

# GENERAL RULES

Every style of flag football that we offer first utilizes our common-to-all general rules as a baseline for each format. These rules are meant to standardize the game in areas where each style should be synchronized to be easier for players and officials alike to understand the basics of the game from one format to another.

Read these rules first for any style you play, as they apply to every style we offer, then also make sure and check out the style-specific rules in their specific chapters that are unique to their particular format.

## **RULE 1: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

### ***SECTION 1. GENERAL GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY***

**Article 1.** Our officials administer the rules of this league not any other organization (past or present). When more details are needed than are outlined in our abridged TSO Sports Rule Book(s), game officials will defer to the most current National Federation of State High Schools Rule Book.

**Article 2.** The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull or the ball carrier left the field-of-play.

**Article 3.** Order of tie breakers to determine seeding for playoffs are as follows: Overall record, head to head: (only applies if every team with the same record played each other directly), total points scored, points against.

### ***SECTION 2. REQUIRED PERSONAL CONDUCT***

**Article 1.** Players, coaches and spectators must keep their comments profanity free. Disrespectful language, racist, sexist, homophobic remarks, obscene gestures/behavior, and bullying are prohibited.

**Article 2.** Foul play will not be tolerated. Any staff member that hears or sees anything that leads them to believe an infraction of the required personal conduct outline has been committed the person responsible may be dismissed for the rest of the game.

**Article 3.** Fighting will lead to an immediate ejection for the remainder of the game, possible suspension or even a lifetime exclusion.

**Article 4.** Alcohol, other intoxicants, weapons, and pets are prohibited on our permitted fields.

***SECTION 3. REQUIRED TEAM CONDUCT***

Article 1. For the safety of our officials and their ability to administer the game all team personnel and fans must remain at least 1 yard off the sidelines.

Article 2. Teams are required to clean up their garbage after contests.

***SECTION 4. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING PROTOCOL***

Article 1. Practice and competitions will be suspended immediately when lightning is detected within 10 miles. All athletes and spectators should seek safe shelter during severe weather (but not under trees). Play shall not resume for at least 30 minutes after the last sight of lightning or sound of a thunderclap. Three long blasts from an air horn, car horn, or whistle will be the signal it is safe to continue play.

**RULE 2: UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT*****SECTION 1. SAFETY***

Article 1. Players may not wear hard, unyielding, or stiff material items that in the view of the officiating crew may present a hazard to other players.

Article 2. It is mandatory that all players wear a protective mouthpiece while on the field-of-play.

Article 3. Players must wear pants or shorts that do not have pockets, belt loops, zippers, or exposed draw strings. Pants or shorts with pockets that have been professionally sewn-shut are allowed at the game official's discretion. Pants or shorts cannot be taped or turned inside out unless the shorts are double lined.

***SECTION 2. FLAG BELTS***

Article 1. Flags will be provided by TSO Sports at the beginning of the season. Each player will receive their own Pop flags. Flags that are lost may be purchased from TSO at the field for \$5.00. Flags that are ripped, torn or suffer a manufacturing defect will be replaced free of charge.

Article 2. Altered or tampered flags could result in an ejection or forfeit. No shortening, cutting, using a cloth material or other substrate different from the traditional vinyl material (at the discretion of the officials and director), etc.

Article 3. Flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding. Flags must be evenly distributed on the belt. Suction cups must face down and away from the body. Belts must be snug around the waist to avoid rotating.

**Article 4.** Extra long belts should be tucked in or cut off. Grabbing the extended long end of the belt that is not tucked is **NOT** holding and will not be penalized. It is the offensive player's responsibility to have the end of the belt tucked, tied or cut off.

**Article 5.** Players' shorts or pants may **NOT** be the same color as the flags.

**Article 6.** If a player chooses to wear a hand towel, or any other object, on their waist it will be treated as part of the flag belt.

**Article 7.** If a ball carrier starts the play wearing an incomplete, improperly worn, or improperly secured flag belt, or no flag belt at all, they may not advance the ball after taking possession of it and will be ruled down where they took possession of the ball. For example: They may catch a pass but not advance it.

**Article 8.** All players on the field are eligible receivers at the snap regardless of possible uniform violations.

**Article 9.** A missing flag violation will not delay the game or stop a live play.

### ***SECTION 3. MISCELLANEOUS UNIFORM AND GEAR ISSUES***

**Article 1.** Players must ensure their jerseys are long enough to remain tucked in during the entire play or short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline. (Jerseys should never cover the flag belt).

**Article 2.** Players must wear matching jerseys on the field of play.

**Article 3.** When a shirt is untucked at the snap a hold will not be called on the defender that is making a fair and legal attempt at the ball carrier's flag. It is the player's responsibility to check their equipment before each snap.

**Article 4.** Footballs must be pebble grained leather or composite covered and meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football.

- Flyweight - Mini Football
- PeeWee - PeeWee Football
- Junior - PeeWee Football
- Senior - Junior Football
- Varsity - Youth or Regulation football

**Article 5.** Players must wear close-toed shoes. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed.

**Article 6.** Players may wear eye protection to include prescription glasses or flexible sunglasses.

**Article 7.** Jewelry that in the judgment of a game official might endanger other players must be removed before play.

**Article 8.** Player's finger nails must be trimmed or taped over to protect opponents. Alternatively, players may wear gloves to protect their opponents.

**Article 9.** Players may wear knit or stocking-style caps. Hard-billed caps must be removed or turned around backward. Players may wear a headband made of non-abrasive material. Rubber or elastic bands may be used in hair. Soft-shelled helmets designed for flag football players (e.g., the EliteTek brand), may be worn.

**Article 10.** Players may tape forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear soft gloves, elbow pads, shin guards, and knee pads. Unyielding items such as braces, casts, or anything with exposed metal are not allowed.

## **RULE 3: CLOCK MECHANICS**

### ***SECTION 1. General Timing Procedures***

**Article 1.** Time outs are 30-seconds

**Article 2.** A game will consist of 2 25 minute halves(Flyweight 20 Minutes). The clock will continue to run throughout the game and will only be stopped in the last minute of both halves (pro clock)

**Article 3.** Games must start on time. The clock will be started at the time the game is scheduled. If a team is more than ten (10) minutes late, that team will forfeit the game. If a team is less than ten (10) minutes late, the team that was on time will have the option to receive the ball both halves.

**Article 4.** The offense has a 25-second play clock to snap the ball before a delay of game penalty is assessed.

**Article 5.** Length of games and stop-clock procedure vary by style, please refer to individual style rules books. When officials go to the 'stop clock' mechanic the clock will stop / start as listed below:

- Defense gains possession of the ball: on the following snap unless it is a PAT attempt
- Either side is awarded a first down after a punt / on the snap
- Inadvertent whistle / at the ready
- Incomplete passes / on the snap
- Intentional grounding / at the ready
- Offense achieves a first down / clocks stops till referee whistles the ready to play whistle
- Out-of-bounds plays with a player in possession of the ball / on the snap
- Intentional loose ball initiated beyond the line of scrimmage that goes out-of-bounds / on the ready (judgment call)

- Penalty administration (other than Delay of Game) / depends on previous play  
Delay of game / on the snap
- Referee timeout / at the Referee's discretion
- Safety / when the receiving team take possession of the ball to attempt a return
- Team timeout / on the snap.
- Injury / when player is removed from field (depending on the status of clock on previous play)
- Touchback / on the snap
- Touchdown / on the next snap after the PAT attempt. PATs are untimed downs during 'stop/pro clock mechanics'.

## ***SECTION 2. TIME OUTS AND CLOCK PROTOCOL***

Article 1. Officials may stop the clock as needed.

Article 2. Teams have 3 timeouts per half. Team timeouts are 30 seconds. After 30 seconds the official will audibly place the offense on a 25-second play clock. Timeouts do not roll over from the first half.

Article 3. Halftime is no longer 5 minutes.

## **RULE 4: COIN TOSS**

Article 1. Game officials will confirm with team captains during the coin toss that the teams are in correct and legal uniforms (pockets, flags, contrasting colors, unyielding materials, etc.).

Article 2. Referee will issue the first warning about unsportsmanlike conduct, excessive rough play, and language.

Article 3. First possession is decided using a coin toss. The head official will ask the 'calling captain' their choice of "heads" or "tails". The head official will then confirm the call. The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:

- Begin on offense
- Begin on defense
- Designate which goal their team will defend
- Defer their choice to the second half

Article 4. The loser of the coin toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. Before the start of the second half, the choice of options shall be reversed.

## **RULE 5: CHALLENGE PROCEDURE**

Article 1. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Generally, officials are happy to answer quick responses

and general questions during the game if they do not impede the game. The priority is to spot the ball then address questions without impeding the play clock.

Article 2. Only procedural issues may be addressed, not an official's judgment call or no-call.

## **RULE 6: OFFENSE**

### ***SECTION 1. GENERAL OFFENSE***

Article 1. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless they are the only player in motion.

Article 2. The ball must be snapped. The ball does not have to come from the ground. Ex. Between the legs, side by side, behind the back. The QB must receive the ball from the center.

Article 3. The offense may not act or move in a manner that, in the judgment of the covering official, is clearly intended to cause the defense to encroach. Verbalizing play-calls or snap counts alone are not acts or moves that should be considered unless they are in conjunction with other acts or moves. The speed, abruptness, down and distance and if any player pretends to have the ball or otherwise simulate action at the snap will be considerations.

Article 4. The ball will be declared dead if any portion of the ball carrier's body other than their hands and feet (knee, elbow, buttocks, ball-in-hand, etc.) touches the ground.

Article 5. The offense is responsible for retrieving the ball and returning it to an official or to the line of scrimmage at the end of each play.

Article 6. The offense has 4 downs to achieve a first down. If a 1st down is achieved there will be another 4 downs to score.

- Flyweight and Peewee do not have to declare a punt on 4th down. If a first down is not achieved the ball will be placed at the opposite 5 yard line.
- Junior, Senior and Varsity must declare a punt on 4 down. If a first down or touchdown is not scored the ball will be placed at the spot of the 4th down.

### ***SECTION 2. FUMBLES AND MUFFS***

Article 1. Fumbles are a "dead ball" when they hit the ground. If a lateral, muffed or fumbled ball is intercepted before becoming dead it remains a "live ball".

Article 2. Forward fumbles that hit the ground will be marked where the ball carrier's feet were when he/she lost control and not the spot where the ball hit the ground.

Article 3. Muffed snaps will be marked where the ball hits the ground.

### ***SECTION 3. RUNNING / JUMPING / DIVING***

**Article 1.** Ball carriers are allowed to leave their feet, jump, and spin as evasive maneuvers in order to advance the ball as long as they do not put another player's safety at risk. Not every insignificant jump or small hop constitutes a safety issue and player safety risk is at the discretion of each official. Jump cuts or leaping between two defenders is allowed if they do not initiate noteworthy contact with the defender or put another player's safety at risk.

**Article 2.** Ball carriers may not hurdle over another player. Ball carriers may not dive, lunge, or fall forward in a perceived intentional manner in order to advance the ball or achieve a line-to-gain. This is a judgment call by the game officials.

**Article 3.** Diving by the defense to capture a ball carrier's flag is legal.

**Article 4.** Ball carriers must make every effort to avoid a defender who has established a stationary position.

**Article 5.** Runners may leave their feet to avoid collision or falling on another player.

**Article 6.** Passers may jump vertically to throw the ball over a defender.

**Article 7.** The offense may use multiple backward hand-offs or laterals.

**Article 8.** Scoring and 1st Downs: The ball carrier's hips and ball must be over the line for a score and a first down.

#### ***SECTION 4. FLAG GUARDING INCLUDING STIFF-ARMING***

**Article 1.** The ball carrier's flags must be accessible to the defense throughout the play. Flags may not be tucked in pants, tucked under jerseys, worn improperly, looped around the waist belt, or knotted.

**Article 2.** Flag guarding is the act of a ball carrier denying a defender the opportunity to capture their flag in any physical way. The ball carrier shall not flag guard by flailing of arms, using their hands, arms, elbows or extremely dipped shoulders to deny the opportunity of an opponent to remove a flag.

**Article 3.** The ball carrier may not swat a defender's hands away nor pin the flag against their body using the ball or hands. An official may call flag guarding if they feel that a ball carrier's natural running motion gave the ball carrier a decisive advantage over the defender and the running motion caused part of the ball carrier's body to block a de-flagging attempt.

**Article 4.** What constitutes flag guarding is up to the official's judgment. We recommend you carry the ball with your hands held high on the body to avoid flag guarding. This is one of the most difficult transitions for traditional football players. Flag guarding shall not be called if there is no defensive player within reasonable distance to capture the flag.

**Article 5.** The ball carrier may bend at the knees to dip low, side cut, skip, or take short hops. Extreme low dips (sometimes called a "duck-walk") are legal and do not constitute

flag guarding in themselves, as long as the flag carrier's flags are still exposed and the defensive player isn't physically impeded (i.e. the ball carrier isn't using his arms, hands, shoulder, ball, etc. to impede the defender. Normally flag guarding can be avoided while "duck-walking" when the ball carrier keeps his hands and elbows high on the body (ex: at shoulder-level).

Examples of flag guarding:

- stiff arming
- pinning the flag
- swatting
- using the ball as a stiff arm

**Article 6.** No penalty will be called if a ball carrier simultaneously flag guards as the defender pulls the flag.

**Article 7.** Tampering with the flag in any way to gain advantage is illegal

### ***SECTION 5. PASS PLAYS***

**Article 1.** Only one forward pass per play. Once the ball has passed the line-of-scrimmage it cannot be returned to behind the line-of-scrimmage and thrown forward legally.

**Article 2.** If any portion of the passer's body is behind the line-of-scrimmage it is a legal pass.

**Article 3.** All players are eligible to receive a pass unless they have stepped out-of-bounds of their own accord. Players may re-establish themselves in the field of play and catch the ball if another player has touched the ball first.

**Article 4.** Any offensive player who receives either a forward or backward handoff behind scrimmage can pass the ball from behind the line-of-scrimmage.

**Article 5.** Backward passes are allowed. **Article 6.** If the passer's flag has been pulled while the passer still has the ball in their hand, it is a sack. There is no allowance given for the passer's arm being in motion at the time of the sack. Ball in hand at all equals a sack.

**Article 6.** If a QB crosses the line of scrimmage then retreats behind the line, he may still throw the ball. However, this will be counted as a QB run for that half.

### ***SECTION 6. INTENTIONAL GROUNDING***

**Article 1.** A passer may not throw the ball into the ground to avoid a loss of yardage or conserve time.

**Article 2.** An exception to this rule is it is legal to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball to the ground immediately (spiking) after receiving either a direct hand-to-hand snap or from the "shot-gun" formation for styles that do not allow hand-to-hand snaps. The spike must be fluid and immediate after the snap or it is intentional grounding.



Article 3. A pass may not be intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an offensive receiver.

Article 4. Passers may not throw the ball out-of-bounds to stop the clock as in NFL or NCAA games.

Article 5. Intentional grounding can occur anywhere behind the line of scrimmage.

## ***SECTION 7. CATCHES***

Article 1. A pass is completed when an offensive player simultaneously places at least one foot inbounds and momentarily maintains possession of the ball.

Article 2. Simultaneous catches between a defensive and offensive player go to the offense.

Article 3. In the event of a bobbled catch, i.e., the ball is batted about by the receiver in an attempt to catch it, and the intended receiver is de-flagged before taking full possession; there is no penalty for early flag pull.

Article 4. Whether or not a ball is tipped or touched in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls anywhere on the field (roughing, personal fouls, illegal contact, etc.).

Article 5. If a receiver steps out-of-bounds of their own accord and is the first to touch a pass, it is illegal touching. The play will be allowed to continue to a dead ball situation (5-yards from previous and a loss of down, if accepted).

Article 6. If the ball comes out of the receiver's grasp due to contact with the ground or while going to the ground the pass is incomplete

## **RULE 7: DEFENSE**

### ***SECTION 1. GENERAL DEFENSE***

Article 1. Stripping or attempting to strip the ball from a player's hand, including the quarterback, is illegal.

Article 2. Defensive teams may not simulate the offensive team's signals or cadence. (Unsportsmanlike)

Article 3. There are no "free plays" for the offense. After the head official blows the ready-for-play whistle and the snapper puts their hand(s) on the ball, no player may enter the neutral zone until the ball is moved to start the snap. Entering the neutral zone before

the snap is known as “offside” or encroachment which causes the play to be immediately blown dead and the offending team is penalized five yards.

**Article 4.** If a defensive team intentionally commits a penalty in order to achieve a specific goal and the penalty is declined, any subsequent attempts to continue committing the penalty will result in a 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty and automatic first down for the offense.

- Example: Offense has the ball 2nd down and 3 yards to gain prior to a first down. Defense intentionally jumps offside to try and get offense to accept a first down and long line to gain. If offense declines, and defense immediately attempts the same penalty again, an additional unsportsmanlike penalty will be enforced.

**Article 5.** The defense may cross the line to rush the quarterback after the official has counted to the appropriate time.

- Flyweight: NO RUSH. Coaches are the QB's. Defense line should be 2 yards off the ball. Linebackers should be 5 yards off the line. (The objective of the flyweights is to have fun and let the kids have a chance to run and make plays.) ( Offense does not have to declare a punt on 4th down. If a 1st dow is not achieved the ball moves to the opposite 5 yard line.)
- Peewee: 5 count ( Offense does not have to declare a punt on 4th down. If a 1st dow is not achieved the ball moves to the opposite 5 yard line.)
- Junior 4 count (Offense must declare a punt on 4th down)
- Senior 4 count ( Offense must declare a punt on 4th down)
- Varsity 4 count ( Offense must declare a punt on 4th down)

## ***SECTION 2. ROUGHING***

**Article 1.** Defensive players must make a concerted effort to avoid charging into the quarterback.

**Article 2.** In general, defensive players may not “crash” the quarterback’s throwing arm, shoulder or body even if the ball is touched first. This rule applies to holders and kickers as well.

**Article 3.** It is a quarterbacks right to step into a throw, and the rushers duty to avoid contact. If contact is significant and forceful at the discretion of the officials, whether attempting to go for the flag or not, it may be deemed roughing the passer.

**Article 4.** An insignificant “brush-by” may be allowed by the referee but is not guaranteed.

**Article 5.** Making contact with the quarterback while blocking a pass or attempting to block a pass may result in a roughing the passer penalty.

**Article 6.** Whether or not a ball is tipped in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls (roughing, personal fouls, etc.).

Article 7. A roughing penalty will not be enforced if a quarterback initiates contact with a defensive player while in the throwing motion; for example, during the passer's follow through the player's arm makes contact with an opponent's hand, arm, or shoulder. In this instance the impetus of the contact is the action of the quarterback and not the defender. This is a judgment call.

#### ***SECTION 4. FLAG PULLING MECHANICS***

Article 1. Flag football is a finesse game versus the brute strength game of traditional tackle football.

Article 2. Flag pulling is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball. Legal flag pulls must begin with the hands leading toward the opponent's hips and flags.

Article 3. No player shall make any contact with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness. This is a judgment call

Article 4. No player has the right to over-aggressively 'body up', 'wrap up', 'play through', 'bull rush', charge, spear or lead with a shoulder against an opponent even to capture a flag. Players must play to capture the flag, not to commit Illegal Personal Contact.

Article 5. Pushing out on the sidelines is not permitted unless the defense was making a fair, legal, and reasonable attempt to pull the ball carrier's flags, i.e. the defender's hands were aimed low at the ball carrier's hips and flags and not high up on the body.

Article 6. Pushing, striking, holding, slapping or tripping while attempting to pull a flag is not permitted.

Article 7. A defensive player may not pull the flag of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

Article 8. Any defensive player who removes the flag from an offensive ball carrier is encouraged to show good sportsmanship and hold the flag above their head to assist the officials in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

Article 9. Players may be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct for throwing, spiking, obscuring, or delaying the ball carrier in recovering their pulled flag.

Article 10. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play the player will be considered down if they possess the ball during the play.

Article 11. When a ball carrier flag guards and a defensive player pulls the ball carrier's flag simultaneously, no penalty will be called for flag guarding.

#### ***SECTION 4. PASS COVERAGE***

**Article 1.** Pass interference normally occurs above the waist; entangled feet are not considered pass interference. Incidental contact is not considered pass interference.

**Article 2.** A player may “find” their opponent by reaching out and placing a hand on him/her as long as touching does not delay or impede him/her. This is not considered pass interference.

**Article 3.** Contact away from the direction of the pass is not considered pass interference. Examples of pass interference include:

- Shoving or pushing off to create separation.
- Playing through the back.
- Hook and turn: grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.
- Not playing the ball: the defender is looking at the receiver and contact materially impedes the receiver.
- Arm bars, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.
- Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched, commonly seen through “pick plays”.
- Cutting off the path of a receiver by being in front of them and slowing down or being beside them and “riding” them off their path to the ball.

**Article 4.** Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference.

**Article 5.** A player may use their arms or hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver’s view (face guarding) of the ball without turning their own head to play the ball as long as contact is not made with the receiver

## ***SECTION 5. INTERCEPTIONS***

**Article 1.** Interceptions may be returned. In the event of an interception, the intercepting team must secure the ball with “clean hands,” i.e., they must not have committed a foul before or simultaneous to the interception.

**Article 2.** If the intercepting team gained the interception with “clean hands” they will be awarded a first down where the ball becomes dead (flag pull, stepping out-of-bounds, fumbled, etc.)

**Article 3.** The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull or the ball carrier left the field-of-play.

**Article 4.** Fouls by the intercepting team after an interception will be assessed from the spot of the foul. Fouls by the intercepted team after the interception will be assessed at the end of the run.

**Article 5.** Interceptions on an extra point may be returned by the defense for 6 points.

## **RULE 8: SCORING**

### ***SECTION 1. POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN (PAT)***

**Article 1.** Following a touchdown, once the scoring team has informed an official of which point conversion choice they want to attempt the decision cannot be changed unless the scoring team uses a team timeout.

**Article 2.** If a penalty occurs during an extra point attempt, the penalty will be assessed but the extra point value remains the same.

**Article 3.** Decisions cannot be changed after a penalty. For example, if the offense attempts a 1-point PAT and is penalized five yards for a false start, they cannot change their mind and go for a 2-point PAT.

**Article 4.** Unsportsmanlike conduct and personal fouls during successful touchdown attempts will be assessed at half the distance to the goal during the PAT attempt (e.g., 2-point PAT attempts will be spotted at the 2 ½ yard line and 1-point attempts at the ½-yard line). All other defensive penalties may be declined by the offense and the score will stand.

**Article 5.** Dead ball fouls committed by the offense that do not carry a loss-of-down penalty (false start, offside, etc.) will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.

**Article 6.** Fouls by the offense during a PAT attempt that carry a loss-of-down penalty (flag guarding, illegal advancement, illegal forward pass, etc.) will result in the PAT being “no good” and the attempt will not be repeated.

**Article 7.** Fouls committed by the offense in unsuccessful PAT attempts will be declined by the defense and the PAT will be “no good” and will not be replayed.

**Article 8.** Fouls simultaneous to the snap (illegal shift, illegal motion, illegal formation, etc.), if accepted, will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.

**Article 9.** Fouls by the defense during an unsuccessful PAT attempt will result in a retry after the options are administered. The offense may opt to accept or decline penalty yardage before the retry.

**Article 10.** Interceptions on any PAT can be returned by the defense for 6 points regardless of PAT point attempted. (Intentionally preventing a return by any other means other than pulling a flag will result in the score counting and the ensuing offensive possession will start at the 49yd line.)

## ***SECTION 2. SAFETIES***

Article 1. Terminologies and Designations – Team A is the team that initiates the snap. Team B is the opponent that began the play on defense. Safeties occur when the ball becomes dead in the offense's (Team A's) end zone or Team A commits a foul in their end zone. The team's End Zone is the one it is defending. The goal line is IN the End Zone.

Examples include:

- Grounded fumbles in or out of Team A's end zone (sidelines and end line).
- A player in possession of the ball has their flag pulled in the end zone (except after a change-of possession).
- The ball carrier going out-of-bounds behind the goal line (except after a change-of-possession).
- The ball is snapped out of the end zone.

Article 2. Team B Exceptions:

- A flag pull immediately after an interception by Team B in the end zone is a touchback, not a safety. A Team B player going out-of-bounds behind the goal line immediately after an interception in the end zone is a touchback, not a Safety.
- If the ball is intercepted by Team B in the end zone and Team B fouls in the end zone prior to the ball being brought back into the field-of-play (example: flag guarding) the result of the play is a touchback and the foul will be administered from the touchback spot. This will not be a safety..
- If the ball is intercepted Team B between the 5-yard line and the goal line and the player's momentum takes them into the end zone where the ball becomes dead in Team B's possession or Team B fouls in the end zone (example: flag guarding) the ball belongs to Team B and the penalty will be assessed from the spot where it was intercepted. It is a touchback. It is not a safety.

# **RULE 9: OVERTIME**

## ***SECTION 1. GENERAL PROCEDURES***

Article 1. Only one coin toss is allowed during overtime regardless of the number of overtime periods played. The visiting team calls the toss. Winning choices are:

- Offense
- Defense
- End of the field

Article 2. During the regular season there will be one overtime session. During the playoffs teams must play to a winner. If a team chooses offense first in the first session and the game remains tied after both teams have possessed the ball, that team will now start on defense for the second session and so on.

Article 3.. Peewee and Junior divisions will start from the 5 yard line. Teams will have 4 downs to score. Senior and Varsity divisions will start from the offensive 49 yard line.

Article 4. Each team is allowed one timeout per each overtime period.

Article 5. Interceptions are returnable in overtime for 6 points.

Article 6. Penalties are administered as during the regular game.

Article 7. The goal line shall always be the line-to-gain in overtime, regardless of the number of overtimes played.

## **RULE 10: OFFICIATING**

### ***SECTION 1. GENERAL OFFICIATING***

Article 1. Officials do not have to call everything they see but they must completely see everything they call.

Article 2. Game officials may not use any recording or replay in making any decision relating to the game.

Article 3. Officials must not tolerate taunting, baiting, and unsportsmanlike acts.

Article 4. Game officials must err on the side of safety while officiating.

Article 5. Officials should aim to assist teams to avoid penalties (preventative officiating). Cautions and teaching points are appropriate most times.

Article 6. It is not the mission of the game officials to flag every small, nuanced infraction of traditional high-level football unless it produces a significant unfair advantage.

Preventative GENERAL RULES officiating examples include:

- Warning players about unsportsmanlike conduct during the coin toss
- Reminding coaches and players how the clock works
- Clarifying rules
- Telling the offense to "Stay Still" before the snap.
- Give players warnings when appropriate
- Remind players on the line to "check with me / look at me" to help them line up correctly
- Announcing "10 seconds to snap, please" and counting down: five, four, three, etc.
- Announcing "balls away" to let the defensive players know they can stop pursuing the passer
- Yelling 'forward' or 'back' while observing a pass to leave no doubt what you saw

- Keeping sidelines clear of players and coaches etc.

**Article 7.** Prior to a snap, officials can require and warn players to adjust their flags to their proper alignment. Repeated warnings of this nature can result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.

**Article 8.** Berating and other out of control behavior by coaches, parents and players will not be tolerated towards referees and other coaches. . Violators may be subject to suspension and/or expulsion from the league.