



# USA FLAG™ 5'S

## RULEBOOK

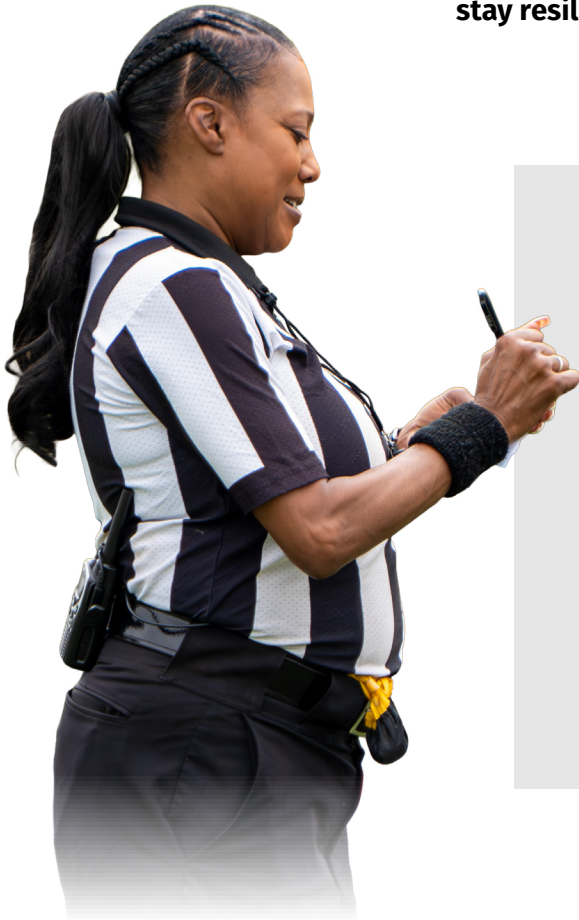


# OFFICIALS COURSE



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## Definitions

<b>BOUNDARY LINES</b>	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
<b>LINE OF SCRIMMAGE</b>	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
<b>LINE-TO-GAIN</b>	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
<b>RUSH LINE</b>	An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
<b>OFFENSE</b>	The team with possession of the ball.
<b>DEFENSE</b>	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
<b>PASSER</b>	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
<b>BLITZER</b>	The defensive player, identified by raising one hand above the head continuously until the snap, that is at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass. The act of raising the hand beyond the 7 yard line guarantees the blitzer Right of Way.
<b>RUSHER</b>	Any player who legally crosses the line of scrimmage through the normal course of game play.
<b>DOWNS (1-2-3-4)</b>	The offensive team has four attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.
<b>LIVE BALL</b>	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
<b>DEAD BALL</b>	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
<b>WHISTLE</b>	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for reporting a penalty, a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.
<b>INADVERTENT WHISTLE</b>	Official’s whistle that is performed in error.
<b>CHARGING</b>	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.
<b>FLAG GUARDING</b>	An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm or ball.
<b>SHOVEL PASS</b>	A legal pitch attempted behind the line of scrimmage.
<b>UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT</b>	A rude, confrontational, physical or offensive behavior or language.
<b>RIGHT OF PLACE (ROP)</b>	Right of place is given to any stationary players who maintains normal player posture and make no movements in any horizontal direction to change their position. A purely vertical movement, including a lift from the ground, in order to throw or catch a pass does not mean that a previously established right of place has been lost. Right of place supersedes right of way when determining who is guilty of a foul.
<b>RIGHT OF WAY</b>	Right of way is given to a player according to rule who has established a direction of movement in a regular manner and does not alter that direction. A player with right of way has a higher privilege when determining who is guilty of a foul than all other players except those with right of place.
<b>AGE GROUPS</b>	<b>Adult:</b> Aged 18+   <b>Junior:</b> Aged 14-17   <b>Youth:</b> Aged 13 and under.

# USA FLAG™ 5'S RULEBOOK

## RULE 1: GAME, FIELD, BALL, AND EQUIPMENT

### SECTION 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### Article 1. Coin Toss

- a. 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.
- b. 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. Teams change direction after the first half. **(A.R. 1-1-1b)**

#### Article 2. Possession and Change of Possession

- a. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. Crossing midfield is the only opportunity for an offense to gain a first down within a single possession.
- b. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
- c. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
- d. If the defense intercepts the ball, a defensive player can attempt to return it until down or out of bounds.
- e. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.

#### Article 3. Coaches

- a. USA Football recommends 2-3 coaches per team.
- b. At the Youth level, one coach is allowed on the field to call plays and direct players according to need. Once the quarterback begins his or her cadence, however, coaches can no longer speak and must be behind the deepest offensive and defensive players and out of the action.
- c. At the Youth level, Coaches can assist in the alignment of their players to facilitate a fast-paced game, but coaches on the field may not provide extra instruction or make audibles to play calls once the huddle is broken. Coaches on the sidelines can provide this information to players on the field.
- d. For adult and junior games no coaches are allowed on the field

## SECTION 2: ROSTERS

### Article 1: Team Rosters

Teams must consist of at least five players with a recommended maximum of 15 players.

**NOTE: FLEXIBILITY IS GRANTED FOR ROSTER SIZED AT THE DISCRETION OF TOURNAMENT OPERATORS.**

### Article 2: Uniform Colors

Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys. (A.R. 1-2-2)

### Article 3: On Field Participants

Teams must start games with five players on the field. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four. (A.R. 1-2-3)

## SECTION 3: POSITIONS

### Article 1. Offense

The five players on offense consist of a center, a quarterback and three receivers.

- a. **Center.** This player is responsible for snapping the ball and is eligible to go out for passes, once they have snapped the ball.
- b. **Quarterback.** The quarterback is the offensive player who first gets possession of the ball after the snap. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the line of scrimmage without first handing the ball off to a teammate and then receiving a second handoff back or receiving a pass.
- c. **Receiver/back.** Any player who does not initiate the snap nor receive the snap is considered an eligible receiver/back and can either receive a handoff or catch a pass.

**NOTE: LEAGUES MAY CONSIDER WAIVING THE RESTRICTION ON LINING WITHIN THREE YARDS OF THE CENTER FOR YOUNGER AGE GROUPS.**

## Article 2. Defense

- a. **Blitzer.** A defender who lines up with all parts of their body more than 7 yards away from the scrimmage line at the snap can establish themselves as a blitzer with a legal signal by raising one hand clearly above the head at least during the last second prior to the snap. This grants them right of way which supersedes the general right of way for the offense, because they are pursuing the runner. The rush of a blitzer shall be immediately after the snap, quick and straight towards the point where the quarterback receives the snap in order to retain the right of way. If a blitzer is rushing late, slowly, towards a different spot, changing direction during the rush or just does not rush the quarterback, the player loses the right of way but still can participate as any other defender. If a blitzer is forced to change direction due to an offensive foul (shielding), the blitzer will not lose their right of way for a further direct rush to the point where quarterback received the snap.
- b. **Rusher.** A defender who does not give a signal and legally crosses the line of scrimmage. Following a legal handoff, any member of the defense can cross the line of scrimmage.

## SECTION 4. EQUIPMENT

### Article 1: Flag Belts

The organization provides each player with an official flag belt and team jersey. See Flag Specifications section for more details.

### Article 2: Footwear

Players must wear rubber soled shoes. Cleats may not be allowed at certain locations. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.

### Article 3: Additional Equipment

- a. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metal are not allowed. Players must remove any jewelry and head wear (acceptable head wear is determined by league officials).
- b. Athletes may choose to wear protective eyewear that meets ASTM F803 safety standards. ASTM F803 is the most rigorous eyewear safety standard in the industry. Allowable eyewear must have a visible marking that indicates compliance with ASTM's F803 safety standard. Athletes must remove eyewear at the official's discretion.

### Article 4: Uniform Standards

Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.

No shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets are allowed. Shorts or pants should not include snaps, clips, or zippers of any kind. Players may not tape or secure any part of the shorts or pants to meet this regulation.

- a. **Flags cannot be the same color as shorts or pants. Flags must sharply contrast with shorts or pants.**

**OFFICIALS HAVE ULTIMATE DISCRETION IN MAKING ANY FINAL DETERMINATION REGARDING FLAGS THAT DO NOT FIT THAT CRITERIA.**

## Article 5: Mouthguards

All players must wear mouth guards while on the playing field.

## SECTION 5. THE BALL

The ball shall be made of four panels of pebble-grained leather in natural tan color with eight equally spaced lacings and new or nearly new with no alterations. The ball shall be an ellipsoid spheroid of regulation dimensions and inflated to a pressure of between 12.5 and 13.5 psi (0.85 – 0.95 bar).

### Article 1. Types of Football

Dimensions	Adult	Junior	Youth
Length	11.00 to 11.50 inches (27.9 – 29.2 cm)	10.25 to 10.75 inches (26.0 – 27.3 cm)	10.50 to 11.00 inches (26.7 – 27.9 cm)
Length circumference	27.00 to 28.00 inches (68.6 – 71.1 cm)	25.00 to 26.00 inches (63.5 – 66.0 cm)	26.00 to 27.00 inches (66.0 – 68.6 cm)
Diameter	6.25 to 6.75 inches (15.9 – 17.2 cm)	5.75 to 6.25 inches (14.6 – 15.9 cm)	6.00 to 6.50 inches (15.2 – 16.5 cm)
Cross circumference	20.00 to 21.00 inches (50.8 – 53.3 cm)	18.00 to 19.00 inches (45.7 – 48.3 cm)	19.00 to 20.00 inches (48.3 – 50.8 cm)
Weight	14 to 15 ounces (400 – 425 g)	11 to 12 ounces (310 – 340 g)	12 to 13 ounces (340 – 370 g)

### Article 2. Sizes

- For men's or co-ed games, adult sized ball shall be used. (A.R. 1-5-2)
- For women's games, use youth ball dimensions. (example: USA Football Youth or Wilson TDY)
- For junior games, youth sized ball shall be used. (example: USA Football Youth or Wilson TDY)
- For youth games, junior sized ball shall be used. The ball need not be leather. (example: USA Football Junior or Wilson TDJ)
- For youth games aged under-8, peewee sized ball shall be used. (example: USA Football peewee)

**TEAMS AT ANY AGE MAY CHOOSE TO USE A LARGER SIZE BALL. IT IS PROHIBITED FOR TEAMS TO USE A BALL SMALLER THAN THE SIZES LISTED ABOVE.**

## SECTION 6. FLAG SPECIFICATIONS

### Article 1. General Provisions

Players of a team shall wear tightly fixed flag belts with pop-sockets and 2 identical flags. Every effort shall be made to keep one flag on each hip of the player. The sockets shall be placed facing outwards and downwards. The flags shall be clearly visible, hang down freely and must not be covered in any way by the player's uniform and all colors must be contrasting with all colors on the pants. The flags and sockets may not be greased, glued or altered in any way. Any player, who deliberately manipulate their flags shall be disqualified. The flags and sockets each shall be made of the same material in the same color without sharp edges. **(A.R. 1-6-1)**

### Article 2. Sizes

Dimensions	Measurements
The flags shall measure	2 inches (5 cm) x 15 inches (38 cm)
Flag length from socket	15 to 16 inches (38.1 – 0.6 cm)
Flag width:	1.9 to 2.1 inches (4.8 – 5.3 cm)
Brand or logo	On each flag one single color brand or logo in the upper quarter is allowed with a maximum size of 2x3 inches (5 x 7.5 cm)
Flag thickness:	Maximum 0.03 inches (0.75 mm)
Flag weight	Minimum 3.5 ounces (100 g)

## SECTION 7. THE FIELD

### Article 1: Field Dimensions

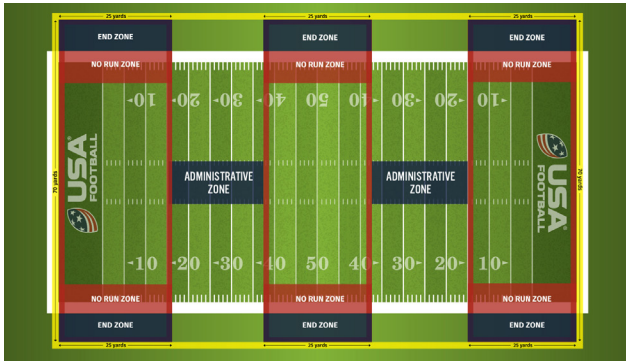
Field dimensions are 25 X 70 yards in total with two 10- yard end zones and a 50 yard field of play. No-run zones are only before the goal line. However, some locations may use smaller fields due to available field space.

### Article 2: No-Run Zone's

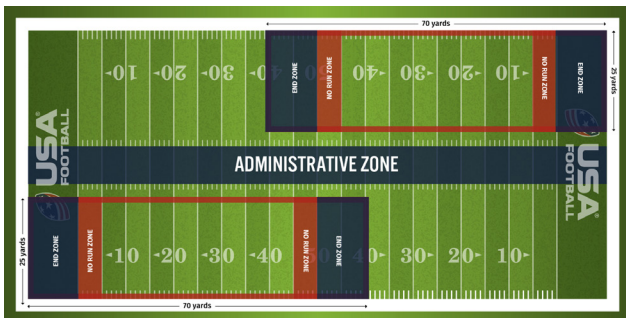
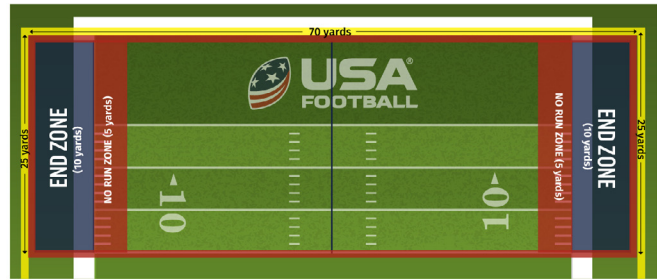
A No-run zone is in place to prevent teams from conducting run plays. While in the No-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff. **(A.R. 1-7-2)**

**USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDATION: THE NO-RUN ZONE MAY BE REMOVED FOR PLAYERS WHO ARE STILL LEARNING BASIC PASSING AND CATCHING SKILLS.**

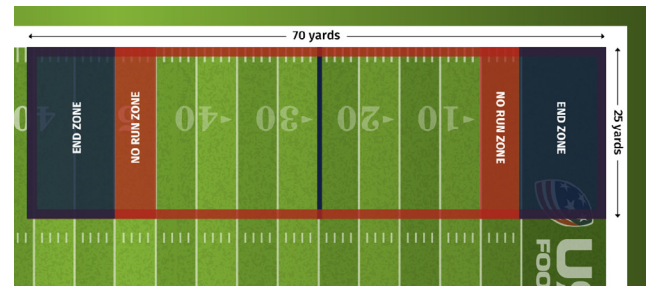
## Article 3: Field Setup Diagrams



\*Yellow line indicates lines of a soccer field



\*Administrative Zone should be 3 yards wide



## RULE 2: LEAGUE AND TOURNAMENT PLAY

### SECTION 1. LEAGUE PLAY

#### Article 1: Game Clock Settings

Games are played on a 40-minute clock with two 20-minute halves unless one team gains a 30-point advantage at which point the clock should run continuously for the duration of the game. The clock stops for timeouts or injuries only, though officials can stop the clock at their discretion for injury, to stop a team from delaying or other unsportsmanlike conduct. For 18+ we recommend a pro-clock be used during the last two minutes of both halves unless there has been a 30-point advantage obtained by a team throughout the course of play. **(A.R. 2-1-1)**

**USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDS A RUNNING CLOCK AT THE YOUTH LEVEL (5-12 YEARS OLD), BUT IT IS UP TO THE LEAGUES DISCRETION TO USE A PRO-CLOCK INSTEAD. FOR JUNIOR ATHLETES (13-17 YEARS OLD) USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDS THE USE OF A RUNNING CLOCK IN THE FIRST HALF AND A PRO-CLOCK IN THE SECOND HALF.**

#### Article 2: Halftime

Halftime is five minutes.

### Article 3: Delay of Game

Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced. If there is a visible play clock, a warning will not be issued. **(A.R. 2-1-3)**

**USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDATION: OFFICIALS SHOULD USE DISCRETION WITH TEAMS WHO ARE STILL LEARNING BASIC FOOTBALL SKILLS AND MAY NEED MORE TIME TO LINE UP AND GET A PLAY OFF.**

### Article 4: Timeout's

Each team has two 30-second timeouts per half.

### Article 5: Injury Stoppage

In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play and both teams are lined up ready to restart the play.

### Article 6. League Play Overtime

1. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first. In overtime the visiting team calls the coin toss.
  - a. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
  - b. The referee will determine on which end of the field the overtime will take place.
  - c. No charged team timeouts shall be granted.
2. In the first extra period, each team will have one series starting at the mid-field. On the first series, if the defense intercepts the ball and scores, then the overtime period is over. **(A.R. 2-1-6)**
3. Each team retains the ball during its series until it scores (including try downs for 1 or 2 points) or exhausts its series of downs. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead. The series is then ended even if there is a second change of team possession during that down.
4. If after the first period (with 2 series including tries) the score is still tied, the second and following periods consist of series with each team playing a 1-point try from the 5-yard line. The overtime ends when the score after a period is no longer a tie or the defense scores during the first series of a period.
5. The team scoring the greater number of points during overtime shall be declared the winner.

## SECTION 2. TOURNAMENT PLAY

### Article 1: Tournament Play Clock Settings

Level of Play	Total Length of Game	Length of Halftime	Clock Settings
Youth (5-12 years old)	Two 12-minute halves	2 minutes	Running clock
Junior (13-17 years old)	Two 15-minute halves	2 minutes	Running clock- first half Pro clock- second half
Adult (18+)	Two 20-minute halves	2 minutes	Pro clock

\*Up to tournament organizer's discretion on what type of game clock setting they would like to use.

### Article 2: Pro-Clock Operation

PRO-CLOCK CLOCK STOPS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To award a first down, also after a change of team possession.</li><li>2. To complete a penalty.</li><li>3. When the ball or the runner goes out of bounds.</li><li>4. When a pass or fumble (forward or backward) strikes the ground.</li><li>5. When a score is made and during and after the following try and onside snap.</li><li>6. When a charged timeout is granted.</li></ol>

**(A.R. 2-2-2)**

### Article 3. Tournament Play Overtime

1. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
  - a. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
  - b. The official will determine on which end of the field the overtime will take place.

2. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of its own.
  - a. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the five-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
  - b. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
3. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect. **(A.R. 2-2-3)**
4. There are no timeouts in overtime.

## **RULE 3: LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL**

### **SECTION 1. LIVE BALL**

#### **Article 1: Live Ball Definition**

The ball is live at the snap and remains live until an official's whistle blows the ball dead.

#### **Article 2: Ball Spot**

The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage by spotting the ball before each play and signaling ready for play with a short whistle.

- 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, an official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification prior to the snap to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage. **(A.R. 3-1-2)**

#### **Article 3: Pre-Snap Defense**

The defense may not mimic the offensive team's signals by trying to confuse the offensive players while the quarterback is calling signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

#### **Article 4: Possession**

A player who gains possession of the ball is considered inbounds as long as one foot or other body part comes down in the field of play. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

## **SECTION 2. DEAD BALL**

### **Article 1: Dead Ball Definition**

Any official can whistle the play dead.

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. **(A.R. 3-2-1a, 3-2-1b, 3-2-1c)**
- 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. Any part of the body other than feet or hands touches the ground.
- f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out. **(A.R. 3-2-1d)**
- g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
- h. An inadvertent whistle.

### **Article 2: Inadvertent Whistle**

In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offended team has two options:

- a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed. **(A.R. 3-2-2)**
- b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

### **Article 3: Dead Ball Substitution**

- a. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- b. Neither team may substitute once the ball becomes live. Any live ball substitutions will result in an illegal substitution foul. **(A.R. 3-2-3)**

### **Article 4: Ruling Challenges**

- a. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official’s rule interpretation. If the official’s ruling is correct, the team is charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout is not 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. **(A.R. 3-2-4)**
- b. A team with no timeout remaining cannot challenge a rule interpretation, though officials can come together independently and reverse a call by unanimous decision.
- c. Each team is limited to one coach challenge per half.

## RULE 4: GAME PLAY

### SECTION 1: SCORING

#### Article 1: Touchdown

**Touchdown:** Six 6 points (**A.R. 4-1-1**)

#### Article 2: Extra Points

**PAT** (point after touchdown) **1 point** (5-yard line) or **2 points** (10-yard line). (**A.R. 4-1-2**)

- a. Because of the No-run zone, a one point PAT is pass only; two point PAT can be run or pass.
  - i. Defense touchdown on a try - 2 points.
  - ii. Safety - 2 points
  - iii. Safety on a try - 1 point.

**NOTE: AT YOUNGER LEVELS, LEAGUES SHOULD CONSIDER WAIVING THE NO-RUN ZONE FOR TOUCHDOWNS AND POINT-AFTER TRIES.**

- b. A team that scores a touchdown must declare prior to the snap whether it wishes to attempt a one- or two-point conversion. Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

#### Article 3: Safety

##### 2 points

- a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his or her own endzone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, a knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the endzone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone. A penalty in the end zone (i.e. flag guarding) can also be ruled a safety. (**A.R. 4-1-3**)

#### Article 4: Mercy Rule

- a. After one team is leading by 30 points or more, the game is over and no PATs are attempted. (**A.R. 4-1-4**)
- b. Forfeits will be scored 30-0.

### SECTION 2: RUNNING

#### Article 1: Spotting the Ball

The spot of the ball is the position of the ball when the flag is pulled, not the location of the feet or hips.

## Article 2: Legal Running Plays

Only direct handoffs and backward passes behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must take place behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. **(A.R. 4-2-2a)**

- a. The “center sneak” play is not allowed as centers are ineligible to receive handoffs. **(A.R. 4-2-2b)**
- 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, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

## Article 3: No Run Zone

No-run zone are located five yards before the end zone in the direction the offense is headed. They are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in this zone. **(A.R. 4-2-3)**

**USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDATION: THE NO-RUN ZONE MAY BE REMOVED FOR PLAYERS WHO ARE STILL LEARNING BASIC PASSING AND CATCHING SKILLS.**

## Article 4: Flag Guarding

- a. 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, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey. **(A.R. 4-2-4)**
- b. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
- c. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
- d. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- e. 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.

## Article 5: Blocking / Screening

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

## Article 6: Running With the Ball-Carrier

Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. There is no running with the ball-carrier. **(A.R. 4-2-6)**

## SECTION 3: PASSING

### Article 1: Forward Pass

A pass is considered a forward pass if the ball first touches anything beyond the spot where the ball is released. All other passes are backward passes, even if it is lateral (parallel to the scrimmage line).

- a. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage and be in the vicinity of a receiver. Any ball not crossing the line of scrimmage or deemed to be in the vicinity of a receiver by an official is considered intentional grounding. **(A.R. 4-3-1)**
- b. Quarterbacks cannot spike the ball dead unless the ball travels beyond the line of scrimmage and is in the vicinity of a teammate.
  - i. A spike to stop the clock is allowed with two minutes or less on the clock.
  - ii. The ball must go directly down to the ground near the quarterback's feet.
  - iii. As a result of the play a down is consumed.
- c. Any player who has received a legal handoff can throw the ball forward as long as they are still behind the line of scrimmage.
- d. An illegal forward pass is defined as a pass thrown by a player with any part of that player's body having crossed the line of scrimmage.

**USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDATION: FOR TEAMS THAT ARE STILL LEARNING BASIC FOOTBALL SKILLS, OFFICIALS SHOULD USE THEIR DISCRETION FOR BALLS THAT DO NOT REACH THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE AS LONG AS THE PLAYER MADE AN HONEST EFFORT TO MAKE IT THERE.**

### Article 2: Shovel Pass

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

### Article 3: Seven Second Clock

A seven-second pass clock begins upon the snap and continues until there is a handoff or pass. If the seven-second clock expires while the quarterback still has the ball, the play is blown dead, a down is lost and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage as if an incomplete pass occurred. **(A.R. 4-3-3)**

## SECTION 4: RECEIVING

### Article 1: Eligible Receivers

All players – are eligible to receive passes.

### Article 2: Legal Reception

A player must have at least one foot or other body part inbounds to make a legal reception.

### Article 3: Simultaneous Possession

In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

### Article 4: Interceptions

Interceptions are returnable and are the only changes of possession that do not result with starting on the 5-yard line. **(A.R. 4-4-4)**

## SECTION 5: BLITZER AND RUSHER

### Article 1: Blitzzer

All Blitzzers must be a minimum of seven yards behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped and must declare themselves by raising their hand. Players not blitzing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage. No more than two players may establish themselves as Blitzzers on a given play. **(A.R. 4-5-1)**

**USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDATION: FOR TEAMS STILL LEARNING BASIC FOOTBALL SKILLS, ELIMINATE PASS BLITZERS TO ALLOW PLAYERS THE FULL SEVEN SECONDS TO THROW THE BALL WITHOUT PRESSURE.**

### Article 2: Rusher

Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. At this point players crossing the line of scrimmage are Rushers. **(A.R. 4-5-2)**

### Article 3: Legal Blitzing

A marker, or the official, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position and identify themselves before every play.

- a. A legal blitz is:
  - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
  - ii. If a blitzzer leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback. **(A.R. 4-5-3)**
  - iii. If a blitzzer leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the second receiver.
- b. A live ball penalty may be called if:
  - i. The Blitzzer 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 or declared 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. A maximum of 2 players may establish themselves as a blitzzer. If a player who signals is less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage or if a player is giving an invalid signal or if more than 2 players simultaneously keep their hand raised after the snapper has touched the ball, it's a foul for illegal signal. Foul - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.

c. Special circumstances:

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

**Article 4: Roughing the Passer**

Players blitzing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty. (A.R. 4-5-4)

**Article 5: Impeding the Blitzler**

The offense cannot impede the Blitzler in any way. The Blitzlers have the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the Blitzler. Any disruption to the Blitzler’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the blitzler penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the Blitzler’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.

**Article 6: Quarterback Sack**

A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flag are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.

- a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

**SECTION 6. HOLDING, SHIELDING, CONTACT AND AIMING**

**Article 1: Holding**

Holding is grasping an opponent or their equipment, not releasing immediately and impacting the opponent.

**Article 2: Shielding**

Shielding is obstructing an opponent without contact by moving into their path. A moving player without right of way who impedes an opponent from running a pass route, getting to the runner or impedes a legal blitzler is guilty of shielding. A player standing still (with the right of place) is not shielding, even if the player is obstructing an opponent.

**Article 3: Contact**

Contact is touching an opponent with impact. Touching with no impact is not a foul. (A.R. 4-6-3)

**Article 4: Aiming**

Aiming is to target and initiate contact with an opponent or to run into an opponent on purpose, even with right of way. Aiming is any deliberate or avoidable contact with excessive force, even in an attempted flag pull or while playing the ball during a pass. Aiming is to attack a ball in possession or take away the ball from the runner.

## **SECTION 7. FLAG PULLING**

### **Article 1: Legal Flag Pull**

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

### **Article 2: Diving and Holding**

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

### **Article 3: Stripping**

It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time. **(A.R. 4-7-3)**

### **Article 4: Inadvertent Loss of Flag**

If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the play is declared dead.

### **Article 5: Illegal Flag Pull**

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

- a. If a defender makes a good-faith flag pull while a receiver bobbles or juggles what will be a completed catch, the ball is down where possession is made.

## **SECTION 8. FORMATIONS**

### **Article 1: Offensive Formations**

Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and any number of players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

- a. A shift is a simultaneous change of position by 2 or more offensive players after the ball is made ready for play and before the snap. The shift ends when all players have been stationary for 1 full second.
- b. One player at a time may go in motion 1 yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- c. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.

### **Article 2: Illegal Motion**

Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a illegal motion.

### **Article 3: Legal Snap**

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. **(A.R. 4-8-3)**

## SECTION 9. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

### Article 1: Intentional Contact

If the field monitor or official 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! (A.R. 4-9-1)

- a. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- b. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- c. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

**USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDATION: FOR TEAMS STILL LEARNING BASIC FOOTBALL SKILLS, REMOVE ANY PLAYER WHO COMMITS AN UNSPORTSMANLIKE OR DANGEROUS ACT FROM THE FIELD TO RECEIVE INSTRUCTION FROM A COACH AND A COOLING OFF PERIODS. OFFICIALS CAN EJECT THE PLAYER AT THEIR DISCRETION IF THERE ARE CONTINUED INFRACTIONS THAT ARE DEEMED INTENTIONAL.**

### Article 2: Offensive Language

Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game. (A.R. 4-9-2)

### Article 3: Spectator Conduct

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.

### Article 4: Field Safety

Fans are required to keep fields safe and kid-friendly:

- 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. The Administrative Zone is reserved for league administration, game officials, medical personnel, coaches and players only.
- c. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.

### Article 5: Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty

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
- c. Disconcerting signals: No player or team should make any deliberate attempt to mimic the cadence of the quarterback. (A.R. 4-9-5)

## **RULE 5: OFFICIAL DUTIES**

### **SECTION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 1: Jurisdiction of Officials**

Jurisdiction of Officials - The officials' jurisdiction begins with the coin toss and ends when the Referee declares the score final.

#### **Article 2: Number of Officials**

Number of Officials - The game shall be played under the supervision of 2 (R and FJ), 3 (R, DJ and FJ) or 4 (R, DJ, FJ and SJ) officials.

- a. If officiating crews contain 2 or 3 officials, the other job responsibilities are to be split accordingly.

### **SECTION 2. REFEREE**

#### **Article 1: Position**

The initial position of the Referee is behind and to the side of the FJ in the offensive backfield. On a 2-man crew, the Referee is positioned and working like Down Judge. **(A.R. 5-2-1)**

#### **Article 2: Basic Responsibilities**

Basic Responsibilities **(A.R. 5-2-1)**:

- a. The Referee has general oversight and control of the game, has final authority for the score and their decisions upon rules and other matters pertaining to the game are final.
- b. The Referee shall inspect the field and report any irregularities to game management, coaches and other officials.
- c. The Referee has jurisdiction over player equipment.
- d. The Referee shall indicate that the ball is ready for play, award new series of downs and administer penalties.
- e. The Referee shall notify both head coaches of any disqualifications.
- f. After the snap, the Referee shall be responsible for ruling on the play behind the scrimmage line around the ball.
- g. The Referee is responsible for coverage of the quarterback.

## **SECTION 3. DOWN JUDGE**

### **Article 1: Position**

The initial position of the Down Judge is on the scrimmage line at the side line with the down indicator.

### **Article 2: Basic Responsibilities**

Basic Responsibilities (**A.R. 5-3-2**):

- a. The Down Judge is responsible for the operation of the down indicator.
- b. The Down Judge shall keep count of the downs.
- c. The Down Judge has jurisdiction over the scrimmage line and their side line.
- d. Once the ball has crossed the scrimmage line, the Down Judge shall be responsible for ruling on the play around the ball and forward progress on their side of the field.

## **SECTION 4. FIELD JUDGE**

### **Article 1: Position**

The initial position of the Field Judge is 7 yards deep at the side line opposite to the down indicator.

### **Article 2: Basic Responsibilities**

Basic Responsibilities (**A.R. 5-4-2**):

- a. On a 2 or 3-man crew the Field Judge is responsible for timing the game or supervising the game clock operator.
- b. The Field Judge has jurisdiction over their side line.
- c. Once the ball has crossed the scrimmage line, the Field Judge shall be responsible for ruling on the play around the ball and forward progress on their side of the field.

## **SECTION 5. SIDE JUDGE**

### **Article 1: Position**

The initial position of the Side Judge is 7 or more yards deep at the side line with the down indicator.

### **Article 2: Basic Responsibilities**

Basic Responsibilities (**A.R. 5-5-2**):

- a. The Side Judge is responsible for timing the game or supervising the game clock operator.
- b. The Side Judge shall be responsible for observing receivers on deep routes for ruling on long passes and the status of the ball and forward progress in their area.

## RULE 6: PENALTIES

### SECTION 1.

#### General Provisions (A.R. 6-1)

The officials will call all penalties.
Game officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

### SECTION 2.

#### Defensive Spot Fouls

Holding	+10 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down
Stripping	+10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from the spot
Illegal Equipment	+5 from the spot. *Further infractions may result in unsportsmanlike conduct up to ejection.

### SECTION 3.

#### Offensive Spot Fouls

Screening, Blocking, Holding, or Running With the Ball Carrier	-10 yards and loss of down
Charging	-10 yards and loss of down
Flag Guarding	-5 yards and loss of down
Illegal Equipment	-5 yards from the spot of the foul. *Further infractions may result in unsportsmanlike conduct up to ejection
Intentional Grounding	-5 yards and loss of down

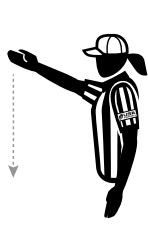
**SECTION 4.****Defensive Penalties**

Defensive Pass Interference	+10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+10 yards from the end of the play and automatic first down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct Including Defensive Taunting	+10 yards from the end of the play and automatic first down
Offsides	+5 yards from line of scrimmage
Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage
Illegal Signal	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage. Live ball foul
Roughing the Passer	+10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down. For a completed pass, the offense may elect to add the yardage from the end of the play.
Delay of Game	+5 yards from the line of scrimmage

**SECTION 5.****Offensive Penalties**

Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct Including Taunting	-10 yards from the end of the play
Offsides / False Start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage
Delay of Game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage
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	-10 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
Impeding the Blitzer	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Center Sneak	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
Backwards Pass	-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down

**SECTION 6. OFFICIALS SIGNALS**



**Ready for play**



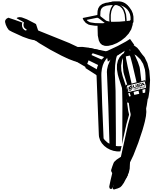
**Stop the clock**



**Touchdown**



**Safety**



**First down**



**Loss of down**



**Incomplete pass**



**End of period**



**Offside  
Illegal blitz**



**False start  
Illegal procedure**



**Delay of game  
Delay of pass**



**Illegal participation  
Illegal substitution**



**Unsportsmanlike  
conduct**



**Pass interference**



**Illegal forward pass or  
backward pass**



**Illegal contact**



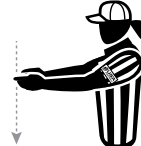
**Shielding**



**Disqualification**



**Jumping**



**Diving**



**Flag guarding  
Illegal flag pull**

**\*\*THIS REPRESENTS PRACTICE AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES BASED ON OUR CURRENT LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE. RECOMMENDATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS MORE RESEARCH AND INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE.\*\***



# **FLAG FOOTBALL APPROVED RULINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

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# INTERPRETATIONS AND APPROVED RULINGS

## RULE 1: GAME, FIELD, BALL, AND EQUIPMENT

### A.R. 1-1-1b (Coin Toss—Deferral)

- **Play:** At the coin toss, the visiting team wins and asks to defer its choice to the second half.
- **Ruling:** NOT allowed. Teams may only choose from the options of offense or defense, and then direction.

### A.R. 1-2-2 (Uniforms—Same color)

- **Play:** At the coin toss, both the home and visiting team are wearing dark colored jerseys.
- **Ruling:** NOT allowed. The visiting team must change into a lighter jersey unless both the coaches and officials agree that the contrast between the two jerseys is sufficient.

### A.R. 1-2-3 (Participants—fewer than 4)

- **Play:** Team A is playing with four players and is ahead by 6 points. On the next run play, one of their receivers is injured and there's no substitute available to replace them.
- **Ruling:** Game over. Team A must take a forfeit.

### A.R. 1-5-2 (Ball Size - Swap During Play)

- **Play:** Team A throws a deep pass out of bounds and replaces its ball with a smaller-than-allowed size.
- **Ruling:** At discovery, dead-ball administrative correction; subsequent downs must use legal ball. Prior play stands unless clear unfair advantage (ex: a TD was scored); repeated violation results in unsportsmanlike conduct.

### A.R. 1-5-2 (Ball Size - Swap Discovered)

- **Play:** Team A throws a deep pass that is intercepted by Team B. After the ball is declared dead. Team B informed the Referee that the ball that was intercepted is a smaller-than-allowed size. Previously Team A was warned about utilizing the incorrect sized football.
- **Ruling:** The ruling of interception on the field stands. Assessment of a dead ball unsportsmanlike conduct penalty against Team A.
- **Note:** Penalty can be charged to offending player or coach.

### A.R. 1-6-1 (Flag Contrast Discovered Mid-Drive)

- **Play:** During a live series, Team B coach complains that Team A's flags closely match shorts.
- **Ruling:** The legality of flags should be addressed prior to the first snap of the game. The Referee confirms that Team A flags are legal. If the Team A player's flags are deemed illegal, they must immediately replace their flags; failure to do so results in delay of game. Prior live play stands.

### A.R. 1-7-2 (The Field - No-Run Zone in OT)

- **Play:** OT: Team A lines up a Try from the 10 yard line for two points; Team A's coach asks whether the No-Run Zone applies during the try.
- **Ruling:** No, unless moved to the 5-yard line by penalty. Although the No-Run Zone still exists five yards before the goal line on all plays, including tries; this try starts prior to that zone and therefore the ball can be advanced beyond the LOS by run or pass.
- See Rule 4-1-2.

## RULE 2: LEAGUE AND TOURNAMENT PLAY

### A.R. 2-1-1 (Mercy Rule Inside Final 2:00)

- **Play:** During adult league play, after a long run that results in a touchdown, Team A goes up by 30 points with 1:15 remaining.
- **Ruling:** Game ends immediately; no try is attempted.

### A.R. 2-1-3 (Delay of Game)

- **Play:** Team A 2nd and midline at the A-20 with 8:32 to go in the first half of the game. The Referee announces that Team A has 5 seconds to snap the ball. Team A's QB continues to instruct their team and the play clock expires.
- **Ruling:** Delay of Game, offense. The game clock keeps running during penalty administration. A 2nd and midline at the A-15.

### A.R. 2-1-6 (League OT—Defensive TD Ends Period)

- **Play:** In the first overtime series from midfield in league play, Team B intercepts a pass by QB A4 and returns it for a touchdown.
- **Ruling:** Overtime period over by rule; no try; Team B wins.

### A.R. 2-1-6 (League OT—Defensive TD Ends Period)

- **Play:** In the first overtime series from midfield in league play, Team B intercepts a pass by QB A4 and returns it for a touchdown.
- **Ruling:** Overtime period over by rule; no try; Team B wins.

### A.R. 2-2-2 (Clock stops - on the ready)

- **Play:** During adult league play with 1:45 left in the game, Team B commits a holding foul during a run. The runner is de-flagged inbounds.
- **Ruling:** The ruling of interception on the field stands. Assessment of a dead ball unsportsmanlike conduct penalty against Team A. Note: Penalty can be charged to offending player or coach.

### **A.R. 2-2-2 (Clock stops - on the snap)**

- **Play:** During adult league play with 1:45 left in the game, Team B commits a holding foul during a pass play. The pass falls incomplete.
- **Ruling:** Game clock stops during penalty administration and due to the incomplete pass, remains stopped until the ball is next legally snapped.

### **A.R. 2-2-3 (Tournament OT—Penalty on First Play)**

- **Play:** In the first overtime series of a Tournament, Team A elects 2-point Try from the 10 yard line. During the play A8 holds rusher B3. QB A4 throws an incomplete pass.
- **Ruling:** Holding- offense. Team B declines the foul and will be the next team to put the ball in play at the Try value of their choosing (5 or 10 yardline).

## **RULE 3: LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL**

### **A.R. 3-1-2 (Offsides)**

- **Play:** A 1st and midline at the A-15. B10 enters the neutral zone before the snap; the ball is snapped.
- **Ruling:** Offsides, defense. Dead-ball foul, the down is not played. A 1st and midline from the A-10.

### **A.R. 3-2-1a (Muffed Snap)**

- **Play:** A 1st and midline at A-15. Team A center snaps the ball to QB A5. A5 muffs the snap and the ball hits the ground at the line of scrimmage.
- **Ruling:** Ball is dead and down is consumed. The ball is placed at the line of scrimmage. A 2nd and midline at the A-15.

### **A.R. 3-2-1b (Muffed Snap)**

- **Play:** Play: A 1st and midline at the A-15. Team A center snaps the ball over the head of QB A5. The ball lands at the A-5.
- **Ruling:** A 2nd and midline at the A-5.

### **A.R. 3-2-1c (Muffed Snap)**

- **Play:** A 1st and midline at the A-5. Team A center snaps the ball over the head of QB A7. The ball lands (a) in the endzone (b) out of bounds behind the endzone or endline.
- **Ruling:** Both a and b result in a safety. B's ball 1st and midline at the B-5.

### **A.R. 3-2-1d (Possession w/ Missing Flag)**

- **Play:** Receiver secures catch with less than two flags attached.
- **Ruling:** Dead ball at spot of the catch (by rule); pass is complete; ball is placed where possession was obtained.

### A.R. 3-2-2 (Inadvertent Whistle)

- **Play:** A Team B defender intercepts a pass; an inadvertent whistle occurs at B-15 during return.
- **Ruling:** Defense chooses: (a) take the ball at B-15 with the down consumed; or (b) replay the down.

### A.R. 3-2-3 (Substitution Infraction)

- **Play:** During a live play, B5 notices that there are only 4 players on defense. After the ball is snapped B5 leaves their sideline and comes onto the field to participate in the play.
- **Ruling:** Illegal substitution - defense. 5 yards, previous line of scrimmage.

### A.R. 3-2-4 (Challenge)

- **Play:** A 1st and midline at the A-8. Team A center false starts. The penalty is enforced from the A-8 to the A-3 and is announced as A 1st and midline at the A-3. Team A's head coach approaches the Down Judge and states that the penalty should have been enforced half the distance to the goal line. The coach asks to challenge the enforcement. Team A has one time out left.
- **Ruling:** If the officials believe their enforcement is in error, they will fix the enforcement without charging Team A a timeout. If officials believe their enforcement is correct, they will charge Team A a timeout, consult a reference manual or another authority, and confirm the enforcement challenged. Successful challenge, A 1st and midline at the A-4. Team A's timeout is returned.

### A.R. 3-2-4 (Challenge)

- **Play:** A team has made a challenge and it was successful. Later in the half the coach wants to make a second challenge about a ruling.
- **Ruling:** The official on the team's sideline informs the coach that they already had a challenge in this half and are not afforded a second opportunity to challenge.

## RULE 4: GAME PLAY

### A.R. 4-1-1 (Defensive penalty on a score)

- **Play:** A 2nd and goal at the B-10. QB A6 rolls to the right of the field and throws a pass to receiver A8 in the endzone for a Touchdown. During the pass, B9 hit QB A6 in their passing arm.
- **Ruling:** Roughing the passer by Team B. Touch down counts. The 10-yard penalty is assessed on the Try, half the distance to the goal line.

### A.R. 4-1-2 (Try)

- **Play:** After a touchdown, Team A elects to a try for 1 point from the 5 yard line. Just before the ball is snapped, Team B jumps offside.
- **Ruling:** Dead ball foul, Encroachment, defense. The ball will be placed at the 2 ½ yard line. The try is still for 1 point.

#### **A.R. 4-1-2 (Try)**

- **Play:** After a touchdown, Team A elects to a try for 1 point from the 5 yard line. During the successful try, Team A commits offensive pass interference.
- **Ruling:** Pass interference, offense. Try is no good; B 1st and midline at the B-5. Since this penalty includes a loss of down the try down is consumed and is not repeated.

#### **A.R. 4-1-2 (Try)**

- **Play:** After a touchdown, Team A elects to a try for 1 point from the 5 yard line. Before the snap, Team B jumps offsides. Before officials enforce the penalty, Team A requests to change their attempt to try for 2 points.
- **Ruling:** Team A cannot change the value of a try after a penalty. They can however change their decision with a timeout.

#### **A.R. 4-1-3 (Safety)**

- **Play:** A 3rd and midline at the A-5. QB A7 drops back into their own end zone looking to avoid the rush and find an open receiver. While in the endzone, A7 flag guards, rolls to the right side of the field and throws an incomplete pass.
- **Ruling:** Flag guarding. Safety. Since the foul by the offense occurs while the ball is in the endzone, the accepted penalty results in a safety.

#### **A.R. 4-1-4 (Mercy Rule)**

- **Play:** A 2nd and goal at the B-10. Team A is ahead by 24 points. QB A4 throws a pass downfield and connects with A8 in the endzone for a touchdown.
- **Ruling:** Game is over and the extra point is not attempted.

#### **A.R. 4-2-2 (QB Run)**

- **Play:** A 2nd and midline at the A-20. QB A5 hands the ball to A2 behind the line of scrimmage. While still behind the line of scrimmage, A2 hands the ball back to A5. A5 runs and is de-flagged at the B-20.
- **Ruling:** Legal run. A 1st and goal at the B-20.

#### **A.R. 4-2-2 (Center Handoff)**

- **Play:** A 2nd and midline at the A-20. At the snap, QB A5 hands the ball immediately to center A8 behind the line of scrimmage. A8 runs and is de-flagged at the B-15.
- **Ruling:** Illegal run, center sneak. A 3rd and midline at the A-15.

#### **A.R. 4-2-3 (No Run Zone)**

- **Play:** A 2nd and goal at the B4, in the no run zone (NRZ). QB A5 pitches the ball forward to back A7 who advances upfield without the ball first crossing the line of scrimmage. A7 scores on the play.
- **Ruling:** Illegal run—all plays must be pass plays inside the NRZ. A 3rd and goal at the B-9. Team A can run and pass.

#### **A.R. 4-2-4 (Flag Guarding)**

- **Play:** Runner A7 lowers their hand over their flag while defender B12 is attempting to pull the flag.
- **Ruling:** Flag guarding. 5 yards from the spot of the foul.

#### **A.R. 4-2-4 (Flag Guarding—Avoidance vs. Collision)**

- **Play:** Runner jumps to avoid a stationary defender's reach.
- **Ruling:** Flag guarding. 5 yards from the previous spot line of scrimmage, loss of down. Note the basic spot enforcement for live ball fouls by the offense behind the line of scrimmage.

#### **A.R. 4-2-4 (Flag Guarding—Jumping)**

- **Play:** While still behind the line of scrimmage, QB A5 is being pressured and rolls out for a pass. As the defender reaches out to deflag them, A5 jumps while delivering a pass to receiver A6.
- **Ruling:** Flag guarding. Safety. Since the foul by the offense occurs while the ball is in the endzone, the accepted penalty results in a safety.

#### **A.R. 4-2-6 (Running with Ball Carrier)**

- **Play:** Ball crosses the LOS on a run. Two receivers continue jogging downfield near the runner and screen defenders without contact.
- **Ruling:** Screen blocking. 10 yards from the spot of the foul. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball crosses the LOS.

#### **A.R. 4-3-1 (Forward Pass)**

- **Play:** QB under pressure throws beyond the LOS but clearly to an empty area with no eligible receiver nearby.
- **Ruling:** Illegal forward pass (intentional grounding). 5 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.

#### **A.R. 4-3-3 (Pass Clock)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. QB A5 receives the snap and holds the ball looking downfield for an open receiver, the seven second pass clock expires.
- **Ruling:** Pass clock violation. 3rd and midline at the A-10. If a pass is not thrown by the time the pass clock expires, the down is consumed and the ball placed at the previous line of scrimmage.

#### **A.R. 4-3-3 (Pass Clock)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. QB A5 throws a backward pass to A2 behind the LOS. A2 holds the ball looking downfield for an open receiver, then decides to run with the ball and is de-flagged at the A-20.
- **Ruling:** Legal run. 3rd and midline at the A-20. The seven-second pass clock ends with a handoff or pass.

#### **A.R. 4-3-3 (Pass Clock and Blitz)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. Blitzer B3 legally crosses the line of scrimmage and pursues QB A5 in the offensive backfield. A5 scrambles and holds the ball looking downfield for an open receiver, the pass clock expires while they still have the ball in their possession.
- **Ruling:** Pass clock violation. 3rd and midline at the A-10. The seven-second pass clock does not end when the QB is rushed or blitzed. It only ends with a handoff or pass.

#### **A.R. 4-4-4 (Interception)**

- **Play:** A 2nd and midline at the A-10. QB A5 throws a pass and it is intercepted by DB B7 at the A-20. B7 runs the ball to the A-9 where they are de-flagged.
- **Ruling:** Interception. B 1st and Goal at the A-9.

#### **A.R. 4-5-1 (Blitzer)**

- **Play:** A 2nd and midline at the A-10. Prior to the snap, B12, B13, & B14 all have their hands up asking for the right of way.
- **Ruling:** Live ball penalty, illegal signal. A 2nd and midline at the A-15.

#### **A.R. 4-5-2 (Rusher)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. B10 is standing 1 yard from Team A's line of scrimmage. That the snap QB A5 hands the ball off to A6. B10 crosses the line of scrimmage and pulls A6's flag at the A-8.
- **Ruling:** Legal rush. Once the ball is handed off, any defender can cross the line of scrimmage from any distance. 3rd and midline at the A-8.

#### **A.R. 4-5-3 (Blitzer)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. QB A5 conducts a hard count causing blitzer B6 to jump in front of the 7 yard rush line. The ball is snapped and B6 retreats to 7 yards and proceeds to rush QB A5.
- **Ruling:** Legal play, the blitzer/rusher can reset and rush after resetting themselves at the rush line.

#### **A.R. 4-5-4 (Roughing the Passer)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. Defender B6 is approaching QB A12 with their hands up. As the A12 passes the ball, B6 hits the QB on their throwing arm.
- **Ruling:** Roughing the passer, defense. 10-yard penalty. 1st and midline at the A-20.

#### **A.R. 4-6-3 (Charging vs. Right of Place)**

- **Play:** Defender B4 establishes a stationary position ready to pull a flag. Runner A6 lowers their shoulder and runs through B4.
- **Ruling:** Charging on the runner, 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

#### **A.R. 4-7-3 (Stripping of the ball)**

- **Play:** A 3rd and goal at the B-23. After completing the process of the catch, A15 turns up field to advance the ball at the B-20. While the ball is extended in an attempt to gain more yardage, B7 slaps the ball out of A15's hands.
- **Ruling:** Illegal Stripping of the ball, 10 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down. A 1st and goal at the B-10.

#### **A.R. 4-8-3 (Legal Snap)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. Center A7 walks up to the ball, sets for one second, and side snaps the ball to QB A5.
- **Ruling:** Illegal procedure. Note that legal snaps must occur from the ground and through the legs.

#### **A.R. 4-9-1 (Intentional Contact)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. Player B7 completes a flag pull by driving their forearm into the ribs of receiver A6.
- **Ruling:** Unnecessary Roughness defense, 10 yards added to the end of the run. Possible ejection from the game if deemed flagrant.

#### **A.R. 4-9-2 (Offensive Language/Taunting)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. Player A10 receives a pass over the middle of the field and on the way to the endzone verbally taunts closing defender B4.
- **Ruling:** Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Taunting, offense. 10 yards enforced at the spot of taunt if prior to the receiver reaching the endzone. Enforced at the succeeding spot if taunt occurs while in the endzone.

#### **A.R. 4-9-5 (Delay of Game and Unsportsmanlike Conduct)**

- **Play:** 2nd and midline at the A-10. Player B7 is standing 3 yards away from the line of scrimmage and claps their hands in an attempt to mimic QB A5's snap cadence.
- **Ruling:** Delay of Game, defense for 1st occurrence. Unsportsmanlike conduct for second and subsequent occurrences.

## **RULE 5: OFFICIALS DUTIES**

### **A.R. 5-2-1 (All Officials - Field Inspection)**

- **Play:** Before the first snap of the game, SJ and FJ notice that there are Team bags too close to the endline area.
- **Ruling:** They use their whistles to and declare an official timeout. The Referee instructs the Team to remove all bags from the endline. This action must be complete before the game can commence.

### **A.R. 5-2-1 (All Officials - Player Removal)**

- **Play:** A pass is caught by A9 downfield and as the catch is completed, player B6 tackles A9 while trying to make a flag pull. This is B6's second time tackling a player.
- **Ruling:** Illegal contact, defense. Officials come together to discuss disqualification. If the player is ejected from the game, the FJ and DJ inform each respective coach on their sideline while the Referee makes the announcement. All officials write down the name and number of the player, and time of the infraction.

### **A.R. 5-1-1 (Inadvertent Whistle)**

- **Play:** QB A7 takes the snap and hands the ball to RB A2. A2 runs past the line of scrimmage to the B-15 where defender B5 attempts a flag pull. B5 misses, A2 runs to the B-7 before their flag is pulled. During the run, the FJ blew their whistle at the flag pull attempt by B5.
- **Ruling:** Inadvertent whistle. Team A has the option of taking the result of the play when the whistle was blown (ball at the B-15) or replaying the down.

### **A.R. 5-2-1 (Referee Coverage on QB Pass Clock)**

- **Play:** QB A7 takes the snap and drops back 5 yards to look for an open receiver. The defense does not rush and drops into coverage. A7 cannot find an open receiver and the pass clock expires.
- **Ruling:** The Referee determines when the pass clock expires by counting 7 seconds starting at the snap.

### **A.R. 5-2-1 (Referee Coverage on Passer and Behind the LOS)**

- **Play:** QB A5 rolls to the right and blitzer B5 closes in from 7 yards away. When B5 is one step away from QB A5, A5 passes the ball forward to teammate A7. B5 hits A5's hand on the follow through-passes forward.
- **Ruling:** Referee determines whether contact to passer violates roughing the passer.

#### **A.R. 5-2-1 (Referee Clock Stoppage)**

- **Play:** During Adult tournament level play, the ball becomes dead at the end of a play and the game clock in the second half runs down to 2 minutes before the Referee can declare the ball ready for play.
- **Ruling:** The official with the game clock will stop the clock at 2 minutes and the Referee will inform both teams about the remaining time in the half. The clock will start on the snap.
- **Note:** The same process will happen if the ball has been made ready for play but the offense does not snap the ball before the 2 minute clock stoppage.

#### **A.R. 5-2-1 (Referee Clock Stoppage under 2 minutes)**

- **Play:** During Adult tournament level play, the ball becomes dead at the end of a play and the game clock is under 2 minutes.
- **Ruling:** The official with the game clock will stop the clock and the Referee will inform both teams of the exact time remaining in the half. The clock will start on the snap.

#### **A.R. 5-3-2 (Down Judge - Line of Scrimmage)**

- **Play:** QB A5 rolls to the left after receiving the snap. Tucks the ball and begins to run toward the line of scrimmage. Just before crossing the line, A5 pulls up and throws the ball downfield to teammate A8. Team B Head Coach wants a penalty for illegal forward pass.
- **Ruling:** Seeing that the line of scrimmage is threatened, DJ holds the line. The DJ confirms with the rest of the crew that the pass by A5 was legal as their body was behind the line as the ball was thrown.

#### **A.R. 5-3-2 (Down Judge - Line of Scrimmage)**

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- **Ruling:** Seeing that the line of scrimmage is threatened, DJ holds the line. The DJ confirms with the rest of the crew that the pass by A5 was legal as their body was behind the line as the ball was thrown.

#### **A.R. 5-4-2 (Field Judge - Rush Line)**

- **Play:** B12 is lined up 6 yards away from the line of scrimmage and has raised their hand to indicate that they'd like to blitz.
- **Ruling:** Seeing that the potential blitzer is not at 7 yards, the FJ asks the defender to line up with them prior to the snap of the ball.

### A.R. 5-4-2 (Deep Pass Coverage)

- **Play:** A10 runs deep down field in an attempt to catch a pass. B15 is guarding them closely. When A10 jumps up for the ball, B15 holds A10's left arm down. The pass falls incomplete.
- **Ruling:** SJ and FJ have eyes on this action. If there's only one flag on the play, both SJ and FJ come in and discuss what was seen and provide a final ruling to the Referee for announcement. .

### A.R. 5-5-2 (Side Judge - Clock Management)

- **Play:** Clock is under 2 minutes in adult play. The clock is running during a received pass play. The flag is pulled at the A-20.
- **Ruling:** At the conclusion of each play, the SJ will announce the time on the clock for both teams and officials to hear.

## RULE 6: PENALTIES

### A.R. 6-1 (Incidental Contact)

- **Play:** A 1st and mindline at the A-5. Team A QB throws a pass downfield to receiver A20. Defender B25 is guarding A20 closely but not engaging in significant contact. As the ball approaches, A20 jumps and B20 faces the ball and jumps at the same time in an attempt to catch the pass. Both player's shoulders collide during the attempt and the ball falls incomplete.
- **Ruling:** Incidental contact, no player is at fault for a contact foul. 2nd and midline at the A-5.

### A.R. 6-1 (Coach to Official Communication)

- **Play:** A 2nd and mindline at the A-5. The pass is knocked down by B15 at the line of scrimmage 2 yards away from passing QB8. Team A's head coach runs onto the field, yelling at the Referee that there should have been a roughing the passer penalty called.
- **Ruling:** Automatic unsportsmanlike conduct (UNS) penalty to the Team A head coach. The Referee should throw the flag, announce the foul and calmly walk the coach back to their sideline, explain what was seen and remind the coach that subsequent UNS penalties will result in their ejection from the game. Coaches may debate calls from the team box or during a team awarded timeout.

### A.R. 6-1 (Penalty Enforcement - Live-Ball then Dead-Ball Fouls)

- **Play:** A 1st and mindline at the A-5. During a run play, B18 holds at the A-20 and pulls the runner's flag. After the play A7 spikes the ball in front of defender B7's face.
- **Ruling:** Holding, defense. Unsportsmanlike conduct, offense. Both penalties are enforced. A 1st and midline at the A-15. Live-ball fouls do not offset dead-ball fouls. Penalties for dead-ball fouls are administered separately and in order of occurrence.

#### **A.R. 6-1 (Penalty Enforcement - Multiple fouls by the same team)**

- **Play:** A 1st and mindline at the A-20. At the line of scrimmage, B25 jams A2 at the snap. QB7 rolls to the right and successfully completes a pass to A9. Just prior to the pass B10 held A3.
- **Ruling:** Illegal Contact, Defense, holding, defense. Team A must decide which live-ball penalty they would like to accept. When two or more live-ball fouls are committed by the same team, the offended team may only select one of the penalties.

#### **A.R. 6-1 (Penalty Enforcement - Offsetting Fouls)**

- **Play:** A 1st and mindline at the A-5. During the run, A12 commits flag guarding and B10 holds the runner.
- **Ruling:** Offsetting fouls, down replayed. If live ball fouls by both teams are reported, the fouls offset and the down is replayed. Exception - there is a change of possession or a live-ball foul is administered as a dead-ball foul during the play.

#### **A.R. 6-1 (Half the Distance Enforcement)**

- **Play 1:** A 2nd and mindline at the A-5. Team A commits a false start.
  - **Ruling:** Dead ball, 5 yards from the previous line of scrimmage. A 2nd and midline from the A-2.5 yard line.
- **Play 2:** A 3rd and goal at the B-8. Team B commits pass interference in the end zone.
  - **Ruling:** Defensive pass interference, half the distance to the goal line, automatic first down. A 1st and goal at the B-4.

#### **A.R. 6-1 (Yardage Declined)**

- **Play:** A 1st and mindline at the A-5. A legal forward pass is caught by A9 who crosses the midline and is held at the A-23.
- **Ruling:** Team A has a choice of accepting the penalty as a whole (1st and goal at the B-22) or accepting the penalty but declining the yardage, 1st and midline at the A-23. Teams can accept a penalty but decline the yardage if they find it beneficial to their field position.

#### **A.R. 6-1 (Extensions)**

- **Play:** A 1st and mindline at the A-20 with 0:07 seconds remaining in the half. Team B commits a pass interference at the B-10 and the pass falls incomplete. Time expires on the play.
- **Ruling:** Team A may accept the penalty and extend the half by one untimed down. A 1st and goal at the B-20.



# USA FLAG™ 5'S

## RULEBOOK