

# 2010 IIFA RULE BOOK

Edited and Published by



## Independent Indoor Football Alliance

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# ARTICLE 1 RULES OF THE GAME

## **1.1 The Field:**

- A. Regulation Field:
  - 1) The playing surface should be 50 yards long by 28 yards wide.
  - 2) The end zones should be 8 yards deep.
  - 3) The playing surface can be either an outdoor or indoor facility.
  - 4) The out of bounds shall be defined as 4 inch painted lines. Indoor facility can have either dasher boards or painted sidelines.
  - 5) The field should be marked every 5 yards with lines extending from sideline to sideline.
  - 6) Hash marks are 12 inches in length and begin 5 feet from the center of the field. The hash marks are placed on both sides of the field every five yards perpendicular to the yard line.
  - 7) Goal posts for all outdoor and indoor fields must be ten feet off the ground and ten feet wide and extended at least ten feet high off the crossbar.
  
- B. Team Sidelines:
  - 1) Teams may be on the same or opposite sides of the field. The league recommends that the players are on one side and the fans on the other.
  - 2) There should be a player box painted 2 yards from the sideline and marked between the 20 and 5 yard lines for each team.
  - 3) No players should be outside of the box or fans inside of the box or on the sideline of the teams.
  
- C. Fields Less Than Regulation Size:
  - 1) If the regulation length or width of a field is not available because of a wall, seating or any other object, the field shall be marked as closely as possible to regulation, subject to the approval of the league.

## **1.2 Game Balls:**

- A. IIFA will supply game balls that are approved by the league. Each team is responsible to have enough game balls on hand. The league will not replace any footballs that are given away.

## **1.3 Timing:**

- A. The IIFA plays four 15 minutes quarters.
  
- B. Time shall start when the ball is received at the start of the a half and shall continue until the ball is ruled dead and an official signals to the timekeeper that time shall stop.
  
- C. Halftime shall be 15 minutes in length (exceptions are made for halftime shows that need more time).
  
- D. During normal play, the clock will stop after a score. The point after will be an un-timed down.
  
- E. The clock will stop for all penalties.

- F. The clock will stop at the 2 minute mark in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters and the 9 minute mark in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters if required for TV/Radio time out. The TV/Radio Time out will last for 1 minute.
- G. Time between the 1st and 2nd quarter and between the 3rd and 4th quarter will be 2 minutes.
- H. The clock will stop during the last 2 minutes of each half when there is incomplete pass or a player runs out of bounce.
- I. The clock will stop for any injured player and that player must be sideline for one play unless a timeout is used by either team. If a player is injured within the last 2 minutes of each half, the team with the injured player must use a timeout. If the team with the injured player does not have a timeout, a 10 second runoff of the game clock will occur. However, if the team who has an injured player and is winning the game and there are 10 seconds or less and they have no timeouts, the team with the injured player will be penalized 5 yards and the clock will start at the snap of the ball.
- J. Each team is allowed three timeouts per half. Either a player or coach can signal a timeout to any of the officials. The timeouts will be 1 minute in length and will be timed by the referee. After the timeout, the clock will start at the snap of the ball.
- K. The clock can be stopped within the 2 minutes of each half with a spike of the ball by the QB. The ball must hit the ground first, if the ball hits a lineman, a penalty of illegal touching will be called.
- L. The Referee may stop the clock at any time during the game for an official's timeout.
- M. IIFA will utilize a 25-second play clock that will be kept on field by the Referee. With 10 seconds left on the play clock, the Referee will raise his hand.
- N. After a stopped clock for any reason, the Referee will give the signal to the timekeeper when to start the game clock on the snap of the ball after it was stopped for the following reasons:
  - 1) After a game penalty.
  - 2) Following an official's time-out.
  - 3) Following a team time-out.
  - 4) Following a play during which possession changed in the last two minutes in any half.
  - 5) Following an incomplete legal forward pass in the last two minutes in any half;
  - 6) When a player with the ball is out of bounds in the last two minutes of either half.
- O. If a touchdown is scored on the last play of a period, the period shall be extended to include the point after touchdown attempt.
- P. Goals shall be changed at the end of the first and third periods. At the start of the second and fourth periods the ball shall be put at a point corresponding exactly to the point at the other end of the field where the ball became dead at the end of the previous period. It shall be put into play exactly the same manner as if the play had not been interrupted.
- Q. Ball in Play:
  - 1) The ball shall be considered in play until an official stops the action by sounding his whistle.
  - 2) The game shall not be stopped because of injury of a player until the ball is dead.

- 3) The Referee shall not stop the game to impose a penalty until the ball is dead.
- R. Delay of Game: The game shall not be delayed except by permission of the Referee. Any unauthorized delay shall be subject to a penalty:
- 1) If the Referee finds it necessary to suspend play while a player in the game has repair done to his equipment, that player shall be required to leave the game for a minimum of one play. If the player does not leave the game, the team is charged with a timeout.
  - 2) If the Referee finds it necessary to suspend play while an injured player received medical attention on the field that player shall be required to leave the game for a minimum of one play. If the player does not leave the game, the team is charged with a timeout.
  - 3) On a kickoff, the kicking team shall be required to kick the ball within 25 second of notification by the Referee that play is to commence.
  - 4) If any player interferes with the placement of the ball after the Referee has declared it in play, his team shall be penalized 5 yards. (delay of game)
- S. Forward Progress inside last 2 minutes of each half:
- 1) If the team on offense is ahead in points and does not make at least 1 yard forward progress on any down inside the last 2 minutes of each half, the clock will be stopped as if the run was out of bounds or pass was incomplete. It will be a normal clock for an offensive team that is losing.

#### **1.4 Uniforms:**

- A. All players shall be numbered 1 through 99.
- B. No two players of the same team may participate on the same down with identical numbers.
- C. Numbers may not be changed during the game to deceive the opponents. All such number changes shall be reported to the referee.
- D. Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colors, and all players on a team shall wear jerseys of the same color and design. Jerseys shall cover all pads worn. The jersey must be full length and tucked into the pants or reach the belt line when a player assumes a normal standing position. Any altered jerseys shall be prohibited and players wearing such jerseys shall not be allowed to participate until such jersey is restored to its original condition, in compliance with this rule.
- E. Players may have there surname on the back of their jersey. Players with the same surname should have player's first initial before the surname.
- F. All players of a team shall wear pants of the same color and design.
- G. All players of a team must have matching helmets.
- H. All players, other than a kicker lined up to attempt a free kick or a scrimmage kick, must wear shoes suitable for football. No slippers, boots or any other shoes not designed for football or turf activities may be worn in a game. The umpire is the sole judge of the legality of equipment.

## **1.5 Equipment**

- A. Players do not have to wear pads in their pants.
- B. Helmets and facemasks, commercially manufactured for professional, college or high school football. All players of a team shall wear helmets of the same color and design.
- C. Shoulder pads and tailbone protector must be worn.
- D. Players do not have to use an intra-oral mouth piece.
- E. Any equipment which in the judgment of the umpire would seem to be dangerous to other players is considered illegal and must be taken off.
- F. No hard, abrasive or unyielding substances may be worn on the hand, wrist, forearm or elbow, unless covered with adequate foam padding as approved by the umpire.
- G. No metal or other hard substance may be worn which may be dangerous to the player or his opponent.
- H. Players are not allowed to wear adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to the body or clothing that may affect the ball or an opponent.
- I. Only the quarterback and the center may wear a towel, which must be of reasonable size. The umpire's decision on the size of the towel may not be appealed.
- J. Eye shields of any tint will be allowed.
- K. There shall be no adornment to the uniform, which serves no football purpose. No player shall highlight their appearance.
- L. The umpire is the sole judge of legal and illegal equipment, and may rule on such without appeal.

## **1.6 Rosters**

- A. Each team of the IIFA will be allowed to dress up to 25 players for a game. Each team will be allowed to carry only 5 players on their practice squad.
- B. The 25 players that will dress for the game must be on your active roster and submitted to the league office no later than Friday morning, or the day before the game.
- C. If you want to add a player to your active roster, that player must be on your roster Wednesday before that week's game and you must notify the league office and the other teams through email.
- D. At all times each team must have on the field a player designated as captain, and so identified to the league. All captains will have a patch with the letter C on their jersey that is provided by the league.

## **1.7 Game Officials**

- A. The IIFA will supply four officials that will make up a game day crew. They are a Referee, Umpire, Line Judge and a Head Linesman.
- B. The league will notify the Head Coach of the Home Team the names of their officials one week before game day. Each official must be certified by the IIFA.
- C. Each home team is responsible for the official's safety and pay.
- D. Each home Team must supply a Clock operator and the Clock Operator must meet with the Referee no less than 30 minutes before game time to receive instructions.
- E. The crew should be at the game one hour prior to kickoff and will meet with the head coaches to go over general rules, questions and concerns.
- F. The Referee must report all penalties using hand signals with a verbal call and player numbers of the infraction as well as the team the penalty was committed.
- G. The Line Judge will be responsible of the official game clock and the Referee will keep the 25 second play clock.

## **1.8 Start of Game**

- A. The game shall start promptly according to the published start time.
- B. If a team is late appearing on the field at the start of the first or third periods, the team shall be penalized for delay of game. Penalty 5 yards – first opportunity
- C. The team that hosts the game has the option to introduce the starting lineups for both teams.
- D. It is recommended that each team then will provide the singing or playing of our National Anthem. (7 minutes before kick-off.)
- E. 5 minutes before Kick-off the officials will escort the captains to the center of the field for the coin toss. The referee will toss a coin at midfield in the presence of no more than four field captains from each team. The field captain of the visiting team will call the coin toss. The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:
  - 1) Kicking off or receiving the kickoff
  - 2) Which end of the field to defend
  - 3) Defer choice to second half.
  - 4) The captain of the other team shall have first choice at the start of the second half when both captains shall again meet the officials at center field to inform them of their choices.

## **1.9 Possession**

- A. Possession means having the ball firmly in hand or hands, arm or arms, leg or legs or under the body.
- B. When players of the opposite teams have possession of the ball, it shall belong to the player who first gained possession and who has not lost possession.
- C. If players of both teams legally gain possession of the ball simultaneously it shall belong to the team which last previously had possession.
- D. A ball not in possession of a player is still in play. A ball shall be considered to have been fumbled if the player last in possession has lost control of it.
- E. Lost Possession Out of Bounds
  - 1) When on any play the ball is fumbled out of bounds or touches a player in the field of play and then goes out of bounds, it shall belong to the team, which last possessed the ball in the field of play. If the ball is fumbled backwards then the ball shall next be scrimmaged at the point where the ball went out of bounds. If the ball was fumbled forward, the ball is spotted at the point where the ball was fumbled.
- F. Fumble Out of Bounds in Opponents Goal Area
  - 1) When a player fumbles the ball, other than by kicking, from the field of play over the opponent's goal line and goes out of bounds in the goal area without the ball touching an opponent, it shall be ruled as a touchback.
  - 2) When a player directs the ball, other than by kicking, from the field of play over the opponent's goal line where an opponent recovers it or it is touched by an opponent before going out of bounds in the goal area, there shall be no score and the ball shall be awarded to the opponent's team at its 5-yard line. If in attempting to run the ball out of the goal area the opponent's team commits an infraction the penalty shall be applied from the 5-yard line.
  - 3) If the defense recovers a fumble or intercepts a pass in the end zone and does not forward it outside of the end zone, then they will have possession at the 5-yard line.
- G. Lost Possession Into Own Goal Area
  - 1) When a player fumbles or directs the ball from the field of play into his own goal area, where the ball goes out of bounds without possession being gained by either team, a safety shall be awarded.
- H. Fourth Down Fumble Rule
  - 1) On fourth down, only the offensive player who fumbled the ball may recover and advance the ball for the offense. Any defensive player may still recover and advance a fumble on fourth down.

## **1.10 Dead Ball**

- A. The ball is dead:
  - 1) Whenever a field official blows his whistle;
  - 2) When an official has signaled a score;
  - 3) When the ball goes out-of-bounds;
  - 4) When a forward pass is declared incomplete;

- 5) When a kicked ball strikes the opponent's goal post assemble in flight, without first touching the ground, a player or an official and is ruled no good;
- 6) When the ball carrier is tackled and his forward progress has been halted (tackling is defined as the act of grasping or encircling a ball carrier with hands and arms);
- 7) When the ball carrier behind the line of scrimmage is firmly in the grasp and control of a tackler to the extent that he cannot throw the ball;
- 8) When a ball carrier is tackled and driven back towards his own goal line the official must assume that he was attempting to advance the ball and that only the actual contact with an opponent prevented such advance. Therefore, the most forward point of advance shall be considered the point where the ball became dead.
- 9) When the ball carrier is contacted by an opponent and loses his balance so that a portion of his body, other than his hands or feet touched the ground, the ball shall be dead at the point where it was held when he so touched the ground;
- 10) When the quarterback, in possession of the ball, intentionally kneels on the ground. Inside last 2 minutes of each half, the clock will stop.
- 11) When the quarterback, in possession of the ball dives in a feet first sliding motion the ball shall be declared dead at the point it was held when another part of the quarterback's body, other than his hands or feet, touched the ground;
- 12) When a player, having possession of the ball in his own goal area, intentionally kneels on the ground;
- 13) When a ball carrier, in the judgment of the official, is not attempting to advance the ball the official shall immediately declare the ball dead.

### **1.11 Teams**

- A. For reference hereinafter the team which puts the ball in play shall be identified as the Offense (Team A) and the other team shall be named Defense (Team B). A IIFA game is played by two teams of eight players over the age of 18.

### **1.12 Team Captains**

- A. Each team will be given six patches to designate their captains and at least one of these players must be on the field at all times. The captain shall be the sole communicator between his team and the officials (through the Referee) and he may appeal to the Referee only on questions of interpretation and application of rules. Such consultations should be held apart from other players on the field. The captain may request the Referee to call in the yardsticks to determine whether a first down has been made, or how much distance is required. If, in the judgment of the Referee, the position of the ball is within one yard of the first down marker he shall signal time out and call for the measurement, otherwise he shall refuse the request and order play to continue. The Referee's decision cannot be disputed. A captain is entitled to an explanation of any decision but no prolonged argument is to be allowed. When the yardsticks are called from the sidelines to determine whether a first down has been gained the on-field captain for each team shall be the only player permitted in the vicinity of the measurement. In case of a foul the captain of the non-offending team shall be given the choice of the penalty or the option provided.

### **1.13 Overtime Rules**

- A. If the score is tied at the end of the second half, the officials will instruct both teams to retire to their respective team areas and there shall be a two-minute intermission. Then the officials will assemble at the mid-field and review the tiebreaker procedures.
- B. Then the officials will escort the captains to the center of the field for the coin toss. The referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of no more than four field captains from each team. The field captain of the visiting team will call the coin toss. The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:
  - 1) Offense or defense, with the offense starting at midfield.
  - 2) Which end-zone each series will drive to of that overtime period.
  - 3) The winner of the toss may not defer his choice.
  - 4) The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first overtime period, and shall have first choice of the two options for subsequent even-numbered periods. The winner of the coin toss shall have first choice of the two options for subsequent odd numbered periods. No additional coin toss is conducted in additional overtime periods. At the conclusion of the 2nd overtime period both teams must attempt a two-point conversion on the PAT, a one point PAT is not allowed.
- C. Overtime period (s) shall consist of two series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap on or between the hash marks on the 25-yard line. There will be no clock operation during Overtime Periods.
- D. Each team retains the ball during a series until scores or fails to make a first down. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead, however, Team A may not have a first and ten if it again possesses the ball after a change of team possession.
- E. The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation game and the overtime period (s) shall be declared the winner. There shall be an equal number of series as defined in D (above), in each extra period, except if Team B (the team first on defense in a given period) scores during a period other than on a try. If the teams remain tied at the end of an overtime period, a subsequent overtime period is played.
- F. Each team will have one time-out in each overtime period. Time-outs do not carry over from the second half, or from any previous overtime period.

### **1.14 Substitution**

- A. A substitute may enter the field of play at any time the ball is dead and only at that time.
- B. If the substitute enters the game to the extent that he can communicate with a teammate on the field he must remain in the game for at least one play.
- C. A player leaving the game shall proceed directly to the sideline on which his bench is located and, thence, outside the field of play to his bench.
- D. A team shall not be permitted to use player substitution as a means of deceiving the opponent.

- E. If a team breaks its huddle with more than eight players, it shall immediately be penalized for illegal substitution.
  - 1) Penalty-- Illegal Substitution—5 yards
  
- H. If a team has more than eight players on the field at the snap of the ball, the offending team will be charged with an Illegal Participation.
  - 1) Penalty -- Illegal Participation -- 10 yards

## **ARTICLE 2 SCORING**

### **2.1 Points for Scoring**

- A. The following point total can be scored by the offense and the defense;
  - 1) Touchdown 6 points (offense)
  - 2) Field Goal 3 points (offense)
  - 3) Safety 2 points (defense)
  - 4) Point after touchdown by running/passing 2 points (offense)
  - 5) Returned PAT to goal following PAT 2 points (defense)
  - 6) Point after touchdown by kick 1 point (offense)
  - 7) Drop Kick for a field goal is 4 points (offense)
  - 8) Drop Kick for a PAT is worth 2 points (offense)
  - 9) Rouge is worth 1 point (kicking team)
  
- B. The team having scored the most points at the conclusion of the game is declared the winner.

### **2.2 Types of Scoring**

- A. Touchdown
  - 1) A touchdown is scored when a player with the ball in his possession:
    - a) Is in his opponent's goal area, or
    - b) Crosses or touches the plane of his opponent's goal line.
  - 2) The ball becomes dead at the instant of scoring a touchdown.
  
- B. Field Goal
  - 1) A field goal is scored when a player kicks the ball by place kick from scrimmage formation between the opponent's uprights and over the crossbar.
  
  - 2) Scrimmage Formation
    - a) Offensive scrimmage formation for field goal and point after touchdown attempts consist of four interior linemen, a place kicker, a holder, and a personal protector. The offensive team may have receiver/s lined up on the line of scrimmage and split out away from the interior line. This/These players do not count as interior linemen. The offensive team may have up to two players in lateral or forward motion toward their opponent's goal-line prior the scrimmage snap.
    - b) Defensive scrimmage formation for field goals and point after touchdown attempts consist of three linemen. Defensive players may not stunt, which is defined as an intentional act involving two or more players. Individual defensive techniques are permitted. The defensive must line up in the A and/or B gaps between the kicking team four interior linemen. All three defensive linemen must be in a three or four point stance at the snap. The remaining five defenders may line up anywhere else, as long as they remain behind the defensive line of scrimmage during a kick attempt. They may leap or otherwise attempt to block a scrimmage kick while behind the defensive line of scrimmage, but at no time may they use a teammate or opponent to enhance their vertical height, and they may return or block for a return on an

unsuccessful field goal attempt. Defensive linemen may drop into pass coverage, just as in a regular scrimmage down, after making contact with an offensive lineman.

- c) The ball, once having been kicked, cannot touch the ground before breaking the plane of the uprights.
- 3) Touching of a field goal kick in flight by players of either team or game officials once the ball has been kicked is ignored; however, batting of the ball in flight by any player is not permissible.
- 4) The ball in flight/grounded during a field goal attempt may be caught/recovered in the goal area and advanced into the field of play by a defensive player. A ball not breaking the plane of the goal line remains a live ball and may be advanced by a defensive player.
- 5) If an opponent of the kicking team gains possession of the ball after an unsuccessful field goal attempt, whether blocked or the ball fell short of goal, the ball is live and may be advanced for a touchdown.
- 6) If the attempted field goal is missed and is not tipped or blocked but bounces through the end zone or is wide of the field goal, the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line of the receiving team. If the attempted field goal is missed and is not tipped or blocked, but goes out of bounds in field of play on either sideline, the ball is placed where it went out of bounds.
- 7) Once a field goal attempt hits the ground and is not tipped or blocked, it is a live ball and can be recovered by either team. NOTE: If the kicking team recovers the ball beyond the first down marker and it was not tipped or blocked, they will receive a new set of downs. If the kicking team attempts a field goal and the ball is not tipped or blocked and does not go beyond the first down markers, the receiving team will take possession where the ball was recovered.
- 8) NO Punting. On fourth down, a team may go for a first down, touchdown, or field goal/drop kick.

#### C. Drop Kick

- 1) Involves someone dropping a ball and then kicking it when it bounces off the ground. It contrasts to a punt wherein the dropper kicks the ball without letting it hit the ground first. A drop-kicked extra point counts for two points rather than one, a drop-kicked field goal counts for four points rather than three.

#### D. Safety

- 1) A safety is scored when a player is:
  - a) In possession of the ball in his own team's goal area, other than on a free kick, and the ball is declared dead, or
  - b) Responsible for bringing or placing the ball anywhere behind his own team's goal line by carry, kick, fumble, bat, or backward pass, or snap and subsequently the ball is then declared dead, or
  - c) Intentional grounding while in the goal area.

#### E. Point after Touchdown

- 1) After scoring a touchdown, the offense will have an attempt to score again either by a run, pass, or kick attempt from the 2-yard line.
  - a) A kick attempt is worth one point.

- b) A two-point attempt may be tried from a scrimmage formation or may be attempted by a fake kicking formation. Two points are awarded upon running or passing successfully into the goal area.
- 2) If the defense gains possession of the ball either by fumble recovery, pass interceptions, or blocked kick recovery during the point after touchdown attempt; they may advance the ball and score two points by advancing it into the opposite goal area. A backward pass is considered a lateral and can be recovered as a fumble and advance as such.

F. Rogue

- 1) Scored when the receiving team fails to run a kick out of its own end zone and ball becomes dead in the possession of the receiving team in its own goal area on a kick.
- 2) One point is awarded to the kicking team. The Receiving team retains possession of the ball and ball is place on the 5 yard line, first and ten.

## **ARTICLE 3 SCRIMMAGE**

### **3.1 Lines of Scrimmage and Scrimmage Zone**

- A. The lines of scrimmage are imaginary lines that extend from sideline to sideline, parallel to the goal lines, and passing through the foremost and rear most points of the football. The area between the line of scrimmage (the length of the football) is the scrimmage zone. The offensive line of scrimmage is on the offensive team's side of the football while the defensive line of scrimmage is on the defensive team's side of the football. Both offensive and defensive players are considered to be on their respective lines of scrimmage when they are within one yard of their respective lines.

### **3.2 Alley**

- A. The alley is a zone designated by imaginary lines perpendicular to the outside shoulder of the offensive lineman, not to exceed five yards wide.
- B. A defensive player "blitzing" must be in the alley and out of the defensive box at the snap of the ball five yards from the line of scrimmage and must notify the officials by raising his hand prior to the snap of the ball. Only one player may raise his hand and the player who raised their hand may be the only player who may blitz.

### **3.3 The Box**

- A. The box is a zone designated by imaginary lines perpendicular to the outside shoulder of the offensive lineman, not to exceed five yards wide, and five yards deep on either side of the line of scrimmage.
- B. No part of an offensive player in motion may be in the box at the snap.
- C. No part of a defensive player in motion may be in the box at the snap.  
*Note: Officials need to consider the circumstances, which may have caused a defensive player, while mirroring the actions of an offensive player, to be in the box at the snap, and may not allow the offense to generate penalties in this manner.*

### **3.4 Offensive Alignments**

- A. Positioning
  - 1) After the ready for play signal from the official and just prior to the snap, all offensive players are either on the line of scrimmage or in the backfield. Offensive players are considered in the backfield when any part of their body does not intersect with an imaginary line drawn parallel to the goal lines, from sideline to sideline, through the waist of the center.
  - 2) There shall be at least four offensive players on the line of scrimmage prior to the scrimmage snap; three of who are ineligible receivers. Offensive players may set in two, three or four point stances. To be considered on the line of scrimmage, offensive players must have their shoulders

substantially parallel to the line of scrimmage. The ineligible receivers are the center and the two guards who are aligned on either side of the center. All eligible receivers, who are set at the snap, must line up at least two yards from the nearest guard. The ineligible receivers must have ineligible receiver numbers. The eligible offensive player(s) on the line of scrimmage must have an eligible receiver number.

- a) Eligible receivers shall be numbered 00-49 and 80-99
  - b) Ineligible receivers shall be numbered 50-79 unless he is one of the 3 offensive linemen not covered by a receiver on the line of scrimmage, then he can become an eligible receiver.
  - c) If you're wearing an ineligible number and you're not a lineman, you must check with the referee that you are eligible.
  - d) Penalty for Illegal Numbering is 5 yards
- 3) Only two backs, including the quarterback, may be in the offensive box at snap, both of who must have been in a set position for at least one second prior to the snap. The other back besides the quarterback must be 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- a) Penalty for Illegal Formation is 5 yards
- 4) Ineligible receivers downfield: On any pass play where the pass crosses the line of scrimmage, ineligible receivers may not be more than three yards downfield (expanded neutral zone) until the pass has crossed the line of scrimmage. Such restrictions end if a defensive player deflects the pass.
- a) Penalty Ineligible Downfield—5 yards

#### B. Offensive Line Blocking and Pulling

- 1) An offensive linemen must block above the belt line and never chop or crack blocks any player.
- 2) An offensive guard may pull down the line of scrimmage after the snap of the ball on either a run or passing play.

### **3.5 Defensive Alignments**

#### A. Positioning

- 1) After the ready for play by the official, all defensive players must be on their side of the line of scrimmage. Just prior to the snap, there must be at least three defensive players on the line of scrimmage aligned head to head or shoulder to shoulder with the offensive guards. In determining whether the defensive player has covered the offensive guard, the officials shall use the outside foot of the offensive guards with the inside foot of the defensive lineman for the alignment. The defensive lineman covering the offensive center must be head to head with the center. Defensive lineman must be in 3 or 4-point stances.
- 2) Defensive linebackers are players behind their line of scrimmage but within six yards of the scrimmage zone in the 5-yard belt. The 5-yard belt extends sideline to sideline, from the defensive line of scrimmage to 5 yards parallel to the defensive line of scrimmage. Defensive linebackers may align themselves on the line of scrimmage with offensive eligible receivers in set positions at the scrimmage snap. Defensive linebackers may align themselves on the line of scrimmage as to wait for with receivers who are in motion. When the opponent is inside the defense's 5-yard line, linebackers may align themselves on the goal line.

- 3) Defensive lineman may drop into pass coverage, however must first make contact with their offensive lineman counterpart.
- 4) Defensive players may not stunt, which is defined as an intentional act involving two or more players. Individual stunts, twists and other individual defensive techniques are permitted.
- 5) Defensive linebackers/cornerbacks may line up on the line of scrimmage head up on a set eligible receiver who is not in the box (ie; end, flanker, wingback, slot back). The eligible receiver does not have to be on the line of scrimmage for the defensive player to take a position on the line.
- 6) Defensive players “covering” set offensive players in the box MUST be at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- 7) Defensive linebackers/cornerbacks MAY NOT line up on the line of scrimmage if there is no corresponding set eligible receiver (cannot be on the line of scrimmage when no eligible receiver exists on the offensive side of the ball). In this case the linebacker/cornerback MUST BE off the line of scrimmage.
- 8) A defensive linebacker/cornerback MAY mirror an eligible receiver in motion maintaining a similar distance from the line scrimmage. If the offensive player’s motion is towards, or turns towards, the line of scrimmage, the defensive player MAY likewise approach the defensive line of scrimmage to meet the eligible receiver.
- 9) Defensive linebackers are not required to align themselves with eligible offensive receivers in motion, and if they are not aligned with an eligible receiver, they must be at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- 10) Within the five yard line, defensive players may align themselves on the goal line.

#### B. Blitzing

- 1) Only one defensive player may blitz at any one time and such blitzing must occur within the area designated by the inside shoulders of the guards and the line of scrimmage at the scrimmage snap. The defensive player blitzing must indicate he is eligible to blitz by raising his hand above his head in a whirling motion prior to the scrimmage snap. He is not required to blitz.
- 2) Additionally, this player must start behind the 5-yard box and in the alley at the scrimmage snap.
- 3) Clarification - On any running play, a DB/LB, regardless of position, can come up and play run, including tackling a RB/WR in the backfield. Also, as soon as the QB rolls outside of, or is flushed outside of the alley, (the outside shoulders of the offensive guards), he has become a runner, and any defensive player can play him as a runner. If he passes outside the alley, he has the normal protection an official would give any passer, but not the special protection of only one blitzer, which he previously had in the alley.
  - a) Penalty – Blitzing Infraction – 5 yards, previous spot

### **3.6 Scrimmage Play**

#### A. Ready for Scrimmage Play

- 1) The Referee shall begin scrimmage play by giving the “ready for Scrimmage Play” signal. This signifies that the offensive team has 25 seconds in which to put the ball in play by means of a

scrimmage snap or a free kick. Each team shall not delay in returning to their respective line of scrimmage and huddle once play has ceased.

a) Penalty: Delay of Game – 5 yards, dead ball foul

#### B. Scrimmage Snap

1) The offensive team may put the football into scrimmage play by means of a scrimmage snap once the Referee has given the ready for scrimmage play signal. A scrimmage snap is initiated by the center that shall take his position over the football facing his opponent's goal line. He shall put the ball in play by snapping it back between his legs in one continuous motion to another offensive player who is behind the line of scrimmage in the backfield. The ball must leave the center's hands and he shall not touch the ball again until it has been in possession of another player.

a) Penalty: Illegal Procedure – 5 yards, previous spot

#### C. Illegal Movements

1) The center shall not fake a snap or, having assumed his stance over the ball, bob his head, move his shoulders, flex his knees, or make some other movement simulating a snap in an effort to draw the defense across its line of scrimmage.

a) Penalty: Snap Infraction – 5 yards, dead ball foul

2) After the scrimmage zone is set, no player of either team may encroach on it or be offside.

a) Penalty: Offside—5 yards, dead ball foul

#### D. Situations

1) Defensive player jumps in scrimmage zone, gets back with no contact with the offense, and returns to his three of four point stance before the snap..... No foul.

2) Defensive player jumps through scrimmage zone with no contact with the offense, ball is not snapped. Kill play, encroachment on the defense.

3) Defense jumps in scrimmage zone, offense flinches; encroachment on the defense.

4) Defense jumps in scrimmage zone, offense contact defense; encroachment on the defense.

5) Defense jumps in scrimmage zone, no contact but the ball is snapped. Offside defense; the snap is played and offense gets choice of accepting the penalty.

6) A down defensive lineman fakes charge, offense moves. Illegal procedure on offense but defense is warned that the next time he fakes a charge the foul will be on the defense.

#### E) Motions

1) The offensive team may have up to three players in lateral or forward motion toward their opponent's goal-line prior the scrimmage snap as long as:

a) They clearly started in motion while being in their backfield.

b) The player must be behind or at the line of scrimmage at snap of the ball.

c) They are not in the box at the scrimmage snap.

d) An offensive player in motion and in the box at the scrimmage snap is illegally in motion, and not eligible to receive a hand off or a pass. Players deeper than 5 yards may take a hand off, or

receive a forward or backward pass. With exception of the offensive player(s) in motion, all other offensive players shall remain motionless for a period of at least one second prior to the scrimmage snap.

- e) Penalty: Illegal Motion – 5 yards, previous spot
  - f) Penalty: Illegal touching (motion back in the box also receiving a handoff) – 5 yards from the spot of foul
- 2) No offensive player on the line of scrimmage may make any motion, which simulates the start of the play prior to the scrimmage snap. All offensive players on the line of scrimmage must remain motionless for at least one second immediately prior to the scrimmage snap.
    - a) Penalty: False Start – 5 yards, dead ball foul
  - 3) No offensive player in the backfield shall simulate the start of the play prior to the scrimmage snap. This includes the quarterback, having assumed his position under the center, bobbing his head, moving his shoulders or flexing his knees, making any quick movement, using his voice inflection, or any other movement or signal which is an attempt to simulate the start of the play prior to the scrimmage snap.
    - a) Penalty: False Start – 5 yards, dead ball foul.
  - 4) All offensive players must block above the waist. No cut or chop blocking is allowed.
    - a) Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards, live ball foul.

### **3.7 Series of Downs**

#### A) Downs

- 1) The offensive team shall have a series of four downs to gain a distance of ten yards. A down may be repeated following the application of a penalty. If in a series of four downs the offensive team has not gained the required ten yards, the ball shall be awarded to the opponents at the point where the ball became dead. If the required ten yards are gained, a new series is awarded to the offensive team. A series of downs may be interrupted:
  - a) When the offensive team does not make its ten yards for a new series;
  - b) When the offensive team kicks the ball out of bounds or it crosses the offensive line
  - c) When the ball is intercepted or recovered by the defense.

#### B) Measurement

- 1) The offensive or defensive team captain may request the Referee at any time for a measurement of distance required for an offensive team's new series of downs to be awarded. The Referee, in his discretion, may grant the request or not, but he may at any time make such a measurement himself.
- 2) In making such a measurement, the Referee will measure from the furthest most marked yard line perpendicularly to the forward point of the ball. He may, if required, rotate the ball so that its long axis is parallel to the sidelines. A touchdown cannot be awarded as a result of such a rotation.
- 3) If the offensive team has failed to make a new series by advancing the ball ten yards at the end of the four downs, the ball is not moved and its rear end becomes the forefront for the new series awarded the former defensive team, which has become the offensive team.

## **ARTICLE 4 PASSING**

### **4.1 Backward Pass**

- A. Definition - A backward pass is one thrown, batted, or fumbled by a player parallel to or in the direction of his own end line.
- B. Determinants of a Backward Pass - The point at which the ball is caught, strikes another player, an official, or the ground, or goes out of bounds is the factor, which determined whether it is a backward pass, regardless of the direction in which it goes afterwards.
- C. Pass Striking the Ground - A backward pass striking the ground and is not dead and may be recovered by either team without penalty and can be recovered and advanced.
- D. Pass Out of Bounds - When a backward pass goes out of bounds in the field of play, the ball shall be put in play by scrimmage snap at the outer hash mark perpendicular from the point where the ball went out of bounds.

### **4.2 Forward Pass**

- A. Definition - A forward pass is one thrown by any offensive player from a point behind the defensive line of scrimmage, towards the opponent's end line, to any eligible receiver or receivers. The location of the passer's forward foot determines whether or not the player passing the ball is behind or beyond the defensive line of scrimmage.
- B. Legal Forward Pass - The offense shall make only one forward pass during a scrimmage down, and it must be thrown from behind the defensive line of scrimmage.
- C. Possession - During a forward pass, the ball is considered to be in possession of the offense until the pass is ruled complete or incomplete.
- D. Eligibility of the Passer
  - 1) The offensive player who throws a forward pass is called the passer
  - 2) The passer does not need to be the first player to receive the ball (scrimmage snap) from the center.
- E. Eligibility of Receivers
  - 1) Any offensive player who is identified by number as an eligible receiver and who, at the scrimmage snap, is occupying an end position either at the end of the line of scrimmage or is in the backfield at least one yard back from the offensive line of scrimmage is considered an eligible receiver.
    - a) Eligible offensive players who can receive forward passes shall be identified by the following numbers: 00-49 and 80-99. Ineligible offensive players shall be identified by the numbers 50-79 unless they are not covered by a receiver or has checked in with the referee.
    - b) Any defensive player, whether or not the forward pass is legally thrown.

- 2) In a kicking formation, a player with an ineligible number may become eligible if he lines up as an offensive end, and reports to the referee.
- 3) If a forward pass is touched by, or touches a defensive player, all players of both teams become eligible receivers.
- 4) No ineligible offensive player may be downfield on pass play where the pass crosses the line of scrimmage more than 3 yards (expanded neutral zone).
  - a) Penalty 5 yards from previous spot

#### F. Exceptions to Player Eligibility Numbering

- 1) An offensive player wearing an eligible receiver number may, upon notification to the Referee, enter the game at an ineligible receiver position under the following circumstances:
  - a) On a fourth down play.
  - b) On a point after touchdown attempt.
  - c) On a kicking formation on the understanding that he is not eligible as a pass receiver.
- 2) An offensive player wearing an ineligible receiver number may be declared eligible as a receiver provided that he:
  - a) Reports to the Referee immediately prior to each play in which he is to be declared eligible.
  - b) Occupies an eligible receiver position on the offensive line of scrimmage.
  - c) Is positioned within 3 yards of the position occupied by the offensive guard at the scrimmage snap.
  - d) If an offensive lineman is not covered up by a receiver and he is the only player on that side of the ball, he can be an eligible receiver.

#### G. Illegal Touching

- 1) No ineligible player shall deliberately touch or catch a legal forward pass until it has touched an opponent.
  - a) Penalty: Illegal touching – 5 yards from previous spot, loss of down

#### H. Complete Forward Pass - A pass is completed under the following conditions:

- 1) When caught by an eligible receiver, or by two or more such receivers simultaneously.
- 2) When caught by a defensive player or, simultaneously, by defensive players or when such a pass is touched by, or touches a defensive player and then is caught by another player.
- 3) When caught simultaneously by players of both teams who maintain possession until the play is dead. The ball shall be awarded to the offense.
- 4) If an eligible receiver of either team catches a pass while off the ground and in bounds but is carried or pushed by the opponent in a manner which causes him to land out of bounds in possession of the ball. The pass shall be ruled complete at the furthest point of advance.
- 5) If an eligible receiver of either team catches a pass near the sideline and touches the ground in bounds, the team of the player receiving the ball shall retain possession even if the receiver's next step takes him out of bounds.
- 6) If an eligible receiver catches a pass but is pushed out of bounds (in the air before one foot is down), he will be awarded the reception, upon official's discretion.

#### I. Incomplete Forward Pass - A forward pass shall be declared incomplete and the ball will next be put in play at the point of last scrimmage snap, with downs continuing:

- 1) When the ball strikes the ground or any overhead obstruction, flag, etc.
- 2) When the ball goes out of bounds, even if touched by a player in the field of play.

- 3) When the passer has commenced his forward passing motion with the ball moving forward and as a result of contact with an opponent, the ball leaves the passer's hand and strikes the ground.
- 4) Eligible receivers may not step on the sideline or go outside the field of play and return and be the first one to touch it.

J. Intentional Grounding - If an offensive passer deliberately, in the official's opinion, throws the ball out of bounds or to an area in which there is not an eligible receiver for the purpose of avoiding loss of yardage, his team shall be penalized.

- 1) Penalty: Intentional Grounding – loss of down at spot of foul (point at which pass was thrown). If pass is thrown from the goal area, a safety shall be awarded to the defense subject to the options provided. It is not intentional grounding if the quarterback is outside the alley and throws the ball toward the line of scrimmage, provided the ball first touches the ground or goes out of bounds beyond the line of scrimmage.

K. Pass Interference

- 1) Offensive pass interference is when contact by an offensive team player interferes with a defensive team player after the scrimmage snap. Offensive team players contacting defensive team players within 1 yard of the defensive line of scrimmage shall not be deemed as offensive pass interference.
  - a) Any offensive player may interfere with an opponent anywhere within bounds after the pass has been completed.
  - b) Prior to the pass being completed or declared incomplete, an offensive player may interfere with an opponent anywhere within bounds provided that the pass is thrown to a receiver behind the offensive line of scrimmage.
  - c) Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference – 10 yards
- 2) Defensive pass interference is contact by a defensive player on an eligible offensive player after the ball has crossed the scrimmage zone. Such interference must be ruled as intent by a defensive player to impede an eligible offensive player or prevent an eligible offensive player from receiving a catch.
  - a) Prior to a pass being thrown beyond the defensive line of scrimmage, a defensive player occupying a position beyond the line may use his hands or arms to ward off an opponent who threatens his defensive position as a potential blocker.
  - b) When a pass crosses the defensive line of scrimmage, a defensive player shall not interfere with an eligible offensive player who is not threatening his defensive position.
  - c) A defensive player shall not interfere illegally with an eligible offensive player's attempt to catch the ball.
  - d) Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference – Spot foul, automatic first down and the ball is awarded to the offense at the spot of the foul. If the infraction occurs in the defensive goal area, the ball will be placed on the opponent's 2-yard line, if the previous spot was on or inside the 2-yard line, it will be 1st down halfway between the previous spot and the goal line.
- 3) A defensive player shall not interfere with an eligible offensive player on a point after touchdown attempt.
  - a) Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference – If point after touchdown attempt was good, the penalty will be administered on the first scrimmage play following the kickoff– 5 yards.
  - b) If point after touchdown attempt was no good, the offense will repeat the point after touchdown attempt at the defensive team's 1 yard line.

- 4) When a pass has been intercepted by the defense, any defensive player may interfere with an opponent anywhere within bounds provided that contact is made legally only above the waist of the opponent and from the front or side.
- 5) Pass interference shall not be penalized if, in the judgment of the official:
  - a) During the pass, offensive and defensive players make contact in a simultaneous attempt to catch or bat the ball.
  - b) During the pass, the ball has previously been touched by an eligible player.
  - c) The pass is clearly unable to be caught.

#### L. Interception in the Goal Area

- 1) An intercepted ball, which is down in the defensive team goal's area, is dead without a score.
- 2) An intercepted ball that is fumbled in the defensive goal area may be legally recovered by the offense for a touchdown.
- 3) Any rough play fouls (personal fouls) by the offensive team in the field of play or in the defensive goal area after the defense intercepts a pass in its own goal area where the ball is ruled dead, the foul is administered from the defensive team's 5-yard line.
- 4) A pass intercepted by a defensive player in the field of play while moving towards his goal area and his momentum carried him into his own goal area and thereafter the ball becomes dead is ruled a touchback. The defensive team will retain possession of the ball and put it in play – 1st down 10 yards to go- by a scrimmage snap at its 5-yard line.

### **4.3 Hand-Off**

- A. A hand off is made on a scrimmage play when the ball is handed by one offensive team player to another behind the offensive line of scrimmage. There is no restriction on the number of hand-offs that can be made on any one-scrimmage play.
- B. Ineligible to Receive Hand-Off - The player receiving a hand-off must not be an ineligible offensive receiver or occupying the position of an ineligible offensive receiver (center or guard) at the instant he receives the ball.
- C. Penalty: Illegal Procedure – 5 yards at the previous spot.

## **ARTICLE 5 KICKING**

### **5.1 Definitions**

#### **A. Kicked Ball by a Player**

- 1) A kicked ball is the intentional striking of the ball by a player's foot or leg below the knee.
- 2) If a ball accidentally strikes a player's foot or leg, it shall not be ruled a kicked ball.

#### **B. Place Kick**

- 1) A place kick is a legal kick made by kicking the ball after it has been placed in a fixed position on the ground. The ball, also, may be held in position on the ground by a teammate of the kicker. No substance or device may be used to improve the kicker's footing.
- 2) A place kick may be used for a kickoff, scrimmage kick, or free kick following a safety.
- 3) On a kickoff or free kick the ball may be placed on a kicking tee. On a point after touchdown attempt a kicking tee may not be used.

#### **C. Drop Kick**

- 1) Involves someone dropping a ball and then kicking it when it bounces off the ground. It contrasts to a punt wherein the dropper kicks the ball without letting it hit the ground first. A drop-kicked extra point counts for two points rather than one; a drop-kicked field goal counts for four points rather than three.
- 2) A drop kick may be used for a kickoff, a scrimmage kick or a free kick following a safety.

#### **D. Loose Ball**

- 1) A loose ball occurs when the ball is kicked or blocked during a kick, on a kickoff or a kick from scrimmage, or during a pass or fumble. It continues to be a loose ball until a player secures possession of the ball or it becomes dead by rule, whichever comes first.
- 2) During a free kick, it is first touching, if the ball has been touched by any kicking team player before it crosses the receiver's free-kick line and before any player on the receiving team has touched it. The receiving team may elect to take possession of the ball at the spot of first touching, or any spot if there is more than one spot of first touching.
  - a) Penalty: Ball is awarded to opponent at the spot of first touching, or option of additional first touching.
- 3) It is a foul if the ball is touched by any player of the kicking team and goes out of bounds in an opponent's goal area. Penalty: Ball is awarded to opponent at their 5-yard line.
- 4) It is a foul if the ball is touched by any player of the kicking team and goes out of bounds in his own goal area.
  - a) Penalty: Ball is awarded to opponent at their 15-yard line or 2 points scored (safety).
- 5) A loose ball by the offense across the line of scrimmage does not interrupt the continuity of downs.

#### **E. Scrimmage Kicking Team Restrictions**

- 1) If a team lines up in kicking formation, they may attempt a fake field goal from scrimmage.
- 2) Scrimmage Kick Personnel
  - a) Four offensive linemen and one personal protector, holder and kicker

- b) Personal protector can leave at snap.
- 3) Pass eligibility of players in a kicking formation are determined by position and number. Each player on the end of the line and each player in the backfield is an eligible pass receiver, provided they are also wearing an eligible receiver number, which is 1 through 49 or 80 through 99 or checked in with the referee if they are not wearing an eligible number.

## **5.2 Free Kick**

### **A. Spot of Free Kick**

- 1) The ball shall be kicked off by a place kick or drop kick from any point between the sidelines on the kicking team's goal line at the beginning of each half of the game, after a successful field goal, after a successful point after touchdown and after a safety. All free kicks must occur from the goal line. Any penalty which otherwise might be enforced on the succeeding play, will be enforced on the first scrimmage play following the free kick.

### **B. Rules of Free Kick**

- 1) The ball, unless touched by a member of the receiving team, must be kicked more than 10 yards towards the opponent's goal line before it may be legally touched by a member of the kicking team. Penalty: Kicking Team Touching Violation – Receiving team may take possession of the ball at the spot the ball was first touched by a kicking team player, or option provided.
- 2) If the kicked ball is first possessed in the receiving team's goal area by a receiving team player that player may attempt to advance the ball. If that player does not advance the ball out of the goal area, the ball will be put in play on the receiving team's 5-yard line.
- 3) If the kicked ball goes out of the back of the receiving team's goal area without making contact with the field of play or player, the ball will be put in play on the 5 yard line.
- 4) If the kicked ball goes out of bounds anywhere inside the opposing team's 25 yard line of play without making contact with the field of play or players, then the ball will be spotted at the 25 yard line.
- 5) If the kicked ball strikes any part of the goal post in flight, the ball is dead and will be spotted at the 10 yard line.
- 6) If the kicked ball is simultaneously recovered by players from each team or simultaneously touched by players from each team before going out of bounds, the ball belongs to the receiving team:
  - a) At the spot of recovery, or
  - b) At the spot of last touching, or
  - c) At the spot where the ball went out of bounds.
- 7) If playing indoors and the kicked ball strikes any overhanging objects above the field of play (i.e. scoreboard, netting, beams), the ball is dead and will be put in play at the 25-yard line. If obstruction is hit inside the 25-yard line of the kicking team, the ball is placed at the spot of hit.
- 8) If a kickoff hits in the field of play or players and then:
  - a) Exits the goal area, the ball will be spotted at the 5 yard line;
  - b) Goes out of bounds inside the 5 yard line, the ball will be spotted at the 5 yard line;
  - c) Goes out of bounds further up field than the 5-yard line, then the ball will be spotted at the point it went out of bounds.

### **C. Offside on Free Kicks – Kicking Team**

- 1) During a free kick, the instant the ball is kicked; no player of the kicking team shall be in advance of the ball, except the kicker and player who may be holding the ball for the free kick.

- a) Penalty: Offside - dead ball, 5 yards on the first scrimmage play following the free kick
- D. Offside on Free Kicks – Receiving Team
- 1) During a free kick after the Referee has given the ready for scrimmage play and until the instant the ball is kicked, all players of the receiving team must be a minimum of 10 yards from the kicking team’s free kick line.
    - a) Penalty: Offside – 5 yards at succeeding spot
- E. Blocking By the Receiving Team
- 1) During a free kick, a player of the receiving team may block an opponent within bounds commencing from the moment the ball is kicked and provided that the contact is made legally above the waist of the opponent and from the front or side.
    - a) Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards at the spot of foul or option provided
- F. Blocking by the Kicking Team
- 1) Before gaining possession while the ball is loose:
    - a) A player of the kicking team shall not be permitted to block an opponent until his team is eligible to touch the kicked ball.
    - b) Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards at succeeding spot
  - 2) After gaining possession:
    - a) By the receiving team, any kicking team member may block opponents in accordance with the rules above the waist.
    - b) By the kicking team, the ball is immediately dead so there would be no continuation of play including blocking. If the kicking team recovers a fumbled kick return, it may advance the ball and may block opponents in accordance with the rules above the waist.

### **5.3 Scrimmage Kick**

- A. Definition – A scrimmage kick is a kick by the offense during one of its scrimmage downs or plays from scrimmage. It can be used for a field goal attempt, point after touchdown attempt. A team may also use a fake scrimmage kick formation.
- B. A scrimmage kick is made from a scrimmage kick formation which has a kicker positioned behind the center. He may take a direct snap for a drop kick. The kick formation has four linemen. Another offensive player (snap holder) may be positioned behind the center to receive the scrimmage snap and place it for the kicker. No kicking pad or tee is permissible.
- C. A player who kicks a scrimmage kick or a player who holds for a scrimmage kick cannot be contacted while the kick has a possibility of being successful. A defensive player blocked into the kicker or holder will not be penalized unless, in the opinion of the referee, there is intent to injure. Touching of scrimmage kicks behind the defensive line of scrimmage is not a factor in this determination.
- D. A player who kicks a scrimmage kick may kick the ball to an eligible receiver downfield. If the receiver passes the first down marker the kicking team will be given a new set of downs. If the receiver passes the goal line it is consider a touchdown.
- E. Defensive scrimmage formation for field goals and point after touchdown attempts consist of four linemen who may not stunt. The defensive ends must either line up head to head with the ends of the

kicking team, or in the gap between the kicking team ends and guards. The two interior defensive players must line up in the gap between the center and the two offensive guards. All four defensive linemen must be in a three or four point stance at the snap. The remaining four defenders may line up anywhere else, as long as they remain behind the defensive line of scrimmage during a kick attempt. They may leap or otherwise attempt to block a scrimmage kick while behind the defensive line of scrimmage, but at no time may they use a teammate or opponent to enhance their vertical height, and they may return or block for a return on an unsuccessful field goal attempt. Defensive linemen may drop into pass coverage, just as in a regular scrimmage down, after making contact with an offensive lineman.

#### F. Blocked

- 1) A blocked kick is a kick from scrimmage in which, after being kicked, the ball is prevented from crossing the defensive line of scrimmage because of contact with an opponent or a player of the kicking team.
- 2) If the kick is blocked without going out of bounds and does not cross the defensive line of scrimmage, it may be recovered legally and advanced by a player of either team. If a kicking team player recovers and advances the ball, it is considered as any other play from scrimmage.
- 3) If a kick is blocked in the field of play or the goal area and without being touched, the ball goes directly out of bounds in the goal area, a safety shall be scored. This also applies if immediately prior to the ball going out of bounds in the goal area, a player of the receiving team in the goal area last touches it.

#### G. Blocking

- 1) Once a kick has been made, a player on the receiving team may block any player on the kicking team provided that contact is above the waist and from the front or side.  
Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards at succeeding spot

#### H. Kicking Play Restrictions

##### 1) Reception of Kicks

- a) A player of the receiving team within the boundary lines attempting to catch a kick, and so located that he could have caught a free kick or a scrimmage kick that is beyond the neutral zone, must be given an unimpeded opportunity to catch the kick. Protection terminates when the kick touches the ground or is touched by any player of the Team B beyond the neutral zone. If interference with a potential receiver is the result of a player being blocked by an opponent, it is not a foul. It's an interference foul if the kicking team contacts the potential receiver before, or simultaneous to, his first touching the ball.  
Penalty: Kick Catch Interference – In the field of play, the receiving team will put the ball in play 10 yards in advance of the spot of the foul. In the goal area, the receiving team will put the ball in play 10 yards in advance of the 5-yard line (15 yard line)
- b) If the kicked ball is not touched and a player of the receiving team fakes an attempt to recover the ball, he may be tackled without penalty.
- c) Once a field goal attempt hits the ground and is not tipped or blocked, it is a live ball and can be recovered by either team. NOTE: If the kicking team recovers the ball beyond the first down marker and it was not tipped or blocked, they will receive a new set of downs.
- d) If the kicked ball is not touched in the judgment of the officials, and there is no effort by either team to recover the ball, the covering official may declare the ball dead and award possession to the receiving team at the spot of the dead ball.

##### 2) Place and Drop Kicked Ball Striking Uprights

- a) If the ball after being kicked strikes the opponent's upright assembly in flight and returns to the field of play, the ball shall be declared dead and awarded to the receiving team at its 5 yard line.
- b) If the ball strikes the upright assembly after having touched an official, or another player, it shall remain in play.
- c) If a kicked ball on a field goal or convert attempt strikes an upright in flight and then proceeds through the uprights above the crossbar, it remains alive and scores points in accordance with these rules.

#### **5.4 Punting**

- A. No punting is allowed in the IIFA

Penalty: Illegal Kicking – 10 yards from previous spot and loss of down.

#### **5.5 Fair Catch**

- A. Dead Where Caught

- 1) When a Team B player makes a fair catch; the ball becomes dead where caught and belongs to Team B at that spot.
- 2) Rules pertaining to a fair catch apply only when a scrimmage kick crosses the neutral zone or during free kicks.
- 3) The purpose of the fair catch provision is to protect the receiver who, by his fair catch signal, agrees he or a teammate will not advance after the catch.

- B. No Team B player shall carry a caught or recovered ball more than two steps in any direction after a valid, invalid or illegal fair catch signal by any Team B player.

Penalty - Dead-ball foul 5-yards from the succeeding spot

- C. Illegal Signals

- 1) During a down in which a kick is made, no player of Team B shall make any illegal fair catch signal during a free kick or beyond the neutral zone during a scrimmage kick. Any signal is illegal after a scrimmage kick is caught beyond the neutral zone, strikes the ground or touches another player beyond the neutral zone. A signal is illegal after a free kick is caught, strikes the ground or touches another player.
- 2) A catch after an illegal signal is not a fair catch, and the ball is dead where caught. If the signal follows a catch, the ball is dead when the signal is first given.
- 3) Illegal signals beyond the neutral zone apply only to Team B.
- 4) An illegal signal beyond the neutral zone is possible only when the ball has crossed the neutral zone.

- D. Illegal Block or Contact

- 1) A player of Team B who has made a valid, invalid or illegal signal for a fair catch and does not touch the ball shall not block or foul an opponent during that down.

Penalty – Free kick: Receiving team's ball 10 yards from the spot of the foul.

Scrimmage kick: 10 - yard penalty, post scrimmage kick enforcement or basic spot enforcement.

E. No Tackling

- 1) No player of the kicking team shall tackle or block an opponent who has completed a fair catch. Only the player making a fair catch signal has this protection.  
Penalty - Dead-ball foul, 10 yards from the receiving team's succeeding spot.

## ARTICLE 6 FOULS AND PENALTIES

### 6.1 Illegal Tactics

- A. Holding - Holding is using the hands and/or arms to grasp, encircle, or hinder an opponent, except the ball carrier. Holding hands or interlocking arms during any play is prohibited.  
Penalty: Holding – 10 yards
- B. Clipping - Clipping is blocking an opponent, except the ball carrier, from the rear in such a manner that the player contacts across the back of the legs. The application of a penalty is determined by the initial contact, which must be observed by the official, and shall not be called, if, in the official's judgment:
- 1) The block occurs in the area between the offensive guards, within 2 yards of either side of the scrimmage zone and is executed by an offensive player who, at the scrimmage snap, was positioned within this area, or
  - 2) The initial contact is made on the side of the opponent, or
  - 3) The opponent could see the blocker approaching and deliberately turned his body in order to be contact from behind.
- Penalty: Clipping - 10 yards
- C. Block in the Back - A block in the back is blocking an opponent, except the ball carrier, from the rear in such a manner that the player contacts the opponent's back, above the waist. The application of a penalty is determined by the initial contact, which must be observed by the official, and shall not be called, if, in the official's judgment:
- 1) The block occurs in the area between the offensive guards, within 2 yards of either side of the scrimmage zone and is executed by an offensive player who, at the scrimmage snap, was positioned within this area, or
  - 2) The initial contact is made on the side of the opponent, or
  - 3) The opponent could see the blocker approaching and deliberately turned his body in order to be contact from behind.
- Penalty: Block in the back - 10 yards
- D. Crack Back Blocking - An offensive player is not permitted to move laterally toward the ball and contact an opponent unless the block is in front and above the waist.  
Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards
- E. Chop Blocking - Chop Blocking is contacting an opponent below the waist: at the time another player is already engaging that opponent above the waist.  
Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards
- F. Cut Blocking - Cut Blocking is contacting an opponent at or below the waist  
Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards
- G. Contacting the Kicker
- 1) It is illegal to touch the kicker when he is in the act of kicking from scrimmage, EXCEPT:
    - a) If prior to kicking the ball, the kicker has recovered a loose ball on the ground or made a motion to pass or run with the ball. The kicker shall not be entitled to protection in these instances.
    - b) An opponent who blocks or touches the ball shall not be penalized for contacting the kicker.

- c) An opponent shall not be penalized when a blocker of the kicking team causes the opponent to contact the kicker. If, in the Referee's opinion, a defensive player attempting to block the kick makes slight and incidental contact which does not affect the kicker or the play, and the kicker is only dislodged, it shall be penalized as running into the kicker.  
 Penalty: Personal Foul – Roughing Kicker or Holder – 10 yards and first automatic down.  
 Penalty: Running into the kicker—5 yards
- 2) The act of kicking begins when the kicker's kicking foot leaves the ground and terminates when his foot returns to the ground after kicking, or attempting to kick the ball.
- H. Pyramiding - It is illegal for a player to use the body of another player in any manner to elevate himself in an attempt to block a field goal or convert.  
 Penalty: Pyramiding – 10 yards
- I. Tripping - A player shall not use his leg below the knee to hinder the progress of an opponent, except the runner.  
 Penalty: Tripping – 10 yards
- J. Aiding the Runner - It is illegal to assist the forward progress of a ball carrier by providing a push from behind.  
 Penalty: Aiding the Runner– 10 yards
- K. Personal Fouls or Unnecessary Roughness - A player shall be penalized for any personal foul or act of unnecessary roughness against an opponent except if that contact, in the opinion of the officials, is caused by the movement of the opponent. Personal fouls/acts of unnecessary roughness are live ball fouls and include, but are not limited to:
- 1) Piling on by a player who falls or jumps on the ball carrier after the play has terminated.
  - 2) Contacting an opponent out of bounds in any manner
  - 3) Contacting the passer unnecessarily
  - 4) Contacting the kicker, kicker's holder, or snapper for one second after he has snapped the ball, during a scrimmage kick.
  - 5) Grasping and twisting, turning or pulling an opponents face mask or helmet opening  
 Penalty: Personal foul – 10 yards if by the offense, and 10 yards and automatic first down if by the defense  
 Penalty: Incidental grasping – 5 yards
  - 6) Using the helmet to butt, ram, and spear an opponent. This includes, but is not limited to, action on a passer, a receiver in the act of catching a pass, a ball carrier already down on the playing surface not attempting to advance.
  - 7) Contacting an opponent above the shoulders
  - 8) Any other act of roughness or unfair play provided it is not excessive to warrant disqualification.  
 Penalty: Personal Foul or Unnecessary Roughness – 10 yards if by the offense, and 10 yards and automatic 1st down for the offense if by the defense. If the infraction is flagrant in the judgment of the official, the player shall be ejected from the contest.
- L. Coaches on the Field
- 1) During a time out, ONLY ONE coach is allowed on the field in the team huddle. If the team comes to the sideline in front of the team box, there is no limit to the number of coaches who may confer with the team.
  - 2) During live play, coaches are allowed on the field but MUST be in the Offensive backfield.

- 3) Coaches shall remain on their own team's sideline.
- 4) Coaches on the field are not allowed to complain to officials. Coaches must address officials in a professional manner. Officials will only respond to questions and offer explanations if time allows unless the coach want to take a team time out to discuss a rules question or ask for a detailed explanation.

Penalty Sideline violation—5 yards

- 5) If a coach on the field interferes or causes interference with the game, the ball or a player as a result of being on the field, he SHALL be penalized for interference. The game officials shall determine the penalty, which shall be at a minimum 5 yards, or placement of the ball or forward progress where in the judgment of the officials the player would have advanced, or the officials may award a score, if appropriate.

#### M. Illegal Interference

- 1) No substitute, coach, authorized attendant or any person subject to the rules, other than a player or official, may interfere in any way with the ball or a player while the ball is in play.

Penalty - 10 yards from the basic spot. The referee may enforce any penalty he considers equitable, including awarding a score.

- 2) No person not subject to the rules may interfere in any way with the ball or a player while the ball is in play. When anything other than persons subject to the rules and those not subject to the rules interferes in any way with a player or the ball in play, it is illegal interference.

Penalty - The referee may replay the down or take any action he deems equitable, including awarding a score.

### **6.2 Unsportsmanlike Fouls**

- A. The Rules Committee has declared its total abhorrence of rough play and unnecessary roughness. Officials are instructed that no tolerance is to be given to this type of play. Unsportsmanlike fouls are enforced as dead ball fouls. General Application

- 1) The penalty for an unsportsmanlike foul is always applied at the spot where the ball would next be put on play:
- 2) If the foul occurs during a scoring play, the score shall count and penalty shall be applied at the spot where the ball would next be put on play. Non-offending team can choose the following spots
  - a) After a touchdown, it may be penalized on the point after touchdown or on the first scrimmage play after the subsequent kickoff and
  - b) After a successful point after touchdown, penalize on the first scrimmage play after the subsequent kickoff.
  - c) All kickoffs shall be from the goal line, and any penalty which would move the kickoff to another yard line shall be enforced on the first scrimmage play after the kickoff.

Note: Any player or coach disqualified from the game must leave the bench area and shall not return. Failure to do so will result in forfeit of the game for the offending team. The player or coach who was disqualified will be suspended the following game. If any one player or coach is disqualified twice in the current season, they will be suspended for the rest of the year including playoffs.

#### B. Rough Play

- 1) A player shall be penalized and disqualified from any further game participation for any act of rough play against an opponent. Fouls for rough play, whether during a live ball or during a dead ball are enforced as dead ball fouls. These include, but are not limited to:

- a) Striking or swinging at an opponent with a fist, hand, knee, or elbow in any manner whether physical contact is made, or
- b) Kicking or kicking at an opponent whether or not physical contact is made, or
- c) Any act or action considered by the Referee to warrant disqualification.

Note: Any player or coach disqualified from the game must leave the bench area and shall not return. Failure to do so will result in forfeit of the game for the offending team. The player or coach who was disqualified will be suspended the following game. If any one player or coach is disqualified twice in the current season, they will be suspended for the rest of the year including playoffs.

#### C. Objectionable/ Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- 1) Any player or coach may be penalized for any act, which, in the opinion of the officials, is objectionable conduct. Objectionable/Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls are enforced as dead ball fouls. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - a) Verbal abuse or objectionable gestures directed at opponents, officials, or spectators.
  - b) Throwing the ball at an opponent, official, or an occupant in the opponent's bench area.
  - c) Interfering with the placement of the official's flag marking the spot of a foul.
  - d) Continued objectionable conduct after a penalty has been applied

Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Foul – 10 yards

#### D. Disqualifications

- 1) Any player may be disqualified, and substitution permitted, for any act of rough play, or excessive objectionable or unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 2) A player shall be disqualified for a second foul in the same game for rough play or excessive objectionable or unsportsmanlike conduct. A coach shall be disqualified for a second unsportsmanlike.
- 3) Any player who is ejected the first time during the season for fighting will be fined a game fee. If he is ejected for fighting during the remainder of the season he will be fined a game fee and suspended for the next game. Substitution will be permitted in both cases.

Note: The definition of fighting is the swinging at and hitting or the swinging at and missing of an opponent.

Penalty: Excessive Misconduct or Unsportsmanlike Infraction – 10 yards plus disqualification.

Any player or coach disqualified from the game must leave the bench area and shall not return. Failure to do so will result in forfeit of the game for the offending team. The player or coach who was disqualified will be suspended the following game. If any one player or coach is disqualified twice in the current season, they will be suspended for the rest of the year including playoffs.

**ARTICLE 7**  
**APPLICATION OF PENALTIES**

**7.1 Definition**

A. Loss of Down

- 1) In any penalty “loss of a down” means that the down upon which the foul occurred is not repeated.

B. Spots

- 1) The enforcement spots are: the previous spot, the spot of the foul, the succeeding spot and the spot where the run or scrimmage kick ends.

C. Enforcement Spots

- 1) Dead ball - The enforcement spot for a foul committed when the ball is dead is the succeeding spot
- 2) Snap - The enforcement spot for fouls occurring simultaneously with a snap is the previous spot
- 3) Free kick - The enforcement spot for fouls occurring simultaneously with the free kick, or penalties carried over from a touchdown or point after attempt is the spot where the ball will next be put in play following the kick-off.
- 4) Running plays - The basic enforcement spots for fouls that occur during a running play in the field of play or end zone are as follows:
  - a) When the run ends beyond the neutral zone, the basic enforcement spot is the end of the related run (Exceptions: Offensive team facemask, illegal use of hands, holding and illegal blocks and personal fouls, behind the neutral zone, are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind the offensive team’s goal line.)
  - b) When the run ends behind the neutral zone before a change of team possession, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot (Exceptions: Offensive team facemask, illegal use of hands, holding and illegal blocks and personal fouls, behind the neutral zone, are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind the offensive team’s goal line.)
  - c) When there is no neutral zone, the basic enforcement spot is the end of the related run.
- 5) Pass play - The basic enforcement spot for fouls during a legal forward pass play is the previous spot. Exceptions:
  - a) Roughing the passer enforcement on a completed forward pass from the end of the last run when that run ends beyond the neutral zone, and there is no change of team possession during the down.)
  - b) Offensive team facemask, illegal use of hands, holding and illegal blocks and personal fouls, behind the neutral zone, are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind the offensive team’s goal line.
- 6) Kick plays - The basic enforcement spot for fouls that occur during a legal free kick or scrimmage kick play before possession is gained or regained or the ball is declared dead by rule is the previous spot.  
Exceptions:
  - a) Interference with the opportunity to make a catch - spot foul
  - b) A block or foul after a valid, invalid or illegal fair catch signal by a Team B player who signaled for a fair catch during a free kick and had not touched the ball - spot foul
- 7) Post scrimmage kick enforcement: The enforcement spot is the spot where the kick ends when Team B fouls occur
  - a) During a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the neutral zone;

- b) Three or more yards beyond the neutral zone;
  - c) Before the end of the kick;
  - d) When team A does not have possession of the ball when the down ends.
  - e) Team B fouls behind the post scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.
  - f) Offensive team facemask, illegal use of hands, holding and illegal blocks and personal fouls, behind the neutral zone, are enforced from the previous spot. Safety if the foul occurs behind the offensive team's goal line.
- 8) Behind the goal line
- a) The enforcement spot is the goal line for fouls by the opponents of the team in possession after a change of team possession (not on a try) in the field of play when the run ends behind the goal line.
  - b) The basic enforcement spot is the 5 yard line for fouls that occur after a change of team possession (not on a try) in the end zone and the ball remains in the end zone where it is declared dead.
  - c) The enforcement spot is the goal line for fouls by the opponents of the team in possession after a change of team possession in the end zone (not on a try) when the run ends behind the goal line and any subsequent loose ball is recovered in the field of play.
- 9) Fouls during or after a touchdown, field goal or try
- a) Dead ball or unsportsmanlike fouls on a successful touchdown or after the touchdown and before the ball is ready for play on the try may either be enforced on the succeeding try or the first scrimmage play following the subsequent kick-off;
  - b) Defensive pass interference fouls on the try are penalized half the distance to the goal line, or if the try is successful the penalty is declined;
  - c) Live ball fouls on scoring plays (touchdowns and field goals) will be penalized by rule. To accept a score, the penalty must be declined. A successful field goal may be cancelled and the penalty enforced by rule.
  - d) Fouls during and after a try are penalized on the first scrimmage play following the subsequent kick-off;
- 10) Half the Distance Enforcement Procedures
- a) No distance penalty, including tries, shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.

## **7.2 Penalty Enforcement Fundamentals**

- A. Any penalty may be declined, but a disqualified player must be removed.
- B. When a foul is committed, the penalty shall be completed before the ball is declared ready for play for the next down.
- C. A foul that occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick is considered as having occurred during that down.
- D. When two or more live-ball fouls are committed by the same team, they are called multiple fouls, and the referee shall explain the alternative penalties to the field captain of the offended team, who may then elect to accept only one of the penalties.

- E. If live ball fouls are committed by both teams, they are called double fouls, and each such foul is an offsetting foul, the penalties cancel each other and the down is replayed. (Exception: When there is a change of possession during the down or at the end of the down by rule, the team last gaining possession may decline offsetting fouls and thereby retain possession after completion of the penalty for its infraction if it had not fouled before its last gaining possession.
- F. When Team B's foul calls for post scrimmage kick enforcement, Team B may decline offsetting fouls and accept post scrimmage kick enforcement.
- G. Any dead ball fouls, or a live ball foul which is administered as a dead-ball foul, do not offset and all such dead ball or live ball fouls are administered enforced separately and in their order of occurrence.
- H. When a live ball is committed by one team and one or more dead ball fouls are committed by either team, both the live ball and dead ball fouls are enforced, in the order of their occurrence, provided that the live ball is enforced first.

### **7.3 IIFA Summary of Penalties:**

- A. LOSS OF DOWN
  - 1) Illegal forward pass or handing
  - 2) Intentionally grounding
  
- B. Five (5) YARD PENALTIES
  - 1) Delay of Game
  - 2) Coach interference / Coach field violation
  - 3) Illegal Substitution
  - 4) Illegal motion
  - 5) Offensive motion man in the box at the snap
  - 6) Defensive man in box at the snap
  - 7) Blitzing infraction
  - 8) Illegal defense
  - 9) Illegal formation
  - 10) Illegal numbering
  - 11) Illegal procedure
  - 12) Snap infraction
  - 13) False start
  - 14) Offsides
  - 15) Encroachment
  - 16) Illegal forward pass/handing
  - 17) Ineligible receiver downfield
  - 18) Illegal touching
  - 19) Kick catch interference (halo)
  - 20) Any equipment violations
  - 21) Minor facemask violation
  - 22) Running into the kicker/holder

C. Ten (10) YARD PENALTIES

- 1) Holding
- 2) Tripping
- 3) Aiding the runner
- 4) Block in the Back
- 5) Illegal Participation
- 6) Illegal block (below waist, chop, cut or crack back)
- 7) Clipping
- 8) Personal foul (including roughing the passer/kicker/holder)
- 9) Unnecessary roughness or fighting
- 10) Face Mask - grasping and twisting
- 11) Piling on (late hit) - live ball
- 12) Illegal contact out of bounds
- 13) Illegal contact above the shoulders
- 14) Illegal contact with snapper
- 15) Butt blocking, face tackle, spearing
- 16) Offensive pass interference
- 17) Illegal kicking or Illegal batting
- 18) Illegal batting
- 19) Pyramiding (use another player's body for advantage)
- 20) Unsportsmanlike (misconduct) including any contact with an official
- 21) DISQUALIFICATION
- 22) Fighting
- 23) Two unsportsmanlike fouls
- 24) Contact with an official
- 25) Flagrant live ball fouls
- 26) Hurdling
- 27) Defensive pass interference or illegal contact with an eligible receiver
- 28) Unnecessary roughness/personal foul on defense, including:
- 29) Striking, kicking, kneeing, elbowing, etc
- 30) Piling on, late hit
- 31) Facemask
- 32) Helmet contact (spearing, butt blocking, face tackling)
- 33) Illegal contact to the head/helmet
- 34) Roughing the passer/kicker/holder

D. SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT

- 1) Defensive pass interference, spot foul and automatic first down, Ball is spotted at the spot of foul
- 2) Pass Interference in the end zone - place on 2 yard line
- 3) Offside on kick-off, dead ball foul, 5 yards enforced on the first scrimmage down after the kick-off
- 4) Coach interference - at least 5 yards, up to awarding a score (loss of privilege to be on the field)
- 5) Penalties occurring after a change of possession in overtime
- 6) By Team B: No score by B can occur
- 7) By Team A: Penalties are automatically declined and Team B is awarded its team Possession on the 25-yard line
- 8) By both teams: Penalties are automatically declined and the down is NOT replayed
- 9) Exception: Dead ball fouls or live ball fouls enforced as dead ball fouls, which are enforced at the succeeding spot.