**2024 NFHS Rule Book –** **Rule 2 – Definitions of Playing Terms**

**SECTION 1 STATUS OF BALL - DEAD, LIVE, LOOSE**

ART. 1 ... A dead ball is a ball not in play: The ball is dead during the interval between downs.

ART. 2 ... A live ball is a ball in play. A ball becomes live when the ball has been legally snapped or free kicked and a down is in progress.

ART. 3 ... A loose ball is a pass, fumble, or a kick. The terms "pass," "fumble" and "kick" are sometimes used as abbreviations when the ball is loose following the acts of passing, fumbling, or kicking the ball. A loose ball which has not yet touched the ground is in flight. A grounded loose ball is one which has touched the ground. Any loose ball continues to be a loose ball until a player secures possession of it or until it becomes dead by rule, whichever comes first.

**SECTION 2 BATTING**

Batting is intentionally slapping or striking the ball with the arm or hand.

**SECTION 3 BLOCKING**

ART. 1 ... Blocking is obstructing an opponent by contacting him with any part of the blocker's body.

ART. 2 ... In blocking, a player may contact opponents with the arms or hands provided the technique is legal. The legal techniques are as follows:

a. Closed or cupped hand technique:

1. The elbows may be inside or outside the shoulders.

2. The hands must be closed or cupped with the palms not facing the opponent.

3. The forearms are extended no more than 45 degrees from the body.

b. Open hand technique. The hand(s) shall be:

1. In advance of the elbow.

2. Inside the frame of the blocker's body; the frame of the blocker's body is the front of the body at or below the shoulders.

3. Inside the frame of the opponent's body, except when the opponent turns his back to the blocker during the block or after the blocker is committed to his charge. The frame of the opponent's body is at the shoulders or below other than the back.

4. At or below the shoulders of the blocker and the opponent, except when the opponent squats, ducks or submarines during the block or after the blocker is committed to his charge.

5. Open, when the palm(s) are facing the frame of the opponent or when the forearms are extended beyond the 45 degree angle from the body.

ART. 3 ... The blocker's hand(s) may not be locked, nor may he swing, throw, or flip the elbow or forearm so that it is moving faster than the blocker's shoulders at the time the elbow, forearm, or shoulder contacts the opponent. The blocker may not initiate contact with his arm or hand against an opponent above the opponent's shoulder, but he may use his hand or arm to break a fall or maintain his balance.

ART. 4 ... An offensive player may also use his hands or arms:

a. When he is a runner, to ward off or push any player.

b. During a kick, to ward off an opponent who is attempting to block him.

c. To push, pull or ward off an opponent when the ball is loose if he may legally touch or possess the ball if such contact is not pass interference, a personal foul or illegal use of hands.

ART. 5 ... A defensive player may also:

a. Use unlocked hands, hand, or arm to ward off an opponent who is blocking him or is attempting to block him.

b. Push, pull or ward off an opponent in an actual attempt to get at the runner or a loose ball if such contact is not pass interference, a personal foul or illegal use of hands.

**NOTE:** When a player simulates possession of the ball, reasonable allowance may be made for failure of the defense to discover the deception. This does not cancel the responsibility of any defensive player to exercise reasonable caution in avoiding any unnecessary contact.

ART. 6 ... When a player on defense uses a hand or arm, the hand must be in advance of the elbow at the time of the contact and at the shoulder or below unless the opponent squats, ducks, or submarines.

ART. 7 ... Blocking below the waist is making initial contact below the waist from the front or side against an opponent other than a runner. Contact with an opponent's hand(s) below the waist that continues into the body below the waist is considered blocking below the waist. Blocking below the waist applies only when the opponent has one or both feet on the ground.

ART. 8 ... Chop block is a combination block by two or more teammates against an opponent other than the runner, with or without delay, where one of the blocks is below the waist and one of the blocks is above the waist.

ART. 9 ... Interlocked blocking occurs when one player grasps or encircles a teammate just prior to or while blocking an opponent.

ART. 10 ... A blindside block is a block against an opponent other than the runner, who does not see the blocker approaching.

**SECTION 4 CATCH**

ART. 1 ... A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball which is in flight, and first contacting the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball or having the forward progress of the player in possession stopped while the opponent is carrying the player who is in possession and inbounds.

ART. 2 ... Catching is always preceded by touching the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance.

ART. 3 ... A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch or recovery in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds.

**SECTION 5 CLIPPING/BLOCKING IN THE BACK**

ART. 1 ... Clipping is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is from behind, at or below the waist, and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner.

ART. 2 ... Blocking in the back is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is in the opponent's back, inside the shoulders and below the helmet and above the waist, and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner.

**SECTION 6 CONFERENCES**

ART. 1 ... Coach-Referee Conference - The referee confers with the coach at the sideline in front of his team box in the field of play.

ART. 2 … Authorized Team Conference - There are two types of authorized team conferences:

a. Outside 9-Yard Mark Conference - One or more team members and one or more coaches directly in front of the team box within 9 yards of the sideline; or

b. Between 9-Yard Mark Conference- One coach on the field to confer with no more than 11 players at his team's huddle between the 9-yard marks.

**SECTION 7 DOWN - LOSS OF DOWN**

ART. 1 ... A down is action which starts with a legal snap (beginning a scrimmage down) or when the ball is kicked on a free kick (beginning a free kick down). A down ends when the ball next becomes dead.

ART. 2 ... Loss of a down is the loss of the right to replay a down.

**SECTION 8 ENCROACHMENT**

ART. 1 ... Encroachment occurs when a player is illegally in the neutral zone during the time interval starting at the ready-for-play and until the ball is snapped or free kicked as in 7-1-1, 7-1-5 or 7-1-6. For the purposes of enforcing encroachment re­ strictions, an entering substitute is not considered to be a player until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone.

ART. 2 ... Encroachment also occurs when a player violates the free kick restrictions as in 6-1-3a.

**SECTION 9 FAIR CATCH**

ART. 1 ... A fair catch is a catch by a receiver of a freekick in or beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, or of a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, after a valid signal, under conditions in which the receiver forfeits the right to advance the ball in return for protection from being blocked or tackled by art opponent.

ART. 2 ... An awarded fair catch occurs when the offended team chooses to take the ball after enforcement of a foul for kick-catching interference.

ART. 3 ... A valid fair-catch signal is the extending and lateral waving of one arm, at full arm's length above the head, by any R player.

ART. 4 ... An invalid fair-catch signal is any signal by a receiver before the kick is caught or recovered:

a. That does not meet the requirements of a valid signal.

b. After the kick has touched a receiver.

c. After the kick has touched the ground.

ART. 5 ... An illegal fair-catch signal is any signal by a runner:

a. After the kick has been caught.

b. After the kick has been recovered.

**SECTION 10 FIELD AREAS**

ART. 1 ... The field is the area within the boundary lines.

ART. 2 ... The field of play is the area within sidelines and the goal lines.

ART. 3 ... The side zones are the areas bounded by the sidelines, the hash marks, and the goal lines.

ART. 4 ... The end zones are 10 yards in depth and are located at each end of the field between the goal line and the end line. The goal line is in the end zone and a team's end zone is the one it is defending.

**SECTION 11 FIGHTING**

Fighting is any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage a player or nonplayer in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.

**SECTION 12 FIRST TOUCHING**

ART. 1 ... During a free kick it is first touching if the ball is touched in the field of play by any K player before it crosses R's free-kick line and before it is touched there by any R player.

ART. 2 ... During a scrimmage kick it is first touching if the ball is touched by any K player in the field of play and beyond the expanded neutral zone before it is touched there by Rand before the ball has come to rest.

**SECTION 13 FORCE**

ART. 1 ... Force is the result of energy exerted by a player which provides movement of the ball. The term force is used only in connection with the goal line and in only one direction, i.e., from the field of play into the end zone. Initial force results from a carry, fumble, kick, pass or snap. After a fumble, kick or backward pass has been grounded, a new force may result from a bat, an illegal kick, or a muff.

ART. 2 ... Responsibility for forcing the ball from the field of play across a goal line is attributed to the player who carries, snaps, passes, fumbles, or kicks the ball, unless a new force is applied to either a kick, fumble or backward pass that has been grounded.

ART. 3 ... The muffing or batting of a pass, kick or fumble in flight is not considered a new force.

ART. 4 ... Force is not a factor:

a. On kicks going into R's end zone, since these kicks are always a touchback

regardless of who supplied the force.

b. When a backward pass or fumble is declared dead in the end zone of the opponent of the player who passed or fumbled, with no player possession.

**SECTION 14 FORMATIONS**

ART. 1 ... A scrimmage formation requires a minimum of five A players legally on their line at the snap.

ART. 2 ... A scrimmage kick formation is one in which no player is in position

to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs, and at the snap, either:

a. A player is in position with a knee on the ground 7 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage, in position to be the holder and receive the long snap and with another player 3 yards or less behind that player in position to attempt a place kick; or

b. A player is 10 yards or more behind the line of scrimmage and in position

to receive the long snap.

ART. 3 ... A free-kick formation is a formation used for a free-kick down. Following the ready-for-play for a free-kick down and until the ball is kicked:

a. All R players must be behind their free-kick line.

b. All K players, other than the kicker and holder, must be behind their free­kick line.

**SECTION 15 FORWARD PROGRESS**

ART. 1 ... Forward progress is the end of advancement of the ball, toward the opponent's goal, in a runner's possession or the forward-most point of the ball when it is fumbled out of bounds, and it determines the dead-ball spot.

ART. 2 ... When an airborne player makes a catch, forward progress is the furthest point of advancement after he possesses the ball if contacted by a defender.

**SECTION 16 FOULS AND PENALTIES**

ART. 1 ... A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.

ART. 2 ... Types of fouls are:

a. Dead ball - a foul which occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before the ball is next snapped or free kicked.

b. Double - one or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed by each team at such a time that the penalties offset.

c. Flagrant - a foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury, and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.

d. Live Ball - a foul which occurs during a down.

e. Multiple - two or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team at such a time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.

f. Nonplayer or unsportsmanlike - a noncontact (other than unintentional contact as specified in 9-4-8) foul while the ball is dead or during the down which is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.

g. Player - a foul (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) by a player in the game hereafter referred to as a foul.

h. Post-scrimmage kick - a foul by R (other than an illegal substitution or illegal participation foul that occurs at the snap) when the foul occurs:

1. During scrimmage kick plays, other than a try or successful field goal.

2. During a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the expanded neutral zone.

3. Beyond the expanded neutral zone.

4. Before the end of a kick.

5. And K will not be next to put the ball in play.

i. Simultaneous with the snap - an act which becomes a foul when the ball is snapped or free kicked.

ART. 3 ... No foul causes loss of the ball.

ART. 4 ... No foul causes a live ball to become dead.

ART. 5 ... A penalty is a result imposed by rule against a team or team member that has committed a foul.

ART. 6 ... Game situations which produce results somewhat similar to penalties, but which are not classified as fouls are: disqualification of a player, first touching of a kick by K and forfeiture of a game.

**SECTION 17 FREE-BLOCKING ZONE - LEGAL BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST AND LEGAL BLOCK IN THE BACK**

ART. 1 ... The free-blocking zone is a rectangular area extending laterally 4 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage. A player is in the free-blocking zone when any part of his body is in the zone at the snap.

ART. 2 - Blocking below the waist is permitted in the free-blocking zone when the following conditions are met:

a. All players involved in the blocking are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap.

b. The contact is in the zone.

c. The block is an immediate, initial action following the snap.

ART. 3 ... Blocking in the back is permitted in the free-blocking zone when the following conditions are met:

a. By offensive linemen who are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap.

b. Against defensive players who are in the zone at the snap.

c. The contact is in the zone.

ART. 4 ... The free-blocking zone disintegrates and the exception for an offensive lineman to block in the back is not to continue after the ball has left the zone.

**SECTION 18 FUMBLE**

A fumble is any loss of player possession other than by handing, passing or legal kick.

**SECTION 19 HANDING**

ART. 1 ... Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one player to a teammate in such a way that the ball is still in contact with the first player when it is touched by the teammate. Handing the ball is not a pass. Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of attempted handing is a fumble.

ART. 2 ... Forward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when the entire ball is beyond the yard line where the runner is positioned.

ART. 3 ... Backward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when any part of the ball is on or behind the yard line where the runner is positioned.

**SECTION 20 HELMET CONTACT - ILLEGAL, TARGETING**

ART. 1 ... Illegal helmet contact is an act of initiating contact with the helmet against an opponent. There are several types of illegal helmet contact:

a. Butt Blocking is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent who is not a runner with the front of his helmet.

b. Face Tackling is an act by a defensive player who initiates contact against a runner with the front of his helmet.

c. Spearing is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent at the shoulders or below with the crown (top portion) of his helmet.

ART. 2 ... Targeting is an act by any player who takes aim and initiates contact against an opponent above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow, or shoulders.

**SECTION 21 HUDDLE**

A huddle is two or more players of the same team grouped together before a down.

**SECTION 22 HURDLING**

Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump (hurdle) with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one or both feet.

**SECTION 23 INTERCEPTION**

An interception is the catch of an opponent's fumble or pass.

**SECTION 24 KICKS**

ART. 1 ... A kick is the intentional striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg, or foot.

ART. 2 ... A kick ends when a player gains possession or when the ball becomes dead while not in player possession.

ART. 3 ... A free kick is any kick which puts the ball in play to start a free kick down. After the ready-for-play and before the kick, each player other than the kicker and holder for a place kick must be behind his free-kick line. A free kick is used for a kickoff, for a kick following a safety, and is used if a free kick is chosen following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

ART. 4 ... A scrimmage kick is any kick from in or behind the neutral zone during a scrimmage down. Either a place kick, punt, or drop kick may be used. For a place kick, the ball must be controlled on the ground or on a legal kicking tee by a teammate.

ART. 5 ... A kickoff is a free kick which puts the ball in play at the beginning of each half of the game, after a successful field goal and after any try. A place kick or a drop kick shall be used for the kickoff.

ART. 6 ... A drop kick is a legal kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it when it touches the ground or as it is rising from the ground. A drop kick may be used for a scrimmage kick, a kickoff, a free kick following a safety or for a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

ART. 7 ... A place kick is a legal kick made while the ball is in a fixed position on the ground or on a kicking tee. No material or device may be placed on the ground to improve the kicker's footing. The ball also may be held in position on the ground or on a kicking tee by a place-kick holder who shall be a teammate of the kicker. A place kick may be used for a scrimmage kick, a kickoff, a free kick following a safety or for a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

ART. 8 ... A punt is a legal kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it before it has touched the ground. A punt may be used for a free kick following a safety or for a scrimmage kick.

ART. 9 ... An illegal kick is any intentional striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot which does not comply with Articles 3 and 4. When the ball is loose following an illegal kick, it retains the same status as prior to the illegal kick.

ART. 10 ... A pop-up kick is a free kick in which the kicker drives the ball immediately into the ground, the ball strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of a ball kicked directly off the tee.

**SECTION 25 LINE OF SCRIMMAGE**

ART. 1 ... The line of scrimmage for each team is a vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. It is determined at the ready-for-play and remains until the next ready-for-play.

ART. 2 ... An offensive player is on his line of scrimmage when he complies with the position requirements of a lineman.

ART. 3 ... A defensive player is on his line of scrimmage when he is within 1 yard of his scrimmage line at the snap.

**SECTION 26 LINES**

ART. 1 ... The boundary lines are the end lines and sidelines and are out of bounds.

ART. 2 ... The end line is the outer limit of each end zone.

ART. 3 ... The goal line is the vertical plane which separates the field of play from the end zone. When related to a live ball in a runner's possession (touching inbounds) while the ball is over the out-of-bounds area, the goal line includes the extension beyond the sidelines. A team's own goal line is the one it is defending.

ART. 4 ... The hash marks are a series of marks parallel with the sidelines which divide the field of play longitudinally into thirds. The hash marks shall be marked so that they are bisected by the yard-lines.

ART. 5 ... The line to gain is the yard line established when a new series (first down) is awarded. Unless there is a penalty following the ready-for-play, the line to gain is 10 yards in advance of the foremost point of the ball when placed for the first down of the series. If the line to gain extends into the end zone, the goal line is the line to gain.

ART. 6 ... The sideline is the lateral limit of the field of play and the end zones. It extends from one end line to the other.

ART. 7 ... A yard line is any line and its vertical plane parallel to the end lines. The yard lines marked or unmarked, in the field of play are numbered in yards from a team's own goal line to the middle of the field.

ART. 8 ... A restraining line is a line placed around the outside of the field. No person, including but not limited to, spectators, game administrators or members of the media, shall be allowed within the restraining line. A maximum of three coaches as well as permitted nonplayers are allowed within the restraining line in front of the team box, as provided for in Rule 9-8-3.

**SECTION 27 MUFF**

A muff is the touching of a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession.

**SECTION 28 NEUTRAL ZONE**

ART. 1 ... The neutral zone is the space between the two free-kick lines during a free-kick down and between the two scrimmage lines during a scrimmage down. For a free kick down, the neutral zone is 10 yards wide and for a scrimmage down it is as wide as the length of the football. It is established when the ball is ready for play.

ART. 2 … The neutral zone may be expanded following the snap up to a maximum of 2 yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage, inside the boundary lines, during any scrimmage down. If a scrimmage kick occurs, the neutral zone shall not be expanded into the end zone.

**SECTION 29 OUT OF BOUNDS**

ART. 1 ... A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official that is on or outside the sideline or end line, and that player remains out of bounds until returning to the field of play with any body part touching the field and no body part touching out of bounds.

ART. 2 ... A ball in player possession is out of bounds when the runner or the ball touches anything other than another player or game official that is on or outside a sideline or end line.

ART. 3 ... A loose ball is out of bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official that is out of bounds.

**SECTION 30 PARTICIPATION**

Participation is any act or action by a player or nonplayer that has an influence on play.

**SECTION 31 PASSING**

ART. 1 ... Passing the ball is throwing a ball that is in player possession. In a pass, the ball travels in flight.

ART. 2 ... A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line.

**NOTE:** Prior to releasing the ball on a pass, if the potential passer is contacted, and the ball is released, it is a forward pass if his arm was moving forward on contact.

ART. 3 ... A forward pass has gone beyond the neutral zone if at any time during the pass, the entire ball is beyond the neutral zone.

ART. 4 ... A forward pass ends when it is caught, touches the ground or is out of bounds.

ART. 5 ... A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the runner's end line.

ART. 6 ... A backward pass ends when it is caught or recovered or is out of bounds.

**SECTION 32 PLAYER DESIGNATIONS**

ART. 1 ... A player is one of the 22 team members who is designated to start either half of the game or who subsequently replaces another player. A player continues to be a player until a substitute enters the field and indicates to the player that he is replaced, or when the substitute otherwise becomes a player.

ART. 2 ... A player of Team A is A1, and teammates are A2 and A3. Other abbreviations are B1 for a player of Team B, K1 for a player of the kickers and R1 for one of the receivers.

ART. 3 ... A back is any A player who has no part of his body breaking the plane of an imaginary line drawn parallel to the line of scrimmage through the waist of the nearest teammate who is legally on the line, except for the player under the snapper, who is also considered a back.

ART. 4 ... An offensive blocker is a player who is blocking or in position to block by being between the potential tackler and the runner.

ART. 5 ... A captain of a team is a player designated to represent his team during:

a. The pregame and overtime coin toss. (Limit of four captains in game uniform.)

b. Penalty decisions following a foul (if designated by the head coach, as in 1-4-4).

c. Ball placement on a try, a kickoff, after a safety, after a fair catch or awarded fair catch, after a touchback and to start an overtime.

ART. 6 ... A disqualified player is a player barred from further participation in a game.

ART. 7 ... A holder is a player who controls the ball on the ground or on a kicking tee.

ART. 8 ... A kicker is any player who legally punts, drop kicks or place kicks. A player becomes a kicker when his knee, lower leg or foot makes contact with the ball. He continues to be the kicker until he has had reasonable opportunity to regain his balance or until after a free kick, he has advanced 5 yards beyond his free kick line, or the kick has touched the ground or any other player.

ART. 9 ... A lineman is any A player who is facing his opponent's goal line with the line of his shoulders approximately parallel thereto and with his head or foot breaking an imaginary plane drawn parallel to the line of scrimmage through the waist of the snapper when the ball is snapped.

ART. 10 ... A nonplayer is a coach, athletic trainer, other attendant, a substitute or a replaced player who does not participate by touching the ball, hindering an opponent or influencing the play. See 9-6 for illegal participation.

ART. 11 ... A passer is a player who throws a legal forward pass. He continues to be a passer until the legal forward pass ends or until he moves to participate in the play.

ART. 12 ... A replaced player is one who has been notified by a substitute that he is to leave the field. A player is also replaced when the entering substitute becomes a player.

ART. 13 ... A runner is a player who is in possession of a live ball or is simulating possession of a live ball.

ART. 14 ... A snapper is the player who is facing his opponent's goal line with his shoulders approximately parallel thereto and who snaps the ball. In a scrimmage-kick formation, the snapper remains a snapper until he has had a reasonable opportunity to regain his balance and protect himself or until he blocks or moves to otherwise participate in the play.

ART. 15 … A substitute is a team member who may replace a player or fill a player vacancy. A substitute becomes a player when he enters the field and communicates with a teammate or a game official, enters the huddle, is positioned in a formation, or participates in the play. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone. A team member entering the field to fill a player vacancy remains a substitute until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone.

ART. 16 ... A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury. A player is no longer defenseless once the player’s physical position and focus of concentration no longer makes the player especially vulnerable to injury. A player who initiates contact against a defenseless player is responsible for making legal contact. When in question, a player is defenseless.

Examples of defenseless players include, but are not limited to:

a. A passer;

b. A receiver attempting to catch a pass who has not had time to clearly become a runner;

c. The intended receiver of a pass in the action during and immediately following an interception or potential interception;

d. A receiver in (b) and (c) above, including the person intercepting the pass, who is forcefully contacted by an opponent and that contact is not:

1. Incidental contact as a result of making a play on the ball;

2. Initiated with open hands; or

3. An attempt to tackle by wrapping arm(s) around the receiver.

e. A runner already in the grasp of a tackler and whose forward progress has been stopped;

f. A kickoff or punt returner attempting to catch or recover a kick, or one who has completed a catch or recovery and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a runner;

g. A player on the ground including a runner who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet-first;

h. A player obviously out of the play or not in the immediate vicinity of the runner; and

i. A player who receives a blindside block with forceful contact not initiated with open hands.

**SECTION 33 PLAYS - FOR PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

ART. 1 ... A loose-ball play is action during:

a. A free kick or scrimmage kick other than post-scrimmage kick fouls.

b. A legal forward pass.

c. A backward pass (including the snap), an illegal kick or fumble made by A from in or behind the neutral zone prior to a change of team possession.

d. The run or runs which precedes such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble.

ART. 2 ... A running play is any action not included in Article 1, including the related run as in 2-41-9b.

**SECTION 34 POSSESSION**

ART:1 ... A ball in player possession is a live ball held or controlled by a player after it has been handed or snapped to him, or after he has caught or recovered it.

ART. 2 ... A ball in team possession is a live ball which is in player possession or one which is loose following loss of such player possession. A live ball is always in the possession of a team.

ART. 3 ... A change of possession occurs when the opponent gains player possession during the down.

**SECTION 35 READY-FOR-PLAY**

Ready-for-play signifies that the ball may be put in play by a snap or a free kick with 25 seconds or 40 seconds on the play clock.

**SECTION 36 RECOVERY**

ART. 1 ... A recovery is gaining possession of a live ball after it strikes the ground. An airborne player has completed a recovery when he first contacts the ground inbounds with the ball in his possession.

ART. 2 ... A simultaneous recovery is a recovery where there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing inbounds players.

**SECTION 37 RULE**

A rule is one of the groups of regulations which govern the game. A rule sometimes states what a player may do, but if there is no such statement for a given act (such as faking a kick), it is assumed that he may do what is not prohibited. In like manner, a rule sometimes states or implies that the ball is dead or that a foul is involved. If it does not, it is assumed that the ball is live and that no foul has occurred. If a foul is mentioned, it is assumed that it is not part of a double or multiple foul unless so stated or implied.

**SECTION 38 SCRIMMAGE**

Scrimmage is the action of the two teams during a down which begins with a legal snap.

**SECTION 39 SHIFT**

A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

**SECTION 40 SNAP**

ART. 1 ... A snap is the legal act of passing or handing the ball backward from its position on the ground.

ART. 2 ... The snap begins when the snapper first moves the ball legally other than in adjustment. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the ball during which the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches a back or the ground before it touches an A lineman.

ART. 3 ... The snap ends when the ball touches the ground or any player.

**SECTION 41 SPOTS**

ART. 1 ... The basic spot is a point of reference for penalty enforcement. (10-4)

ART. 2 ... The enforcement spot is the point from which a penalty is enforced.

ART. 3 ... The dead-ball spot is the spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule.

**EXCEPTION:** Rule 5-3-4

ART. 4 ... The inbounds spot is the intersection of the hash marks and the yard line:

a. Through the foremost point of the ball when the ball becomes dead in a side zone.

b. Through the foremost point of the ball on the sideline between the goal lines when a loose ball goes out of bounds.

c. Through the spot under the foremost point of the ball in possession of a runner when he crosses the plane of the sideline and goes out of bounds. **NOTE:** If a penalty measurement leaves the ball in a side zone, the new inbounds spot is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the ball after measurement.

ART. 5 ... The out-of-bounds spot is where the ball becomes dead because of going out of bounds, as in 4-3-1, 4-3-2, 4-3-3.

ART. 6 ... The post-scrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. R retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the post-scrimmage kick spot when a post-scrimmage foul occurs. Fouls by R behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

ART. 7 ... The previous spot is where the ball was last snapped or free kicked.

ART. 8 ... The spot of a foul is where the foul occurs. If a foul occurs out of bounds, the spot of the foul is at the intersection of the nearer hash mark and the yard line extended on which the foul occurs.

ART. 9 ... The spot where a run ends is:

a. Where the ball becomes dead in the runner's possession;

b. Where the runner loses player possession if his run is followed by a loose ball, but the related run (related running play) continues until the ball be­ comes dead or any player gains possession; or

c. The spot of the catch or recovery when the momentum rule is in effect.

ART. 10 ... The succeeding spot is where the ball would next be snapped or free kicked if a foul had not occurred. When a foul occurs during a down in which a touchdown is scored, as in Rules 8-2-2, 8-2-3, 8-2-4 and 8-2-5, the succeeding spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the subsequent kickoff.

**SECTION 42 TACKLING**

Tackling is the use of hands, arms, legs, or body by a defensive player in his attempt to hold a runner or to bring him to the ground.

**SECTION 43 TEAM DESIGNATIONS**

ART. 1 ... The offense is the team which is in possession of the ball. The opponent is the defense.

ART. 2 ... A is the team which puts the ball in play. The opponent is B.

ART. 3 ... K is the team which legally kicks the ball during the down. The opponent is R.

ART. 4 ... Team designations (A and B, K and R) are retained until the ball is next ready for play.

**SECTION 44 TOUCHING**

Touching refers to any contact with the ball, i.e., either by touching or being touched by it. Touching by a game official in the field of play or end zone is ignored.

**SECTION 45 TRIPPING**

Tripping is the intentional use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knee.