

SPARD YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Prepared By

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Prepared For

**ALL SPARD PARTICIPANTS &
SURROUNDING LEAGUES**

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***Rule differences from 2023 TAAF Season highlighted in grey.**

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1. The Game Field & Players

- 1.1. The game shall be played between two teams of no more than eight (8) players each, on a 40 yard wide by 100 yard long rectangular field with a properly shaped, sized and inflated ball. Exception- Pre-K/K League will play on a smaller, modified sized field.
- 1.2. A team may legally play with no fewer than six (6) players. Exception- Pre-K/K League may legally play with no fewer than four (4) players.
- 1.3. Playing Requirement. A player who attends all scheduled weekly practices MUST play 2 full quarters (can be offense, defense or both). A player who attends ½ of the scheduled weekly practices MUST only play 1 full quarter. Any player who does not attend weekly practice is not bound to any playing requirements.

2. Winning Team and Final Score

- 2.1. The teams are awarded points based on values established by rules. Forfeited games result in a score of 7-0 in favor of the team who did not forfeit.
- 2.2. The game is ended and the score is final when the referee declares the game complete. Games can not end in a tie.

3. Supervision

- 3.1. The game is conducted under the supervision of two (2) or three (3) officials including: a referee, line judge, and a back judge. Exception: Pre-k/K league may use 1.
- 3.2. Officiating crews will be assigned from an approved agency from the City of Stephenville Parks and Recreation.

4. Team Managers and Captains

- 4.1. Each team shall designate to the referee one or more players as its field captain(s) and one player shall speak for the team in all dealings with officials. There shall be no more than two (2) captains from each team at the coin toss.
- 4.2. A field captain's first announced choice of any options offered to his team shall not be reversed.
- 4.3. Any player that participated in the last play, and is still on the field of play, may call for a team charged time-out.

5. Persons Subject to the Rules

- 5.1. All players, captains, managers, or persons affiliated with the teams on the field, involved with a tournament or contest are subject to the rules and shall be governed by the officials and/or the tournament director, staff or appointed agents.

6. The Field

- 6.1. 80 yards from goal line to goal line with two end zones of 10 yards each
- 6.2. Field will be divided into 4 zones of 20 yards each.
- 6.3. Field shall be a minimum of 40 yards wide and a maximum of 53 1/3 yards wide.
- 6.4. Marking the three (3) yard line and ten (10) yard line are optional for use during the PAT.
- 6.5. Marking the twenty-five (25) yard line will be optional for beginning the game.

- 6.6. Lines should be clearly marked and use of cones or yard line markers along the sideline signify zone lines are strongly recommended for use during championship play.
- 6.7. Teams shall use the side of the field next opposite of the fans as their team area during the game. The team area stretches from twenty (20) yard line to forty (40) yard line. A team may not cross the forty (40) yard line into the other team's area. Only the coaches and players are allowed within the team area.
- 6.8. When teams and players are in the team area, adequate room along the sideline must be made available in order for officials to work the sideline and to properly officiate the contest.
- 6.9. Exception for Pre-K/K: The field will be reduced in size with shorter 1st downs.

7. The Ball Size

- 7.1. Teams may provide an official leather, synthetic or rubber ball which is properly inflated.
 - 7.1.1. Pre-K/K will use a Pee Wee Official size and weight football
 - 7.1.2. 1st/2nd will use a Pee Wee official size and weight football
 - 7.1.3. 3rd/4th will use Junior official size and weight football
 - 7.1.4. 5th/6th will use Junior official size and weight football

8. Playing Equipment and Uniforms

- 8.1. Jewelry: No jewelry of any kind may be worn by players. No headwear with an extended bill may be worn. (Ex: caps, visors. etc.).
- 8.2. Jersey/Shirts: All members of the same team must wear the same color jersey with non-duplicating numbers including at least a six (6) inch number on the back. Jerseys do not need to be tucked in, but No article of clothing may cover any portion of a player's flag. Officials should warn violators of this prior to the game start.
- 8.3. Shorts/Pants: Any shorts or pants worn during flag football league play may have pockets, but must be black in color. Any shorts or pants that have striping, piping or a design that camouflages a player's flags or flag belt will not be allowed.
- 8.4. Shoes: Any flat soled or completely molded cleat shoes are acceptable. Removable cleats, baseball or track spikes or any shoes that have steel or metal tips are prohibited. All players must wear shoes.
- 8.5. Protective Equipment: Helmets, shoulder pads, thigh pads are prohibited. Any questions as to the legality of player's equipment shall be decided by the referee of that game. The use of any unyielding hard substance cannot be used to protect an injury, no matter how well covered or padded. Therapeutic or prevention knee braces can be used if covered from direct external exposure. 7 on 7 style approved soft shell helmets may be used.
- 8.6. Flags - The current "Triple Threat" flag belts as approved by SPARD must be used for Local and Regional Tournament Play. Pop-Flag belts used by other organizations are not permitted. All flag belts will be inspected and provided by SPARD.
 - 8.6.1. Flags must be worn by all players on offense and defense and must be a different color than the jersey color worn by the team.
 - 8.6.2. In the case of a flag belt coming off, the player will be ruled "Down" when they are touched next.
 - 8.6.3. Flags must be full length and cannot be tied, cut, taped, etc.

8.7. Gloves worn by a player must be approved and inspected by game officials in the case any illegal substance has altered the gloves with the intent to enhance a player's performance.

8.8. Mouth pieces are required at all times.

8.9. If any player has improper attire, said player may not play in the game until he complies with these rules. If discovered during the game, player must be removed from play until compliance occurs. (Uniform violations: 5-yard penalty for someone who gains possession of the football).

9. Team & Players

9.1. Flag football is with 8 players with everyone eligible. No team may field less than 6 players at any time.

9.1.1. In Pre-k/K league, 6 players with everyone eligible. No team may field less than 4 players.

9.2. Team Roster: Teams regular playing roster shall not exceed 12 players

9.2.1. In Pre-k/K league, playing roster shall not exceed 10 players.

9.3. No new player may be added to teams regular playing roster after the draft has been concluded unless approved by SPARD administration.

9.4. Eligibility: No player shall be permitted to play SPARD Flag Football if he is presently or has, during the current season, been on a Junior High or High School team.

10. Classifications

10.1. Youth Age divisions include: Pre-K & K, 1st & 2nd, 3rd & 4th, 5th & 6th

10.2. Team & Player Enforcement- Any team or players found violating these rules shall forfeit all games played in by the ineligible player or players.

10.3. Outside Teams- Any outside Stephenville team registered must provide proof of enrollment from the school registrar. You may only play where you go to school. Exception: If where you go to school does not have a team, you may play where you pay taxes to.

11. Player Conduct

11.1. Any verbal badgering of officials or derogatory language between opposing players after officials have asked once for team captain's control can result in player or players involved in action being disqualified. This includes Faking contact & begging a call.

11.1.1. 10 yd penalty for the 1st offense

11.1.2. 10 yd penalty and ejection for the 2nd offense

11.1.3. This includes coaches, and sidelined players.

12. Approved Rulings and Officials Signals

12.1. An approved ruling is an official decision on a given statement of facts made by the SPARD. This is to illustrate the spirit and application of rules. If there is a conflict between an approved ruling and the official rule, the official rules take precedence.

12.2. Judgment calls/interpretation of rules cannot be protested. Enforcement of penalties may be questioned and confirmed at the time of enforcement, but not protested. Player eligibility may be protested and must be filed with a SPARD administrator or

approved agent before end of the half in which said player is playing.

13. LENGTH OF GAMES, SCORING AND TIME OUTS

- 13.1. Coin Toss- At the beginning of each game, a coin toss will be held. The winner of the coin toss will have the following options: (1) offense, (2) defer to the 2nd half. The loser of the opening toss will have choice of the remaining options for the first half. The captain, not having the first choice of options for the second half, shall exercise one of the remaining options.
- 13.2. Game Time- Clock management and regulations
- 13.2.1. Each game will consist of 2- 20 minute halves.
- 13.2.1.1. Pre-K/K Games will consist of 2- 15 minute halves
- 13.2.2. Game clock will start each half when the official puts the ball in play.
- 13.2.3. The official's whistle makes the ball ready for play and starts the play clock prior to each down throughout the games. The play clock is twenty-five seconds in length.
- 13.2.4. After a 1 min. team time-out, the game clock will start at the snap of the ball.
- 13.2.5. Because the game clock is a continuous click, it does not stop during P.A.T. attempts.
- 13.2.6. The game clock will stop for team time-outs, official time-outs, and injuries only.
- 13.2.7. The play clock is 25 second and starts once the official marks the ball ready for play. (Delay of Game penalty if exceed 25 seconds)
- 13.2.8. Half time – 2 minutes.
- 13.2.9. The on-field captain or quarterback may request the amount of time left in the game from the officials at any time when the ball is dead.
- 13.2.10. Within the last 2 minutes of each half, the clock will stop for players going out of bounds, incompletions, 1st downs, touchdowns, PATs & everything listed.
- 13.2.11. There will be NO 7 play period at the end either half.

14. Tiebreakers

In the event of a tie game at the end of the second half the following method will be used:

- 14.1. After an official's time out of 1 minute, during which time officials and team captains will have a coin toss, the winner will have choice of playing offense or defense first. Both teams will go in the direction of the wind or if no wind in the direction chosen by the loser of the toss.
- 14.2. Ball will be placed on the 20 yard line and each team will have 4 consecutive plays unless terminated by an interception, in which to score the most points or gain the most yards. If no team scores, the team that gains the most additional positive yardage shall be the winner. If after 4 consecutive downs each, the two teams remain tied in all of the above combinations, an additional over time will be granted. In the case that both teams score and get their PAT, an additional overtime will be granted, and teams must go for 2 on the PAT.
- 14.3. If a team scores a touchdown, you will not use remaining downs. A free down will be granted for P.A.T. attempts after each touchdown.
- 14.4. During Tie Breaker, teams will be allowed one time out each per overtime period.

- 14.5. An interception terminates the offensive team chances. The offensive team loses all positive yardage gained but retains any points scored. The defense may not advance the interception. Play stops.
- 14.6. Winner of the Tie Breaker shall be given 7 points.

15. Scoring

- 15.1. Touchdown- 6 points
- 15.2. PAT- 1 point from the 3 yard line, 2 points from the 10 yard line. Teams must declare whether they will elect to go for 1 or 2 points. It will be announced by the official. If the defense legally intercepts a pass or lateral they may attempt to return the ball for a score. If the defense returns the interception for a score they will be awarded the number of points equal to the original value attempted by the offense.
- 15.3. Safety- 2 points (punt ball from the 20 yard line)
- 15.4. Forfeited game- Score is 7-0
- 15.5. Winner of tie breaker- 7 points
- 15.6. Mercy Rule- When any team is ahead by 25 points or more at half time or at any point in the second half.

16. Time Outs

- 16.1. Each team will have 2 time outs per half
- 16.2. Each time out will be 1 minute in length
- 16.3. Each team will be allowed 1 time out per overtime period.
- 16.4. A "time out" to be called from any player that participated on the playing field during the previous play, or by any coach is allowable. Said player may not have left the field and returned prior to the request.
- 16.5. Officials may call additional time outs at their discretion. If a team exceeds their time out limits per half or during a tiebreaker. Delay of Game 5-yard penalty
- 16.6. During a team charged time out, a team representative may confer with their team either on the field or at the sidelines.

17. The Ball in Play

- 17.1. Live ball in play. A pass, lateral, kick or a fumble that has not touched the ground.
- 17.2. Dead Ball- a ball not in play. Incompletions, fumbles, interceptions in overtime.
- 17.3. Loose ball- is a ball not in player possession
 - 17.3.1. A loose ball following the snap prior to the player fielding the ball cleanly
 - 17.3.2. Following a punt that has hit the ground and not yet been fielded by or touched by the punting team.
- 17.4. When a Ball is Marked Ready for Play
 - 17.4.1. A dead ball becomes ready for play once the referee:
 - 17.4.2. If time is in, sounds his whistle and signals ready for play. The 25 second play clock begins on that whistle, Delay of Game (5 yards LOS) enforced if exceed time to put ball in play.

17.4.3. If time is out, sounds his whistle and either signals “start the clock” or “ready for play.”

17.5. In Possession

17.5.1. A player is “in possession” when in the judgment of the covering official, the player exhibits control or is holding the ball.

17.5.2. A team is “in possession” of the ball when its players is “in possession” or attempting to punt; while a pass or lateral is in flight; or when one of its players was last in possession during a loose ball.

17.6. Catch or Interception

17.6.1. A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight.

17.6.2. A catch of an opponent’s pass, lateral or fumble (prior to touching the ground) is an interception.

17.6.3. Simultaneous catch or a double reception of an offensive pass or lateral always goes to the offense.

17.7. Fumble

17.7.1. When a backward pass hits the ground between the goal lines or a fumble occurs, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team last in possession at the spot where the ball hits the ground or at the spot where the ball goes out of bounds (if in the air).

17.7.2. When a forward fumble occurs and hit the ground, it is considered dead. The End of the Run in this case would return to the point and which control was lost or from where the fumble originated. If the offensive fumbles forward and crossed or hits the ground beyond the next line-to-gain or goal line, the result will bring the ball back to where the fumble occurred and next down will be played.

18. Line of Scrimmage

18.1. Is the plane of the ball that extends from sideline to sideline and ninety (90) degrees from the plane face of the field, once an official places his ball marker and signal the ball “ready for play.” Once the ball marker is set, the neutral zone becomes established.

18.2. Neutral Zone- The neutral zone is the space between the between the end of the ball when in a normal resting position on its long axis while parallel to the sidelines and one yard beyond the line of scrimmage. This zone extends from sideline to sideline and is established once the ball is marked ready for play.

19. Series of Downs

19.1. A team will be allowed four downs to advance the ball from one zone to the next. (A zone is to be 20 yards.) If after four (4) consecutive downs, a team has failed to advance the ball into the next zone, possession shall go to the defense at that spot. **Exception- Pre-k/K league will go back to starting possession mark.**

20. Positioning, Motion, Shifts, Substitutions

20.1. Teams may choose to huddle prior to a play. It is not necessary to huddle after a play if a team wishes to use predetermined plays or audible signals.

20.2. Hurry up offense will not be permitted as the ball is blown into play by the official before each down.

- 20.3. Lining up: Any number of players may be on the offensive or defensive L.O.S. at the snap. Defense line must be one (1) yard off the ball at the snap. No defensive player may be within 4 yards of the ball if lined up directly in front of the center or within one yard of the ball if lined up to the side of the center at the snap. 5yd penalty.
- 20.4. Substitutions- There will be free substitution as long as players being substituted for are off the field prior to the next snap OR player is out of the area of play and is departing the field in haste. "Sleepers" on substitutions will not be allowed on any play. No player may line up closer than 5 yards from the sideline unless he came out of the huddle or unless he was on the field of play during the previous play and did not leave the field of play.
- 20.5. Shifts- Two or more offensive players may be shifting their position at the same time prior to the snap. Their movement may be in any direction but they must become set for one full count before the ball is snapped or before another player can go in motion prior to the snap.
- 20.6. Motion- Only one player is allowed to be in motion at the snap and his movement must be parallel or away from the L.O.S. and must be continuous.
- 20.7. Stance- Any stance is permitted. Any number of players may be on the offensive or defensive L.O.S. at the snap.
- 20.8. Encroachment/Offsides/Illegal Procedure- Enforced as normal football penalties. If a player on either side lines up off sides, play shall continue in this instance and following the result of the play, becomes the captain's choice penalty.
- 20.9. Center Snap- A center snap may touch the ground before it gets to the quarterback and remain playable if the quarterback fields it cleanly off of a bounce (one or more) or from the ground. However, if quarterback muffs the ball to the ground or the ball goes past the quarterback it is dead where the ball touches the ground.
- 20.10. Center snaps do not have to be made between the center's legs. A false movement of the football by the center after he is set shall constitute encroachment. A direct snap may not be received and run through the "A" gap. An exchange must take place first.
- 20.11. The ball may be snapped directly under center, pistol, shotgun, etc. If the ball is not taken directly under center, it must travel at least 3 yards back.

21. BLOCKING AND RUSHING

- 21.1. Blocking is permitted. Blocking: shall be defined as obstructing the rusher's path to the quarterback or ball carrier, as long as it is done on or behind the L.O.S. and within the Tackle Box (the tackle box constitutes as the first player to the right and left of the center only being a maximum of 1-2 yards from the center). Use of hands must remain chest to waist level.
- 21.2. Screen Blocking is permitted downfield when stationary only. Moving screens are only legal at or behind the L.O.S.
- 21.3. "Pick Plays" by receivers on defensive backs or linebackers are illegal if set by receivers within 5 yards of defender (a form of downfield screening).
- 21.4. The rusher may not run over the screener/blocker, but may use their hands to avoid the block. The rusher may not push/pull the screener and can only make contact from waist to chest level.

21.4.1. Enforcement: Illegal Rushing - A penalty will be automatically called if the rusher touches the screener's/blocker's neck/head, below the waist, or push/pulls them (10 yards)

21.5. Rushing with the use of hands is only permitted at or behind the L.O.S. and within the tackle box.

21.6. The rusher may not make contact with the Quarterback and can only make contact with other backfield players if they engage to block.

22. Passing

22.1. There can be only one forward pass per play.

22.2. If the passer is beyond the L.O.S. when the football is released, an illegal Forward Pass has occurred and will result in a 5 yard penalty and loss of down if accepted.

22.3. Once the ball has crossed the L.O.S., in the air or in possession of a player, it cannot be passed forward, even if the ball is first returned back across the L.O.S. (Illegal Forward Pass)

22.4. Intentional grounding shall also constitute an illegal forward pass.

22.5. A lateral will be any pass thrown overhand or underhand perpendicular or away from the direction of advancement of team in possession. Forward laterals are treated as an illegal forward pass if beyond L.O.S.

22.6. Push or Shovel Passes thrown in any direction is legal if initiated behind the L.O.S. Once a player crosses the L.O.S., push or shovel passes are legal if thrown parallel or behind the ball carrier.

23. Receiving

23.1. All players of both teams are eligible pass receivers. Each player is eligible, even if he steps out of bounds or out of end zone, as long as re-establishes himself he catches the ball in bounds or comes down first in bounds with at least one (1) foot. If a receiver comes down with one foot in bounds and one foot out of bounds simultaneously, the pass is incomplete. The lines marking the sidelines and the extreme end of the end zone shall be considered out of bounds if stepped on to any degree.

23.2. Two or more offensive receivers or defensive players may touch a pass in succession, resulting in a completion. After a pass is thrown, it is too much to expect of the officials to keep track of exactly who touched the ball and in what order, if receivers and defenders are battling for possession. Therefore, the only things that will be judged will be (1) did pass interference occur, (2) who caught the ball, and (3) was receiver in bounds with at least one foot at moment of possession.

24. Pass Interference

24.1. Pass Interference Rules shall apply to any pass made from behind the L.O.S., whether it is a forward pass or a lateral pass and applies to both offensive and defensive players. After the pass is in the air, neither the pass receiver nor the defender may touch the other player until one of them touches the ball, or else offensive or defensive pass interference may be called. If contact occurs after one of them touches the ball, then pass interference cannot be called unless tackling or excessive contact is made.

- 24.2. Receiver stripping is attempting to take the ball from the grasp of a receiver after he has caught the ball, but before he has brought the ball into a possessive position. In which case, Pass Interference will be called: If player established possession of the football, the defender must go for the flag and not the ball.
- 24.3. Pass interference will be enforced as 5 yards from the previous L.O.S. if accepted.
- 24.4. Defensive pass interference in the endzone will be enforced from the 1yd line.
- 24.5. Face-guarding will be permitted unless contact is made.
- 24.6. Bump and Run”, or “chucking” an offensive receiver during a passing play will be a 5-yard penalty from P.O.I. and captain's choice. Contact can only be made by players in the tackle box.

25. Running

- 25.1. The responsibility of avoiding contact rests with the ball carrier. He must show the officials he made an effort to avoid contact. The ball carrier will not deliberately run or drive into a defensive player. A ball carrier may spin or jump but realize that while spinning or jumping he is in a "State of Non-control" and should contact occur as a result of his uncontrolled momentum, he will be penalized. The "Stiff Arm" is illegal. Penalty: 10 yards from P.O.I.
- 25.2. The ball carrier shall not protect his flags by blocking with his hand, arm or head, the opportunity to pull his flags. Flag guarding will be marked 10 yards from P.O.I.
- 25.3. The ball carrier may jump or dive as long as contact is not made with a defender. Examples include diving for the pylon to score a touchdown & jumping to catch a ball.
- 25.4. If any of the above acts are judged to have caused excessive contact, 10 yards

26. Deflagging the Runner

- 26.1. The ball carrier is down and the ball is dead when either flag is detached from his belt or when the ball or either knee touches the ground. A defensive player may leave his feet to pull the offensive player's flag but may not make contact while doing so. When a defensive player pulls the ball carrier's flag he should stop and hold it above his head for officials to see. If the act of deflagging a player is simulated or faked, the infraction will be treated as a delay of game penalty. The runner will be down where the ball is.
- 26.2. Tackling is prohibited. 10 yard Penalty. Tackling is grasping or encircling the body of the ball carrier with a hand or arm. Grabbing the ball carrier's clothing shall be penalized as tackling. If the defensive player reaches across the body of a ball carrier to pull his flag, and contact occurs, the responsibility of the contact lies with the defensive player.
- 26.3. Illegal deflagging is prematurely pulling an opponent's flag with the intent of making the offensive player ineligible to become a ball carrier. Penalty - 5 yards from L.O.S. or E.O.R.
 - 26.3.1. In the event of illegal deflagging or a flag belt coming off prematurely, the runner will only need to be touched once to be marked down.
 - 26.3.2. Stripping occurs when a defender attempts to strip or take the ball from the grasp of a player in possession. This is a form of Illegal Deflagging.
 - 26.3.3. The intended receiver of either a pass or lateral may be deflagged only after The ball is possessed. In the event of the ball carrier being deflagged while fumbling or

bobbling the ball, the ball carrier (even if deflagged prematurely) is not down. Once possession is established, that receiver will be considered downed at the point he was deflagged (or touched if deflagged prematurely).

- 26.4. If the quarterback's arm was in forward motion when his flag was pulled, the quarterback is down. If the passer is deflagged once he releases the ball, the play continues. If the quarterback later in that play receives the ball back, he shall be downed by a 1 touch.
- 26.5. A defender may not push or knock a ball carrier out of bounds. A form of illegal deflagging, if excessive contact - 10 yards.
- 26.6. Illegal Advancement - Advancement may not occur as a result of the ball being slapped, kicked, pitched, or pushed by either team in the direction of their goal line. The ball will be declared dead at the spot of such illegal advancement and a 5-yard penalty.

27. Punts

- 27.1. The offense must declare to the referee whether they will elect to punt or not. Once declared, the ball will be marked ready for play and the offense will have 25 seconds.
- 27.2. Blocking is not permitted within the tackle box on punts. Free release is required. Screen blocking once the ball is possessed by the return team is permitted.
- 27.3. The ball is not dead if it touches the grounds before reaching the punter or if it is muffed, dropped, or fumbled by the punter.
- 27.4. Neither team may move on the L.O.S. until the ball has left the punter's foot. Teams do not need to take a knee.
- 27.5. The return team may only have a maximum of 3 players not on the L.O.S. to return the punt, but everyone becomes eligible once the punt play is in progress.
- 27.6. If the punt hits a member of the punting team, which has not crossed the L.O.S., it is dead at that spot. Any member of the punting team may down the punt if it is beyond the L.O.S. and has touched the ground prior to being downed. The punt will be declared dead at the spot where it is first touched by the punting team.
- 27.7. The punt receiving team must be given an opportunity to field the punt in the air; therefore, there will be a 10-yard penalty if touched in the air beyond the L.O.S. by the punting team, from the P.O.I.
- 27.8. The punt receiving team may field a punt in the air, off of a bounce (one or more), or directly off of the ground, if fielded clearly. When a punt touches a player on the receiving team who is in bounds and the ball rebounds into the air, all players become eligible to intercept and advance the ball before it touches the ground. This applies even if the punt hits the ground before first touching the receiving team's player.
- 27.9. On a punt play, there are no line-to-gain lines (1st down lines) established. When the punt receiving team is returning a punt, any live ball fouls committed by either team, which are accepted, will result in the penalty being marked off after which the next line will become the line-to-gain for a first down. As soon as the play is blown dead, the line-to-gain is established. Any dead ball fouls that occur will result in the line-to-gain remaining the same (unless the enforced penalty leaves the ball past the line-to-gain.)
- 27.10. When a punt is left unattended, it becomes dead where it rolls still
- 27.11. NO Quick Kicks are allowed. (5 yards penalty and loss of down from L.O.S.)

- 27.12. Punts muffed by the receiving team in the end zone before possession, and ball hits in or out of end zone, it will be a touchback. If the ball is touched in the air or on the ground by the punting team in the zone, it is a touchback. If a punt receiver who has gained possession of the punt in the end zone is deflagged prior to crossing the goal line into the field of play, it is a touchback. If punt receiver remains in end zone 5 seconds after fielding punt, or downs punt by knee or ball touching ground after possession, it is a touchback. A muffed lateral in the end zone will be a safety.

28. Penalty Enforcement

- 28.1. All live ball fouls (fouls which occur while play is in progress) are captain's choice. All dead ball fouls (S-6) (Fouls which occur prior to snap or after ball is blown dead) will automatically be marked off. This means if a foul occurs during a down and is a live ball foul and then a dead ball foul occurs both fouls will be enforced. They do not offset, even if against different teams.
- 28.2. After a penalty is called, only captain of the penalized team may discuss it with the officials. The official making the call is obligated (if able) to give the player's number and the act they committed (without discussion) to the penalized team captain. Official will then give the opposing captain his options on the penalty. That captain's first choice will be final.
- 28.3. In the judgment of any game official, the following acts are deliberate or flagrant, the player or players involved shall be ejected from the game
- 28.3.1. using fists, kicking, or kneeing
 - 28.3.2. illegal use of hands, forearms, or elbows
 - 28.3.3. tackling
 - 28.3.4. any deliberate or flagrant act which could cause injury
 - 28.3.5. any act of unsportsmanlike conduct
 - 28.3.6. abusive, profane, or insulting language
 - 28.3.7. any act of unfair play
 - 28.3.8. harassment of officials or other players
- 28.4. A minimum one (1) game suspension for any person ejected from a game for any reason. Local rule and tournament rules may be more severe.
- 28.5. Penalties, which would otherwise be marked off past the goal line, shall be placed on the one-yard line.
- 28.6. Offsetting Penalties - If offsetting fouls occur during a down, or while the ball is ready-for-play, that down shall be played over. If offsetting fouls occur between successive down, the next down shall be the same as if no fouls occurred.
- 28.7. If there is a change of team possession during a down, the team's last gaining possession may decline the offsetting fouls and retain possession after the penalty for its own infraction providing that the infraction occurs after the change of possession. If offsetting fouls occur prior to change of possession, play shall be repeated.
- 28.8. All penalties will be marked 5 or 10 yards, if in the opinion of the officials, the foul is flagrant or excessive contact, the player (or players) might be ejected.
- 28.9. In order to establish a simple philosophy in assessing penalties, these general rules hold true with only a few exceptions:

- 28.9.1. All Accepted Penalties: are marked from the E.O.R., L.O.S., or P.O.I., whichever hurts the infracting team the most and the down may or may not be replayed.
- 28.9.2. All Refused Penalties: the ball stays where blown dead and down is not replayed.
- 28.9.3. All Live Ball Fouls: are captain's choices
- 28.9.4. All Dead Ball Fouls: are not captain's choices and will be marked off.
- 28.10. "Little-To-Lose" Penalties: If the full penalty cannot be marked off due to the field position relative to the goal line, the ball will be marked off half the distance.
- 28.11. Penalties on the playing field during the tiebreaker period shall be marked the same as during regulation time.
- 28.12. Penalties Enforcement and Line-To-Gain:
 - 28.12.1. Enforcement of any penalty which leaves the ball across the line-to-gain will result in a new line-to-gain (1st down).
 - 28.12.2. After enforcement of any live ball foul that leaves the ball short of the line-to-gain will result in the first down line remaining the same.
 - 28.12.3. All defensive dead ball fouls after a touchdown but before the ball is put in play after change of possession will be penalized from the 20-yard line. All live ball fouls during this period are captain's choice penalties.

29. Inadvertent Whistle Rule

- 29.1. *If an official sounds his whistle inadvertently the play shall be reset to the previous spot and replay the down.*
- 29.2. Except: If the inadvertent whistle does not change the outcome of the play, the play can stand at the discretion of the official. EXAMPLE: 2022 Cincinnati Bengals game, the whistle is blown right before the receiver catches a wide open touchdown & the defender was already beat.
- 29.3. Except: If the inadvertent whistle comes beyond the LOS, the play would be down at the EOR when the whistle was blown. EXAMPLE: 2022 Amari Cooper reception vs Titans

30. Table of Penalties Chart

Offensive Infractions	Penalty Marked From	Captains Choice	Loss of down?
Delay of Game	5 Yds from LOS	No	No
Flag Guarding/Stiff Arm	10 Yds from POI/LOS	YES	No
Illegal Block/Holding	5 Yds from LOS	YES	No
Illegal Contact	10 Yds from POI/LOS	YES	No
Illegal Forward Lateral/Pass	5 Yds from POI	YES	YES
Illegal Procedure/Snap	5 Yds from LOS	No	No
Illegal Shift/Motion	5 Yds from LOS	YES	No
Illegal Substitution	5 Yds from LOS	No	No
Illegal Touching	5 Yds from LOS	YES	YES
Improper Equipment	5 Yds from LOS/EOR	YES	No
Intentional Grounding	5 Yds from POI	YES	YES
Pass Interference	10 Yds from LOS	YES	No
Quick Kicking	5 Yds from LOS	YES	No
Sideline Interference	5 Yds from EOR	No	No
Tripping	10 Yds from POI/LOS	YES	No

Defensive Infractions	Penalty Marked From	Captains Choice	Loss of down?
Bump & Run/Chucking	5 yds from LOS	YES	No
Delay of Game	5 Yds from LOS	No	No
Holding	5 Yds from POI/LOS	YES	No
Illegal Hands to Neck/Face	10 Yds from LOS	YES	No
Illegal Procedure/Offsides	5 Yds from LOS	No	No
Illegal Rushing/Contact	10 Yds from LOS	YES	No
Illegal Stripping of Ball	5 Yds from POI	YES	No
Illegal Substitution	5 Yds from LOS	No	No
Improper Equipment	5 Yds from LOS/EOR	YES	No
Intentional Grounding	5 Yds from POI	YES	YES
Pass Interference	10 Yds from LOS	YES	No
Roughing the Passer	10 Yds from LOS	YES	No
Sideline Interference	5 Yds from EOR	No	No
Tackling/Pushing	10 Yds from POI/LOS	YES	No