), there will be one more play given to the team that has possession. Dead ball fouls that occur on the last play of a quarter must be applied in the next quarter, or overtime period (option if last play of 2nd half).

12.11

Fixed distance penalties are applied in the following manner unless a previous rule states otherwise.

A) if the foul occurs before the ball is put into play, as the ball is put into play, or before a first down is gained, the penalty will be applied at the point the ball was last put into play, and the down will be repeated.

B) If the foul occurs after a first down has been gained; the penalty will be applied from the spot the ball was held at the time of the infraction.

C) If a foul is committed after the offense loses possession of the ball, the penalty will be applied from the spot the ball was held at the time of the infraction. A first down will be awarded to the team that has possession of the ball. If the penalty was called when the ball was in the air as the result of a kickoff or punt, the penalty will be applied at the point the ball is first touched by the receiving team.

12.12

Live ball convert attempts. If a team in possession of the ball creates a foul, it shall forfeit the right to score. Inadvertent whistle rule will still be in effect.

IF BALL IS HELD BY A – All normal rules for convert attempts apply, if target zone PI by A is called, the convert attempt is no good, a kickoff or end of the period will follow.

IF BALL IS HELD BY B – Any live ball foul by B will nullify their score, the convert will NOT be repeated. Any live ball foul by A (after change of possession) will be refused if a score has been made, or will be applied on the following kickoff (or start of next period), the convert will NOT be repeated.

If a dead ball foul (before scoring) by the scoring team results in a score, the score is good, the play is not repeated; all dead ball fouls will be assessed on the following kickoff or convert, option to non-offending team.

12.13

Only 6 fouls can give the offense an automatic first down. They are:

A: Roughing the Passer

B: Roughing the kicker

C: Tripping

D: UR on a player in the Target Area

E: UR on a player attempting to recover muffed snap, onside pass, or kick (KO or punt)

F: Target area PI

12.14

If both teams commit live ball fouls during the same down, the down will be repeated. If dead ball fouls were also committed, they shall be enforced from the line of scrimmage.

RULE 13 - GENERAL

13.1

If a team refuses to start or continue a game at the request of the referee, the referee can award the game to the non-offending team after 2 warnings to the captain of the offending team. If the game is tied or the offending team is leading at the time, the game will be forfeited by a score of 1 – 0. If the non-offending team is leading at the time, that score will count.

13.2

If there are padded goal posts on the goal line and the ball is scrimmaged within the offensive team's 20 yard line, the ball can be moved to the closest hash mark.

13.3

If a team scrimmages within 5 yards of the defensive team's goal line, and there are padded goal posts on the goal line, the ball must be scrimmaged at the nearest hash mark.

13.4

The referee will decide on any on-field ruling that is not covered by this Rulebook. If an incorrect down is announced and then corrected after the play, the previous play shall count as the correct down and not be repeated.

13.5 Ruling Challenge

Any team captain may call a time out to challenge a rule application. An officials judgment call can NOT be challenged, only a rule application. After the rulebook has been checked (if no current rulebook is at the field, the original ruling stands), if the challenge is successful, the time out will be returned to the challenging team. If the challenge fails, the time out will be charged, and a 10 yard Delay of the Game penalty assessed to the challenging team. If the challenging team has no time outs left, and the challenge fails, an additional 10 yard delay of game penalty will be assessed to the challenging team.

