

# **2018 CAPITAL ALUMNI NETWORK FLAG FOOTBALL RULES BOOK & OFFICIALS' MANUAL**

Based on 2017 & 2018 NIRSA Flag and Touch Football Rules Book and Officials' Manual as modified by the CAN Rules Committee

Rule 1. The Game, Field, Players and Equipment	1
Rule 2. Periods, Time Factors, Substitutions	2
Rule 3. Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-of-Bounds	4
Rule 4. Downs and Team Possession After Penalty	5
Rule 5. Snapping the Ball	6
Rule 6. Handing and Passing the Ball	6
Rule 7. Running and Possessing the Ball	8
Rule 8. Gender Plays	9
Rule 9. Scoring Plays and Touchback	10
Rule 10. Kicking the Ball	11
Rule 11. Unsportsmanlike Conduct	11
Rule 12. Enforcement of Penalties	13

## **RULE 1. THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT**

### **Section 1. General Provisions**

Games are played with 8 players per team, including at least 3 women. Games may start and proceed with 6 or 7 players/two women, or 5 players/one woman. Not having the required number of players at the start or during a game results in a forfeit.

The Referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules, *based on common football principles*.

All players, non-players, and spectators affiliated with a team are subject to the rules of the game and the authority of the Referee and game officials.

### **Section 2. The Field**

Avoid hazards when setting up the field boundaries. Ensure 5 yards between fields, 10 yards if end to end. Safety is paramount.

The field is 100 yards long and 40 yards wide. End zones are 10 yards, with four 20-yard zones between the goal lines.

Use an accurate measuring device to mark off the field. Don't just "walk it off" using estimation paces. Use cones, pylons, or yard markers to mark each zone, with two additional cones on each end line (back of end zone).

On each side of the field a team box is designated for the two teams between the 20 yard lines. Only one player or coach from each team may be outside of the team box (between the 20 yard line and the goal line) at any time.

### **Section 3. Game Equipment**

The ball used shall be an official sized genuine or composite leather football. The NFL, NCAA, or high school-sized football shall be used. Each team shall use a legal ball of their choice. The Referee has discretion to disallow a ball that is not of legal size or is otherwise unsuitable. A towel may be placed on the ground under the ball before it is snapped.

Two soft and pliable ball spotters are required to mark the line of scrimmage. The ball spotters will always be 2 yards apart. The offensive scrimmage line is marked with an orange spotter, the defensive line with a yellow spotter.

### **Section 4. Player Equipment – Required**

Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys, without pockets. Players of the same team must wear the same color or similar colored jerseys. The visiting team is responsible for avoidance of similarity of colors. Jerseys must be and remain tucked in.

Each player must wear pants or shorts without pockets. They must be of a different color than the flags.

Flag belts must be a one-piece quick release belt with a spring-loaded clip, without any knots, worn at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. The flags shall be a minimum of 2 inches wide and 14 inches long. Belts with overly crumpled or defective flags should be retired. The Referee has discretion to have a player change their belt if it is not a suitable size or condition.

Players must wear athletic shoes suitable for football—namely non-metal cleats or sneakers.

Failure to wear required equipment.

**Penalty: Live Ball or Dead Ball Foul, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

A player that is designated as a non-alumni of the school s/he represents is required to wear a league defined arm band.

**Penalty: Illegal Participation, 10 yards. [immediate forfeit if more than two non-alums are on the field at a time]**

### **Section 5. Player Equipment – Optional**

It is strongly recommended that a mouth piece be worn by all players.

Players may wear a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band that contains plays or carry a play book inside their clothing as long as it is not visible. The playbook cannot be kept on the ground during play.

Ball caps must have the bill facing backwards.

### **Section 6. Player Equipment – Illegal**

A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play. This applies to any equipment which, in the opinion of the Referee, is dangerous or confusing.

No pockets, belts other than the flag belt, belt loops, zippers, exposed drawstrings, or anything that creates a hazard for the hands of a player trying to de-flag an opponent. Zippers on the neck of a shirt are okay.

No hard casts or other braces with metal or hard/ rigid parts that could be dangerous. A brace may be allowed if sufficiently and safely wrapped in a suitable material to not cause a hazard to opponents.

No jewelry.

No metal cleats.

No metal sunglasses.

No shirts too short so that they constantly come untucked.

No hoods unless they remain tucked in.

No ripped shirts, shorts, or clothing. If ripped during play, official will call a time out to allow replacement.

No shirts with extended/drop arm holes.

No hand warmers, towels, or other accessories that protrude from clothes or interfere with play.

No slippery or sticky foreign substances.

**Penalty: Live Ball or Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Player Equipment, 10 yards from the previous spot.**

## **RULE 2. PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, SUBSTITUTIONS**

### **Section 1. The Start of the Half**

**Before the game begins, the visiting team calls the coin toss (or odds/evens, etc.)**

**Choices:**

- a) To start the game on offense or defense, or
- b) To choose the goal his/her team will defend

The captain not having the first choice of options shall have the remaining option.

Between the first and second halves, the teams shall change goals and starting possession.

Each half starts with possession on the offensive team's 15 yard line unless moved by penalty.

### **Section 2. Game Time**

Playing time is 50 minutes, divided into two 25-minute halves.

There is a 5 minute intermission between halves. Three minute intermission prior to overtime.

The officials may correct obvious timing errors.

### Section 3. Running Clock

The clock will start on the first snap of the half. It will run continuously during each half unless it is stopped for a:

- A. Team time-out – starts on the snap
- B. Referee's time-out – starts on the ready for play (NOTE: Should not be used for routine penalty enforcement)
- C. Touchdown or Safety – starts on the snap of the ensuing series
- D. Penalty enforcement during last minute of each half (Clock stops when play whistled dead, clock starts on ready for play, or offended team may elect to start the clock on the ensuing snap.)
- E. Change of possession during the last minute of each half (Clock stops when play whistled dead, clock starts on the ready for play)

### Section 4. Extension of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Halves

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> halves must be extended by an untimed down, if one of the following occurred during a down in which time expires:

- a) There was a foul (other than unsportsmanlike or non-player fouls, fouls for which enforcement results in a safety, or fouls which specify loss of down) by either team and the penalty is accepted.
- b) There was a double foul (foul by each team).
- c) There was an inadvertent whistle.
- d) If a touchdown was scored, the Try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the Seven Plays period and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

If (A), (B), (C), or (D) occurs during the untimed down, the procedure is repeated. NOTE: The period shall not be extended further when the defense fouls during a successful Try and the offended team accepts the results of the play with enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot.

### Section 5. Play Clock / Delays

When the referee declares the ball "ready for play," the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball (30 second play clock).

**A delay of game may be called when:**

- A. Failure to snap within 30 seconds after the ball is declared ready for play. **(Previous spot enforcement)**
- B. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play. **(succeeding spot enforcement)**

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Delay of Game, 5 yards.**

### Section 6. Seven Plays

At the end of the second half, the game will continue where it left off with 7 additional plays. The game clock will not operate during this time.

- A. If a foul occurs during this period, the play WILL count if:
  - 1) the penalty is declined and the captain takes the result of the play, or
  - 2) the offensive penalty with loss-of-down is accepted.
- B. If a foul occurs during this period and the penalty results in the down being replayed or an automatic 1st down, the play will NOT count.
- C. The 30-second play clock is in effect as in regulation time.

### Section 7. Mercy Rule

If a team is 25 or more points ahead at the end of regulation time for the 2nd half, the 7 plays are not played and the game is over. If a team scores during the 7 plays period and that score creates a point differential of 25 or more points, the game will end at that point.

### Section 8. Tie Game (Overtime)

The visiting captain shall call the coin toss (odds/ evens, etc.) prior to overtime. If additional overtime periods are played, captains will alternate choices. The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense, or direction. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line.

Each team will start 1<sup>st</sup> and goal from the opponent's 10 yard line.

Each team gets 4 downs to score a touchdown and if they do, will attempt the subsequent 1, 2, or 3 point try. If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, the opponent will still have a chance to tie or win the game.

If the defense secures possession of the ball, it may not be advanced, and the series is over.

Each team is entitled to one timeout during each full overtime period.

If the score is still tied after one period, play will proceed to a 2nd period or as many as are needed to determine a winner.

**Fouls and Penalties** are administered similar to the regular game. The offense shall be awarded a new series of 4 downs when an automatic 1st down foul is accepted. Dead ball fouls following a touchdown are penalized on the Try. Dead ball fouls following a successful Try will be penalized from the succeeding spot, the defending team's 10 yard line, if accepted.

### **Section 9. Time-Outs**

**Team Time-Outs.** Each team is entitled to 2 charged time-outs during each half. Team timeouts are for one minute, unless a shorter timeout is agreed to by both teams.

**Referee's Time-Out.** The Referee shall declare an official's time-out for prolonged discussions or clarifications of the rules, replacement of player equipment which becomes illegal through play, for an injured player, or may for any contingency not covered elsewhere by the Rules.

A player who is bleeding, or has an open wound, or has any amount of blood on his/her uniform or on the player shall be considered an injured player and shall be prohibited from returning to the game until the wound is dressed and there is no visible blood on the player or uniform.

**Concussion.** Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional.

### **Section 10. Conserving or Consuming Time**

When a team attempts to conserve or consume time illegally, a Delay of Game penalty shall be called and the Referee shall order the clock started (if conserving) or stopped (if consuming). If consuming time, the clock will start on the Snap. If conserving time, the clock will start on the ready for play.

### **Section 11. Substitutes**

An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from his/her team area. A replaced player must leave the field immediately at the sideline nearest his/her team area prior to the ball being snapped.

**Penalty: Illegal Substitution, 5 yards. If it is a dead ball or non-player foul, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

## **RULE 3. BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

### **Section 1. Ball in Play – Dead Ball**

**Dead Ball Becomes Live.** A dead ball, after having been declared ready for play, becomes a live ball when it is snapped legally.

**Ball Declared Dead.** A live ball becomes dead and all officials shall sound the whistle or declare it dead when:

- A. It goes out-of-bounds
- B. A thrown, snapped, or fumbled ball touches the ground.
- C. Any part of the ball carrier other than a hand(s), foot (feet), or ball while in possession, touches the ground.
- D. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful Try is made.
- E. A pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- F. A ball carrier has a flag belt removed legally by an opponent.
- G. A runner is legally tagged with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, by an opponent once the flag belt is inadvertently no longer attached.
- H. A muff of a punt strikes the ground.
- I. A kicking team player catches a punt which is beyond the neutral zone; when an untouched punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it; or after the ball hits the ground after a first touch from the kicking team.
- J. The defense secures possession during a Try or overtime.
- K. An official blows their whistle.

## Section 2. Inadvertent Whistle

If an official inadvertently blows their whistle, the play is dead. If no foul occurred or the foul is declined, the team in possession of the ball when the whistle occurred may elect to replay the down or accept the result of the play. If a penalty is accepted, it shall be administered as in any other play situation. If the inadvertent whistle occurs during loose ball action prior to change of possession, the ball is returned to the previous spot, and the down/ gender replayed as if it never happened.

## Section 3. Removing the Flag Belt

**Flag Belt Removal.** When the flag belt is taken from or off of the runner in possession of the ball, the ball is declared dead and the down ends. A legal touch that causes the flag belt to be released from the ball carrier's body also constitutes a capture.

If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground (it did not come off because of a legal touch by the opponent), a one-hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes capture. (If a player's flag belt routinely falls off without the player being touched, the player must switch to a larger sized belt).

A player may leave his/her feet to remove the flag belt. **An opponent may not hold, push, strike, slap, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.** If the player trips the runner in his/her attempt to make a tag, it is a foul.

## Section 4. Succeeding Spot

**Placement of a Dead Ball.** When the ball becomes dead, the Referee will designate a spot at the approximate middle of the field between the sidelines to spot the ball on the line of scrimmage. The offense must snap the ball from or within 5 yards to the left or right of this spot.

# **RULE 4. DOWNS AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY**

## Section 1. Neutral Zone

The **neutral zone** is the two yard area between the offense's and defense's scrimmage line, extended to each sideline. It is established when the ball is marked ready for play.

## Section 2. A Series – How Started, How Broken, Renewed

**Series of Downs.** The team beginning a series on offense shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone, gaining a new first down. Any down may be repeated or lost if provided by the Rules.

Zones are the goal lines, 20 yard lines, and the 40 yard line.

The zone line to gain is the next zone line from the spot of the ball when a new series begins.

**Incorrect Down.** Until a new series is awarded, the Referee shall have the authority to correct an error in the number of downs and in the rotation of gender plays.

## Section 3. Down and Possession After a Penalty

If a penalty moves the ball beyond the next first down line (line to gain), a new series of downs begins and the next zone line becomes the line to gain.

If the ball is advanced beyond the line to gain, but a live ball penalty (penalty before ball spotted and declared ready for the next play) causes the ball to be spotted behind the first down line, then a first down is not awarded.

If a foul occurs before a change of possession (with penalty accepted), the ball still belongs to the team that started the play on offense. If the penalty involves loss of a down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series.

If a foul occurs after a change of possession, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The down and distance established by that penalty shall be 1st down with zone line-to-gain.

## **RULE 5. SNAPPING THE BALL**

### **Section 1. Prior to the Snap**

Once the offense takes position on the ball to begin the next play, the defense may not cross its line of scrimmage (enter into the 2-yard neutral zone).

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Encroachment, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

**After 2 consecutive encroachment fouls, the penalty will be 10 yards for subsequent encroachment fouls.**

Once the ball is ready for play and before the ball is snapped, offensive players may not: 1) cross its line of scrimmage, 2) simulate the start of a play, or 3) motion toward the line of scrimmage. If the illegal movement of the offense draws the defense offside, it shall be a penalty on the offense and not the defense.

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, False Start, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

The snapper may not move the ball or simulate a snap once the ball is in position to start the play. The snapper's feet must remain behind the front of the ball and the line of scrimmage, and they must snap the ball in a continuous motion.

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Snap, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

### **Section 2. Position and Action During the Snap**

All offensive players must momentarily be at least 5 yards inbounds before the snap. NOTE: if a defensive player covers an offensive player positioned within 5 yards of the sideline, it is not a foul.

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Formation, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

The snapper is the only offensive player required to be on their scrimmage line at the snap.

**Motion.** Only one offensive player may be in motion (but not in motion towards the opponent's goal line) at the snap.

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Motion, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

The center must snap the ball to a teammate at least 2 yards behind its line of scrimmage (ball must travel at least two yards).

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Formation, 5 yards from the previous spot.** NOTE: If in doubt, the ball was snapped at least 2 yards.

If multiple players are in motion before the snap, all players must come to a complete stop for at least 1 second before another player goes in motion or the ball is snapped.

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Shift, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

## **RULE 6. HANDING AND PASSING THE BALL**

### **Section 1. Screen Blocking**

**Screen blocking** is legally getting your body in the way of an opponent—who is trying to deflag the quarterback or ball carrier—without using any part of the body to initiate contact. Hands and arms must be at the sides or behind the back, unless to break a fall or regain balance. Legs and feet must remain under the torso and not extended in a way that enlarges the body or can cause an opponent to trip.

**Screen Blocking Fundamentals.** A player who screens shall not:

- A. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind an opponent.
- B. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take his/her position.
- C. Interlock hands/arms, or encircle a runner in any manner.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal Screen Block, 10 yards from the basic spot.**

Defenders must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used to displace the blocker. A defender may use his/her arms to break a fall or retain his/her balance.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal Use of Hands/Arms by Defensive Rush, 10 yards from the basic spot.**

## Section 2. Legal Forward Pass

A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction towards the opponent's end zone. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground.

The offense may throw one legal forward pass per down, provided both the passer's feet are behind the line of scrimmage when the ball leaves the hand. NOTE: If in doubt, the passer is behind the offensive scrimmage line.

A player may spike the ball or throw it away as a legal forward pass if it is not done to avoid a loss of yardage.

## Section 3. Illegal Forward Pass

A forward pass is illegal if:

- A. The passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball leaves his/her hand.
- B. Thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
- C. Intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage (intentional grounding).
- D. Thrown after any offensive ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- E. A passer catches their untouched forward pass.
- F. There is more than one forward pass per down.

If an illegal forward pass is not caught, the ball is dead at the spot where the pass was thrown. If the pass is caught, the play continues until the ball is declared dead by other action.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down if by the offense before possession changes. NOTE: If in doubt, the pass is legal.**

## Section 4. Backward Pass and Fumble

**Backward Pass.** A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end zone. A backward pass or fumble that hits the ground is ruled dead at that spot.

A backward pass or fumble which hits the ground between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the spot it hits the ground or out-of-bounds spot. If it hits the ground or goes out-of-bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.

## Section 5. Completed or Intercepted Passes

To complete a catch, a player must maintain possession of the ball with at least one foot in bounds.

It is a catch (and likely a penalty as well) if a player is prevented by a defender from returning to the ground inbounds after securing possession.

It is a catch if any other part of the body lands in bounds first after possession prior to any body part landing out of bounds.

If a player loses possession of the ball when hitting the ground, it is not a catch.

If in doubt, it is a completed pass or interception.

A player may not be the first to touch the ball after they go out of bounds, and they must establish themselves fully in bounds before securing possession.

If a pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players inbounds, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the offensive team.

## Section 6. Incomplete Pass

When a forward pass touches the ground or anything out-of-bounds, it becomes dead.

## Section 7. Forward Pass Interference

A defender may not interfere with an offensive player's attempt to catch a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage before the ball is touched. This includes contact or pulling the flag belt before the ball reaches the receiver.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Defensive pass interference, 10 yards from the previous spot (basic spot), automatic 1st down. If the pass interference by either player is intentional or unsportsmanlike, his/her team shall be penalized an additional 10 yards.**

An offensive player may not interfere with a defender's attempt to catch a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage before the ball is touched.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot (basic spot) and loss of down.**

It is not pass interference if opposing players each make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to catch or bat a pass within the other constructs of the rules.

NOTE: If one player has position to attempt to catch or bat a pass and an opposing player jumps into them while attempting to catch or bat the pass, this is not a bona fide attempt and the opposing player has committed pass interference.

Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on offensive and defensive forward pass interference.

After the ball is touched (or in any other instance not otherwise covered in the rules) a player may not push, drive into, trip, or otherwise forcibly contact an opponent.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal Contact, 10 yards from the basic spot. May also be Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Rule 11-1)**

### **Section 8. Roughing the Passer**

A defender may not run into or contact the body of a passer who is throwing a legal forward pass. This includes after the ball is thrown while the passer is considered defenseless.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Roughing the Passer, 10 yards from the previous spot, or dead ball spot on a completed pass beyond the line of scrimmage; automatic 1st down.**

## **Rule 7. Running and Possessing the Ball**

### **Section 1. Flag Belt Removal**

- A. If an opponent intentionally removes a flag belt from a player without the ball, or before they receive the ball, it is illegal. Play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal Flag Belt Removal, 10 yards from the basic spot.**

- B. Tampering with the flag belt in any way is illegal.

**Penalty: Live or Dead Ball Foul.**

**Tampering with Flag Belt, 10 yards from the previous spot, loss of down, and player disqualification.**

### **Section 2. Flag Guarding**

A runner shall not flag guard by using his/her hands, arms, or the ball to cause or block contact between the runner and an opponent that denies the opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Flag Guarding, 10 yards from the basic spot.**

### **Section 3. Stiff Arm**

The runner cannot contact an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a "stiff arm" extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag/tag.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Stiff Arm, 10 yards from the basic spot.**

### **Section 4. Helping the Runner**

The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, carried, pulled or pushed by a teammate.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Help the Runner, 5 yards from the basic spot.**

### **Section 5. Obstructing the Runner**

An opponent shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or making a legal tag.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Obstructing Ball Carrier, 10 yards from the basic spot.**

## Section 6. Charging

A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his/her path nor attempt to run between two opponents or between an opponent and a sideline, unless the space is such as to provide a reasonable chance for him/her to go through without contact.

If a runner in his/her progress has established a straight-line path, he/she may not be crowded out of that path, but if an opponent is able to **legally establish a defensive position** in that path, the runner must avoid contact by changing direction.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Offensive Charging, 10 yards from the basic spot.**

## Rule 8. Gender Plays

### Section 1. Gender Play Rotation

At least one out of every three consecutive plays executed by the offense must meet the qualifications of a valid Gender Play.

- A. The 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> play of this three-play rotation shall be referred to as an Open Play; more specifically First Open and Second Open. The offense may run any legal play (gender or otherwise) on a down which is open.
- B. The 3<sup>rd</sup> play of this three-play rotation shall be referred to as a Closed Play. The offense must run a valid gender play on a down which is Closed.
- C. If there is a live ball penalty, the captain of the offended team may accept the penalty, but decline the penalty yardage in exchange to replay the gender.

On any down in which the offense executes a valid gender play, gender rotation will be reset to First Open. On any down in which the offense does not execute a valid gender play, gender rotation will advance:

- A. From First Open to Second Open;
- B. From Second Open to Closed;
- C. From Closed to Closed (gender rotation will remain Closed until a valid gender play is executed).

If the offense fails to execute a valid gender play on a down which is Closed, then any yardage gained will be forfeit (the ball will return to the original line of scrimmage from the start of that play); conversely, any yardage lost will remain lost.

### Section 2. Qualifying Actions

A valid gender play must include at least one of the following:

- A. Female ball possession;
- B. A failed handoff to a female behind the line of scrimmage;
- C. A legal snap to a female QB which touches her;
- D. An incomplete forward or backwards pass to a female receiver that contacts her or is within her own arm's reach. NOTE: If in doubt, the ball is within arm's reach. A ball is deemed to be within arm's reach if the female player could have reached the ball in any direction including twisting or bending at the waist, but NOT leaving or moving her feet. This is regardless of whether touched by a defender.
- E. An incomplete forward pass to a female who was at least 10 yards beyond the offense's scrimmage line when the ball passed within a 2 yard radius of any part of her body, PROVIDED:
  - 1) the QB showed clear intent to throw to a female and intended for it to be catchable (i.e. – QB was not throwing at the ground or throwing the pass away in a female's vicinity), AND
  - 2) no offensive male receiver was within that 2 yard radius.

### Section 3. Disqualifying Actions

It is NOT a valid gender play if ANY of the following actions occur:

- A. A male runner carries the ball across the line of scrimmage. EXCEPTION: If the ball initially crosses the line of scrimmage via a qualifying gender action.
- B. A male to male legal forward pass completion;
- C. A male receiver is the first offensive player to touch a forward pass in flight from a male passer;
- D. A male throws a forward pass that is not within arm's reach of a female who is less than 10 yards from the offense's scrimmage line.

### Section 4. Effect of Penalties on Gender Rotation

- A. The offended team has the following three options:
  - 1) Decline the penalty, gender advances.

- 2) Accept the penalty, accept the penalty yardage, gender advances.
- 3) Accept the penalty, decline the penalty yardage, but replay the gender.
- B. For accepted penalties (2 and 3 above), automatic first down, loss of down, or replay down designations are still maintained regardless of the choice.
- C. The enforcement spot for any foul on a required gender play (closed play) down where a legal gender play is NOT run is the previous line of scrimmage or the dead ball spot, if it is behind the previous line of scrimmage in accordance with Rule 8-1.

## **RULE 9. SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACK**

Referees will announce the score to both teams after each scoring play.

### **Section 1. Touchdown = 6 or 9 points**

If an offensive touchdown is scored on a valid gender play, the point value is 9. If a female interception is returned for a touchdown (and she has possession of the ball for the entire interception, i.e. no laterals), the point value is 9. All other touchdowns are 6 points.

### **Section 2. Try = 1, 2, or 3 points**

The team scoring a touchdown has the option to go for a 1, 2, or 3 point "extra point" try.

A try for one point is from the 3 yard line. Two points is from the 10 yard line. Three points is from the 20 yard line.

The team captain must declare the point value to be attempted. The ball will be spotted at the corresponding yard line, and may then be moved by penalty. i.e. a team may attempt a 3 point try from the 20, then have the ball placed at the 10 yard line by penalty, and the try remains for 3 points.

After a Try, the ball shall be snapped by the opponent of the scoring team at their own 15 yard line, unless moved by penalty.

### **Section 3. Safeties**

It is a safety when the ball becomes dead in a team's own end zone while in possession of the ball. It is a safety if an offensive player commits a penalty where the enforcement spot is in their end zone.

Exception: the momentum rule. e.g. a ball is intercepted in the field of play, but the player's momentum from making the catch causes the player to be downed in their own end zone. This would result in a touchback.

The team that forces the safety is awarded 2 points. After a safety, the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their 15 yard line, unless moved by penalty.

### **Section 4. Touchback**

It is a touchback when a punt is downed in the receiving team's end zone without the receiving team possessing the ball in the field of play (beyond the goal line).

It is a touchback if a ball carrier loses possession of the ball just outside the opponent's goal line and the ball hits the ground in the end zone, goes out of bounds in the end zone, or is recovered by the opponent and downed in the end zone without advancing.

After a touchback, the ball shall be snapped from the nearest 15 yard line, unless moved by penalty.

NOTE: If in doubt, it is a touchback. If in doubt, the out-of-bounds punt near the goal line is a touchback.

### **Section 5. Flag Check After a Score**

The player scoring must raise their arms so the nearest official can deflag the player to check that their flag belt was properly secured. If a tug on the middle/rear flag does not result in the removal of the flag belt, the official will investigate the cause:

- A. If the player is not able to be deflagged because the player or a teammate has removed the flag belt before the official has the opportunity to perform the belt check, or the flag belt has been unintentionally secured illegally

(example: the belt was caught in the waistband or other article of clothing or is otherwise malfunctioning) the score is disallowed, the offending team is penalized, but the player is NOT disqualified.

- B. If the official determines the player is not able to be deflagged because the flag belt has been intentionally secured illegally, the score is disallowed, the offending team is penalized and the player is disqualified.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down. If the defense or kick return team scores, the offense retains possession, 10 yards from the previous spot, and automatic first down.**

### **Section 6. Forfeited Game**

The score of a forfeited game shall be: Offended Team – 1, Opponent – 0. If the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score stands.

## **RULE 10. KICKING THE BALL**

### **Section 1. Punt**

A team must declare that they will punt before the ball is marked ready for play. Before a fourth down, the Referee will ask the offensive team if they are punting or running an offensive play and allow the defensive team to ready themselves for the punt before declaring the ball ready for play. A team may change its decision only after a team timeout is called.

All players must be behind their respective lines of scrimmage when the ball is kicked.

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Procedure (or encroachment), 5 yards from the previous spot.**

Quick kicks are illegal. The kicker must wait for the ready for play signal; and once started, must punt the ball immediately in a continuous motion.

**Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.**

Any receiving team player may block the kick. **If the blocked punt hits the ground, it is dead at that spot.**

The ball may only be punted when the intention to punt is declared and kicked only once per down.

**Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal Kicking, 10 yards from the basic spot.**

If the punt is blocked and caught by a receiving team player in the air, the ball may be advanced.

If a blocked punt is caught by the kicking team beyond its line of scrimmage, the ball becomes dead at that spot and belongs to the receiving team.

A punt that goes out of bounds is declared dead at the point it crosses the sideline (even if still in the air).

A punt that is declared dead beyond the receiving team's goal line is a touchback.

### **Section 2. Kick Catching Interference**

The kicking team may catch, touch, or bat a punt beyond its line of scrimmage if there is no receiving team player in position to field the ball.

The kicking team may not touch the ball, the receiver, or obstruct the receiver's path to the ball if in position to field the punt.

**Penalty: Kick catching interference, offended team's choice between 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a 1st down, or 10 yards from the previous spot and replay down.**

## **RULE 11. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

### **Section 1. Unnecessary Roughness**

No player or nonplayer shall commit an unnecessary roughness foul during the game. Any act of unnecessary roughness is unsportsmanlike conduct. No player or nonplayer shall:

- A. Strip or attempt to strip the ball from a runner.
- B. Throw the runner to the ground.
- C. Hurdle any other player.

- D. Make contact of any nature with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary.
- E. Drive or run into an opponent.
- F. Position himself/herself on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- G. Tackle the runner and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football. **(DQ)**
- H. Fight an opponent. **(DQ)** NOTE: Each player who participates in the fight will be assessed one flagrant personal foul for fighting.

**Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct. Can be Dead Ball or Live Ball Foul depending on when it happens. 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified. In Articles 1G and 1H the offender will be disqualified.**

### **Section 2. Other Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

Players, non-players, and spectators shall be penalized for any unsportsmanlike conduct, including the following, during a game:

- A. Using words similar to the offensive audible and quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offense's signals or movements.
- B. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage.
- C. Using profanity, taunting, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures.
- D. Holding an unauthorized conference, or being on the field illegally.
- E. Being outside the team box, but not on the field, during a live ball after being asked or reminded to stay in the team box.

**Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, can be a Dead Ball or Live Ball Foul depending on when it happens, 10 yards. If flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified.**

### **Section 3. Abusing the Football**

When the ball becomes dead, a player shall not intentionally kick the ball, spike the ball into the ground, or throw the ball high into the air.

**Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct. Dead Ball Foul. 10 yards from the succeeding spot.**

### **Section 4. Abusing the Officials**

Players, non-players, and spectators shall be penalized for:

- A. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
- B. Indicating objections to an official's decision in a disrespectful or excessive manner.
- C. Refusal to comply or abide by the request or decision of an official.
- D. Intentionally contacting a game official. **(DQ)**

**Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, can be Dead Ball or Live Ball Foul depending on when it happens. 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified.**

### **Section 5. Repeated Unsportsmanlike Fouls**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or nonplayer results in disqualification.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> unsportsmanlike foul by the same team results in their forfeiture of the game.

### **Section 6. Ejections**

A disqualified player or nonplayer may remain on the bench at the discretion of the Referee. If the disqualified player or nonplayer creates a problem for the game officials from the bench area, he/she will be ejected and told to leave the field area. The field area is defined as "out of sight, out of sound." If the ejected player or nonplayer refuses to leave after a reasonable amount of time and warning to the coach, the Referee may declare the game forfeited.

### **Section 7. Refusal to Play or Halving the Distance**

If a team refuses to play within two minutes after being ordered by the Referee, or if a team repeatedly commits fouls which can be penalized only by halving the distance to its goal line, the Referee may enforce any penalty he/she considers equitable, including the awarding of a score. For refusal to play, or for repeated fouls, the Referee may, after one warning, forfeit the game to the opponents.

### **Section 8. Unfair Acts**

No player or nonplayer shall use verbiage or commit any act not in accordance with the spirit of fair play for the purposes of confusing the opponent. e.g. Snapping the ball to a player while the rest of the team remains stationary in an attempt to intentionally deceive the defense. NOTE: Voice inflection by the QB is not an unfair act.

**Penalty: Unfair Act, can be Dead Ball or Live Ball Foul depending on when it happens, 10 yards.**

## **RULE 12. ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES**

### **Section 1. Foul and Flagrant Foul**

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

A **flagrant foul** is so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury and/or involved violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct. *NOTE: Players who receive a flagrant foul are ineligible to participate in additional games until authorized to participate by a League Commissioner, CAN Sports Chair, or CAN Board Member.*

### **Section 2. Enforcement Spots**

**Enforcement Spots.** Fouls are generally enforced from one of several spots: The previous spot, the succeeding spot (usually the dead ball spot), the spot of the foul, the basic spot, or the post-scrimmage kick spot. There are a few additional special enforcements below.

**Previous Spot** is the spot where the ball was last marked ready for play (scrimmage line).

Previous spot fouls include:

1. False Start/offsidess
2. Illegal motion
3. Illegal equipment
4. Unable to be deflagged by an official after a scoring play.
5. Any dead ball foul after the ball is declared ready for the next play.

**Dead Ball Spot** is the spot of a ball when it becomes dead by rule. This is normally the spot where a run ends (except re: the momentum rule, where the ball goes into the end zone).

**Succeeding Spot** is where the ball would next be snapped (scrimmage line) if a foul had not occurred. This is normally the dead ball spot (except when the dead ball spot occurs in the end zone). When a foul occurs during a down in which a touchdown is scored, the succeeding spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the succeeding spot after the touchdown or try.

Examples of succeeding spot fouls:

1. Personal fouls
2. Any dead ball foul prior to the ball being declared ready for the next play.

**Basic Spot** is a live ball principle of enforcing a penalty from the "worst spot" for the team that committed the foul.

- A. For offensive fouls during running plays, it generally means worst spot between the end of the run and the spot of the foul.

**If the offensive foul occurs behind the end of the run, then the enforcement spot is the spot of the foul.**

- B. For defensive fouls during run plays, it means the end of the run:  
Where the ball becomes dead if the runner does not lose possession.  
Where the player loses possession if his/her fumble into the opponent's end zone, his/her illegal forward pass, or his/her backward pass beyond the scrimmage line that is intercepted.
- C. For all fouls during loose ball action (except roughing the passer), the enforcement spot is the previous spot, the line of scrimmage. For roughing the passer on a completed pass beyond the line of scrimmage, it is the dead ball spot.
- D. For illegal pass or illegal forward pass, the basic spot is the spot of the pass.
- E. For fouls after a change of possession, the basic spot will be the dead ball spot unless the team in possession commits a foul behind the end of the run (basic spot becomes spot of the foul).

**Post-Scrimmage Kick Spot** is where a legally kicked ball is downed or possession gained. A foul by the return team before the ball is downed or possessed is enforced at this spot (or from the team's 15 yard line if the kick was downed in the end zone). Fouls after the ball is possessed and being advanced are treated as running plays.

### Section 3. Types of Play Action

Whenever the ball is live, it is either a loose ball action, or a running action. The type of play determines the spot of penalty enforcement.

**Loose Ball action.** A loose ball action is action during:

- A. A punt, other than post scrimmage kick fouls.
- B. A legal forward pass.
- C. A backward pass, including the snap, or fumble made by an offensive player from on or behind his/her scrimmage line (1st ball spotter – orange).
- D. The run or runs which precedes such legal pass, punt, or fumble from on or behind the line of scrimmage.

**Running Action.** A running action is any action which is not a loose ball action.

- A. Behind the line it includes:
  1. A run which is not followed by a loose ball behind the line.
  2. A run which is followed by an illegal pass from behind the line.
- B. Beyond the line, it is any run, including any action by a runner once a legal forward pass is caught.

### Section 4. Procedure After a Foul

**Live Ball Foul.** When a foul occurs during a live ball, the Referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains, then state all the enforcement options of distance, down and gender to the captain of the offended team to accept or decline. Only one live ball foul per team may be enforced per down. Live ball fouls by both teams during the same down are generally cancelled out, and the down is replayed.

Any live ball foul is penalized according to the Basic Spot enforcement principle except:

- A. A foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap is penalized from the previous spot.
- B. A nonplayer foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.
- C. A live ball foul which occurs on a required gender play ("closed play") where a legal gender play is not run is enforced from the previous spot, or the spot at which the ball becomes dead if behind the previous spot.
- D. Roughing the passer.

**Dead Ball Foul.** When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs before the ball is next spotted ready for play, the foul is enforced from the succeeding spot. If the foul occurs after the ball has been spotted ready for play but before the snap, enforcement is from the ready for play spot. If a dead ball foul occurs after the time expires for any period, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot. Multiple dead ball fouls by the same team may be assessed on top of one another.

**Live Ball/Dead Ball Foul.** 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 (they do not cancel out). When the same team commits a live ball foul followed by one or more dead ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

#### Establishing the Zone Line-to-Gain.

- A. On a live ball foul mark off the penalty yardage first then establish the zone line-to-gain.
- B. Penalties for fouls which occur prior to the ready for play signal shall be administered before setting the zone line-to-gain down box for a new series.
- C. Penalties for fouls which occur after the ready for play signal shall be administered after setting the zone line-to-gain down box for a new series.

NOTE: During overtime the zone line-to-gain is always the goal line.

### Section 5. Special Enforcements (arranged alphabetically)

**Automatic 1st Down Fouls.** Fouls by the defense which give the offense an automatic 1st down are Defensive Pass Interference and Roughing the Passer.

**Dead Ball Fouls.** Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. Dead ball fouls by both teams do not automatically cancel each other out. Any 5 yard dead ball fouls will be enforced separately and in the order of occurrence and would never cancel with a 10 yard foul.

**Double Foul.** It is a double foul if both teams commit live ball fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer, during which:

- A. There is no change of team possession.
- B. There is a change of team possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to the final change of possession.
- C. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

In (A), (B), and (C), the penalties cancel and the down and gender are replayed.

If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul occurs after the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul(s), other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer. This is commonly referred to as the principle of "clean hands."

NOTE: *This Rule does not apply to double fouls during a Try or overtime period.*

**Goal Line.** For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot is on or behind the offensive team's goal line, any measurement is from the goal line if the run ends behind the goal line.

**Half the Distance.** A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.

**Last Play of Period.** Succeeding spot fouls that occur: (A) during the last play of the game or (B) during the last play of an overtime period. These fouls can be carried over to overtime, unless a touchdown is scored on that play, in which case the penalty can only be enforced on the Try.

**Loss of Down Fouls.** Fouls by the offensive team which include loss of down are Illegal Forward Pass, Offensive Pass Interference, and Illegally Secured Flag Belt.

**Multiple Fouls.** When two or more live ball fouls (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) are committed during the same down by the same team, only one penalty may be chosen by the offended team.

**Safety.** If the offensive team commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind its goal line, it is a safety.

### **Touchdown.**

- A. If a foul is committed by the scoring team (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) prior to scoring a successful touchdown, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score.
- B. If the defense commits a foul (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during a down in which a touchdown is scored, and there was not a change of possession during the down, the offense may accept the result of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced on the Try, or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.
- C. If the offense commits a foul (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during a down in which a defensive touchdown is scored, and such foul occurs after the change of possession, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced on the Try, or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.
- D. If either team commits an unsportsmanlike or nonplayer foul during the down in which a touchdown is scored, the opponent may accept the results of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced on the Try, or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.

NOTE: In B, C, and D above, unless moved by penalty, the succeeding spot will be the 15 yard line, or the 10 yard line in overtime.

### **Try.**

- A. If either team commits a dead ball foul following a touchdown and prior to the initial ready for play on a Try, the offended team has the option of enforcing the penalty on the Try, or after the Try, at the succeeding spot.
- B. If there is a foul by the offense (other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer) during a down which results in a successful Try, acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If the foul carries a loss of down, the Try is not replayed.
- C. If there is a foul by the defense during a successful Try, the penalty may be enforced at the succeeding spot.
- D. If a double foul occurs, the down is replayed.
- E. Penalties enforced on the try are enforced prior to asking the scoring team if the try will be for 1, 2, or 3 points.