City of Fort Lauderdale
Parks & Recreation Department

MILLS POND PARK

The PLACE to PLAY!

Flag Football League Rules
Spring 2010

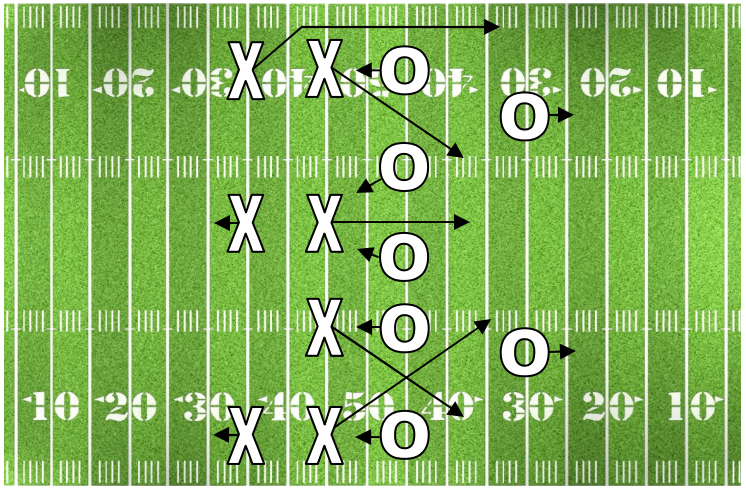

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Table of Contents

Section 1 – League Organization……..……..……3

Section 2 – The Game……..……..…..……10

Section 3 – Definition of Playing Terms……..…..…..12

Section 4 – Periods, Time Factors, Substitutions…....14

Section 5 – Series of Downs, Number of Down & The Team Possession after Penalty…..……..……18

Section 6 – Kicking the Ball & Fair Catch…..……..…19

Section 7 – Snapping, Handling, Passing, Receiving & Running the Ball……..……..…20

Section 8 – Running & Flag Belt Removal…..……24

Section 9 – Blocking……..…25

Section 10 – Scoring Plays and Touchbacks…..……..26

Section 11 – Extra Point Try 1, 2, or 3 Points…..……..27

Section 12 – Safety = 2 Points…..……..……..27

Section 13 – Conduct of Players & Others……..……...28

Section 14 – Personal Fouls……..……..……..29

Section 15 – Enforcement of Penalties…..……29

Section 16 – Coed Rules Summary…..…..……..……32

Section 17 – Protest Policy……..……..……34

Section 18 – Park Policy……..……..……..35

Quick Reference Penalty Summary……...36

Index……..37

Notes……..39

NOTES

Helping the Runner……...8.6
Insurance……..1.14
Interlock Blocking……..9.2
League Playoffs……...1.12
League/Playoff
-Awards..……..1.15
League Standings……...1.13
Length of Game……....4.3
Live Ball Fouls……..…..15.2
Loose Ball Play……15.6
Make-up Games….……..1.5
Mercy Rule……..……10.1
Multiple Dead
-Ball Fouls…...……...15.14
Multiple Live
-Ball Fouls……...……..15.13
New Series of Downs..…5.3
Offense Blocking……..9.1
Offsetting Fouls…...……..5.4
Park Rules……...…....18.3
Pass Interference……..…7.4
Passing & Receiving…….7.3
Personal Fouls……..…..14.1
Pets……..…18.2
Player Eligibility……...1.11
Prior to the Snap……...7.1
Prohibited Acts……..…13.3
Protest Procedure……...17.2
Position & Action
-during the Snap…….....7.2
Protected Scrimmage
-Kick……..……..6.1
Rainouts/Lightning……..…1.7
Rescheduling
-Games….……..……...1.6
Roughing the Passer……7.5
Running Play……..…15.7
Safety / Goal Line……...15.9
Safety Rules……12.1-12.3
Schedules……...1.2
Scoring……1.3
Scoring a Touchdown….10.3
Series of Downs……....5.1
Shortened Periods……....4.4
Stiff Arm……..…...……8.5
Stopped Clock ……..4.7
Substitutions……..……..4.13
Team Classification……...1.9
Team Roster……....1.10
Tie Game……....4.9
Timing Errors……..4.8
Time-Outs……4.10
Touchdown
-Value….……..…10.2,16.9
Two Minute Warning…....4.6
Unfair Tactics……..…4.12
Unsportsmanlike
-Conduct….……13.1
Valid Protest……....17.1
Zone Line-to-Gain……....5.2

Section 1 – League Organization

(1.1) Format

A. All leagues consist of a 8 game season, plus playoffs for the top 4 (four) teams within the division.

B. The League Commissioner reserves the right to amend the format of the league and/or playoffs due to weather or any unforeseen circumstances.

(1.2) Schedules

A. Managers will be called, or emailed (if applicable) with their first game time prior to the start of the league. Managers must pick up their team's schedule on their first night of play.

B. Schedules will be posted on the league website at www.fortlauderdale.gov/cityparks/mills_pond.

C. Make-up schedules will be posted on the league website as need arises. Managers will be called, emailed, or given a revised schedule with their team's makeup game time. Mangers must provide league office with a contact number and an email address.

(1.3) Scoring

A. The home team (team listed second on the schedules) will be the official scorekeeper.

B. If neither the home or away team keeps score the referee is the official scorer and no protests regarding scoring will be accepted. The referee's decision will be final.

C. Scores are reported to the league official via referees' scorecard. **The winning team must initial the referees' scorecard**. Game scores and standings are updated and posted each week on the league website at: www.fortlauderdale.gov/cityparks/mills_pond. Please check your standings to make sure they are accurate.

(1.4) Managers Responsibility

The Manager is the primary link between their team and league management. It is the manager's responsibility to obtain all information regarding league play at Mills Pond Park. This responsibility includes:

A. Register team into appropriate division.

B. Obtain pertinent league information: rulebook, schedules, etc.

C. Assume all financial responsibility for league fees. Submit fees and team roster on time.

D. Inform league office of changes in manager's address, contact number(s) and/or email address.

E. Have all players completely fill out, sign team roster, and have it submitted to league office before the <u>first</u> game.

F. Explain Mills Pond rules to team members.

G. Maintain control over team members in *all* circumstances including disputes on the field. Referees will discuss disputes on the field with the manager only. Players are not to question a referee's call or ruling.

(1.5) Make-up Games

All games cancelled (by league office or due to weather) will be made up on the same night of league play when possible. Managers will be called or emailed with makeup time and date or will be given a revised schedule. Makeup games will be posted online.

(1.6) Rescheduling Games

If at any time, a team is unable to play a scheduled game (due to an unforeseen circumstance), it is our policy to reschedule the game with approval from the opposing team if the time permits within the league's schedule. **Rescheduling must be done at least one (1) week in advance or game may not be rescheduled**

Index

Alcoholic Beverages…...18.1

All-But-One Principle…..15.5

Captains Choice……....4.2

Coed Rules
-The Game……..…....16.1

Coed Rules
-The Ball……..…16.2

Coed Rules-Protected
-Scrimmage Kick……16.3

Coed Rules-Protected
-Kick Male Receiver…...16.4

Coed Rules-Minimum
-Line Players…..…...…16.5

Coed Rules
-Male Runner…..….....16.6

Coed Rules-Male-to
-Male Completion……...16.7

Coed Rules
-Mercy Rule……..…16.8

Coed Rules
-Touchdown Value……..16.9

Contact……8.2

Continuous Clock……..4.5

Defensive Rush &
-Use of Hands…...……9.3

Dead Ball Fouls……..15.3

Dead Ball
-Player Fouls…..……..…13.2

Defensive
-Line-of-Scrimmage…...…9.4

Definitions of
-Playing Terms……..……3.1

Delay of Game……....4.11

Double Foul……..…..15.12

Enforcement of Penalties
-Captains Choice……....15.1

Game & Player
-Equipment (legal)……....2.3

Game & Player
-Equipment (illegal)……...2.4

Establish Zone
-line-to-gain…...……..…15.4

Extra Point Try
-Options……11.1

Extra Point Try
-Rules…...……..…11.2

Extra Point Try
-Fouls……..……..11.3

Face Guarding……..…..8.4

Fair Catch……...6.2

Field Dimensions ……2.2

Flag Belt Removal……8.1

Flag Guarding……8.3

Forfeits……....1.8

Format……..…1.1

Foul on a Score...……....15.10

Foul Prior to a Try…….15.11

Game / Forfeit Time……4.1

General Rules……....2.1

Half the Distance……....15.8

Quick Reference Penalty Summary

Description of Foul	Penalty
No Flag Belt prior to the snap	5 Yards
Illegal Equipment – First Offense	15 Yards
Illegal Equipment – Second Offense	Forfeit
Delaying the Game	5 Yards
Distracting the kicker	5 Yards
Defensive Encroachment	5 Yards
4 Players Not on the Offensive Line of Scrimmage	5 Yards
Offensive Player Illegal Motion	5 Yards
Quarterback must be at least 2 yards behind snapper	5 Yards
After a shift, offensive players must come to a complete stop for at least 1 second before the snap	5 Yards
Offensive Pass Interference	10 Yards L-of-D
Defensive Pass Interference	Spot of Foul A-F-D
Roughing the Passer	10 Yards A-F-D
Defensive Holding	10 Yards F-T-S
Offensive Flag Guarding, Stiff Arm, Diving & Jumping	10 Yards F-T-S
Defensive Face Guarding	10 Yards A-F-D
Helping the Runner	5 Yards F-T-S
Illegal Offensive Blocking & Use of Hands	10 Yards F-T-S
Illegal Defensive Rushing & Use of Hands	10 Yards F-P-S
Unsportsmanlike & Personal Fouls	15 Yards A-F-D

The team needing to reschedule must:

A. Contact the league commissioner at 954-828-8942 (Jason), or email MillsPondAthletics@fortlauderdale.gov about possibility of rescheduling game.

B. Call opposing team regarding game rescheduling.

C. Inform the commissioner of opposing team's decision.

(1.7) Rainouts/Lightning

A. Mills Pond does **not** predict the weather. In the event that rain occurs between the time you call and the time you arrive, please understand, our primary goal is to SAFELY play flag football. If in doubt, come out!

B. **Decisions regarding rainouts will be made at 5:30 p.m. on the day of the game.** At this time, if the game is rained out, the message on the rain out line will be updated with the necessary information. If games get rained out at any time during the evening, the message will then be updated accordingly. **For rainout information please call (954) 828-5977** (after 5:30 p.m.) Please do not call the league office for rain out information, thank you!

C. If a rainout occurs during a game, the game will be replayed from the point the game was called.

D. Per the City of Fort Lauderdale lightning policy, Once lightning is detected or sighted or thunder is heard, no matter the distance, all participants and employees are to take shelter from outside. Once lightning is detected, all players & officials will be cleared from the field of play. After 15 minutes, if the thunder and lightning has stopped play may resume.

(1.8) Forfeits

A. Any team forfeiting more than two games (as a no show or without calling the office) will be dropped from the league.

B. A forfeit game will be scored as 14-0.

(1.9) Team Classification

A. All teams will be classified as Division 1 or 2. Division 1 (Advanced), Division 2 (Intermediate/Beginner). **Please note <u>no</u> Division 1 players will be allowed in Division 2**.

B. All teams are required to remain in the division that they last participated in while part of the previous flag football league with the following exceptions:
   1. Any team will be allowed to move up a division upon registration.
   2. Any team finishing first for the regular season and/or the playoffs in division 2 will be required to move up a division. NO EXCEPTIONS!
   3. With **<u>league commissioner approval only,</u>** will a team be permitted to drop down a division.
   4. The league commissioner reserves the right to move any team up, down, or allow them to stay in the same division at his/her discretion.

C. Any team comprised of 5 or more of the same players as the previous season will be considered a returning team (Team may be asked to provide complete roster prior to registration.)

D. New teams are asked, in the spirit of fair play, to place themselves in a division they feel best suited to compete in.

(1.10) Team Roster

A. Team rosters are limited to 20 players.

B. Rosters are due before the **<u>first</u>** game. It is the manager's responsibility to submit a complete roster (name, signature, address and email address for each player). The team must submit a completed roster to the league official before the start of their first game. If the team has not turned in a completed roster before the start of the first game, the time used to complete the roster will be taken off the game time.

C. The official protest must be filed in writing 24 hours after the start of the game and submitted to the league commissioner at Mills Pond Park. The written protest must contain the following:
   1. Date, time of game, field game played on.
   2. The rule and section of the Mills Pond Flag Football Rule Book under which the protest is being filed.
   3. The referee's ruling and why it was incorrect (cite the rule).
   4. During divisional playoffs, all protests must be addressed at the time the protest is introduced.

<u>Section 18 – Park Policy</u>

(18.1) Alcoholic Beverages

Alcoholic beverages purchased outside of Mills Pond Park are **NOT** permitted onto the field. **Consumption of alcoholic beverages in the parking lot is strictly prohibited in all City of Fort Lauderdale parks unless a permit is obtained.**

(18.2) Pets

No pets are allowed in the park. Only service animals are permitted.

(18.3) Park Rules

The park will determine any situation not covered in these rules. In addition, Mills Pond Park reserves the right to interpret any and all rules and situations and further reserves the right to insert, delete, or change rules at any time and make decisions retroactive should it be deemed necessary for the benefit of the league.

There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward pass to a female receiver, or a female to female, or female to male. **Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from spot where the second consecutive male-to-male completed legal forward pass is released, and a loss of down. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is "open" or "closed."**

(16.8) MERCY RULE - If a team is 21 or more points ahead with 2 minutes to go in the second half the game shall be officially called. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that creates a point differential of 21 or more the game shall be officially called.

(16.9) TOUCHDOWN VALUE - If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9.

Section 17 – Protest Policy

(17.1) Valid Protest

Protests will be accepted in the case of rule interpretation only. No "judgment" call can be protested. Referees are instructed to accept all protests regardless of their validity and must note it on the scorecard.

(17.2) Protest Procedure

A. The notification of "Intent to Protest" must be made immediately before the next play, if it is the conclusion of the game, it must be done before both teams leave the field of play. Once the game is complete and both teams have left the field, no protest can be filed.

B. The manager or acting manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the referee that the game is being played under protest. The referee shall in turn notify the opposing manager. The protest will be noted on the referee's scorecard.

C. **An add/drop period will be offered until the 4th played game. After this point NO roster changes can be made – NO EXCEPTIONS!**

D. As stated previously, any team playing in Division 2 may not have any Division 1 players (which are deemed to be a detriment to the league) on their roster.

E. **Rosters must be filled out in complete form: print name, signature, address, email and telephone number. No signature makes for an ineligible player. Once the team's roster is submitted and signed by a league official, the roster is considered an official roster.**

F. The submission of the original roster and any drop/add changes must be made in person at Mills Pond Park.

G. Original rosters (office copies) will be used for any protest involving player eligibility and also during playoffs. Players must be on the team's original roster and have matching I.D. to be an eligible player.

H. Team rosters (office copy) will be checked during all playoff games.

(1.11) Player Eligibility

A. Players may not compete on more than one team in the same division.

B. The opposing team may only protest the players' eligibility until the completion of the end of the first half. After this time, no protests involving the players' eligibility will be accepted unless a new player enters the game at which time, it must be protested and solved as the new player enters the game either offensively or defensively.
   1. If a team files a player protest, the protesting team must also have a roster on file. Otherwise the protest will not be accepted.

2. A league official will be made aware of the protest. The team's roster (office copy) will be used. If no roster exists, the game will be declared a forfeit in the favor of the protesting team.
3. Players are required to carry a driver's license or other official I.D. to each game and produce it upon request by an umpire or league official.

C. If in violation, protests will result in forfeiture of the game against the team in violation of the rule.

(1.12) League Playoffs

A. League playoffs will be played amongst the top 4 teams within the league. The format will be played as followed:
   1. 2nd place vs. 3rd place
      1st place vs. 4th place
   2. The winners of the above will play for the championship.

B. If two subdivisions of a division exist (i.e. division 1A and 1B) the top 4 teams from each subdivision will be admitted to the playoffs, forming an 8-team playoff. The first playoff game will be versus a team from the opposing subdivision using the same format as above.

C. Playoffs will be held on the same night of league play following the conclusion of the regular season (time and weather permitting).

D. All playoffs are single elimination.

E. Players may play for any team during divisional playoffs provided that they are on the team's original roster. Only one team per division. (see rule 1.11 A)

F. Rosters will be checked during all playoff games. Players must produce official identification to match their name and signature on the roster.

(16.3) PROTECTED SCRIMMAGE KICK - Both teams must have and maintain at least 4 players within I yard of their line of scrimmage and remain motionless until the kick is made. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

(16.4) PROTECTED KICK MALE RECEIVER - On a free kick down a receiving team male player may advance forward with the ball a maximum of two steps. A male may carry the ball backward or parallel. A female runner only may advance the ball forward. However, after the receiving team has caught the free kick, if there is a subsequent change of team possession, any male or female player may advance the ball. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, spot of the male advance, 5 yards.**

(16.5) MINIMUM LINE PLAYERS - The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.**

(16.6) MALE RUNNER - A male runner cannot advance the ball through the line of scrimmage. There are no restrictions during a run by a male runner once the ball is beyond the line of scrimmage; during a run by a female runner; and after a change of possession. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot.**

(16.7) MALE TO MALE COMPLETION - During the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to Coed only. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion or run must involve a female passer, a female receiver or a female runner for positive yards. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the offensive line of scrimmage.

A. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

B. In all three the penalties cancel and the down is replayed. **EXCEPTION:** If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponents foul(s), other than unsportsmanlike or non-player.

(15.13) Multiple Live Ball Fouls - When 2 or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team, only one penalty may be chosen except when a foul(s) for unsportsmanlike or non-player conduct occurs. In such cases, the penalty/penalties for the unsportsmanlike conduct or non-player fouls are administered from the succeeding spot as a dead ball foul.

(15.14) Multiple Dead Ball Fouls - Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. Dead ball fouls are not coupled with live ball fouls or other dead ball fouls to create double or multiple fouls. Penalize all unsportsmanlike and non-player fouls separately.

Section 16 - Coed Rules Summary

(16.1) THE GAME - The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players, 4 men and 3 women. Six (6) players, 3 men and 3 women, or 4 women and 2 men are needed to avoid forfeit.

(16.2) THE BALL - The intermediate, junior or youth size football will be used.

G. Highest seed will be made home team (or visitor if they chose). If teams have the same seed, home team will be determined by coin flip. Home teams for all championship games will be determined by coin flip.

H. If rainout occurs during a playoff game, the game will be replayed from the point the game was called.

I. During playoffs all protests must be made before the next play.

(1.13) League Standings

A. Current league standings will be posted on the league website at: www.fortlauderdale.gov/cityparks/mills_pond. It is the manager's responsibility to check them for correctness and notify the league commissioner of any errors.

B. Final league standings will be determined at the conclusion of each leagues regular season.

C. All end of regular season ties will be settled by the following tie-breaking system:
   1. Head to head won – loss record, if still tied…
   2. Head to head point differential, if still tied…
   3. Won-loss record versus beat common opponent, if still tied…
   4. Point differential versus best common opponent, is still tied…
   5. Won-loss record versus 2nd best common opponent
   6. Ad infinitum

(1.14) Insurance

Players, managers and spectators are not protected by medical or liability insurance while on Mills Pond property (City of Fort Lauderdale).

(1.15) League/Playoff Awards

A. A team plaque is given for the regular season champion, regular season runner-up and playoff champion.

B. Individual awards (12) are given for regular season and playoff champions.

Section 2 – THE GAME

(2.1) General Rules

A. The game is played 7 on 7 (substitutions are allowed during any dead ball). Six (6) players are required to avoid a forfeit.

B. The game will be played under the supervision of 2 Referees.

C. A speaking captain must be selected to make all decisions and shall be the only one who addresses the officials.

D. Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, and other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game, and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

(2.2) Field Dimensions

The field will be 40 yards in width, and contain four (4) twenty (20) yard zones with a ten (10) yard end zone on each end.

(2.3) Game and Player Equipment (Legal)

A. Football – Men's division will use and official NFL/ College regulation football; Women's division will use an intermediate size football. The teams may use their own football provided it is official size and weight. The referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his/her discretion.

(15.8) Half the Distance - A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.

(15.9) Safety / Goal Line - If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from or behind its goal line which is now the basic spot, it is a safety. For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot that is now the basic spot is on or behind the offended team's goal line any measurement is from the goal line.

(15.10) Foul on a Score - If there is a player foul by the offensive team other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during a down, which results in a successful touchdown or try, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a player *foul* by the defensive team, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during a down, which results in a successful touchdown or try, the penalty is automatically declined.

(15.11) Foul Prior to a Try - When a foul occurs after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play for the try, the enforcement is at the succeeding spot where the ball will be next snapped for the try, usually the three (3) or ten (10) yard line.

(15.12) Double Foul - It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during the same live ball period in which:

A. There is no change of possession.

B. There is a change of possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession.

(15.2) Live Ball Fouls – Any live ball foul is penalized according to the all-but one enforcement principle, except:

A. A foul that occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick is penalized from the previous spot.

B. A non-player foul, unsportsmanlike foul, or dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.

(15.3) Dead Ball Fouls – When a foul occurs during a dead ball either between downs or before a snap or free kick, the officials shall not permit the ball to become live.

(15.4) Establish Zone-line-to-gain - On a live ball foul mark off the penalty yardage first, and then establish the zone line to gain. However, with a dead ball foul, establish the zone line to gain first, and then mark off the penalty yardage.

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

(15.6) Loose Ball Play – If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot either the spot of the snap or the free kick.

(15.7) Running Play – If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends.

B. Spot discs - Two ball spotters (rubber disks) may be used. One will mark the offensive scrimmage line. The second will mark the defensive scrimmage line.

C. Jerseys - Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys.

D. Pants / Shorts - Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), or exposed drawstrings. The pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags.

E. Flag belt - Each player must wear a one-piece belt at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. **Penalty: Dead Ball Foul - Failure to have flag belt legally attached prior to the snap, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.**

F. Gloves - Players may wear gloves, which must consist of a soft, pliable and nonabrasive material.

G. Headwear – Players may wear knit stocking caps, or elastic headbands. Hats with bills must be turned backwards.

H. Shoes – Shoes with cleats must be made of soft pliable plastic or rubber. No exposed metal cleats are permitted. (See illegal player equipment)

(2.4) Game and Player Equipment (Illegal)

A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play until the player removes or replaces the illegal equipment. This applies to any equipment, which, in the opinion of the Referee, is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment or substances, which shall always be declared illegal, include:

A. Headgear containing any hard, unyielding, or stiff material. If it is a billed hat it must be turned backwards.

B. Jewelry.

C. Pads or braces worn above the waist.

D. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats. **Any team found wearing illegal equipment will be penalized 15 yards, and the second warning results in a forfeit.**

E. Shirts or jerseys, which do not remain, tucked in, or any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt, which does not remain tucked in.

F. **Pants or shorts with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket (s) or exposed drawstring(s).**

G. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges overlapped, and any other hard substance is covered with at least 1/2 inch of closed cell slow recovery rubber or other material of similar thickness and physical properties.

H. Towels attached at the player's waist (flag only).

I. An official time out shall be declared to permit prompt repair of equipment, which becomes illegal or defective through use (except for illegal shoes).

Section 3 - DEFINITIONS OF PLAYING TERMS

Catch - A catch is an act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight.

Clipping – Clipping is running or diving into the back, or throwing or dropping the body across the back of the leg or legs of an opponent, or pushing an opponent in the back.

Encroachment - Encroachment is a term to indicate a defensive player is illegally in the neutral zone. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until he/she is on his/her team's side of the neutral zone.

Fair Catch – A signal made by receiving person of a punt in which the receiver cannot run after catching the ball and the ball is immediately down when caught.

Section 14 - Personal Fouls

(14.1) No player shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. No player shall:

A. Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.

B. Trip an opponent.

C. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.

D. Throw the runner to the ground.

E. Hurdle any other player.

F. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.

G. Make any contact with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary of any nature including using fists, locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to Flag Rules.

H. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.

I. Clip an opponent.

J. Tackling the runner.

Section 15 - ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

(15.1) Captain's Choice - When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains. The referee shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him/her the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. A captain's choice of options may not be revoked.

(12.3) When a safety is scored, the ball belongs to the defending team. The offense must kick or punt the ball from the twenty (20) yard line.

Section 13 - CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS

(13.1) Unsportsmanlike Conduct - No player shall commit non-contact acts during a period or intermission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

A. Any acts of unfair play.

B. Using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offense's signals or movements.

C. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player.

D. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player.

(13.2) Dead Ball Player Fouls

A. Intentionally kicking the ball.

B. Spike the ball into the ground.

C. Throw the ball high into the air.

(13.3) Prohibited Acts - There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches or others subject to the Rules. Examples include, but are not limited to:

A. Attempting to influence a decision by a referee.

B. Disrespectfully addressing a referee.

C. Indicating objections to an referee's decision.

D. Holding an unauthorized conference, or being on the field illegally.

E. Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.

F. Intentional physical contact against a game referee during the game by persons subject to the rules.

Foul – A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is assessed.

Fumble - A fumble is a loss of player possession other than by handing passing or kicking the ball.

Goal Line – Each goal line is a vertical plane separating the end zone from the field of play. The plane of goal extends beyond the sideline.

Hurdling - Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over a player who is on his/her feet.

Interception - A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble in flight is an interception.

Live Ball - A pass or fumble, which has not yet touched the ground, is a live ball in flight and therefore can be caught and advanced by either team.

Neutral Zone - The neutral zone is the area between the offensive and defensive line of scrimmage that has been established by the spot cone markers and extends to each sideline. It is established when the ball is ready for play.

Pass (Forward and Backward) - A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. A backward pass that hits the ground is ruled the same as a fumble. It will be dead at the spot where it strikes the ground.

Penalty – A penalty is a loss imposed by rule upon a team that has committed a foul.

Protective Scrimmage Kick – A punt in which prohibits either team from advancing beyond their scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked.

Punting - A punt is kicking the ball by a player who drops it and kicks it before it hits the ground.

Screen Blocking - Screen Blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without initiating contact with him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body.

Tagging - Tagging is placing one hand anywhere between the shoulders and knees of an opponent with the ball. The tagger may leave his/her feet to make the tag. Pushing, striking, slapping, and holding are not permitted. If a player trips the runner in his/her attempt to make a diving tag, it is a penalty.

Tripping – Tripping is the use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent, including the runner, below the knee.

Section 4 – *PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, SUBSTITUTIONS*

(4.1) Game time is forfeit time.

A. A ten (10) minute automatic grace period will be given for the first game of the evening. The game will then be played assuming the original game time.

B. There will be no grace period for any other scheduled game after the first game on each field.

(4.2) Captains Choice - The home team will have the choice in the either kick or receive the ball, or to defer. Whichever team chooses to kick or receive the ball, the other team chooses the direction.

(4.3) Length of game - Playing Time shall be 48 minutes, divided into two halves of 24 minutes each. The intermission between halves shall be 5 minutes. When overtime is used, there will be a three (3) minute intermission.

(10.3) A touchdown shall be scored when a legal forward pass is completed or a fumble or backward pass is caught behind the opponent's goal line or when a player is legally in possession of the ball and penetrates the vertical plane of the opponent's goal line.

Section 11 - Extra Point Try = 1, 2, or 3 Points

(11.1) An opportunity to score one (I) point from the three (3) yard line or two (2) points from the ten (10) yard line, or three (3) points from the twenty (20) yard line shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown. While time is out there shall be one scrimmage play, unless changed by penalty.

(11.2) The Referee must speak to the field captain, asking him/her whether the try shall be from the three (3), ten (10) or twenty (20) yard line. Once the scoring team makes the choice, he/she may change the decision only by taking a charged team time out.

(11.3) If a double foul occurs during the down, the down shall be replayed. When a distance penalty is incurred by the offense during a successful try, the down will be repeated, if accepted. However, if the offense penalty carries a loss of down, the try has ended and will not be repeated.

Section 12 - Safety = 2 points

(12.1) It is a safety when a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his/her team's possession.

(12.2) A safety is also when an offensive player commits a foul for which the penalty is accepted and the measurement is from the spot of the foul that is in the end zone.

(9.2) Interlock Blocking - Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.

(9.3) Defensive Rush and Use of Hands - Defensive players must attempt to go around the offensive blocker. Defensive players must not use any part of his/her arms, hands, elbows, or any part of the body to contact the offensive player. **Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from previous spot**

(9.4) Defensive Line of Scrimmage – is five (5) yards off the offensive line of scrimmage unless the distance to an offensive first down or touchdown is within five (5) yards. In that case the defensive line will have a short rush situation and will be able to line up on the first down line or the goal line.

Section 10 - SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACKS

(10.1) Mercy Rule

A. If a team is 19 or more points ahead with 2 minutes to go in the second half, the game shall be officially called.

B. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more the game shall end at that point.

C. The teams can still play if they want. (Service to participate)

(10.2) All touchdowns are 6 points. If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9.

(4.4) Shortened Periods - Before the start of the game, playing time may be shortened by mutual agreement of the field captains and the Referee. Anytime during the game, the playing time of any remaining halves may be shortened by mutual agreement of the opposing captains and the Referee.

(4.5) Continuous Clock - The Clock will start when the ball is kicked off. It will run continuously for the first 22 minutes unless it is stopped for:

A. Team time-out (clock resumes on snap of next play)

B. Referee's time-out (clock resumes on official's ready to play whistle)

(4.6) Two (2) Minute Warning - Approximately 2 minutes before the end of each half the Referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in that half. The Official keeping time will announce to the captains the remaining time and status of the clock after every play during the final 2 minutes.

(4.7) Stopped Clock - **During the final two (2) minutes of each half** the clock will stop for the following and resume on the snap of the next play unless otherwise noted:

A. Incomplete Pass

B. Out-of-Bounds

C. Score (touchdown or safety)

D. Team time-out

E. Fair Catch

F. Penalty and administration

G. Referee's Time-out - starts at his/her discretion

H. Touchback

I. Change of Possession

J. Team attempting to conserve time illegally

(4.8) Timing Errors - The Referee shall have the authority to correct obvious timing errors if discovery is prior to the second live ball following the error unless the period had officially ended.

(4.9) Tie Game - In case of a playoff game ending in a tie score, the officials must bring all players and coaches of both teams to the center of the field. They will discuss the tiebreaker procedures and answer all questions prior to the coin toss. After this meeting the field captains will stay while the remaining players and coaches return to their respective sidelines.

A. A coin will be flipped or odd/even choice by the captain will determine the options as in the start of the game. The winner of the toss shall be given the options of offense, defense, or direction. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. Each overtime period begins with a coin toss or odd/even choice.

B. ALL OVERTIME PERIODS ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE.

C. Unless moved by penalty, each team will start 1st and goal from the twenty (20) yard line. The object will be to score a touchdown. An overtime period consists of one possession by each team. If the score is still tied after one period, they will go to a second period or as many as needed to determine a winner. If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, the opponent still has a chance to win the game. If the defense intercepts the pass or fumble and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will belong to the defense, as the offense did not convert their chance. They must convert to win or another period starts. Each team in entitled to one time-out per overtime period.

A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt. **Penalty: Defensive Holding, 10 yards from spot**

(8.3) Flag Guarding - A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. A player may use a spin move, however; must keep their arms away from their flag to avoid flag guarding. **Penalty: Flag guarding, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty.**

(8.4) Face Guarding - A defensive player may not use their arms and hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver's view of the ball. **Penalty: Face guarding, 10 yards, automatic first down.**

(8.5) Stiff Arm - A runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with an extended hand or arm which includes the use of a "stiff arm" to flag guard. **Penalty: Stiff Arm, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty**

(8.6) Helping the runner - A player shall not grasp, pull, push or aid any teammate runner. **Penalty: Helping the Runner, 5 yards from spot of the penalty.**

Section 9 – Blocking & Defensive Line of Scrimmage

(9.1) Offense Blocking - The offensive blocking shall take place without contact. The blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive block is illegal. **Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty**

Section 8 - Running and Flag Belt Removal

(8.1) Flag Belt Removal - When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred. The spot of the ball is determined by the location of the ball by the player that was deflagged.

A. **Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged.**

B. When a runner loses his/her flag belt, accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one -hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees.

C. In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play.

D. A defensive player intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. The official shall warn the team, any further penalty will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct.

E. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal.

F. A player may leave his/her feet when trying to remove the flag.

(8.2) Contact - In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands.

D. **Penalties -** The offense should be awarded a new series of 4 downs when the penalty for defensive pass interference or roughing the passer is accepted. Dead ball fouls following a successful try will be penalized from the succeeding spot.

(4.10) Time-Outs – Each team is entitled to two (2) charged timeouts per half.

A. The Referee shall declare time-out when he/she suspends the play for any reason. Each time-out shall be charged either to the Referee or one of the teams.

B. **The Referee shall declare an official's time-out when a team is illegally conserving time and administer a five-yard penalty.**

C. The Referee may declare an official's time-out for any contingency not covered elsewhere by the Rules.

D. **Coach-Referee Conference** - When a team requests a charged time-out for a misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule, the Referee will confer with the league commissioner and team captain or coach. The request must be made prior to the time the ball becomes alive following the play to be reviewed unless the period has officially ended. At the end of the half the team has until the first snap of the second half to protest.

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

(4.11) Delay of Game - The ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or inaction by either team, which tends to prevent this, is a delay of game. This includes:

A. Failure to snap or free kick within 25 seconds after the ball is ready for play.

B. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.

C. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.

(4.12) Unfair Tactics - The Referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever, in his/her opinion, either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by tactics obviously unfair. **Penalty: Delay of Game, 5 yards from previous spot.**

(4.13) Substitutions - No substitute shall enter during a down. All substitutions must enter the game during a dead ball.

Section 5 - SERIES OF DOWNS, NUMBER OF DOWN & THE TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

(5.1) Each team receives four (4) downs to pass the zone-line-to-gain or end zone.

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

1. If one foot first lands in-bounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception although a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.
2. A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception.

J. A player may, while jumping in the air to attempt a catch, tip the ball forward provided he/she has not touched the ground yet.

(7.4) Pass Interference - Contact that interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the line of scrimmage is pass interference unless it occurs when 2 or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged/tagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage.

A. Offensive Pass Interference - after the ball is snapped, and until a receiver has touched it, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the line of scrimmage. **Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from previous spot, loss of down**

B. Defensive Pass Interference - after the pass is thrown, and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the line of scrimmage while the ball is in flight. **Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference, ball placed at the spot of the foul, automatic first down.**

(7.5) Roughing the passer – Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into the passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown, also there should be no attempts to hit the player's arm during a throwing motion. **Penalty: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards, automatic first down**

(7.3) Passing and Receiving

A. There is **no diving** while running with the ball. A receiver may dive to catch a ball. A defensive player may dive to try to remove a flag.

B. A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at anytime except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or to avoid being deflagged/tagged.

C. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the last team in possession unless lost on downs.

D. A backward pass or fumble that goes out-of -bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out-of -bounds spot. If out-of bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.

E. If an offensive player fumbles the ball prior to reaching the end zone and the ball lands in the end zone, the offensive team shall retain possession at the spot of the fumble.

F. All players are eligible to catch a pass.

G. A forward pass is illegal:
   1. If the passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage.
   2. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.

H. If a team advances the ball across the line of scrimmage by laterals or runs, they cannot lateral the ball behind the line of scrimmage for a forward pass attempt.

I. If a player attempts a catch or intercept while in the air, the player must contact the ground inbounds with the ball in his/her possession prior to touching out-of-bounds, unless an opponent's contact causes him/her to first touch out-of- bounds.

(5.3) A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the opponents moves the ball into the next zone; or an accepted penalty against the opponents involves an automatic first down; or either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, free kick, protected scrimmage kick, touchback, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.

(5.4) If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated. Exception: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul was not prior to the final change of possession and it declines all penalties for its opponent's fouls, other than unsportsmanlike.

Section 6 - KICKING THE BALL AND FAIR CATCH

(6.1) Protected Scrimmage Kick

A. Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the Referee must ask the offense if he/she wants a protected kick (punt). The Referee must communicate this decision to the defensive captain and the other officials.

B. The offense must have all field players (typically 6) except the punter on the line of scrimmage. The defense must have at least 4 players on the scrimmage line. All players on the line of scrimmage must remain motionless until the kick is made. A line player may not raise his/her arms to distract the kicker or block the kick. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

C. The kicker must be at least 5 yards behind the scrimmage line when receiving the snap. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion.

D. Any kick caught by the kicking team behind the line of scrimmage cannot be advanced.

(6.2) Fair Catch

A. Any receiver may signal for a fair catch while any kick is in flight and is beyond the kicker's free kick line.

B. If any receiver gives a valid signal for a fair catch and catches the kick beyond the kicker's line and between the goal lines, it is a fair catch and the ball becomes dead.

C. After a valid fair catch signal by any member of the receiving team, no receiver may advance the ball. When receiving a protected kick the receiver may call for a fair catch. The player must signal intention by extending one arm above his/her head and waving laterally from side to side more than once.

D. An invalid fair catch signal is any signal by a receiver before the kick is caught or recovered that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal or after the kick has touched a receiver or the ground.

E. The player on the receiving team must catch the ball cleanly. If the ball touches the player or if the player fumbles the ball and it hits the ground the ball will be dead at the spot the ball touches the ground.

Section 7 - SNAPPING, HANDLING, PASSING, RECEIVING, RUNNING THE BALL

(7.1) Prior to the Snap

A. Following the ready for play and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or in any other way interfere with them. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals, or shifting through the zone. After the snapper has placed his/her hands on the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball. **Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Encroachment, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

B. The snapper, after assuming position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play until it is snapped. An infraction of this provision may be penalized, whether or not the ball is snapped, and the penalty for any resultant encroachment or contact foul by an opponent shall be cancelled.

(7.2) Position and Action during the Snap

A. The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot**

B. One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line. **Penalty: Illegal Motion, 5 yards from previous spot**

C. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot**

D. In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, arms for at least one full second before the snap. **Penalty: Illegal Motion, 5 yards from previous spot**