



Youth Football Rules Book 2014

Official Rules • Approved Rulings

USA FOOTBALL YOUTH FOOTBALL RULES BOOK

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Published by USA Football, Inc.
USA Football, Inc.
45 N. Pennsylvania St., Suite 700
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-614-7750
www.usafootball.com

Printed in the United States of America
ISBN: 978-1478295310

Table of Contents

Letter from the Executive Director	4
About USA Football, USA Football Overview.....	5
USA Football Regional Map	6
USA Football Rules Committee	7
About This Book	8
Major Differences Between USA Football and Other Codes.....	10
Points of Emphasis	15
Shoulder Pad Fitting Guide.....	16
Helmet Fitting Guide	18
Concussions in Football	21
League Development Guide Codes of Conduct.....	23
Rule 1 Basic Definitions	25
Rule 2 Timing	37
Rule 3 Kicks.....	51
Rule 4 Snapping and Handing the Ball.....	73
Rule 5 Passing	85
Rule 6 Series of Downs.....	99
Rule 7 Contact	107
Rule 8 Scoring and Touchbacks.....	127
Rule 9 Penalty Enforcement.....	137
Rule 10 Non-Contact Fouls	149
Rule 11 Officials and Their Duties	161
Rule 12 Field and Equipment	169
Signal Chart	184
Alphabetical Index	186
Feedback Information	192



March 2013

Dear Youth Football Commissioners and Coaches,

Thank you for your commitment to incorporating USA Football's Rules Book within your organization. This book is dedicated solely to America's youth football community and its 3 million players.

Shaped and assembled with the support and direction of our 10-member Rules Committee, comprised of youth league commissioners and game officials from all eight USA Football regions, this book is the result of more than four years of research (USA Football's Rules Committee is introduced on page 7).

Among the ideas voiced during more than 150 USA Football State Leadership Forums since 2007 has been the need for a youth football-specific rule book. This publication further unifies America's favorite sport on its grassroots level and fosters fair play through easy-to-understand diagrams, tips and graphics to introduce and explain rules, sportsmanship, player wellness and more.

This edition also includes the most common youth football rule modifications from the National Federation of State High School Association's rule book.

I thank you for your selfless dedication to lead a youth football league that instills the sport's inherent values of responsibility, teamwork and discipline while ensuring that your players and their families enjoy a positive experience with the greatest game on earth.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Hallenbeck".

Scott Hallenbeck
Executive Director



About USA Football

USA Football, the sport's national governing body in the United States, hosts dozens of football training events annually offering education for coaches, skill development for players and resources for youth football league commissioners. The independent nonprofit is the official youth football development partner of the NFL, its 32 teams and the NFL Players Association. USA Football manages U.S. national teams within the sport for international competitions and provides more than \$1 million annually in equipment grants and youth league volunteer background check subsidies. Endowed by the NFL and NFLPA in 2002 through the NFL Youth Football Fund, USA Football (www.usafootball.com) is chaired by former NFL team executive Carl Peterson.

MISSION, ROLE AND VALUES

USA Football leads the game's development, inspires participation and ensures a positive experience for all youth, high school and other amateur players.

It seeks to improve:

- How football is taught.
- How football is organized and delivered in communities.
- How parents and players perceive and experience the sport.

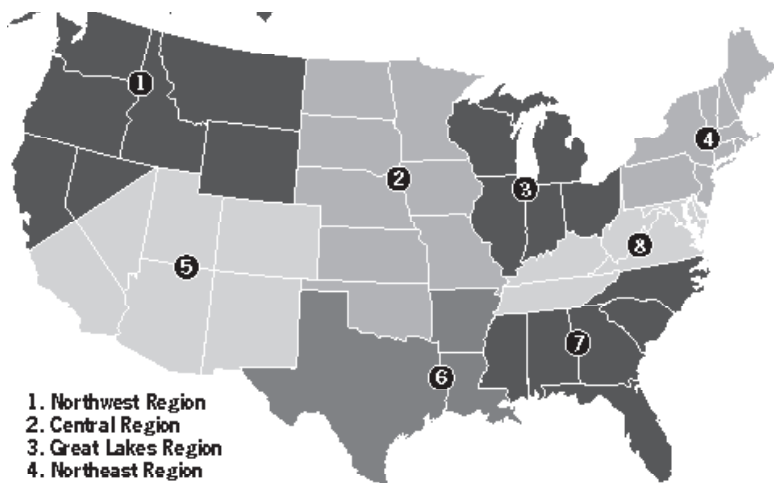
USA Football plays a unique role in the football community. It was created, in part, to lead a fragmented youth football community. It takes pride in helping all football organizations—teams, clubs, leagues and league membership organizations—ensure a positive experience for their players.

Above all, USA Football is focused on what is best for players and how the game's fundamentals and values are taught to those players. It also works to promote an inclusive culture in football. It wants all players to have a positive experience that teaches fundamentals, builds character and helps each player be the best he/she can be. USA Football produces innovative educational resources and programs that focus on fundamentals and values and facilitate player development.

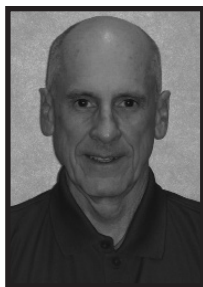
USA Football is accepted by the NCAA and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) as the national governing body of football and as the sole member of the International Federation of American Football (IFAF) it has the exclusive right to field national teams for international competition. Within this role, USA Football promotes the game's values domestically and internationally.

About This Book

USA Football Regional Map



1. Northwest Region
2. Central Region
3. Great Lakes Region
4. Northeast Region
5. West Region
6. South Region
7. Southeast Region
8. Mid-Atlantic Region



Rules Editor

Bill LeMonnier
Tinley Park, Ill.



Rules Committee

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Whitewater, WI

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin



Mid-Atlantic Region
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Vienna, VA

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Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia



Southeast Region
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North Carolina, South Carolina



Pacific Mountain
Region
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Wyoming.



West Region
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Arizona, Colorado, Southern Nevada, New
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South Region
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Mississippi, LA

Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas



Central Region
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Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma,
South Dakota



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Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont



Official At-Large
Donnie Stitt
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Official At-Large
Jason Soistman
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The USA Football Rules book standardizes on-field playing rules for youth football. The book reflects the beliefs of USA Football, including:

- Sportsmanship
- Participation
- Safety/Risk Minimization
- Sound Traditions of the Sport
- Support for USA Football's Mission
- Balance Between Offense and Defense

The USA Football Rules Committee has direct oversight of the rules and votes on changes and amendments. The book is edited and interpreted by Bill LeMonnier, USA Football Rules Editor.

The USA Football Rules book is:

- Organized by topic for ease of reference
- Includes approved rulings and other helpful tidbits

Indicates that a USA Football rule is different from rules that you'd normally see on TV in a professional, collegiate or high school game and one that is commonly misunderstood by players, coaches, fans, officials – and TV announcers.



Indicates a playing rule difference between a league's age/ability level. Each league is to determine its own junior level.



Indicates the rationale for the playing rule.



National Federation of State High School Association rules language is used with permission.

Note: Some rules and approved rulings are repeated because they apply to more than one topic.

To make rule change proposals, log on to www.usafootball.com/rulebook. For interpretations of current USA Football rules, contact the rules editor.

Section 1





Major Rule Differences Between USA Football and Other Codes

There are differences between the codes of every level of football. They are necessary because the age and skill level of the players vary greatly. In an effort to help simplify the game for coaches, players, parents and officials, the USA Football Rules Committee has approved a number of modifications from rules used in pro, collegiate and high school football.

Throughout this book, team A refers to the offense, team B is the defense, team K is the kicking team and team R is the receiving team.

The major differences between USA Football rules and those used at other levels are listed here along with the rationale behind them.

CONTACT FOULS

- All contact fouls on the kicker/holder result in a 15-yard penalty (there is no 5-yard option for running into the kicker or holder).
- All facemask fouls result in a 15-yard penalty (there is no 5-yard option for grasping but not twisting or pulling the facemask).
- All blocking below the waist, blocking in the back and clipping is illegal. There is no "free blocking zone." The penalty for clipping and blocking below the waist is 15 yards; the penalty for blocking in the back is 10 yards.
- At the junior levels of play (each league to determine its own junior level), a defensive player lined up over the snapper must be positioned 5 yards off his line of scrimmage. Failure to do so results in the ball remaining dead and a warning issued to that team. Second and subsequent violations result in a 15-yard penalty. For the non-junior divisions, no defensive player may be lined up directly over the snapper and on the line of scrimmage if there is no player in position to take a hand-to-hand snap. The restriction is not in effect if an offensive player shifts to a position and takes a hand-to-hand snap.
- The penalties for defensive pass interference, facemask fouls and any personal fouls (including illegal blocks) by team B are 15 yards and a first down.

To encourage players to learn and employ proper techniques, USA Football rules include more severe penalties for some contact fouls.



OTHER FOULS

- The penalties for illegal forward pass and illegal touching by ineligible receivers are 5 yards only (no loss of down). There is no loss of down for offensive pass interference.

The committee believes that the loss of a down in addition to the loss of yardage is too much for youth offenses to overcome.



PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

- The penalty for a live-ball foul behind the line by either team when the play ends beyond the line is enforced from the previous spot. Accepted penalties for fouls by team A that occur in team A's end zone result in a safety.
- The penalty for a live-ball foul by either team beyond the line when the play ends behind the line will be enforced from the previous spot. Accepted penalties for fouls by team A that occur in team A's end zone result in a safety.
- Pass interference against either team results in a 15-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot.

Enforcing those penalties from the previous spot rather than the spot of the foul is easier to remember and promotes consistent penalty enforcement.

SCORING

- On tries, two points are awarded for a kick and one point for a run or pass.



Place kicking is a comparatively advanced skill at the youth level. As a result, teams that are able to kick extra points are rewarded for accomplishing a more difficult task.

MODIFIED COMPETITION RULE



- When a team scores to take a 30-point lead any time in the second half, the trailing team gets the ball at the opponent's 40-yard line: if at any time in the second half the deficit is reduced to fewer than 30 points, traditional rules take effect. If the 30-point deficit occurs at the start of the second half, the trailing team begins the second half in possession at the opponent's 40-yard line even if the leading team was to receive the second-half kickoff.

To keep games competitive, discourage "running up the score" and to prevent players on trailing teams from becoming discouraged or disillusioned with the game, the rule gives trailing teams more possessions with an opportunity to catch up.

TIMING

- The clock will run continuously except for injuries, charged team timeouts, delay of game and scores, except for last two minutes of each half, when traditional timing rules apply.



Using a running clock for the vast majority of the game allows leagues to keep games on schedule. It also eliminates confusion as to when the clock should or should not be running. For the last two minutes of each half, using timing rules identical to those used in high school football prevents teams from illegally wasting or conserving time.

NUMBERING

- Uniform numbering rules regarding eligible receivers and linemen are eliminated.



Eliminating numbering rules allows coaches to use players in multiple positions without having to change their jerseys. Whether or not an offensive player is an eligible pass receiver is determined by his position alone, not his number.

Section 2

Points of Emphasis



TRICK PLAYS AND UNFAIR ACTS /UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

It is a fundamental core belief of USA Football that coaches demand sportsmanship from their players and, equally important, lead by example. Coaches must always remember that the players look to them for positive life skills and values.

With that in mind, USA Football takes the position that coaches should refrain



PENALTY DIFFERENCES

	USA FOOTBALL	FEDERATION (NFHS)
Contact fouls on kicker/holder	All result in 15-yard penalty.	Option for 5-yard penalty for running into kicker/holder.
Facemask fouls	All result in 15-yard penalty.	Option for 5-yard penalty for grasping but not twisting.
Blocking below the waist	Illegal in all circumstances.	Allowed only in specified zone by specific players in specific situations.
Lining up over snapper	Junior level: defensive player lined up over the snapper must be positioned 5 yards off his line of scrimmage. Non-junior level: No defensive player may be lined up directly over the snapper and on the line of scrimmage if there is no player in position to take a hand-to-hand snap. The restriction is not in effect if an offensive player shifts to a position and takes a handto-hand snap.	No restrictions.
Penalties for defensive pass interference, facemask fouls and any personal fouls (including illegal blocks) by defense	Fifteen yards and automatic first down.	No automatic first down for facemask fouls, personal fouls or illegal blocks.
Penalty for a live-ball foul behind the line by either team when the play ends beyond the line	Enforced from the previous spot.	Enforced under the all-but-one principle.



PENALTY DIFFERENCES CONT.

	USA FOOTBALL	FEDERATION (NFHS)
Pass interference	No loss of down for offensive interference.	Penalty for offensive interference includes loss of down.
Point value for try	Two points for kick; one point for run or pass.	Two points for run or pass; one point for kick.
Modified competition rule	When a team scores to take a 30-point lead any time in the second half, the trailing team gets the ball at the opponent's 40-yard line. If at any time in the second half the deficit is reduced to fewer than 30 points, traditional rules take effect. If the 30-point deficit occurs at the start of the second half, the trailing team begins the second half in possession at the opponent's 40-yard line even if the leading team was to receive the second-half kickoff.	State associations adopt their own rules.
Timing	Quarters are 12 minutes. Clock runs continuously except for injuries, charged team timeouts, delay of game and scores. In the last two minutes of each half, the clock also stops for incomplete passes and runs that end out of bounds.	Quarters are 12 minutes. Clock stops for injuries, charged team timeouts, delay of game, scores, incomplete passes and runs that end out of bounds.
Uniform numbering rules	No numbering requirements to determine eligible receivers.	Offensive players numbered 50 through 79 inclusive are ineligible receivers and may become eligible only if the defense touches a legal forward pass.



from teaching their players and teams techniques and plays that have no place in youth sports. Examples of deceptive plays include but are not limited to “hideout” plays, “wrong ball” plays and/or “fumblerooski” plays.

Football has been and always will be a game of deception and trickery involving multiple shifts, unusual formations and creative plays. However, actions or verbiage designed to confuse the defense into believing there is a problem and a snap isn’t imminent or planned loose ball plays, are beyond the scope of sportsmanship and are illegal. Respect your opponent! Respect the game!

HELMET-TO-HELMET CONTACT

The football helmet was never intended to be used as a weapon. It is designed to offer the wearer protection. It has become common for players to contact opponents with the helmet or facemask. That is a dangerous and illegal tactic that must be eliminated from football. It is as potentially hazardous to the person who inflicts the blow as to the player on the receiving end. And it is illegal whether or not the blow is aimed at the opponent’s head.

USA Football urges coaches to teach players proper blocking and tackling techniques.

Officials must penalize players who violate the rules regarding helmet contact. League officials must support officials who call those fouls.

There will always be contact in football. But all unnecessary and illegal contact must be eradicated.

ILLEGAL CONTACT ABOVE THE SHOULDERS

Using the helmet, shoulder(s) or arm(s) to contact an opponent above the shoulders is illegal. That type of contact against a defenseless opponent is particularly dangerous. Situations in which defenseless players are most susceptible to serious injury include but are not limited to: a quarterback who has handed off, pitched the ball or is in the act of passing; a kicker who has yet to regain his balance after kicking the ball; a pass receiver who is concentrating on the ball or has clearly relaxed when the pass is no longer catchable; a kick receiver who is concentrating on the ball or who has just touched the kick; and players who have relaxed as the ball is becoming dead or are obviously out of the play.

Officials must penalize players who violate the rules regarding illegal contact. League officials must support officials who call those fouls.

Section 3

Shoulder Pad Fitting Guide

Riddell and the National Governing Body of Youth and Amateur Football have teamed up to bring the best protection to the field.

1. MEASURE CHEST

- Wrap measuring tape around upper torso
- Record measurements

2. MEASURE SHOULDERS

- Stretch tape over contour of shoulders
- Measure from tip of left humerus to tip of right humerus
- Record measurements

3. SELECT PADS

- Identify player position and select corresponding Riddell® pad style
- Refer to chart below for correct Riddell® pad size
- Select appropriate shoulder pads



4. PUT ON PADS

- Bring pads down over head
- Be careful of eyes and nose



5. SECURE STRAPS AND LACES

- Connect front and back of pads
- Buckle belts and connect straps (if applicable)
- Establish tight fit in chest and back area

PAD SIZE/ PLAYER WEIGHT	CHEST CIRCUMFERENCE	SHOULDER WIDTH
2XS / 40 lbs	26" - 28"	10" - 11"
XS / 60 lbs	28" - 30"	11" - 12"
S / 80 lbs	30" - 32"	12" - 13"
M / 100 lbs	32" - 34"	13" - 14"
L / 130 lbs	34" - 36"	14" - 15"
XL / 150 lbs	36" - 38"	15" - 16"
2XL / 170 lbs	38" - 40"	16" - 17"

*This is only a guide. Athletes' measurements, shoulder pad sizes and actual fit may vary.

6. CHECK FOR PROPER FIT

- Ensure there is no pinching in collar
- Foam padding should be above tip of humerus (at least one-quarter inch)



7. ENSURE COVERAGE IN FRONT

- Pads should cover sternum
- Pads should cover front-upper shoulders



8. ENSURE COVERAGE IN BACK

- Pads should cover scapula
- Pads should cover rhomboid



9. CONFIRM PROPER FIT

- Confirm complete coverage
- Confirm optimal range of motion



Section 4

Helmet Fitting Guide

Riddell and the National Governing Body of Youth and Amateur Football teamed up bringing the best protection to the field.

1. CHECKING HEAD SIZE

To get the most accurate circumference measurement, use a soft measuring tape, fixing the tape approximately one inch above the eyebrows around the player's head, ensuring the tape remains flat against the player's skin and hair. When the tape has traveled completely around the head, the measurement is taken.



head, determine the helmet's size by the number that appears when the orbit is complete.

2. PUTTING ON HELMET

Before putting on the helmet, make sure that the correct size appears on the helmet's label. After confirming the appropriate size, the player should hold the helmet with the thumbs over the bottom of the face pads and the fingers against the exterior shell. Bring the helmet down at a slight angle with the face pads first touching the temples. For additional leverage, place the index fingers into the ear holes. This should help bring the helmet straight down into position.



3. ADJUSTING HELMET HEIGHT

When properly fitted and adjusted, the front of the helmet should be approximately one inch above the player's eyebrows. For helmets with inflatable crown liners, it is important to use an inflation bulb and a well-lubricated inflation needle. When lubricating the



inflation needle, do not use petroleum-based lubricants or saliva as they can weaken the valve material. Glycerin is recommended for lubrication prior to each inflation. Inflate the crown liner to adjust the height of the helmet on the player's head.

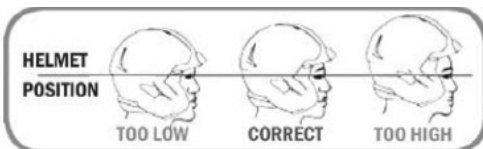
4. ADJUSTING FRONT-TO-BACK AND SIDE-TO-SIDE OF HELMET

Helmets that contain inflatable liners for a proper front-to-back and side-to-side fit can be adjusted using appropriate inflation points that may differ in location depending upon helmet model. Add air to achieve a snug, comfortable fit front to back and side to side.



5. ADJUSTING FACE PADS

Face pads should feel firm against the player's face. If non-inflatable jaw pads look and feel loose - if there is space between the pad and cheek - change to a thicker size. If inflatable face pads are installed, the fit can be adjusted with the helmet on the player's head. When the helmet is on the head, inflate the pad at the valve located on the outside of the



helmet's jaw flap. Inflatable pads are also available in different thicknesses. Use the different thicknesses to avoid over-inflation.

6. CHECKING FOR PROPER FIT

It's important to remember that in a properly fit helmet there should be no room for twisting. The skin of the player's forehead should move with the helmet's front pad. If the helmet slides easily over the player's forehead, adjust the fit using the inflatable air liners or try a smaller-sized helmet. A properly fit helmet should rest approximately one inch above the player's eyebrows. To avoid injury and discomfort, a player should never wear a helmet that is positioned too low or too high. Check for a proper fit by interlocking the hands on top of the helmet and pressing down on the exterior shell. The player should feel pressure on the crown of the head, not the brow.



7. ADJUSTING CHIN STRAP

Using either a soft or hard cup chin strap, buckle the chin strap into the snaps making sure the cup is centered and snug over the player's chin. Chin straps are available in multiple sizes to best fit the player's chin. If the cup offers a loose fit - if it is not firmly pressed against the chin - tighten it until it fits properly. The chin strap is adjustable and can easily be modified to fit the player. With the chin strap buckled, the helmet should feel comfortable and snug.



8. TAKING OFF HELMET

To take off the helmet, unbuckle chin straps and pull the chin cup from the chin. The player should place an index finger into the left and right ear holes of the helmet. Finally, the player should press his thumbs into the bottom of the face pads, located below the ear holes on the inside of the helmet. This grip will give the player the necessary leverage to lift the helmet straight up and off his head.

WARNING: NO HELMET CAN PREVENT SERIOUS HEAD OR NECK INJURIES A PLAYER MIGHT RECEIVE WHILE PARTICIPATING IN FOOTBALL.

Do not use this helmet to butt, ram or spear an opposing player. This is in violation of the football rules and such use can result in severe head or neck injuries, paralysis or death to you and possible injury to your opponent. Contact in football may result in CONCUSSION-BRAIN INJURY that no helmet can prevent. Symptoms include: loss of consciousness or



memory, dizziness, headache, nausea or confusion. If you have symptoms, immediately stop playing and report them to your coach, trainer and parents. Do not return to a game or practice until all symptoms are gone and you have been cleared to play by an appropriate medical professional. Ignoring this warning may lead to another and more serious or fatal brain injury. Maintenance of correct fitting is essential to the use of all protective equipment. Football helmets must be fitted and properly maintained if they are to serve the player.



Section 5

Concussions in Football

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience any of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE
---------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------



<input type="checkbox"/> Appears dazed or stunned	<input type="checkbox"/> Headache or “pressure” in head
<input type="checkbox"/> Is confused about assignment or position	<input type="checkbox"/> Nausea or vomiting
<input type="checkbox"/> Forgets an instruction	<input type="checkbox"/> Balance problems or dizziness
<input type="checkbox"/> Is unsure of game, score or opponent	<input type="checkbox"/> Double or blurry vision
<input type="checkbox"/> Moves clumsily	<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity to light
<input type="checkbox"/> Answers questions slowly	<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity to noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Loses consciousness (even briefly)	<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
<input type="checkbox"/> Shows mood, behavior or personality changes	<input type="checkbox"/> Concentration or memory problems
<input type="checkbox"/> Can't recall events prior to hit or fall	<input type="checkbox"/> Confusion
<input type="checkbox"/> Can't recall events after hit or fall	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not “feel right” or is “feeling down”

For more information and safety resources, visit www.cdc.gov/concussion or www.usafootball.com.

ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

1. Remove athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform the athlete’s parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health care professional says he is symptom-free and it’s OK to return to play.

Section 6

League Development Guide Codes of Conduct

OVERVIEW

USA Football, the sport’s national governing body on youth and amateur levels, encourages every youth football organization to adopt a code of conduct for its players, coaches, parents and game officials. USA Football has developed



WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Name: _____

Phone: _____

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

Name: _____

Phone: _____

SCHOOL STAFF AVAILABLE DURING PRACTICE

Name: _____

Phone: _____

SCHOOL STAFF AVAILABLE DURING GAMES

Name: _____

Phone: _____



Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



the following codes to help youth football organizations communicate what is expected from youth football's four major participants. Leagues are encouraged to use each code, including requiring written signatures from every player, coach, parent and game official on an annual basis.

USA FOOTBALL ATHLETES CODE OF CONDUCT

- I am accountable for the results of my behavior toward my teammates, coaches and game officials.
- I will respect other players (including my teammates and my opponents), coaches and game officials at all times. When I score a touchdown I will simply hand the ball to the official before celebrating with my teammates.
- When I make a great play, I will not embarrass my opponent.
- I will honor the sport by playing within the rules during games and practices.
- I will respect the game and not use foul language at any time.
- I agree to put my team first and put forth my best effort on the field in support of team goals.
- I agree to give my best effort in the classroom and listen to my teachers.

USA FOOTBALL COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

- I agree to conduct myself in a positive manner toward my players, coaches, parents and game officials at all times.
- I will respect players, coaches, parents and game officials at all times.
- I will develop a coaching philosophy that embraces fundamentals, organization, life lessons and friendships versus a "Win at all Cost" mentality.
- I will remember kids register to play football because it is fun; every child should have the opportunity to play.
- I will support and respect all decisions made by the game officials and refrain from outward criticism.
- I am responsible to understand the rules of the game and abide by those rules at all times.
- I will support the integrity of the game and make game decisions in line with fair play and sportsmanship.
- I am responsible for completing my coaching education requirements and teaching the proper fundamentals.
- I will create a safe and positive environment for my players to learn how to play the sport.
- I will listen to my fellow coaches and players regarding player safety and when in doubt, I will sit them out of play.
- I will honor the game and my responsibility as a coach to provide a positive experience for my team.
- I shall dress neatly and appropriately for every team practice and game.

USA FOOTBALL PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT

- I agree to support our team in a positive manner and showcase good sportsmanship toward all players, coaches, parents and game officials.
- I will respect the coaches' commitment to coach my child and will not interfere with on-field instruction during practices or games.
- I will address any concerns with the head coach in private and away from the field and in a positive manner.



- I will support the coaches and do my best to ensure that my child arrives at practice and games on time.
- I will teach my child to play by the rules and respect teammates, opponents, game officials and coaches.
- I will cheer for our team in a positive manner no matter the outcome of the game.

USA FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS CODE OF CONDUCT

- I understand I bear a great responsibility for fostering public confidence in sports.
- I shall be free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of sports competitions.
- I shall hold and maintain the basic tenets of officiating, that include history, integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity and professionalism.
- I shall master the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
- I shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interactions with athletes, coaches, league administrators, colleagues, parents and the public.
- I shall display and execute superior communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal.
- I recognize that anything that may lead to a conflict of interest, either real or apparent, must be avoided. Gifts, favors, special treatment, privileges, employment or a personal relationship with an individual or team that can compromise the perceived impartiality of officiating must be avoided.
- I shall prepare both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately and conduct myself in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
- I shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
- I shall work with governing bodies in a constructive and cooperative manner.
- I shall resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as an official to benefit myself.
- I shall not make false or misleading statements regarding my qualifications, rating, credentials, experience, training or competence.
- I shall accept responsibility for all actions taken.

Section 1

Game Elements

1. A down is action that starts with a legal snap (beginning a scrimmage down) or when the ball is kicked on a free kick (beginning a free-kick down). A down ends when the ball next becomes dead. While the ball is live, an interval called a down is in progress and the team in possession attempts to advance the ball by carrying, kicking or passing it. The team in possession has a series of four downs numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 to advance the ball to the line to gain.

2. Force is the result of energy exerted by a player that provides movement of

RULE 1 BASIC DEFINITIONS

IN THIS RULE

Definitions that apply throughout
the rule book



Section 1: Game Elements	27	Section 5: Status of the Ball	30
Down	27	Live and dead	30
Force	27	Catch	32
Forward progress.	27	Fumble	32
Foul	27	Interception	32
Huddle	27	Kick	32
Line to gain	27	Muff	32
Line of scrimmage	27	Recovery	32
Neutral zone.	27	Loose ball.	32
Penalty	27	Player possession.	33
Scrimmage.	28	Team possession	33
Shift	28	Out of bounds.	33
Snap	28	Section 6: Player Actions.	33
Section 2: Areas of the Field.	28	Batting	33
Boundary lines	28	Blocking	33
End zones	28	Handing	33
Field	28	Passing	33
Field of play	28	Tackling	34
Goal line	28	Touching	34
hash marks.	28	Section 7: Types of Fouls.	34
Sidelines	28	Dead ball	34
Side zones	28	Double	34
Yardlines	28	Flagrant	34
Section 3: Team Designations	28	Live ball	34
Offense and defense	28	Multiple.	34
A and B	29	Nonplayer	34
K and R	29	Player	34
Section 4: Player Designations	29	Post-scrimmage kick	34
Player	29	Simultaneous with snap	34
Back	29	Section 8: Penalty Enforcement Spots	35
Offensive blocker.	29	Basic spot.	35
Captain	29	Enforcement spot	35
Disqualified player	29	Post-scrimmage kick spot	35
Holder.	29	Previous spot	35
Kicker	29	Spot of a foul	35
Lineman	29	Spot where a run ends	35
Nonplayer	29	Succeeding spot	35
Out of bounds player	30	Section 9: Other Spots	35
Passer	30	Dead-ball spot	35
Replaced player.	30	Inbounds spot.	35
Runner	30	Out-of-bounds spot	35
Snapper.	30		
Substitute	30		



- A is the team that puts the ball in play. The opponent is B. K is the team that legally kicks the ball. The opponent is R. A1, A2, etc. are players of team A; B1, B2, etc. are players of team B; K1, K2, etc. are players of team K; R1, R2, etc. are players of team R.
- Team designations (A and B, K and R) are retained until the ball is next marked ready for play.
- No foul causes loss of the ball, and no foul causes a live ball to become dead.
- A "foul" is analogous to a crime, while the "penalty" is the punishment. Just as speeding results in a fine, a foul can result in a loss of yardage.

the ball. The term force is used only in connection with the goal line and in only one direction, i.e., from the field of play into the end zone.

3. Forward progress is the end of advancement of the ball in a runner's possession or the forward-most point of the ball when it is fumbled out of bounds toward the opponent's goal and it determines the dead-ball spot. When an airborne player makes a catch, forward progress is the furthest point of advancement after he possesses the ball if contacted by a defender.

4. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.

5. A huddle is two or more players of the same team grouped together before a down.

6. The line to gain is the yard line established when a new series (first down) is awarded. Unless there is a penalty following the ready-for-play signal, the line to gain is 10 yards in advance of the foremost point of the ball when placed for the first down of the series. If the line to gain extends into the end zone, the goal line is the line to gain.

7. The line of scrimmage for each team is a vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. It is determined when the ball is marked ready for play and remains until the next ready-for-play signal.

8. The neutral zone is the space between the two free-kick lines during a free-kick down and between the two scrimmage lines during a scrimmage down. For a free-kick down, the neutral zone is 10 yards wide and for a scrimmage down it is as wide as the length of the football. It is established when the ball is marked ready for play. The neutral zone may be expanded following the snap up to a maximum of two yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage, in the field of play, during any scrimmage down.

The neutral zone is expanded up to two yards on scrimmage plays to allow offensive linemen to block and drive defensive linemen off the line of scrimmage without violating rules regarding ineligible receivers downfield.

9. A penalty is a result imposed by rule against a team or team member that has committed a foul. Game situations that produce results somewhat similar to penalties but are not classified as fouls are disqualification of a player, first touching of a kick by K and forfeiture of a game.

10. Scrimmage is the action of the two teams during a down that begins with a snap.

11. A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.



12. A snap is the legal act of passing or handing the ball backward from its position on the ground. The snap begins when the snapper first moves the ball legally other than in adjustment. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the ball during which the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches a back or the ground before it touches a team A lineman. The snap ends when the ball touches the ground or any player.

13. An approved ruling (AR) is an official decision on a given statement of facts. It serves to illustrate the spirit and application of the rules.



Section 2

Areas of the Field

1. The boundary lines are the end lines and sidelines and are out of bounds.
2. The end zones are 10 yards in depth and are located at each end of the field between the goal line and the end line. The goal line is in the end zone. The end line is the outer limit of each end zone.
3. The field is the area within the boundary lines and the end lines.
4. The field of play is the area within the boundary lines and the goal lines.
5. The goal line is the vertical plane that separates the field of play from the end zone. When related to a live ball in a runner's possession (touching inbounds) while the ball is over the out-of-bounds area, the goal line includes the extension beyond the sidelines. A team's own goal line is the one it is defending.
6. The hash marks are a series of marks parallel with the sidelines that divide the field of play longitudinally into thirds. The hash marks shall be marked so that the yard lines bisect the hash marks.
7. Sidelines are the lateral limit of the field of play and the end zones. They extend from one end line to the other. Sidelines are out of bounds.
8. The side zones are the areas bounded by the sidelines, the hash marks and the goal lines.
9. Yard lines are any lines and their vertical planes parallel to the end lines. The yard lines, marked or unmarked, in the field of play are numbered in yards from a team's own goal line to the middle of the field.

Section 3

Team Designations

1. The offense is the team that is in possession of the ball. The opponent is the defense.
2. A is the team that puts the ball in play. A player of A is A1 and teammates are A2 and A3. The opponent is B. A player of B is B1 and teammates are B2 and B3.
3. K is the team that legally kicks the ball during the down. A player of K is K1 and teammates are K2 and K3. The opponent is R. A player of R is R1 and teammates are R2 and R3.

Section 4

Player Designations

1. A player is one of the 22 team members on the field or one who subsequently replaces another player.

- A player continues to be a player until a substitute enters the field and indicates to the player that he is replaced or when the substitute otherwise becomes a player.

2. A back is any A player who has no part of his body breaking the plane of an imaginary line drawn parallel to the line of scrimmage through the waist of the nearest teammate who is legally on the line, except for the player under the snapper, who is also considered a back.

3. A blocker is a player who is blocking or is in position to block.

4. A captain of a team is a player designated to represent his team during the pregame and overtime coin tosses, the selection of second-half options, penalty decisions following fouls and ball placement on tries, kickoffs, after safetys, after fair catches or awarded fair catches, after touchbacks and to start overtimes.

5. A disqualified player is a player barred from further participation in a game.

6. A holder is a player who controls the ball on the ground or on a kicking tee/block.



7. A kicker is any player who legally punts, drop kicks or place kicks. A player becomes a kicker when his knee, lower leg or foot makes contact with the ball. He continues to be the kicker until he has had reasonable opportunity to regain his balance or until after a free kick, he has advanced 5 yards beyond his free-kick line or the kick

has touched the ground or any other player.

8. A lineman is any A player who is facing his opponent's goal line with the line of his shoulders approximately parallel to the line of scrimmage and with his head or foot breaking an imaginary plane drawn parallel to the line of scrimmage through the waist of the snapper when the ball is snapped.

9. A nonplayer is a coach, athletic trainer, other attendant, a substitute or a replaced player who does not participate by touching the ball, hindering an opponent or influencing the play.

10. A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official, that is on or outside the sideline or end line.

11. A passer is a player who throws a legal forward pass. He continues to be a passer until the legal forward pass ends or until he moves to participate in the play.

12. A replaced player is one who has been notified by a substitute that he is to leave the field. A player is also replaced when the entering substitute becomes a player.

13. A runner is a player who is in possession of a live ball or is simulating possession of a live ball.

14. A snapper is the player who is facing his opponent's goal line with his shoulders approximately parallel thereto and who snaps the ball. In a scrimmage-kick formation, the snapper remains a snapper until he has had a reasonable opportunity to regain his balance and protect himself or until he blocks or moves to otherwise participate in the play.

15. A substitute is a team member who may replace a player or fill a player vacancy. A substitute becomes a player when he enters the field and communicates with a teammate or an official, enters the huddle, is positioned in a formation or participates in the play. An entering substitute is not considered

to be a player for encroachment restrictions until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone. A team member entering the field to fill a player vacancy remains a substitute until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone.

In USA Football, it is not a foul for the offense to have more than 11 players in the huddle or to break the huddle with more than 11 players. A foul occurs if a replaced player does not leave the field upon being notified by a teammate he is to leave the field. That may or may not occur as the huddle is breaking.

Section 5

Status of the Ball

1. A live ball is a ball in play. A dead ball is a ball not in play. The ball is dead during the interval between downs. A down is action that starts with a legal snap (beginning a scrimmage down) or when the ball is kicked on a free kick (beginning a free-kick down). A down ends when the ball next becomes dead.

2. A ball becomes live when the ball has been legally snapped or free kicked and a down is in progress. After being put in play, the ball remains live until the down ends.

3. A live ball becomes a dead ball:

a. When a runner goes out of bounds, is held so his forward progress is stopped or allows any part of his person other than hand or foot to touch the ground.



EXCEPTIONS:

1. The ball remains live if, at the snap, a place kick holder with his knee(s) on the ground and with a teammate in kicking position catches or recovers the snap while his knee(s) is on the ground or rises and catches or recovers an errant snap and immediately returns his knee(s) to the ground and places the ball for a kick or if he rises to advance, hand, kick or pass.

NOTE: The ball becomes dead if the place kick holder muffs the snap or fumbles and recovers after his knees have been off the ground and he then touches the ground with other than hand or foot while in possession of the ball.

b. When a live ball goes out of bounds.

c. When any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete or is simultaneously caught by opposing players.

d. When any legal free kick or scrimmage kick that is not a scoring attempt or is a grounded scoring attempt breaks the plane of R's goal line; when a scoring attempt while in flight touches a K player in R's end zone or when a scoring attempt after breaking the plane of R's goal line has apparently failed.

EXCEPTION: If a scoring attempt kick touches an upright, crossbar, an official or R player in the end zone and caroms through the goal, the touching is ignored and the attempt is successful.

e. When any loose ball is simultaneously caught or recovered by opposing players, is on the ground motionless and no player attempts to secure possession or touches or is touched by, anything inbounds other than a player, substitute, replaced player, an official, the ground or authorized equipment. In



that case, the ball will be put in play in accordance with the procedure for an inadvertent whistle.

f. When the kicking team catches or recovers any free kick anywhere and when the kicking team catches or recovers a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone and when the kicking team is first (i.e., before any touching by the receivers) to touch a scrimmage kick after it has come to rest beyond the neutral zone and between the goal lines.

g. Following a valid or invalid fair-catch signal given by any member of the receiving team when a scrimmage kick or free kick is caught or recovered by any member of the receiving team beyond, in or behind the neutral zone.

h. When any score occurs.

i. During a try if B secures possession or as soon as it is apparent that a kick has failed to score.

j. When the helmet comes completely off a player who is in possession of the ball.

k. When a runner simulates taking a knee or simulates "spiking" a forward pass.

l. When an official sounds his whistle inadvertently. Inadvertent whistles are administered as follows:

1. The down shall be replayed if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while a legal forward pass or snap is in flight or during a legal kick.

2. The team last in possession may choose to either put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while the ball is loose following a backward pass, fumble, illegal forward pass or illegal kick.

3. The team in possession may choose to either accept the results of the play at the dead-ball spot or replay the down if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while the ball is in player possession.

4. The penalty shall be administered as determined by the basic spot and takes precedence over inadvertent whistle administration if, during a down, a live-ball foul occurs prior to the inadvertent whistle and the penalty is accepted.

4. A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball that is in flight and first contacting the ground inbounds or being contacted by an opponent in such a way that he is prevented from returning to the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball. A simultaneous catch is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds. An airborne player with control of the ball is required first to have at least one foot or body part down inbounds.

a. The player secures control of a live ball in flight with his hands or arms before the ball touches the ground; touches the ground in bounds with any part of his body; maintains control of the ball long enough to enable him to perform an act common to the game, i.e., long enough to pitch or hand the ball, advance it, avoid or ward off an opponent, etc.; and satisfies paragraphs c, d and e below.

b. If a player goes to the ground in the act of catching a pass (with or without contact by an opponent), he must maintain complete and continuous

control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground, whether in the field of play or in the end zone. This is also required for a player attempting to make a catch at the sideline and going to the ground out of bounds. If he loses control of the ball, which then touches the ground before he regains control, it is not a catch. If he regains control inbounds prior to the ball touching the ground, it is a catch.

c. If the player loses control of the ball while simultaneously touching the ground with any part of his body or if there is doubt that the acts were simultaneous, it is not a catch. If a player has control of the ball, a slight movement of the ball, even if it touches the ground, will not be considered loss of possession. He must lose control of the ball in order for there to be a loss of possession.

d. The game clock will stop at the end of a down in which a player's helmet comes completely off. The clock will start on the ready for play unless a team timeout is taken.

- A player need only have one foot inbounds to make a catch.

- A simultaneous catch can only occur if both players are inbounds.

5. A fumble is any loss of player possession other than by handing, passing or legal kicking. An illegal kick is treated as a fumble.

6. An interception is the catch of an opponent's fumble or pass.

7. A kick is the intentional striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot. A kick ends when a player gains possession or when the ball becomes dead while not in player possession. Accidental striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot is not a kick.

8. A muff is the touching of a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession.

9. A recovery is gaining possession of a live ball after it strikes the ground. An airborne player has completed a recovery when he first contacts the ground inbounds with the ball in his possession. A simultaneous recovery is a recovery in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing inbounds players.

10. A loose ball is a pass, fumble or a kick. A loose ball that has not yet touched the ground is in flight. A grounded loose ball is one that has touched the ground. Any loose ball continues to be a loose ball until a player secures possession of it or until it becomes dead by rule, whatever comes first. A loose-ball play is action during a free kick or scrimmage kick other than post-scrimmage kick fouls, a legal forward pass, a backward pass (including the snap), an illegal kick or fumble made by A from in or behind the neutral zone prior to a change of team possession, the run or runs that precedes such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble. Any other action is a running play.

11. A ball in player possession is a live ball held or controlled by a player after it has been handed or snapped to him or after he has caught or recovered it.

12. A ball in team possession is a live ball that is in player possession or one that is loose following loss of such player



possession. A live ball is always in possession of a team. A change of possession occurs when the opponent gains player possession during the down. Ready for play signifies the referee has signaled the ball may be put in play by a snap or free kick and the 25-second count has begun.

13. A ball in player possession is out of bounds when the runner or the ball touches anything, other than another player or game official, that is on or outside a sideline or end line. A loose ball is out of bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official that is out of bounds.

Section 6

Player Actions

1. Batting is intentionally slapping or striking the ball with the arm or hand.

2. Blocking is obstructing an opponent by contacting him with any part of the blocker's body.

3. Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one player to a teammate in such a way that the ball is still in contact with the first player when it is touched by the teammate. Forward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when the entire ball is beyond the yard line where the runner is positioned. Backward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when any part of the ball is on or behind the yard line where the runner is positioned.

- Handing the ball is not a pass.

- Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of attempted handing is a fumble.

4. Passing the ball is throwing a ball that is in player possession. In a pass, the ball travels in flight. A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. A forward pass has gone beyond the neutral zone if at any time during the pass the entire ball is beyond the neutral zone. A forward pass ends when it is caught, touches the ground or is out of bounds. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the runner's end line. A backward pass ends when it is caught or recovered or is out of



bounds.

- A pass is either forward or backward. There is no such thing as a "lateral" or a "forward lateral."

5. Tackling is the use of hands, arms, legs or body by a defensive player in his attempt to hold a runner or to bring him to the ground. A horse-collar occurs when



any player grabs the inside back or side collar of the shoulder pads or jersey and pulls an opponent down.

6. Touching refers to any contact with the ball, i.e., either by touching or being touched by it. Touching by an official in the field of play or end zone is ignored.

Section 7

Types of Fouls

1. A dead-ball foul is a foul that occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before the ball is next snapped or free kicked.

2. A double foul is one or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) committed by each team at such a time that the penalties offset.

3. A flagrant foul is a foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.

4. A live-ball foul occurs during a down.

5. A multiple foul is two or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) committed during the same down by the same team at such a time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.

6. A nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul is a noncontact foul while the ball is dead or during the down that is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.

7. A player foul is a foul (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) by a player in the game hereafter referred to as a "foul."

8. A post-scrimmage kick foul is a foul by R when the foul occurs during scrimmage kick plays, other than a try or successful field goal, in which the kicked ball crosses the expanded neutral zone. The foul occurs beyond the expanded neutral zone and before the end of a kick and K will not be next to put the ball in play.

9. A foul simultaneous with the snap is an act that becomes a foul when the ball is snapped or free kicked.

Section 8

Penalty Enforcement Spots

1. The basic spot is a point of reference for penalty enforcement. It is the previous spot for a loose-ball play unless the only accepted penalty meets the requirements of a post-scrimmage kick foul and the end of the run for a running play.



- 2. The enforcement spot is the point from which a penalty is enforced.
- 3. The post-scrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. Fouls by R behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.
- 4. The previous spot is where the ball was last snapped or free kicked.
- 5. The spot of a foul is where the foul occurs. If a foul occurs out of bounds, the spot of the foul is at the intersection of the nearer inbounds line and the yard line extended on that the foul occurs.
- 6. The spot where a run ends is where the runner loses player possession or where the ball becomes dead in his possession.
- 7. The succeeding spot is where the ball would next be snapped or free kicked if a foul had not occurred.

Section 9

Other Spots

- 1. The dead-ball spot is the spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule, except that a ball touching the goal line plane when it becomes dead is in the end zone, even though it is moving away from the nearer end line and has its foremost point in the field of play.
- 2. The inbounds spot is the intersection of the inbounds line and the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when the ball becomes dead in a side zone; through the foremost point of the ball on the sideline between the goal lines when a loose ball goes out of bounds; or through the spot under the foremost point of the ball in possession of a runner when he crosses the plane of the sideline and goes out of bounds. If a penalty measurement leaves the ball in a side zone, the new inbounds spot is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the ball after measurement.
- 3. The out-of-bounds spot is where the ball becomes dead because of going out of bounds.

Section 1: Time Factors	39
Severe Weather Policy	39
Section 2: Starting a Half or Period	40
Section 3: Period Ends.....	40
Section 4: Extending a Period	40
Extending a Period: Approved Rulings	40
Section 5: Clock Starts.....	41
Section 6: Clock Stops.....	42

RULE 2 TIMING

IN THIS RULE

- When the clock starts and stops
- Charged team timeouts
- Starting and ending a period
- Overtime

Clock Stops: Approved Ruling	42
Section 7: Clock Restarts on Ready for Play	42
Clock Restarts on Ready for Play: Approved Rulings	42
Section 8: Clock Restarts on Snap	43
Clock Restarts on Snap: Approved Rulings	43
Section 9: Timing Errors	43
Section 10: Delay of Game	43
Delay of Game: Penalty	44
Section 11: Timeouts	44
Timeouts: Approved Rulings	45
Section 12: Official's Timeout	45
Section 13: Overtime	46
Overtime: Approved Rulings	47

Section 1

Time Factors

1. The game is played in four periods of 12 minutes each. Leagues/Associations may adopt the length of quarters to be 8, 10 or 12 minutes. By adoption, timing of these quarters [starting and stopping the clock] may be in accordance with NFHS



- Except for the last two minutes of each half, the clock stops only if either team scores, a team's timeout request is granted or there is an unusual delay.
- The referee has the power to start or stop the clock if he believes a team is illegally consuming or conserving time.
- A period cannot end if the penalty for a live-ball foul that occurred on the last timed down of a period is accepted or there are offsetting fouls.



timing rules [NFHS 3-4, Articles 1-7]. Otherwise, USA Football rules 2.1.5 [Starting the Clock] and 2.1.6 [Stopping the Clock] are in effect.

2. The intermission between the second and third periods is 15 minutes unless altered by the league. After that intermission expires, the game officials are responsible for ensuring that three minutes are posted on the clock for players to warm up. The head coach is responsible for his team being on the field for mandatory warm-up time at the end of the halftime intermission.

3. There shall be a one-minute intermission between both the first and second and the third and fourth periods. The referee may extend that intermission in cases of unusual heat or humidity that may create a health risk to the players.

4. A period or periods may be shortened or the game terminated by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee.

5. Games interrupted because of events beyond the control of the league shall be continued from the point of interruption, unless the teams agree to terminate the game with the existing score or as otherwise provided by league adoption.

6. When weather conditions are construed to be hazardous to life or limb of the participants, the crew of game officials is authorized to delay or suspend the game.

Guidelines on Handling Contests During Thunder and Lightning Disturbances: The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a default policy to those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests based on the presence of thunder and lightning. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your league/association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

Proactive Planning:

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during events.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby shelters.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play.
 - a) When thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
 - b) Thirty-Minute Rule: Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - c) Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
4. Hold periodic reviews with appropriate personnel.

For more detailed information, refer to the "Guidelines for Lightning Safety" contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

7. Approximately four minutes before the end of each half, the referee shall notify the field captains and their coaches of the time remaining. If an electric field clock is the official timepiece, no notification is required.



Section 2

Starting a Half or Period

1. Each half of the game shall be started by a kickoff.
2. The teams shall change goals between the first and second and between the third and fourth periods. Team possession, number of the next down, the relative position of the ball and the line to gain remain unchanged.

Section 3

Period Ends

1. If time for any period expires during a down (clock indicates 0:00), play shall continue until the down ends, even though a mechanical signal is allowed to sound.
2. If a dead-ball foul occurs after time expires for any period, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot to start the next period.
3. At the end of each period, the referee shall hold the ball in one hand overhead to indicate the period has officially ended. The referee should delay momentarily to ensure that no foul, obvious timing error or other irregularity has occurred or there is no request for a coach-referee conference to determine if a rule has been misapplied.

Section 4

Extending a Period

1. A period is extended for an untimed down when:
 - a. The penalty for a foul other than unsportsmanlike or non-player that occurs during the last timed down of the period is accepted;
 - b. The scoring team accepts enforcement on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot for a foul other than unsportsmanlike or non-player by its opponent during a touchdown-scoring play in which there is no change of possession;
 - c. There was a double foul;
 - d. There was an inadvertent whistle; or
 - e. If a touchdown was scored, unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.
2. If any instance in Rule 2-4-1a through e occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated.

Extending a period prevents situations in which it is advantageous for a team to trade a penalty in exchange for defending the opposite goal. For instance, a team going into the wind could intentionally foul in order to get the wind at its back.

EXTENDING A PERIOD: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 2.4.A: A1's run ends inbounds and there is a live-ball foul by either team. The penalty is accepted. After enforcement, the clock expires before A can snap the ball. **RULING:** The period will be extended for an untimed down because the penalty for a foul that occurred during the last timed down of the period was accepted. That would be the case whether or not A had enough time to snap the ball before the clock expired.



AR 2.4.B: A1's run ends inbounds. After the play, there is a dead-ball foul by either team. The penalty is accepted. After enforcement, the clock expires before A can snap the ball. **RULING:** The period will not be extended because the penalty was for a dead-ball foul.

AR 2.4.C: A scores a touchdown to take a 12-7 lead. The touchdown occurs as time expires in the (a) fourth or (b) third period. **RULING:** In (a), the try will not be permitted unless the potential point(s) is needed in a tie-breaker system for playoff qualification. In (b), the try is attempted as part of the third period.

Section 5 Clock Starts

1. If a period begins with a free kick, the game clock starts when the kick is touched, other than first touching by K.
2. If a period begins with a snap, the game clock starts when the ball is legally snapped.

Section 6 Clock Stops

1. At any point in the game, the game clock stops if either team scores, if either team takes a charged timeout or if there is any unusual delay.
2. In the last two minutes of either half, the game clock stops when the down ends following a foul, an official's or charged timeout occurs, the period ends, the ball is out of bounds, a legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete, a touchback occurs, a fair catch is made or an inadvertent whistle is sounded.
3. The game clock will stop at the end of a down when a player's helmet comes completely off. The clock will start on the ready for play unless a team timeout is



taken.

CLOCK STOPS: APPROVED RULING

AR 2.6.A: A1's pass is incomplete. When the ball is ruled dead, the clock shows (a) 2:02, (b) 2:00 or (c) 1:59 to play in the second or fourth period. RULING: In (a) and (b), the clock does not stop unless the referee determines either team is intentionally consuming time. In (c), the clock stops and does not restart until the ball is legally snapped.

Section 7

Clock Restarts on Ready for Play

In the last two minutes of either half, the clock shall start with the ready for play signal on a down beginning with a snap if the clock was stopped for any reason other than because the ball went out of bounds; B was awarded a new series; either team was awarded a new series following a legal kick; the ball became dead behind the goal line; a legal or illegal forward pass was incomplete; a request for a charged timeout was granted; a period ends; a team attempted to consume time illegally; the penalty for a delay of game foul was accepted; if a period begins with a snap; when the ball was legally snapped; or for an untimed down.

CLOCK RESTARTS ON READY FOR PLAY: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 2.7.A: A1's pass in the last two minutes of the second or fourth period is intercepted by B2, but A accepts the penalty for B3's pass interference. RULING: After enforcement of the penalty, the clock starts on the referee's ready signal.

AR 2.7.B: A1's run in the last two minutes of the second or fourth period ends inbounds in advance of the line to gain. RULING: The clock stops when the ball is ruled dead. Because the play ended inbounds, the clock starts on the referee's ready signal.

Section 8

Clock Restarts on Snap

In the last two minutes of either half, the clock shall start with the snap if the clock was stopped because the ball went out of bounds; B was awarded a new series; either team was awarded a new series following a legal kick; the ball became dead behind the goal line; a legal or illegal forward pass was incomplete; a request for a charged timeout was granted; a period ends; a team attempted to consume time illegally; or the penalty for a delay of game foul was accepted.

CLOCK RESTARTS ON SNAP: APPROVED RULINGS



AR 2.8.A: A1's pass is incomplete. When the ball is ruled dead, the clock shows (a) 2:02, (b) 2:00 or (c) 1:59 to play in the second or fourth period. RULING: In (a) and (b), the clock does not stop unless the referee determines either team is intentionally consuming time. In (c), the clock stops and does not restart until the ball is legally snapped.

AR 2.8.B: A1's pass in the last two minutes of the second or fourth period is incomplete, but A accepts the penalty for B3's pass interference. RULING: The clock starts on the snap because the clock was stopped because of the incomplete pass.

Section 9

Timing Errors

The referee shall have authority to correct obvious errors in timing if discovery is made prior to the second live ball following the error, unless the period has officially ended.

Section 10

Delay of Game

1. Action or inaction that prevents promptness in putting the ball in play is delay of game. Examples include failure to snap or free kick within 25 seconds after the ball is ready for play; unnecessarily carrying the ball after it has become dead or consuming time in failing to unpile at the end of a down; a coach-referee conference after all the permissible charged timeouts for the coach's team have been used and during that the referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule and no change in the ruling results; failure to properly wear legal or required player equipment when the ball is about to become live; snapping or free kicking the ball before it is marked ready for play; or any other conduct that unduly prolongs the game.

2. Game management is responsible for clearing the field of play and the end zones at the beginning of each half so play can begin at the scheduled time.

3. Failure of a team to play within two minutes after being ordered to do so by the referee results in forfeiture.

DELAY OF GAME: PENALTY

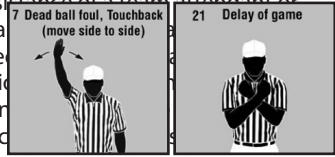
5 yards. Signals 7 and 21.

Section 11

Timeouts

1. Each team is entitled to three charged timeouts each half. Unused first-half timeouts cannot be used in the second half. Unused second-half timeouts cannot be used in overtime.

2. A charged team timeout occurs when the ball is dead and the request of either a player, the head coach or the head coach's designee is legally granted; the repair of faulty player equipment requires the assistance of a team attendant or attendants or that, without the assistance of a team attendant or attendants, the repair of faulty player equipment requires the assistance of a team attendant or attendants for play signal for more than 25 seconds or a timeout for the purpose of reviewing an official's application of the rule is misapplied or misinterpreted. The timeout remains charged if no change in the ruling results. The head coach may request a timeout at any time during the game except in case of emergency.



3. A single charged timeout shall not exceed one minute. The referee shall notify the teams within five seconds after the timeout expires and shall declare the ball ready for play. Charged timeouts shall be reduced in length only if both teams are ready to play prior to the 25-second ready for play signal by the referee. Successive charged timeouts may be granted during the same dead-ball period.

4. After a team has used its permissible charged timeouts for the half, any subsequent request shall be denied unless it is for an apparently injured player who is so designated when the request is made, necessary repair to player equipment, or the review of a possible misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule. If repair of equipment without the assistance of a team attendant delays the ready for play signal for more than 25 seconds or requires the assistance of a team attendant(s) and the player's team has used all permissible timeouts, the player shall be replaced for at least one down.

5. During a timeout, teams may choose between one or more team members and one or more coaches directly in front of the team box within nine yards of the sideline or one coach on the field to confer with no more than 11 players at his team's huddle between the inbounds marks. A team may only use one or the other type during any one timeout.

6. If during a timeout one or more team members and one or more coaches meet directly in front of the team box within nine yards of the sideline, three attendants, none of whom is a coach, may enter the field to attend their team. Three attendants, none of whom is a coach, may enter the field to attend their team during the one-minute intermission following a try, a successful field goal or safety, prior to the succeeding free kick, between periods and during an official's timeout for unusual heat and humidity.

7. Neither team is charged for a timeout when there is a break for unusual heat or humidity that may create a health risk to players; the one-minute intermission between the first and second and the third and fourth periods; and during the one-minute intermission following a try, successful field goal or safety and prior to the succeeding free kick.

TIMEOUTS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 2.11.A: Team A's captain requests a timeout prior to (a) making a penalty decision, (b) deciding whether A will snap or free kick following a fair catch or (c) designating where the ball is to be spotted on the 3-yard line for a try. RULING: Not allowed in (a), but permissible in (b) and (c).



AR 2.11.B: During a charged timeout, the intermission between the first and second or the third and fourth periods or following a try, team members of A confer with their head coach in front of the team box near the sideline. RULING: Legal.

AR 2.11.C: During the course of the game, quarterback A1 runs to the vicinity of his team box area for the purpose of receiving instructions from his coach. No timeout is requested, there is no delay in declaring the ball ready for play and the coach does not leave the team-box or coaches area. RULING: Legal.

AR 2.11.D: A's head coach has designated an assistant coach to request timeouts. In the second quarter, (a) the head coach requests a timeout, (b) the designee is ejected or (c) the head coach changes his mind and wants to request timeouts himself. RULING: In (a), the request is not granted. Only the designee is allowed to request timeouts. In (b), the head coach may now designate someone else to request timeouts. In (c), the request is denied. A designee remains in place except in case of emergency or ejection of the designee.

AR 2.11.E: During a charged timeout the coach of A confers with A1 near the sideline and in front of his team box. The discussion continues for 30 seconds. A1 then returns to the huddle and A2 comes to the sideline to confer with the coach for the remainder of the charged timeout. RULING: Legal.

Section 12

Official's Timeout

1. An official's timeout occurs during a dead ball without a timeout being charged to either team for measurement of a possible first down; when a first down is declared; following a change of team possession; when captains and coaches are notified of the time remaining; for a player who appears to be injured; for a player in need of equipment repair; to dry or change the game ball; for unusual heat or humidity that may create a health risk to the players; when a coach-referee conference concerning the misapplication of a rule results in the referee altering his ruling; after a foul to administer the penalty; for any unusual delay in getting the ball ready for play; and for a one-minute intermission between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety and prior to the succeeding free kick.

2. An official's timeout may follow a charged timeout if safety is involved.

OFFICIAL'S TIMEOUT: APPROVED RULING

AR 2.12.A: During an official's timeout for injury or heat/humidity, may a player(s) of either team go near the sideline to communicate with the coach? RULING: Yes. However, if a coach enters the field to attend the injured player, he may not confer with players.

Section 13



Overtime

The following rules apply in leagues that use a tiebreaking procedure.

1. An overtime period is untimed play after a regulation game has ended with the score tied. During an overtime period, each team has an opportunity for an offensive series of downs.

2. When the score is tied at the end of the fourth period, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a three-minute intermission during that both teams may confer with their coaches. All officials will assemble at the 50-yard line, review the overtime procedure and discuss how penalties, if any, including any carry-over penalties from the regulation contest will be assessed to start the overtime procedure.

3. At the coin toss in the center of the field, the visiting team's captain shall choose "heads" or "tails" before the coin is tossed. The winner of the toss shall be given his choice of defense or offense first or of designating the end of the field where the ball will be put in play for this set of downs. The loser will have his choice of the other option. The referee will indicate the winner of the toss by placing a hand on his shoulder. To indicate that team will go on offense, the referee will have that captain face the goal toward that his team will advance and indicate it with the first-down signal. The other team captain will face the offensive captain with his back toward the goal he will defend.

4. Each team shall be permitted one timeout during each overtime period (a series for A and a series for B). The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime shall be declared the winner. The final score shall be determined by totaling all points scored by each team during both regulation time and overtime periods.

5. To start the overtime, the offensive team shall put the ball in play anywhere between the hash marks, first-and-goal, on the defensive team's 10-yard line or succeeding spot if a carry-over penalty has been administered.

6. The first offensive team shall have a series of four downs. That series shall be terminated by any score by the offensive team or if the defensive team has possession of the ball.

7. If the team on offense scores a touchdown, it is entitled to the opportunity for a try unless the points would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying. A field-goal attempt is permitted during any down.

8. If the defensive team gains possession, the ball becomes dead immediately and the offensive team's series of downs is ended.

9. After the first team on offense has completed its series of downs, the first team on defense will become the offensive team with the ball in its possession at the same 10-yard line anywhere between the hash marks. The same end of the field will be used for possessions by both teams during the two sets of downs to ensure equal game conditions and conserve time.

10. If the score remains tied after each team has been given one series of downs in an overtime period, then the procedure shall be repeated with other overtime periods until a game winner is determined. In that case, there shall be an intermission of two minutes. At the subsequent meeting of team captains, the loser of the overtime coin toss will be given first choice of the options. If additional overtime periods are required, then first options will be alternated with no coin toss.

11. If a safety is scored by the offensive team, the succeeding spot will be the 10-

yard line in possession of the team that was on defense. If the defensive team has had its series of downs, the game is over.

12. The offensive team shall be awarded a new series of downs when a penalty by B that includes an automatic first down is accepted or the offensive team recovers a scrimmage kick (field-goal attempt) between the goal lines after it has been touched first by the defensive team beyond the neutral zone.

13. The line to gain is always the goal line.

Unlike what you see on TV, in USA Football play, the defense cannot score in overtime (with exception of an A team safety, though highly unlikely). The ball is dead as soon as B gains possession. Also, unlike the NFL, overtime is not sudden death.

OVERTIME: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 2.13.A: On fourth down in overtime play, A scores a touchdown. After the score but before the try, B1 commits an unsportsmanlike foul. RULING: The penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot on the try. Nonplayer fouls, nonplayer unsportsmanlike fouls and dead-ball fouls are penalized from the succeeding spot in overtime.

AR 2.13.B: During the last timed down of the fourth period A1 advances for a touchdown making the score B-22 and A-20. The kick try is successful. Following the try B1 commits an unsportsmanlike foul. RULING: The penalty for the foul by B1 after the successful try will be administered from the succeeding spot to begin overtime play. In that situation, the referee should explain to the captains at the time of the coin toss the fact the penalty will be administered on the first series of downs in the overtime. The place from which the ball will be put in play for each team could have an effect on the choice made by the winner of the toss.

AR 2.13.C: A wins the toss and elects to take the ball. A1 scores on the third down. After A1 crosses the goal line (a) A2 clips B1 or (b) B1 strikes A2. RULING: The score counts and the penalties for the deadball fouls in both (a) and (b) are enforced on the try, because that is the succeeding spot.



AR 2.13.D: On third-and-4 in overtime play, B recovers a fumble or intercepts a pass. RULING: The down ends as soon as B1 recovers or intercepts. In both cases the series of downs is ended for A.

AR 2.13.E: On third-and-6 in overtime play Team A attempts a field goal. The attempt is not successful and B recovers on the 1-yard line. RULING: The down ends when B1 recovers. The series is ended for A.

AR 2.13.F: The fourth quarter ends with a touchdown by A. During the successful kick try, the kicker is roughed. A accepts the result of the play, that ties the score and chooses to have the penalty assessed at the succeeding spot. RULING: Since A can choose succeeding spot enforcement and the try was successful, A will likely take enforcement at the succeeding spot to begin the overtime. Game officials must be certain to explain the options clearly, not only during penalty administration but also during the overtime coin toss.



AR 2.13.G: In overtime play with third-and-goal from B's 4-yard line, B1 interferes during a forward pass. RULING: If the penalty is accepted, it will be first-and-goal for A on B's 2-yard line.

AR 2.13.H: At the end of the regulation game the score is tied, 7-7. Immediately after the last down of the fourth period A1 strikes B1. RULING: A1 will be disqualified and may not participate during the overtime period. The penalty for A1's foul will be administered from the succeeding spot. If B is the first to put the ball in play, it will be from the 5-yard line. If A is the first to put the ball in play, it will be from the 25-yard line.

AR 2.13.I: On first down in overtime, B1 intercepts a pass but then fumbles and A1 recovers. RULING: The ball became dead and A's series ended immediately when B1 intercepted. A1 recovered a dead ball. B will put the ball in play to start its series of four downs, first-and-goal from anywhere between the inbound lines on the 10-yard line.

AR 2.13.J: During the last timed down of the fourth period, A scores a touchdown to make the score 14-13. During the successful pass for a try, B1 roughs the passer. RULING: If A accepts the score, the penalty is enforced to start the overtime. If A accepts the penalty, the try will be replayed from the 1 1/2-yard line.

AR 2.13.K: During an overtime period, it is fourth-and-goal from the 6-yard line. B1 charges into the place kick holder. The kick is (a) unsuccessful or (b) successful. RULING: In (a), it will be first-and-goal for A at the 3-yard line following enforcement of the roughing penalty, that also includes an automatic first down. In (b), A could choose a replay of the down after enforcement, yielding first-and-goal from the 3-yard line or choose to have B penalized from the succeeding spot. In that case, B will start its overtime series from the 25-yard line after the penalty for roughing the holder is enforced.

AR 2.13.L: Following a scoreless first overtime period, the captain of B chooses to play the second overtime period at the opposite end of the field. RULING: Permissible, as it is one of the options to begin each overtime period.

AR 2.13.M: In overtime play with fourth-and-goal from B's 24-yard line, B1 interferes during a legal forward pass. RULING: First down and goal for A on the 12-yard line if the penalty is accepted.

AR 2.13.N: A has utilized one timeout in the second half and B has used three. How many timeouts are available to the teams in overtime? RULING: Each team has only one timeout per period; unused second half timeouts do not carry over to overtime.



Section 1

Drop Kick

1. A drop kick is a legal kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it when it touches the ground or as it is rising from the ground. A drop kick may be used for a scrimmage kick, including a field goal or try; a kickoff; a free kick following a safety; or for a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

2. A may drop kick from in or behind the neutral zone before team possession has changed.

Section 2

Place kick

1. A place kick is a legal kick made while the ball is in a fixed position on the ground or on a kicking tee. No material or device may be placed on the ground to improve the kicker's footing. Reference Rule 3.12: In "no rush" situations, Team A may only use a standard kicking block or the ground. Use of a standard kicking tee, one that self-supports the football, is prohibited. In "no rush" situations, this will require the use of a Team A player being designated as the holder.

2. The ball may be held in position on the ground or on a kicking tee/block by a place kick holder who shall be a teammate of the kicker. A place kick may be used for a scrimmage kick, a kickoff a free kick following a safety or for a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

3. During a scrimmage down, K may place kick from in or behind the neutral zone before team possession has changed.

RULE 3 KICKS

IN THIS RULE

- How a free kick differs from a scrum kick
- How a field goal or try is scored

Section 1: Drop Kick.....	53	Formation	63
Section 2: Placekick.....	53	Neutral Zone	63
Section 3: Punt	53	Resuming Play After a Scrimmage Kick.....	63
Section 4: Clock Starts and Stops.....	54	Lining Up Over Snapper.....	64
Section 5: Ball Becomes Dead	54	Lining Up Over Snapper: Penalty.....	64
Ball Becomes Dead:		Section 9: Fair Catch	64
Approved Ruling	55	Fair Catch: Approved Rulings	65
Section 6: Ball Becomes Live or Stays Live.....	55	Advancing a Dead Ball.....	65
Section 7: Free Kicks.....	55	Advancing a Dead Ball: Penalty.....	65
Ball Placement: Penalty	56	Blocking After Fair-Catch Signal.....	65
Ball Placement: Approved Ruling	56	Blocking After Fair-Catch	
Before the Ready	56	Signal: Penalty.....	65
Attempting a Kick Before the		Blocking After Fair-Catch Signal:	
Ready: Penalty.....	56	Approved Ruling	66
Catch or Recovery by K.....	56	Fair-Catch Signals.....	66
Catch or Recovery by K:		Fair-Catch Signal: Approved Rulings	66
Approved Rulings	56	Invalid, Illegal or Valid	
Catch or Recovery by R.....	57	Fair-Catch Signals.....	67
Encroachment.....	57	Invalid or Illegal Fair-Catch	
Encroachment: Penalty.....	57	Signals: Penalty	67
Encroachment: Approved Rulings	57	Invalid, Illegal or Valid Fair-Catch	
Forced Touching.....	57	Signals: Approved Rulings.....	67
Forced Touching: Approved Ruling	58	Resuming Play After a Fair Catch	67
Formation	58	Resuming Play After a Fair Catch:	
Fouls During Free Kick Plays	58	Approved Ruling	68
Free-Kick Line	58	Section 10: First Touching.....	68
Kick Out of Bounds.....	58	First Touching: Approved Rulings.....	68
Kick Out of Bounds: Penalty.....	59	Section 11: Illegal Kicks.....	69
Kick Out of Bounds:		Illegal Kick: Penalty.....	69
Approved Rulings	59	Illegal Kick: Approved Rulings.....	69
Kick Not Repeated.....	60	Section 12: Kicking Tee	70
Resuming Play After a Free Kick.....	60	Illegal Tee: Penalty	70
Section 8: Scrimmage Kicks	60	Illegal Tee: Approved Ruling	70
Ball Becomes Live	60	Section 13: Kick-Catching Interference.....	71
Ball Becomes Dead.....	60	Kick-Catching Interference: Penalty	71
Batting a Scrimmage Kick.....	61	Kick-Catching Interference:	
Batting a Scrimmage Kick:		Approved Rulings.....	71
Approved Ruling	61		
Catch or Recovery by K.....	61		
Catch or Recovery by K:			
Approved Rulings	61		
Catch or Recovery by R.....	62		
Catch or Recovery by R:			
Approved Ruling	62		
Fouls During Scrimmage Kick Plays.....	62		
Forced Touching.....	62		
Forced Touching: Approved Ruling	62		

A kick always ends as soon as any player secures possession.



- A fair catch may be made of any free kick that is in or beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line or a scrimmage kick that is beyond the neutral zone to R's goal.
- Any kick that is not a scoring attempt becomes dead when it breaks the plane of R's goal line.
- A scrimmage kick recovered in or behind the neutral zone may be advanced by K or R.



Section 3

Punt

1. A punt is a legal scrimmage kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it before it has touched the ground. A punt may be used for a free kick following a safety or for a scrimmage kick.

2. K may punt from in or behind the neutral zone before team possession has changed.

3. A punt may not be used for a free kick other than after a safety. When a punt is used following a safety, the ball must be kicked within one step behind K's free-kick line. In an emergency, such as a pool of water on K's free-kick line, the referee has authority to move the ball to a playable line. In that case both free-kick lines are moved to compensate.

Section 4

Clock Starts and Stops

1. The clock shall start when a free kick is touched, other than first touching by K. It is first touching if the ball is touched in the field of play by any K player before it crosses R's free-kick line and before it is touched there by any R player.

2. At any point in the game, the game clock stops when either team scores, when either team takes a charged timeout or when there is any unusual delay.

3. In the last two minutes of either half, the game clock stops when the down ends following a foul, an official's or charged timeout occurs, the period ends, the ball is out of bounds, a touchback occurs, a is made or an inadvertent whistle is sounded.

Section 5

Ball Becomes Dead

1. The ball becomes dead and the down is ended:

- a. When a kicked ball goes out of bounds.
- b. When any legal free kick that is not a scoring attempt or that is a grounded scoring attempt, breaks the plane of R's goal line.
- c. When any legal free kick that is a scoring attempt, while in flight touches a K player in R's end zone or after breaking the plane of R's goal line has apparently failed.
- d. When the ball is loose following a free kick and it is simultaneously caught or recovered by opposing players, is on the ground motionless and no player attempts to secure possession or touches or is touched by, anything inbounds other than a player, substitute, replaced player, an official, the ground or authorized equipment.



e. When K catches or recovers any free kick anywhere and when K catches or recovers a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone and when K is first (i.e., before any touching by R) to touch a scrimmage kick after it has come to rest beyond the neutral zone and between the goal lines.

f. Following a valid or invalid fair-catch signal given by any member of the receiving team when a scrimmage kick or free kick is caught or recovered by any member of the receiving team beyond, in or behind the neutral zone.

g. When a touchdown or field goal occurs.

h. During a try if B secures possession or as soon as it is apparent that a kick has failed to score.

i. If the place kick holder muffs the snap or fumbles and recovers after his knees have been off the ground and he then touches the ground with a part of his body other than hand or foot while in possession of the ball.

BALL BECOMES DEAD: APPROVED RULING

AR 3.5.A: K1's field-goal attempt is partially blocked behind the neutral zone but deflects beyond the neutral zone and is then muffed by R1. The muffed ball is recovered (a) behind or (b) beyond the neutral zone by K2. RULING: In both (a) and (b), it is a first down for K. In (a), K2 could have advanced after recovering.

Section 6

Ball Becomes Live or Stays Live

1. A ball becomes live when the ball has been legally free kicked and when a free-kick down is in progress. After being put in play, the ball remains live until the down ends. No foul causes a live ball to become dead.

2. The ball remains live if, at the snap, a place kick holder with his knee(s) on the ground and with a teammate in kicking position catches or recovers the snap while his knee(s) is on the ground and places the ball for a kick or if he rises to advance, hand, kick or pass; or rises and catches or recovers an errant snap and immediately returns his knee(s) to the ground and places the ball for a kick or again rises to advance, hand, kick or pass.

Section 7

Free Kicks

1. A free kick is any legal kick that puts the ball in play to start a free-kick down. A free kick is used for a kickoff at the beginning of each half of the game; after a successful field goal and after any try; following a safety; and is used if a free kick is chosen following a fair catch or awarded fair catch. A punt may not be used for a free kick other than after a safety.

2. Each team may use any referee-approved ball of its choice to free kick.



3. A free kick shall be made from any point between the hash marks and on K's free-kick line. A captain may designate ball placement. Once designated, K must kick from that spot. Before the ready-for-play signal, A may designate the spot from that the ball is put in play anywhere between the hash marks for a kickoff, following a safety, following a fair catch, following an awarded fair catch, on a try, a kickoff, after a safety and after a fair catch or awarded fair catch. When a team may designate the spot along the proper yard line from that the ball is to be put in play, it shall have the same privilege if the down is to be replayed or a dead-ball foul occurs.

4. When the ball becomes dead in a side zone or is awarded to a team there or is left there by a penalty, play is resumed at the inbounds spot. That does not apply to the free kick or snap that follows a fair catch or awarded fair catch in a side zone.

BALL PLACEMENT: PENALTY

5 yards. Signals 7 and 19.

BALL PLACEMENT: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.7.A: No Team K player may block or initiate engagement with any member of the receiving team until Team K is eligible to touch a free-kicked ball. Penalty: 10 yards (signal 43)

AR 3.7.B: With the score tied near the end of the fourth period, R1 signals for a fair catch and catches the kick at K's 40. After a timeout, R's captain advises the referee he wishes to put the ball in play by snap. A1 throws a pass intended for A2. B1 interferes with A2 and the pass is incomplete. Following administration of the penalty, the captain of R decides to put the ball in play by free kick from K's 25 as a field-goal attempt.

RULING: Permissible. In putting the ball in play in that situation, R's captain is privileged to designate the point on K's 25, anywhere between the hash marks he wishes the ball to be placed.

BEFORE THE READY

5. The ball remains dead and a down is not begun if a free kick is attempted before the ball is ready for play or a dead-ball foul occurs.

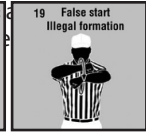
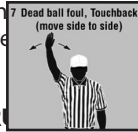
ATTEMPTING A KICK BEFORE THE READY: PENALTY

5 yards. Signals 7 and 21.

CATCH OR RECOVERY BY K

6. If any K player recovers or catches a free kick, the ball becomes dead. It belongs to K unless it is kick-catching interference and R chooses an awarded fair catch or unless it is first touching. Any K player may catch or recover the ball before it goes beyond R's free-kick line if it is touched first by R. Such touching in the neutral zone by R is ignored if it is caused by K pushing or blocking R into contact with the ball or if any K player muffs or bats the ball into contact with R. Any K player may recover a free kick if it has both touched the ground and goes beyond the plane of R's free-kick line. The two requirements may occur in any order. If a

free kick becomes dead inbounds between the goal line and the 50-yard line. Possession or inbounds anywhere while opponents are in the field of play is awarded to R.



CATCH OR RECOVERY BY K: APPROVED RULINGS



AR 3.7.C: A kickoff by K1 from K's 40 is muffed by R1 near his 20-yard line. The muff is caught by K2 at the 18 and he advances into R's end zone. RULING: It will be K's ball first-and-10 from R's 18. K2 may catch or recover the muffed kick but may not



advance. The ball is dead when K gains possession. The covering official should sound his whistle to stop play immediately when the ball becomes dead.

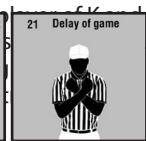
AR 3.7.D: The ball is free kicked from K's 40-yard line and in flight it crosses the 50-yard line before a strong wind blows it back to K's 45 where it touches the ground and is recovered by K2. RULING: First-and-10 for K.

CATCH OR RECOVERY BY R

8. Any R player may catch or recover a free kick in the field of play and advance, unless any member of R has given a valid or invalid fair-catch signal. R may catch or recover a free kick in K's end zone.

ENCROACHMENT

9. After the ready-for-play signal and until the ball is kicked, no R other than the kicker and holder for a place kick must be in the field of play. For the purposes of enforcing encroachment restrictions, a player not considered to be a player until he is on his team's side of the line.



ENCROACHMENT: PENALTY

5 yards. Signals 7 and 18.

ENCROACHMENT: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.7.E: After the ball is marked ready for play for a free kick but before it is kicked (a) place kick holder K1 kneels so one leg and part of his body are beyond K's free-kick line or (b) K2 who is near the kicker or the place kick holder is beyond K's free-kick line before the ball is kicked. RULING: In (a), it is permissible for the place kick holder or the kicker to be beyond the free-kick line prior to the time the ball is kicked. In (b), it is encroachment for any other player to be beyond his free-kick line prior to the time the ball is kicked.

AR 3.7.F: Following the ready-for-play signal but before the free kick (a) R1 advances to block the kicker/holder and is beyond the plane of R's free-kick line before the ball is kicked, (b) R has only four players within five yards of its free-kick line or (c) R2, who is one of several R players within five yards of his free-kick line, retreats from that area prior to the time the ball is kicked. RULING: In (a), it is encroachment. The responsible official will sound his whistle to prevent the ball

from being kicked when encroachment occurs. In (b) and (c), the action is legal, as there is no requirement for positioning of R players on their side of the neutral zone.

FORCED TOUCHING

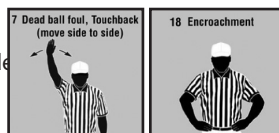
10. Touching of a free kick by R in the neutral zone is ignored if it is caused by K pushing or blocking R into contact with the ball or it is caused by K legally batting or muffing the ball into R. Such catch or recovery by K beyond the neutral zone causes the ball to become dead. Touching of a free kick by K is ignored if it is caused by R pushing or blocking K into contact with the ball.

FORCED TOUCHING: APPROVED RULING

AR 3.7.G: K's free kick is bouncing on the ground in the neutral zone where R1 and K1 are engaged in blocking one another. K2 muffs the ball and the ball touches R1 on the leg and K3 recovers the ball. RULING: The touching by R is ignored and R will be awarded possession of the ball at the spot of first touching or at the dead-ball spot.

FORMATION

11. At least four Team K players must be on each side of the ball, 10 yards (signal 19)



FOULS DURING FREE KICK PLAYS

12. Fouls that occur during free kicks are loose-ball fouls. A loose-ball play includes action during a free kick.

13. The basic spot is the previous spot for a loose-ball play. The previous spot is where the ball was last free kicked.

FREE-KICK LINE

14. For any free kick, a free-kick line, corresponding to a scrimmage line, is established for each team. These lines are always 10 yards apart. Unless moved by a penalty, K's free-kick line is its 40-yard line for a kickoff, its 20-yard line after a safety or the yard line through the spot of the catch after a fair catch or an awarded fair catch.

KICK OUT OF BOUNDS

15. If a free kick goes out of bounds between the goal lines after it has been touched inbounds by R, the ball is put in play by R at the inbounds spot.

16. A free kick shall not be kicked out of bounds between the goal lines untouched inbounds by R.

17. A player or other person is out of bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official, who is on or outside the sideline or end line.

18. A ball in player possession is out of bounds when the runner or the ball touches anything, other than another player or game official who is on or outside a sideline or end line.

19. A loose ball is out of bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official, that is out of bounds.

20. When a loose ball goes out of bounds, the out-of-bounds spot is fixed by the yard line where the foremost point of the ball crossed the sideline. When the ball becomes dead in the field of play because of touching a person who is out



of bounds, the out-of-bounds spot is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the ball.

21. When the out-of-bounds spot is between the goal lines, the ball shall be put in play at the inbounds spot. If the out-of-bounds spot is behind a goal line, it is a safety, field goal or touchback. If the ball touches a pylon, it is out of bounds behind the goal line.

22. When the ball becomes dead between the hash marks, play is resumed at the dead-ball spot.

KICK OUT OF BOUNDS: PENALTY

5 yards and re-kick or put the ball in play 25 yards beyond the previous spot at the inbounds spot. Signal 19. Declining the penalty results in R taking the ball at the inbounds spot.

KICK OUT OF BOUNDS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.7.H: A free kick by K1 is touched by R1 on his 15-yard line and then it (a) rolls out of bounds at R's 5-yard line, (b) contacts an official in the field of play and thereafter rolls out of bounds at the 5-yard line, (c) contacts an official who is straddling the sideline at the 5-yard line or (d) contacts an official in the end zone. RULING: The ball will be put in play by R from its 5-yard line in (a), (b) and (c). In (a), R1 touched the kick before it went out of bounds. In (c), when the loose ball touches a game official who is straddling the sideline, it causes the ball to be out of bounds and R1 was the last to touch it. In (d), the ball is dead when it breaks the goal line plane and a touchback results.

AR 3.7.I: The free kick by K1 from K's 40-yard line (a) is touched by R1 at R's five and goes out of bounds at the 8-yard line, (b) is muffed by R1 at his 15 and then touched by K2 before it rolls out of bounds at R's 10-yard line or (c) bounces out of bounds on R's 30-yard line untouched by R or K. RULING: In (a) and (b) the ball belongs to R at the inbounds spot. In (c), it is a foul by K. R may take the ball at the inbounds spot, take the ball at R's 35 that is 25 yards beyond the previous spot at the inbounds spot or accept the 5-yard penalty and have K free kick from K's 35-yard line.

AR 3.7.J: R1 is running near a sideline as he attempts to catch a free kick in flight. R1 has (a) both feet inbounds or (b) one foot on the sideline, when he reaches through the plane of the sideline. The ball bounces off his hands and lands out of bounds. RULING: In (a), the ball is not yet out of bounds until it hits the ground there. Since R1 touched it, he caused it to go out of bounds and the ball will be put in play at the inbounds spot. In (b), since R1 is out of bounds when the ball is touched, the kicker has caused the ball to be out of bounds.

AR 3.7.K: K1 tries an onside kick from K's 40. K2 muffs the ball at K's 48 and the ball bounces off R and is muffed out of bounds by K3 at R's 45.

RULING: R can either choose to take the ball at K's 48 at the spot of first touching or at R's 45 where the ball went out of bounds. The free kick was touched by R, so R has no re-kick option.

AR 3.7.L: K free kicks from its own 40-yard line. K1's onside kick is rolling at K's 46-

yard line, when K2 muffs the ball, that then touches R3's leg and goes out of bounds at K's 48-yard line. **RULING:** Since R's touching is ignored, that is a free kick that went out of bounds. R has the option of accepting the ball at the spot of first touching by K or having the penalty enforced for the free kick out of bounds with all these options (a) re-kick following a 5-yard penalty; (b) awarded the ball at the out-of-bounds spot or (c) accept the ball 25 yards from the spot of the free kick.

AR 3.7.M: K, after accepting multiple R fouls, is now free kicking from R's 20-yard line. In attempting to onside kick, the ball goes out bounds untouched in the field of play. **RULING:** R may take the ball at the inbounds spot or accept the 5-yard foul and have K re-kick from R's 25-yard line.



KICK NOT REPEATED

23. A free kick is not repeated unless a foul occurs prior to a change of possession and the penalty acceptance requires a replay of the down; there is a double foul; or there is an inadvertent whistle during the kick.

RESUMING PLAY AFTER A FREE KICK

24. When a free-kick down ends with the ball in the field of play between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to R at the spot of recovery if any K player recovers the kicked ball before it travels the 10 yards to R's free-kick line and before R has touched the ball or if there is joint possession by R and K of a recovered kick. If any K player is the first to touch the kicked ball before it has gone 10 yards, a new series is awarded to R at the spot of first touching by K.

25. A new series is awarded to the team in possession of the ball when the down ends if the ball is recovered beyond R's free-kick line with no first touching by K.

26. When a foul occurs prior to or during a free-kick down and before any change of team possession, the down that follows enforcement is a free-kick down, unless following a fair catch or an awarded fair catch, a scrimmage down is chosen for the replay.

Section 8

Scrimmage Kicks

1. A scrimmage kick is any legal kick from in or behind the neutral zone. Either a place kick, punt or drop kick may be used. For a place kick, the ball must be controlled on the ground or on a legal kicking tee/block by a teammate. The kick must be made before team possession has changed.

BALL BECOMES LIVE

2. A ball becomes live when the ball has been legally snapped and a down is in progress. After being put in play, the ball remains live until the down ends.

BALL BECOMES DEAD

3. The ball becomes dead and the down is ended when K catches or recovers a



scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone; when K is first (i.e., before any touching by R) to touch a scrimmage kick after it has come to rest beyond the neutral zone and between the goal lines; when a touchback occurs; or when an official sounds his whistle inadvertently.

4. The down shall be replayed if during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded during a legal kick. The team last in possession may choose to either put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined an inadvertent whistle is sounded while the ball is loose following an illegal kick.

BATTING A SCRIMMAGE KICK

5. No player shall bat a scrimmage kick, except a low scrimmage kick in flight that he is attempting to block. Additionally, a K player may:

- a. Bat toward his own goal line a grounded scrimmage kick that is beyond the neutral zone; or
- b. Bat a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone if no R player is in position to catch the ball.

BATTING A SCRIMMAGE KICK: APPROVED RULING

AR 3.8.A: With fourth-and-4 from R's 40-yard line, K1 punts. The kick is bounding near R's goal line and K2, in an attempt to keep it from penetrating the plane of the goal line, bats the ball at the 2-yard line back toward his own goal line. RULING: The bat by K2 is legal because it occurred beyond the neutral zone.

CATCH OR RECOVERY BY K

6. Any K player may catch or recover a scrimmage kick while it is in or behind the neutral zone and advance, unless it is during a try.

7. Any K player may catch or recover a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the neutral zone or the expanded neutral zone, provided such kick has been touched by a receiver who was clearly beyond the neutral zone at the time of touching.

CATCH OR RECOVERY BY K: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.8.B: Fourth-and-10 on K's 45-yard line. K1 punts the ball beyond the neutral zone. R1 muffs the ball back behind the neutral zone where K1 recovers and (a) falls on the ball at K's 40-yard line, (b) throws a forward pass to K3 that is complete at the 50-yard line and R1 interferes with K3 or (c) K1 punts the ball and R1 fair catches at his 30-yard line.

RULING: Since R1 touched the kick beyond the neutral zone, it will be first down for the team in possession in (a), (b) and (c). In (a), it is a first down for K at K's 40-yard line. In (b), the pass is legal as there had been no change of team possession. If K accepts the penalty for interference, it will be K's ball at R's 40-yard line. In (c), the second punt is legal as there had been no change of team possession. The ball belongs to R first-and-10 on its own 30-yard line.

AR 3.8.C: K2's punt is high and a strong wind blows it back toward the neutral zone. R1 gives a valid signal while he is beyond the neutral zone. However, the ball comes down (a) in or (b) behind the neutral zone. K2 pushes R1, then catches the kick and advances. RULING: Since K may catch or recover a scrimmage kick in or



behind the neutral zone and advance, the action in (a) and (b) is legal. Since R may not fair catch in or behind the neutral zone, he may be legally contacted there. AR 3.8.D: A scrimmage kick by K1 is partially blocked in the neutral zone by R1. The kick goes beyond the neutral zone, where R2 muffs it back behind the neutral zone. K2 recovers behind the neutral zone and advances across R's goal line. RULING: Touchdown for K. The right of K to advance this recovered scrimmage kick depends entirely upon whether the kick is recovered in, behind or beyond the neutral zone. Whether the kick went beyond the neutral zone and then rebounded behind it is of no consequence. The spot of recovery is the only factor. If the recovery is in or behind the neutral zone, K may advance. If the recovery is beyond the neutral zone, K may recover but may not advance.

CATCH OR RECOVERY BY R

8. Any R player may catch or recover a scrimmage kick in the field of play and advance unless it is during a try or unless any member of the receiving team has given a valid or invalid fair-catch signal. R may catch or recover a scrimmage kick in K's end zone.

FOULS DURING SCRIMMAGE KICK PLAYS

9. The basic spot is the previous spot for fouls by K that occur between the snap and the end of a scrimmage kick and between a free kick and the end of a free kick. Post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement (PSK) is used after a foul by R when the foul occurs during scrimmage kick plays other than a try or successful field goal; during a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the expanded neutral zone; the foul occurs beyond the expanded neutral zone; before the end of a kick; and K will not be next to put the ball in play.

10. PSK fouls are enforced from the basic spot. The basic spot is a point of reference for penalty enforcement. It is the previous spot for a loose-ball play unless the only accepted fouls meet the requirements of a post-scrimmage kick foul.

FORCED TOUCHING

11. Touching of a scrimmage kick by R is ignored if it is caused by K pushing or blocking R into contact with the ball or it is caused by K legally batting or muffing the ball into R. A catch or recovery by K beyond the neutral zone causes the ball to become dead. Touching of a scrimmage kick by K is ignored if it is caused by R pushing or blocking K into contact with the ball.

FORCED TOUCHING: APPROVED RULING

AR 3.8.H: K1 punts the ball from K's 40-yard line. While R1 and K1 are engaged in blocking downfield at R's 30-yard line, K2 legally bats the ball at R's 28-yard line and the batted ball touches R1 on the leg. Then, K3 recovers the ball at the 30-yard line. RULING: That touching by R is ignored and R will have the choice of taking the ball at the spot of first touching or the dead-ball spot.

FORMATION

12. At the snap, at least seven K players shall be on their line of scrimmage. A scrimmage-kick formation is a formation with at least one player seven yards or more behind the neutral zone and in position to receive the long snap. No player



may be in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper's legs.

13. The players on each side of and next to the snapper may lock legs with the snapper, but any other A lineman must have each foot outside the closest foot of the player next to him at the snap. A's players may stand, crouch or kneel.

NEUTRAL ZONE

14. The neutral zone is the space between the two scrimmage lines during a scrimmage down. The neutral zone may be expanded following the snap up to a maximum of two yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage in the field of play during any scrimmage down. The neutral zone shall not be expanded into the end zone.

15. Low scrimmage kicks may touch or be touched by players of K or R and such touching is ignored if the kick has not been beyond the expanded neutral zone. The zone disintegrates immediately when the kick has crossed the expanded zone or when the trajectory is such that it cannot be touched until it comes down. If touched by R beyond the neutral zone, it establishes a new series.

Unlike what you see when you watch pro football, kicking team players in USA Football may go downfield once the ball is snapped for a punt. Only the punter must remain in or behind the neutral zone until the ball is kicked.

RESUMING PLAY AFTER A SCRIMMAGE KICK

16. A new series is awarded to the team in possession at the end of the down if R is the first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the expanded neutral zone, unless the penalty is accepted for a non-post-scrimmage kick foul that occurred before the kick ended.

17. A new series is awarded to R at the spot of first touching by K if any K player is first to touch the kicked ball beyond the expanded neutral zone before it is touched beyond that zone by R and before it has come to rest.

18. A new series is awarded to R at the spot of recovery if there is joint possession by R and K of a recovered kick, unless there is first touching by K.

19. When any scrimmage kick is out of bounds between the goal lines or becomes dead inbounds between the goal lines while no player is in possession, the ball is awarded to R. Following an out-of-bounds kick, the ball is put in play at the inbounds spot unless R chooses a spot of first touching.

LINING UP OVER SNAPPER

20. No defensive player may be lined up over the snapper and on the line of scrimmage if there is no player in position to take a hand-to-hand snap. The restriction is not in effect if an offensive player shifts to a position to take a hand-to-hand snap.

A defensive player lined up over the snapper must be positioned 5 yards off his line of scrimmage regardless of the offensive team's formation until the ball is

snapped.

LINING UP OVER SNAPPER: PENALTY

For the first violation by a team, the ball remains dead and a warning is issued. Signal 21. Second violation results in a 5-yard penalty. Signal 21. Third and subsequent violations result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty charged to the head coach. Signal 27.

The snapper is unable to defend himself immediately upon snapping the ball when there is no one in position for a hand-to-hand snap. The rule provides reaction time for the snapper.

Section 9

Fair Catch

1. A fair catch is a catch by a receiver of a free kick in or beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line or of a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line after a valid signal under conditions in which the receiver forfeits his right to advance the ball in return for protection from being blocked or tackled by an opponent. It is a fair catch and the ball is dead if any receiver gives a valid fair-catch signal and he catches a free kick in or beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line or a scrimmage kick beyond the neutral zone to R's goal



line.

2. An awarded fair catch occurs when the offended team chooses to take the ball at the spot of the kick-catching interference rather than accepting the distance penalty from the previous spot and replaying the down.

FAIR CATCH: APPROVED RULINGS

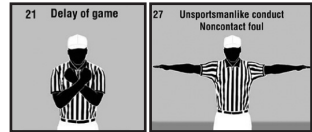
AR 3.9.A: K1 attempts an onside kick from his own 40 but instead of causing the ball to strike the ground and bounce he pops it up into the air. R1 signals for a fair catch while the kick is in flight and catches the ball (a) before it crosses R's free-kick line or (b) after it has gone beyond R's free-kick line. RULING: R1 has made a fair catch in both (a) and (b). A fair catch is permitted from in or beyond the neutral zone to R's goal line during a free kick.

AR 3.9.B: During a scrimmage kick beyond the expanded neutral zone, R1 gives a fair-catch signal. He muffs the kick into the air, where (a) R1 catches it 5 yards in advance of his muff, (b) K2 pushes R1 in an attempt to reach the ball, (c) K3 tackles R1 following the muff, preventing R1 from catching the kick or (d) R1 is blocked below the waist by K4 and K5 recovers. **RULING:** In (a), R1 has made a fair catch and the ball will be put in play at the spot where the catch was completed. In (b), the contact on R1 by K2 is legal because K may retain possession following the muff by R1. In (c), it is a holding foul for K3 to tackle R1 following the muff, thus preventing him from reaching the ball. The block by K4 is illegal in (d). The fouls in (c) and (d) are fouls during a loose-ball play and the penalty, if accepted, will be administered from the previous spot and the down replayed.



ADVANCING A DEAD BALL

3. No R player may advance the ball after a valid or invalid fair-catch signal has been given by any member of R.



ADVANCING A DEAD BALL: PENALTY

5 yards. Signal 21.

BLOCKING AFTER FAIR-CATCH SIGNAL



4. A receiver who has given a valid or invalid fair-catch signal shall not block an opponent until the kick has ended.

The rule prohibits the receiver from signaling for a fair catch near his goal line, purposely making no attempt to catch the kick and then blocking an opponent to prevent the opponent from downing the ball before it goes into the end zone.

BLOCKING AFTER FAIR-CATCH SIGNAL: PENALTY

15 yards. Signal 40. Disqualification also if any foul is flagrant. Signal 47.

BLOCKING AFTER FAIR-CATCH SIGNAL: APPROVED RULING

AR 3.9.C: R1 and R2 both signal for a fair catch and (a) the punt is short and is caught by R3, (b) the punt is over the head of R1 and R2 blocks K1 who is attempting to down the ball near the goal line or (c) R2 muffs the punt that is then muffed by K2 and finally recovered by R1. **RULING:** R3 did not make a fair catch in (a) because he did not signal, but the ball became dead when it was caught. In (b), it is an illegal block because R2 blocked before the kick ended after giving a signal and the penalty, if accepted, will be administered from the post-scrimmage kick spot. In (c), the ball became dead as soon as R1 recovered.

FAIR-CATCH SIGNALS

5. The ball becomes dead following a valid or invalid fair-catch signal given by any member of the receiving team when a scrimmage kick is caught or recovered by any member of the receiving team behind, in or beyond the neutral zone.

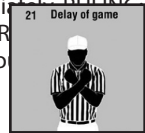
6. Only a receiver who gives a valid signal is afforded protection. If, after a receiver signals, the catch is made by a teammate, it is not a fair catch but the ball becomes dead.

7. Contacting a receiver who did not give a fair-catch signal or contacting a receiver who has given a signal but is contacted where he cannot make a fair catch is not a foul for kick-catch interference but could be judged to be a personal foul. The receiver is not afforded special protection in such situations. Members of the kicking team have the responsibility for knowing when the ball is dead. If a K player could not have seen a fair-catch signal made by the teammate of the receiver, there is no foul. However, if he could have seen the signal, he does not have license to contact the receiver.

FAIR-CATCH SIGNAL: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.9.D: K1 punts from midfield and R1 gives a fair-catch signal at R's 10-yard line. R1 muffs the catch and the ball bounces toward R's end zone. The ball is recovered at the 2-yard line by R2 and he is downed immediately. **RULING:** It is R's ball on the 2-yard line because the ball became dead when R2 recovered following the fair-catch signal.

AR 3.9.E: K1's punt on fourth-and-10 is from his own 20-yard line. The kick is high and short. R1 gives a valid signal beyond the neutral zone and muffs the kick. The ball rebounds behind the neutral zone where (a) R2 falls on the ball at K's 9-yard line or (b) R2 recovers the ball at K's 9-yard line and is tackled immediately. In (a), it is R's ball first-and-goal at K's 9-yard line. In (b), the signal by R1 causes the ball to become dead at the spot of recovery. The covering official should blow the whistle as soon as R2 or any other receiver recovers the ball.



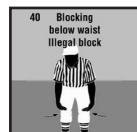
AR 3.9.F: R1 signals for a fair catch of a scrimmage kick by K1. Teammate R2 catches the kick and is tackled immediately by K1, who did or did not have a chance to see the signal. The contact, that was not a personal foul, occurred before the official sounded his whistle. R2 fumbles when tackled and the ball is recovered by K2. **RULING:** The ball became dead when it was caught by R2. The contact by K1 was not a foul because R2 did not signal for a fair catch. R2 fumbled a dead ball and there could be no recovery by K2.



By making a fair catch, R is trading the ability to advance the ball for protection from contact.

INVALID, ILLEGAL OR VALID FAIR-CATCH SIGNALS

8. A valid fair-catch signal is the extending and lateral waving of one arm at full arm's length above the head by any member of the receiving





team.

9. An invalid fair-catch signal is any signal by a receiver before the kick is caught or recovered that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal; made after the kick has touched an R player; or made after the kick has touched the ground. An illegal fair-catch signal is any signal by a runner after the kick has been caught; or after the kick has been recovered.

INVALID OR ILLEGAL FAIR-CATCH SIGNALS: PENALTY

5 yards. Signal 32.

INVALID, ILLEGAL OR VALID FAIR-CATCH SIGNALS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.9.G: R1 gives a fair-catch signal (a) immediately following his catch of a kick or (b) after making a catch, then advancing a couple of steps. RULING: Illegal fair-catch signal in (a) and (b), because it was given after the kick was caught and R1 had become a runner. The signal does not cause the down to end. If accepted, the 5-yard penalty is enforced under the all-but-one principle.

AR 3.9.H: During a scrimmage kick, R1 signals for a fair catch by (a) extending and holding one arm above his head, (b) partially extending and waving one hand in front of his face, (c) fully extending and laterally waving both hands above his head or (d) extending and laterally waving one arm at full length above his head. RULING: The signals in (a), (b) and (c) are invalid. In (d), the signal is valid. Giving an invalid signal is a foul for that the penalty is enforced under the post-scrimmage kick provision.

AR 3.9.I: R2 gives a fair-catch signal just after R1 begins to advance after catching a punt. RULING: No foul, as only the runner can give an illegal fair-catch signal. Opponents must continue to play and not be deceived by a player waving an arm after a kick-catching situation.

RESUMING PLAY AFTER A FAIR CATCH

10. The team that next puts the ball in play by scrimmage following a fair catch is awarded a series of four consecutively numbered downs in which to advance the ball to the line to gain. Each awarded first down starts a new series of four downs unless R chooses a free kick after a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

11. The captain may choose to free kick or snap anywhere between the hash marks on the yard line through the spot of the catch when a fair catch is made or through the spot of interference, when a fair catch is awarded. These choices remain if a dead-ball foul occurs prior to the down or a foul or an inadvertent whistle occurs during the down and the down is replayed.

RESUMING PLAY AFTER A FAIR CATCH: APPROVED RULING

AR 3.9.J: With the score tied near the end of the fourth period, R1 signals for a fair catch and catches the kick at K's 40. After a timeout, the captain of R advises the referee that he wishes to put the ball in play by snap. RULING: That is permissible. In putting the ball in play in that situation, the captain of R is privileged to

designate the point anywhere between the hash marks he wishes the ball to be placed.



Section 10

First Touching

1. If any K player touches a free kick before it crosses R's free-kick line and before it is touched there by any R player or if any K player touches a scrimmage kick beyond the expanded neutral zone to R's goal line before it is touched beyond the neutral zone by R and before the ball has come to rest, it is referred to as "first touching of the kick." First touching is a game situation that produces results somewhat similar to a penalty but is not classified as a foul.

2. When K first touches a scrimmage kick after it has come to rest beyond the neutral zone and between the goal lines, the ball becomes dead and the down has ended.

3. The place where the touching occurs is the "spot of first touching." Such touching is ignored if it is caused by R pushing or blocking K into contact with the ball.

4. R may take the ball at the spot of first touching or any spot if there is more than one spot of first touching or they may choose to have the ball put in play as determined by the action that follows first touching. The right of R to take the ball at the spot of first touching by K is canceled if R touches the kick and thereafter during the down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

5. Following an out-of-bounds scrimmage kick, the ball is put in play at the inbounds spot unless R chooses a spot of first touching.



FIRST TOUCHING: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.10.A: K1 attempts to down a punt beyond the neutral zone but his touching only slows it down. The bouncing ball is subsequently recovered by R1, who advances 25 yards but then fumbles and K2 recovers. K2 is immediately tackled. RULING: R should take the ball at the spot of K1's first touching. R can exercise that option unless after R1 touches the ball, R commits a foul or the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

AR 3.10.B: K2, running toward R's end zone, leaps in the air to catch K1's punt that is in flight. K2 has the ball in his grasp over the 1-yard line but first touches the ground in R's end zone. No player of R is in position to catch the punt. RULING: R can take the ball at the spot of first touching, his own 1-yard line or take a touchback since K2 has not possessed the ball until he came to the ground in the end zone.

Section 11

Illegal Kicks

1. An illegal kick is any intentional striking of the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot that does not qualify as a free kick or scrimmage kick. When the ball is loose following an illegal kick, it is treated as a fumble.

2. No player shall intentionally kick the ball other than as a free or scrimmage kick. A player may not punt, drop kick or place kick after team possession has changed. Accidentally kicking a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession is not illegal.

3. The team last in possession may choose to either put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down if, during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, an inadvertent whistle is sounded while the ball is loose following an illegal kick. The penalty shall be administered as determined by the basic spot and takes precedence over inadvertent whistle administration if during a down a live-ball foul occurs prior to the inadvertent whistle and the penalty is accepted.

ILLEGAL KICK: PENALTY

15 yards. Signal 31.

ILLEGAL KICK: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.11.A: It is first down and 10 on A's three. Runner A1 fumbles on his 3-yard line. B1 intentionally kicks the loose ball that is (a) on A's 2 or (b) in the end zone. The ball then goes out of bounds behind the goal line. **RULING:** Undoubtedly, A will decline the penalty in (a) and take the touchback. A will accept the penalty for the illegal kick in (b), because declining it would give B a safety. Accepting the penalty results in a first down for A at its own 18.

AR 3.11.B: K1 kicks off to start the second half. The ball is rolling on R's 7-yard line when R1 (a) accidentally or (b) intentionally kicks the ball into his own end zone, where R2 recovers. Is the kick by R1 in either (a) or (b) a new force? If the action is a foul, where is it penalized from? **RULING:** It is not a new force in either (a) or (b), as force is not a consideration on kicks going into R's end zone. Even though the ball was kicked by R1, the kick had not ended. The contact in (a) is ignored, because it was not an intentional act. In (b), the kick is illegal and if the penalty is accepted, it is enforced from the previous spot. If the foul is declined, it is a touchback by rule. In both (a) and (b), the ball becomes dead when the kick breaks the plane of R's goal line.

AR 3.11.C: It is fourth-and-10 for A from its own 15-yard line. A1 fakes a kick and runs beyond the neutral zone and kicks the ball at the 20. The kicked ball (a) is caught by A2 at A's 30 and he is downed there, (b) goes out of bounds at midfield or (c) comes to rest on K's 45 and no player of either team will touch it, so the covering official sounds his whistle. **RULING:** The kick is illegal and the resulting loose ball is treated as a fumble. The normal kicking rules and restrictions are not in effect during an illegal kick. In (a), (b) and (c), if the penalty for the illegal kick is declined, it will be A's ball first-and-10 from the yard line where the ball became

dead. If the penalty is accepted, it is enforced from the end of the run that is the spot of the illegal kick.

AR 3.11.D: A is in scrimmage-kick formation and the ball is snapped to A1, who is the potential punter. A1 muffs the ball, allowing it to hit the ground, where he kicks it. **RULING:** Illegal kicking. If accepted, the penalty is 15 yards from the spot of the foul, because it is a foul by A behind the basic spot during a loose-ball play.

Section 12

Kicking Tee

A kicking tee/block may be used for a place kick when the place kick is a scrimmage kick (for a field goal or try), a kicking tee may be used for a kickoff, a free kick following a safety or for a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch. When rules allow a kicking tee/block to be used a tee or a block shall be made of pliable material that elevates the lowest point of the ball no more than two inches above the ground.

ILLEGAL TEE: PENALTY

15 yards from the previous spot. Signal 27.

ILLEGAL TEE: APPROVED RULING

AR 3.12.A: A scores (a) on a try where the line of scrimmage was the 3-yard line and the tee was placed at the 10-yard line or (b) on a field goal where the line of scrimmage was B's 20-yard line and the tee was placed at B's 27-yard line. In both cases, the referee determines during the kick that the kicker was using an illegal kicking tee. **RULING:** In (a), the basic spot is the previous spot. Therefore the penalty will be 15 yards marked from the 3-yard line and, if accepted, will result in a replay of the try from B's 18-yard line. In (b), the basic spot is the previous spot. Therefore the penalty will be 15 yards marked from the 20-yard line and, if accepted, will result in a replay of the down from B's 35-yard line.



Section 13

Kick-Catching Interference

1. While any free kick is in flight in or beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line or any scrimmage kick is in flight beyond the neutral zone to the receiver's goal line, K shall not touch the ball or R, unless blocked into the ball or R or to ward off a blocker, nor obstruct R's path to the ball. That prohibition applies even when no fair-catch signal is given, but it does not apply after a free kick has been touched by an R player or after a scrimmage kick has been touched by an R player who was clearly beyond the neutral zone at the time of touching.

2. K may catch, touch, muff or bat a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone if no player of R is in position to catch the ball.

3. A K player may bat toward his own goal line a grounded scrimmage kick that is beyond the neutral zone and may also bat a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone if no R player is in position to catch the ball.

KICK-CATCHING INTERFERENCE: PENALTY

Fair catch interference by the kicking team is a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

KICK-CATCHING INTERFERENCE: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.13.A: A free kick from K's 40 is high and comes down over K's 45, where it is muffed in flight by K2, after that it is recovered by K3 on R's 40. RULING: That is first touching and also kick-catching interference by K2. R may choose to take the ball at the spot of first touching, accept the 15-yard penalty for kick-catching interference and have K rekick or R may choose to accept the penalty of an awarded fair catch at the spot of the interference.

AR 3.13.B: The ball is free kicked from K's 40-yard line and in flight it crosses the 50-yard line before a strong wind blows it back to K's 45, where it is touched in flight by K1 and is recovered by K2. RULING: Kick-catching interference.

AR 3.13.C: K2's punt is partially blocked by R1 in or behind the neutral zone and it then travels beyond the neutral zone. R2 is in position to catch the ball, but it first touches K2's shoulder before hitting the ground, where it is recovered by R2. RULING: Since R1's touching is ignored, it is kick-catching interference by K2, because R2 was in position to catch the ball.

AR 3.13.D: K1's punt is coming down over R's 15-yard line and (a) R2 is in position to catch the ball or (b) all R players have moved away from where the ball will land. In both (a) and (b) K3 catches the ball. RULING: In (a), it is kick-catching interference. R may choose the result of the play, may take the ball at the spot of first touching, take an awarded fair catch, accept a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul or accept a 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and replaying the down. If R chooses to take the result of the down, it would be R's ball where K3 caught it. In (b), the play is legal and the ball is dead as soon as K3 catches it. The spot of the catch is also a spot of first touching and R will put the ball in play on that-yard line, first-and-10.

AR 3.13.E: K5, running down field under a punt, has the kick strike him on his helmet (a) R1 is in a position to catch the kick if he so chooses or (b) no R player is in position to be able to get to the ball and catch it. RULING: In (a), K5 has committed kick-catching interference. In (b), there is no foul.





Section 1

Encroachment

Encroachment occurs when a player is illegally in the neutral zone during the time interval starting when the ball is ready for play and until the ball is snapped. For the purposes of enforcing encroachment restrictions, an entering substitute is not considered to be a player until he is on his team's side of the neutral zone.

Unlike what you see on TV, in USA Football it is a foul if a B player enters the neutral zone before the snap, even if he returns to his side of the line before the snap.

ENCROACHMENT: PENALTY

5 yards. Signals 7 and 18.

ENCROACHMENT: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 4.1.A: A1 takes his position over the ball and places both hands on the ball. The ready-for-play signal has not been given. B1 breaks the plane of the neutral zone. RULING: No foul. Encroachment restrictions are not in effect before the ready-for-play signal has been given.

AR 4.1.B: Following the ready signal, snapper A1 positions over the ball and



immediately places his hands on the ball and adjusts it. The rest of the team then take presnap positions. The coach of B realizes his team has only 10 players on the field and he sends B1 into the game. The ball is located at one end of the field so that B1 is on A's side of the neutral zone when he enters the field. He crosses through the neutral zone but is onside prior to the snap. **RULING:** It is not encroachment for the substitute to cross through the neutral zone. An entering substitute cannot encroach until after he has established himself as a player on his team's side of the neutral zone. If B1 is unable to get onside prior to the snap, it will be a foul for illegal substitution. The foul occurs simultaneously with the snap and if penalized would be administered from the previous spot. Similarly, it is not encroachment when a replaced player crosses the neutral zone in leaving the field.

Section 2

The Snap and the Snapper

1. A snap is a backward pass. A snap is the legal act of passing or handing the ball backward from its position on the ground. The snap begins when the snapper first moves the ball legally other than in adjustment. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the ball during that the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches a back or the ground before it touches an A lineman. The snap ends when the ball touches the ground or any player.

2. A scrimmage down must start with a legal snap. An illegal snap causes the ball to remain dead.

3. A snapper is the player who is facing his opponent's goal line with his shoulders approximately parallel thereto and who snaps the ball. The snapper may be over the ball but his feet must be behind the neutral zone and no part of his person, other than a hand(s) on the ball, may be beyond the foremost point of the ball. The snapper may lift the ball for lateral rotation but may not rotate end-for-end or change the location or fail to keep the long axis of the ball at right angles to the line of scrimmage.

4. Following the ready-for-play and after touching the ball, the snapper shall not remove both hands from the ball; make any movement that simulates a snap; fail to clearly pause before the snap; or following adjustment, lift or move the ball other than in a legal snap.

SNAP INFRACTION: PENALTY:

5 yards. Signals 7 and 19.

SNAP INFRACTION: APPROVED RULING

AR 4.2.A: A's linemen take their positions and snapper A1 has made preliminary adjustments. Prior to the snap A1 (a) tilts the ball to an angle of 90 degrees, (b) lifts the ball and pushes it forward in order to make a deep snap, (c) rotates the ball end for end or (d) removes both hands.

RULE 4 SNAPPING AND HANDING THE BALL

IN THIS RULE

- Legal and Illegal Formations
- False Starts, Snaps, Shifts and Motion
- Encroachment

Section 1: Encroachment75
 Encroachment: Penalty75
 Encroachment: Approved Rulings75
 Section 2: The Snap and the Snapper75
 Snap Infraction: Penalty:.....76
 Snap Infraction: Approved Rulings.....76
 Section 3: Formation.....76
 Illegal Formation: Penalty.....77
 Illegal Formation: Approved Rulings77
 Section 4: Lining Up Over Snapper78
 Lining Up Over Snapper: Penalty.....78
 Lining Up Over Snapper: Approved Rulings.....79
 Section 5: False Start.....80
 False Start: Penalty80
 False Start: Approved Rulings.....80
 Section 6: Shift/Motion.....81
 Illegal Shift/Motion: Penalty.....81
 Illegal Shift/Motion: Approved Rulings.....81
 Section 7: Handing the Ball.....82
 Illegal Forward Handing: Penalty83
 Illegal Forward Handing: Approved Ruling.....83



- Illegal formation, illegal shift and illegal motion are live-ball fouls, meaning the play continues.
- Only one A player may be in motion at the snap, and he must not be moving toward the line of scrimmage.
- Although a back or end may legally change his position and reset for one second before the snap, any movement that simulates action at the snap is a false start.

RULING: Legal in (a). It is a snap infraction in (b), (c) and (d). The covering official will sound his whistle immediately, signifying the ball remains dead. A snap infraction is a dead-ball foul and the penalty of 5 yards is administered from the succeeding spot.

Section 3 Formation



RULE 4 SNAPPING & HANDING

1. After the ball is ready for play, each player of A who participated in the previous down and each substitute for A must have been, momentarily, between the nine-yard marks before the snap.

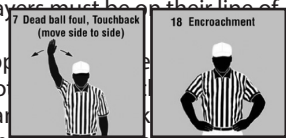
2. At the snap, at least seven A players must be on their line of scrimmage.

3. The players on each side of and next to the snapper, but any other A lineman must have each foot on the player next to him at the snap. A's players may stand.

4. Of the players of A who are not on their line at the snap only one may penetrate the vertical plane through the waistline of his nearest teammate who is on his line. He must have his hands in position to receive the ball if it is snapped between the snapper's legs but he is not required to receive the snap. Any other player(s) must be in legal position as a back.

5. All A players who, at the time of the snap, are on the ends of their scrimmage line or legally behind the line are eligible receivers.

6. B players may be anywhere on or behind the line.



Allowing only one player under center eliminates potential confusion by the defense as to that player is receiving the snap.

While it is preferable to have players numbered 50-79 inclusive line up in positions traditionally occupied by linemen, it is not required. It is impractical at the youth level to restrict players to positions by virtue of their numbers.

ILLEGAL FORMATION: PENALTY

5 yards. Signal 19.

ILLEGAL FORMATION: APPROVED RULINGS

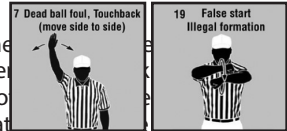
AR 4.3.A: A players assume their pre-snap positions. A1 takes a position behind the line of scrimmage as a potential runner. A1 is standing and is turned so he is directly facing the quarterback. At the snap, A1's shoulder and elbow are breaking

the plane through the waist of his nearest teammate who is on the line. RULING: Since A1 is not on the line and is not positioned as a back, it results in an illegal formation foul. To be a back, A1 cannot have any part of his body breaking the plane through the waist of his nearest teammate who is on the line.

AR 4.3.B: Substitute A1, noticing his team has only 10 players on the field, comes onto the field just as the ball is about to be snapped. RULING: A1 must be on the field on A's side of the neutral zone, inside the nine-yard marks and not violate the shift or motion provisions. Furthermore, the act of his coming onto the field must not deceive the defensive team.

AR 4.3.C: When A comes to the line of scrimmage, the linemen assume their final positions such that five linemen penetrate the vertical plane through the waistline of the snapper while the head of the sixth penetrates the plane drawn through the waistline of the nearest teammate who is on his line of scrimmage. RULING: It is an illegal formation that is a foul simultaneously with the snap. The offended team will be given the option of taking the result of the play or accepting the penalty and replaying the down.

AR 4.3.D: Following the huddle, after A comes to its line of scrimmage, A1 is breaking the plane of the waistline of the snapper or a part of his body breaking the plane of the waistline of the nearest teammate who is on the line of scrimmage. RULING: Illegal formation. If quarterback A1 may be breaking the plane of the waistline of the snapper or nearest teammate legally on the line of scrimmage, it is illegal for any other back to break the plane of the waistline of his nearest teammate who is on the line of scrimmage.



AR 4.3.E: At the snap, A1 is in a position that is neither on the line of scrimmage nor clearly in the backfield. A1 is not on the line because neither his head nor his foot is breaking the plane through the waist of the snapper and he is not a back because he is penetrating the plane through the waist of his nearest teammate, end A2, who is on the line. The position of A1 is inside that of end A2, who is clearly on the line of scrimmage. When the ball is snapped, both A1 and A2 go downfield and A1 catches a pass.

RULING: The position of A1 is illegal when the ball is snapped. A1 is an ineligible receiver because he was not clearly a back. His advance beyond the neutral zone is illegal and when he touches the pass, it is illegal touching. That is a multiple foul and B has a choice of that penalty to accept.

AR 4.3.F: In the last few seconds of a half, A1 completes a pass to A2 at B's 20-yard line. The ball is properly spotted and the referee marks it ready for play and signals the clock to start. In the rush and confusion to stop the clock, A's snapper and quarterback A1 are the only A players in legal position when the ball is snapped and legally "spiked" by A1. RULING: A foul for illegal formation occurs at the snap. The "spike" is legal. Since the spike is legal, the only applicable foul is for illegal formation.

Section 4

Lining Up Over Snapper

No defensive player may be lined up over the snapper and on the line of scrimmage if there is no player in position to take a hand-to-hand snap. The restriction is not in effect if an offensive player shifts to a position to take a hand-to-hand snap.

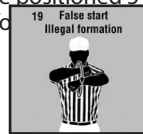


LINING UP OVER SNAPPER: PENALTY

For the first violation by a team, the ball remains dead and a warning is issued. Signal 21. Second violation results in a 5-yard penalty. Signal 21. Third and subsequent violations result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty charged to the head coach. Signal 27.



A defensive player lined up over the snapper must be positioned 5 yards off the line of scrimmage regardless of the offensive team's formation when the ball is snapped.



For the first violation by a team, the ball remains dead and a warning is issued. Signal 21. Second violation results in a 5-yard penalty. Signal 21. Third and subsequent violations result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty charged to the head coach. Signal 27.

LINING OVER THE SNAPPER: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 4.4.A: (Non-junior division): B1 is head-up on snapper A2. A3 is (a) in position to take a hand-to-hand snap from A2 or (b) is 5 yards deep in the backfield. RULING: In (a), there is no foul. There is no restriction on team B because A3 was in position to take a hand-to-hand snap. In (b), the official should blow his whistle and prevent the snap. If it is team B's first violation, a team warning is issued. If it is the second violation, a 5-yard penalty is assessed. Subsequent violations result in a .

AR 4.4.B: (Non-junior division): A1 is lined up 5 yards in his backfield. B2 is lined up in the gap between snapper A3 and guard A4. A1 legally shifts to a position to take a hand-to-hand snap, so B2 moves head-up on A3. A1 then legally moves back to his original position. RULING: Once A1 moves to a position to take a hand-to-hand snap, the restriction on team B placing a player head-up on the snapper is eliminated for that play. However, B2 is not excused for actions that could still be ruled unnecessary roughness once the ball is snapped.

AR 4.4.C: (Non-junior division): A1 is in position to take a hand-to-hand snap and B2 is head-up on snapper A3. A1 legally shifts to a position 5 yards behind the line. RULING: Because A1 was in a position to take a hand-to-hand snap, the restriction on team B placing a player head-up on the snapper is eliminated for that play.

However, B2 is not excused for actions that could still be ruled unnecessary roughness once the ball is snapped.

AR 4.4.C: (Junior division): B1 is head-up on snapper A2. A3 is (a) in position to take a hand-to-hand snap from A2 or (b) is 5 yards deep in the backfield. **RULING:** A team B player lined up over the snapper must be at least 5 yards off his line regardless of A's formation. The official should blow his whistle and prevent the snap. If it is team B's first violation, a team warning is issued. If it is the second violation, a 5-yard penalty is assessed. Subsequent violations result in a 15-yard penalty.

Section 5

False Start

After the ball is ready for play and before the snap begins, no false start shall be made by any A player. It is a false start if a shift or feigned charge simulates action at the snap; any act is clearly intended to cause B to encroach; or if any A player on his line between the snapper and the player on the end of his line, after having placed a hand(s) on or near the ground, moves his hand(s) or makes any quick movement. If a false start causes B to encroach, only the false start is penalized.

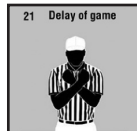
FALSE START: PENALTY

5 yards. Signals 7 and 19.

FALSE START: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 4.5.A: A is on its line of scrimmage with A1 directly and immediately behind the snapper in a position to receive the ball. As the count is started but before the ball is snapped (a) A1 steps backward from the line of scrimmage and while so doing he fakes throwing a forward pass. B1 then charges across the neutral zone and contacts A2, (b) A1 quickly withdraws his hands from under the snapper and goes in motion. Reaction on the part of B2 causes him to charge across the neutral zone and contact A3 or (c) A1 lifts the heel of one foot as a signal to start A2 in motion. **RULING:** False start by A1 in both (a) and (b). These are acts interpreted to cause an opponent to encroach and, therefore, are infractions. It is the intent of the rules to prohibit such acts. Whether or not the action by A1 draws B into the neutral zone should not be the determining factor in ruling a false-start foul. The action by A1 in (c) is legal.

AR 4.5.B: On third-and-10 from A's 40-yard line, all team A players are set. While quarterback A1 is calling signals, defensive back B1, starting from a position eight yards behind his line of scrimmage, runs toward the neutral zone. B1 stops directly in front of tackle A4 but does not enter the neutral zone. In response to B1's charge, A4 (a) does not move or (b) flinches. **RULING:** No foul in (a). In (b), A4 is guilty of a dead-ball foul



for false start. If in the official's judgment the action by B1 was for the purpose of disconcerting or hindering A, it is an unsportsmanlike conduct foul, in which case, the official should sound the whistle before the snap.



AR 4.5.C: On fourth-and-4 on A's 35-yard line, A comes to the line in a scrimmage formation. After calling a few signals, A1 says "shift." All 11 players then make a movement. Some

players move to a new position for a scrimmage-kick formation, while four interior linemen remain in place and move from a hands-on-thighs position to an upright position and finally to a three-point stance. RULING: False start. Any act designed to cause B to encroach is a foul by A.

Section 6

Shift/Motion

1. A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.
2. After a huddle or shift all 11 players of A shall come to an absolute stop and shall remain stationary simultaneously without movement of hands, feet, head or body for at least one second before the snap.
3. Only one A player may be in motion at the snap and then only if such motion is not toward his opponent's goal line.
4. Other than the player with his hands in position to receive the ball if it is snapped, any other A player in motion shall be at least 5 yards behind his line of scrimmage at the snap if he started from any position not clearly behind the line and did not establish himself as a back by stopping for at least one full second.

ILLEGAL SHIFT/MOTION: PENALTY

5 yards. Signal 20.

ILLEGAL SHIFT/MOTION: APPROVED RULINGS

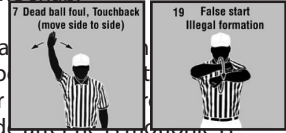
AR 4.6.A: Before the snap (a) A's guards and tackles go from a hands-on-knees position to a three-point stance, (b) quarterback A1 takes a step forward and puts his hands under the center or (c) quarterback A1 is in an upright position as he looks over the defense, but he then bends his knees and puts his hands under center. RULING: Each of the movements in (a), (b) and (c) constitutes a shift. Normal shoulder and head movements by the quarterback are not considered a shift.

AR 4.6.B: A comes to its line of scrimmage with the quarterback A1 standing behind the snapper. Upon signal, A2 goes in motion and then A1 assumes his final position under the snapper. RULING: When the ball is snapped, it will be an illegal shift because A2 did not reset for one second along with the other A players after A1 shifted. Motion cannot be started legally until all 11 players of A have been set simultaneously for at least one second.

AR 4.6.C: Backs A1 and A2 simultaneously move to new backfield positions prior to the snap. In less than one second after both are stationary (a) A3 goes in motion and is in motion at the snap or (b) the ball is snapped. RULING: Illegal shift in both (a) and (b). Following a huddle or a shift, all 11 players of A must come to a complete stop and must remain stationary simultaneously for at least one second before the snap or before a player goes in motion.

AR 4.6.D: After A has been set for more than one second, back A1 goes in motion. While A1 is in motion, back A2 takes one step forward and then resets. A1 is still in motion when the ball is snapped two seconds after A2 reset. RULING: Illegal shift. A2's movement was a shift and the failure of the entire team to set for at least one second after the shift and before the snap is a foul at the snap.

AR 4.6.E: The quarterback by voice command has signaled to assume a set position while he is standing upright but the quarterback steps forward and places his hands under the ball (a) at the instant the snap is made, (b) that is made after he is motionless but prior to one second having elapsed, (c) that is made after he is motionless for one second or (d) that is made after he is motionless for one second but while he is stepping backward with one foot as the snap is made. RULING: In (a), it is illegal motion. In (b), it is an illegal shift. In (c), it is legal. In (d), it is legal unless a teammate is also in motion at the snap.



Section 7

Handing the Ball

1. Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one player to a teammate in such a way that the ball is still in contact with the first player when it is touched by the teammate.

2. Handing the ball is not a pass. Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of attempted handing is a fumble. A ball in player possession is a live ball held or controlled by a player after it has been handed to him.

3. Backward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when any part of the ball is on or behind the yard line where the runner is positioned. Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.

4. Forward handing occurs when the runner releases the ball when the entire ball is beyond the yard line where the runner is positioned. No player may hand the ball forward except during a scrimmage down before a change of possession, provided both players are in or behind the neutral zone and it is to a lineman who has clearly faced his goal line by moving both feet in a half-turn and is at least one yard behind his line when he receives the ball or a back or a teammate who, at the snap, was on an end of his line and was not the snapper nor adjacent to the snapper. During a scrimmage down after a change of team possession, no player may hand the ball forward to a teammate.

5. The position of the ball determines whether it is behind, in or beyond the neutral zone. If the entire ball is beyond the neutral zone when it is released, it is forward handing.

ILLEGAL FORWARD HANDING: PENALTY

5 yards. Signal 35.

ILLEGAL FORWARD HANDING: APPROVED RULING

AR 4.7.A: Quarterback A1 takes the snap and hands the ball forward to back A2. The handing is done (a) behind, (b) in or (c) beyond the neutral zone. RULING: Legal in (a) and (b), but a foul in (c).

Illegal motion: 1 hand

Illegal shift: 2 hands



Section 1

Backward Pass

1. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the runner's end line. A backward pass ends when it is caught or recovered or is out of bounds.

2. During any down, any player in possession may make a backward pass. If a backward pass is caught or recovered by any player, he may advance.

3. If a backward pass goes out of bounds between the goal lines or becomes dead inbounds while no player is in possession or while opponents are in joint possession, the ball belongs to the passing team unless, after fourth down, A is short of the line to gain.

4. If a backward pass is out of bounds behind a goal line, the ball belongs to the team defending that goal and the result is either a touchback or a safety.

5. A snap is a backward pass. A snap is the legal act of passing or handing the ball backward from its position on the ground. The snap begins when the snapper first moves the ball legally other than in adjustment. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the ball during that the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches a back or the ground before it touches an A lineman. The snap ends when the ball touches the ground or any player.

Section 2

Forward Pass

1. A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. Prior to releasing the ball on a pass, if the potential passer is contacted and the ball is released, it is a forward pass if his arm was moving forward on contact.

2. A forward pass has gone beyond the neutral zone if at any time during the pass, the entire ball is beyond the neutral zone.

3. A forward pass ends when it is caught, touches the ground or is out of bounds.

4. The ball becomes dead when any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete or is simultaneously caught by opposing players.

Section 3

Legal Passes



1. It is a legal forward pass if during a scrimmage down and before possession has changed a player of A throws the ball with both feet in or behind the neutral zone when the ball is released. Only one forward pass may be thrown during the down.

2. It is legal to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving a direct hand-to-hand snap.

LEGAL PASSES: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.3.A: With time expiring in the second or fourth period and A behind in the score, A1 intentionally throws the ball forward to the ground in order to stop the clock. A1's action took place immediately after receiving a direct hand-to-hand snap. RULING: The grounding is legal and the clock remains stopped until the subsequent snap.

AR 5.3.B: Quarterback A1 runs wide and while near the neutral zone decides to throw a forward pass. As A1 releases the ball his foremost foot is touching the ground in the neutral zone. RULING: Legal forward pass.

AR 5.3.C: First-and-10 on A's 20. A1 throws a pass intended for A2, who is at A's 24-yard line. A2 cannot make the catch and the ball hits the ground at A's 26-yard line. A1's pass is (a) thrown with a one-handed underhanded motion, (b) pitched forward with both hands or (c) thrown with a conventional overhand motion. RULING: No foul in (a), (b) and (c). The rules do not require a forward pass to be thrown with an overhand motion. The pass is incomplete and is dead when it hits the ground.

There is no such thing as a "forward lateral." A passer may throw the ball underhanded, sidearmed or in any other fashion. Whether the pass is forward or backward is determined by its initial direction.

Section 4 Illegal Passes

1. An illegal forward pass is a foul. The illegal forward passes are a pass after team possession has changed during the down; a pass from beyond the neutral zone; a pass intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver; and a second or subsequent forward pass thrown during a down.

ILLEGAL FORWARD PASSES: PENALTY

5 yards from the previous spot. Signal 35.

RULE 5 PASSING

IN THIS RULE

- The difference between forward and backward passes
- What is pass interference?
- What makes a player an eligible receiver?

Section 1: Backward Pass	87
Section 2: Forward Pass	87
Section 3: Legal Passes.....	87
Legal Passes: Approved Rulings.....	88
Section 4: Illegal Passes	88
Illegal Forward Passes: Penalty.....	88
Intentional Grounding: Penalty	89
Illegal Forward Passes: Approved Rulings.....	89
Section 5: Catch and Completed Pass.....	90
Catch: Approved Rulings	91
Section 6: Simultaneous Catch	92
Simultaneous Catch: Approved Rulings	92
Section 7: Incomplete Pass.....	92
Incomplete Pass: Approved Rulings.....	93
Section 8: Eligible Receivers.....	93
Section 9: Ineligible Receivers.....	94
Section 10: Illegal Touching	95
Illegal Touching: Penalty	95
Illegal Touching: Approved Rulings.....	95
Section 11: Interference by A	96
Interference by A: Penalty	96
Interference by A: Approved Rulings.....	96
Section 12: Interference by B.....	97
Interference by B: Penalty	97
Interference by B: Approved Rulings	97



- Pass interference can occur even if there is no contact.
- If B is first to touch a forward pass, all players become eligible receivers.
- A pass is either forward or backward; there is no such thing as a “lateral.”
- A player who is eligible to start the down remains eligible throughout the down. If he goes out of bounds on his own and returns, he becomes an illegal participant.



2. Intentional grounding is a pass intentionally thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or to conserve time. Some factors to look for in making an intentional-grounding decision are absence of eligible offensive receivers in the area and the “dumping” to avoid loss of distance. The ability and skill of the passer and the pressure of the defense are also factors to consider.

INTENTIONAL GROUNDING: PENALTY

5 yards from the previous spot and loss of down. Signals 36 and 9.

3. If the offended team declines the distance penalty for an illegal pass or intentional grounding, it has the choice of having the down counted at the spot of the illegal incomplete forward pass or (if the illegal forward pass is caught or intercepted) of having the ball put in play as determined by the action that followed the catch.

4. If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass (including intentional grounding) from its end zone or commits any other foul for that the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind its goal line, it is a safety.

When the defensive team forces a passer into a position from that he cannot safely deliver the ball to an eligible teammate and he is unable to escape the defensive confinement, the defensive team has accomplished its objective. The penalty prevents the defense from losing an advantage that was fairly earned.

ILLEGAL FORWARD PASSES: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.4.A: With time expiring in the second or fourth period and A behind in the score, A1 intentionally throws the ball forward to the ground in order to stop the clock. A1’s action took place (a) immediately after receiving the snap while A1 was lined up three yards deep or (b) after A1 delayed and took more than one step after receiving a direct hand-to-hand snap. RULING: Illegal forward pass in (a) and (b), the clock shall be started on the ready-for-play signal.

AR 5.4.B: Quarterback A1 runs wide and while near the neutral zone, decides to throw a forward pass. As A1 releases the ball, his foremost foot is breaking the plane of B’s side of the neutral zone. RULING: It is an illegal forward pass because the location of the passer’s foremost foot was beyond the neutral zone.

AR 5.4.C: Quarterback A1 drops back to pass but is unable to find a receiver and (a) throws the ball to the ground, (b) throws the ball to the ground in an area occupied by only defensive players or (c) deliberately throws the ball at the legs of onrushing defensive linemen. RULING: An illegal forward pass in (a), (b) and (c). Penalize A 5 yards from the previous spot.

AR 5.4.D: Quarterback A1, in position for a direct hand-to-hand snap, muffs the snap but is able to take the ball from the ground and spike it forward. RULING: An illegal forward pass. In order to be a “direct snap” and therefore meet the allowance within the exception, the ball must go immediately from the snapper to the person

in position to take the hand-to-hand snap without being muffed, fumbled or otherwise mishandled.

AR 5.4.E: Runner A1 advances 5 yards beyond the neutral zone to B's 3-yard line, where he is tackled. As he is going down, A1 simulates a fumble by tossing the ball forward into the end zone, where A2 downs it.

RULING: Illegal forward pass by A1. The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the pass. If A1 is contacted after releasing the ball, it is not roughing the passer since he lost that protection when he threw the pass from beyond the neutral zone.

AR 5.4.F: A1 throws a legal forward pass to A5 who is behind the line of scrimmage and who in turn throws another forward pass to A11 who advances the ball for a first down. RULING: The second forward pass is illegal.

Unlike what you see on TV in USA Football the passer is not excused from intentionally grounding the ball even if he is outside the "tackle box" or "outside the pocket" or fails to throw the pass beyond the line of scrimmage.

Section 5

Catch and Completed Pass

1. A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball that is in flight and first contacting the ground inbounds or being contacted by an opponent in such a way that he is prevented from returning to the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball. An airborne player with control of the ball is required first to have at least one foot or body part down inbounds.

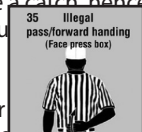


2. A forward pass, legal or illegal, is complete and the ball may be advanced when caught by any player of A or B.

3. Catching is always preceded by touching the ball; thus, if touching causes the ball to become dead, securing possession of the ball has no significance. With the present catch definition, there can be confusion concerning interceptions of a pass or fumble, catching or recovering a kick and recovering a backward pass or fumble. To make a catch, recovery or interception, the player must first come down inbounds or be prevented from returning to the ground inbounds by being contacted by an opponent in such a way that the ball will become dead because forward progress has been stopped. To make a catch, a player must return to the ground inbounds or be contacted by an opponent preventing him from coming down inbounds. To make an interception, the player must make a catch, hence he must return inbounds. To make a recovery, the same must be true.

CATCH: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.5.A: It is first-and-10 for A at B's 12-yard line. A1 sprints near the line and then buttonhooks. He jumps and possesses a forward pass while in the air above the end zone. A1's momentum carries him back into the field of play and he lands and is downed on the 1-yard line. RULING: It is A's ball first-and-goal at B's 1-yard



line.

AR 5.5.B: A has third down and seven yards to gain at B's 30. A1 leaps near the sideline to catch a pass near B's 30-yard line. A1 is driven out of bounds backward by B2 while making the catch and landing outside the sideline at B's 32. RULING: If the covering official decides A1 would have landed out of bounds of his own accord it is an incomplete pass.



AR 5.5.C: A pass from A1 is possessed by A2 while he is in the air above B's end zone. A2 loses control when he is contacted by B1 while in the air. The ball (a) is caught by eligible A3 in B's end zone or (b) is intercepted and downed by B2 in the end zone. RULING: Complete pass in (a) and (b). In (a), it is a touchdown and in (b), it is a touchback.

AR 5.5.D: B1 attempts to intercept a pass while in the air and deflects the ball into the air but is able to catch it after he comes down inbounds. RULING: Interception, B's ball.

AR 5.5.E: A8, in B's end zone, leaps in the air to catch a pass and is contacted by B2, forcing A8 to come down inbounds on B's 1-yard line, where he is downed. RULING: Touchdown, since A8's forward progress was stopped over B's end zone by B2's contact. Even though the catch was not made until A8 came down inbounds, his forward progress was stopped by B2's contact resulting in A possessing the live ball in its opponent's end zone, hence, a touchdown.



AR 5.5.F: A pass from A1 is thrown near the intersection of the sideline and the goal line. A2, running toward the goal line, leaps and possesses the pass at the 3-yard line and is forcibly (a) contacted from the front by B1 so that A2 contacts the ground out of bounds opposite B's 4-yard line, (b) contacted from the side by B1 and A2 first contacts the ground out of bounds opposite the 3-yard line or (c) tackled from behind by B1 so that A2 first contacts the ground in the end zone. RULING: Completed pass in both (a), (b) and (c). In (a) and (b), the contact by B1 changed the direction of A2 and he is given forward progress. It is a touchdown in (c). In (c), the added force in the general direction the player was moving, is not considered a factor affecting his spot of landing.

Unlike what you see on TV, receivers in USA Football need only get one foot down inbounds in order to make a catch.

Section 6

Simultaneous Catch

1. A simultaneous catch is a catch in that there is joint possession of a live ball by

opposing players who are inbounds.

2. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by two opponents, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team.

3. In order for there to be a simultaneous catch, opposing players must have simultaneous joint possession and both must be in contact with the ground inbounds. The players' contact with the ground does not have to be exactly simultaneous. If A1 and B1 jointly possess a forward pass while airborne and both land inbounds, it is a completed pass, the ball is dead at that point and belongs to A. If there is simultaneous recovery of a fumble, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team that last had possession.

SIMULTANEOUS CATCH: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.6.A: A1 and B1 simultaneously gain possession of a live ball that is a legal forward pass and both players are touching inbounds. **RULING:** The down is ended. It is a complete pass and the ball belongs to A at the spot of completion.

AR 5.6.B: Airborne A1 and B1 simultaneously gain possession of a legal forward pass near the goal line and return to the ground where (a) they alight in the field of play inbounds, (b) they alight in the end zone with the ball, (c) A1 lands in the end zone and B1 in the field of play inbounds; (d) B1 comes down in the end zone and A1 lands in the field of play.



RULING: In (a), the ball is dead and belongs to A at the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when A1 and B1 contacted the ground inbounds. It is a touchdown in (b). In (c) and (d), the ball

becomes dead and the pass is complete at the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when the players contacted the ground inbounds. If the ball has penetrated the plane of the goal line in either (c) or (d), it is a touchdown.

Section 7

Incomplete Pass

1. A forward pass, legal or illegal, is incomplete and the ball becomes dead when the pass touches the ground or goes out of bounds. It is also incomplete when a player in the air possesses the pass and lands so that his first contact with the ground or with anything other than a player or game official is on or outside a boundary. An airborne player with control of the ball is required first to have at least one foot or body part down inbounds. 2.

When an incompletion occurs the down counts unless the pass is after a change of possession. If the incomplete pass is legal, the passing team next snaps the ball at the previous spot, unless lost after fourth down.

INCOMPLETE PASS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.7.A: Quarterback A1 drops back to pass and is under a heavy rush. A1 is hit and the ball drops to the ground and B1 recovers. At the instant A1 was hit and lost possession, his passing arm was (a) moving backward, (b) was extended back but not moving in either direction or (c) was moving forward. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), it is a fumble and B gains possession. In (c), since A1's arm was moving forward, it is

an incomplete forward pass and the ball becomes dead when it hits the ground.

AR 5.7.B: A pass from A1 is possessed by A2 while he is in the air above B's end zone. A2 loses control when he is contacted by B1 while in the air. The ball falls to the ground. RULING: The pass is incomplete.

AR 5.7.C: B1 attempts to intercept a pass while in the air and (a) the ball touches one hand and then deflects to the other without securing possession, after that B1 lands with his first step inbounds and second out of bounds or (b) B1 is juggling the ball as he takes two steps inbounds and then out of bounds. RULING: Incomplete pass in (a) and (b).

AR 5.7.D: A pass from A1 is thrown near the intersection of the sideline and the goal line. A2, running toward the goal line, leaps and possesses the pass at the 3-yard line and is forcibly tackled from behind by B1 so that first contact with the ground by A2 is out of bounds one yard beyond the goal line. RULING: Incomplete pass. The added force in the general direction the player was moving is not considered a factor affecting his spot of landing. Therefore, when A2 landed out of bounds, the pass was incomplete.

AR 5.7.E: Airborne A1 and B1 simultaneously gain possession of a legal forward pass near the goal line. When they return to the ground, A1 lands in the end zone and B1 lands out of bounds. RULING: Incomplete pass. In order for there to be a simultaneous catch, opposing players must have simultaneous joint possession and both must be in contact with the ground inbounds.

Section 8

Eligible Receivers

1. Pass eligibility rules apply only to a legal forward pass. All A players who, at the time of the snap, are on the ends of their scrimmage line or legally behind the line (possible total of six) are eligible.

2. All A players become eligible when B touches a legal forward pass. All B players are eligible. A player who is eligible at the start of the down remains eligible throughout the down. All other players are ineligible receivers.

While it is preferable to have players numbered 1-49 and 80-99 inclusive line up only in positions traditionally occupied by eligible receivers, it is not required. It is impractical at the youth level to restrict players to positions by virtue of their numbers.



Section 9

Ineligible Receivers



All A players who are not on the ends of their scrimmage line or legally behind the line are ineligible receivers. Ineligible A players may not advance beyond the expanded neutral zone on a legal forward pass play before a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone is in flight. If B touches the pass in or behind the neutral zone, this restriction is terminated. An ineligible is not illegally downfield if, at the snap, he immediately contacts a B lineman and the contact does not continue beyond the expanded neutral zone.

INELIGIBLE DOWNFIELD: PENALTY

5 yards. Signal 37.

INELIGIBLE DOWNFIELD: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.9.A: B1 is on his defensive line of scrimmage when he is contacted by ineligible lineman A1 and driven back about two yards. RULING: A1 is not illegally downfield if a forward pass crosses the neutral zone, since he contacted B1 on the line and after driving him back did not go beyond the neutral zone expanded.

AR 5.9.B: A1 drops back and throws a screen pass to flanker A2, who is behind the neutral zone. B2 has come across the line and deflects the pass so that its flight is altered and the pass goes beyond the neutral zone. Ineligible A8 has gone beyond the expanded neutral zone before the pass is released. RULING: Since B has touched the forward pass in or behind the neutral zone, there is no foul for an ineligible downfield.

AR 5.9.C: At the snap, interior lineman A1 moves about three yards downfield and finding no one to block, retreats behind the neutral zone and blocks for A2, who eventually throws a forward pass that crosses the neutral zone. RULING: A1 is an ineligible illegally downfield. The prohibition against ineligibles downfield for A starts at the snap and the fact A1 was no longer downfield when the pass was thrown has no bearing on the ruling.

AR 5.9.D: Eligible receiver A1 is running a sideline route when he intentionally steps out of bounds at A's 30-yard line. A1 returns inbounds and (a) catches or touches a forward pass from A2, (b) cannot catch a forward pass because of interference by B3 or (c) interferes with B3 so he cannot intercept the pass. RULING: Stepping out of bounds means A1 is guilty of illegal participation, a 15-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot. He is not an ineligible illegally downfield. In (a), when he catches or touches the pass, he is also guilty of illegal touching. In (b), the interference by B3 creates a double foul; the penalties cancel and the down is replayed. In (c), A1 is also guilty of offensive pass interference.

Unlike what you see on TV, a player in an ineligible position cannot become eligible by reporting to the referee.



Section 10

Illegal Touching

An ineligible A player has illegally touched a forward pass if he bats, muffs or catches a legal forward pass unless the pass has first been touched by B.

ILLEGAL TOUCHING: PENALTY

5 yards from the previous spot. Signal 16.

ILLEGAL TOUCHING: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.10.A: Ineligible receiver A2 is behind, in or beyond his neutral zone when a forward pass by A1 (a) accidentally strikes him in the back, (b) is muffed by him or (c) is caught by him. RULING: In (a), there is no infraction, but in (b) and (c) it is illegal touching. The acts in both (b) and (c) are intentional and not accidental as in (a). Note: Ineligible downfield could also be called; the yardage penalty is the same.

AR 5.10.B: A1's forward pass is deflected by B1 and then caught by interior lineman A2 behind the neutral zone. RULING: No foul has occurred as A2 became an eligible receiver after B1 touched the pass.

AR 5.10.C: A1 throws a forward pass beyond the neutral zone that is touched by eligible A2 and is muffed high into the air. While the muffed ball is in the air (a) ineligible A3 blocks B1 away from the ball or (b) ineligible A3 touches the ball in an attempt to catch it. RULING: Legal action in (a) but illegal touching in (b). After A2 touches the ball, eligible offensive team players may use hands or arms. Pass interference restrictions for eligibles have ended. However, an ineligible A player may not touch the pass until a B player has touched it. The ineligible, however, may block an opponent to keep him from getting to the ball or to help a teammate secure possession.

Section 11

Interference by A

1. Pass interference restrictions only apply beyond the neutral zone and only if the legal forward pass, untouched by B in or behind the neutral zone, crosses the neutral zone.

2. Pass interference restrictions are in effect for all A players until the ball is touched by B or the pass is incomplete.

3. Ineligible A players may not touch the pass but can use hands or arms in a legal block to ward off an opponent.

4. It is forward-pass interference if any player of A who is beyond the neutral zone interferes with an eligible opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch or bat the pass; or if any A player hinders an opponent's vision without making an

attempt to catch, intercept or bat the ball, even though no contact was made.



5. It is not forward-pass interference if unavoidable contact occurs when two or more eligibles are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch or bat the pass.

INTERFERENCE BY A: PENALTY

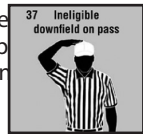
15 yards. Signal 33. If the interference is intentional, A is penalized an additional 15 yards. Signal 27.

The interference restrictions on A players are more stringent because they know the play is a pass.

INTERFERENCE BY A: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.11.A: A1 goes downfield and pushes off B2 (pushes him away from A1 to help him make his cut), cuts toward the sideline and catches A3's pass. A1's push occurred prior to B4 tipping the pass. RULING: Pass interference on A1. Restrictions for A begin at the snap.

AR 5.11.B: Eligible receiver A1 blocks an opponent 10 yards downfield. The pass is in flight. The pass is completed to A2, who is (a) beyond or (b) in the neutral zone when he catches the ball. RULING: It is a foul for pass interference in (a) and a legal block in (b).



AR 5.11.C: B3 gets in the path of receiver A4 without making contact. B3's presence results in A4 initiating contact in an effort to reach the ball. RULING: A foul by A4 for offensive pass interference.

AR 5.11.D: Before A1 throws a pass beyond the neutral zone, A2 contacts lineman B1 on his line and drives him back four yards. RULING: Offensive pass interference by A2 because he has driven B1 beyond the expanded neutral zone.

Section 12

Interference by B

1. Pass interference restrictions on a legal forward pass begin for B when the ball leaves the passer's hand. Pass interference restrictions are in effect for all B players until the ball is touched or the pass is incomplete.

2. It is forward-pass interference if any player of B who is beyond the neutral zone interferes with an eligible opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch or bat the pass; or if any B player hinders an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, intercept or bat the ball, even though no contact was made.

3. It is not forward-pass interference if unavoidable contact occurs when two or more eligibles are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch or bat the pass; or if contact by B is obviously away from the direction of the pass.

- In order for pass interference to occur, it must be a legal

forward pass, the contact must occur beyond the neutral zone and the pass must be untouched by team B in or behind the neutral zone.

INTERFERENCE BY B: PENALTY

15 yards for A. Signals 33 and 8. If the interference is intentional, B is penalized an additional 15 yards. Signal 27.



Unlike what you see on TV, in USA Football defensive pass interference may be called even if the pass is not catchable and even if there is no contact.

INTERFERENCE BY B: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 5.12.A: B3 gets in the path of a receiver, A4, without making contact. B3's presence results in A4 slowing down to avoid contact. RULING: No foul.

AR 5.12.B: While a legal forward pass is in flight (a) B1 interferes with eligible A1 and then there is an inadvertent whistle or (b) a whistle is inadvertently sounded after that B2 contacts A2 while the ball is still in flight. RULING: In (a), if the captain accepts the penalty for a foul that occurred prior to the inadvertent whistle, the whistle is disregarded. It will be a new series for A, 15 yards in advance of the previous spot. In (b), the contact by B2 occurred during a dead-ball situation unless it is a personal foul, will be ignored. Because the whistle was sounded while a legal forward pass was in flight, the down shall be replayed.



AR 5.12.C: Quarterback A1 drops back and throws a forward pass toward the sideline to A2, who is behind the neutral zone. B1 blocks A2 behind the line prior to A2 touching the ball. RULING: Legal block in (a) since interference restrictions for B do not apply to a forward pass that does not cross the neutral zone.

AR 5.12.D: On second down, quarterback A1 drops back and throws a forward pass to A2, who is behind the neutral zone. A2 throws a backward pass to A1. A1 then throws the ball forward beyond the neutral zone to A3. B1 blocks A3 away from the ball and intercepts A1's pass.

RULING: Legal contact by B1 and an illegal forward pass by A1. Pass interference restrictions for B players ended when the first pass by A1 was touched. B will likely decline the foul and keep the ball. If the foul for illegal forward pass is accepted, it is 5 yards, but A retains the ball.

AR 5.12.E: Quarterback A1 drops back 15 yards and throws a legal forward pass intended for A2, who is 5 yards behind the neutral zone. Before the pass reaches A2, B1 (a) tackles A2 or (b) engages A2 above the waist from the front. RULING: In (a), tackling A2 is a foul, as it is a form of holding. Defensive players are prohibited from grasping an opponent other than the runner. In (b), the contact by B1 is not pass interference because A2 is behind the line.

AR 5.12.F: A1 is in a position to catch a forward pass beyond the neutral zone. An opponent, who is in the vicinity, turns his back to the ball. The opponent directs his

attention to A1 and waves his arms to block the vision of the potential receiver or interceptor. **RULING:** Hindering an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, intercept or bat the ball is pass interference even though no contact was made.

Unlike what you see on TV, there is no "5-yard chuck zone." A defensive player may block a receiver until the receiver is at the same-yard line or beyond the defender. That contact may or may not occur five or more yards beyond the line of scrimmage.

AR 5.12.G: A11 is running a deep post pattern and B11 (a) contacts A11 knocking him off his intended path or (b) grabs A11's jersey. In both situations, the pass has already crossed the neutral zone and the pass is clearly away from the intended receiver. **RULING:** In (a) there is no foul for pass interference and (b) there is a foul for illegal holding.



Section 1 New Series

1. The team legally in possession after a free kick, touchback, fair catch, awarded fair catch or change of team possession shall put the ball in play by snap. That team is awarded a series of four consecutively numbered downs in which to advance the ball to the line to gain. Each awarded first down starts a new series of four downs. The ball may also be put in play by free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

2. To start a new series of downs after a change of team possession after a touchback, the foremost point of the ball is placed on the 20-yard line.

3. When a scrimmage down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to A if the ball belongs to A on or beyond the line to gain.

4. When a scrimmage down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to B if the ball belongs to B at the end of any down; or if, at the end of fourth down, the ball belongs to A behind the line to gain.

5. When a scrimmage down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to the team in possession at the end of the down if R is the first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the expanded neutral zone, unless the penalty is accepted for a non post-scrimmage kick foul that occurred before the kick ended; or if there is a change of team possession during the down, unless the penalty is accepted for a non post-

scrimmage kick foul that occurred before the change of possession.

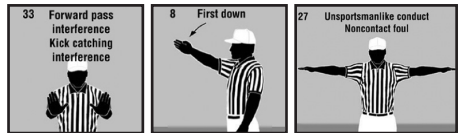
6. When a free-kick down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to the team in possession of the ball when the down ends if the ball is recovered beyond R's free-kick line with no first touching by K.

7. After a scrimmage kick, a new series is awarded to R at the spot of first touching by K, if K is first to touch the kicked ball beyond the expanded neutral zone before it is touched beyond this zone by R and before it has come to rest. However, the right of R to take the ball at the spot of the first touching by K is canceled if R touches the kick and thereafter during the down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.

8. When a free-kick down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to R at the inbounds spot if R touches the kicked ball before it goes out of bounds.

9. When a free-kick down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to R at the spot of recovery if K recovers the kicked ball before it travels the 10 yards to R's free-kick line and before R has touched the ball or if there is joint possession by R and K of a recovered kick.

10. When a free-kick down ends with the ball in the field of play or out of bounds between the goal lines, a new series is awarded to R at the spot of first touching by K if K is the first to touch the kicked ball before it has gone 10 yards. However, the right of R to take the ball at the spot of the first touching by K is canceled if R touches the kick and thereafter during the down commits a foul or if the penalty is accepted for any foul committed during the down.



NEW SERIES: APPROVED RULINGS



AR 6.1.A: Following the ready-for-play signal for a new series by A, (a) B1 encroaches or (b) A1 false starts. RULING: In (a), it is first and five for A. In (b) it is first and 15 for A.

AR 6.1.B: third-and-10 for A from B's 40-yard line. A1 gains 10 yards and is downed on B's 30. A2 taunts B1 during the run. RULING: Since the live-ball action gave A a new series, the line to gain shall be established after A is penalized for A2's unsportsmanlike act. It will be First-and-10 for A from B's 45-yard line.

- Whether the next down will be first is determined at the time the ball becomes dead and after considering the effect of any act, except a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul, that occurred during the down.
- In USA Football rules, the penalty for all personal fouls by B includes an automatic first down.

Section 2

Effect of a Penalty

1. When a foul occurs during a scrimmage down and before any change of team possession and before a receiver is first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the neutral zone, the number of the next down is the same as that of the down during that the foul occurred unless penalty acceptance includes a first down or the enforcement or the advance results in a first down.

2. When a foul occurs prior to a scrimmage down or simultaneously with the snap, the number of the next down after enforcement is the same as the number established before the foul occurred unless enforcement for a foul by B results in a first down.

3. When a foul occurs prior to or during a free-kick down and before any change of team possession, the down that follows enforcement is a free-kick down unless a scrimmage down is chosen for the replay following a fair catch or an awarded fair catch.

4. When a penalty is declined, the number of the next down is the same as if the foul had not occurred. If a double foul occurs during a down, the number of the next down is the same as that of the down in which the foul occurred.

5. Following a foul, a series of downs ends and A is awarded a new series if the acceptance of the penalty includes the award of a first down or if acceptance or declination of any penalty leaves A in possession beyond the line-to-gain.

6. After a first, second or third down, a new series of downs is awarded only after considering the effect of any act during the down and any dead-ball foul by B. After a fourth down, a new series of downs shall be awarded only after considering the effect of any act during the down.

7. Following a foul, a series of downs ends when there is acceptance or declination of the penalty for any foul that occurs after team possession changes during the down or R is first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the neutral zone, unless a non-post-scrimmage kick foul occurs before the kick ends and the penalty is accepted.



8. Following a foul, a series of downs ends and B is awarded a new series when declination of any penalty leaves A in possession behind the line to gain after fourth down or, after a change of possession, declination of any penalty leaves B in possession.

EFFECT OF A PENALTY: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 6.2.A: Fourth down and four from A's 20-yard line. A1 runs to A's 30-yard line and throws an incomplete forward pass. RULING: If B declines the penalty for the illegal pass, it will be A's ball First-and-10 from A's 30-yard line. If B accepts the 5-yard penalty, it will still be a first down for A from A's 25-yard line. A is awarded a new series because, even if the penalty is enforced, the ball is beyond the line to gain.

AR 6.2.B: Fourth down and four from A's 20-yard line. A1 throws an incomplete pass. B1 is flagged for a personal foul (a) while the ball is live or (b) after the ball is dead. RULING: In (a), A will likely accept the 15-yard penalty, that results in a first down at its own 35-yard line. In (b), because the foul occurred on fourth down after

RULE 6 SERIES OF DOWNS

IN THIS RULE

- How a team is awarded a first down
- How penalties affect the number of the next down
- Ways in which the ball may be put into play

Section 1: New Series 101

Section 2: Effect of a Penalty 102

 Effect of a Penalty: Approved Rulings 103

Section 3: Line to Gain and Measurements 104

Section 4: Ball Placement..... 105

Section 5: Modified Competition Rule..... 105



- A series can never begin with a down other than first.
- After a fair catch or awarded fair catch, the team in possession may snap or free kick.
- On fourth-down plays, A must get a first down by virtue of the yardage gained, including any yardage or an automatic first down from penalties for player fouls during the down or it is a new series for B automatically when the down ends unless the down is to be repeated.
- Officials should conduct a measurement whenever there is doubt as to whether the ball is beyond or short of the line to gain. However, officials are not required to honor measurement requests from coaches or captains.



A failed to make a first down, the penalty is enforced to start B's new series. The chains are set after enforcement. Therefore, it is B's ball, first-and-10 at A's 35-yard line.

AR 6.2.C: Second-and-2 at A's 25-yard line. A1 advances to B's 30. Following the down, A2 illegally contacts B1. RULING: The 15-yard penalty is enforced and then the chain is set. It will be First-and-10 for A at B's 15-yard line.

AR 6.2.D: Second-and-2 at A's 20-yard line. A1 throws an incomplete pass. Following the down, A2 and B1 are flagged for personal fouls. RULING: If the officials know the order in which the fouls occurred, the penalties are enforced in that order. Thus, if B1 was the instigator, the 15-yard penalty against B takes the ball to A's 35-yard line (beyond the line to gain) and A is awarded a first down. The 15-yard penalty against A2 is then enforced back to A's 20-yard line. The chains are then set and it is First-and-10 for A. If A2 committed the first foul, enforcement of the penalty is half the distance to A's 10-yard line. The 15-yard penalty for B1's foul is enforced. The result is First-and-10 for A from its own 25-yard line. If the officials do not know the order in which the fouls occurred, the penalties cancel and it is third-and-2 at A's 20-yard line.

Section 3

Line to Gain and Measurements

1. The line to gain is the yard line established when a new series (first down) is awarded. Unless there is a penalty following the ready-for-play signal, the line to gain is 10 yards in advance of the foremost point of the ball when placed for the first down of the series. The penalties for all fouls (including nonplayer and unsportsmanlike) committed prior to the ready-for-play signal shall be administered before the line to gain is established. The line to gain then remains fixed until the series ends and a new line to gain is established.

2. If the line to gain extends into the end zone, the goal line is the line to gain.

3. To start a new series of downs after a change of team possession, that does not involve a fourth-down incomplete forward pass, a safety or touchback, the foremost point of the ball at the time it became dead becomes the rear point when the direction of the offense is changed.

4. To start a new series of downs after a change of team possession after a fourth-down incomplete forward pass, the ball is placed at the previous spot so the rear point becomes the foremost point.

5. The referee may call for the official line-to-gain equipment to be brought onto the field for a measurement. Measurement shall be parallel with the sideline and from a convenient yard line to the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when it became dead. The ball shall be placed with its long axis parallel with the sideline before measurement. The inside edge of the foremost rod marks the line to gain when the traditional yardage chain is used. Following measurement in a side zone, the chain should be used to place the ball at the inbounds line.

6. A measurement may be requested by the captain prior to the ball being marked ready for play, but it may be denied if, in the referee's opinion, it is obvious the line to gain has or has not been reached.



Giving the referee the power to deny a measurement when it is obviously not needed prevents teams from gaining an advantage through a play stoppage to plan strategy.

LINE TO GAIN AND MEASUREMENTS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 6.3.A: On fourth-and-goal, the ball is snapped with the front (nose) of the ball on B's 5-yard line. A1 throws an incomplete pass. RULING: The chains and down marker — not the ball — are adjusted for the new series. The ball should be placed as it was for the previous down, so that the “new tail” of the ball is on the 5-yard line and the “new nose” is beyond B's 5-yard line.

AR 6.3.B: Following a third-down play, the officials do not measure as the referee judges the line to gain clearly has not been reached. A lines up in punt formation. Just before assuming his set position, the captain of A requests a measurement.

RULING: The request is denied. The captain must make a request for measurement before the ball is marked ready for play and no measurement is made if it is obvious the line to gain has not been reached.



Section 4

Ball Placement

1. A captain of a team is a player designated to represent his team during ball placement on a try, a kickoff, after a safety and after a fair catch or awarded fair catch.

2. When a team may designate the spot along the proper-yard line from that the ball is to be put in play, it shall have the same privilege if the down is to be replayed or a dead-ball foul occurs.

BALL PLACEMENT: APPROVED RULING

AR 6.4.A: Prior to the ready-for-play on a try, A's captain requests the ball be placed on the right side inbounds line. After A deploys in a spread formation, (a) A1 does not like the defensive coverage and requests a timeout or (b) a dead-ball foul occurs. The captain of A then asks the referee to move the ball to a position midway between the uprights. RULING: The request is denied in (a) and honored in (b). The captain may ask that the ball be placed at a certain point between the inbounds line. However, once spotted the ball may not be moved because of a second request. If a dead-ball foul occurs or a foul occurs during the down and the penalty is accepted, the captain again will be given an opportunity to pick a spot for the replay.

Section 5

Modified Competition Rule



When a team scores to take a 30-point lead any time in the second half, the trailing team gets the ball at the opponent's 40-yard line; if at any time in the second half the deficit is reduced to fewer than 30 points, traditional rules take effect. If the 30-point deficit occurs at the start of the second half, the trailing team begins the second half in possession at the opponent's 40-yard line even if the leading team was to receive the second-half kickoff.

Section 1

Legal Blocking

1. The closed- or cupped-hand technique is a legal method of blocking. In that technique, the elbows may be inside or outside the shoulders, the hands must be closed or cupped with the palms not facing the opponent and the forearms are extended no more than 45 degrees from the body.

2. The open-hand technique is also a legal method of blocking. In that technique, the hand(s) shall be in advance of the elbow, inside the frame of the blocker's body and inside the frame of the opponent's body, except when the opponent turns his back to the blocker during the block or after the blocker is committed to his charge; at or below the shoulders of the blocker and the opponent, except when the opponent squats, ducks or submarines during the block or after the blocker is committed to his charge; and the hands shall be open, when the palm(s) are facing the frame of the opponent or when the forearms are extended beyond the 45 degree angle from the body.

3. A defensive player may also use unlocked hands, hand or arm to ward off an opponent who is blocking him or is attempting to block him.

4. When a player simulates possession of the ball, reasonable allowance may be made for failure of the defense to discover the deception.

5. A runner may use hands or arms to ward off or push any player. An offensive player may also use his hands or arms during a kick, to ward off an opponent who is attempting to block him.

6. When a player on defense uses a hand or arm, the hand must be in advance of the elbow at the time of the contact and at the shoulder or below unless the opponent squats, ducks or submarines.

Unlike other codes, in USA Football there is no free-blocking zone or other area in that blocking below the waist, clipping and blocking in the back are allowed. All blocks must be above the waist and in front.

LEGAL BLOCKING: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.1.A: During a scrimmage down, blocker A1 contacts B1 with open hands (a) while his forearms are extended more than 45 degrees from his body and the palms of his hands are toward the defender or (b) in a pushing action when extending his arms beyond 45 degrees from his body.

RULING: It is a legal blocking technique in both (a) or (b).

AR 7.1.B: As the offensive linemen charge on the snap of the ball, B1 (a) contacts A1 with one hand on his shoulder pad and the other hand on his helmet in fighting off the block or (b) pulls A1's shoulders to one side and charges through in an effort to get to the runner. RULING: The action by B1 in (a) and (b) is legal.

AR 7.1.C: A1 and A2 block B1 above the waist at the same time.

RULING: Multiple blocks above the waist and from the front are legal.

AR 7.1.D: A sets in a formation with the split end A1 outside the defensive end and outside the linebacker. Following the snap, A1 blocks toward the ball on either B1, the defensive end or B2, the linebacker, who is two yards behind the neutral zone. A1 blocks (a) B1 above the waist from the front or (b) B1 with his hands on the side of B1's shoulder pads. RULING: Legal block in (a) and (b).

AR 7.1.E: A1 is leading interference on a sweep play and makes initial contact (a) with B1's hands that are above his waist and, thereafter, contact is at B's knees or (b) at B1's waist level, but as he continues contact he does block on B1's legs. RULING: Legal contact in (a) and (b). If the initial contact is with the opponent's body, hands or arms, at the waist or above and in continuation the contact is below the waist, it is a legal block.

AR 7.1.F: R1 rushes in to block a punt by K1. K2 attempts to block R1. The direction of K2's block is above the waist; however, just before contact R1 jumps in the air attempting to block the punt and contact by K2 is below R1's waist.



RULING: K2's block is legal since the initial direction was legal and the below-the-waist contact was as a result of R1's movement. When R1 jumped in the air, it absolved K2 of responsibility for the low block. This would not be true if R1 changed direction laterally; in which case initial blocking contact must be above the opponent's waist.

AR 7.1.G: A1 contacts B1 with a legal block above the waist. The contact causes both players to stop or to bounce backward slightly and A1 immediately continues his charge and blocks B1 below the waist.

RULING: Legal block. It is permissible for A1's block to be below the waist if it is part of a continuous block or continuous charge after first contact was above the waist.

AR 7.1.H: Runner A1 is hit behind the line. The ball pops free and (a) is in the air or (b) is rolling on the ground, when B1 pushes A2 in the back above the waist to get to the loose ball. RULING: Legal in both (a) and (b).



AR 7.1.I: Runner A1 breaks free beyond the neutral zone at midfield. A2 is running between A1 and safety B1, who is gaining fast on both of them. As B1 nears A2 he pushes him from behind above the waist to clear the way to A1. B1 subsequently tackles A1 at B's 10-yard line. RULING: B1's contact on blocker A2 is legal when attempting to get to the runner or to catch or recover a loose ball that he may possess.

Section 2

Blocking Below the Waist

Blocking below the waist is making initial contact below the waist from the front or side against an opponent other than a runner. Blocking below the waist applies only when the opponent has one or both feet on the ground. No player (team A or team B) shall block an opponent below the waist except to tackle a runner or player pretending to be a runner.

BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST: PENALTY

15 yards. Signal 40. If foul is by B, penalty includes an automatic first down. Signal 8.

BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.2.A: A1 is in shotgun formation, lined up seven yards behind the line of scrimmage ready to receive the snap. Immediately after the snap to A1, (a) A2 immediately drops and blocks B1 below the waist or (b) A2 rises and slightly retreats as if to go in traditional pass blocking protection but then dives and blocks B1 below the waist. RULING: Illegal block in (a) and (b). Blocking below the waist in the manner described is illegal.

AR 7.2.B: A runs a sweep with A2 leading the blocking. B3 blocks A2 below the waist to allow teammates to reach the runner. RULING: Foul. Blocking below the waist restrictions apply to both teams.

Section 3

Blocking In the Back

1. Blocking in the back is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is in the opponent's back, inside the shoulders and below the helmet and above the

RULE 7 CONTACT

IN THIS RULE

- Legal and illegal blocks
- Personal fouls
- Legal and illegal tackles

Section 1: Legal Blocking.....	109	Tackling/Horse-Collar: Approved	
Legal Blocking: Approved Rulings	109	Rulings	117
Section 2: Blocking Below the Waist.....	111	Section 11: Illegal Helmet Contact.....	117
Blocking Below the Waist: Penalty	111	Illegal Helmet Contact: Penalty.....	117
Blocking Below the Waist:		Illegal Helmet Contact: Approved	
Approved Rulings.....	111	Rulings	117
Section 3: Blocking In the Back.....	111	Section 12: Fighting.....	119
Block In the Back: Penalty.....	111	Fighting: Penalty	119
Block In the Back: Approved		Fighting: Approved Rulings.....	119
Rulings	112	Section 13: Personal Fouls.....	120
Section 4: Clipping	112	Personal Fouls: Penalty.....	121
Clipping: Penalty.....	112	Personal Fouls: Approved Rulings.....	121
Section 5: Helping the Runner.....	112	Section 14: Facemask Fouls.....	122
Helping the Runner: Penalty	113	Facemask Fouls: Penalty.....	122
Helping the Runner: Approved		Facemask Fouls: Approved	
Ruling	113	Rulings	122
Section 6: Holding	113	Section 15: Roughing the	
Holding: Penalty.....	113	Kicker/Holder	123
Holding: Approved Rulings.....	113	Roughing the Kicker/Holder:	
Section 7: Illegal Use of Hands or		Penalty	123
Arms.....	114	Roughing the Kicker/Holder:	
Illegal Use of Hands or Arms:		Approved Rulings.....	123
Penalty	114	Section 16: Roughing the Passer	124
Illegal Use of Hands or Arms:		Roughing the Passer: Penalty	124
Approved Rulings.....	114	Roughing the Passer: Approved	
Section 8: Interlocked Blocking.....	116	Rulings	125
Interlocked Blocking: Penalty	116	Section 17: Striking, Kicking or	
Interlocked Blocking: Approved		Kneeing an Opponent	125
Rulings.....	116	Striking, Kicking, Kneeing an	
Section 9: Tripping		Opponent: Penalty.....	125
Tripping: Penalty	116	Section 18: Intentionally Contacting	
Tripping: Approved Ruling.....	116	An Official	126
Section 10: Tackling/Horse-Collar	116	Intentionally Contacting An	
Penalty	117	Official: Penalty.....	126



- Blocking by a player either on offense or defense is legal unless it is kick-catching interference, forwardpass interference or a personal foul.
- Any player may push, pull or ward off an opponent in an actual attempt to get at the runner or a loose ball if such contact is not pass interference, a personal foul or illegal use of hands.
- Per USA Football rules, the penalty for any personal foul by B includes an automatic first down.

waist and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner.

2. Blocking an opponent in the back is illegal when it is not an attempt to ward off a blocker, reach a runner or catch or recover a loose ball that the blocker may legally touch or possess or is not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner. When in doubt, the contact is legal and not from behind.

BLOCK IN THE BACK: PENALTY

10 yards. Signal 43.

Blocking below the waist, clipping and blocking in the back are illegal in USA football because players are to be taught basic, legal blocking techniques.

BLOCK IN THE BACK: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.3.A: A9 is approaching B10 in the open field and at an angle. A9 pushes B10 in the back with one hand and with the other hand on the shoulder. RULING: Illegal block in the back.

AR 7.3.B: Runner A1 breaks free beyond the neutral zone at midfield. A2 is running between A1 and safety B1, who is gaining fast on both of them. As B1 nears A2 he pushes him from behind above the waist to clear the way to A1. B1 subsequently tackles A1 at B's 10-yard line. RULING: B1's contact on blocker A2 is legal when attempting to get to the runner or to catch or recover a loose ball that he may possess.



Section 4 Clipping

Clipping is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is from behind, at or below the waist and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner. When the contact is ruled to be from behind and the official has question as to the initial point of contact, it shall be ruled clipping.

CLIPPING: PENALTY

15 yards. Signal 39. If foul is by B, penalty includes an automatic first down. Signal 8.

Clipping is an extremely dangerous block because it is directed at an especially vulnerable part of the opponent's body and in a manner that prevents the blocked player from anticipating or avoiding it.



Section 5

Helping the Runner

An offensive player shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist his forward progress.

HELPING THE RUNNER: PENALTY

5 yards. Signal 44.

HELPING THE RUNNER: APPROVED RULING

AR 7.5.A: With fourth-and-goal from B's 1-yard line, runner A1 is pushed at the line of scrimmage from behind by A2 in an effort by A2 to get him into the end zone.

RULING: A2 has fouled by helping the runner. The foul carries a 5-yard penalty. Therefore it will be fourth-and-goal from B's 6-yard line if the penalty is accepted.

Section 6

Holding

An offensive player (except the runner) shall not use his hands, arms or legs to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent. A defensive player shall not use his hands, arms or legs to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent other than the runner.

HOLDING: PENALTY

10 yards. Signal 42.

HOLDING: APPROVED RULINGS

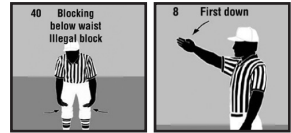
AR 7.6.A: During a scrimmage kick beyond the expanded neutral zone, R1 gives a fair-catch signal. He muffs the kick into the air, where K3 tackles R1 following the muff, preventing R1 from catching the kick. RULING: It is a holding foul for K3 to tackle R1 following the muff, thus preventing him from reaching the ball.

AR 7.6.B: A11 is running a deep post pattern and B11 grabs A11's jersey. The pass has already crossed the neutral zone and the pass is clearly away from the intended receiver. RULING: That is a foul for holding.

AR 7.6.C: A1 is blocking with open hands (a) outside his own frame or (b) outside B1's frame, during contact. RULING: A1 is using an illegal blocking technique in both (a) and (b). When the hands are outside the frame, as described above and grasps the opponent or his equipment, it is a holding foul instead of illegal use of hands.

AR 7.6.D: Quarterback A1 drops back 15 yards and throws a legal forward pass intended for A2, who is 5 yards behind the neutral zone. Before the pass reaches A2, B1 tackles A2. RULING: Tackling A2 is a foul as it is a form of holding. Defensive players are prohibited from grasping an opponent other than the runner. The foul occurs during a loose-ball play and the 10-yard penalty will be administered from the previous spot.

Unlike what you see on TV, the penalty for defensive holding in USA Football does not include a first down.



Section 7

Illegal Use of Hands or Arms

1. The runner may not grasp a teammate.
2. A defensive player shall not use his hands to add momentum to the charge of a teammate who is on the line of scrimmage; use his hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold in an effort to restrain an opponent other than the runner; or contact an eligible receiver who is no longer a potential blocker.
3. The blocker's hand(s) may not be locked nor may he swing, throw or flip the elbow or forearm so that it is moving faster than the blocker's shoulders at the time the elbow, forearm or shoulder contacts the opponent. The blocker may not initiate contact with his arm or hand against an opponent above the opponent's shoulder, but he may use his hand or arm to break a fall or maintain his balance.

ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS OR ARMS: PENALTY

10 yards. Signal 42.

ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS OR ARMS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.7.A: During a running play, blocker A1 has his hands cupped and together in front of his body with his elbows outside his shoulders. As he approaches his opponent, he raises his hands and forearms perpendicular to the ground to contact his opponent. RULING: If the blocker's palms are facing the opponent or if his forearms are extended more than 45 degrees from his body, the hands must be open at and during contact.

AR 7.7.B: Blocker A1 has his hands and arms in legal position with the elbows outside the body and (a) when B1 attempts to penetrate his block in an upright position, he contacts B1 above the shoulders with his forearm or (b) as ducks or submarines, A1 contacts him above the shoulder with



in
B2



his cupped hands. RULING: In (a), it is an illegal blocking technique because contact was made above the defensive player's shoulders while he was in a normal upright position. In (b), the responsibility for the contact on the head of B2 is that of B2, because he has taken evasive action to avoid the block. It is assumed contact by A1 in (b) does not violate the provision of striking or contacting above the

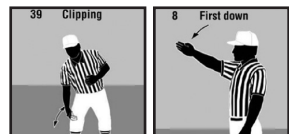
shoulders.

AR 7.7.C: In blocking B1, A1's forearms are almost fully extended from his body and he contacts B1 with the side of his closed hands. The palms of A1's hands are not directly facing B1. RULING: An illegal blocking technique by A1. The hands may not be closed or cupped when the arms are extended more than 45 degrees from the blocker's body.

AR 7.7.D: A1 is blocking with open hands (a) outside his own frame or (b) outside B1's frame during contact. RULING: A1 is using an illegal blocking technique in both (a) and (b). When the hands are outside the frame, as described above and grasps the opponent or his equipment, it is a holding foul instead of illegal use of hands.

AR 7.7.E: A1 makes legal contact on B1's chest using extended arms with open hands. B1 spins in an effort to evade A1 and get to the passer. A1 effectively maintains contact while shifting his hands to B1's upper arm and then directly on his back as B1 turns. A1 continues the contact and finishes the block by forcing B1 beyond the passer. RULING: The described blocking technique is legal. In order to legally contact the back of the opponent in this situation it must either be a continuation of contact that was legal originally or because the opponent turned so quickly the blocker could not stop his charge in time to avoid contact on the back. When the extended-arms technique is used, the hands must be open on contact and remain open during the contact. The open-hand blocking technique may be used in any situation where blocking is legal for A.

AR 7.7.F: End A1 sprints from the line and then cuts sharply toward the middle of the field. A1 makes no attempt to block defensive back B1. B1 pursues A1 and pushes him from the side using his open hands. Contact is made on A1's upper arm before the pass



is thrown. A1 was moving away from B1 when the contact occurred. RULING: Illegal use of hands by B1. A defender may legally contact an eligible receiver beyond the neutral zone before the pass is in flight. The contact may be a block or warding off the opponent who is attempting to block by pushing or pulling him. However, if the receiver is not attempting to block or has gone past or is moving

away, it is illegal for the defender to use hands in the manner described. In this situation, it is clear that A1 is no longer a potential blocker on B1.

AR 7.7.G: As the offensive linemen charge on the snap of the ball, B1 (a) grasps guard A1 by the jersey and controls him until he sees where the ball is going, (b) slaps A1 on the side of the helmet with an open hand and forces his head to the side with what is commonly called the "bell ringer," (c) contacts A1 with one hand on his shoulder pad and the other hand on his helmet in fighting off the block, (d)

pulls A1's shoulders to one side and charges through in an effort to get to the runner or (e) pulls A1's shoulders to one side so B2 may charge through to the runner. **RULING:** It is holding in (a), that will result in a 10-yard penalty administered in accordance with the all-but-one principle, if accepted. In (b), it is illegal personal contact and (e), it is illegal use of hands by B1, that also carries a 10-yard penalty. The action by B1 in (c) and (d) is legal.



Section 8

Interlocked Blocking

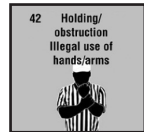
An offensive player (except the runner) shall not grasp or encircle any teammate to form interlocked blocking.

INTERLOCKED BLOCKING: PENALTY

10 yards. Signal 44.

INTERLOCKED BLOCKING: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.8.A: Following the snap on a kick try, the offensive linemen "step down" and interlock feet. **RULING:** Legal. However, prior to the snap only the linemen next to the snapper are permitted to lock legs with the snapper.



AR 7.8.B: On a successful try for point by kick, the interior linemen of K all reached across and grasped the teammate immediately to their inside after the snap. **RULING:** Interlocked blocking, 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul since this spot is probably behind the basic spot.

Section 9

Tripping

1. Tripping is the use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent, who is not the runner, below the knee.

2. A player shall not trip an opponent who is not a runner.

TRIPPING: PENALTY

15 yards. Signal 46.

TRIPPING: APPROVED RULING

AR 7.9.A: B1 tackles runner A1 with a trip with his foot. **RULING:** Legal.

Section 10



Tackling/Horse-Collar

1. Tackling is the use of hands, arms, legs or body by a defensive player in his attempt to hold a runner or to bring him to the ground.

2. All players are prohibited from grabbing the inside back or side collar of the shoulder pads or jersey and pulling an opponent down (horse-collar).

HORSE-COLLAR: PENALTY

15 yards and automatic first down. Signals 38, 25 and 8.

TACKLING/HORSE-COLLAR: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.10.A: During a running play beyond the neutral zone, A1 is momentarily in the clear and B1 comes up to make the tackle. B1 keeps his head in an upright position with his eyes on the numbers of A1 and (a) moves his head at the last moment so that he contacts A1 with his shoulder or (b) moves his head to attempt a shoulder tackle, but because of a sharp cut by A1, there is some contact with the side of the helmet of B1.

RULING: Legal in both (a) and (b).

AR 7.10.B: B1 tackles runner A1 with (a) a cross-body block at the knees, (b) a block from behind and below the waist, (c) a trip with his foot or (d) his arms and shoulder. RULING: The techniques in (a), (b), (c) and (d) are all legal.

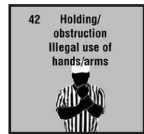
AR 7.11.C: B1 grabs runner A1's shoulder pad opening from behind and (a) pulls A1 down abruptly backward; (b) pulls A1 down to the ground from the side; (c) rides A1 for several yards before pulling A1 backward to the ground; or (d) rides A1 for several yards before A1 falls forward.

RULING: Horse-collar in (a), (b) and (c), no foul in (d).

AR 7.11.D: B1 grabs runner A1's shoulder pad opening from behind and (a) A1 does not go down from the contact; (b) B2 tackles A1 while still in B1's grasp; or (c) A1 runs four more yards before being pulled down.

RULING: No foul in (a) and (b); foul in (c) because A1 subsequently went down because of the horse-collar.

AR 7.11.E: B1 grabs runner A1's shoulder pad opening from behind, causing A1 to fumble. B2 recovers the fumble. A1 (a) does not go down from the contact; or (b) does go down. RULING: No foul in (a) because A1 did not go down. Horse-collar in (b).



Section 11



Illegal Helmet Contact/Contacting Opponent's Head

1. Illegal helmet contact is an act of initiating contact with the helmet against an opponent. Butt blocking, face tackling and spearing are examples of illegal helmet contact. Illegal helmet contact may be considered a flagrant act.

2. Butt blocking is an act by an offensive or defensive player who initiates contact against an opponent who is not a ball carrier with the front of his helmet.

3. Face tackling is an act by a defensive player who initiates contact with a ball carrier with the front of his helmet.

4. Spearing is an act by an offensive or defensive player who initiates contact against any opponent with the top of his helmet.

5. No player shall strike an opponent above the shoulders using his helmet, shoulder or arms.

ILLEGAL HELMET CONTACT/ CONTACTING OPPONENT'S HEAD: PENALTY

15 yards. Signal 24. Disqualification if flagrant. Signal 47. If foul is by B, penalty includes an automatic first down. Signal 8.

ILLEGAL HELMET CONTACT: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.11.A: From a four-point stance on the offensive line, interior lineman A1 (a) contacts an opponent by driving his facemask directly into the opponent's chest, (b) contacts an opponent with his shoulder so that his head is to the side of the opponent's body and the helmet does not make initial contact or (c) attempts to block an opponent with a shoulder, but because of a defensive slant, primary contact with the opponent is made with A1's helmet. **RULING:** The block in (a) is illegal butt blocking. In (b), even though there was some contact with the helmet, the block is legal because the helmet or facemask was not used to deliver the blow. In (c), the covering official will have to use good judgment. Because of defensive slants and stunts, there will be instances in which the blocker attempts to make a legal shoulder block but inadvertently contacts an opponent with either his facemask or helmet. When this is the case, contact does not result in a direct blow and is legal.

AR 7.11.B: Flanker A1 comes back toward the ball and contacts B1 from the front above the waist in delivering a blow with his facemask.

RULING: Foul by A1. Even though the contact with B1 was above the waist, it is butt blocking because the facemask was used to make initial contact.

AR 7.11.C: Wide receiver A1 goes downfield 15 yards, cuts sharply to the outside and stops near the sideline and catches the pass. B1 drives his helmet into A1.

RULING: The use of the helmet is spearing by B1.

AR 7.11.D: Runner A1 breaks free beyond the neutral zone (a) As B1 and B2 are closing in to tackle him, A1 veers into B1 and deliberately drives his helmet into

B1's chest or (b) as B1 and B2 attempt to bring him down, A1 lowers his head and drives forward for yardage and he contacts B1 and/or B2 with his helmet. RULING: Spearing by A1 in (a) as he uses his helmet to punish B1. It is a 15-yard penalty. If the spearing is flagrant, A1 must be disqualified. In (b), the lowering of the head to pick up additional yardage is not illegal unless it is done to punish an opponent or if he uses his helmet to butt or ram. The runner's normal reaction is to attempt to gain yardage when being tackled.

AR 7.11.E: During a running play, A1 breaks into the secondary. Safety B1 comes up quickly and drives his facemask or helmet directly into the chest of A1. B1 simultaneously wraps his arms around A1 bringing him to the ground. RULING: This is a face-tackling foul by B1.



The rules provide protection for defenseless players. Situations in which defenseless players are most susceptible to serious injury include but are not limited to: a quarterback who has handed off, pitched the ball or is in the act of passing; a kicker who has yet to regain his balance after kicking the ball; a pass receiver who is concentrating on the ball or has clearly relaxed when the pass is no longer catchable; a kick receiver who is concentrating on the ball or who has just touched the kick; and players who have relaxed as the ball is becoming dead or are obviously out of the play.

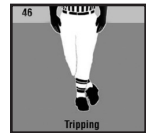
Section 12

Fighting

No player or nonplayer shall fight. Fighting is any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.

FIGHTING: PENALTY

15 yards and disqualification. Signals 38 and 47. Automatic first down if foul is by B. Signal 8. USA Football strongly encourages leagues to adopt additional penalties such as suspensions for players who are disqualified for fighting.



FIGHTING: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.12.A: With the ball on B's two -yard line and between downs, a fight starts between A1 and B1. The officials do not know that player struck the first blow. RULING: Disqualify both A1 and B1 and signal personal fouls against each team but do not enforce any yardage penalty. In that situation, because it is impossible to enforce the dead-ball foul penalties in the order in which the fouls occurred, an arbitrary choice of one of them would lead to inequities due to the half-the-distance provision in penalty enforcement.



AR 7.12.B: It is A's ball, third down and one on A's 10-yard line. B1 tackles A1 with a hard legal tackle at the line of scrimmage. A1, feeling the tackle was unjustly harsh, jumps to his feet and (a) attacks B1, delivering blows with his fist or (b) swings at B1 but misses. In both cases, B1 then directs a profanity toward A1. **RULING:** A1 is guilty of fighting in (a) and (b). The penalties are administered in the order that they occurred. Consequently, A would be penalized half the distance to the goal (5-yard line). B would then be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. A1 shall be disqualified for fighting whether or not his blows struck B1; B1 would remain in the game unless the officials determined his reaction was flagrant. It's A's ball First-and-10 on its own 20-yard line.

AR 7.12.C: During B1's tackling of runner A1, he delivers a blow toward the ball in an attempt to dislodge it but instead strikes A1 with his fist. **RULING:** B1 is charged with a personal foul and disqualified for striking. The penalty is 15 yards and an automatic first down. Because B1's contact was a football-related action, it is not considered to be fighting even though it is a personal foul and results in disqualification.

AR 7.12.D: A fight breaks out between several opposing players and (a) two substitutes from each team come onto the field, (b) one substitute of A enters and three enter from B's team box. **RULING:** In (a), both substitutes are disqualified and the penalties offset. In (b), the one 15-yard penalty on A will cancel one by B resulting in two 15-yard penalties on B. In both cases, penalties and disqualification also will be assessed to those who were fighting.

Section 13

Personal Fouls

1. No player or nonplayer shall charge into or throw an opponent to the ground after he is obviously out of the play or after the ball is clearly dead either in or out of bounds; pile on any player who is lying on the ground; position himself on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage; throw a helmet to trip an opponent; or make any other contact with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary and that incites roughness.

2. No defensive player may use the hand(s) to slap the blocker's head.

3. The blocker may not initiate contact with his arm or hand against an opponent above the opponent's shoulder.

4. No player or nonplayer shall hurdle an opponent. Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump (hurdle) with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one or both feet.

5. No player shall initiate helmet-to-helmet contact on an opponent.

PERSONAL FOULS: PENALTY

15 yards. Signal 38. Disqualification also if any foul is flagrant. Signal 47. If foul is by B, penalty includes an automatic first down. Signal 8.

PERSONAL FOULS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.13.A: Quarterback A1 has (a) handed off to A2 and is walking away observing the progress of the play or (b) thrown a legal forward pass and is moving away from the play after the pass was caught. In (a) and (b), B1 tackles A1. RULING: Illegal personal contact by B1 in both (a) and (b). It is a foul for illegal personal contact when a player charges into or throws an opponent to the ground after he is obviously out of the play. The 15-yard penalty is administered in accordance with the all-but-one principle and includes an automatic first down. If the act is flagrant, B1 must be disqualified.



AR 7.13.B: R1 (a) steps on the back of snapper A1 immediately after the snap as he propels himself into the air to block a punt or (b) R1 jumps on R2's shoulders in an effort to block a field-goal attempt. RULING: A personal foul in (a) and (b). The 15-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot and includes an automatic first down.

AR 7.13.C: During a forward-pass play, eligible receiver A1 runs a pass pattern and it is obvious he will be unable to catch the pass from A2, B1 aggressively contacts A1. The contact occurs (a) after the pass is incomplete, striking the ground or (b) is well overthrown but is still in flight. RULING: In (a), because this contact is following the incomplete pass, it is a dead-ball foul. The foul would be penalized 15 yards from the succeeding spot and includes an automatic first down. In (b), because the pass was still in flight when B1 contacted A1, it was pass interference even though it is obvious the pass was overthrown and is not catchable. The penalty is 15 yards from the previous spot and an automatic first down.

AR 7.13.D: Wide receiver A9 goes downfield 10 yards and starts to block B10. B10 slaps A9 on the side of the helmet in an effort to avoid the block. RULING: Illegal personal contact. The 15-yard penalty is administered in accordance with the all-but-one principle and includes an automatic first down. Disqualification also if the foul is flagrant.

Section 14

Facemask Fouls

No player or nonplayer shall grasp an opponent's facemask or any edge of a helmet opening, including the chin strap.

FACEMASK FOULS: PENALTY

15 yards. Signals 38 and 45. Disqualification also if flagrant. Signal 47. If foul is by B, penalty includes an automatic first down. Signal 8.

It is illegal to grasp the helmet opening and chinstrip as well as the facemask because it is just as dangerous to wrench the neck of an opponent as it to grasp the facemask. Neither the helmet, chin strap nor facemask was intended to provide a handle for the tackler.



FACEMASK FOULS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.14.A: With second down and 5 yards to go from B's 30-yard line, A1 throws a pass to eligible A2. Following the reception, A2 grasps B1's facemask/helmet opening/chin strap at B's 15-yard line as B1 attempts to tackle A2, who scores a touchdown. **RULING:** If B accepts the penalty, the score is nullified. Following the penalty enforcement, it will be A's ball First-and-10 at B's 30-yard line.

AR 7.14.B: A1 is tackled by B1 who (a) grasps A1's facemask/helmet opening/chin strap momentarily and lets go, (b) has his hand brush across A1's facemask or (c) pulls A1 to the ground by grasping A1's facemask/helmet opening. **RULING:** No foul in (b). It is a personal foul in (a) and (c). The penalty is 15 yards and an automatic first down.

AR 7.14.C: As B5 attempts to tackle A6, he has his hand on the helmet but does not touch the facemask, the chin strap or inside the helmet. **RULING:** No foul as B5 did not grasp the helmet opening, chin strap or facemask.

Unlike other codes, in USA Football, any foul involving the facemask is a foul that results in a 15-yard penalty. There is no 5-yard option for grasping but not twisting or pulling the facemask and those acts are to be ignored.



Section 15

Roughing the Kicker/Holder

1. The kicker or place kick holder of a free kick may not be blocked until after a free kick, he has advanced five yards beyond his free-kick line or the kick has

touched the ground or any other player.

2. A defensive player shall not block, tackle or charge into the kicker of a scrimmage kick or the place kick holder, other than when contact is unavoidable because it is not reasonably certain that a kick will be made; the defense touches the kick near the kicker and contact is unavoidable; contact is slight and is partially caused by movement of the kicker or contact is caused by R being blocked into the kicker by K.

ROUGHING THE KICKER/HOLDER: PENALTY

15 yards and first down from the previous spot. Signals 38 and 30.
Disqualification also if any foul is Signal 47.

The kicker is off balance, largely defenseless and vulnerable while in the act of kicking. Common sense demands the kicker and holder be given special protection.

ROUGHING THE KICKER/HOLDER: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.15.A: K1 punts and R1 touches and partially blocks the kick. R2 does not touch the ball but firmly contacts K1. RULING: If R1 partially blocked the kick near the kicker/holder and R2 was near the kicker/holder at the time R1 touched the ball and R2 had already started his charge at the time the kick was touched, there would be no foul as a result of the contact by R2, unless it was unnecessarily rough.

AR 7.15.B: K1 in scrimmage-kick formation, muffs the snap but quickly recovers and begins to run. However, K1 changes his mind and (a) punts on the run or (b) abruptly stops and punts. R1 is unable to stop his charge and forcibly contacts K1. R1 did not touch the kick. RULING: No foul in either (a) or (b) because it was not reasonably certain K1 was going to punt the ball. It is always roughing the kicker if the contact could have been avoided regardless of whether or not it was apparent a kick would be made. Only unavoidable contact is ignored if it is not reasonably certain a kick will be made.

AR 7.15.C: R1, in an effort to block a place kick, charges through blocker K1 and without touching the ball, charges into the kicker/holder. RULING: The official must determine whether R1's charge would have taken him into the kicker/holder, regardless of the contact by the blocker. It is only when K1's block alters the course of R1's path and thus causes the contact with the kicker/holder that R1's contact is ignored and does not result in a foul.

AR 7.15.D: K10, the place kick holder, is contacted forcibly by R9, clearly after the kick is away. RULING: Roughing the kicker/holder is a personal foul. The penalty would be 15 yards and an automatic first down, if accepted.

AR 7.15.E: As R2 rushes punter K11 he (a) brushes K11 who maintains his balance; (b) bumps K11 causing him to fall backward or (c) runs over K11, knocking him to the ground. RULING: In (a), no penalty. It is roughing the kicker in (b) and (c). The 15-yard penalty includes an automatic first down.

AR 7.15.F: A11 is in scrimmage kick formation. After taking the snap and attempting to kick the ball, he misjudges the distance and misses the ball. A11 is then contacted by B1 before he can regain his balance. B2 recovers the ball. RULING: Unless B1's contact is viewed as unnecessary roughness, there is no foul as A11 never became a kicker.



Unlike other codes, there is no option for a 5-yard penalty for running into the kicker or holder. In USA Football, all contact fouls against the kicker and holder carry a 15-yard penalty and automatic first down.

Section 16

Roughing the Passer

1. A passer is a player who throws a legal forward pass. He continues to be a passer until the legal forward pass ends or until he moves to participate in the play.
2. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer, who has thrown the ball from in or behind the neutral zone, after it is clear the ball has been thrown. No defensive player shall charge into the passer who is standing still or fading back, because he is considered out of the play after the pass.

ROUGHING THE PASSER: PENALTY

15 yards and a first down from the end of the last run when the last run ends beyond the neutral zone and there has been no change of team possession. Otherwise, the penalty is 15 yards and an automatic first down from the previous spot. Signal 34. Disqualification also if any foul is flagrant. Signal 47.

ROUGHING THE PASSER: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 7.16.A: A1 (a) passes from behind the neutral zone and is subsequently contacted by B1, who could have avoided the contact but renewed his charge after the pass or (b) is two yards beyond the neutral zone when he passes and B1 continues his charge and contacts him. RULING: It is roughing the passer in (a). In (b), it cannot be roughing the passer because A1 lost his protection as a passer when he passed from beyond the neutral zone. However, the contact could still be ruled a personal foul.

AR 7.16.B: A1's pass on fourth-and-15 from A's 40 is complete to A2 at midfield. During the pass, A1 is roughed by B1. A2 advances to B's 30 where he fumbles the ball out of bounds at B's (a) 28 or (b) 32-yard line. RULING: In both (a) and (b), if the penalty is accepted, it is administered from the end of A2's run, that is B's 30-yard line.

AR 7.16.C: From A's 20-yard line, passer A1 is roughed by B1. The pass is completed to A2 who is (a) downed on A's 18 or (b) fumbles and the ball is recovered by B3. RULING: In (a) and (b), enforcement is from the previous spot, resulting in a first down for A from B's 35-yard line.

AR 7.16.D: A1's pass on fourth-and-20 from A's 20 is complete to A2 at A's 25-yard line. During the pass, A1 is roughed by B1. A2 advances to A's 29, where he fumbles. The ball (a) rolls out of bounds at A's 30 or (b) is recovered by B2 at A's 30. RULING: Because of the change of possession in both (a) and (b), if the penalty is accepted, it is administered from the end of A2's run (A's 29-yard line).



Section 17 Striking, Kicking or Kneeing an Opponent

No player or nonplayer shall intentionally contact an official; swing the foot, shin or knee into an opponent, nor extend the knee to meet a blocker; or strike an opponent with his fist, locked hands, forearm or elbow, nor kick or knee him.

STRIKING, KICKING, KNEEING AN OPPONENT: PENALTY

15 yards and disqualification. Signals 38 and 47. If foul is by B, penalty includes an automatic first down. Signal 8.

Section 18 Intentionally Contacting An Official

No player or nonplayer shall intentionally contact an official.

INTENTIONALLY CONTACTING AN OFFICIAL: PENALTY

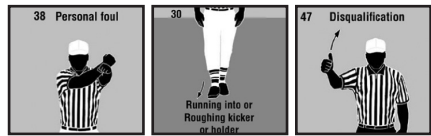
15 yards and disqualification.
Signal 38 and 47.



Section 1

Touchdown

1. A touchdown is six points.
2. It is a touchdown when a runner advances from the field of play so that the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the opponent's goal line; a loose ball is caught or recovered by a player while the ball is on or behind his opponent's goal line; or when a backward pass or fumble is declared dead in the end zone of the opponent of the player who threw the backward pass or fumbled while no player is in possession (other than because of an inadvertent whistle).



TOUCHDOWN: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 8.1.A: Runner A1 is advancing toward B's goal line and is very near the sideline. A1 (a) advances into B's end zone while holding the ball outside the sideline plane so the ball breaks the plane of B's goal line extended or (b) dives short of the goal line and is airborne when he holds the ball so that it crosses the plane of B's goal line outside the sideline plane.

RULING: In (a), it is a touchdown because A1 was touching inbounds when the ball broke the plane of the goal line extended. In (b), it cannot be a touchdown because A1 was not touching the ground inbounds. The covering official will have to determine the location of the ball when it crossed the sideline. That will be the spot of forward progress.

AR 8.1.B: A8, in B's end zone, leaps in the air to catch a pass and is contacted by B2. A8 comes down inbounds on B's 1-yard line, where he is downed. **RULING:** Touchdown, since A8's forward progress was stopped over B's end zone by B2's contact. Even though the catch was not made until A8 came down inbounds, his forward progress was stopped by B2's contact, resulting in A possessing the live ball in its opponent's end zone.

AR 8.1.C: Airborne A1 and B1 simultaneously gain possession of a legal forward

pass near the goal line and return to the ground so that (a) they alight in the end zone with the ball, (b) A1 lands in the end zone and B1 in the field of play inbounds or (c) B1 comes down in the end zone and A1 lands in the field of play. **RULING:** It is a touchdown in (a). In (b) and (c), the ball becomes dead and the pass is complete at the yard line through the foremost point of the ball when the players contacted the ground inbounds. If the ball has penetrated the plane of the goal line in either (b) or (c), it is a touchdown.

Section 2

Try

1. 1. During a try, Team A may score one point from what would be a touchdown or two points for a field goal under rules governing play at other times during the game. Only Team A, the touchdown scoring team, can score on a try.

2. After a touchdown, the scoring team shall attempt a try during that the ball is snapped from a spot designated by A anywhere between the hash marks on B's 3-yard line. It involves a scrimmage down that is neither numbered nor timed.



3. If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period, the try shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

4. The try begins when the ball is ready for play. It ends when B secures possession; the try is successful; or the ball becomes dead for any other reason.

5. When a try is replayed, the snap may be from any point between the hash marks on the yard line through the spot of the ball.

6. If during a successful try, a foul by A occurs and the penalty is accepted, the down is replayed.

7. If during an unsuccessful try, a foul by A occurs, the penalty is obviously declined, the results of the play stand and there is no replay. If B fouls, the down is replayed after enforcement. If a double foul occurs, the down shall be replayed.

Place kicking is a comparatively advanced skill at the youth level. As a result, teams that are able to kick extra points are rewarded for accomplishing a more difficult task.

TRY: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 8.2.A: During a try by place kick, the kick by K1 is blocked by R1 and recovered by K2, who advances across R's goal line. **RULING:** The try is unsuccessful. The try and down ended when the attempted place kick was blocked and it was obvious the kick would not score.



AR 8.2.B: During a try, A1 passes complete to A2 in the end zone and (a) ineligible A3 was illegally beyond the neutral zone, (b) A4 interfered with B1 or (c) B2

interfered with A2. RULING: In (a) and (b), if the penalties are accepted, the try will be repeated. In (c), A undoubtedly will accept the result of the play and enforce the penalty from the succeeding spot.

Section 3

Field Goal

1. A field goal is three points.

2. To score a field goal, the attempt shall be a place kick or a drop kick from scrimmage or from a free kick following a fair catch or an awarded fair catch. The kick shall not touch any player of K beyond the expanded neutral zone or the ground before passing through the goal. The kick shall pass between the vertical uprights or the inside of the uprights extended and above the crossbar of the opponent's goal.

3. If a scoring attempt kick touches an upright or crossbar or an R player in the end zone and caroms through the goal, the touching is ignored and the attempt is successful.

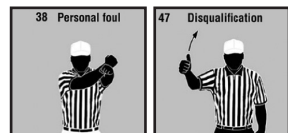
4. The ball remains live if, at the snap, a place kick holder with his knee(s) on the ground and with a teammate in kicking position catches or recovers the snap while his knee(s) is on the ground and places the ball for a kick or if he rises to advance, hand, kick or pass; or rises and catches or recovers an errant snap and immediately returns his knee(s) to the ground and places the ball for a kick or again rises to advance, hand, kick or pass.

Unlike what you see on TV, a holder in USA Football cannot throw a pass or hand the ball to a teammate without getting up off his knee before passing or handing.

FIELD GOAL: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 8.3.A: The field-goal attempt (a) goes directly over an upright or (b) is clearly over the crossbar between the uprights. In (a) and (b), the ball is blown back by the wind so that it drops into B's end zone. RULING: In (a), it is an unsuccessful attempt because the ball did not penetrate the plane of the goal between the inside of the uprights extended. It is a legal field goal in (b) and it doesn't matter if the ball comes back above or below the crossbar.

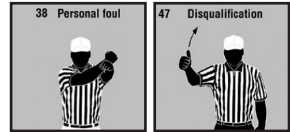
AR 8.3.B: K has the ball on R's 40-yard line for a free kick. The ball is in that position following (a) a fair catch, (b) an awarded fair catch or (c) a safety followed by a couple of dead-ball penalties. In all three cases, K1 place kicks the ball between the uprights and over the crossbar. RULING: Field goal in (a) and (b) and touchback in (c).



AR 8.3.C: From a field goal formation, potential kicker K1 yells, "Where's the tee?"

K2 replies, "I'll go get it" and goes legally in motion toward his team's sideline. Ball is snapped to K1, who throws a touchdown pass to K2. **RULING:** Unsportsmanlike conduct prior to snap. The ball should be declared dead and the foul enforced as a dead-ball foul. Football has been and always will be a game of deception and trickery involving multiple shifts, unusual formations and creative plays. However, actions or verbiage designed to confuse the defense into believing there is problem and a snap isn't imminent, is beyond the scope of sportsmanship and is illegal.

Unlike what you see on TV, when an unsuccessful field goal in USA Football becomes dead inbounds or out of bounds between the goal lines, R begins a new series at the dead-ball spot. The ball is not returned to the previous spot or the spot of the kick.



Section 4

Resuming Play After a Field Goal/Try

1. To resume play after a successful field goal or after any try, the ball shall be put in play by a kickoff.
2. After an unsuccessful field goal, a new series is awarded to the team in possession at the end of the down if R is the first to touch a scrimmage kick while it is beyond the expanded neutral zone, unless the penalty is accepted for a non

RULE 8 SCORING AND TOUCHBACKS

IN THIS RULE

- How points are scored
- Explanation of the momentum exception
- How penalties that occur on scoring plays are enforced

Section 1: Touchdown..... 129
 Touchdown: Approved Rulings..... 129
 Section 2: Try..... 129
 Try: Approved Rulings 130
 Section 3: Field Goal 130
 Field Goal: Approved Rulings 131
 Section 4: Resuming Play After a Field Goal or Try..... 132
 Section 5: Safety 132
 Safety: Approved Rulings 133
 Section 6: Momentum Exception 134
 Momentum Exception: Approved Rulings 134
 Section 7: Force and Touchbacks 135
 Force and Touchbacks: Approved Rulings 135



- Possession of a live ball in the opponent's end zone is always a touchdown.
- The defense can never score on a try.
- No penalty directly results in a safety, but if a distance penalty is enforced from behind the offender's goal line toward his end line, it is a safety.



post-scrimmage kick foul that occurred before the kick ended.

3. A new series is awarded to R at the spot of first touching by K if any K player is first to touch the kicked ball beyond the expanded neutral zone before it is touched beyond that zone by R and before it has come to rest.

4. A new series is awarded to R at the spot of recovery if there is joint possession by R and K of a recovered kick, unless there is first touching by K.

5. When any scrimmage kick is out of bounds between the goal lines or becomes dead inbounds between the goal lines while no player is in possession, the ball is awarded to R. Following an out-of-bounds kick, the ball is put in play at the inbounds spot unless R chooses a spot of first touching.

Section 5

Safety

1. A safety results in two points being awarded to the opponent.

2. It is a safety when a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his own goal line and it becomes dead there in his team's possession; a player who is either in the field of play or in his end zone forces a loose ball from the field of play to or across his goal line by his pass, fumble, snap or by a new force to a grounded loose ball with his muff or bat or illegal kick (when the penalty is declined), provided the ball becomes dead there in his team's possession (including when the ball is declared dead with no player in possession) or the ball is out of bounds when it becomes dead on or behind their goal line (does not apply to a legal forward pass that becomes incomplete); a player on offense commits any foul for that the penalty is accepted and enforcement is from a spot in his end zone; or a player throws an illegal forward pass (including intentional grounding) from his end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation that leaves him in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.

3. A safety on a try results in one point being awarded to A.

SAFETY: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 8.5.A: A1 receives the snap behind his own goal line. A1 advances but is tackled and the ball becomes dead with its foremost point in the field of play, but part of the ball is in the end zone. RULING: Safety. To avoid a safety, the ball must be advanced completely out of the end zone with no part of it touching the goal line.

AR 8.5.B: It is first down and 10 on A's 12. A fumble by A1 is still rolling slowly on A's 4-yard line. During an attempt to recover the ball, A2 pushes B1 into the ball. That provides new force, causing the ball to roll across the goal line. It is recovered by (a) A3, who is downed there or (b) A4, who advances to A's 15. RULING: Safety in (a). A2 provided a new force when he pushed B1 into the ball, causing the ball to go across his goal line. In (b), it is A's ball on the 15 and the next down is second-and-7.

AR 8.5.C: Fourth-and-15 for A from its own 8-yard line. A1 is in punt formation and receives the snap in his end zone but fumbles the ball. A1 quickly recovers and throws a forward pass to ineligible A2, who is also in the end zone. A2 muffs the ball and it falls incomplete. RULING: If B accepts the penalty for A2's illegal touching, it results in a safety. If B declines the penalty for the foul by A2, the result is B's ball first-and-goal from A's 8-yard line.

AR 8.5.D: A leads 16-7 with little time remaining in the fourth period. A is deep in its own territory. A1 goes back to pass from his own end zone. A2 holds B1. A1's pass is intercepted and returned for a touchdown. RULING: The penalty for the holding foul may be accepted (resulting in a safety) or declined (resulting in a touchdown).

AR 8.5.E: A's ball second-and-10 from its own 3-yard line. A2 muffs the handoff and the ball rolls into A's end zone. A1 picks up the ball and is immediately tackled by B3 in the end zone. B3 grasped A1 by the facemask/chin strap/helmet opening in making the tackle. RULING: If A declines the penalty, the play would result in a safety. If the penalty is accepted, it will be enforced from the goal line, making it First-and-10 for A from its 15-yard line.



AR 8.5.F: A's ball second-and-11 from its own 9-yard line. A2 fumbles the ball on his own 5-yard line and the ball rolls into the end zone. A1 recovers the ball in the end zone and is downed there, but B3 held A3 while the ball was loose. RULING: A undoubtedly will accept the penalty, because to decline would result in a safety. Because the foul occurred during a loose-ball play, the previous spot will be the enforcement spot. The result is second-and-1 for A from its own 19-yard line.

AR 8.5.G: During the last timed down of the first half, A1 retreats into his own end zone to attempt a pass, but he is downed there. During the down there is holding in the end zone by (a) A2 or (b) B1. RULING: In (a), it is a safety and B would score two points whether the penalty is accepted or declined since the run ended in the end zone and the foul was in the end zone. If B accepts the penalty, the period is extended with an untimed down and A must free kick to B. In (b), if the penalty is accepted it will be enforced from the goal line and the period is extended.

AR 8.5.H: B1 leaps in the air over his 2-yard line and has A's pass in his grasp. He returns to the ground in his end zone inbounds, where he is downed. RULING: B1's interception was not completed until he returned to the ground inbounds. He now possesses a live ball in his own end zone and may attempt to run it out or down it in the end zone for a touchback. Momentum is not involved.

For simplicity, the momentum exception applies to all types of loose balls. Also, backward passes, fumbles, kicks and muffs need only be recovered — not necessarily caught — for the rule to apply.

Section 6

Momentum Exception

1. It is not a safety when a defensive player intercepts an opponent's forward pass; intercepts or recovers an opponent's fumble, kick or backward pass between his 5-yard line and the goal line and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession or it goes out of bounds in the end zone. In that case, the ball belongs to B at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered.

2. When the momentum exception applies and the ball becomes dead behind the goal line, if the penalty for a foul by either team is accepted, the end of the run is the spot where the kick, fumble or pass was caught or recovered. The penalty is enforced under the all-but-one principle. If momentum is not involved, the end of the run is the goal line.



MOMENTUM EXCEPTION: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 8.6.A: B1 leaps in the air over his 2-yard line and has A's pass in his grasp. He returns to the ground on his 1-yard line and his momentum carries him back into his end zone where he is downed. RULING: Since B's interception was made in the field of play and his momentum carried him into his end zone where he is downed, the momentum exception is in effect and the spot of the interception, B's 1-yard line, is the spot from that B will start its series.

AR 8.6.B: B1, while in full stride at B's 2-yard line, (a) intercepts a backward pass; (b) intercepts a fumble; or (c) recovers a grounded fumble or backward pass and his momentum carries him into his end zone where he is downed. RULING: In (a), (b) and (c) the ball would belong to B at the spot where the backward pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered as the momentum exception applies.

Section 7

Force and Touchbacks

1. Force is the result of energy exerted by a player that provides movement of the ball. The term force is used only in connection with the goal line and in only one direction, i.e., from the field of play into the end zone. Initial force results from a carry, fumble, pass or snap. After a fumble or backward pass has been grounded, a new force may result from a bat or a muff. The muffing or batting of a pass or fumble in flight is not considered a new force.

2. It is a touchback when a forward pass is intercepted in B's end zone and becomes dead there in B's possession, when a fumble is the force or a muff or bat of a backward pass or a fumble after either has touched the ground is the new force, that sends the ball to or across the opponent's goal line and provided such opponent is in team possession or the ball is out of bounds when it becomes dead on or behind its goal line.

3. If a player provides the force to a fumble or a backward pass that goes out of bounds behind the opponent's goal line, the result is a touchback.

The team whose goal line is involved in a touchback shall put the ball in play





anywhere between the hash marks on its 20-yard line by a snap.

FORCE AND TOUCHBACKS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 8.7.A: A pass from A1 is possessed by A2 while he is in the air above B's end zone. A2 loses control when he is contacted by B1 while in the air. The ball is intercepted and downed by B2 in the end zone. RULING: It is a touchback.

AR 8.7.B: A1's forward pass is intercepted in B's end zone by B1, who attempts to advance but is downed there. B2 clips at B's 4-yard line (a) during B1's run or (b) after B1 is downed. RULING: It is a touchback in both (a) and (b) and the basic spot is the succeeding spot. In (a), it is First-and-10 for B from B's 2-yard line. In (b), the dead-ball foul will be penalized from B's 20, resulting in First-and-10 from B's 10-yard line.

AR 8.7.C: A1 throws a pass from B's 22-yard line. B1 intercepts the pass in his own end zone and is tackled prior to leaving the end zone. During the run, B2 holds A2 at B's 10-yard line. RULING: The basic enforcement spot is the 20-yard line. If the penalty is accepted, it will be enforced from the spot of the foul. B will have a First-and-10 from its own 5-yard line. If the penalty is declined, it will be B's First-and-10 from B's 20-yard line.

AR 8.7.D: K1's punt is blocked on K's 5-yard line and the ball is slowly rolling near the goal line. R1 attempts to recover and just barely touches the ball. The ball then rolls into the end zone where K2 falls on it. RULING: The covering official will have to judge whether or not a new force resulted from R1's touch. The official must decide whether the original force was such that the ball could have gone into the end zone regardless of the muff. If the official has doubt, he will rule that the force was supplied by the kick, thus resulting in a safety. If the official rules R1 supplied the force, it is a touchback.

AR 8.7.E: With fourth down and seven from K's 10, K1 punts from the end zone. The kick is partially blocked and is just barely moving at K's 2-yard line when R1's muff provides a new force that moves the ball into and out of the end zone. RULING: Touchback. Because it was the new force by R1 that caused the ball to go out of K's end zone, the result is a touchback instead of a safety.

AR 8.7.F: B1 intercepts a forward pass in his end zone and then passes backward to B2 who (a) muffs the ball so that it goes out of bounds across the sideline behind the goal line or (b) bats the ball over the end line. RULING: In both (a) and (b), the force that put the ball into the end zone was the pass by A1. When B2 muffed the backward pass out of bounds in the end zone or batted the backward pass in flight so that it went over the end line, the result is a touchback. It will be First-and-10 for B from its 20-yard line.

AR 8.7.G: K1's scrimmage kick is blocked on K's 5-yard line and is rolling away from K's goal line when R1 muffs the ball into K's end zone (applies a new force to a grounded kick). K2 recovers the ball and attempts to advance but is downed in the end zone. During K2's run R1 holds K3 in the end zone. RULING: It is a touchback and the basic spot is the 20-yard line.



Section 1

Types of Plays

1. A loose-ball play is action during a free kick or scrimmage kick, other than post-scrimmage kick fouls, a legal forward pass or a backward pass (including the snap), illegal kick or fumble made by A from in or behind the neutral zone and prior to a change of team possession. The run(s) that precedes such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble is (are) considered part of the action during a loose-ball play.

2. A running play is any action other than loose-ball or post-scrimmage kick plays.

Section 2

Penalty Enforcement Spots

1. The basic spot is a point of reference for penalty enforcement. It is the previous spot for a loose-ball play unless the only accepted fouls meet the requirements of a post-scrimmage kick foul. The basic spot for a running play is the end of the run.

2. The enforcement spot is the point from that a penalty is enforced.

3. The post-scrimmage kick spot is the spot where the kick ends. R retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the post-scrimmage kick spot when a post-scrimmage foul occurs. Fouls by R behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.

4. The previous spot is where the ball was last snapped or free kicked.

5. The spot of a foul is where the foul occurs. If a foul occurs out of bounds, the spot of the foul is at the intersection of the nearer inbounds line and the yard line extended on that the foul occurs.

6. The spot where a run ends is where the runner loses player possession or where the ball becomes dead in his possession.

7. The succeeding spot is where the ball would next be snapped or free kicked if a foul had not occurred.



Section 3

Basic Procedure

1. When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains. He shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined, there is no loss of distance. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged timeout is granted either team.

2. When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free kick or snap, the official shall not permit the ball to become live.

3. The captain's choice of options may not be revoked.

Section 4

Live-Ball Foul Followed by Dead-Ball Foul

1. When a live-ball foul by one team is followed by a dead-ball foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

2. When the same team commits a live-ball foul followed by one or more dead-ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

Section 5

Fouls Occuring Behind the Line

The penalty for a live-ball foul by either team that occurs behind the line when



the play ends behind or beyond the line is enforced from the previous spot. Accepted penalties for fouls by A in its own end zone result in a safety.

Unlike in high school rules, in USA Football, penalties for fouls that occur behind the line are enforced from the previous spot.

Section 6

Fouls Occuring Behind the End of the Run

1. The penalty for a live-ball foul by A that occurs behind the end of the run when the play ends beyond the line will be enforced from the spot of foul.
2. The penalty for a live-ball foul by B that occurs behind the end of the run when the play ends beyond the line and beyond the foul will be enforced from the end of the run.

Section 7

Fouls Occuring Beyond the End of the Run

1. The penalty for a live-ball foul by either team that occurs beyond the end of the run when the play ends beyond the line will be enforced from the end of the run.
2. The penalty for a live-ball foul by either team that occurs beyond the line when the play ends behind the line will be enforced from the previous spot.
3. The penalty for a dead-ball foul by either team that occurs beyond the end of the run is enforced from the end of the run.

Section 8

Special Enforcements

1. If team K fouls during a scrimmage kick play, team R has the option of enforcement from the previous spot or from the end of the play.
2. If B is penalized for roughing the kicker, holder or passer; forward pass interference; or any personal foul, the penalty includes an automatic first down for A.
3. Pass interference against either team results in a 15-yard penalty enforced



from the previous spot.

Section 9

Half the Distance

Enforcement of a penalty cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the prescribed penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the spot of enforcement to the goal line.

Section 10

Nonplayer and Unsportsmanlike Fouls

1. Nonplayer and unsportsmanlike fouls cannot be paired with live-ball fouls to create a double foul.
2. Nonplayer and unsportsmanlike fouls are enforced from the succeeding spot.

Section 11

Double and Multiple Fouls

1. It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer, during the same live-ball period in which:
 - a. There is no change of team possession, unless all fouls committed by R are post-scrimmage kick fouls; or
 - b. There is a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession unless all fouls committed by R are post-scrimmage kick fouls; or
 - c. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul at any time during the down.
2. In case of a double foul, the captains are not consulted since the penalties offset. If there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance.
3. If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession and the play does not have a post-scrimmage kick foul, the team last gaining possession has two options:
 - Option 1. Decline the penalty for the opponent's foul other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In that case, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, but the team that lost possession may accept the penalty for the opponent's foul.
 - Option 2. Accept the penalty for the opponent's foul other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In that case, the penalties cancel and the down is replayed from the previous spot.
4. If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession and R's penalty has post-scrimmage kick enforcement, R has two options:

RULE 9 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

IN THIS RULE

- Penalty enforcement spots
- Types of fouls
- How penalties are enforced

Section 1: Types of Plays..... 139

Section 2: Penalty Enforcement Spots..... 139

Section 3: Basic Procedure..... 139

Section 4: Live-Ball Followed by Dead-Ball 140

Section 5: Fouls Occurring Behind the Line..... 140

Section 6: Fouls Occurring Behind the End of the Run 140

Section 7: Fouls Occurring Beyond the End of the Run 141

Section 8: Special Enforcements 141

Section 9: Half the Distance 141

Section 10: Nonplayer and Unsportsmanlike Fouls 141

Section 11: Double and Multiple Fouls 142

 Double and Multiple Fouls: Approved Rulings 143

Section 12: Basic Spot is the 20-yard line 143

 Basic Spot is the 20-yard line: Approved Ruling..... 143

Section 13: Basic Spot is the Goal line..... 143

 Basic Spot is the Goal line: Approved Ruling..... 144

Section 14: Penalties on Touchdowns 144

Section 15: Penalties on Trys 145

Section 16: Penalties on Field Goals 145

Section 17: Extending a Period..... 145

Section 18: Kick Plays..... 146

 Kick Plays: Approved Rulings..... 146



- The calling official must know the status of the ball (live or dead, loose or in possession) at the time a foul occurs.
- No foul causes the ball to become dead.



Option 1. Decline the penalty for K's foul other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In that case, R may retain the ball, but K may accept the penalty for R's foul.

Option 2. Accept the penalty for K's foul other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In that case, the penalties cancel and the down is replayed from the previous spot.

4. When two or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team (multiple fouls), only one penalty may be enforced. The offended captain may choose that one shall be administered or the captain may decline all penalties. When a team commits a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul during that same down, it is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for the other foul.

5. Penalties for dead-ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of their occurrence. A dead-ball foul is not coupled with a live-ball foul or another dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

6. A foul during a try is not paired with a dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

DOUBLE AND MULTIPLE FOULS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 9.11.A: During a forward-pass play in which the ball crosses the neutral zone, ineligible A1 is illegally downfield and B2 is flagged for interfering with eligible receiver A3. RULING: The interference foul by B2 and A1's foul for being downfield combine to make a double foul and the down will be replayed.

AR 9.11.B: B2 is flagged for pass interference. Thereafter, a fumble by A1 is recovered by B2 who is downed after advancing nine yards. While the ball was loose during the fumble, B3 held A3. RULING: Double foul. Both fouls occurred before the change of team possession. The penalties cancel and the down shall be replayed.

AR 9.11.C: First and 20 for A from its own 10-yard line. A1's legal forward pass is complete to A2, who advances to A's 20-yard line. Before the pass is thrown, B3 is flagged for holding. After the pass, B4 is flagged for roughing the passer. RULING: That is a multiple foul and A may accept either penalty or decline both and take the results of the play. If either penalty is accepted, it is enforced from the previous spot. The roughing penalty is 15 yards and includes a first down for A. The holding penalty is 10 yards and does not included a first down.

Section 12

Basic Spot is the 20-Yard Line

The basic spot is the 20-yard line for fouls by either team when the opponent of the team in possession at the time of the foul is responsible for forcing the ball



across the goal line of the team in possession and the related run ends in the end zone and is followed by a loose ball, regardless of where the loose ball becomes dead.

BASIC SPOT IS THE 20-YARD LINE: APPROVED RULING

AR 9.12.A: B1 intercepts A1's pass in B's end zone. B1 is grabbed by the facemask by A2. B1 then fumbles while in the end zone. the ball rolls back into the field of play and then (a) goes out of bounds at B's 2-yard line or (b) is recovered by B7 at B's 5-yard line. RULING: In both (a) and (b), the basic spot is the 20-yard line. The accepted foul will result in a first down for B at its 35-yard line.

Section 13

Basic Spot is the Goal Line

The basic spot is the goal line for fouls, that are committed during running plays by the opponent of the team in possession at the time of the foul when the team in possession is responsible for forcing the ball across its own goal line and the related run ends in the end zone and is followed by a loose ball, regardless of where the loose ball becomes dead.

BASIC SPOT IS THE GOAL LINE: APPROVED RULING

AR 9.13.A: B1 intercepts A1's pass at B's 6-yard line and retreats to B's end zone. B1 is grabbed by the facemask by A2. B1 then fumbles while in the end zone. The ball rolls back into the field of play and then (a) goes out of bounds at B's 2-yard line or (b) is recovered by B7 at B's 5-yard line. RULING: In both (a) and (b), the basic spot is the goal line and the accepted foul will result in a first down for B at its 15-yard line.



Section 14

Penalties on Touchdowns

1. The score is nullified if the penalty is accepted for a foul, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, by A that occurs during a down resulting in a touchdown.

2. If during a touchdown-scoring play in which there is no change of possession, the opponent of the scoring team commits a foul other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and have a penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or may choose to have the foul enforced on the subsequent kickoff. Those penalties may not carry over from regulation to overtime or from one overtime period to another.

3. If during a touchdown-scoring play in which there is a change of possession, the opponent of the scoring team commit a foul other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike after the change of possession, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or may choose to have the foul enforced on the subsequent kickoff. Those penalties may



not carry over from regulation to overtime or from one overtime period to another.

PENALTIES ON TOUCHDOWNS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 9.14.A: Second-and-20 for A on B's 40-yard line. A1 runs for a touchdown. A2 is flagged for illegal motion and during the play B is flagged for (a) illegal substitution or (b) a facemask foul. RULING: In both cases, the touchdown is canceled, the fouls offset and the down is replayed.

AR 9.14.B: Second-and-10 for A on B's 20-yard line. A1 runs for a touchdown. A2 is flagged for clipping and during the play B is flagged for (a) illegal substitution or (b) a facemask foul. RULING: In both cases, the touchdown is canceled. In (a) and (b), the fouls cancel and the down is replayed.

Section 15

Penalties on Trys

1. If during a successful try, a foul by B occurs, A is given the choice of accepting the penalty and replaying the down following enforcement or accepting the result of the play and enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot, unless in conflict with other rules.

2. If during an unsuccessful try, a foul by A occurs, the penalty is obviously declined, the results of the play stand and there is no replay. If B fouls, the down is replayed after enforcement.

3. If a double foul occurs, the down shall be replayed.

4. When a try is replayed, the snap may be from any point between the hash marks on the yard line through the spot of the ball.

Section 16

Penalties on Field Goals

1. The score is nullified if the penalty is accepted for a foul, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, by A that occurs during a down resulting in a successful field goal.

2. If during a successful field goal, a foul by R occurs, K is given the choice of accepting the penalty and replaying the down following enforcement or accepting the result of the play and enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.

Section 17

Extending a Period

1. A period is extended for an untimed down when the penalty for a foul other than unsportsmanlike or non-player that occurs during the last timed down of



the period is accepted, the scoring team accepts enforcement on the succeeding kickoff or from the succeeding spot for a foul other than unsportsmanlike or non-player by its opponent during a touchdown-scoring play in which there is no change of possession, there was a double foul, there was an inadvertent whistle, if a touchdown was scored, unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

2. If any instance in Rule 9-8-1 occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated.

Section 18

Kick Plays

1. The basic spot is the previous spot for fouls by K that occur between the snap and the end of a scrimmage kick and between a free kick and the end of a free kick. Post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement (PSK) is used after a foul by R when the foul occurs during scrimmage kick plays other than a try or successful field goal; during a scrimmage kick play in which the ball crosses the expanded neutral zone; the foul occurs beyond the expanded neutral zone; before the end of a kick; and K will not be next to put the ball in play.

2. PSK fouls are enforced from the basic spot. The basic spot is a point of reference for penalty enforcement. It is the previous spot for a loose-ball play unless the only accepted fouls meet the requirements of a post-scrimmage kick foul.

3. The post-scrimmage spot is the spot where the kick ends. R retains the ball after penalty enforcement from the post-scrimmage spot when a PSK foul occurs. Fouls by R behind the post-scrimmage spot are spot fouls.

4. Fair catch interference by the kicking team is a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

KICK PLAYS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 3.18.A: Fourth-and-5 from K's 20-yard line, K is in an illegal formation at the snap. While K1's punt is in flight, beyond the expanded neutral zone, R2 blocks K8 in the back at the 50-yard line. R4 catches the kick at R's 36-yard line and returns it for a touchdown. RULING: That is a PSK foul by R. Therefore, R may decline K's foul and keep the ball after enforcement of the 10-yard foul for the block in the back or it may accept the penalty against K, thereby creating a double foul in which case the down shall be replayed.

AR 3.18.B: Fourth-and-8 for K from its own 45-yard line. Prior to R2 catching the kick, R7 clips K5 at the 50-yard line and R2 catches the kick at his 20-yard line and is immediately tackled. RULING: The ball will belong to R, first-and-10 at its 10-yard line. The basic spot is the 20-yard line as post-scrimmage kick enforcement applies.

AR 3.18.C: Fourth-and-11 from K's 36-yard line. While the punt was in flight, beyond



the expanded neutral zone, R6 was guilty of holding K3 at R's 32-yard line. The kick goes into the end zone. **RULING:** Since the kick ended in R's end zone, the post-scrimmage kick enforcement spot is the 20-yard line. It will be R's ball, first-and-10 from R's 10-yard line after the half-the-distance enforcement.

AR 3.18.D: K is in punt formation from the 50-yard line. Following the snap but prior to the ball being kicked, R6 holds K4 at R's 46-yard line. The punt crosses the neutral zone, bounces at R's 25 and rolls to R's 18 where R4 recovers. **RULING:** The basic spot is R's 18-yard line. Since R6's foul occurs beyond the basic spot, the penalty is enforced from the basic spot. R is penalized half the distance to the goal, making it R's ball First-and-10 at R's 9-yard line.

AR 3.18.E: Fourth-and-5 for K from R's 49-yard line. R9 catches the kick on the 15-yard line and returns the ball to R's 40-yard line, where he is downed. During the return, R3 holds K7 at R's 30-yard line. **RULING:** That is not a PSK foul but a foul during a running play. Following enforcement of R's holding penalty, it would be R's ball, first-and-10 from R's 20-yard line.

AR 3.18.F: Fourth-and-5 for K from its own 20-yard line. R9 catches the kick on K's 45-yard line and returns the ball to K's 40-yard line, where he is downed. K1 is flagged for (a) holding while K1's punt is in flight or (b) grasping R9's facemask during R9's run. **RULING:** In (a), if team R accepts the penalty, it is enforced from the previous spot. R can start a new series at K's 40-yard line by declining the penalty. In (b), if team R accepts the penalty, it is enforced from the end of R9's run.



Section 1

Nonplayer and Unsportsmanlike Fouls

1. No player, coach, substitute, athletic trainer or other team attendant shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner once the officials assume authority for the contest. Examples are, but not limited to, baiting or taunting acts or words or insignia worn that engenders ill will; using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures; any delayed, excessive or prolonged act by that a player or coach attempts to focus attention upon himself; attempting to influence a decision by an official; disrespectfully addressing an official; indicating objections to an official's decision; using any illegal communication equipment; holding an unauthorized conference; the failure of a team to be ready to start either half; failure of the head coach, following verification, to have his player(s) wear or use legal and/or required equipment; being on the field except as a substitute or replaced player; using tobacco or smokeless tobacco; a substitute who leaves the team box during a fight; using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with A's signals or movements; intentionally kicking at the ball, other than during a legal kick; leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or unless with permission of an official; refusing to comply with an official's request.

2. Contact fouls during a dead ball period that are not part of the football play are enforced as unsportsmanlike conduct penalties. A player who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game has disqualified himself for the remainder of that game. Penalty: 15 yards.

3. When the ball becomes dead in possession of a player, he shall not intentionally kick the ball, spike the ball into the ground, throw the ball high into the air or from the field of play or intentionally fail to place the ball on the ground or immediately return it to a nearby official.

4. Any form of taunting that is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin is to be penalized.

5. A nonplayer shall not be outside his team box unless to become a player or to return as a replaced player. A maximum of three coaches may be in the coaches' area.

NONPLAYER AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOULS: PENALTY



15 yards. Signal 27. A single flagrant act may result in disqualification. Two unsportsmanlike fouls by the same player or nonplayer results in disqualification. Signal 47.

Penalizing unsportsmanlike fouls from the succeeding spot provides consistent enforcement for all unsportsmanlike conduct fouls. It also supports the philosophy that no unsportsmanlike conduct foul should go unpenalized. A team does not have to decline an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty in order to retain possession of the ball.

NONPLAYER AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOULS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 10-1.A: During a run by A1 on first down from A's 10 to midfield, A2 clips B1 at A's 20 and (a) B1 swears at A2 or (b) A3 taunts B2. RULING: The unsportsmanlike foul in (a) or (b) is not paired with any other foul to create a double or multiple foul. Following the acceptance of the penalty for the clip by A2, the unsportsmanlike fouls will be administered from A's 10, that is the succeeding spot. In (a), it will be A's ball first down and 10 from its own 25-yard line. In (b), it will be A's ball first and 15 from A's 5-yard line.

AR 10-1.B: On third-and-10 from A's 40-yard line, all team A players are set. While quarterback A1 is calling signals, defensive back B1, starting from a position eight yards behind his line of scrimmage, runs toward the neutral zone. B1 stops directly in front of tackle A4. In response to B1's charge, A4 (a) does not move or (b) flinches. RULING: No foul in (a). In (b), A4 is guilty of a dead-ball foul for false start. If in the official's judgment the action by B1 was for the purpose of disconcerting or hindering A, it is an unsportsmanlike conduct foul. In that case, the official should sound the whistle before the snap.

AR 10-1.C: In the process of scoring a touchdown, A1 (a) holds and waves the ball overhead the last 10 yards, (b) throws the ball into the bleachers, (c) kicks the ball from the field, (d) spikes the ball to the ground with force, (e) does a series of back flips or (f) runs toward his team box, then stops and struts back and forth in front of the fans. RULING: Unsportsmanlike conduct in all cases. The 15-yard penalty is assessed on the try.

AR 10-1.D: After crossing the goal line for a touchdown, A1 (a) momentarily raises the ball overhead but then quickly drops it to the ground, (b) jumps into the arms of teammate A2 for a hug or (c) has a group hug with several teammates. RULING: No foul in (a), (b) or (c).

AR 10-1.D: B1 calls defensive signals loudly (a) before A takes its set position, (b) during the time A1 is giving his cadence count or (c) while A1 is using audibles. RULING: Legal in (a). In (b) and (c), if in the official's judgment the action by B1 was for the purpose of disconcerting or hindering A, it is an unsportsmanlike conduct foul. In that case, the official should sound his whistle before the snap.

AR 10-1.E: After A1 carries the ball into B's end zone, he is knocked down by B1 clearly after the ball is dead. RULING: B1's dead-ball contact foul will be penalized



on the try to the 11/2-yard line. If deemed flagrant, B1 could be disqualified. AR 10-1.F: Following the second 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul by the coach of B, the referee notifies him that he may no longer remain in the vicinity of the playing field and that he may not have any contact with his players, either direct or indirect, throughout the remainder of the game including halftime. The coach departs to the (a) stands, (b) press box or (c) the team locker room. RULING: Illegal in (a) and (b). Legal in (c). In (c), if the coach has been disqualified in the first half and has gone to the locker room, he must leave the locker room if the team comes to the locker room.

AR 10-1.G: In the first half, the head coach of A has been penalized (a) 5 yards or (b) 15 yards for being outside the box and on the field of play. In the third period the coach is again in violation. RULING: In both (a) and (b), another 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty is assessed. In (b) the coach must be disqualified since he has now committed his second 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul. The initial 5-yard penalty in (a) for sideline interference is not counted as one of the two fouls leading to disqualification.

AR 10-1.H: In the first period, A is warned and then later penalized 5 yards for having more than three coaches in the two-yard belt between the sideline and the team box. The same infraction occurs again in the third period. RULING: The third and subsequent infractions result in 15-yard penalties. If the individual offender cannot be determined, the fouls are all charged to the head coach. The second 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul is considered flagrant and the head coach must be removed from the stadium area. If an individual assistant coach is the offender, he — not the head coach — is charged with the foul.

AR 10-1-9: A1 is deaf. A's coach requests the referee to (a) permit a signer to go to the team huddle to relay the play-call to the deaf player or (b) permit the signer to move up and down the sideline without penalty. RULING: Not permitted in (a) or (b). However, a reasonable accommodation is to permit the signer to occupy the coaching box but not be counted as one of the three allowable coaches.

Section 2

Substitution

1. Each team shall begin the game with 11 players, but if it has no substitutes to replace injured or disqualified players, it may continue with fewer.

2. Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players. During the same dead-ball interval, no substitute shall become a player and then withdraw and no player shall withdraw and re-enter as a substitute unless a penalty is accepted, a dead-ball foul occurs, there is a charged timeout or the period ends.

SUBSTITUTION: APPROVED RULINGS



AR 10.2.A: Either team has 12 players on the field as team A is in formation and quarterback A1 is calling signals. RULING: A dead-ball illegal substitution foul has occurred. Neither team may have more than 11 players on the field when the snap is imminent.

AR 10.2.B: B11 mistakenly believes he is his team's 12th player. He leaves the field before the snap on his sideline and enters his team box. B11 then discovers his error and returns to field on his team's side of the neutral zone before the snap. RULING: There is no foul as long as B11 remains a player.

AR 10.2.C: Substitute (a) A1 or (b) B1, noticing his team has only 10 players on the field, comes onto the field just as the ball is about to be snapped. RULING: In (a), A1 must be on the field on A's side of the neutral zone, inside the nine-yard marks and not violate the shift or motion provisions. Furthermore, the act of his coming onto the field must not deceive the defensive team. In (b), the substitution is legal as long as B1 is on the field on B's side of the neutral zone prior to the snap.

Section 3

Dead-Ball Illegal Substitution

A player, replaced player or a substitute who has been unable to complete the substitution is required to leave the field at the side on that his team box is located and go directly to his team box.

During the same dead-ball interval, no substitute shall become a player and then withdraw and no player shall withdraw and re-enter as a substitute unless a penalty is accepted, a dead-ball foul occurs, there is a charged timeout or the period ends.

DEAD-BALL ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION: PENALTY

5 yards. Signals 7 and 22.

DEAD-BALL ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 10.3.A: Substitutes A12 and B12 properly enter the game between downs. The replaced player of A remains in the team huddle while the replaced B player leaves the field immediately. RULING: In that situation, A is charged with a 5-yard dead-ball foul for an illegal substitution because the replaced player of A did not leave as required.

Breaking the huddle with 12 players is not in and of itself a foul. If the substitute arrives just as the huddle is breaking, it is not a foul. If either team has more than 11 players on the field and the snap is imminent, it is a dead-ball foul for illegal

RULE 10 NON-CONTACT FOULS

IN THIS RULE

- Unsportsmanlike fouls
- Substitution and participation rules
- Unfair acts

Section 1: Nonplayer and Unsportsmanlike Fouls	151
Nonplayer and Unsportsmanlike Fouls: Penalty	151
Nonplayer and Unsportsmanlike Fouls: Approved Rulings.....	152
Section 2: Substitution.....	153
Substitution: Approved Rulings.....	154
Section 3: Dead-Ball Illegal Substitution.....	154
Dead-Ball Illegal Substitution: Penalty	154
Dead-Ball Illegal Substitution: Approved Rulings.....	154
Section 4: Live-Ball Illegal Substitution	155
Live-Ball Illegal Substitution: Penalty	155
Live-Ball Illegal Substitution: Approved Rulings	155
Section 5: Illegal Participation.....	156
Illegal Participation: Penalty	156
Illegal Participation: Approved Rulings.....	156
Section 6: Unfair Acts	158
Unfair Acts: Penalty	158
Unfair Acts: Approved Rulings	158



- If an unsportsmanlike or nonplayer foul occurs during a down resulting in a change of possession or a first down, the line-to-gain equipment is set following enforcement of the penalty. Penalizing unsportsmanlike fouls from the succeeding spot provides consistent enforcement for all unsportsmanlike conduct fouls. It also supports the philosophy that no unsportsmanlike conduct foul should go unpenalized. A team does not have to decline an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty in order to retain possession of the ball.

- Contact fouls during a dead ball period that are not part of the football play are enforced as unsportsmanlike conduct penalties. A player who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game has disqualified himself for the remainder of that game. Penalty: 15 yards. Unnecessary roughness is not to be confused with unsportsmanlike conduct just as taunts or curses directed at opponents are not to be penalized as personal fouls.

substitution.

AR 10.3.B: B11 mistakenly believes he is his team's 12th player and leaves the field before the snap on his opponent's sideline. **RULING:** B11 has committed illegal substitution by leaving on the opponent's sideline.

AR 10.3.C: It is First-and-10 on B's 12-yard line. Substitute B12 comes onto the field to replace B2 and communicates with him. Prior to the ball becoming live (a) B2 leaves the field of play through the end zone and across B's sideline without crossing the end line and continues toward his team box, (b) B12, seeing that he will be unable to replace B2 before the ball is snapped, returns to his team box, (c) B2, seeing that he will not be able to reach the sideline before the ball is snapped, leaves the field through the end zone and remains to observe the play or (d) B12 becomes confused and withdraws through the end zone across the end line and goes around the field to return to B's team box. **RULING:** In (a), the act is legal. In (b), (c) and (d), it is a nonplayer foul for illegal substitution. A player, replaced player or substitute is required to go directly to his team box. A substitute may not enter and withdraw in the same dead-ball interval.

Section 4

Live-Ball Illegal Substitution

1. During a down a replaced player or substitute who attempts unsuccessfully to leave the field and who does not participate in or affect the play constitutes an illegal substitution.

2. An entering substitute shall be on his team's side of the neutral zone when the ball is snapped or free kicked.

3. During a down a replaced player or substitute who enters but does not participate constitutes illegal substitution.

LIVE-BALL ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION: PENALTY

5 yards. Signal 22.

LIVE-BALL ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION: APPROVED RULINGS



AR 10.4.A: A number of team substitutes enter the field between downs. The officials do not recognize that one replaced player does not leave the field immediately. When the ball is snapped, B12 is attempting



to get off the field. RULING: It is an illegal substitution foul on B12. However, if the official's count is not completed before the snap is imminent or if the substitution has not been monitored, it becomes illegal participation at the snap if more than 11 are in the formation. Each team is responsible for substituting legally and for replaced players to leave immediately as required.

AR 10.4.B: Prior to the snap, B11 recognizes he is to be in the game and he enters on A's side of the neutral zone. The ball is snapped before B11 gets to his team's side. RULING: Illegal substitution at the snap. If the 5-yard penalty is accepted, it is enforced from the succeeding spot.

Section 5

Illegal Participation

1. Prior to a change of possession or when there is no change of possession, no player of A or K shall go out of bounds and return during the down unless blocked out of bounds by an opponent. If a player is blocked out of bounds by an opponent and returns inbounds during the down, he shall return at the first opportunity.

2. During the down, no player shall intentionally go out of bounds and return.

3. No replaced player, substitute, coach, trainer or other team personnel shall hinder an opponent, touch the ball, influence the play or otherwise participate.

4. It is illegal participation when any player, replaced player, substitute coach, trainer or other team personnel enters and participates during a down.

5. It is illegal participation if an injured player is not replaced for at least one down, unless the halftime or intermission occurs; to have 12 or more players participating at the snap or free kick; to use a player, replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap or free kick; for a player to be lying on the ground to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap or free kick; for a disqualified player to re-enter the game. A disqualified player is a player barred from further participation in a game. A disqualified player shall be removed.

ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION: PENALTY

15 yards, previous spot. Signal 28.

ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 10.5.A: A number of team substitutes enter the field between downs. The officials do not recognize that one replaced player does not leave the field immediately. When the ball is snapped A12 is in the formation as an extra lineman. RULING: It is illegal participation. If the official's count is not completed before the snap is imminent or if the substitution has not been monitored, it becomes illegal participation at the snap if more than 11 are in the formation. Each team is responsible for substituting legally and for replaced players to leave immediately as required.



AR 10.5.B: Eligible receiver A1 is running a sideline route when he intentionally steps out of bounds at A's 30-yard line. A1 returns inbounds and (a) catches or touches a forward pass from A2, (b) cannot catch a forward pass because of interference by B3 or (c) interferes with B3 so he cannot intercept the pass. RULING: Stepping out of bounds means A1 is guilty of illegal participation, a 15-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot. He is not an ineligible illegally downfield. In (a), when he catches or touches the pass, he is also guilty of illegal touching. In (b), the interference by B3 creates a double foul; the penalties cancel and the down is replayed. In (c), A1 is also guilty of offensive pass interference.

AR 10.5.C: Fourth-and-15 on K's 30-yard line. K1 accidentally steps on the sideline while K2's punt is in the air. K1 returns inbounds at midfield (a) before or (b) after R1 catches the ball and makes the tackle on R's 40. RULING: Since K1 went out of bounds before the change of possession, it is an illegal participation foul in both (a) and (b) when he returns inbounds. In (a), if accepted, the penalty is enforced from the previous spot as the foul occurred during a loose ball play. In (b), since the foul occurred during R1's run, the 15-yard penalty is enforced from the end of R1's run.

AR 10.5.D: Between second and third downs, A's head coach sends several substitutes into the game. A11, believing that he has been replaced, leaves the field and goes directly to his team's box. Realizing that his position has not been substituted for, A11 enters the field as the ball is being snapped, runs a pass pattern and catches the ball for a first down. RULING: That is illegal participation and is marked off 15 yards from the basic spot.

AR 10.5.E: Several A substitutes enter the field between downs and go to the team's huddle, but one replaced player does not leave immediately and is not detected. However, when they break the huddle the replaced player runs toward his sideline and leaves the field just before the ball is snapped. RULING: An illegal participation foul if the official judges that A was using a replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive the opponents. If not, it is illegal substitution.

AR 10.5.F: Following a kickoff return, A1 and A2 enter the field while A3, A4 and A5 move toward the sideline. A5 stops within the nine-yard marks while A3 and A4 continue to the team box. The ball is snapped without a huddle and the quarterback throws a forward pass to A5, who has gone downfield as a wide receiver. RULING: That play is illegal because a pretended substitution is used to deceive the opponents. The penalty of 15 yards for the illegal participation foul will be administered from the previous spot since the foul occurred at the snap.

AR 10.5.G: With third-and-10 from B's 30-yard line, A1 runs to B's 18-yard line where he is tackled. During the down: substitute A12 comes onto the field and blocks B1. RULING: A12 is guilty of illegal participation.

- If there are more than 11 players in the formation at the snap, either offensively or defensively, the foul is considered as having occurred simultaneously with the snap and is

illegal participation. The 15-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot.

- If a substitute enters the field during the down and participates, it is illegal participation and enforced from the basic spot. The basic spot is where the substitute participated, not necessarily where he entered the field.
- If a nonplayer hinders an opponent outside the field of play, it constitutes illegal participation. The spot of the foul is on the yard line directly inbounds.
- Prior to a change of possession or when there is no change of possession, a player of A or K who goes out of bounds and then comes back in during the down commits illegal participation.

Section 6

Unfair Acts

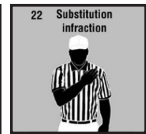
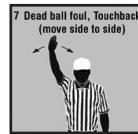
1. If a player or nonplayer or person(s) not subject to the rules hinders play by an unfair act that has no specific rule coverage; either team repeatedly commits fouls that halve the distance to the goal line or either team commits any act that, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game, the referee enforces any penalty he considers equitable, including the award of a score.

2. No player shall hide the ball under a jersey. No player shall use a kicking tee that is not made of pliable material or that elevates the lowest point of the ball more than two inches above the ground.

3. Any planned loose ball play ("fumblerooski") is illegal.

UNFAIR ACT: PENALTY

15 yards, basic spot. Signal 27.



UNFAIR ACT: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 10.6.A: A is trailing by five points and has no timeouts left when the play ends on B's 3-yard line. The referee does not feel there is any illegal delay in unpinning and that time will definitely expire before the ball is ready and A gets in position to snap. Quarterback A1 reaches into the pile of players and grabs the ball. He then throws the ball to midfield. RULING: Even if the referee imposes a 15-yard penalty for an unsportsmanlike act, A has accomplished its goal — the clock is stopped and it can get in position and be ready to run a play even though the clock will start on the ready-for-play signal. That situation illustrates when it is appropriate for the referee to invoke the unfair-act rule and handle the situation in any way that he feels is equitable. In that specific situation the referee should wind the

clock and end the game without giving A an opportunity to put the ball in play.



AR 10.6.B: From a field goal formation, potential kicker K1 yells, "Where's the tee?" K2 replies, "I'll go get it" and goes legally in motion toward his team's sideline. Ball is snapped to K1, who throws a touchdown pass to K2. RULING: Unsportsmanlike conduct prior to a snap. The ball should be declared dead and the foul enforced as a

dead-ball foul.

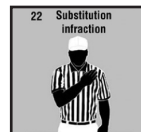
AR 10.6.C: Fourth-and-4 at team B's 30-yard line. Following the third-down play, team A's players remain on the field apparently waiting for the coach to make a decision about the next play. Before the play clock expires, all 11 team A players jog toward the sideline as team A substitutes run onto the field and settle into a formation. A11, who participated in the third-down play, jogs toward the sideline with his teammates. He does not leave the field but, undetected by the defense, stands behind the line of scrimmage within a few yards of team A's sideline. At the snap, A11 runs downfield near the sideline and catches a legal forward pass in team B's end zone.

RULING: Live-ball foul by team A for an unfair act. It is illegal to use the substitution process to deceive the opponent. The 15-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot. Team A will have Fourth-and-19 at team B's 45-yard line.

PLAY 10.6.D: third-and-1 on team A's 40-yard line. A1 takes the snap, steps back one stride and places the ball on the ground behind guard A2 at team A's 37-yard line. Right tackle A3, who has turned to face his goal line, then loops behind the line, grabs the ball and runs for a touchdown.

RULING: Illegal because it is a planned loose ball play involving a lineman. The penalty is marked off 5 yards from the previous spot. It will be third-and-6 on team A's 35-yard line.

COMMENT: It is a fundamental core belief of USA Football that coaches demand sportsmanship from their players and, equally important, lead by example. Coaches must always remember that the players look to them for positive life skills and values. With that in mind, USA Football takes the position that coaches should refrain from teaching their players and teams techniques and plays that have no place in youth sports. Examples of deceptive plays include but are not limited to "hideout" plays, "wrong ball" plays and/or "fumblerooski" plays. Football has been and always will be a game of deception and trickery involving multiple shifts, unusual formations and creative plays. However, actions or verbiage designed to confuse the defense into believing there is problem and a snap isn't imminent or planned loose ball plays, beyond the scope of sportsmanship and are illegal. Respect opponent! Respect the game!



are your

Section 1

Officials' Jurisdiction

The officials shall have the authority to make decisions for infractions of

the rules. The game officials shall assume authority for the contest, including penalizing unsportsmanlike acts, 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time or as soon thereafter as they are able to be present. The officials' jurisdiction extends through the referee's declaration of the end of the fourth period or overtime.

OFFICIALS' JURISDICTION: APPROVED RULINGS

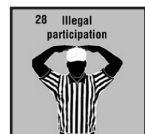
AR 11-1.A: The game officials inspect the playing field as a part of their pregame routine and determine that (a) the game field does not have the required restraining line marked at all on the field from the sidelines and end lines or (b) the 3-yard line that is marked on the game field for the try is only 12 inches in length. RULING: In both (a) and (b), the field markings are not legal by rule, but the game will still be played. In (a), a four-inch-wide restraining line shall be placed around the outside of the field, at least two yards from the sidelines and end lines, as an extension of the line limiting the team box area, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. In (b), a line four inches wide and a minimum of 24 inches in length shall be centered in the field of play, three yards from each goal line. The game officials must notify league officers to let them know the field was not properly marked.

AR 11-1.B: A coach reports that his team's headphones are not working. RULING: Whether or not the headphones are working on either side does not come under the jurisdiction of the officials.

AR 11-1.C: Upon returning to the field near the end of the normal 15-minute halftime intermission, the officials notice one team standing quietly in front of its bench during the entire three minutes posted for warm-up. The officials (a) start the game as soon as the three minutes have elapsed or (b) inform the coach of that team he must have his team actively warm up by running or doing some kind of exercises. RULING: The officials are correct in (a), but in error in (b). The rules simply require that an opportunity to warm up be made available.

AR 11-1.D: A trails by three points in the fourth period with the ball on B's 20, fourth-and-10 and two seconds on the clock. A1 throws an incomplete pass into B's end zone with time expired. The referee quickly glances to each sideline and then begins to leave the field. After he crosses the sideline, the referee hears the line judge blowing his whistle. The line judge explains he called pass interference on B1. RULING: The game is not officially over even though the referee left the field. Since a foul had been called, the referee will give A a chance to accept the penalty and extend period with an untimed down from B's 10-yard line.

- The game is officially over when referee holds the ball overhead (signal 14) or if he forgets to do it, when he leaves the field. Before doing that however, he should pause briefly and glance to both sidelines and make sure there are no fouls, no obvious timing error, no request for a coach-referee conference, etc.



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Section 2

Authority and Duties of the Referee

1. Prior to the game, the referee shall meet with the head coach(es) and captain(s) and explain that everyone is expected to exhibit good sportsmanship throughout the game.

2. The referee has authority to rule promptly and in the spirit of good sportsmanship on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

3. The referee shall decide whether the ball meets specifications. If the field is wet, the referee may order the ball changed between downs.

4. Prior to the start of the game, the head coach shall be responsible for verifying to the referee and umpire that all of his players are legally equipped and in compliance with the rules.

5. The referee's decision to forfeit a game is final.

6. When a team attempts to conserve or consume time illegally, the referee shall order the clock to be started or stopped.

7. The referee shall notify the teams within five seconds after the time-out expires and shall mark the ball ready for play.

8. In an emergency, such as a pool of water on K's free-kick line, the referee has authority to move the ball to a playable line.

9. Neither team shall commit any act that, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game. For violations, the referee has authority to enforce any penalty he considers equitable, including the award of a score.

AUTHORITY AND DUTIES OF THE REFEREE: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 11.2.A: Prior to the game, both teams wait for the other team to go on the field first. **RULING:** The referee shall direct the home-team coach to have his team enter first. The referee has authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in the rules.

AR 11.2.B: Prior to the start of the game, A has provided two balls for the referee's examination, but B has not provided a ball. **RULING:** There is no penalty if a team does not provide a ball; however, in this case, B will have to use the ball(s) provided by A until such time B offers a legal ball for the referee's approval.

AR 11.2.C: The referee has examined and verified the legality of a number of balls provided by each team prior to the game. However, during the course of the game, the weather conditions change dramatically and the teams wish to have additional balls approved for use. **RULING:** This is permissible and is within the intent of the rule.

AR 11.2.D: During the third period, a thunderstorm moves into the area. The crew of officials huddle to assess the situation. There is disagreement among the crew as to whether the game should be suspended.

RULING: The referee will make the final decision. If possible, he should involve league officers and/or the head coaches before making the final decision unless



there is no time for discussion. Player safety always must be the primary consideration.

Section 3

Duties of the Umpire

Players may wear auxiliary equipment if sanctioned by the umpire as being made of soft, nonabrasive, nonhardening material. No player shall participate while wearing illegal equipment. This applies to any equipment, that in the opinion of the umpire is dangerous, confusing or inappropriate.

DUTIES OF THE UMPIRE: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 11.3.A: During the pregame conference, the home team's coach informs the umpire that all players' gloves are new but none of the gloves have the required label/stamp indicating compliance with test specifications.

RULING: The gloves may not be worn; all gloves must have the required label or stamp.

AR 11.3.B: Prior to the game, the coach of B requests the umpire to examine a cast/splint on the forearm of one of his players. The protective item has "hard" material but is covered with at least 1/2-inch thick, high-density, closed-cell polyurethane. The coach (a) provides or (b) does not provide to the umpire prior to the start of the game, a written authorization from a licensed medical physician directing the use of the cast/splint as necessary to protect an injury. **RULING:** In (a), the cast/splint may be worn during the game; however, in (b), the cast/splint may not be worn. Unless proper authorization is provided to the umpire prior to the start of the game by a licensed medical physician, no hard material may be worn on the hand, wrist, forearm or elbow, regardless of how well it is padded.

AR 11.3.C: During the pregame visit with the head coach of A, the umpire notices that some squad members have eye shields that are (a) dark or (b) clear. The head coach of A has a letter from a physician indicating that the dark shield is a necessity for the player. **RULING:** In (a), the umpire indicates to the head coach only eye shields that permit 100% light transmission may be worn, a physician's statement cannot supersede this rule. In (b), the eye shield is legal if, in addition to being clear, it is also molded and rigid and securely attached to the helmet.



Section 4

Coin Toss



1. Before the scheduled game starting time, the referee, in the presence of the field captains, shall instruct the visiting captain to give a “heads” or “tails” choice before the coin toss. If the coin toss or simulated coin toss, is held on the playing field, it shall be held three minutes prior to the scheduled game starting time or as otherwise specified by individual leagues.

2. Not more than four captains from each team may be present at the coin toss and only one from each team shall be designated as its spokesman. All team personnel on the playing field, other than the team captains involved in the coin toss ceremony, shall be restricted to their respective team box areas or well away from the vicinity of the toss.

3. The winner of the toss shall have first choice of options for the first half or to defer and have first choice for the second half. The loser shall have the first choice of options for the half the winner of the toss did not select. The options for each half shall be to choose whether his team will kick or receive or to choose the goal his team will defend. The captain not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option. A captain represents his team during the selection of second half options.

4. In leagues using a tiebreaking procedure, when the score is tied at the end of the fourth period, the referee will conduct the coin toss in the center of the field. The visiting-team’s captain shall be given the privilege of choosing “heads” or “tails” before the coin is tossed. The winner of the toss shall be given his choice of defense or offense first or of designating the end of the field at that the ball will be put in play for this set of downs. The loser will have his choice of the other options. The referee will indicate the winner of the toss by placing a hand on his shoulder. To indicate that team will go on offense, the referee will have that captain face the goal toward that his team will advance and indicate this with the first-down signal. The other team captain will face the offensive captain with his back toward the goal he will defend.

Section 5

Supplementary Equipment

1. The use of any replay or television monitoring equipment by the officials in making any decision relating to the game is prohibited.

2. Supplementary equipment to aid in game administration may be used if authorized by the league.

SUPPLEMENTARY EQUIPMENT: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 11.5.A: A1 advances the ball to near B’s goal line, where several B players try to prevent the score. The covering official rules a touchdown. Sideline replay equipment clearly shows (a) A1 fumbled the ball at B’s 1-yard line, (b) A1 stepped out of bounds on B’s 2-yard line or (c) A2 was illegally in motion at the snap. **RULING:** The touchdown is scored in all cases. Video monitoring or replay equipment shall not be used by game officials to make any decision relating to the game.

RULE 11 OFFICIALS AND THEIR DUTIES

IN THIS RULE

- When the officials' jurisdiction begins and ends
- The referee's power to judge matters not specifically covered by rule
- Conducting the coin toss

Section 1: Officials' Jurisdiction	163
Officials' Jurisdiction: Approved Rulings	163
Section 2: Authority and Duties of the Referee	164
Authority and Duties of the Referee: Approved Rulings	164
Section 3: Duties of the Umpire	165
Duties of the Umpire: Approved Rulings	165
Section 4: Coin Toss	166
Section 5: Supplementary Equipment	166
Supplementary Equipment: Approved Rulings	167



- Officials are empowered to call fouls regardless of the position they work. However, the referee has special authority to make certain decisions and to settle specific disputes.



AR 11.5.B: The game officials are advised that supplementary equipment such as (a) a microphone for penalty announcements by the referee, (b) a ball-spotting device, (c) a ball-tracking device or (d) a 25-second clock will be used during the game. RULING: None of the supplementary devices as described may be used unless the league has given specific authorization.

Section 1

The Field

Football is played on a rectangular field 360 by 160 feet. The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and markers. It is recommended there be a slope of 1/4 inch per foot from the center of the field to each sideline. The field of play is the area within the boundary lines and the goal lines. The rise from each sideline to the center of the field is 20 inches when the recommended slope is used. See diagram on page 188.

Section 2

Lines and Markings

1.-yard line markers, constructed of soft, pliable materials, if placed on the ground, should be no closer than 5 yards to the sideline.

2. Lines shall be marked with a noncaustic, nontoxic material designed for marking fields such as powdered gypsum, calcium carbonate and liquid aerosol paint. It is recommended that the lines be white. Neither lime, hydrated lime or other chemical derivatives of lime, nor caustic material of any kind may be used for marking football fields.

3.-yard lines shall be marked with a continuous line every 5 yards beginning and ending four inches from each sideline. Game administration may place on the field of play, four inches from each sideline,-yard line extensions that should be 24 inches in length and four inches in width.

4. Endlines and sidelines shall be continuous lines at least four inches wide. All other field dimension lines should be marked four inches in width.

5. A restraining line is a line placed around the outside of the field. No person, including but not limited to, spectators, game administrators or members of the media, shall be allowed within the restraining line. A maximum of three coaches may be in the restricted area. No player, non-player or coach shall be in the

restricted area when the ball is live.



NON-PLAYER IN RESTRICTED AREA WHEN BALL IS LIVE: PENALTY

First offense – warning. Signals 7 and 29. Second offense – 5 yards. Signals 7 and 29. Each subsequent offense – 15 yards. Signals 7, 29

and 27.

6. A four-inch-wide restraining line shall be placed around the outside of the field, at least two yards from the sidelines and end lines, as an extension of the line limiting the team box area, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. It is recommended that the restraining line be marked by placing 12-inch long lines, separated by 24-inch intervals. Game administration may place four-inch wide and 12-inch long bisecting marks along the restraining line at each 5-yard line between the goal lines.

7. A series of hash marks should be 24 inches in length and four inches in width and shall be located 53 feet, four inches from and parallel with each sideline dividing the field of play longitudinally in thirds. The hash marks shall be marked so that each 5-yard marker bisects the hash mark. Game administration may place on the field of play, at the hash marks, yard line extensions that should be 24 inches in length and four inches in width. It is permissible to use college or professional fields with hash marks marked at the distance specified by their respective codes.

8. Nine-yard marks, 12 inches in length and four inches in width, shall be located nine yards from each sideline. The nine-yard marks shall be marked so that at least each successive 10-yard marker bisects the nine-yard marks. The marks shall not be required if the field of play is visibly numbered. If on-the-field numbers are used, the tops of those numbers shall be nine yards from the sideline, should be six feet in height and four feet in width and may include directional arrows next to the yard line numbers indicating the direction toward the nearest goal line.

9. Team boxes shall be marked on each side of the field outside the coaches' area between the 25-yard lines for use of coaches, substitutes, trainers, etc., affiliated with the team. The coaches' area is a minimum of a two-yard belt between the front of the team box and the sideline. It is permissible for both team boxes to be on the same side of the field, provided each team box is marked between respective 20- and 45-yard lines. It is recommended goal lines and the team box boundaries be marked in a color that contrasts with other field markings and the area between the sidelines and the team box boundaries be solid white or marked with diagonal lines.

10. Decorative markings in the end zones shall be no closer than two feet to the boundary and the goal lines. Advertising and/or commercial markings on the field of play are prohibited.



11. Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the boundary marks, such marks being out of bounds.

12. Each goal line mark shall be entirely in its end zone so the edge toward the field of play and its vertical plane is the actual goal line. The goal line shall extend from sideline to sideline.

13. A line, four inches wide and a minimum of 24 inches in length, shall be centered in the field of play, three yards from each goal line.

Section 3

Pylons

A soft, flexible pylon, that is four inches square, 18 inches high, either orange, red or yellow in color and does not constitute a safety hazard, shall be placed at the inside corner of each of the intersections of the sidelines with the goal lines and the end lines as well as with each intersection of the hash marks extended and shall be placed either three feet beyond the end lines or on the end lines. When properly placed, the goal line pylon is out of bounds at the intersection of the sideline and the goal line extended.

PYLONS: APPROVED RULING

AR 12.3.A: Ball carrier A10 dives into the pylon at the intersection of the goal line and sidelines and the ball breaks the plane of the goal line.

RULING: Touchdown. Assuming the pylon was placed properly, the ball broke the plane of the goal line prior to the touching of the pylon.

Section 4

Coaches' Field Equipment

1. Communication devices, other than audio tape recorders, LAN phones and/or headsets, including but not limited to cellular phones, still photograph(s), film, analog or digital video(s) and/or Internet descriptions shall not be used for coaching purposes during the game or between periods.

2. Local Area Network (LAN) phones and/or headsets may be used by coaches, other non players and players; however, players may use LAN phones and/or headsets only during authorized sideline conferences.

COACHES' FIELD EQUIPMENT: APPROVED RULINGS



AR 12.4.A: A coach is observed talking into a tape recorder during the game. RULING: Legal for use during or after the game.

AR 12.4.B: A coach reports that his team's headphones are not working. RULING: Whether or not the headphones are working on either side does not come under the jurisdiction of the officials.

Section 5

Line-to-Gain Equipment

1. Either a yardage chain that joins two rods exactly 10 yards apart or any other 10-yard indicator with a visible line-to-gain indicator shall be used as the official line-to-gain equipment. This equipment and a down indicator shall be provided by game management.

2. The line-to-gain indicator shall be used to fix the line to gain and the down indicator shall be used to mark the spot of the ball and indicate the number of the down in a series. The game officials shall check the line-to-gain indicator for accuracy prior to the start of the game.

3. The official line-to-gain and down indicators shall be operated approximately two yards outside the sideline. It is recommended they be located opposite the press box. If there is no press box, the location will be specified by game management at the request of the linesman. The line-to-gain indicator shall be removed from the sideline when the line to gain is the goal line.

4. All line-to-gain and down-indicator rods shall have flat lower ends covered by protective caps.

5. Unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain and down indicators may be used on the sideline opposite the official line-to-gain and down indicators and shall be operated approximately within two yards outside the sideline except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit.

11. It is recommended that the members of the crew wear distinctive vests or jackets furnished by game management.

LINE-TO-GAIN EQUIPMENT: APPROVED RULING

AR 12.5.A: The chain crew wants to have the line-to-gain equipment on the sideline even though there is plenty of room to have the equipment two yards off the sideline on the restraining line. RULING: All chain crews must comply with the rules. If the chain crew is insistent, the officials should contact game administration to address the situation.



Section 6

The Goal

1. The goal is the vertical plane midway between the sidelines extending indefinitely above the inside of the uprights and the front edge of the crossbar and in the same vertical plane as the inside edge of the end line. The top of the crossbar shall be 10 feet above the ground, measured from the base of each upright to the top of the crossbar at the intersection or at each end of the crossbar perpendicular to the ground when a single pedestal is used.

2. The crossbar shall be 23 feet, four inches long.

3. The uprights shall be 23 feet, four inches apart inside to inside and each upright may not exceed four inches in width. It is permissible to use college or professional fields with goal post uprights set at the width specified by their respective codes. The uprights shall extend a minimum of 10 feet above the crossbar.

4. The goal posts shall be padded with resilient, shock absorbing material to a height of at least six feet above the ground.

5. The horizontal crossbar and the uprights above it shall be free from any decorative material except paint that is recommended to be either silver, white or yellow in color. One wind directional streamer may be attached to the top of each upright. Wind directional streamers shall be four inches in width, 42 inches in length and either red, orange or yellow in color.

RULE 12 FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

IN THIS RULE

- Specifications for field lines and markings
- Player equipment regulations
- Game equipment regulation

Section 1: The Field.....	171
Section 2: Lines and Markings	171
Non-Player in Restricted Area When Ball is Live:	
Penalty	171
Field Diagram.....	172
Section 3: Pylons	174
Pylons: Approved Ruling	174
Section 4: Coaches Field Equipment	174
Coaches Field Equipment: Approved Rulings	174
Section 5: Line-to-Gain Equipment	175
Section 6: The Goal.....	175
Section 7: Supplementary Equipment	176
Supplementary Equipment: Approved Ruling	176
Section 8: Auxiliary Player Equipment.....	176
Auxiliary Player Equipment: Approved Rulings.....	177
Section 9: Illegal Player Equipment	177
Illegal Player Equipment: Approved Rulings	179
Illegal Player Equipment: Penalty.....	179
Section 10: Mandatory Player Equipment.....	179
Helmet and Facemask	180
Helmet and Facemask: Approved Rulings.....	180
Jerseys and Pants.....	180
Jerseys: Approved Rulings	181
Pads.....	181
Shoes.....	181
Tooth and Mouth Protectors.....	182
Tooth and Mouth Protectors: Approved Ruling	182
Failure to Wear Required Equipment: Penalty.....	183
Section 11: Game Balls.....	183

**KEEP
IN MIND**

- Officials must use good judgment when ruling on failure to properly wear required equipment during the down. Whenever a player is involved in contact during the down, it is possible for mouth protectors, chin straps, shoes, helmets, etc., to come loose or be displaced. In such cases, it is not a foul.

Section 7

Supplementary Equipment

Supplementary equipment to aid in game administration may be used if authorized by the league.

SUPPLEMENTARY EQUIPMENT: APPROVED RULING

AR 12.7.A: The game officials are advised that supplementary equipment such as (a) a microphone for penalty announcements by the referee, (b) a ball-spotting device, (c) a ball-tracking device or (d) a 25-second clock will be used during the game. RULING: None of the supplementary devices as described may be used unless the league has given specific authorization.

Section 8

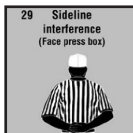
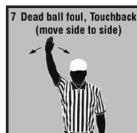
Auxiliary Player Equipment

1. Tape, bandage or support wrap not to exceed three thicknesses are legal without inspection or approval.

2. Auxiliary equipment may be worn if sanctioned by the umpire as being soft, nonabrasive, nonhardening material. That includes gloves, that may be anchored with athletic tape and, even though modified, must have a securely attached label or stamp (NFHS/NCAA specifications) indicating compliance with test specifications on file with the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA) as of January 1, 1994, unless made of unaltered plain cloth; hand pads, that may be anchored with athletic tape; forearm pads, that may be anchored on each end with athletic tape; or tape, bandage or support wrap on the hand or forearm to protect an existing injury.

3. A glove is a covering for the hand having separate sections for each finger and thumb, absent of any web-like material between the fingers and/or thumb and completely covering each finger and thumb.

4. Beginning in 2012, hand pads must have a securely attached label or stamp indicating compliance with test specifications on file with the SGMA as of January 1, 1994 unless made of unaltered plain cloth. A hand pad is a covering for the hand, that may have separate openings for each finger and thumb, is absent of any web-like material between the fingers and/or thumb and not covering each finger and thumb.



AUXILIARY PLAYER EQUIPMENT: APPROVED RULINGS





AR 12.8.A: During the pregame conference, the home team's coach informs the umpire that all players' gloves are new but none of the gloves have the required label/stamp indicating compliance with test specifications.

RULING: The gloves may not be worn; all gloves must have the required label or stamp.

AR 12.8.B: During the pregame warm-ups, the umpire notices that a few of A's linemen have hand pads that do not have label/stamp indicating compliance with test specifications. RULING: The hand pads are legal. A label/stamp is not required until 2012.

AR 12.8.C: A1 is wearing (a) a biceps pad or (b) an ankle support. In all three cases a hard plastic surface on the outside of the pad/support is not covered, but all the edges are rounded and there are no cutting or abrasive surfaces. RULING: The items described in (a) and (b) are legal. The exposed plastic does not require a covering on those specific items of equipment. However, if any of the plastic surface is cracked or has a cutting edge it would not be legal. If the biceps pad is connected to the shoulder pad, it must be fully covered by the jersey.

Section 9

Illegal Player Equipment

1. When any required player equipment is missing or when illegal equipment is found, correction shall be made before participation. An official's timeout shall be declared to permit prompt repair of equipment that becomes illegal or defective through use.

2. No player shall participate while wearing illegal equipment, including equipment that, in the opinion of the umpire is dangerous, confusing or inappropriate.

3. Jewelry shall not be worn. Religious and medical alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert medal must be taped and may be visible.

4. If worn attached to the helmet, an eye shield is illegal unless it is constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission. Sunglasses or tinted goggles or eyeglasses are permitted.

5. Illegal equipment shall always include but is not limited to:

a. Ball-colored helmets, jerseys, patches, pads or gloves, penalty-marker colored pads or gloves. Any transverse stripe on the sleeve below the elbow.

b. Communication devices other than audio recorders, Local Area Network (LAN) phones and/or headsets including but not limited to cellular phones; still photograph(s), film, analog or digital video(s) and/or Internet depictions. Such prohibition does not include the use of computers and/or other electronic devices that produce reports for the purpose of compiling statistics. However, the use of computers and/or other electronic devices shall be considered illegal if they are used at any time during the game and can be used to produce play tendencies and other scouting information and such information is given to any member of any team prior to the conclusion of the game.



c. Hard substance in its final form such as leather, rubber, plastic, plaster or fiberglass when worn on the hand, wrist, forearm or elbow unless covered on all exterior surfaces with no less than 1/2-inch thick, high-density, closed-cell polyurethane or an alternate material of the same minimum thickness and with similar physical properties to protect an injury as directed in writing by a licensed medical physician (M.D./D.O.) Such written direction shall be provided to the umpire prior to the start of the game.

d. Knee braces made of hard unyielding material, unless all parts of the brace made of hard material and extending below the pants are covered. Any other hard substance across the front of the leg are covered with at least 1/2 inch of closed-cell, slow-recovery rubber or other material of the same minimum thickness and having similar physical properties.

e. Metal that is projecting or other hard substance on clothes or person.

f. Plastic material covering protective pads whose edges are not rounded with a radius equal to half the thickness of the plastic.

g. Rib pads and back protectors unless fully covered by a jersey.

h. Jerseys, undershirts or exterior arm covers/pads manufactured to enhance contact with the football or opponent.

i. Slippery or sticky substance of a foreign nature on equipment, towel, uniform, opponent or on an exposed part of the body that affects the ball or an opponent.

j. Tear-away jerseys or jerseys that have been altered in any manner that produces a knot-like protrusion or creates a tear-away jersey.

k. Uniform adornments, with the exception of one unmarked moisture-absorbing white towel, that shall be no less than four inches in width and 12 inches in length and no greater than 18 inches in width and 36 inches in length and/or moisture-absorbing sweatbands, when worn on the wrist beginning at the base of the thumb and extending no more than three inches toward the elbow.

l. Jerseys and pants that have more than one manufacturer's logo/trademark on the outside of each item; a visible logo/trademark exceeding 2-1/4 square inches and exceeding 2-1/4 inches in any dimension; more than one manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference on the outside of each item. (The same size restriction shall apply to either the manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference); or sizing, garment care or other nonlogo labels on the outside of either item.

ILLEGAL PLAYER EQUIPMENT: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 12.9.A: During the pregame warm-ups, the umpire notices some of the players wearing (a) sweatbands on their biceps or (b) sweatbands on their calves. RULING: In (a) and (b), the uniform adornments must be removed prior to the individual becoming a player.

AR 12.9.B: Before the game, the umpire notices that a squad member has an eye shield that is dark. The head coach has a letter from a physician indicating that the dark shield is a necessity for the player. RULING: Only eye shields that permit 100 percent light transmission may be worn. A physician's statement cannot supersede the rule.

AR 12.9.C: During the first period, B1 is detected wearing (a) an earring, (b) a



necklace, (c) a ring, (d) a medical alert bracelet or (e) a religious medallion. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), an unsportsmanlike penalty is assessed to the head coach. B1 must comply with the rules before further participation. In (d), legal if securely attached to the body and visible, if necessary and judged not to present a hazard to the wearer or other players. In (e), the medallion must be taped to the body.

ILLEGAL PLAYER EQUIPMENT: PENALTY

Failure of the head coach, following verification, to have his player(s) wear or use legal and/or required equipment results in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty assessed to the head coach. Signal 27.

Section 10

Mandatory Player Equipment

1. Each player shall properly wear the mandatory equipment while the ball is live. Each player shall participate while wearing legal and properly fitted equipment, that shall be professionally manufactured and not altered to decrease protection.

2. Prior to the start of the game, the head coach shall be responsible for verifying to the referee and umpire that all of his players are legally equipped and in compliance with the rules. Any questions regarding legality of a player's equipment shall be resolved by the umpire.

3. When any required player equipment is missing or when illegal equipment is found, correction shall be made before participation. An official's timeout shall be declared to permit prompt repair of equipment that becomes illegal or defective through use.

4. Failure of the head coach, following verification, to have his player(s) wear or use legal and/or required equipment results in a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct charged to the head coach.

HELMET AND FACEMASK

5. All players shall wear helmets that carry a warning label regarding the risk of injury and a manufacturer's or reconitioner's certification indicating satisfaction of NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment) test standard at the time of manufacture. All such reconitioned helmets shall show recertification to indicate satisfaction with the NOCSAE test standard. The coach's pregame verification to the referee and umpire that all players are properly equipped in compliance with the rules includes the exterior warning label. The facemask shall have a surface covered with resilient material designed to prevent chipping, burrs or abrasiveness and be properly secured to the helmet as designed by the manufacturer. The helmet shall be secured by a properly fastened chin strap with at least four attachment points.

6. If a player's helmet comes completely off through play, other than as the direct result of a foul by an opponent, the player must leave the game for the next down. The game clock will stop at the end of the down. A team timeout is permitted to allow the player to remain in the game. The player must leave the game for one



HELMET AND FACEMASK: APPROVED RULINGS

7. A player whose helmet comes completely off may not continue to participate during the play (illegal participation), nor should an opponent intentionally make contact with a player whose helmet has come completely off during the play (personal foul). Penalty: 15-yard penalty for either infraction.

AR 12.10.A: B10 has a chin strap with (a) two or (b) four attachment points. The umpire notices that not all attachment points are secured. RULING: That is a foul in both situations. All available attachment points must be secured and all helmets must be secured with a four-attachment points system.

AR 12.10.B: Flanker A1 is detected with a chin strap hanging down (a) while going downfield in his pass pattern, (b) after being blocked by B1 downfield or (c) after catching a pass and being hit by B1, he is continuing downfield. RULING: No foul in (a), (b) and (c) unless the covering official observes A1 unsnapping the strap. That penalty would be enforced from the succeeding spot.

JERSEYS AND PANTS

8. A jersey with clearly visible and legible Arabic numbers 1-99 inclusive on the front and back that are long enough to reach the top of the pants and shall be tucked in if longer.

9. Each player shall be numbered 1 through 99 inclusive. The numbers shall be centered horizontally at least eight inches and 10 inches high on front and back, respectively and with bars or strokes approximately 1-1/2 inches wide. The color and style of the number shall be the same on the front and back. The body of the number shall be either a color(s) contrasting with the jersey color or the same solid color(s) as the jersey with a minimum of one border that is at least 1/4 inch in width of a single solid contrasting color.

10. Players of the opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colors.

11. An American flag, not to exceed two by three inches and either a commemorative or memorial patch, not to exceed four square inches and with written league approval, may be worn on the jersey provided neither the flag nor the patch interferes with the visibility of the number.

12. When an official discovers a player who has any amount of blood on a player's uniform, that player shall be directed to leave the game until the uniform is appropriately cleaned and/or the uniform is changed before returning to competition. Such player shall be considered an apparently injured player.

13. Every player is required to wear pants that cover the knees and knee pads.

JERSEYS: APPROVED RULINGS

AR 12.10.C: After the ball has been marked ready for play, but prior to the snap, it is discovered (a) A1 and A2 are both wearing number 81 or (b) B2 is wearing 00. RULING: In (a), it will become a foul at the snap for illegal numbering. In (b), it is a foul before the snap for illegal numbering and B2 will not be permitted to participate with that number, because 00 is not a legal number. If the illegal numbering is discovered during the down, it is a foul that occurred at the snap.

AR 12.10.D: Team A's players are wearing jerseys (a) just covering the shoulder



pads and their midribs are exposed, (b) that extend below the top of their pants, but some players have them tucked in, while others have them outside their pants or (c) that are waist length but have tucked them up under the bottom of their shoulder pads. RULING: The jerseys in (a) and (c) are not legal. In (b), the jerseys of all players will have to be tucked inside the pants upon discovery.

PADS

14. Required pads are hip pads and tailbone protector, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production; knee pads, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, that are worn over the knee and under the pants and at least 1/2 inch thick or 3/8 inch thick if made of shock-absorbing material; shoulder pads and hard surface auxiliary attachments, that shall be fully covered by a jersey; and thigh guards, unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, that shall have any hard surface covered with material such as closed-cell vinyl foam that has a minimum compression resistance of 4-8 pounds for 25 percent compression or other material with equivalent specifications and is at least 1/4 inch thick on the outside surface and at least 3/8 inch thick on the inside surface and the overlap of the edge. Shinguards, if worn, must meet NOCSAE specifications.

SHOES

15. Every player must wear shoes and shall be made of a material that covers the foot (canvas, leather or synthetic) attached to a firm sole of leather, rubber or composition material that may have cleats or that may be cleatless. Among the items that do not meet the requirements are gymnastic slippers, tennis shoes cut so protection is reduced, ski and logger boots and other apparel not intended for football use.

16. Metal cleats are not legal. Removable cleats shall be constructed of a material that does not chip or develop a cutting edge. Legal material includes leather, nylon, certain plastics and rubber; the use of aluminum or ceramics is not permissible. The base and the tip of the cleat shall be parallel. The free end may be rounded in an arc with a radius of not less than 7/16 inch provided the overall length is not more than 1/2 inch measured from the tip of the cleat to the sole of the shoe. The cleat may be attached to a raised platform that is molded to the shoe. The platform may be no more than 5/32 inch in height and must be wider than the base of the cleat. The widest part of the cleat must be in direct contact with the platform. The 5/32 inch raised platform must be wider than the base of the cleat and must extend across the width of the sole to within 1/4 inch or less of the outer edges of the sole. A single toe cleat does not require a raised platform that extends across the width of the sole. The raised platform of the toe cleat is limited to 5/32 inch or less. The 5/32 inch platform is measured from the lowest point of the platform to the sole of the shoe. Removable cleats must have an effective locking device that prevents the exposure of metal posts shall be incorporated. The cleat wall shall be at least 3/16 inch in diameter. The sides of the removable cleat shall taper uniformly from a minimum base of 3/4 inch in diameter to a minimum tip of 3/8 inch in diameter.

17. Nonremovable cleats are limited to studs or projections that do not exceed 1/2 inch in length measured from the sole of the shoe to the tip of the cleat and that are made with nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material that does not have or develop a cutting edge.



TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS

18. Every player is required to wear a tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) that shall include an occlusal (protecting and separating the biting surfaces) and a labial (protecting the teeth and supporting structures) portion and covers the posterior teeth with adequate thickness. It is recommended the protector be properly fitted and constructed from a model made from an impression of the individual's teeth and constructed and fitted to the individual by impressing the teeth into the tooth and mouth protector itself. The tooth and mouth protector shall be of any readily visible color, other than completely white or completely clear. The tooth and mouth protector need not be attached to the helmet or facemask. A tooth and mouth protector with a breakaway tether is legal.

TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS: APPROVED RULING

AR 12.10.E: A4 is noticed to (a) have a clear tooth and mouth protector or (b) have a tooth and mouth protector that is only covering the upper, front teeth. **RULING:** All tooth and mouth protectors shall (a) be a color other than completely clear or white and (b) the tooth and mouth protector must also cover the posterior teeth. The officials should, through normal observations, attempt to verify that each player is legally equipped prior to the ball becoming live and if illegal equipment is detected, that player must fix the problem or leave the game. If the officials are unable to detect the illegal equipment and the player is observed wearing a completely clear or white mouth protector during a down, a foul is to be called.

FAILURE TO WEAR REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: PENALTY

Failure to properly wear required equipment during a down, 5 yards. Signals 27 and 23. Failure to properly wear required equipment when the ball is about to become live, dead-ball foul 5 yards. Signals 7 and 21.

Section 11

Game Balls

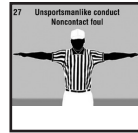
USA Football recommends that all balls used for practice and games are made of leather, composite or rubber material. The chart below includes the recommended footballs broken out in accordance with USA Football's recommended playing standards.





































MANUFACTURER	U6	U8	U10	U12	U14
Baden	Pee-Wee	Pee-Wee	Junior	Junior	Youth
Rawlings	Pee-Wee	Pee-Wee	Junior	Youth	Youth
Riddell	Pee-Wee	Pee-Wee	Junior	Youth	Youth
Spalding	Rookie Gear	Rookie Gear	Junior	Junior, Youth	Youth
Wilson	K2	K2	TDJ	TDJ	TDY

Signal Chart

NOTE: USA Football has adopted the NFHS/NCAA signal chart and numbering

NFHS		OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS		USA Football		
1	Ball ready for play *Untimed down	2	Start clock	3		
4	TV/radio time-out	5	Touchdown, Field goal, Point(s) after touchdown	6	Safety	
7	Dead ball foul, Touchback (move side to side)	8	First down	9	Loss of down	
				10	Incomplete forward pass Penalty declined No play, no score Toss option deferred	
				11	Legal touching of forward pass or scrimmage kick	
					12	Inadvertent whistle
13	Disregard flag	14	End of period	15	Sideline warning	
18	Encroachment	19	False start Illegal formation	20	Illegal shift (2 hands) Illegal motion (1 hand)	

PlayPic® PlayPics courtesy of Referee magazine.

 OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS 				
23 Failure to wear required equipment 	24 Illegal helmet contact 	25 Illegal horse-collar tackle 	27 Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul 	28 Illegal participation 
29 Sideline interference (Face press box) 	30 Running into or Roughing kicker or holder 	31 Illegal batting/kicking (Followed by pointing toward toe for kicking) 	32 Invalid fair catch Illegal fair catch signal 	33 Forward pass interference Kick catching interference 
34 Roughing passer 	35 Illegal pass/forward handing (Face press box) 	36 Intentional grounding 	37 Ineligible downfield on pass 	38 Personal foul 
39 Clipping 	40 Blocking below waist Illegal block 	41 Chop block 	42 Holding/obstruction Illegal use of hands/arms 	43 Illegal block in the back 
44 Helping runner Interlocked blocking 	45 Grasping face mask or helmet opening 	46 Tripping 	47 Disqualification 	

PlayPic® PlayPics courtesy of Referee magazine. Note: Signal numbers 17 and 26 is for future expansion.

Index

Symbols

15-yard penalty 10 11 13 70 78 92
98 101 116 117 118 119 120 121
135 142 145 153 154 155 176

A

Accepted penalties 11 135
Adjusting chin strap 19
Adjusting helmet height 18
Adornments, uniform 174
Airborne player 27 31 32 88 90
All-but-one principle 13 66 113 118
131
Arms, use of 31 33 93 96 103 104
110 111 112 114 115 116 145
Audio recorders 173
Auxiliary equipment 158

B

Backfield 76 77 78 80
Backward Pass 82 86
Ball Placement 52 55 100 102
Basic spot 31 34 57 61 68 69 113
132 133 139 140 142 143 153 154
Batting 57 61 131
Blocker 26 29 33 69 103 104 105
109 111 112 115 117 120 122
 offensive 26
 potential 111 112
Blocking 10 15 29 55 57 61 64 67
103 104 105 109 110 112 113 115;
 continuous 104
 cross-body 114
 dangerous 109
 low 104
Blocking technique 104 110 112
 illegal 110 112
 open-hand 112
Boundary lines 28 163
Boundary marks 165

C

Captain 29 44 46 48 55 66 95 101

102 134 139 157 159
Catch and Completed Pass 86 88
Change of possession 33 40 59 80
90 97 98 122 136 140 142 150 152
153 154
Charged timeout 41 42 44 45 53 134
146 147
Chin strap 19 119 130 175 176
Clipping 10 103 109 141
Clock 12 14 32 37 38 39 40 41 42
43 53 76 83 87 154 155 156 157
163 171 175
 25-second 33 44 163 171
 electric field 39
 running 12
Clock restarts 38 42
Clock stops 35 38 41 42
Coaches area 45
Coaches Field Equipment 170
Coach-referee conference 40 43 45
156
Coach's pregame verification 175
Coin toss 46 47 159 161
 simulated 159
Communication devices 165 173
Concussion 19
Conduct 3 21 23 24
 abusive 34
Conserving time 12 38
Contact 10 15
 below-the-waist 104
 helmet-to-helmet 117
 initiating 94 115
 legal 95 104
 unavoidable 94 120
Contacting Opponent's Head 115
Crossbar 30 125 167
Cupped-hand technique 103

D

Dark eye shield 158 174
Dead ball 30 45 48 65 134 144 150
Dead-ball foul 34 40 41 55 66 75 78
98 102 116 118 126 132 134 135
139 145 146 147 155 178
Deception 15 103 126 155
Decorative markings 164
Defenseless players 15 116
Defensive player 10 13 33 62 77 96

103 110 111 112 114 115 117 120
121 131
Delay 38 43
 illegal 154
 unusual 41 45 53
Delay of game 12 14 42 43
Disqualification 64 115 118 119 120
121
Disqualified player 29 152
Downs 24 30 46 47 48 66 88 96 98
101 116 134 144 146 147 151 152
153 157 159

E

Eligible receivers 12 14 75 86 91
Encroachment 30 56 57 71 72
Endlines 163
End zones 28 43 164
Enforcement 11
 half-the-distance 116 143
 post-scrimmage kick 32 34
 35 61 62 64 66 96 98 129
 133 134 136 142 143
Enforcement spot 35 130 132 133
136 143
 basic 132
 post-scrimmage kick 143
Equipment 2 5 20 30 43 44 45 53
101 110 112 144 150 158 159 163
166 169 170 171 173 174 175 178
 authorized 30 53
 faulty player 44
 fitted 175
 illegal 158 173 175 178
 illegal communication 144
 mandatory 175
 player's 175
 protective 20
 required 144 170 175 178
 required player 43 173 175
 television monitoring 159
Eye shields 158 174

F

Facemask 13 108 118 119 170 175
176
Failure to Wear Required Equipment
178
Fair Catch 41 44 49 52 54 55 57 59

61 63 64 65 66 69 70 96 98 100
102 125
Fair-catch signal 31 54 56 61 63 64
65 66 69 110
 invalid 31 54 56 61 64 65
66
Fair-Catch Signals 52 64 65 66
Feigned charge 78
Field 5 8 15 17 23 27 28 29 30
32 34 35 39 43 44 45 46 47 48 49
51 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 61 62 69
70 72 76 88 90 96 97 101 109 112
117 118 123 124 125 126 129 131
140 141 142 144 145 146 147 151
152 153 154 155 156 157 159 163
164 165 169
Field Diagram 170
Field goal 34 44 45 47 49 51 54 58
61 69 124 125 126 141 142 155
 legal 125
 unsuccessful 126
Field markings 156 164
Fighting 104 112 116 117
First Touching 18 27 41 53 55 57 58
59 61 62 67 70 97 129
Flagrant 34 64 115 116 117 118 119
121 145 146
Forced Touching 52 57 61
Formation 52 57 61 74 75
 free-kick 52 57
 offensive team's 62 77
 scrimmage-kick 29 61 69
 79 120
 shotgun 105
Forward pass 10 14 29 30 31 32
33 41 42 48 60 78 82 83 86 87 88
90 91 92 93 94 95 98 101 111 118
121 123 129 130 131 132 133 135
139 153 155
Forward progress 27 30 88 89 110
123
Foul 11 13 23 26 27 30 31 34 35
38 40 41 42 45 47 48 53 54 55 58
59 60 61 62 64 65 66 67 68 69 70
71 72 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 83 87
92 93 94 95 96 97 98 101 102 105
108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115
116 117 118 119 120 121 122 124
126 129 130 131 132 133 134 135
136 138 139 140 141 142 143 145

146 147 150 151 152 153 154 155
156 170 175 176 178
 double 34 40 59 92 98 124
 136 139 141 142 153
 flagrant 34
 multiple 34 76 139 145
 noncontact 34
 non-post-scrimmage kick 62
 98
 post-scrimmage 134
Frame 103 110 112
Free kick 24 29 30 31 32 33 41 43
44 45 49 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58
59 61 63 66 67 68 69 70 96 100
119 125 130 133 134 142 152
Free-kick line 29 53 55 56 57 59 63
67 97 119 157
Fumble 31 32 33 47 68 80 88 90
114 123 129 131 133 139

G

Game Balls 170 178
Gloves 158 171 173
Goal 27 28 29 30 31 34 35 40 42
44 45 46 47 48 49 51 52 53 54 55
56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 67
68 69 70 72 79 80 82 87 88 89 90
91 96 97 101 102 110 117 118 123
124 125 126 128 129 130 131 132
136 140 141 142 143 145 154 155
156 159 163 164 165 166 167
Goal line 27 28 29 30 35 42 47 52
53 58 60 61 63 64 67 68 69 70 72
79 80 82 87 89 90 91 101 123 124
128 129 130 131 132 136 140 145
154 155 156 159 164 165 166
Goal line plane 35 58
Goal posts 167

H

Halftime 39 146 152 156
Hand pads 171 173
Hand-to-hand snap 10 13 62 63 77
78 83 87 88
Hash marks 26 28 46 55 58 66 67

124 132 141 164 165
Headphones 156 166
Heat 39 44 45
Helmet Fitting Guide 3 17
Hideout 15 155
Holder 10 13 29 30 48 49 54 56
119 120 121 125 135
Holding 64 66 95 96 110 111 112
113 123 130 139 143 144
Horse-Collar 108 114
Huddle 27 29 30 44 45 76 79 80
146 147 153 157
 team's 44 153
Hurdling 117

I

Illegal block 64
Illegal blocks 10 13 107
Illegal Fair-Catch Signals 66
Illegal formation 74 75
Illegal forward pass 10 31 41 42 83
87 95 129
Illegal helmet contact 108 115
Illegal kick 31 32 60 68 69 129 133
Illegal motion 74 80 141
Illegal participation 34 92 152 153
154 176
Illegal Player Equipment 170 173 174
Illegal shift 74 79
Illegal substitution 72 141 147 151
152 153
Illegal substitution foul 147 152
Illegal tactic 15
Illegal tee 52 69
Illegal touching 10 76 92 93 130 153
Illegal use of hands 108 110 112 113
Inadvertent whistle 31 40 41 53 59
60 66 68 95 123 142
Inbounds 28 30 31 32 35 41 42 44
53 55 56 57 58 59 62 67 82 88 89
90 91 92 97 101 102 123 124 126
129 130 134 152 153 154
Inbounds spot 35 55 57 58 59 62
67 97 129
Incomplete pass 43 89 90 98 101
102 118 156
Injury 2 15 19 20 21 34 45 116 158
171 174 175
Intentional grounding 87
Interference 10 11 13 14 42 43 55

60 63 65 66 70 85 86 92 93 94 95
96 104 108 118 135 139 142 146
153 156
 forward-pass 93 94
 interlocked blocking 108 113
 restrictions 93 94 95

J

Jerseys 12 173 174 176 177
Jewelry 173
Joint possession 31 32 56 59 62 82
89 90 91 97 129
 simultaneous 90 91

K

Kick 11 14 15 24 26 27 29 30 31
32 33 34 35 41 42 43 44 45 47 48
49 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60
61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 79
88 96 97 98 100 103 108 110 113
116 119 120 121 122 124 125 126
129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136
142 143 144 152 157 159
 first touching of 18 27 41 53
55 57 58 59 61 62 67 70 97 129
 grounded scrimmage 60 70
 legal free 30 53
 legal scrimmage 53
 muffed 56
 onside 58 59 63
 out-of-bounds 62 129
 recovered 59 62 97 129
Kick-catching interference 55 63 70
108
Kicker 10 13 15 29 47 49 56 57 58
69 116 119 120 121 125 135 155
Kicking tee 29 49 59 69 154
 illegal 69
 legal 59
Kickoff 11 14 40 49 54 55 56 57 69
102 103 126 140 142 153
Knee braces 174
Kneeing 108 122

L

LAN phones 165
Legal forward pass 29 31 32 48 83
88 90 91 92 93 94 95 111 118 121

123 129 133 139 155
Legal kick 31 42 49 54 59 60 144
Leverage 18 19
Lineman 27 29 62 72 75 80 82 92
93 94 115 152 155
Line-to-gain equipment 101 150 166
Live ball 26 28 29 30 31 32 33 43
54 80 88 89 90 123 128 130 134
Live-Ball Foul 134

M

Mandatory player equipment 170 175
Metal cleats 177
Momentum exception 127 130 131
Motion 17 27 72 74 76 78 79 80 81
82 83 126 141 147 155 159
Mouth protectors 170 178
Muffs 30 54 55 57 58 59 60 61 64
65 69 87 93 110 120 130 132
Multiple Fouls 136 138 139

N

Neutral zone 27 30 31 32 33 34 47
49 52 53 54 55 56 57 59 60 61 62
63 64 65 67 68 69 70 71 72 76 78
80 81 82 83 87 88 92 93 94 95 96
97 98 104 105 109 110 111 112
114 115 121 124 125 126 129 133
139 142 143 145 147 151 152
 expanded 34 60 61 62 64
 67 92 94 96 97 110 125
 126 129 142 143
New series 27 42 47 59 62 66 95
96 97 98 100 101 102 126 129 143
NOCSAE 175 177
Non-Contact Fouls 3
Nonplayer fouls 47
Nonremovable cleats 177
Numbering, illegal 176
Numbering requirements 14

O

Offensive pass interference 10 92 94
153
Officials 3 15 24 100 155 156 161

162 170
Officials' Jurisdiction 155 156 162
Official's timeout 44 45 173 175
Overtime 29 44 46 47 48 140 141
156

P

Pads 16 18 19 34 104 114 171 173
174 176 177
 biceps 173
 helmet's front 19
 non-inflatable jaw 18
 protective 174
Participation 2 5 29 34 92 149 152
153 154 173 175 176
Pass 10 11 12 13 14 15 29 30 31
32 33 41 42 43 47 48 54 55 60 72
76 78 80 82 83 85 86 87 88 89 90
91 92 93 94 95 96 98 101 102 105
108 110 111 112 115 116 118 119
121 122 123 124 125 126 129 130
131 132 133 135 139 140 153 155
156 176 187
Pass eligibility rules 91
Passer 26 108 121
Pass interference 10 42 43 85 92 93
94 95 96 108 118 135 139 153 156
 defensive 10 95
 forward 135
 restrictions 93 94 95
Pass receiver 12 15 116
Penalty enforcement spots 26 34 133
138
Period expires 40
Personal fouls 10 13 97 101 116 150
Place kick 30 48 49 54 56 59 68 69
119 120 124 125
 holder 30 48 49 54 56 119
 120 125
Plane 27 28 29 30 35 52 53 55 56
58 60 68 71 75 76 87 90 123 124
125 165 167
Player Designations 26 28
Player possession 31 32 33 35 57
80 88 134
 act of establishing 31 88
 opponent gains 33
 transferring 33 80
Players 2 4 5 8 10 11 12 13 14 15
21 23 26 27 30 31 32 39 44 45 53

56 57 61 62 70 72 75 76 78 79 80
82 86 87 90 91 92 93 94 95 104
109 111 114 116 117 121 124 145
146 147 152 153 154 155 157 158
159 165 173 174 175 176 177
 blocked 109
 deaf 146
 first 33 80
 injured 44 45 152 176
 opposing 19
Player vacancy 29 30
Possession 11 14 24 26 27 28 29
30 31 32 33 35 40 45 46 47 49 52
53 54 56 57 59 60 62 64 68 80 82
83 88 89 90 91 93 96 97 98 100
101 103 121 122 123 124 126 129
131 133 134 136 138 139 140 142
144 145 150 152 153 154
 awarded 57
 final 136
 final change of 136
 gains 32 46 47 56 90
 lost 90 136
 maintaining 31 88
 runner's 27 28
 secures 31 32 54 124
 securing 88 91
 simulating 29
 team's 129 131
Post-scrimmage kick foul 34 61 62 96
98 129 133 136 142
Profanity 117 144
Punts 29 60 61 65 120 132
Pylon 58 165

Q

Quarterback 15 45 75 76 78 79 80
95 116 145 147 153

R

Ready-for-play 27 55 56 71 72 87
97 101 102 154
 signal 27 55 56 71 87 97
 101 154
Receiver 12 15 60 63 64 65 66 69
76 83 85 87 92 93 94 95 96 98

110 111 112 115 116 118 139 153
eligible offensive 83
ineligible 76
potential 96
Reconditioned helmets 175
Recovery 32 57 59 61 62 65 88 90
97 129 174
simultaneous 32 90
spot of 59 61 62 65 97 129
Removable cleats 177
Replaced player 29 30 53 72 144
147 151 152 153
Replay equipment 159
Restricted area 163 164
Rib pads 174
Roughing 48 88 120 121 135 139
Roughness 77 78 117 121 150
Runner 27 28 29 30 31 33 35 57
66 75 80 82 95 103 104 105 108
109 110 111 113 114 116 117 123
129 134

S

Safety 11 21 23 44 45 46 47 49 53
54 55 57 58 68 69 82 87 101 102
105 109 125 128 129 130 131 132
135 158 165
Scoring 30 40 46 52 53 124 125
127 140 142 145
Scrimmage formation 79
Scrimmage kick 26 30 31 32 34 35
47 49 51 52 53 54 59 60 61 62
63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 96 97 98
110 120 121 126 129 132 133 134
135 136 142 143
formation 121
Scrimmage lines 27 62
Series 24 27 28 42 46 47 48 59 62
66 95 96 97 98 100 101 102 126
129 131 143 145 164 166
Shift 27 74 76 78 79 80 81 147
Shoulder pad fitting guide 3 15
Shoulder pads 16 34 104 114 176
177
Sideline 29 32 33 35 44 45 57 58
89 91 92 94 95 101 115 123 126
132 146 147 151 153 155 156 163

164 165 166
Sideline interference 146
Side zones 28
Simultaneous catch 31 32 89 90 91
Snap 10 13 15 24 26 27 30 31 32
33 34 41 42 43 44 54 55 61 62 63
66 71 72 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81
82 83 87 88 91 92 94 96 98 100
104 105 112 113 118 120 121 124
125 126 129 130 131 132 133 134
141 142 143 144 145 147 151 152
153 154 155 159 176
direct 87
errant 30 54 125
hand-to-hand 10 13 62 63
77 78 83 87 88
illegal 72
legal 24 30 72
long 61
Snapper 10 13 27 29 62 63 71 72
75 76 77 78 79 80 82 87 113 118
Spearing 115 116
Spot 11 13 26 27 31 34 35 40 46
47 48 55 57 58 59 61 62 63 64 65
66 67 68 69 70 72 75 83 87 88 89
90 91 92 93 95 97 101 102 111
113 118 120 121 122 123 124 125
126 129 130 131 132 133 134 135
136 139 140 141 142 143 145 150
152 153 154 155 166 176
dead-ball 27 31 35 57 58
61 126
out-of-bounds 35 57 58 59
post-scrimmage 142
previous 11 13 34 35 57
58 61 63 64 68 69 70 72
83 87 90 92 93 95 101
111 118 120 121 122 126
130 133 134 135 136 139
142 143 152 153 154 155
Substitute 29 30 53 56 71 72 75
117 144 146 147 151 152 153 154
Succeeding 35 40 44 45 46 47 48
75 118 125 132 134 136 139 140
141 142 145 150 152 176
Sunglasses 173
Sweatbands 174

T

Taunting 144
Team box 44 45 117 144 145 146
147 151 153 156 159 164
Team designations 26
Team warning 77 78
Tee 29 49 59 69 125 154 155
Timeouts 12 14 37 43 44 45 48 154;
charged team 12 14
 unused second half 48
Timing errors 38 43
Tinted goggles 173
Tooth and mouth protectors 170 178
Touchback 41 53 58 60 67 68 82
89 96 101 125 130 131 132
Touchdown 23 40 41 46 47 48 54
89 90 119 123 124 126 128 130
140 141 142 145 155 159
Towel 174
Trainer 20 29 144 152
Trickery 15 126 155
Tripping 108 113
Trys 138 141

U

Unauthorized conference 144
Unfair acts 150 154
Uniform numbering rules 12
Unsportsmanlike conduct 12

V

Vertical plane 27 28 75 76 123 165
167



USA Football Wants to Hear From You

Want to propose a rule change? Is there a rule you think you should be added, removed or modified? If so, USA Football wants to hear from you!

Go to www.usafootball.com/rulebook and click on the rule changes link. Your suggestion will be reviewed by USA Football Rules Editor Bill LeMonnier for possible consideration at next year's meeting of the USA Football Rules Committee.

Comments on the rulebook are also appreciated. Follow the same link to pass along your suggestions.

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