



Youth Football Rule Book

This rule book outlines the playing rules for Youth Football, a limited-contact 9-on-9 (or 8v8) football game that incorporates soft-shelled helmets and shoulder pads. For any rules not specifically addressed below, refer to the NFHS rule book.

Team Size and Groupings

- Each team has 9 or 8 players on the field depending on final numbers (9v9 or 8v8).
- A team can play with as low as six if it chooses, losing eligible receivers on offense and non-linemen on defense.
- If a team has less than six players, it will automatically forfeit the game. However, the opposing coach may lend players in order to allow the game to be played as a scrimmage. The officials will call the game as if it were a regular game.
- Divisions will likely be as follows:
 - 4th & 5th graders - Elementary age division will use a Junior size football
 - 6th - 8th graders - Middle School division will use a Jr/Youth size football, up to the coach
 - 9th - 12th graders. - High School division will use a youth/official size, up to the coach

Required/Recommended Equipment

- The league will provide game day footballs at the start of the season.
- Matching team uniforms provided by the league/team must be worn for games.
- Molded Mouth guards approved soft shell helmets and soft-shell shoulder pads are mandatory and must be readily visible to the game official.
- Equipment may not be used in an offensive manner; (refer to unnecessary roughness section).
- Cleats are required (no metal cleats or metal spikes)
- In the case of inter-divisional games, each team will use the ball appropriate for its division when on offense. There are currently no plans to have inter-divisional games.

Banned Equipment

- Metal spikes; hard casts; unapproved soft shell shoulder pads or soft-shell helmets; baseball caps of any kind; jewelry: including rings, necklaces and watches.
- Scrum caps, karate helmets, headbands or any other non-approved helmet is not allowed.
- Beanies and skull caps/wraps are permitted **under helmet**.
- Wearing any banned equipment on the field results in a delay of game penalty.
- Players wearing banned equipment are not allowed back onto the field until the banned equipment is removed.



Coaches

The following applies to all coaching staffs:

- All coaches will have a background check completed through Fruit Cove Baptist Church.
- Non-coaching parents are **not** allowed on the team area of the sidelines except as volunteer down marker holders.
- Each coach is expected to read and understand all stated rules in this booklet. Any questions should be directed to the League Commissioner/SportsLife Pastor
- **All football personnel and coaches** will abide by the Upward Circle of Affirmation and exhibit a Christlike Code of Conduct. Any violation of these rules can result in being asked to leave the property and/or expulsion of coaching privileges.
- If any coach deliberately and flagrantly violates these rules, the league may suspend the coach without prior notice.
- The head coach shall identify himself during the pre-game meeting by accompanying his team.
- The head coach has final responsibility for his/her actions as well as those of his/her assistant coaches, players, staff and parents.
- When a head coach of record is not present at a game, the assistant coach will act as head coach.
- The head coach on the field is the only person allowed to speak to a game official. At the game official's discretion, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty can be called on other coaches if they continually attempt to speak to a game official during the game.
- All coaches are to be respectful to each other, players, parents, and game officials before, during and after games.
- The game officials are empowered to eject any coach or parent from a game if that coach or parent is acting unsportsmanlike, using foul language, or is causing a disruption to the game. Swearing at a game official because you do not agree with a call is not acceptable and will not be permitted.
- We typically do not have the above-mentioned actions happening as a regular part of our leagues. However, they do need to be stated, with their appropriate consequences, to be clear with all involved.
- Thank you to each of our veteran coaches who season in, and season out make it a joy to minister to our community through sports.



Coaches on the Field/in the huddle - optional

- For the 4th/5th division, a maximum of 1 coach per team is allowed in the huddle for the first two games of the season.
- No coaches are allowed in the huddle for the Middle & High School divisions.
- Unless helping a younger, inexperienced athlete into proper position, these coaches shall remain a minimum of 10 yards behind all participating players after approaching the line of scrimmage.
- Once the team has broken the huddle, coaches on the field cannot talk except to assist players getting into correct position. On-field coaches must be silent once the quarterback begins his cadence.
- The above rule does not apply to coaches on the sideline.
- If in the opinion of the game official, the coach continues to give instructions once the QB begins his cadence or the coach becomes verbally involved in the play in any way, a warning will be issued. Upon the second infraction, a 5-yard penalty shall be assessed.
- If in the opinion of the game official, the coach on the field makes no attempt to avoid an oncoming player or otherwise avoid interfering with a play or deliberately causes interference, a 10-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be issued, and that coach will not be allowed on the field for the remainder of the game. Another coach must replace him. If no coach is present, the coach must assist from the sideline.
- If accidental or unavoidable contact (in the officials' judgment) occurs in such a manner that it affects the outcome of the play, it will immediately be blown dead and the down replayed.
- Contact by a player with an official will not result in a stoppage of play.

Down marker

The following shall apply to down marker responsibilities:

- It is the responsibility of the home team to supply down marker volunteers, though volunteers can come from either side if necessary.
- Down markers can be sticks or cones but must accurately mark 10 yards.
- At minimum, this duty must consist of one volunteer who places the first-down marker cone 10 yards ahead as the line-to-gain and then marks the line of scrimmage with the down box.
- The volunteers are considered part of the game official's crew. As such, they can cheer politely and engage in normal sideline conversation but must not speak negatively about players, coaches or officials and must defer to the game official for all decisions made.



Game officials

- The National Federation of State High School Associations rule book serves as the foundation for all rules and penalties unless specified otherwise in this booklet.
- Game officials will be provided by the league. If a league does not designate a head game official for the game, the game officials will determine pregame which of them will serve that role.
- There will be a minimum of two (2) game officials provided per game, though three or more is suggested, especially for older ages once passing is more prevalent.
- Game officials are instructed to identify to coaches the player who commits a penalty by name, number, or position on the field.
- Game officials have the final say on-field for all matters and will apply all rules to maintain safety.
- The game officials are to be treated as professionals. If coaches have a concern with the conduct of any game official, they are to notify the League Commissioner/SportsLife Pastor.
- Game officials are expected to have the rule book in hand no later than two weeks before the start of the season and are expected to know its contents.
- Game officials are expected to have all necessary equipment, which includes a penalty flag, bean bag, whistle, stopwatch, and notepad.
- The head game official is suggested to note each flagrant foul by a player's name or number for tracking records.
- The head game official also is suggested to write down and report any other pertinent information regarding a coach, player or parent of a team who has committed an infraction that infringes on the sanctity of the game.

Coin toss

- Before the game, the game officials will gather all players and coaches near the center of the field for the pre-game meeting. Both head coaches must accompany the players and identify themselves to the game officials.
- No game will begin before the scheduled time unless both coaches are present and in agreement, regardless of when the previous game ends.
- Possession will begin with the Visiting Team and therefore the Home Team will start with the ball in the 2nd half. If there is an Overtime, possession will be decided by a coin toss.
 - If the winner of the coin flip defers, the loser of the flip must choose to begin on offense.
- The team that starts on defense selects which end it will defend.



Game and play clock

1. 20-minute halves. 5-10 minute halftime. There is a running clock that only stops for injuries/player safety, timeouts and dead balls in accordance to NFHS rule books that occur within the final two minutes of the game.
2. If no scoreboard is present, the head game official – or a fellow official he designates during pregame – is the official timekeeper and scorekeeper.
3. Each team is entitled to 1 one-minute timeout per half. The clock restarts on the snap following any team time out.
4. A 30-second play clock is enforced with the play clock beginning following the spot of the ball and at the head game official's signal.
5. Dead balls that stop the clock within the final two minutes are: incomplete passes, any play that ends out of bounds, scoring plays, change of possession, timeouts. The clock will also stop for all injury timeouts and official timeouts, restarting at the head officials ready to play signal. Penalty clock stoppages are held in accordance to NFHS rules. The clock is also stopped for the entirety of extra point tries within the final two minutes.
6. **If a team is winning by 12 or more points, they will play with one less player on defense. This will help keep the game competitive. Once the lead is within 11 points, then the player can be added again on defense.**
7. If a team is losing by 21 or more points within the final two minutes, the clock does not stop for any reason other than timeouts, injury timeouts and official timeouts. If the losing team scores to create a deficit of 20 or fewer, normal timeout rules apply.

Substitutions and injured players

- Free substitutions are always in effect between plays.
- All players should appear in each half and should play at least 25% of the game.
- If the offense subs in, the defense must have a chance to sub before the snap is allowed.
 - If the official delays the snap to allow the defense time to match the substitution, the delay of game penalty shall not be called on the offense.
 - If, however, the official determines the offense is substituting late to run additional time off the clock, a delay of game penalty can be assessed.
- If an injured player remains down on the field, struggles to leave the field, or needs assistance, the official will signal for the clock to stop. The play clock and game clock both restart upon the player leaving the field, the ball being set and both sides being ready to play.

Procedure for injured players

- If any game official stops play for an injured player or players to be checked/assisted, the injured player must leave the field for at least one play. A team may not “buy” a player back into the game through use of a time out.
- Head injuries. Any player who receives a head injury – whether a concussion, contusion, cut or other – during practice, pregame warm-ups or in-game is not allowed to return to play until cleared by a qualified medical professional.

GAMEPLAY

- There are no kickoffs. Play starts at the offensive team's "20" yard line.
- There are 9 (or 8) players on each side of the ball, including a center and 2 guards on offense.
 - Unbalanced lines are not allowed. One guard must be on either side of the center.
- Four players are required on the line of scrimmage with either tight ends or split ends joining the three linemen. At least one player must be on the line on each side of the center.
- All players, except for the center, must be in a 2-point stance.
- The three players who line up at center or guard cannot receive hand-offs nor be the initial touch on a pass. They may, however, catch tipped passes, at which point the play is blown dead.
- The quarterback may take a direct snap from under center or in the shotgun position.
- All fumbles – defined as a loose ball touching the ground – are blown dead with the team last in possession retaining possession at that spot.

Passing

- A forward pass that falls incomplete returns to the line of scrimmage.
- A lateral pass that is thrown behind or in front of the line of scrimmage and touches the ground is blown dead and returned to the spot where the ball touched the ground.
- A pass is determined to be forward or lateral based on the direction it travels, not by how it is delivered (i.e., overhand, underhand, side arm, etc.).
- The quarterback may spike the ball to stop the clock within the final two minutes of the game, providing all offensive players are set. If players are not set, an illegal procedure penalty is enforced and the clock restarts on setting the ball.
- **Intentional grounding includes any pass in which an eligible receiver is not in the immediate area of where the ball is thrown, whether the quarterback is inside or outside of the pocket.**

Receiving

- Only eligible receivers and a quarterback who has first handed the ball off or thrown a legal lateral pass can be the initial receiver on a forward pass.
- Players must get one foot down in bounds for a completed pass.
- If an offensive and defensive player catch a ball simultaneously and forward progress is stopped, the ball is declared dead at that spot and awarded to the offense. No flag pull is required.
- The three players lined up at center and guard may not catch a forward pass unless it is first touched by an eligible receiver or defensive player. If an ineligible receiver does take possession of a forward pass – legal or illegal – the play is blown dead at that spot.



Blocking

- Lead blocking on all runs is allowed.
- Pulling offensive linemen is allowed, and all blocking rules apply.
- **When engaging a block, the blocker must come to balance and all initial contact must be made with the hands.**
- Landing on or piling on any player on the ground results in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- **Blocking by initiating or leading with head, elbows, forearms, knees or shoulders – anything but the hands, will result in a charging penalty.**
- Blocking below the waist, cut blocks, clipping and any blindside crack back blocks – by the offense or defense – are assessed appropriate penalties and result in an automatic ejection as determined by the game officials. A player who is blocked into a low block may continue to play in the game if the officials see extenuating circumstances.

Running

- The QB is allowed to run for a pass beyond the line of scrimmage after a pitch or hand off.
- If the QB who received the center exchange, hands off/laterals to another player and (in the game official's opinion) attempts to double pass, the non-QB player now attempting to throw the ball will be viewed as the new QB.
- Immediate QB sneaks in the A gap are not allowed – even with a blitzing defender.

Pre-Snap Alignment

- The offensive team must have five (or 4 if 8v8) players on the line of scrimmage at the point of the snap – three linemen and one eligible receiver on each side of the field aligned on the ball.
- **Both guards must line up within both players outstretched arms' reach of the center. The two eligible receivers can be tight or split at the coach's decision.**
- All motion and shift rules apply as outlined in the NFHS rule books.
- The defensive alignment rules are as follows
 - **No defender can align directly over the center or in the A gap.**
 - **The two defensive linemen must be aligned with the outside shoulder of the offensive lineman.** If there is a tight end, then he can lineup anywhere from the outside of the tight end to the outside shoulder of the lineman. For example, a defensive lineman can line up on the tight end. If a tight end shifts outside prior to the snap, the defensive player must also shift to at least the outside shoulder of the guard.
 - The defensive team may choose any alignment but must have two players on the line of scrimmage within the tackle box.
 - It is SUGGESTED that in the younger age groups: The two defensive linemen raise their hands as they line up to indicate that they are the eligible rushers and the only ones who can cross the line of scrimmage without triggering the QB run rule.

First Downs

- The offense has up to four (4) plays to reach a 10-yard first down by run, pass or penalty.
- On a series beginning from or inside the defensive 10-yard line, the offense can only achieve a first down through penalty.
- Any penalty that results in a first down starts a new set of downs with a new line to gain.

Touchdowns and Scores

- When a ball carried by an offensive player breaks the plane of the defensive team's end zone or an offensive player gains control of the ball in the defensive team's end zone, it is considered a touchdown.
- Extra point tries are attempted following all touchdowns with one (1) point from the 3-yard line and two (2) points from the 5-yard line.
- The clock continues to run during extra points unless the touchdown comes in the final two minutes of the game with teams within a 20-point margin.
- If a touchdown is scored as time runs out in the first or second half, the conversion will still take place as an untimed down.

Scoring values

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Safety = 2 points
- PAT, game official will ask if the scoring team will go for 1 or 2 extra points.
- If the offensive team elects to go for 1, the ball will be placed on the 3-yard line.
- If the offensive team elects to go for 2, the ball will be placed on the 5-yard line.
- All rules apply during an extra point the same they do during a regular play.
- **In the event of a penalty on an extra point, the offense cannot change its decision to go for 1 point or 2.**
- In the event of an interception or a fumble caught on the fly during a point-after try, the ball is blown dead. **There is no return for 2 points.**

Safety

- A safety is defined as the ball moving into the end zone of the offensive team and then downed, or where the ball goes out of bounds within the end zone with the offense having last possession, or a penalty on the offense while in the end zone.
- Two points are awarded for a safety.

Ties

- During the regular season, the organization has the option to proceed with either of the following if the score is tied at the end of regulation:
 - A tie will be entered into the standings.
 - Play an overtime period.
- During the postseason, if the score is tied at the end of regulation time, overtime periods will be played until a winner is declared.
- Leagues also can set a limit on the number of overtimes allowed during a regular-season game.

Over time

- A coin toss is used to determine who gets the ball first. The coin toss winner chooses offense or defense.
- The ball is placed at the defensive team's 10-yard line.
- Overtime is structured as **3 plays** per team (no 1st downs) with both teams getting the chance to answer if within the same series
- **There are no timeouts, and none carry over from regulation.**
- **If a team turns the ball over or runs out of downs, the possession is over.**
- **The defense can return a turnover (turnover rules apply) for a touchdown. However, if downed before scoring, the resulting series begins back at the 10-yard line.**
- **As in regulation, extra point attempts may not be returned for points by the defense.**
- Both teams get possession of the ball with the team scoring more points declared the winner. If the score remains tied at the end of overtime, the teams can play another overtime.
- For all overtimes beyond the first, teams simply alternate possession and remain on the same side of the field. (AB-BA) There is no second coin flip.
- This process is repeated with teams having equal chances to score until a tie no longer exists after a complete series of AB or BA.
- League Leadership reserves the right to cap the number of overtimes at their discretion.

Blitzing/rushing rule

- **Only the Defensive Ends can cross the LOS on the snap. LBs and DBs must not cross the LOS until the ball has left the QBs hands.**
- Blitzing is defined as any predetermined penetration by a linebacker or defensive back.
- **Blitzer/rusher must use hands and feet to defeat the block to either side of the blocker.**
- **Blitzer/rusher cannot throw or purposefully push blocker into the ground or into the ball- carrier.**
- There is no bull rushing. The blitzer/rusher must rush the inside or outside part of a blocker's body and is not allowed to rush through the centerline of the blocker.
- These rules are judgment calls by the game official.

Center

- The center must snap the ball between his/her legs. The snap must be continuous, meaning it must pass directly and immediately from the center to another player on offense.
- Center must have both feet behind the scrimmage line with no part of his/her body beyond the forward tip of the ball.
- The center can double-team block alongside another player but must initiate a block with hands, and all blocking rules apply.



Jumping and spinning

- **Players may not dive for the end zone or to gain additional yardage. This is unnecessary roughness.**
- Players may not attempt short yardage "over the pile" jumps. This is unnecessary roughness.
- Any player who jumps illegally and lands on another player will be flagged for unnecessary roughness.
- A player may dive to catch a pass but is down upon reception.
- Quarterbacks can jump when throwing the ball.
- Players may spin, as long the motion is continuous and at least one foot stays on the ground at all times.

Turnovers: Fumbles, dead balls, and interceptions

- All fumbles are considered dead balls as soon as the ball hits the ground.
- If the ball hits the ground behind the player who fumbled it, the ball is placed at the point it first hits the ground.
- **If the ball hits the ground in front of the player, the ball is placed at the point the player lost possession.**
- **A fumbled ball may be recovered in the air and advanced by either team.**
- An interception can be advanced by the intercepting team.
- **A player may not strip anyone of the ball. Anyone making intentional contact with the ball while it is being carried causing the ball to be fumbled will be called for stripping, a 5-yard penalty.**

Ball spotting

- Spotting the ball is at the game officials' judgment. It is up to the game officials to try and be near the spot whenever possible.
- Ball will be spotted where the ball is held when a player is downed.

A gap

- The A gap is the area between the center and the guards.
- **Defenders on the line of scrimmage cannot line up directly over the center and may not immediately engage the center.**
- **The defense cannot blitz the A gap from the line of scrimmage.**
- Attempts at a center sneak by the offense is penalized as an A gap violation.
- See A gap violation under penalties section.



PENALTIES

- Any penalties not covered below are to follow NFHS rules – based on your state’s guidelines.
- The team not committing the foul gets to choose between the result of the play or the enforcement of the penalty.
- If both teams commit fouls on the same play, they offset, and the down is replayed.
 - An odd number of fouls with more being assessed on one team will still offset and result in replay of down
- A live-ball foul on the offense is marked off from the spot of the penalty.
- A live-ball foul on the defense is marked off from the spot of the penalty, the original line of scrimmage or the end of the play, whichever benefits the offense the most.
- No penalty may move the ball more than half the distance toward the penalized team's goal line. When penalty yardage is greater than the distance to the goal, the maximum penalty is half the distance to the goal line.
- **A half cannot end on a penalty that is accepted. If the penalty is accepted, it is marked off and a single untimed down is played. If the penalty is declined, the half is over.**
- A first down will be determined after the ball is spotted at the end of a play and any applicable penalty yardage is assessed. Net yardage (forward progress plus/minus penalty yardage) must be sufficient to be awarded a first down.
- No penalty will be enforced within the offensive team’s 5-yard line. On an unsuccessful or successful offensive play from within the 5-yard line resulting in an offensive penalty, the ball will be returned to the 5-yard line and the line to gain is extended 5 yards.
 - An exception to this rule is if the penalty takes place in the end zone, in which case a safety is awarded upon accepting it.
- EOP – End of Play
- LOS – Line of Scrimmage
- POI – Point of Infraction

NOTE: All dangerous and flagrant fouls carry with them automatic first downs or loss of downs in addition to the penalty yardage.



****Flagrant fouls** (starred)**

- A player committing a flagrant foul – including an unsportsmanlike conduct, intentional tackling, or unnecessary roughness penalty with malice – will receive a warning from the head game official and ejected upon a second flagrant foul. If the first act is determined to be severe, the head game official has the option to eject the player without the warning.
- All flagrant fouls that do not result in an ejection will be accompanied by a substitution from the field for at least one play to allow the coaches to address the situation and calm down any tempers.
- It is recommended that the league track players who commit flagrant fouls on a per game basis. The head game official will mark down on paper the guilty player (by name, number and/or team) and will turn in the information to the league director, commissioner, or appropriate staff member.
- The head game official's decision on flagrant fouls are final.
- The safety of all players is the primary concern of the league. Game officials shall call unnecessary roughness when any player uses excessive force or violence during a play – even if the play is technically within the rules.

***Intentional tackling**

Defense – The ball placed at the defense's 5-yard and an automatic first-and-goal.

- Intentional tackling defined: Intentionally wrapping up to stop forward progress while taking the ball-carrier to the ground; shoulder checking/hit with the intent of knocking the ball-carrier to the ground. It is the game officials' discretion on any other attempt to use excessive force by a player to initiate a tackle.
- **An automatic touchdown will be given to the team if a player is running and judged to be free with no defenders between him/her and the end zone and is deliberately tackled, tripped, or restrained by clothing grab by a pursuing player or by an individual associated with the defensive team who comes onto the field.**
- Not intentional tackling: unintentional contact resulting in a player falling to the ground.
- **If anyone (player, coach, parent, etc.) comes off the sideline to interfere with a breakaway, then a TD will be given to the team and the player, coach, parent, etc., will be ejected.**



***Unnecessary Roughness**

Offense -10 yards, loss of down

Defense - 10 yards, automatic first down.

- The safety of all players is the primary concern. Game officials shall call unnecessary roughness when any player uses excessive force or violence during a play, **even if the play is technically within the rules.**
- **All players are expected to play “in control” at all times. Players are in violation of the unnecessary roughness rule when they risk injury to themselves or to other players because of unsafe or out-of-control conduct on the field.**
- Examples include but are not limited to head butting, head slapping, throwing elbows or forearms and intentionally hitting, kicking, or tripping other players. It is the game officials’ discretion on whether these fouls elevate to flagrant fouls. Repeated or flagrant violations may result in the player being ejected from the game.
- A player may never lead with his or her head or initiate contact to the head.
- Unnecessary and overly violent contact that includes charging, bull rushing, and purposefully shoving a player to the ground will be considered unnecessary roughness.

*** Charging (offense) - unnecessary roughness**

10 yards, loss of down

- **When a ball-carrier intentionally runs into a defender, lowers his/her shoulder, or makes unnecessary contact with defender to cause bodily harm.**
- When an offensive player intentionally runs through or over a defensive player with a running start.
- When an offensive player intentionally engages a block with his shoulder with no attempt to come to balance and initiate the block first with open hands.

*** Bull rushing (defense) - unnecessary roughness**

10 yards - automatic first down

- **When a defender intentionally uses his/her momentum or excessive force to bull rush through the centerline of an offensive player. Defender must make the appropriate effort to go around or to a leveraged side of the blocker.**



* **Ejection**

Any two (2) flagrant foul infractions by an individual player in one game or multiple single infractions across several games may result in further action, including suspension from future games or ejection from the league, subject to the league's discretion.

- The ejection process will also apply to coaches and any parents/spectators on the field or in the stands who encourage players to act in an unsportsmanlike manner.
- **Any player who strikes another player or is involved in a fight will be immediately ejected from the game and be suspended indefinitely pending a ruling from the League Commissioner/SportsLife Pastor.**
- Before a player can be ejected from a game, all game officials must confer and unanimously agree. NOTE: Only the head coach or coach on the field may speak to the game officials. If a player or coach contests a call or says anything to a game official that the head game official feels is inappropriate, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called. The game officials are empowered to eject any coach if the foul is deemed excessive.
- If a coach is ejected, the individual cannot enter the field of play for the rest of the game. The individual may be required to leave the premises if he or she becomes disruptive.
- Depending on the situation, the on-field staff has full discretion to take up the chain of command and may request for the LD/commissioner/president or higher-level staff member to be involved.

GENERAL RULES

Roughing the passer

Defense – 10 yards

Defenders may raise arms while rushing the passer so long as no contact is made with the passer. Excessive contact with passer before, during or after throwing the ball including but not limited to:

- Rushing the passer and running into him.
- Making contact with the passer's head and/or shoulders/throwing arm.

Unsportsmanlike conduct

Offense - 10 yards

Defense - 10 yards

All players, head, and assistant coaches are expected to follow the codes of conduct.

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to:

- **Verbal abuse, profanity, taunting.**
- **Constant or repeated audible criticism of the game officials.**

Game officials can eject any player, coach or spectator who violates this rule repeatedly or egregiously.



Pass interference

Offense – 10 yards from LOS

Defense – 10 yards from LOS

- In addition to normal pass interference rules, any significant physical contact after the ball arrives shall be considered unnecessary roughness. After the ball has been caught any additional attempts to dislodge it will be considered illegal stripping.
- Either receiver or defender pushing off while the ball is in the air.
- Intentionally running into a defender without the ball on a passing play.

Taunting

Offense - If occurring on touchdown, a 10-yard penalty will be assessed on the extra point try. If occurring in the field a play, a 10-yard penalty will be enforced.

Defense - 10 yards.

- Any flagrant acts or remarks that deride, mock, or bait an opponent are considered taunting.
- Celebration, whether communal or individual, is allowed if it does not fall under “Taunting” definition.



Illegal blocking

Offense – 10 yards

- When an offensive player intentionally drives or “pancakes” the defender with which he is engaged. Severity could result in an unnecessary roughness and/or a flagrant foul.
- Landing or piling on a defender/player on the ground.
- Chip blocking, elbowing and knee blocking.
- Blocking by initiating or leading with elbows, forearms, or shoulders - severity may result in a charging penalty or flagrant foul/unnecessary roughness.
- A crack back or any block on a defenseless defender falls under unnecessary roughness and can result in ejection if determined as intentional.

Delay of game

5 yards

- In addition to the offense not snapping the ball within the 30 second play clock, this can include:
- Too many players on the field.
- Not wearing required equipment during a play.
- Defense delays or hinders the offense from making the next snap.

Illegal formation

Offense - 5 yards

Defense - 5 yards

- Fewer than five (or 4 if 8v8) players on the line of scrimmage for offense. These five players must be contiguous with the center. There must be one player on each side of the center (within both players arm’s length of the center) and one eligible receiver on each side of the center.
- Fewer than two players on the line of scrimmage for the defense.
- **Showing blitz directly over the center or aligning any defensive player directly over the center on the LOS.**

Offside

Offense – 5 yards

Defense - 5 yards

- If a defensive player enters the neutral zone before an offensive player commits a false start, the penalty is on the defense, even if no contact is made.
- NOTE: For states following the NFHS rule book, offside is called as soon as a defensive player enters the neutral zone. There is no “getting back.”



Diving

Offense – 5 yards, loss of down

- Diving forward to gain yardage or advance the ball when other players are nearby.
- Diving into the end zone or for a first down when other players are nearby.

A-gap violation

Defense or offense – Live ball foul only. 5 yards from LOS, replay down

- Any non-linemen who makes LOS penetration immediately in the A-gap.
 - A blitz into the A-Gap is allowed if the non-lineman blitzes from at least 3 yards depth. Also, if a defensive lineman is lined up correctly (outside shoulder of the guard) he/she is allowed to shoot the A-Gap from that position.
- Any intentional illegal handoff to an ineligible receiver (offensive lineman).
- Any QB sneak in the A-gap from under center.

Inadvertent whistle

- If a game official blows the whistle prematurely or by mistake, the ball is dead at the spot where the ball-carrier was when the whistle was blown. If the whistle occurs early during a play and the ball-carrier has not crossed line of scrimmage, then the play and down is to be repeated.

STANDINGS

- Standings are not necessary in the 4th/5th grade division as there is no end of season tournament. Middle School and High School Divisions will keep standings when they have four or more teams.
- Standings will be based in order on a) win %, then b) number of wins, then c) head to head, and then d) coin flip (to determine playoff seeding).

The SportsLife Ministry and its leadership reserves the right to modify or change these rules at any time throughout the season.

