

# **ACREAGE BOYS FLAG FOOTBALL**



## **Rules and Regulations Handbook FALL 2025**

## **General Rules**

**Acreage Boys Flag Football League:** also referred to as **ABFF**.  
“Board” or “the Board” refers to the ABFF Board.

### **Must Play Rule:**

ABFF requires that every player registered with the league to have a certain percentage of playing time regardless of their ability. All players are to have either a starting position on Offense or Defense. The intent of the rule is that each player shall participate in 50% of the plays, at a minimum, regardless of skill level. The exception to the rule will be due to an injury or exhaustion. Special Team positions do not count as starting positions.

### **Scheduled Events:**

There will only be 3 allowed events per week. For example, 2 practices and one game or 1 practice and two games etc. Each practice is limited to 90 minutes.

\*\*If a Head Coach is found violating the above requirements, they will be suspended from the next game. Repeated violations will result in removal as Head Coach.

### **Divisions and Players:**

Peewee 4-5 years old

Freshman 6-7 years old

Junior Varsity 8-10

Varsity 11-13

Pro 14-19 (Must be in high school)

Division/Age alignment is subject to change based on final registration numbers. For example, Peewee may be combined with Freshman, or Freshman may be split with 6-year-olds going to Peewee and 7-year-olds going to JV.

Cutoff dates (players born on or after the cutoff date play in the younger division):

- ABFF September 1<sup>st</sup>

## **Sportsmanship Rules**

The following rules apply to the enforcement of Personal Foul and Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalties described in **Rule 9**.

1. (Player or Coach) A second Personal Foul or Unsportsmanlike Conduct act in the same game results in disqualification from that game and his/hers next game, including playoffs. The disqualified individual must immediately leave the playing area. They may not remain on the sideline or the immediate vicinity of the field. They may observe the remainder of the game from beyond the end zone or another part of the park. The disqualified individual is also now subject to immediate disqualification and a one game suspension for any subsequent Personal Foul or Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty they receive for the remainder of the season, including playoffs.
2. (Player or Coach) A Personal Foul or Unsportsmanlike Conduct act committed after the clock has expired, including during the last play of the game, carries over to the next game. That individual will begin the next game subject to immediate disqualification and a one-game suspension upon receiving any Personal Foul or Unsportsmanlike penalty in that game.
3. Players or Coaches receiving Unsportsmanlike Conduct/Personal Foul penalties will receive a written warning from the board.

## **Scheduling of Games:**

No later than the draft, head coaches are required to notify the league of any recurring scheduling conflicts that they wish to be taken into consideration when preparing the game schedule. There is no guarantee that these conflicts will be accommodated.

Preliminary schedules will be made available for coach review and comment for a limited time. Once finalized, there will be no changing of the game schedule unless weather or Covid-related, or other extenuating circumstances (e.g. double-booking a coach on two fields at one, field or referee availability, etc.). Schedule changes require AAL Board approval.

Games interrupted because of events beyond the control of the responsible administrative authority shall be considered complete if the interruption occurs after the completion of the first half. In such event, the existing score will be recorded as the final score. If the interruption occurs prior to the completion of the first half, the game will be recorded as rainout. The game may or may not be rescheduled at the discretion of the board, taking into consideration field/referee availability and other scheduling constraints. Exception: Playoff games will be continued from the point of interruption unless the teams agree to terminate the game with the existing score.

### **Sponsors:**

All (Head) coaches are required to have a sponsor for their team. If the coach cannot produce a sponsor for his/her team, their coaching privilege may be withdrawn the following season. The sponsor will have their company name printed on the uniform of their team in their respective division and on the back of all coach's shirt, receive a team plaque and their name will appear on the sponsor board posted in the park and on the league website.

**No team will receive any sponsor money back at the end of the season.**

### **Background Checks:**

All coaches and parents helping out on the fields must have passed a Level 2 Background Check and must be certified. Each team has a maximum of (3) background checks at no cost to the individual. Additional background checks will be charged a fee of \$60.00 each, payable by the parent/volunteer. Minors that request to help must be accompanied by their respective coach at all times.

### **Coach Information:**

No later than the draft, all head coaches are required to provide proof of completion of the following items:

1. Background check submittal
2. Complete "Heads-Up" concussion training, a free online course provided by the CDC
3. Complete a NAYS coach certification (annual fee)
4. Complete NAYS Bullying Prevention training
5. Complete NAYS Protecting Against Abuse training
6. Read the current season ABFF Rules and Regulations and sign an acknowledgement form

An equipment deposit is required at the draft in order to receive a league-supplied equipment bag, which will contain flags, ball(s), and cones. The deposit check will be held (not deposited) and returned to the coach at the end of the season when equipment bags are returned.

### **Team Placement/Refunds:**

Once a player is placed on a team, they are considered property of that team. If that player refuses to play for that team, a refund check will not be issued to that player. The player may not be moved to any other team or be placed on a waiting list during that season. If a player chooses to discontinue in the league after the draft a refund check will not be issued.

### **Miscellaneous Rules:**

1. All members and players must shake hands after each game as a show of good sportsmanship towards other members and players. Failure to comply can lead to a suspension.
2. Please remove all trash from playing fields, practice fields, parking lots and other areas directly following use.
3. There will be no use of tobacco products or vaping, alcohol during practices and games on the fields, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. SEE SPORT BYLAWS
4. No coach, player or member of the ABFF is permitted to bring any items to a permitted field within the Indian Trail District without approval from Indian Trails. Only approved sports equipment is permitted.
5. It is the intention of ABFF Board to maintain their Rules and Regulations congruent (to the extent practical) with each other and with USA 5v5 flag football rules.

### **Trophy Information:**

ABFF will provide trophies for....

Each Divisional winner

Each Super Bowl runner-up

Each Super Bowl winner

If there are only two teams in a division, only Super Bowl trophies will be provided.

### **Injured Player Policy**

#### **Coach Responsibility:**

1. If a player is injured during a game or practice, that player's coach must complete an injury form. Forms must be turned in to a board member within 24 hours of the injury. If protocol is not followed, ABFF has the right to sit out the Head Coach for the next scheduled game.
2. Any player that was injured and has missed any games and/or practices that required Doctor's care must have a doctor's note to resume playing.
3. Any player that shows any sign of a headache, nausea or shows evidence of limping, or any other signs of illness, may not practice or play in any games.
4. See **Rule 1 Section 4** for additional information regarding braces and padding.

*\*\*\*The health and wellbeing of the children must come first\*\*\**

**ABFF Board Responsibilities:**

1. Copies of the injury report must be given to an AAL Board member within 48 hours.
2. The ABFF President or Vice-President must receive a doctor's note releasing the player to return to normal activity before the player can resume playing in the league; parent's permission to resume playing is not adequate. Injuries which require a doctor's release are as follows:
  - a. A player wearing a brace or cast that was removed.
  - b. A player who has had stitches or staples/stitches removed.
  - c. A player that was removed from a practice or a game by ambulance.
  - d. A player that was attended to by a Paramedic during a practice or game.
  - e. A player that was ill and missed at least 2 weeks (14 days) of practice or games.
  - f. A player that had broken bones.
  - g. A player that was hospitalized.
  - h. A player that received professional medical attention due to an injury on/off the fields.

For additional information, see the Acreage Athletic League's Injured Player Policy available at <http://www.acreageathleticleague.org/about-us.html>, clicking on the "Sports Bylaws".

## ABFF Injury Report

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_

Player's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Coach: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_

When did injury happen (time and date)?

Practice

Game

Did Coach Witness

Accident? Yes No

Describe Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was Medical Care Required? Yes No

Name of Insurance Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Insured: \_\_\_\_\_

Coach's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ABFFF League Grievance Policy & Procedures**

SEE SPORT BYLAWS at <http://www.acreageathleticleague.org/about-us.html> for additional information

**Purpose:** To provide parents, players, and other league members an avenue to grieve Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, and other members of this Acreage Boys Flag Football League.

**Policy:** Members who are not satisfied with any Bylaw, Policy, Procedure, or other member of the Acreage Athletic League Executive Board must fill out a "Grievance Hearing Application." This application may be obtained from the League Secretary and must be submitted to the Vice President.

The Grievance Hearing will be held at a special meeting which will be called no later than 2 weeks after the application is submitted, at the convenience of the applicant and the Executive Board. The Parks Director may be asked to oversee the hearing to ensure fairness.

The Board will provide the applicant with any information or documentation requested which pertains to the grievance.

The committee reviewing the grievance will consist of the Executive Board members less any member to which the grievance may pertain.

The applicant must be present at the grievance hearing. He/she is responsible for bringing along any witness and supportive documentation pertaining to the grievance.

The outcome of the meeting will be based on a majority vote of the Board of Directors less any member to which the grievance may pertain.

If, after completing this procedure, the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, then and only then, he/she may apply for a Grievance Hearing with the Indian Trails Improvement District.

## Grievance Application

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Grievance:

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Draft/Freeze Rules:**

### **Freezes**

Freezes will be evaluated against the field of players in their respective division. These evaluations may be performed by independent evaluators, board members, randomly selecting coach evaluation sheet after the evaluations are complete, or some combination thereof. Any player frozen that does not attend the evaluations will automatically carry a grade of the strongest player.

Coaches are required to turn their list of freezes to the board no later than 48 hrs prior to the draft. Freezes will be announced to all coaches prior to the draft. ABFF requires written parental consent before their child may be frozen by a coach.

**ABFF:** Each team is allowed a maximum of ONE freeze unless a sibling link is applicable.

If a coach does not freeze their own child before the draft, they cannot pick them during the draft. Their child will be placed with a different coach, and they are not allowed to freeze any other players.

### **Siblings**

Siblings are defined as children that live in the same household. When the first sibling is drafted or frozen, all siblings of that family are assigned to that team.

When there is a single sibling link, the accompanying sibling is assigned to the next available draft slot of the appropriate gender, regardless of their evaluation performance.

When there are three or more siblings from the same family in a given division/draft, all will be graded during evaluations. When the first sibling is drafted, the accompanying siblings will fill that team's next available draft spots of the appropriate gender at the corresponding evaluation strength (or lower if none are available).

### **Blocking**

A player cannot block a coach that he/she has not played for already. To block a coach, a player must have a valid reason stated in writing to the ABFF board. The letter must be signed by a parent. After review, the board will determine if a block is warranted.

## Hat Picks

Any player that does not attend the tryout will be placed on a team by a “hat pick”. Hat pick players are NOT allowed to block the pick of any coach. A coach may “pick from the hat” during any round of the draft.

## Draft

Following evaluations, all divisions will have a draft to determine teams.

The draft order will be determined in advance of the draft by the board according to the evaluation strength (numerical score) of each team’s freezes from weakest (first) to strongest (last).

After the freezes have been evaluated and ranked (numerically scored) against the other players in the division and the draft order determined, they are given a rating of A, B, or C, with the top third in each gender being considered “A” players, the middle third as “B” players, and the bottom third as “C” players. The coaches’ draft sheet will then be filled out with their freezes taking the first available opening/openings in the appropriate round being either A, B, or C (see example below).

The draft order is the same for every round, i.e. “left to right”. There is no “snake draft”.

No players will be added to a roster after the draft unless determined to be a special circumstance voted on by the board.

| Coaches               |            |            |            |            | Rank<br>of<br>Round |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
|                       | coach<br>4 | coach<br>2 | coach<br>3 | coach<br>1 |                     |
| R<br>O<br>U<br>N<br>D | 1          |            |            | A          | A                   |
|                       | 2          |            |            |            | A                   |
|                       | 3          |            |            |            | A                   |
|                       | 4          | B          | B          |            | B                   |
|                       | 5          |            | B          |            | B                   |
|                       | 6          |            |            |            | B                   |
|                       | 7          | C          |            | C          | C                   |
|                       | 8          |            |            |            | C                   |
|                       | 9          |            |            |            | C                   |

| COACH FREEZES |            |            |            |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Coach<br>1    | Coach<br>2 | Coach<br>3 | Coach<br>4 |
| A             | B          | A          | B          |
| A             | B          | C          | C          |

## **Rule 1 Game Play Rules**

### **SECTION 1: THE GAME**

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
  - a. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
  - b. Offensive Teams **MUST** declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt", when asked by the referee and prior to the 'Ready for Play'.
  - c. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
  - d. If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with **NO** option to change the declaration.
  - e. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line.
4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

### **SECTION 2: THE FIELD AND MARKINGS**

1. **The field** shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and markers.
2. **Yard line markers**, constructed of soft, pliable materials, are placed on the sideline by the game officials. One official is to mark the line of scrimmage, and the other official is to mark the closest point the defense may line up opposite the ball.
3. **Lines and other markings:**
  - a. Lines shall be marked with a non-caustic material. Neither lime, hydrated lime, nor other chemical derivatives of lime, nor caustic material of any kind may be used.
  - b. End lines and sidelines should be at least 4 inches wide. All other field

dimensions lines should be marked 4 inches in width.

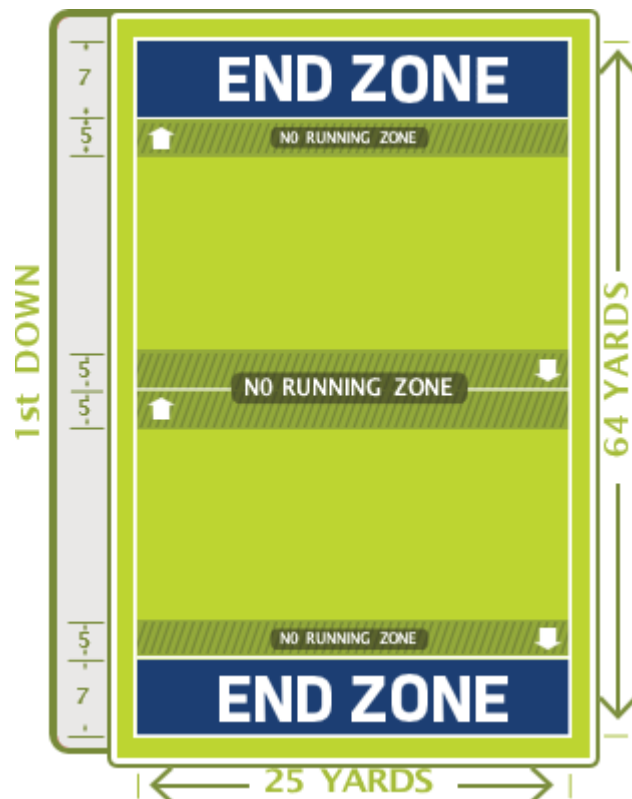
- c. Team boxes shall be marked on each side of the field between the 20-yard line. All players and team representatives shall remain in this area during the game.

4. **Each goal line** mark shall be entirely in its end zone so the edge toward the field of play and its vertical plane is the actual goal line.

5. **A soft, flexible pylon**, which shall not constitute a safety hazard, 4 inches square and 18 inches high, orange, or red in color, is recommended to be placed at the inside corner of each of the intersections of the sidelines with the goal lines and the end lines, as well as with each intersection of the inbounds lines extended and the end lines. When properly placed, the goal line pylon is out-of-bounds at the intersection of the sideline and the goal line extended. A soft, flexible cone orange or red in color may be used as a replacement for the above-mentioned pylon.

6. Recommended field dimensions.

- a. 25 yards wide by 64 yards with two 7-yard endzones



Both with a midfield line to gain. No Run zones are located five yards prior to the line to gain and five yards prior to the endzone in the offense's direction.

7. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be passing plays, even with a handoff.

8. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

9. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

### **SECTION 3: GAME EQUIPMENT**

**1. A league-supplied football** will be used by all teams at all games.

**2. A timing device** referred to as “the game clock” shall be the scoreboard clock. The clock operator will be a game official designated by the referee.

### **SECTION 4: PLAYER EQUIPMENT**

#### **1. Flag belts:**

- a. The player's flag belt must be the “triple threat” flag belts provided by the League. This flag belt may never be altered or secured other than according to the manufacturer's instructions. Any alterations to or improper securing of the flag belt is prohibited.
- b. The flag belt must be worn only on the waist. The flags must hang loosely below the waist on each side of the player.
- c. The flags must sharply contrast with the color of the player's shorts or pants.
- d. The entire flag belt assembly must be completely visible at all times. No part of the flag belt may be obscured or camouflaged.

**2. Jerseys, shirts, and top coverings:** Team players must wear the jerseys provided to them by the League. The jersey must be kept tucked inside a player's shorts or pants. A second shirt may be worn under the jersey, provided that it does not present a safety hazard. For example, sweatshirts with exposed hoods, shiesty mask or drawstrings are prohibited.

**3. Shorts and pants:** Players must wear shorts provided by, or approved by, the League/Board and not have any other items that could cause injury to a player attempting to pull an opponent's flag, e.g. pockets, external strings, or ties, etc.

#### **4. Shoes:**

- a. A player must wear cleats.
- b. May have cleats that screw into a receded hole in the bottom of the sole area.
- c. Any shoe that has steel tipped cleats or steel reinforced toe or heel, or a squared toe is prohibited.
- d. No player may participate barefooted, or sock footed.

#### **5. Towels:**

- a. The offensive team may have a full-sized towel in the huddle between downs. During plays, the towel may remain on the field only if kept at least 5 yards behind the furthest offensive player.
- b. The defensive team may have a full-sized towel in the huddle between downs. Leaving the towel on the field during a play is prohibited.

**6.** Prescription, shatter-proof eyewear may be worn if it is secured by a soft band. Caps, hats, and non-prescription sunglasses are not allowed.

#### **7. Tape, gloves, bandages, braces, and padding:**

- a. Tape or any type of bandage worn on the hand or a finger may only be worn to protect an existing injury.
- b. Gloves are permitted.
- c. Ace bandages, "wet suit" rubber wraps, and similar materials are permitted.
- d. Knee braces or knee supports are permitted provided all hard surfaces are covered by some type of padded material.
- e. Soft padding is permitted.
- f. Hard plastic surfaced or hard plastic reinforced pads or equipment are prohibited. No helmets, shoulder pads, thigh or forearm pads, or other devices permitted.
- g. Any type of hard cast that covers any part of a player's arm, wrist, or hand is not permitted.
- h. No player may wear any pad, brace, support, splint, or any type of device that has any metal that is or has the potential to be exposed.

**8. All jewelry** other than medical is prohibited. Exception: rubber nose rings/studs may remain in place.

**9. Mouthguards** are required to be worn by players when the ball is live. Clear mouthguards are not permitted.

**10. Long hair** that extends below the middle of the back must be placed in bun or tucked into the jersey so as not to interfere with play.

**11. Each player shall** properly wear the mandatory equipment outlined above while the ball is live.

| Penalty           | Article      | Enforcement                                                                  |
|-------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Illegal Equipment | 1 through 11 | 10-yard penalty.<br><br>Player will be removed until proper uniform is worn. |

## **Rule 2 Definitions of Playing Terms**

### **SECTION 1: BALL – DEAD, LIVE, LOOSE**

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage
  - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - a. The ball hits the ground.
    - i. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
  - b. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
  - c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
  - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
  - e. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
  - f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
  - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
  - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
  - i. Inadvertent whistle
  - j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet diving or to hurdle a player.

**NOTE:** There are no fumbles, ground contact does not have to be made. If the ball is fumbled forwards then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession. Loss of possession is a **DEAD BALL**.

8. If inadvertent whistle occurs the offense has two options:

- A) take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed
- B) replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

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

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

10. Officials should all agree in order to change a call on the field that is in dispute.

## **SECTION 2: RUNNING**

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.

3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.

***a. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.***

***b. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.***

***c. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.***

4. Definition of a "Legal Handoff" - Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive play to another.

5. Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind.

6. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

7. Runners are not permitted to dive or hurdle any player while advancing the ball.

8. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid

a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, contact is made unnecessary roughness penalty may be enforced by the official.

**9.** No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.

**10.** Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.

**11.** Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

### **SECTION 3: PASSING**

**1.** All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.

a. There is no intentional grounding

b. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.

c. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

**2.** Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

**3.** The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.

a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

b. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

### **SECTION 4: RECEIVING**

**1.** All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).

**2.** Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.

**3.** A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.

**4.** In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player,

possession is awarded to the offense.

5. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.

## **SECTION 5: RUSHING THE PASSER**

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.

8, 7 & 6U & 1st-3rd Grade Division: Defenders may not rush the passer

2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

a. A legal rush is:

- i. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
- ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.

b. A penalty may be called if:

- i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
- iii. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- iv. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.

c. Special circumstances:

- i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
- ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.

4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves.

If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**

6. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.

i. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

## **SECTION 6: FLAG PULLING**

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.

2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier’s possession at any time.

4. If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.

5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.

6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

7. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender’s access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

## **SECTION 7: FORMATIONS**

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.

b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.

2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while

in motion is considered a false start.

3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

### **SECTION 8: UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion.

No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

2. Offensive or confrontational language is **NOT** allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.

3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.

4. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

5. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. **ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**

6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:

- a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
- b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
- c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly and adhere to league requirements for seating:

- a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
- b. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.
- c. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.

8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:

- a. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- b. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

## **SECTION 9: PENALTIES**

### **i. General**

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted.  
(Spot fouls)
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
5. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
8. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)

### **ii. Defensive spot fouls**

|                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Defensive pass interference | Automatic first down              |
| Holding                     | +5 yards and automatic first down |
| Stripping                   | +5 yards and automatic first down |

### **iii. Offensive spot fouls**

|                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Screening or blocking | -5 yards and loss of down |
| Charging              | -5 yards and loss of down |
| Flag guarding         | -5 yards and loss of down |

iv. Defensive penalties

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

v. Offensive penalties

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

## **Pee Wee and Freshman Division Guidelines**

These are recommended and adopted adjustments to the rules that have been proven successful throughout the country from their direct input to assist with teaching the Game in the younger age groups.

### **Pee Wee**

1. Defenders may **NOT** rush the passer.
2. One Coach for each team is permitted on the field pre and post snap to help their players, but post snap at a safe distance to plays completion.
3. If the ball falls to or touches the ground during the initial center to quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a 'Do Over' with no loss of down, once per down. On a second consecutive occurrence, the down is consumed.
4. Defenders **MUST** line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.

### **Freshman**

1. One Coach for each team is permitted on the field pre-snap to help their players, but **MUST** be off the field prior to the snap of the ball.