



**Green Hill  
Sports Association**

**2023 Flag Football  
Rule Book**



## Green Hill Sports Association 2023 – Flag Football Rule book

### 1. Game

- 1.1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- 1.2. The winner of the coin toss gets first offense possession. The loser of the coin toss chooses the end zone it would prefer to defend. Teams may not choose to defer to second half choice.
- 1.3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- 1.4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5- yard line.
- 1.5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- 1.6. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- 1.7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the loser of the coin toss.

### 2. Terminology

- 2.1. **Boundary lines** – the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and the rear end zone lines.
- 2.2. **Line Of Scrimmage** – an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
- 2.3. **Line-To-Gain** – the line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
- 2.4. **Rush Line** – an imaginary line running across the width of the field 10 yards (into the defensive side) from the Line of Scrimmage.
- 2.5. **Offense** – the squad with possession of the ball.
- 2.6. **Defense** – the squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
- 2.7. **Passer** – the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the QB.
- 2.8. **Rusher** – the defensive player assigned to rush the Quarterback to prevent him/her from passing by pulling his/her flags or blocking the pass.
- 2.9. **Downs (1-2-3-4)** – the offensive squad has four attempts or “Downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the Line to Gain to get another set of downs or to score.
- 2.10. **Live Ball** – the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regards to penalties, Live Ball Penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
- 2.11. **Dead Ball** – the period of time immediately before or after a play.
- 2.12. **Whistle** – the sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for timeout, half time or the end of the game.



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- 2.13. **Inadvertent whistle** – an official's whistle that is performed in error.
- 2.14. **Charging** – the movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, contacting the defender with a shoulder, chest or forearm.
- 2.15. **Flag Guarding** – an 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, arm, or football. Absolutely no part of the arm is allowed below the waist of the runner when there is a defensive player in near enough proximity to pull the runner's flags.
- 2.16. **Shovel Pass** – a legal pass attempted behind line of scrimmage by throwing ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in shot put type manner that must be received past the line of scrimmage.
- 2.17. **Lateral** – a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier (allowed behind L.O.S in 2011)
- 2.18. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

### 3. Eligibility

- 3.1. A player's age must fall within the specified age-range as of July 31st of the current year. Age may be verified by a valid birth certificate.
- 3.2. All players must present a waiver that is signed by a legal guardian or parent.

### 4. Equipment

- 4.1. The league provides each player with a jersey. This is official uniform. Any modifications or replacement of equipment will result in disqualification of player.
- 4.2. Green Hill Sports Association will provide the game ball and flags for use during the game.
- 4.3. Mouth guards are required to play during practice and games.
- 4.4. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed, however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
- 4.5. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- 4.6. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
- 4.7. Official GHSA Flag jerseys must be worn during play.
- 4.8. Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.

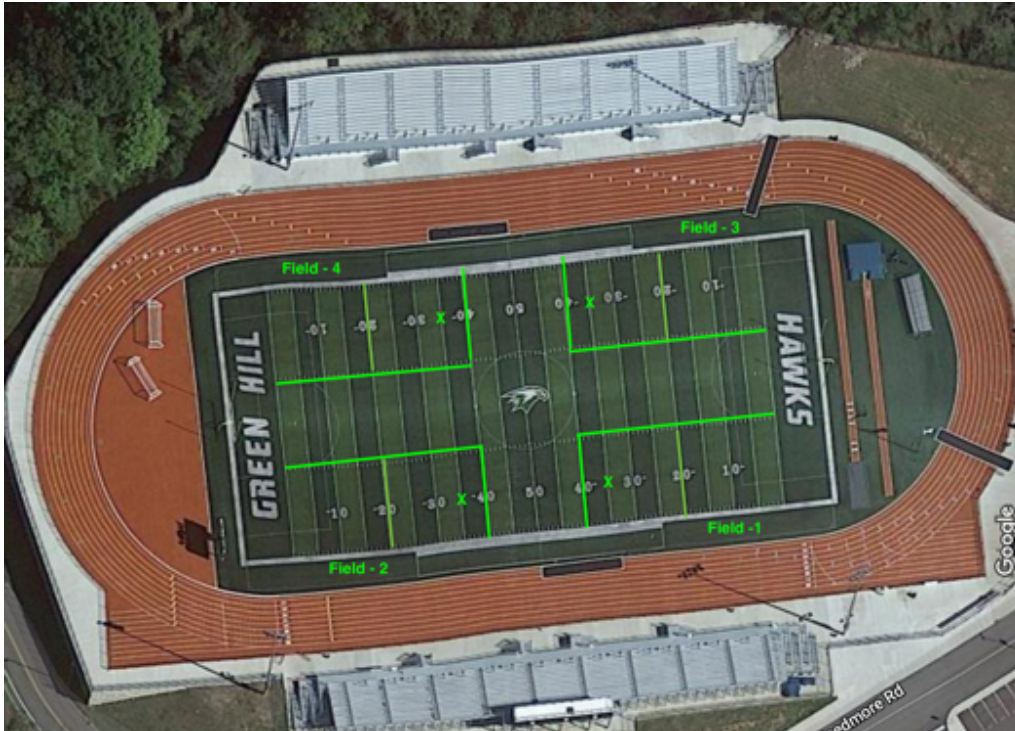


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- 4.9. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Pants nor tape can be the same color as the flags.
- 4.10. Football sizes:
- 4.10.1. 8u and under: Wilson K2 or PeeWee equivalent size
  - 4.10.2. 10u – 12u: Wilson TDJ or Junior equivalent size
  - 4.10.3. 15u – 18u: Wilson GST/Collegiate or Official equivalent size

### 5. Field

- 5.1. The field will be 17 yards by 40 yards with one standard end zone.
- 5.2. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.



5.3.

### 6. Rosters

- 6.1. Home teams wear green jerseys, visiting teams wear white jerseys.
- 6.2. Teams must always field a minimum of four (5) players.
- 6.3. Each player must play approximately half the game, provided they attend practice and show a desire to play in the game.
- 6.4. If a team can only field 5 players in a 6 on 6 league because of injury or player unavailability, the opposing coach must also play with fewer players on the field.



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### 7. Timing

- 7.1. Games will consist of four (4) 10-minute quarters. The clock runs continuously except for injury or timeouts until the final two minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarter. The clock will then stop for an incomplete pass, change of possession, runner steps out of bounds, first down, or score.
- 7.2. Halftime is five minutes long.
- 7.3. 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.
- 7.4. The coach on offense is responsible for moving the QB-Tee once given the go ahead by the official.
- 7.5. Each team has two (2) 30-second time-outs per half. Time-outs do NOT carry over to the 2nd half.
- 7.6. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- 7.7. In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- 7.8. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, an Overtime (OT) Period will be used to determine a winner.

### 8. Over Time format

- 8.1. Each team gets one series of up to four plays (and possibly more pending penalty enforcement) in which to score, starting from the 20-YD line.
- 8.2. First possession choice goes to the winner of regulation coin toss.
- 8.3. There is no Sudden Death - each team gets one possession.
- 8.4. If the score remains tied after each team has completed its series, then the team that scored in the fewest attempts/downs is declared the winner.
- 8.5. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- 8.6. There are no time-outs.
- 8.7. A 1- or 2-point-after-touchdown attempt is required following a touchdown.
- 8.8. Additional overtime periods:
- 8.9. If an OT period does not produce a winner because either (1) neither team scored or (2) both teams scored using the same number of attempts/downs, then one or more additional Overtime Periods will be played.
- 8.10. The 2nd and subsequent overtime periods follow the same format as the first (4 plays each from the 20-Yd line) except that the PAT must be a 2-point attempt.
- 8.11. First possession is awarded to the team who had second possession in the prior OT period.



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- 8.12. Winning by fewest-attempts-to-score is equivalent to winning by 6 points for tie-breaker purposes.
- 8.13. Change of Possession:
  - 8.13.1. Change of possession takes place when Team A's forward progress is halted on downs or scores a touchdown.
  - 8.13.2. Team B takes possession on the 20-Yd line. Team B begins on the 20-Yd line regardless of whether Team A's possession ended in an interception.

### 9. Scoring

- 9.1. Touchdown: 6 points
- 9.2. PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1-point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)
- 9.3. Safety: 2 points
  - 9.3.1. A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone or behind the 40-Yd line.
  - 9.3.2. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm.
  - 9.3.3. A safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone, player fumbles in the end zone or if backwards pass contacts the ground.
- 9.4. PAT (Point After Touchdown): A team that scores a touchdown will make a PAT attempt subject to the following procedures:
  - 9.4.1. Interceptions on PAT attempts cannot be returned, regardless of age bracket.
- 9.5. Division 10u and above:
  - 9.5.1. Offense must declare its intent to attempt a 1-point conversion (5-yard line, pass only) or a 2-point conversion (10-yard line, run or pass)
  - 9.5.2. Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out.
  - 9.5.3. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
- 9.6. 6u division and lower:
  - 9.6.1. All extra-point attempts will take place from the 5-yard line.
  - 9.6.2. The coach does not have to inform the official of his/her intentions.
  - 9.6.3. A pass earns 2 points, a run earns 1 point.
- 9.7. **Mercy Rule:**
  - 9.7.1. After one team is winning by twenty-eight (28) points or more, the losing team gets one offensive series to continue regulation play. If they do not score, the game goes into scrimmage mode playing up to the fifteen-minute mark in the second half if time allows.



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9.7.2. After the fifteen-minute mark, the game is over.

9.7.3. Scrimmage Mode: The losing team gets the ball for up to three possessions. Each possession lasts until the team scores or fails to achieve the Line-To-Gain. Points do not count in final score. After three possessions the game is over

### 10.Coaches

10.1. Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to always support the coach.

10.2. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and bracket.

10.2.1. One (1) coach is allowed on the field on offense and defense.

10.2.2. Offensive coaches must be 15 yards behind LOS at time of snap.

10.2.3. Defensive coaches must be 10 yards deeper than the deepest defensive player or 15 yards from the LOS whichever is deepest.

10.3. Defensive coaches need to move towards the sidelines (away from the middle of the playing field) at the snap.

10.4. Each team is allowed 2 total coaches

### 11.Live Ball/Dead Ball

11.1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.

11.2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. The official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back beyond the line before the snap.

11.3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds if one foot, hip, elbow comes down in the field of play.

11.4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play.

11.5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

11.6. Any official can whistle the play dead.

11.7. Play is ruled “dead” when:

11.7.1. The ball hits the ground.

11.7.2. The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.

11.7.3. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.

11.7.4. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.

11.7.5. The ball carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.

11.7.6. The 7 second pass clock expires.





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- 11.7.7. An inadvertent whistle is performed (at the spot where the ball was whistled dead).
- 11.8. Dead ball at spot if backwards pass contacts ground just as with a pitch.
- 11.9. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - 11.9.1. Take the ball where the whistle blew.
  - 11.9.2. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- 11.10. There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.
- 11.11. A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official's rule interpretation.
  - 11.11.1. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged, and the proper ruling will be enforced.
  - 11.11.2. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call, in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.
  - 11.11.3. If the ruling is correct the team will be charged a time out.

### 12. Running

- 12.1. The ball is spotted where the runner's FEET are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
- 12.2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The QB is the player who takes the ball from the qb-tee.
- 12.3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- 12.4. Laterals and pitches are permitted only behind the line of scrimmage.
- 12.5. Any player who takes a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- 12.6. Once the ball has been handed off in front or behind the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 12.7. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball.
  - 12.7.1. Diving, leaping, sliding or jumping is considered flag guarding.
  - 12.7.2. Backward or lateral hopping will be allowed but will be up the Official's discretion.
- 12.8. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
- 12.9. 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. This is a judgment call by the official.
- 12.10. No downfield physical blocking or "moving screens" are allowed at any time.





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- 12.11. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
- 12.12. 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.

### 13. Passing

- 13.1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage and may be thrown forward beyond the line of scrimmage or behind the QB.
  - 13.1.1. With backwards pass receiver must be lateral to or behind the QB at time of reception.
  - 13.1.2. If thrown behind QB only legal rusher may attempt to go for ball while in the air.
  - 13.1.3. Once reception has been made behind QB, any defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage
- 13.2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 13.3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.
- 13.4. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

### 14. Receiving

- 15. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, legal lateral pass, or pitched behind the line).
- 16. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- 17. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- 18. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
- 19. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- 20. Interceptions are NOT returnable. The ball will be whistled dead, spotted at the 35-Yd line and the intercepting team goes on offense.

### 21. Rushing the Passer

- 21.1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- 21.2. Any number of players may rush the quarterback.



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- 21.3. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- 21.4. Once the ball is handed off or a backward pass is completed, the 10-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- 21.5. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
- 21.6. A legal rush is:
  - 21.6.1. Rush from a point 10 yards from defensive line of scrimmage.
  - 21.6.2. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off or a backwards pass has been completed by the quarterback.
  - 21.6.3. If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
  - 21.6.4. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
- 21.7. A penalty may be called if:
  - 21.7.1. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
  - 21.7.2. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offsides (5 yards LOS and first down).
  - 21.7.3. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
- 21.8. Special circumstances:
  - 21.8.1. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, seven second clock in effect.
  - 21.8.2. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play. The rusher must be behind the 10-yard rush line.
  - 21.8.3. If rusher leaves the 10-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced.
  - 21.8.4. Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass. However, the defender cannot initiate contact with the quarterback in any way while blocking or attempting to block a pass.
  - 21.8.5. Offense cannot impede the rusher. The rusher has a CLEAR PATH to the QB and any interference that would impede his/her path to the QB will be considered screening.
  - 21.8.6. Blocking the pass and then striking the passer will result in a 10-yard LOS penalty against the defense and a first down.
  - 21.8.7. A Sack occurs if the QB's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the QB's feet are when the flag is pulled.
  - 21.8.8. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place on or past the 40-yd line.



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### 22. Flag Pulling

- 22.1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- 22.2. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through ball carrier when pulling flags.
- 22.3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball or pull from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- 22.4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play and then takes possession of the ball, play will continue, and the player will be ruled down when touched by a defender with one hand.
- 22.5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- 22.6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or elbow, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.

### 23. Formations

- 23.1. On offense, you must have following on the line of scrimmage:
  - 23.1.1. 1 player on 4 man
  - 23.1.2. 2 players on 5 man
  - 23.1.3. 3 players on 6 man
  - 23.1.4. 4 players on 7 man
- 23.2. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard beyond and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- 23.3. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage
- 23.4. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the one player in motion.
- 23.5. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.

### 24. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- 24.1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals! FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- 24.2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the



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referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game. This also applies to coaches for both verbal or physical contact with referees or opposing coaches.

- 24.3. Players and coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent or official.
- 24.4. Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- 24.5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- 24.6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship:
  - 24.6.1. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
  - 24.6.2. Any profanity or poor sportsmanship by fans referee will give one warning if behavior continues forfeiture of game will be result. Any behavior witness by commissioner will be handled in same fashion with same result of forfeiture of game with or without referee assistance.
  - 24.6.3. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
- 24.7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
  - 24.7.1. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents away from the sidelines.
  - 24.7.2. Stay outside of the fenced area.

### 25. Penalties

- 25.1. General:
- 25.2. The referee will call all penalties.
- 25.3. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- 25.4. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
- 25.5. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
- 25.6. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- 25.7. Penalties are assessed Live Ball then Dead Ball. Live Ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered completed.
- 25.8. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- 25.9. 10 Yard Penalties
  - 25.9.1. Unsportsmanlike conduct.



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25.9.2. Offending team receives a 10-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage (one warning to the player or coach and team before ejection) See coach code of conduct for further reference.

### 25.10. Spot fouls

25.10.1.	Flag guarding.....	10 yd & Loss of Down
25.10.2.	Charging .....	10 yd & Loss of Down
25.10.3.	Offensive Unnecessary Roughness.....	10 yd & Loss of Down
25.10.4.	Blocking or Running with the ball carrier .....	10 yd & Loss of Down
25.10.5.	Defensive Unnecessary roughness.....	10 yd & First Down
25.10.6.	Stripping .....	10 yd & First Down
25.10.7.	Defensive Illegal contact (Holding,etc.) .....	Automatic First Down

### 25.11. Line of scrimmage fouls

25.11.1.	Offside .....	5 yd & first down
25.11.2.	Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball).....	5 yd & first down
25.11.3.	Illegal rushing.....	5 yd & first down
25.11.4.	Roughing the passer.....	5 yd & first down
25.11.5.	Illegal motion .....	5 yd & loss of down
25.11.6.	Illegal forward pass .....	5 yd & loss of down
25.11.7.	Offensive pass interference .....	5 yd & loss of down
25.11.8.	Pick play .....	5 yd & loss of down
25.11.9.	Delay of game.....	5 yd & loss of down
25.11.10.	Unsportsmanlike Conduct.....	10 yd & loss of down
25.11.11.	Taunting.....	5 yd & loss of down
25.11.12.	Impeding the rusher.....	5 yd & loss of down
25.11.13.	Taunting.....	5 yd & loss of down
25.11.14.	Unsportsmanlike Conduct .....	10 yd & first down

## 26. Playoffs and seeding

27. The top 8 teams will play in a post season playoff.

28. Seeding will be based on regular season standings.

29. In the event of a 2-team tie in which the teams played head to head only once, the head to head winner will have the tie breaker.

30. For all other tie breaker scenarios, we will use tie breaker points.

31. If there is still a tie breaker, we will flip a coin.