## Mercer County Flag Football League

## 2015 Rules of Play

**Rule 1 – The League, Rules, Field, Equipment, Clock, and Game Officials**

SECTION 1 – This League shall be known as The Mercer County Flag Football League (herein referred to as MCFFL or League).

 Article 1 – The League and its playoff tournament are reserved for teams that advance through league play.

Article 2 – The League shall declare its intent to begin a season and playoffs prior to each season. Usually two (2) seasons are played within a calendar year – Spring and Fall. Typically Spring Season begins in March and concludes in June, and Fall Season begins in September and concludes in December. This may vary as needed to accommodate league needs.

Article 3 - Teams are seeded into the playoff tournament based on final league record of that regular season. If a tie exists at the end of the league, the following methods will be used to break ties:

 A - The team that won the head to head game(s) between tied teams will be awarded the higher position

 B -If a tie still exists, the team’s points allowed from the regular season will be used

C - If a tie exists between more than (two) 2 teams, head to head records will be used (if all teams played each other)

D - If all teams did not play each other, the team’s points allowed for the regular season will be used to place the teams

SECTION 2 – The Rules governing all aspects of play in the MCFFL shall be those enumerated herein.

Article 1 - On occasion, when League Rules are not sufficient to cover a situation, League Officials shall defer to National Federation of High School (NFHS or FED) Rules, and will utilize Case Plays, as needed.

Article 2 –These Rules may be amended by either League Committee or Majority Vote of assembled registered team captains or their alternate. There is to be one vote per team.

Article 3 – These rules shall carry over from spring to fall, then fall to spring. A rule once changed shall stay changed until amended or otherwise removed. This version of the League Rules has been updated and amended for **Spring 2015**.

Article 4 - The league directors or their representatives have the final authority to make rulings on any and all dealings regarding league play, including suspensions and reinstatements. All decisions are final.

SECTION 3 - The official dimensions of the field shall be seventy (70) yards from goal line to goal line, thirty (30) yards from sideline to sideline. There shall be two end zones, one at each end of the field – seven (7) yards deep by thirty (30) yards wide.

SECTION 4 – There shall be one (1) “No Run – No Blitz” Zone for each Team when they are on offense. That zone shall be the five (5) yards preceding the goal line.

SECTION 5 – Each team is responsible for supplying their own football while on offense. Any football for league play must be official size and weight and have the identifying mark for one (1) of the following: NFHS (High School), NCAA (College), or NFL (Pro).

 Article 1 – All footballs must be properly inflated

Article 2 – All footballs must be of leather or composite leather construction. Nerf, plastic, or other non-complying materials shall not be used.

SECTION 6 – Flags and Flag Belts are to be worn by all players on the field. They must consist of two (2) “Sonic Pop” type flags, which are to be properly worn while on the playing field.

 Article 1 – No part of the flag, the connector, or the hollow cap shall be altered, treated, or otherwise affected.

Article 2 – A few non-compliant styles of flags and belts exist. In the interest of fairness and consistency, non-compliant styles (i.e. NFL Flag, Mushroom Caps) shall not be allowed for league play.

SECTION 7 – Other Player accessories such as - but not limited to - wrist bands for plays, towels, gloves, and hand warmers, are allowed. These items may be subject to review by the league officials.

SECTION 8 – Game Officials are assigned to league regular season and tournament play. Officials shall adjudicate game play using the rules, enforce penalties as needed for game play, keep official game time, record all scores, and report all unsportsmanlike fouls to the league. The league shall assign as many officials as needed for each game. Officials may also review and remove any equipment, clothing, or player accessory as needed to ensure fair and proper game play.

**Rule 2 –Teams, Captains, Players and Player Requirements**

SECTION 1 – Teams are comprised of players that are properly registered with the league and placed on that team’s League Roster. A team’s roster is limited to twelve (12) players for a given season.

SECTION 2 – Team Captains (or their alternates) shall be responsible for all communication between the league and a team. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of League Meetings, Schedule Changes, Site Changes, timely collecting of the league fee for a given season, and any player suspension issues. Team Captains (or Alternates) may be contacted by the league via voice phone, text, email, and/or social media to facilitate widespread and timely communication. Captains should update this information with the league as often as needed. Attendance at scheduled League Meetings (especially those held just prior to the start of a new season) is not mandatory, but strongly encouraged.

SECTION 3 – Players on a team are required to properly register with the league, including any required forms, by the filing deadline to be allowed to be considered for league play. A player who plays on a team, but does not properly register by the deadline may be considered to be filling a roster spot on a team, but barred from further on-field participation until such requirements are met. All players in the league must be at least eighteen (18) years of age as of the day of any game in which they participate.

SECTION 4 – Players on a team are required to be uniformly dressed. If a player is not dressed in a uniform manner, that player shall not be eligible for play in a game until they meet the uniform requirement team shall lose one time out per half when at least one player takes the field who is not uniformly dressed (jersey color) as his teammates. No more than one time out shall be lost, per half, for all uniform violations on a team.

SECTION 5 – Player jerseys are to be tucked in, or not hang over (covering) the flag belt.

SECTION 6 – Players must wear shoes. Athletic shoes are encouraged. Cleats are acceptable, but must plastic, nylon, or molded rubber. Metal cleats or spikes are not allowed. Any footwear deemed to be unacceptable shall cause a player to be removed from the field until acceptable footwear is worn.

SECTION 7 – Baseball style caps may be worn, but must be worn with the bill of the cap facing backwards.

SECTION 8 – Casts, Braces, or any other personal items or clothing deemed to be of a concern to player safety by game or league officials shall result in that player being ineligible to play until such item(s) are removed.

SECTION 9 - Any player who is bleeding or is found to have an excessive amount of blood on his/her clothing, shall be removed from the field of play until such time that any bleeding has subsided, any open wound properly covered, and any clothes covered with blood removed/replaced.

SECTION 10 – Teams should occupy opposing sidelines. Teams are responsible for players on their team, and the behavior of any non-player associated with their team or its members. No team members of personnel are allowed within 5 yards of the goal line

SECTION 11 – All players and team personnel are encouraged to display good sportsmanship before, during, and after all games to all teammates, opponents, and officials. Any unsportsmanlike conduct displayed by a player or team personnel shall be penalized. Such penalties shall be kept for review by the league. If a player or member of a team receives two (2) Unsportsmanlike Penalties immediately before, during, or immediately upon completion of a game, that individual shall be disqualified from that contest and a least the next game. Repeat offenders, that is any player receiving four (4, Unsportsmanlike Penalties during the season shall be declared suspended indefinitely and subject to review by the league for reinstatement. Officials must submit any and all Unsportsmanlike Penalties each week to the league for tracking purposes.

**Rule 3 Definitions (This section will constantly be updated, as needed)**

* Blocking – There is no legal contact blocking in this league.
* Catch- a catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball which is in flight, and first contacting the grounds inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball.
* Fumble – A fumble is a loss of the football by a runner. A fumble which contacts the ground is dead immediately at the spot where the runner’s flag belt was, when ball was lost (if forward) or where it contacts the ground (not forward). There are no turnovers on fumbles, with one exception – a ball fumbled by a runner where the runner has caused his own inadvertent loss of possession, and the ball is recovered by the opposing team prior to it becoming grounded. There can be no fumble when the loss of the football by the runner is caused by the defense.
* Handoff – an exchange of the ball from one offensive player to another. Handoffs may only be forward when they occur behind the line of scrimmage. All handoffs beyond the line of scrimmage must be backward, not forward or to the side.
* Hold/Holding – is an illegal restriction on the movement of an opposing player. Shirt pulls, prolonged holding of the shorts/pants which cause a player to be restricted shall be cause for a penalty. An inadvertent pulling of the shorts or pants, while legally pulling a flag shall not be considered holding.
* Line of Scrimmage – a plane that separates the offensive team and defensive team.
* Punt – A scrimmage kick by the offense, which begins with a legal snap, is kicked by a member of the offense, and ends when the kicked ball is no longer advancing downfield or has entered the end zone of the kicking team.
* Spot – Dead Ball Spot is determined by the most downfield location of the ball carrier’s flag belt – NOT THE BALL when the ball becomes dead by tackle, or a runner stepping out of bounds.
* Spot – Enforcement Spot is the location of where a penalty is enforced.
* Spot – Previous Spot is where the ball was last put into play by snap.
* Spot – The Spot of the Foul Spot is where the foul occurs.
* Run – An attempt to advance the ball where a player in possession of the ball attempts to gain distance through carrying the ball and moving with the intent of gaining a new location closer to their goal line. Runs are ended when the player in possession of the ball is “tackled” by legal means as defined herein.
* Tackle – Flag Football “Tackles” are considered to have occurred when a player, in possession of the ball, has a flag intentionally removed by another player on the field. When a player that has less than two flags on his belt (and began the play properly flagged) has possession of the ball, they are considered tackled with a simple one hand touch by another player. **The physical act of one player dragging or knocking another player to the ground or out of bounds is not legal, and cause for possible ejection without warning if so deemed by the officials**

**Rule 4 The Clock, Time Periods, Coin Toss, Starting and Ending the Game, Overtime, Time Outs, Ready for Play**

SECTION 1 – In all League Regular Season and Playoff Tournament contests there shall be a game clock which shall be kept by the on field officials (or their off-field designee).

SECTION 2 – Each game shall consists of two (2) twenty minute (20) halves, with a one (1) minute halftime.

Article 1 – The clock shall be of “running” time until the final two (2) minutes of each half. Clock stoppages during this “running” time shall be upon time out requests by the teams or at the discretion of the officials (i.e. prolonged injury).

 A – The clock shall restart upon a legal snap following a granted team time out.

 B – The clock shall restart with the ready for play following an official’s time out.

Article 2 – The clock shall stop in the final two (2) minutes of each half for incomplete passes (legal or illegal), a run out of bounds, the awarding of a new series, touch downs, change of possessions, penalties, team requested time outs, and upon the discretion of the officials.

A – During the final two minutes the clock shall re-start upon the legal snap after time outs, scores (not including the try), incomplete passes, runs out of bounds, change of possessions, and dead ball fouls that had occurred when the clock was stopped.

B – During the final two minutes the clock shall re-start upon the ready for play after dead ball fouls have been accepted and enforced, a declined penalty which stopped the clock, or an official’s time out.

C – The clock may be started or stopped upon the discretion of the officials if they feel a team is attempting to conserve or consume time illegally.

Article 3 – When a game has a differential score of 18 or more points, and is within the final two (2) minutes, there shall be a running clock.

 A – The losing team shall be entitled to only one remaining time out, if they have any remaining.

 B – The winning team shall be granted no time out, regardless of their balance remaining.

SECTION 3 – Prior to the start of playing action, at least one game official, and no more than 2 team captains per team shall meet at the middle of the field or other designated spot to complete pre-game preliminaries.

Article 1 – The visiting team (or the team with the better record in the absence of a home/away designation) shall call the toss. The team which wins the coin toss shall choose EITHER their preference of starting the game on offense or defense OR shall choose which goal they shall defend in the first half.

Article 2 – The teams shall change direction for the second half, and the team which began the game on defense shall begin the second half on offense.

SECTION 4 – The game shall start promptly, at the discretion of the officials, following completion of the pre-game preliminaries (coin toss) at the scheduled start time as published on the league schedule. For purposes of the “official” time, it shall be by the clock of the crew chief of the respective field on which the team is scheduled to play.

Article 1 - To start, a team must have a minimum of four (4) rostered players present. A team has a “grace period” of 10 minutes from their scheduled start time. PENALTY - A team who is short the minimum of four players at the scheduled start time, and prior to the 10 minute forfeit time, shall lose one time out per half at the scheduled start time, and a second time out shall be lost in each half at 5 minutes after the scheduled start time. Failure to have a proper number of players by 10 minute past the scheduled start time shall result in a forfeit loss.

Article 2 - Teams may not play league games (which count towards their league records) with players that are not found legally on their roster.

Article 3 - If a last minute site change is determined necessary by the league, a reasonable amount of time shall be granted to allow players to travel from the previously scheduled location to the new playing location.

SECTION 5 – The game shall be declared completed at:

Article 1 - The expiration of available playing time on the game clock, when either team is ahead in score and:

A - On field playing action has ceased

B – There are no fouls by either (or both) team(s) which require an extension of the game, by rule

C – Any Try for Point after a Touchdown has been completed (the league uses scores to determine playoff seeding)

D – There were no inadvertent whistles during the down

 Article 2 – The completion of an Overtime period which has resulted in the ability to determine a winning team.

Article 3 – A team is no longer able to field the required numbers of players or chooses to concede with two (2) minutes or less remaining on the game clock.

SECTION 6 – Overtime (Tie Games) shall be determined in the following manner:

Article 1 - An additional coin toss will be held. The team that called the pre-game toss shall again call the toss. The winner of the coin toss shall choose either offense or defense. Game Officials will determine one end zone of the field to be used for both teams to use.

Article 2 - The offensive team will receive two (2) downs to score from the ten (10) yard line. If Team A scores on first down, then Team B must also score on first down in order to force a second overtime period. If Team A scores on first down and Team B does not, then the game is over and Team A wins. On the other side, if Team A scores on second down, and Team B scores on first down, then Team B wins the game.

Article 3 – If no winner has been determined in the previous overtime period, and another overtime period is required, the teams shall reverse roles from the previous overtime period. That is to say, the team that began the previous overtime period on offense shall begin the subsequent overtime period on defense. This alternating shall continue until a winner has been determined.

Article 4 - All points scored in overtime(s) will count as part of the final score.

Article 5 - There are no extra points or 2 point conversions in overtime

SECTION 7 – Teams shall be granted up to three (3) time outs per half. A time out is 30 Seconds in length. Time outs do not carry over from half to half, nor to overtime. At the conclusion of the time out, the officials shall begin a 30 second ready for play. Time outs may be lost due to Penalties found under 4-4-1 or 2-4.

SECTION 8 –The officials will signal/call a ready for play which will begin a thirty (30) second count in which a team must put the ball in play through a legal snap. The officials will begin the ready for play as quickly as they determine fair. This may begin no sooner than the completion of a previous down. Failure to properly do so will result in a delay of game penalty.

**Rule 5 Line of Scrimmage, Formations & Motion, Pre-Snap, Snap, Eligibility, Substitutions**

SECTION 1 – The Line of Scrimmage shall be a straight line that separates the offense and defense prior to, up to, and after the snap. There shall be a marker used for the line of scrimmage.

Article 1 - A player is considered to have crossed the line of scrimmage if any part of his body breaks the plane of the line. This is different from other football rule codes.

Article 2 – Players are required to be on their side of the line of scrimmage once the ready for play is set, and not cross until after the snap.

SECTION 2 – Formations

Article 1 - The only player required to be on the line of scrimmage is the center. Up to three (3) other players may be lined up at the snap on the line of scrimmage.

Article 2 - Only players lined up behind the line of scrimmage may be in motion; there is a limit of one player in motion at the snap each play. A player is defined as behind the line of scrimmage when they are offset back from a line extending through the center. A player in motion may only move parallel to the line of scrimmage, at the time of the snap.

Article 3 – A player who is not on the Line of Scrimmage is considered in the backfield.

A – When a player is in the backfield, and within two (2) yards of the QB (set or in motion) at the snap, he is considered to be in a position to take a handoff from the QB, which will allow a free blitz from before the ten (10) yard blitz line for the defense.

B – When a player is in the backfield, and NOT within two (2) yards of the QB (set or in motion) at the snap, he is NOT considered to be in a position to take a handoff from the QB, SO THERE SHALL NOT BE A FREE BLITZ for the defense.

SECTION 3 – Pre-Snap

Article 1 – All offensive players, other than a player in legal motion, must be lined up and set (for one second) prior to the snap. Offensive movement at the snap (other than a player legally in motion) will result in a false-start penalty.

Article 2 – Players may check with the line official to make sure they are on-side. If a player is moving to be on-side, and the offense snaps the ball, a false start, or offside penalty may be called. (QB’s should make sure all players are set prior to the snap)

SECTION 4 – Snap

Article 1 – A legal snap shall begin live ball play. An illegal snap shall be ruled dead immediately, and a false start penalty shall be enforced.

Article 2 – A traditional between the legs or to the side of the center from the ground shall be legal snaps.

Article 3 - A team may choose to have the center hold the ball on his back, while he is lined up BEHIND the scrimmage marker, and the ball “snapped” by removing the ball from his hands. Prior to the exchange, there shall be clear separation between the ball and any player other than the center who possess the ball.

Article 4 – The legal snap shall begin the Six (6) second count for the QB.

SECTION 5 – Eligibility for Passes, Handoffs, Pitches, and Punts.

 Article 1 – All players are eligible to receive a pass, provided they began the play with two (2) flags.

A – A player who began the play with two (2) flags, but had a flag (or two) removed prior to possession of the ball, remains eligible to catch and possess a pass, but will be considered down with a single hand touch, by the opposing team, while in possession of the ball.

B – A player who does not begin the play with two (2) flags shall be considered ineligible to receive or intercept a pass. Should such a player catch or intercept a pass, it shall be considered an incomplete pass.

Article 2 – All players, other than the center may receive a handoff, from the QB, provided they began the play with two (2) flags.

A – A player who began the play with two (2) flags, but had a flag (or two) removed prior to possession of the ball, remains eligible to receive a pitch or handoff from the QB, but will be considered down with a single hand touch, by the opposing team, while in possession of the ball.

B – A player who does not begin the play with two (2) flags shall be considered ineligible to receive or intercept a pitch or handoff. If they receive a handoff or pitch, the ball shall be declared dead at the spot of the handoff or pitch.

 Article 3 – All defensive players (commonly called Receiving or R) are eligible to receive a punt.

SECTION 6 – Substitutions may occur at any time when the ball is considered dead. There is no limit on the amount of players in a team huddle while the ball is dead. Teams may only have a max of five (5) players on the field as the ball becomes live.

**Rule 6 The Offense, Center, Quarterback, Other Offensive Players, Offensive**

SECTION 1 – The offense shall consist of five (5) legally and properly flagged players who are on the field.

Article 1 - The goal of the offense is to score a touchdown by legally advancing the ball downfield, while maintaining possession, through passing or running the ball through a series of downs.

A – A team has 4 downs to advance to mid-field, and gain a new set of for (4) downs. A down may not begin until the referees have indicated the ready for play, and the blitz line has been set. A down must begin before the thirty (30) second ready for play has expired. Officials will give teams a verbal ten (10) second warning.

B - If a team begins with possession already on or over mid-field, they only have 4 downs to achieve the end zone.

C- A team may lose a down through its own actions, or be granted a replay of a previous down or even a new series of downs by rule.

D- The most downfield part of the player’s flag belt, while in possession of the ball, at the time of a legal “tackle” shall be the spot where a new down begins.

E – A pass is completed when a player has completed a catch. When a simultaneous catch occurs (joint possession) and a ball has become dead by rule, possession is maintained by the offense.

Article 2 - A team begins with possession of the ball located five (5) yards from the goal line they are defending when they start a half with possession, following a successful score by their opponents, when they obtain legal possession of the ball in the end zone which they are defending, or a punt by their opponents ends in touchback. They may also begin possession at the spot where, following an interception the previous down has ended, or where the advancement of the ball has ended on a punt by their opponents. They may also begin possession at the spot where their opponents ended their own previous possession and failed to achieve either a new series of downs or the end zone (turnover on downs).

Article 3 – A team may choose to punt the ball away on any down (usually 4th), and effect an intended change of possession while hoping to increase the distance which their opponents shall have to gain to score.

A – The kicking team is required to begin the down with a legal snap, and has the same six (6) seconds with which to punt the ball away, as they would on a regular down. The offense shall not attempt to cover the punt by crossing the line of scrimmage, as the receiving team is not allowed to return any punt.

B- The punt ends when the ball is no longer advancing toward the goal line of the kicking team, or has entered the end zone of the kicking team (touchback), absent of additional force as applied by the receiving team.

C- A team must determine if it’s going to punt within the first twenty (20) seconds of the play clock, so as to afford the receiving team a fair chance of getting into punt receiving formation. Once the team has decided to punt or not, any change to the other option must be done so through a called time out. If no Time Out is available, then the team will penalized for delay of game.

SECTION 2 - There shall be at least one player on the line of scrimmage, the center, who shall snap the ball either through traditional between the legs or to the side from the ground, or the center may hold the ball behind his back.

 Article 1 - The center shall be eligible to receive a forward pass.

Article 2 - The center is NOT eligible to receive a handoff or lateral pitch from the Quarterback immediately after the snap. The center may receive a handoff or lateral pitch from a player who either received a pass, handoff, or lateral from the Quarterback or any subsequent player in possession of the ball after the snap.

SECTION 3 – The player lined up behind the center (directly or in “shotgun”) who receives the snap from the center shall be considered the Quarterback. This player must be off the line of scrimmage.

Article 1 – Upon receiving the snap, the Quarterback shall have six (6) seconds to pass, handoff, or lateral pitch the ball. Failure to do so in time shall result in the ball being downed at the spot where the Quarterback is at the time of the six (6) second time window, unless the count is waived (ended) by the actions of the defense (see Rule 7-6). A player who is or is attempting to throw a pass is considered a Passer. Any player may attempt to throw a pass. A team is allowed one forward pass attempt per down, and any number of backward pass attempts per down, before the ball is dead by rule.

Article 2 –The Quarterback is restricted from advancing the ball downfield through a run, unless a defensive player has legally or illegally crossed the line of scrimmage and the line of scrimmage is not located on or in the “No Run” zone (see 1-5).

Article 3 - The Quarterback is not permitted to place his hands of the ball prior to the snap, except to adjust the ball. Any ball adjustment must be followed by clear separation of the hands from the ball, and may not be used to deceive the defense that a snap has occurred.

Article 4 – A Passer shall be protected from any contact both before and after they have thrown the ball even if the ball has been tipped. The Passer in flag football should be treated like the basketball player shooting a jump shot. Contact is not allowed even after the quarterback releases the ball. The Passer may not lean into, run into, or throw into the defender in an attempt to draw a penalty.

Article 5 – The Passer shall not use the football to intentionally prevent a flag pull by a defender.

Article 6 – The Passer must attempt a legal forward pass from behind the Line of Scrimmage. Any crossing of the Line of Scrimmage prior to and during the forward throwing of the football shall make any forward pass attempt illegal.

SECTION 4– All other players on the field shall be considered eligible to receive passes, handoffs, lateral pitches, provided they are legally and properly flagged. Any player may go be “in motion” however a team may only have one player in motion at the snap, but that motion must be in accordance with Rule 5-2-2. Other players may be on or off the line of scrimmage.

SECTION 5 – A player in possession of the football may not dive to gain yardage or achieve the goal line. A player may dive to catch a pass.

SECTION 6 – A player in possession of the football may not use his hands, wrists, arms, or the football to intentionally protect their flags from being pulled. They may not dive, hurdle, or jump to avoid a flag pull. A player may spin to elude a flag pull.

SECTION 7 – A runner may not run through a defender who is stationary or otherwise initiate contact so as to prevent a flag pull.

SECTION 8 – No offensive player may intentionally initiate contact, so as to gain an advantage. Any such contact shall be penalized for illegal contact. If flagrant, may be cause for ejection.

SECTION 9 – No offensive player shall intentionally de-flag an opponent unless there is reasonable cause to believe they are in possession of the football.

SECTION 10 – Any offensive player who is out of bounds, then returns inbounds may not be the first person to touch a loose ball (pass). This would be considered an incomplete pass (there is no penalty assessed for such action). A player may re-establish himself inbounds, but has lost the right to be the first to touch the loose ball, but may touch or catch the ball after another player (offensive or defensive) has touched the ball.

**Rule 7 – The Defense, Blitzing and The Blitzer**

SECTION 1 – The defense shall consist of five (5) legally and properly flagged players who are on the field. The goal of the defense is to stop advancement of the offense to the mid-field line to gain, or end zone through legal means within the downs they are allotted.

SECTION 2 - There shall be a blitz option for the defense when the Line of Scrimmage is not on or within the “No Blitz” zone located in the five (5) yards before the goal line. When the Line of Scrimmage is on or within the No Blitz zone, there shall be no cause for a legal blitz.

SECTION 3 – A Blitzer is any defensive player who crosses, or is attempting to cross the line of scrimmage in an attempt to tackle - by pulling flags, an offensive player in possession of the ball behind the line of scrimmage. There is no requirement on the defense to blitz, and the max number of blitzers allowed when the blitz is permitted by the location of the Line of Scrimmage, is the five (5) players on the field for the defense.

Article 1- The Blitzer may attempt to block the Passer’s pass attempt by extending his hands away from his body. As he nears the Passer, he must realize he is only entitled to the location (verticality) on the field he legally occupies, and should his arms cause contact with the passer and be penalized for roughing the passer. The tipping of a pass does not allow for contact with the Passer.

Article 2 – The Blitzer may attempt to pull the flags of the Passer. He may not intentionally try to strip the ball from the Passer’s possession, regardless of where the ball is being held. Any intentional stripping of the ball from the Passer shall be penalized. Inadvertent contact with the football, while in the Passer’s possession, which leads to a fumble (grounded or not) shall be declared dead at the spot.

Article 3 – The Blitzer, while attempting to legally pull the Passer’s flags, may inadvertently cause incidental contact with the Passer.

SECTION 4 – There are two blitz types – the Ten (10) Yard Blitz and the Free Blitz which does not require a distance from the line of scrimmage.

Article 1 – The Ten (10) Yard Blitz option requires the Blitzer to start from a distance of Ten (10) Yards or more from the Line of Scrimmage at the snap. A Blitzing player who may jump early, need only restart his blitz from the ten (10) yard mark.

Article 2 – The Free Blitz shall be an option for the defense based on either pre-snap alignment of the offense or the actions of the offense after the snap.

A – The defense shall be entitled to Free Blitz when the offense has one or more players lined up behind the line of scrimmage, and within two (2) yards of the QB at the snap.

B – The defense shall be entitled to Free Blitz when, after the snap, the offense either hands off or fakes a hand off of the football.

SECTION 5 – There shall be no impeding of the Blitzer by any member of the offense, when the Blitzer is lined up within a two (2) yard “lane” over the center, and ten (10) yards or more from the line of scrimmage.

Article 1 – If the Center does not move, he may remain in place, and shall not be called for a foul of impeding the Blitzer.

Article 2 – Only one player, lined up ten (10) yards or more from the line of scrimmage, and within the two (2) yard “lane” over center is to be afforded the protection from being impeded by the offense.

Article 3 – There is no requirement of actual contact for a foul of Impeding the Blitzer to be called. The Offense is obligated to not impede the Blitzer.

SECTION 6 – Once a Defensive player legally or illegally crosses the line of scrimmage, the six (6) second count for the QB to throw the ball is ended. This applies only when the Line of Scrimmage is not located on or in the “No Blitz” zone.

SECTION 7 – A defensive player may dive to pull a flag on a runner, defend a pass, recover a fumble that was inadvertently caused by the runner, or to stop the forward progress of a punt.

SECTION 8 – No defensive player may intentionally initiate contact on an offensive player so as to gain an advantage. Any such contact shall be penalized

SECTION 9 – No defensive player shall physically tackle or hold a runner.

Article 1 - When a runner is physically tackled or dragged to the ground, and there is no other defensive player near him when near the end zone or between him and the end zone, the runner will be awarded an automatic touchdown. This is up to the discretion of the official.

Article 2 – When a runner’s ability to move is restricted by arm bar, illegal grasping of clothing, other such contact, a holding penalty will be called. Exception – when a defender is pulling a flag and grasps loose clothing.

SECTION 10 – No defensive player may intentionally push or bump out an opponent out of bounds instead of pulling or attempting to pull a flag. Such action shall be declared illegal contact. If flagrant could cause ejection.

SECTION 11 – No defensive player shall intentionally de-flag any opponent unless there is reasonable cause to believe they are in possession of the football.

SECTION 12 – No defensive player may intentionally strip the football in possession of an opposing player. Such action shall be penalized. A change of possession may not occur when a defender causes the dispossession of the football.

**Rule 8 – Scoring**

SECTION 1 – Touchdowns shall be worth 6 points and are scored when:

 Article 1 – A runner must have his properly worn flag belt break the plane of the goal line. Or

Article 2 – A receiver must catch the pass, and legally possess the ball in the end zone – where his first foot down must be inbounds. Or

Article 3 – If a defensive player “strips the ball” from a receiver, the receiver is considered to have possessed the ball and a touchdown shall be awarded – the distance penalty may be awarded on the ensuing try or assessed against the offending team on their possession. Similarly, a player who is in the act of catching a pass, and is intentionally pushed out of bounds illegally, shall be awarded the touchdown, and the distance penalty assessed on the ensuing try or against the offending team on their possession. Play the football – not physically hit the receiver!

SECTION 2 – The Try for Point After Conversion shall be worth either:

 Article 1 – One (1) Point if attempted from the 5 yard line, the No Run, No Blitz shall be in effect.

Article 2 – Two (2) Points if attempted from the 10 yard line. The offense may choose to run, and the defense may choose to blitz.

Article 3 – Any penalties that are enforced on the Try shall cause the ball location to be moved, but the value of the try to remain. (i.e. A Stripping the Ball Penalty on the Touchdown, shall allow the offense to make a 2 point Try from the 5 yard line after the distance is enforced. As the spot is on the No Run No Blitz line, the offense may attempt for 2 points, but may not gain the end zone through a run play and the defense may not blitz.)

Article 4 – Any change of possession on the Try, where the ball is advanced to the other end zone shall be worth two (2) points for the defense.

SECTION 3 – Safety – two (2) points shall be awarded to the defense for successfully pulling the ball carrier’s flag in the end zone. Also, a safety shall be awarded an offensive fumble in their own end zone. Following a safety, the team that scored will receive a punt (free kick) from the opposing team. That punt shall be initiated from their own 5 yard line.

**Rule 9 – Fouls, Penalties, and Enforcement**

SECTION 1 – A foul occurs when a team is observed to take action which is against the rules of play for the league. Fouls shall be upon the judgement of the game officials as to whether an infraction occurred. When a foul is observed an official shall toss his flag to the spot of the foul (spot fouls) or in the air (dead ball fouls) to indicate a foul has occurred. Officials are encouraged to work together on the field to properly observe and call any infractions.

Article 1 – Double Fouls are when one or more live ball fouls against each team are called, which cause them to offset, and a replay of the down to occur.

Article 2 – Multiple Fouls are when two or more live ball fouls against a team are called, and the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.

Article 3 – Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls are assessed as dead ball fouls.

Article 4 – Fighting Fouls are cause for immediate disqualification from the game and indefinite suspension pending a league review.

SECTION 2 – A Penalty is the result imposed by rule against a team or a team member that has committed a foul.

SECTION 3 –The distance penalty of a foul shall never be greater than half the distance to the goal line.

SECTION 4 – Any offensive foul which occurs in the offense’s own end zone shall result in a safety.

SECTION 5 – Five (5) Yard Distance Fouls –

* Delay of the game – offense only – distance and replay of down
* Illegal substitution – too many players on the field at the snap – on offense – dead ball at snap, distance and replay down – on defense - choice of result of play or distance and replay of down
* Offside/Encroachment – Offense/Defense – distance and replay down
* False start - includes any illegal act by Center or Quarterback – offense only - distance and replay of down
* Illegal motion – offense only - distance and replay of down
* Flag-guarding (from spot of foul) – on ball carrier – down consumed
* Illegal forward pass/pitch – penalty assessed from spot of foul – Loss of down
* Stripping the ball – on defense – assessed to end of run and down consumed or may be assessed on try or ensuing possession
* Holding – on defense – assessed to end of run and automatic first down
* Impeding the Blitzer – on offense – distance and replay of down

SECTION 6 – Ten (10) Yard Distance Fouls –

* Illegal use of hand or arm/Illegal contact - defense/offense – distance and automatic first down/ loss of down
* Striking, kicking, kneeing, clipping - either team – distance and replay of down
* ANY blocking or charging (from spot of the foul) - either team – assessed to end of run, and down consumed
* Pushing/Bumping out ball carrier (from end of play) – defense – assessed to end of run, down consumed
* Intentionally de-flagging – either team – assessed to end of run, down consumed
* Unsportsmanlike conduct – either team – distance assessed only. Second USC Foul against a player in the same game results in disqualification from the game, and one (1) game suspension.

SECTION 7 - . Miscellaneous Fouls –

* Defensive pass interference - spot foul + automatic 1st down
* Offensive pass interference - loss of 10 yards from line of scrimmage and repeat the down
* Roughing the Passer - if complete: 10 yards from end of play + automatic first down. If incomplete: 10 yards from line of scrimmage + automatic first down

SECTION 8 - Fouls during the Try for Point

* Offensive Fouls:
	+ Pre-snap and Snap fouls will result in a five (5) yard penalty and repeat the conversion attempt
	+ Post-snap Fouls (i.e. offensive pass interference or illegal forward pass) will result in a loss of the Try
* Defensive Fouls: Accepted Penalties will result in 1/2 the distance to the goal line and repeat the conversion attempt

SECTION 9 - Any of the preceding fouls or any foul not covered herein: If in the judgment of the game officials the foul is flagrant and/or deliberate; player shall be ejected from the game. (i.e.Tripping or Tackling)

Misc Notes –

* All players must have their uniform shirts tucked in. Game officials will not be constantly telling players to do this. Penalties may be assessed.
* Holding penalties should be called when a player’s forward progress is stopped or altered due to the defensive player pulling or holding on the shorts, shirt, or flag belt of the offensive player with the ball.
A holding penalty should not be called if the offensive player’s shorts, shirt, or flag belt are grabbed inadvertently and are instantly released without causing the offensive player to break stride, lose momentum, or have his forward progress stopped.
* If an offensive player’s jersey is not tucked in and/or hanging over their flags, there will NOT be a holding penalty called unless they were tucked in and/or hanging over prior to starting the play and were pulled out during game action. Team captains and players are responsible for having their uniforms in place before each play.
* Any player may request time out. Officials are the only ones who may grant a time out, when a team has one available.
* Have fun! Football is a passion for many, and while our competitive juices may run heavy, remember we all have someplace else to be after the games are over.
* Players or coaches ejected from the game will leave the park immediately or their team shall forfeit the game and face possible expulsion from the league.
* Any player or coach ejected from a game for physically abusing an official or player will be suspended from the league.
* Players and coaches are responsible for the actions of their spectators. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will be assessed against the team the spectator(s) represents. The spectator(s) will be asked to leave the park immediately or the team will automatically forfeit the game
* Any player suspended cannot accompany the team to any scheduled games during the suspension
* A player ejected for fighting (throwing or attempting to throw a punch) shall be subject to a suspension for the remainder of the season.
* Any team that has a second fighting incident – separate from the first, shall forfeit the game and possible season ending suspension.