IX. LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

- 1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- 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 of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.
- 5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- 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. Other unfair acts would be; not returning five (5) eligible players to the field of play after halftime, a team or officials time out prior to the 'Ready to Play' signal by the referee. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- 6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
- 7. 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 then placed where the ball hit the ground.
 - b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
 - q. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - i. Inadvertent whistle
 - j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet diving or to hurdle a player.

NOTE: Fumbles/ loss of possession: Ground contact must be made for the play to be dead at that spot. A fumble is loss of possession by a player, resulting in the ball contacting the ground.

- 8. If inadvertent or erroneous whistle occurs the offense has two options:
 - A) take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed
 - B) replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

- 9. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.
- 10. Officials should all agree in order to change a call on the field that is in dispute

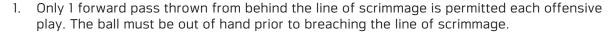


X. RUNNING

- 1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
- 2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center directly, or in shotgun formation.
- 3. Direct handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead by the official. The ball shall be placed at the spot possession was lost for the succeeding play.
 - a. "Center sneak" play is NOT allowed. The QB may NOT handoff, pitch or lateral the ball first to the center.
 - b. Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - c. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occured, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 4. Definition of a "Legal Handoff" Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive play to another.
- 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. Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead and ball spotted where it was when they left the ground.
- 7. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, contact is made unnecessary roughness or an illegal contact penalty may be enforced by the official.
- 8. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
- 9. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
- 10. 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 quarding.
- 11. Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the current ball-carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.



XI. PASSING



- a. Passes may be thrown forward or backwards behind the line of scrimmage.
- b. There is no intentional grounding.
- c. All passes, except backwards passes, that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- d. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be forward from behind the line of scrimmage, and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven 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, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).
 - b. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

XII. RECEIVING



- 1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
- 2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. Player MUST be off the line of scrimmage at least one (1) yard. All motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
- 4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- 5. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.



12



XIII. RUSHING THE PASSER

- 1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Up to two (2) players can rush the quarterback. Rushers MUST identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap. Rushers MUST rush the passer immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is NOT permitted, by rule. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend the line of scrimmage. 8, 7 & 6U & 1st-3rd Grade Division: Defenders may not rush the passer.
- 2. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- 3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
 - a A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled by the quarterback.
 - b. A penalty may be called if:
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, pitch, lateral or pass illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
 - iii. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, pitched, lateraled or handed off illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
 - iv. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff, pitch, lateral or passed ball.
 - c. Special circumstances:
 - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
 - ii. Teams are required to identify their rushers before the play.
- 4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- 5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. 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.
- 6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possesion of the ball is once the flag is pulled.
 - a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

TOURNAMENT PLAY: 8U Division may rush the passer at the snap from 7-yards



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XIV. FLAG PULLING

- 1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- 2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but 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 a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
- 5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
- 6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- 7. 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, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.





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- 1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.
 - b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
- 2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- 3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.



XVI. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- 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 offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.
- 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 must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. Offensive players may NOT initiate contact at the line of scrimmage with defenders, in the officials judgement. **ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**
- 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 and adhere to league requirements for seating:
 - 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. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.
 - c. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.
- 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
 - c. Two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties on any player or coach in a game is automatic disqualification from that game and may lead to additional discipline





XVII. 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 as noted. (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 or halves 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.
- 8. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding/Illegal Contact	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening or blocking	-5 yards and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-5 yards and loss of down
Holding/Illegal Contact	-5 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside / illegal substitution	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start / illegal substitution	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Taunting	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

