

TUFF RULES & REGULATIONS

Changed or altered items are identified in the rules by a shaded background.

RULE 1

Registration, Rosters, Contracts and Uniforms

TEAM REGISTRATION

- o **On-time Registration** – If a captain registers a team with the Conference Manager and pays the team fee prior to the deadline, there will be no late fee. This deadline is approximately 3 weeks before the start of the season.
- o **Late Registration** – If a captain registers a team with the Conference Manager after the deadline, there will be a \$20 late fee enforced. If the league does not receive your team payment by the late registration deadline, your team may not be scheduled for that season. The late registration ends approximately one week before the start of the season.

ROSTERS

- o **Active Roster** – Teams have a maximum of 12 players on their final roster. There are no injured reserves or subs after Roster Lock.

ROSTER LOCK

- o **Roster Lock** – Before the start of their game(s) on Roster Lock game day, a final roster must be submitted. Any player that is not on the “Final Roster” will not be allowed to play the remainder of the current season.
- o **Playoff Eligibility** – Players on the Final Roster are eligible to play in the playoffs only if they played in at least 2 regular season games and have paid their full player fee.

SUBSTITUTES

- o **Substitutes** – Teams are allowed to bring substitutes prior to Roster Lock Weekend. Substitutes will pay \$30 per week. In order to be eligible for playoffs, a previous substitute must have played at least 2 regular season games and be listed on the Final Roster and paid the full player fee.

PLAYER CONTRACTS

- o **Player Contracts** – TUFF League incentivizes teams staying together. Players are given the option to sign multiple season contracts with their team, with their captain’s consent.
 - One Season Contract - \$100 per season.
 - Two Season Contract - \$90 per season.
 - Three Season Contract - \$80 per season.

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- o If a player does not sign a contract by Roster Lock (see Roster Lock above), he/she must pay \$100 for their player fee that season.
- o A player may opt out of his/her contract by paying \$80. This fee will waive any contract under the player's name and will allow that player to enter free agency.
- o The team captain can terminate a player contract in between seasons by paying \$80. If the team captain for the team the player plays on terminates the contract, the player becomes a free agent.
- o If the player gets injured and cannot complete the season, the contract for that season will be considered completed.
- o The contract is good for consecutive seasons and non-consecutive seasons. In other words, the player may not "skip" a season to get out of the contract.
- o If the team the player plays on dissolves, the contract will be considered a "carryover" contract. The player will be a free agent with their current contract stipulations in play.
- o If the team the player is currently under contract with splits off, the player can either remain on the current team or join the team that split. The player's contract would continue and the player does not enter free agency.
- o If the team that the player is currently under contract with created a new franchise, the player's contract will be considered a "carryover" contract and the player must play with the new franchise.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- o **Uniforms** – All teams must either wear TUFF League jerseys or their own team jerseys that fit the jersey requirements of the league. TUFF League's management will have to approve jerseys that aren't provided by TUFF League. Some guidelines to follow:
 - Jerseys must have numbers on front and back
 - Jerseys must have team logo or approved team name
 - Dry-fit or t-shirts will not be permitted
 - Pocket-less shorts are not required, but are recommended. All players must have their jersey tucked in under their flag football belt. No helmets are allowed. No jewelry on hands or neck. Hats may only be worn backwards.
- o **Shoes** – Any athletic shoes may be worn on an artificial turf field. Bare feet and metal cleats are not allowed.
- o **Flags and Accessories** – All players wear a two-flag belt provided by TUFF League. Players may wear their own flag belts only if confirmed by an official. Players are responsible to keep flags at either hip to begin a play. Any other items tucked into a player's waistline are considered flags. If an accessory is pulled from the waistline during play, it will count as a flag-pull.

RULE 2

The Field, Timing and Scoring

FIELD DIMENSIONS

- o **Field of Play Measurements** – The field of play is 70 yards long with 10-yard end zones, totaling 90 yards in length. The field is 32 yards wide.
- o **Field Description** – The boundary of the field is clearly defined with staked rope, official football sideline paint, or combination of the two. Each first down indicator will be clearly visible with colored foam poles on either sideline. The end zone will be clearly defined with football pylons.

TIMING AND SCORING

- o **Start Time** – The first game of the day will start promptly at game time. If the previous game(s) run behind a bit, the next game will start 3 minutes after the previous game ends.
 - If a team does not have 5 or more players present at the start of the game, the game clock starts. After 5 minutes, the opposing team is awarded 8 points.
 - Every 5 minutes, the opposing team is awarded 8 points.
 - If the game clock reaches halftime, the game is over with a score of 32-0.
 - The team is allowed to call two consecutive timeouts to allow time for their player to arrive.
- o **Game Clock** - Games are played in two, 20-minute halves. The game clock is timed differently in the 2nd half, under 2 minutes. Game officials have the right to stop the game clock, or to allow it to continue to run, if they feel it's necessary or appropriate.
 - The game clock will stop until the next snap when:
 - A team uses a timeout.
 - At the 2-minute warning of the first half. The remainder of the first half is not timed with a 2-minute clock.
 - At the 2-minute warning of the second half provided that the score differential is under 17 points.
 - After a touchdown is scored. The game clock will run through the change of possession following the extra point attempt.
 - 2nd half, 2-minute clock will stop until the next snap for:
 - Incomplete passes.
 - A runner out of bounds after a catch.
 - All extra point attempts.
 - Defensive penalties, excluding **Offsides**.
 - Quarterback sacks if the defense is trailing
 - 5-second quarterback sacks if the defense is trailing.
 - Possession change.

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- 2nd half, 2-minute clock will stop only until the ball is set/ready for play whistle for:
 - First Downs.
 - Defensive Offsides penalty.
 - Offensive penalties.
 - During 2-minute clock, an offensive completion that gains zero or negative yardage will be timed as an incompletion.
- o **Play Clock** – There is a timed play clock of 25 seconds, which begins as soon as a flag is pulled, touchdown is signaled or incomplete pass hits the ground. If a penalty is called, the play clock will begin as soon as a game official has walked off the penalty. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds following an offensive penalty. The game official have the right to stop the play clock, or to allow it to continue to run, if they feel it's necessary or appropriate.
- o **Coin Toss** – The Line Judge will gather team captains for the coin toss. While the Line Judge is conducting the coin toss with the captains, all remaining players must verify with the Field Judge that they are in the Stat App. If a player is not in the Stat App, they must go see the Conference Manager. The winner of the coin toss can choose to begin the game on offense, defense or declare direction. Loser of the coin toss decides the needed missing information to begin. The teams will change direction at halftime and possession begins with the team which didn't start with the ball in the first half. Method is determined by the game officials.
- o **Timeouts** – Each team is awarded 2 timeouts per half. Timeout duration is 45 seconds. The play clock will begin to run as soon as the 45 seconds has expired. If a team leads by 17 or more points in the second half, no team will be awarded timeouts. Furthermore, the game clock will not stop under normal timing conditions until the score is reduced below 17 points. A timeout will be charged to a team which elects to punt, but changes their mind under 30 seconds on the play clock.
- o **Lights Out** – During night games, if the lights go out because of timing restrictions, the game is over. If the game is tied, each team is awarded a tie. At the time the lights go out, the leading team earns a win and the trailing teams gets a loss. If the game is in overtime, and the lights go out, the game ends in a tie.
- o **Scoring**
 - Touchdown = 6 pts
 - 5-yard conversion = 1 pt.
 - 10-yard conversion = 2 pts
 - Safety = 2 pts
 - Returned interception on a conversion attempt = 2 pts
- o **Mercy Rule** – There is no official mercy rule. The team that is behind can choose to end the competition at any time they feel the deficit is insurmountable. Only clock timing rules are in effect for deficits 17 points or greater. Refer to the *Game Clock* section of the rules for specifics.
- o **Game Forfeits** – A scheduled game will be ruled a forfeit if a team does not show for their game or if a team does not have enough players to comply with the minimum number to play with (5). The game officials can issue a maximum of two grace periods, 5 minutes in length. Each grace period is

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subtracted from the game clock at the start of each half. Additionally, each grace period issued carries an 8-point penalty.

OVERTIME

- o **Regular Season Overtime Description** – If a game is tied at the end of regulation, overtime is divided into 3 rounds, if needed. Only the first and third overtime rounds begin with a coin toss. The winner chooses offense or defense. To start each *ROUND*, the team that begins with offensive possession for that round will rotate. Example: Round 1 - Team A, Team B. Round 2 – Team B, Team A. Round 3 – Team A, Team B.
 - **Round 1** – Team A begins 1st and goal from the 15-yard line. If they score, standard conversion options are available. Team B begins the same, with standard conversion options. If the ball is intercepted, Team B must return it to win. If the interception is not returned, Team B gains possession and must score to win. If a team ends the overtime period with more points, they win the game. If the score remains tied, the game will move to a second overtime round.
 - **Round 2** – Team B begins with the ball from the 15-yard line, with 4 play to score a touchdown. Standard conversion options are available. Team A begins the same, with standard conversion options. If the ball is intercepted, Team A must return it to win. If the interception is not returned, Team A gains possession and must score to win. If a team ends the overtime period with more points, they win the game. If the score remains tied, the game will move to a third overtime round.
 - **Round 3** – Coin toss. Team A begins with possession at midfield, with 1 play to advance the ball downfield as far as possible. Should Team A throw an interception, Team B now has possession at midfield and must advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. If Team A completes the pass, their distance is marked on the field clearly and Team B will take possession at midfield to try and better the yardage. Should Team B throw an interception, Team A has possession at midfield and must advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. Should both yardages be “too close to call”, the round will be repeated until there is a clear winner.
- o **Playoff Overtime Description** – If a game is tied at the end of regulation, overtime is divided into 3 rounds, if needed. Only the first overtime round begins with a coin toss. The winner chooses offense or defense. To start each *ROUND*, the team that begins with offensive possession for that round will rotate for the first two rounds. Example: Round 1 - Team A, Team B. Round 2 – Team B, Team A. Round 3 – Team A, Team B. Round 4 – Team A, Team B.
 - **Round 1** – Team A begins 1st and goal from the 15-yard line . If they score, standard conversion options are available. Team B begins the same, with standard conversion options. If the ball is intercepted, Team B must return it to win. If the interception is not returned, Team B gains possession and must score to win. If a team ends the overtime period with more points, they win the game. If the score remains tied, the game will move to a second overtime round.
 - **Round 2** – Team B begins with the ball from the 15-yard line, with 4 plays to score a touchdown. Standard conversion options are available. Team A begins the same, with standard conversion options. If the ball is intercepted, Team A must return it to win. If the interception is not

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returned, Team A gains possession and must score to win. If a team ends the overtime period with more points, they win the game. If the score remains tied, the game will move to a third overtime round. This pattern will continue until a winner is determined.

RULE 3

Game Play

GAME PLAY AND FIELD INDICATORS

- o **Possession** – Offenses begin with the ball on the 15-yard line to start a drive at the beginning of the game, start of the second half, after touchdowns and after turnovers inside the 15-yard line. An offense can obtain a new set of downs at midfield, which is the 40-yard line, and at the opponent's 15-yard line. Once the team reaches their opponent's 15-yard line, they are awarded 1st and goal. If at any time an offense takes possession of the ball between any of these two indicators, the team must only travel the necessary distance to the next indicator to receive a new set of downs. Loss of yards due to a penalty, sack or flag pull, does not allow a team another opportunity at a first down indicator, once they have passed that same indicator.
- o **Down Markers** – The line of scrimmage and rush line are marked by an official prior to a snap. The yardage is paced off and the marker is placed in reasonable proximity to 5 yards off the line of scrimmage. The offense may not snap the ball until the both markers (down marker and rush marker) are set. If the ball is snapped before the second marker is set, they play will be blown dead and the clock will continue to roll. In addition to being responsible for the down markers, the offense is also responsible for retrieving their own ball. Game officials MAY assist the offense with gathering the ball to help with game pace, but WILL NOT assist with retrieval during 2-minute clock.
- o **Spotting the Ball** – During "hurry-up" play, game officials are expected to move with the pace of the game. They are to do their best not to interrupt the pace of play while still effectively doing their job. The ball is spotted at the furthest distance the football traveled, not the body. This is especially important to note on the goal line.
- o **Substitution Procedure** – Either team can substitute at a dead ball. Subs must enter the game from the designated sideline. Every player that enters the game has to be approved by the Conference Manager prior to the game, or entry into the game should they arrive late. Defense is responsible to get their players onto the field before the offense snaps the ball, no exceptions. If a team has more than the maximum 6 players on the field after the snap, the team will be penalized 5 yards for a Substitution Infraction. If the offense has less than the required 5 players on the field (The team must have the minimum number of players available, in uniform, on the sideline. See *Game Forfeits* for further detail.), the offense will be penalized 5 yards for a Substitution Infraction.

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PRE-SNAP AND BLOCKING

- o **Pass Only League** – TUFF6 is considered a “pass-only” league. A pass constitutes any overhand or underhand throw, toss or shovel, that leaves the hand of the quarterback and travels forward. An offensive player must attempt to catch a forward pass. The quarterback can not rebound a pass off another player in order to run. A pass cannot be completed behind the line of scrimmage. In either of these cases the play is treated as an incomplete pass. See *Double Passes* for more details.
- o **Formations** – The center may snap the ball from anywhere along the plain of the line of scrimmage. Receivers can line up anywhere behind the line of scrimmage, only the center must be ON the line of scrimmage. At the snap, if there isn't a receiver on both sides of the center, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Illegal Formation. If the first player to control the snap is the lone player on either side of the center, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Illegal Formation.
- o **Receiver Motion** – Only one player may be in motion at once. The center cannot motion, once set for the snap. The offense cannot motion a lone receiver behind the center. The offense must have at least 1 receiver to either side of the center at all times, prior to the snap. The ball can be snapped at any time during a motioning player's movement, provided the player in motion is not traveling downfield at the time of the snap. A player in motion can receive the snap. Any Illegal Motion will be penalized 5 yards.
- o **Legal Blocking Technique** – The only time blocking is allowed, is in the pocket of the quarterback, or to protect a scrambling quarterback in the backfield. Blocking contact can only occur with hands and extended or bent arms. The target area on a rushing player is the waist and shoulder line. Any number of players can be used for blocking purposes, but cannot cross the line of scrimmage to block, only receive. If a blocking player engages a rusher in front of the line of scrimmage, the offense will be penalized 10 yards for Illegal Contact. If a blocking player makes excessive contact to the rusher, or any contact above the shoulders, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. Offensive players can block a rushing player, and then release contact to receive a pass.
- o **Illegal Blocking Technique** – Absolutely no diving or chop blocking will be allowed, and could be grounds for ejection at the discretion of the game officials. Absolutely no contact to the head will be allowed. If a blocking player makes any contact below the waist or above the shoulders of a rusher, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. There is no blocking to the back of a rushing player. If a blocker blindsides a rushing player, the offense will be penalized 10 yards for Illegal Contact. Any contact to the back of a rusher should be the result of the rusher's spin move. No grabbing of the jersey, arms and waist of a rushing player or pulling a player to the ground. No contact to a player is allowed once they are on the ground. If a blocking player makes any grabbing or pulling contact, or contacts a rusher on the ground, the offense will be penalized 10 yards for Holding.
- o **Impeding the Rusher** – Offensive receivers cannot make any contact with a legally rushing player. Any offensive player that crosses the line of scrimmage becomes a receiver only, and cannot return to the pocket to help block. It is the responsibility of the offense to avoid the rushing players. If a

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receiver contacts the rusher and alters their path, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Impeding the Rusher. If a receiver makes excessive contact to the rusher, or any contact above the shoulders, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. If the defense initiates contact with a receiver while in the process of rushing, it will be considered the defensive player's 1 "bump", provided it was legal contact.

THE SNAP AND THE POCKET

- o **Snap Origin** – The offense has 25 seconds in between plays to snap the football. If the offense is unable to snap the football before the play clock expires, or cannot signal for a timeout before the play clock expires, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Delay of Game. The center must snap the ball from the ground. The snap can come from any player. The ball can be snapped from anywhere along the line of scrimmage, see *Formations* for further details. Centers can release the ball in any manner they wish from the ground. Snaps between the legs, "shovel-snaps" from the side or "stand-and-throw" methods are all legal ways to snap. Once the ball leaves the ground, the snap is initiated and the throw clock starts. If the center snaps the ball from in front of the line of scrimmage, or without the ball starting from the ground, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Illegal Snap. The center cannot bluff a snap. If the center feigns the snap movement, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for False Start. No offensive player may move forward prior to the snap, once the center has set. If an offensive player moves across the line of scrimmage or feigns movement, once the center is set, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for False Start.
- o **Fumbled Snaps** – The center-quarterback exchange or "Snap", is the only "live" fumble. The quarterback or any offensive player, other than the center, that picks up the ball will be considered the quarterback. If the center recovers a snap, the play is dead. A fumble retained by the defense cannot be advanced and their offensive possession will begin where the ball was recovered. Diving for a fumble is not allowed. See *Jumping and Diving* for further details. If an offensive player dives and recovers a fumble, the play will be blown dead at the spot of the recovery and the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Diving. If a defender dives and recovers a fumble, possession will not change and the defense will be penalized 5 yards for Diving, from the spot of the recovery. If the fumbling play was fourth down, the change of possession occurs after the 5-yard penalty has been assessed. If any player intentionally kicks the ball during a fumble recovery, the team will be penalized 5 yards for Kicking a Fumble.
- o **The Quarterback** – Any player, except the center, with legal possession of the football in the backfield, prior to a forward pass attempt, is considered the quarterback. Any offensive player can receive the snap from the center and be the quarterback, with one situational exception: In an unbalanced formation, the first player to control the snap cannot be the single player on either side of the center. The quarterback cannot cross the line of scrimmage prior to attempting a forward pass. The ball must be completely out of the hand of the quarterback before the quarterback's whole body has crossed the line of scrimmage. If the quarterback is in possession of the football and crosses the line of scrimmage, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Illegal Run.
- o **5 Second Throw Clock** – The offense has 5 seconds to attempt a forward pass. The timing is kept with TUFF League's Automated Throw Clock*.

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If the throw clock expires with the quarterback still in possession of the football, the play will be blown dead as a sack. If the quarterback is halfway through their throwing motion, when the time expires, it will be considered simultaneous and play will continue. If the offense pump fakes or throws a backward lateral at 5 seconds, the play is blown dead as a sack. The ball will be placed at the spot of the Quarterback when the timer expires. **TUFF League Technologies has developed an app with an Automated Throw Clock. The system reduces the human error associated with counting aloud and blowing a sack dead.*

- o **Double Passes** – The offense is allowed one backward lateral in the backfield within the throw clock. At no time will a player have a “run-pass” option. The backward lateral creates a new quarterback. The throw clock does not stop until a forward pass is attempted. Any backward lateral in the backfield that is dropped, will be considered a fumble. The play will be blown dead, and the ball will be placed at the spot of the drop.
- o **Roughing the Passer** – Quarterbacks are allowed any space needed to complete their throwing motion. It is illegal to make contact to the quarterback’s arm on the follow through. A defender cannot strip the quarterback. Rushing players cannot make any contact to the upper body of the quarterback. All contact should be below their midsection, and the result of a flag pull attempt. If a defender contacts the quarterback, in a way that limits the motion of their throw, the defense will be penalized 15 yards for Roughing the Passer.
- o **QB Kneel and Running Out the Clock** – There are no kneel downs due to the fact that a player must be flagged or touched to be down. During 2-minute clock, the offense must progress the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, in order for the clock to continue to run.

RECEIVING AND RUNNING AFTER A CATCH

- o **Definition of a Catch** – Receivers must have at least 1-foot down inbounds after maintaining control of a pass to be considered a legal reception. Knees and hips are other parts of the body that are considered a foot for the purposes of defining a catch. Quarterbacks may only receive their own pass if the ball is tipped by another player first. Once the ball is touched by a receiver beyond the line of scrimmage, or by a defender anywhere on the field, the quarterback may catch the pass and advance it. A receiver must attempt to catch a forward pass. Should a receiver and defender come into a catch simultaneously, the offense will be awarded the reception. Once a receiver makes first contact with a thrown ball, the act of possession begins. A defender may pull the receivers flag at any time after first contact and the receiver will be marked down at the point where the possession is completed. (see *Bobbled Catch*).
- o **Bobbled Catch** – When a receiver attempts to catch the ball and it bounces out of their hands, but the defender pulls the receivers flag(s), once the receiver fully gains possession of the bobbled catch, the receiver is immediately down once the possession has been completed. A receiver may not intentionally bobble a catch to avoid a catch behind the line of scrimmage. If a pass is touched by a receiver, clearly behind the line of scrimmage, the pass will be ruled incomplete. (see *Catches Behind the Line of Scrimmage*)
- o **Catches Behind the Line of Scrimmage** – If a receiver catches a forward pass behind the line of scrimmage, it will be considered an

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incomplete pass. If a receiver catches a pass that traveled backward, the receiver would become the quarterback. Once a forward pass has been made, no more forward passes can be made. Any backward lateral in the backfield that is dropped, will be considered a fumble. The play will be blown dead once the ball hits the ground or crosses the sidelines.

- o **Pass Interference** – One player cannot restrict another player’s ability to make a catch, once a player gains position. Both players must play the ball and not target the body. Both players have a right to the ball, thus Pass Interference can be called on either team. Neither the defense nor the offense, has a right to the ball through another player’s back. If any contact influences the ability of a defender to make a catch when they have position, the offending team will be penalized 15 yards for Pass Interference.
- o **Receiver Picks** – Offensive receivers cannot intentionally run into defensive players downfield. The offense cannot impede the defense by discontinuing or abruptly stopping their route. The receiver must make contact with a defensive player to be considered a pick. Simply crossing paths in close proximity will not warrant a penalty. If a receiver contacts a defensive player downfield, the offense will be penalized 10 yards for Illegal Contact. *Incidental Contact* can be ruled by the game officials in all situations involving Receiver Picks. If a receiver makes any excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a defender downfield, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
- o **Flag Guarding** – Runners may not intentionally or unintentionally use their arms or hands to prevent the defense from pulling their flags. Runners may not drop their arms to the sides when they are juking or spinning. If a players use their hands or arms to prevent the defense from successfully pulling the flag, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Flag Guarding. Players jersey’s that remain out of their waistline to start a play, game officials may issue a Flag Guarding penalty if they feel the uniform affected the play.
- o **Runners with 1 Flag** – Offensive players are required to have two flags on their belt, at either side of their hips, at all times. Should offensive players knock their own flag off, or should the flag fall on its own accord, the player only needs to be tagged during a live run. If the defense removes the flag prematurely, they are still responsible to pull the remaining flag. If the flag belt shifts during a run, it is to be corrected after the play, but the runners are live until their flag has been pulled.
- o **Runner Considered Down** – An official shall declare the ball dead:
a) the runner’s flag is pulled b) a runner with one flag is touched [exception: See Premature Flag Pull] c) the runner is touched by an opponent while the runner is touching the ground with any part of the body other than their hands or feet. If a receiver is contacted by a defender in mid-air while attempting a catch, they would be considered “down by contact” if the contact brought them to the ground. If contact from the defense happens before a catch, the receiver will not be considered “down by contact”, and they would be a live runner.
- o **Jumping and Diving** – At no time is a player allowed to jump or dive while running with the ball. This includes hurdling a player, jumping while spinning/juking, diving for a first down/touchdown and diving or jumping to get out of bounds. Jumping and diving are only allowed when a receiver is attempting a catch, or the defense is attempting a flag pull or defending a pass. If a player already in possession of the football, jumps or dives, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Jumping/Diving.

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- o **Laterals** – After a catch or interception, or during a punt return, there can only be one backward lateral attempt. Laterals can be underhand or overhand tosses, pitches or shovels. There is no penalty yardage assessed for forward lateral. There is no penalty if a player laterals more than once, the ball will be blown dead at the spot of the second lateral attempt. If a legal lateral does not get possessed by a player, the ball will be placed at the spot where it hits the ground or crosses the sideline. A lateral is considered live until it hits the ground or crosses the sideline. Offensive players can trail the play looking for a lateral, but cannot run in front of the ball carrier. Any offensive player downfield from the ball carrier, must allow defense the right of way. If the offense makes contact with defensive players after a catch, or prohibits the path of the defense, the offense will be penalized an Illegal Contact 10-yard penalty for blocking downfield. If a receiver makes any excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a defender downfield, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
- o **Fumbles** – The center-quarterback exchange or “Snap”, is the only “live” fumble. The quarterback or any offensive player, other than the center, that picks up the ball will be considered the quarterback. If the center recovers a snap, the play is dead. If a player fumbles forward, it will return to the spot where possession was lost. If a player fumbles backwards, the ball will be placed at the spot where it hits the ground or crosses the sideline. A fumble is considered live until it hits the ground or crosses the sideline. No recovery is needed.

PUNTING

- o **Declaring a Punt** – The offense can punt on any down. The offense must clearly declare their decision to the game officials. Should the offense change their mind during the 25 second game clock, they will be charged a timeout. If the offense chooses to punt and changes their mind and the offense has no timeouts, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Delay of Game.
- o **Punt Procedure** – The defense is allowed 2 representatives to receive the punt. The offense is allowed their full team of 6 to cover the punt return. The 25 second play clock and 5 second throw clock are still in play. The kicking team may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. The return team is only allowed 1 lateral, and cannot block. There are no fumbles during a punt. If the return team muffs the punt, the ball will be dead at the point of the first offensive touch. The receiving team may return the ball if it bounces less than 3 times. The ball will be spotted at the third bounce and the play will be blown dead. There are no fair catches needed, and the coverage team must provide the receiver an opportunity to catch the ball. The receiver has a 5-yard halo to retrieve the ball. Punts out of bounds will be spotted where the ball crossed the sideline. If a punt is downed inside the 15-yard line, the next drive will automatically begin at the 15-yard line. The same is true for a flag pull inside the 15-yard line.
- o **Punt Return Interference** – The coverage team must provide the receiver enough space to catch the punt. The halo given to a receiver is 5 yards. The kicking team may not cross into the halo or touch the ball before the receiver has had an attempt to return it. If contact to the ball is made or if the halo is violated, the kicking team will be penalized 10 yards for Illegal Contact due to punt return interference. If the return team makes no effort to return the kick, the coverage team may collect the ball as soon as they can.

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- o **Substitution Procedure** – Either team can substitute at a dead ball. Subs must enter the game from the designated sideline. Every player that enters the game has to be on the stat app and verified by the Field Judge prior to the game, or entry into the game should they arrive late. Defense is responsible to get their players onto the field before the offense snaps the ball, no exceptions. If a team has more than the maximum 6 players on the field after the snap, the team will be penalized 5 yards for a Substitution Infraction. Provided the defense has the minimum number of players available, in uniform on the sideline (5), there is no minimum number of players needed to play defense.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE DEFENSE

- o **Formations** – The defense may align their players any way desired. Players that are rushing must begin the play at or beyond the rush line, but are not required to declare themselves to the offense. If a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage after the snap, and did not begin the play behind the 5-yard rush line, the defense will be penalized 5 yards for Illegal Rush. Defensive players cannot begin the play in the offensive backfield. If a player is ON or beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped, the defense will be penalized 5 yards for Offsides.
- o **Bump and Run Contact** – The defense is allowed to contact an offensive receiver 1 time, within a 3-yard extension, beginning at the line of scrimmage. Defensive players may not make contact with the receiver throughout the extension, only 1 “bump” will be allowed. The defensive player cannot cross the line of scrimmage to contact the offense. Intentional contact to the receiver is not allowed once the 3-yard extension has expired. If a defensive player “bumps” a receiver more than once, or outside of the 3-yard extension, the defense will be penalized 10 yards for Illegal Contact. If a defensive player makes excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a receiver, the defense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
- o **Center Coverage** – Defenders cannot contact centers until they cross the line of scrimmage. The center cannot be “bumped” while still in the process of rising from the snap. If a defensive player contacts the center prematurely or while in a vulnerable position, the defense will be penalized 10 yards for Illegal Contact. If the center is contacted above the shoulders while rising from the snap, the defense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

RUSHING THE QB

- o **Legal Rushing Technique** – At the beginning of each play, defensive players that will be rushing the quarterback must be lined up at or beyond the 5-yard rush line. Rushing players are allowed a free path to the line of scrimmage and cannot be impeded with contact by a wide receiver. Rushers must try to limit contact with blocking players by attempting to get around the side of the blocker. If the offense laterals the ball in the backfield, the 5-yard rush line is negated. Rushers are allowed to leave their feet to block a pass, but cannot make contact with the ball during a quarterback’s throwing motion.
- o **Illegal Rushing Maneuvers** – Rushing players cannot swing their arms upward or downward forcibly at the arms of a blocker. Defensive players cannot “Bull Rush”. If a rusher drives a blocking player backward, due to direct

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contact, the defense will be penalized 10 yards for Illegal Contact. If the rusher makes excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a blocking player, the defense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. The defense cannot imitate the Throw Timer. If any player attempts to manipulate the Throw Timer, the team will be penalized 5 yards for Delay of Game.

- o **Roughing the Passer** – Quarterbacks are allowed any space needed to complete their throwing motion. It is illegal to make contact to the quarterback's arm or follow through. A defender cannot strip the quarterback. Rushing players cannot make any contact to the upper body of the quarterback. Any contact should be below their midsection, and the result of a flag pull attempt. If a defender contacts a quarterback in a way that limits the motion of their throw, the defense will be penalized 15 yards for Roughing the Passer.

PASS DEFENSE

- o **Pass Interference** – Offensive players cannot have their movement hindered or ability to make a catch altered by the defense. Both players must play the ball and not target the body. Contact above the shoulders is not allowed at any time. Both players have a right to the ball, thus Pass Interference can be called on either team. Neither the defense nor the offense, has a right to the ball through the opponent's back. If contact influences the ability of a receiver to make a catch, the defense will be penalized 15 yards for Pass Interference. The game officials can rule *Incidental Contact* in all situations involving Pass Interference.
- o **Tipped Balls** – If a ball is tipped at the line, or otherwise, contact to receivers will not be allowed. Normal Pass Interference rules will still apply. When a ball is tipped in the air at the line, the quarterback and center are considered receivers.
- o **Inadvertent/Incidental Contact** – If two players should come into contact, that neither player meant to cause, it can be ruled *Incidental Contact* by the game officials. This can happen when feet become entangled or when two players, unaware of the other, collide. In the event of *Incidental Contact*, no down-over will be issued. The use of this non-call is at the discretion of the game officials. *Incidental Contact* can be ruled by the game officials in all situations involving Pass Interference, Illegal Contact, or where applicable.

FLAG PULLING AND PURSUIT OF RUNNER

- o **Legal Flag Pulling Technique** – The defense must obtain an offensive player's flag without impeding the forward motion of the runner. The defense can only grab a flag, flag belt or accessory in the waistline of the runner. The defense cannot "bear hug" a runner before pulling their flag. If a player prohibits a runner's movement while attempting a flag pull, the defense will be penalized 5 yards for Holding. If a defensive player makes excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a runner, the defense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
- o **Sideline Pursuit** – Defensive players cannot force a runner out of bounds. Any contact that is "not reasonable" for the flag pull attempt will not be allowed. If the defender herds or rides a runner out of bounds, the defense will be penalized 5 yards for Holding. If a defender pulls or pushes a runner out of bounds, the defense will be penalized 10 yards for Illegal Contact. If the

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defense makes excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a runner, the defense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

- o **Stripping** – Once a receiver has possession of the ball, defensive players are expected to attempt a flag pull. Should a ball remain unsecured (bobbled) by a receiver, the defense may still target the ball. At no time can a defender rip the ball away from a runner. If the ball comes loose due to a strip attempt, the play is blown dead. If a runner has possession forcibly removed by a defender, the defense will be penalized 5 yards for Stripping.
- o **Inadvertent Whistle** – If a game official blows a play dead prematurely, the ball is spotted at the location of the ball carrier at the time of the whistle. No down-over will be awarded for an *Inadvertent Whistle* that occurs on a run after a catch. If the ball is still in the possession of the quarterback, or in the air, at the time of the whistle, play will be stopped, and the down will be replayed. *Inadvertent Whistles* do not offset penalties. Should an *Inadvertent Whistle* occur when a runner has an unrestricted path to the goal, the game officials can award the team a touchdown. "Clear Path" calls require confirmation from BOTH game officials.
- o **"Last Man" Rule** – If the last defender between a runner and the goal is penalized for Holding, the team will be awarded a touchdown. Should there be a defender anywhere along the plain of the ball across the field, the Holding penalty is assessed but no touchdown is awarded. "Last Man" calls require confirmation from BOTH game officials. When a runner has an unrestricted path to the goal, the game officials can award the team a touchdown. "Clear Path" calls require confirmation from BOTH game officials. The hold MUST occur past mid field.

TURNOVERS

- o **Interceptions** – Intercepted passes can be returned for additional yardage and defensive touchdowns. Intercepted conversion attempts can be returned for 2 points only. Interceptions in the end zone, that are kneeled or returned to less than the 15-yard line, will be spotted at the 15-yard line on the change of possession.
- o **Possession** – When a runner loses control of the ball it will be fall under the rules of a lateral.
- o **Safeties** – If the quarterback is sacked in the end zone or the 5 Second Throw Timer expires while the quarterback is in possession of the ball in the end zone, the defense will be awarded a safety. If the snap goes out of bounds through the end zone, or Holding is called on the offense in the end zone, the defense will be awarded a safety. Following a safety, the defense will be awarded 2 points and possession will change with a punt from the 15-yard line.
- o **Turnover on Downs** – If a team does not advance the ball passed the first down indicator on a 4th down attempt, possession will change at the same line of scrimmage. The rush line is flipped and the game continues. If the offense fails to score a touchdown on 4th and goal, within the 15-yard line, the ball is spotted at the 15-yard line on the change of possession.

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RULE 4

Penalties

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

- o **Delay of Game** – If the offense is unable to snap the football before the play clock expires, or cannot signal for a timeout before the play clock expires, the offense will be penalized. If the offense chooses to punt and changes their mind, with under 25 seconds on the play clock, and the offense has no timeouts, the offense will be penalized. See *Snap Origin* and *Declaring a Punt*.
 - 5-yard penalty:
 - Dead ball foul.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be repeated.
 - The defense cannot decline the penalty.
 - The down is repeated.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
- o **Diving** – Players may not leave their feet to advance the ball. This includes diving for a first down or touchdown.
 - 5-yard penalty:
 - Play is blown dead when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the spot of the foul. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the offense will not retry the conversion. If the penalty is committed in the end zone, the defense will take possession of the ball on the 15-yard line.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **False Start** – If the center feigns the snap movement, the offense will be penalized. If an offensive player moves across the line of scrimmage or feigns movement, once the center is set, the offense will be penalized. See *Snap Origin*.
 - 5-yard penalty:
 - Dead ball foul.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be repeated.
 - The defense cannot decline the penalty.

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- During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
- o **Flag Guarding** – When a player is in possession of the ball, they may not intentionally or unintentionally use their arms or hands to prevent the defense from pulling their flags. If a player's jersey remains out of their waistline to start a play, the official may issue a Flag Guarding penalty if they feel the uniform affected the play. The ball is an extension of the hand.
- 5-yard penalty:
 - The play is blown dead when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the spot of the foul. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be forfeited.
 - The defense cannot decline the penalty.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
- o **Illegal Blocking** – All blocking must be with open hands. No offensive player may grab the jersey, arms or waist of a rushing player. No pulling a player to the ground. No contact to a rushing player is allowed once they are on the ground. No blocking to the back of a rushing player who is clearly past the blocker. If a blocker blindsides a rushing player, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. If the offense makes contact with defensive players after a catch, or prohibits the path of the defense, the offense will be penalized an Illegal Contact 10-yard penalty for blocking downfield. See *Legal Blocking Technique*.
- 10-yard penalty:
 - The play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be forfeited.
 - The penalty results in loss of down.
 - The defense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the result of the play.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
- o **Illegal Contact** – The offense cannot push-off to create separation with a defender, by using their arms or hands, while running a route downfield. If downfield contact gives a receiver an advantage, the offense will be penalized. If a receiver contacts a defensive player downfield, the offense will be penalized. If the offense makes contact with defensive players after a catch, or prohibits the path of the defense, the offense will be penalized. Beyond the 3

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yard bump window, any intentional contact that puts a defender at a disadvantage will be deemed Illegal Contact. The coverage team must provide the receiver enough space to catch the punt. The halo given to a receiver is 5 yards. The kicking team may not cross into the halo or touch the ball before the receiver has had an attempt to return it. If contact to the ball is made or if the halo is violated, the kicking team will be penalized. See *Legal Blocking Technique, Illegal Blocking Technique, Offensive Pass Interference, Laterals, Punt Return Interference, and Receiver Picks*.

- 10-yard penalty:

- The play is continues when flagged.
- The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be forfeited.
- The penalty results in loss of down.
- The defense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the result of the play.
- During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
- The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.

- o **Illegal Formation** – If the center snaps the ball and there is not a receiver to either side of them, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Illegal Formation. If the first player to control the snap is the lone player on either side of the center, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Illegal Formation. See *formations*.

- 5-yard penalty:

- Dead ball foul.
- The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be repeated.
- The defense cannot decline the penalty.
- During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
- The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.

- o **Illegal Motion** – Only one player may be in motion at once. The center cannot motion, once set for the snap. The offense cannot motion a lone receiver behind the center. The ball can be snapped at any time during a motioning player's movement, provided the player in motion is not traveling downfield at the time of the snap. See *receiver motion*.

- 5-yard penalty:

- Dead ball foul.
- The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be repeated.
- The defense cannot decline the penalty.

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- During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
- o **Illegal Run**– If the quarterback crosses the line of scrimmage, the play will be blown dead and the offense will be penalized for an Illegal Run. The ball must be completely out of the hand of the quarterback before their entire body has crossed the line of scrimmage. *See The Quarterback.*
- **5-yard penalty:**
 - The play is blown dead when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be forfeited.
 - The penalty results in loss of down.
 - The defense cannot decline the penalty.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
- o **Illegal Snap** – If the center snaps the ball from in front of the line of scrimmage, or without the ball starting from the ground, the offense will be penalized. *See Snap Origin.*
- **5-yard penalty:**
 - Dead ball foul.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be repeated.
 - The defense cannot decline the penalty.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense. It will start on the snap at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
- o **Impeding the rusher** – Offensive receivers cannot make any contact with a legally rushing player. If a receiver contacts and impedes rusher, the offense will be penalized 5 yards for Impeding the Rusher. If a receiver makes excessive contact to the rusher, or any contact above the shoulders, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. If a rusher initiates contact with a receiver while rushing, it will be not be considered impeding. *See Impeding the Rusher*
- **5-yard penalty:**
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be forfeited.
 - The penalty results in loss of down.

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- The defense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the result of the play.
 - The down is repeated, unless the penalty yardage advances the ball passed a first down indicator.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Intentional Grounding** – The quarterback MUST throw the ball past the line of scrimmage. If the quarterback attempts a pass that does not pass the line of scrimmage, the offense will be penalized. See *pass only league*.
- **10-yard penalty:**
 - Play is blown dead when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be forfeited.
 - The defense cannot decline the penalty.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
 - The penalty will result in a loss of down.
- o **Kicking a Fumble** – If any player intentionally kicks the ball during a fumble recovery, the team will be penalized. See *Fumbles* and *Fumbled Snaps* (Offensive).
- **5-yard penalty:**
 - Play is blown dead when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the spot of the foul. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the offense will not retry the conversion. If the penalty is committed in the end zone, the defense will take possession of the ball on the 15-yard line.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Pass Interference - Offense** – Receivers cannot restrict a defender's ability to make a catch, if the defensive player gains position. Both players must play the ball and not target the body. Both players have a right to the ball, thus Pass Interference can be called on either team. Neither the defense nor the offense, has a right to the ball through another player's back. If any contact influences the ability of a defender to make a catch while in position, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for Offensive Pass Interference. See *Pass Interference*
- **15-yard penalty:**
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be forfeited.

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- The defense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the result of the play.
 - The penalty results in a loss of down.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Substitution Infraction** – If a team has more than the maximum 6 players on the field after the snap, the team will be penalized. If the offense has less than the required 5 players on the field, the offense will be penalized. See *Substitution Procedure*.
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Dead ball foul.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the conversion will be repeated.
 - The defense cannot decline the penalty.
 - The down is repeated.
 - During 2-minute clock, the game clock stops until the down markers are set, and will start on the ready for play at the discretion of the defense.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

- o **Delay of Game** - Defensive players may not simulate the offense's snap, play clock count, or throw clock in any way. If any defender attempts to simulate the snap, or manipulate the play or throw clocks, the team will be penalized. See *Illegal Rushing Maneuvers*
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the ball will be spotted at the 2-yard line. The offense will retry the conversion.
 - The offense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the result of the play.
 - The down is repeated, unless the penalty yardage advances the ball passed a first down indicator.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Holding** – If a player prohibits a runner's movement while attempting a flag pull, the defense will be penalized. See *Legal Flag Pulling Technique, Sideline Pursuit* and *"Last Man" Rule*.
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the spot of the foul.
 - The offense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the result of the play.

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- There are no additional downs awarded to the offense, unless the penalty yardage advances the ball passed a first down indicator.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Illegal Contact** – If a defensive player “bumps” a receiver more than once, or outside of the 3-yard extension, the defense will be penalized. If a defensive player contacts the center prematurely or while in a vulnerable position, the defense will be penalized. If a rusher drives blocking player backward, due to direct contact, the defense will be penalized. If a defender pulls or pushes a runner out of bounds, the defense will be penalized. See *Bump and Run Contact, Center Coverage, Illegal Rushing Maneuvers* and *Sideline Pursuit*.
- 10-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed in the end zone, the ball will be placed on the 2-yard line. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the ball will be spotted at the 2-yard line. The offense will retry the conversion.
 - The offense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the yardage gained on the play.
 - The offense is awarded an automatic first down.
 - The penalty cannot be added to the end of the play.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Illegal Rush** – If a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage after the snap, and did not begin the play behind the 5-yard rush line, the defense will be penalized. See *Formations (Defense)*.
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the offense will retry the conversion.
 - The offense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the yardage gained on the play.
 - The down is repeated, unless the penalty yardage advances the ball passed a first down indicator.
 - The penalty yardage cannot be added to the end of the play.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-min clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Kicking a Fumble** – If any player intentionally kicks the ball during a fumble recovery, the team will be penalized. See *Fumbles* and *Fumbled Snaps (Offensive)*.
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Play is blown dead when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the ball will be spotted at the 2-yard line. The offense will retry the conversion.

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- If the penalty is committed in the end zone, the ball will be placed on the 15-yard line.
 - The offense cannot decline the penalty.
 - There are no additional downs awarded to the offense, unless the penalty yardage advances the ball passed a first down indicator.
 - The penalty yardage is added from where the player lost possession.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Offsides** – If a player is ON or beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped, the defense will be penalized. See *Formations*.
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the ball will be spotted at the 2-yard line. The offense will retry the conversion.
 - The offense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the yardage gained on the play.
 - The down is repeated, unless the penalty yardage advances the ball passed a first down indicator.
 - The penalty yardage cannot be added to the end of the play.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Offsides “Verbal”** – Once per series, the defense may elect a verbal offsides penalty.
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Dead ball foul.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the try will be repeated half the distance to the goal.
 - The offense cannot decline the penalty.
 - The game clock stops until the down markers are set during 2-minute clock, and will start on the ready for play at the choice of the offense or game officials.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
- o **Pass Interference - Defense** – If contact influences the ability of a receiver to make a catch, the defense will be penalized. If the pass defender does not demonstrate awareness of the ball to the game officials, the defense will be penalized. See *Offensive Pass Interference*.
- 15-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed in the end zone, the ball will be spotted on the 2-yard line. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the offense will retry the conversion from the 2-yard line.
 - The offense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the yardage gained on the play.

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- The offense is awarded an automatic first down.
 - The penalty cannot be added to the end of the play.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Roughing the Passer** – If a defender contacts the quarterback in a way that limits the motion of the quarterback's throw, the defense will be penalized. See *Roughing the Passer*.
- 15-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the offense will retry the conversion from the 2-yard line.
 - The offense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the yardage gained on the play.
 - The offense is awarded an automatic first down.
 - The penalty cannot be added to the end of the play.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Stripping** – If a defender forcible removes possession of the football from the offense, the defense will be penalized. See *Stripping* and *Fumbles* (Defensive and Offensive).
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Play is blown dead when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the end of the play. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the ball will be spotted at the 2-yard line. The offense will retry the conversion.
 - The offense cannot decline the penalty.
 - There are no additional downs awarded to the offense, unless the penalty yardage advances the ball passed a first down indicator.
 - The penalty yardage is added from where the offense lost possession.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-min. clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
- o **Substitution Infraction** – If a team has more than the maximum 6 players on the field after the snap, the team will be penalized 5 yards for a Substitution Infraction. See *Substitution Procedure*.
- 5-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the ball will be spotted at the 2-yard line. The offense will retry the conversion.
 - The offense may elect to decline the penalty and keep the yardage gained on the play.
 - The down is repeated, unless the penalty yardage advances the ball passed a first down indicator.
 - The penalty yardage cannot be added to the end of the play.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-min. clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.

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- o **Unsportsmanlike Conduct (During a play)** – If a defensive player makes excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a receiver, the defense will be penalized. If the center is contacted above the shoulders while rising from the snap, the defense will be penalized. If the rusher makes excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a blocking player, the defense will be penalized. If a defensive player makes excessive contact, or contact above the shoulders of a runner, the defense will be penalized. See *Bump and Run Contact, Center Coverage, Illegal Rushing Maneuvers, Legal Flag Pulling Technique and Sideline Pursuit*.
 - 15-yard penalty:
 - Play continues when flagged.
 - The penalty is assessed from the end of the play. If the penalty is committed in the end zone, during the play, the ball will be spotted on the 2-yard line. If the penalty is committed during a conversion attempt, the offense has the choice to assess the penalty on their retry of the conversion (from the 2-yard line). The offense may also elect to have penalty assessed on the change of possession (half the distance to the goal), and retry the conversion from the originally chosen standard distance.
 - The offense cannot decline the penalty.
 - The penalty will be added to the end of the play.
 - The game clock stops until the next snap during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge.
 - If a player receives 2 Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalties, they will be disqualified from the remainder of that game.
- o **Unsportsmanlike Conduct (During a dead ball)** – If a player engages in any verbal abuse or physical altercation with a game official, opposing player, or spectator, before, during or after a play, the team will be penalized. See *Player Conduct*.
 - 15-yard penalty:
 - Dead ball foul
 - The penalty is assessed from the line of scrimmage. If the penalty is committed following 4th down, the yardage is added to the change of possession.
 - The offense cannot decline the penalty.
 - The game clock stops until the down markers are set during 2-minute clock.
 - The play clock is reset to 25 seconds after the penalty yardage is walked off by the Line Judge. During 2-minute clock, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds.
 - If a player receives 2 Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalties, they will be disqualified from the remainder of that game.

OFFSETTING PENALTIES

- o **With No Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty**
 - If a penalty is called on both teams, and no penalty is for Unsportsmanlike Conduct, the down will be repeated by the offense. Down-over is the call regardless of the quantity of penalties called on either team.
- o **With Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty on Defense**

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- If the defense is penalized for Unsportsmanlike Conduct, and the offense is flagged for any other penalty, the offense will be awarded the difference in yardage and an automatic 1st down.
- **With Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty on Offense**
 - If the offense is penalized for Unsportsmanlike Conduct, and the defense is flagged for any other penalty, the offense will lose the difference in yardage, and the down will not be repeated.
- **With Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty on both Teams**
 - If Unsportsmanlike Conduct is called on both teams, and there are no other penalty flags, the down will be repeated by the offense.

DEAD BALL DELAY OF GAME

- **Begging/Badgering** – Players, and their spectators, cannot heckle or complain incessantly about the performance of the game officials. In most instances, the game officials will offer a warning to players that they are in jeopardy of a penalty. If a player continues to badger the game officials about a call, or the performance of the game officials, the team will be penalized 5 yards for Begging/Badgering. The penalty is addressed the same as Delay of Game. If a team receives a 3rd, or any subsequent Begging/Badgering penalties, they will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct each time thereafter. If a player is excessive or threatening, the player will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct at the discretion of the game officials.
- **Kicking The Ball** – If a player intentionally kicks or throws the opponent's ball, before or after a play, the team will be penalized 5 yards for Delay of Game. If a player kicks or throws the football in a celebratory manner, the team will be penalized 5 yards for Delay of Game. If the penalty occurs during 2-minute clock, the team will be penalized 15 yards for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

RULE 5

Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the rules

PLAYER CONDUCT

- *Players and spectators must adhere to the game rules, which are administered at the discretion of TUFF League appointed officials and game officials. Game officials are expected to communicate with team captains before a game to clarify any rule or roster questions.*
 - No drugs or alcohol will be permitted on the grounds of a TUFF League event. The first offense will result in a 1-week suspension of the offending player. The second offense will result in the player being dropped from league. Should a

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single team violate this rule 3 times in a season they will be dropped as a whole. No league fees will be refunded.

- o Dogs must remain on leash and must be cleaned up after. Teams are expected to dispose of their spectators' mess as well. Teams should clean and vacate their sideline area immediately after their game. Teams can be penalized future points if their area is consistently left a mess.
- o Consistent unsportsmanlike conduct, extensive or vulgar trash talk, verbal abuse and rough play will not be tolerated. Game officials have a duty to provide warnings before suspending/ejecting when possible. Offending players are subject to temporary game suspension, ejection from game and/or league. No league fees will be refunded.
- o All decisions of the officials are final, and must be abided by. Players shall not object in an inappropriate manner at an official's decision. Demonstrations of dissent by throwing equipment or using exaggerated gestures could result in player penalties up to and including suspension. Should a player make physical contact with an official in an aggressive manner, discipline could include season long suspension or permanent league dismissal. No league fees will be refunded.
- o Teams are expected to maintain a 3-yard distance between players and the sideline. If a team interrupts a game officials' movement they will be issued a warning on the first offense. Any additional violations will result in a 5-yard penalty. Players can exit the field of play on any sideline, but can only enter the game from the designated sideline. Substitution infractions are assessed a 5-yard penalty.
- o Players and teams are subject to suspension and ejection from a game anytime they are on the TUFF League rented property. Ejected players can be asked to leave the premises for a duration of time at the discretion of the officials. Further penalties to a team may be enforced if the team doesn't leave in a timely fashion or return to the field during their suspension.
- o Zero tolerance policy for fighting and bench clearing arguments. Game officials have the discretion to penalize a team up to 65 yards for bench clearing altercations. Any player who is involved in a fight with punches thrown is subject to immediate ejection of the game. The player could be further penalized by TUFF League, up to and including, permanent dismissal from the league. No league fees will be refunded. Any player who engages in physical contact with a TUFF League game officials or representative WILL be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.
- o Team captains are the only players allowed to address the officials with questions during the game. The captain may designate another player to speak for them. During the game, the captain or designated player may speak to the game officials for no longer than 30 seconds. The player will be warned that the time is up, and if they continue to engage the game officials, a 10-yard delay of game penalty will be called. Game officials are available briefly between games for other players to ask questions.
- o Team captains are held to a higher standard than other players and spectators. They are expected to remain in control and manage their team during explosive situations. The team captain is responsible for their players' knowledge of the rules.

PLAYER SUSPENSION AND EJECTION

- o **Game Official's Jurisdiction** – TUFF League empowers their game officials to keep the peace in difficult situations. Game officials are trained

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to handle moments where players' emotions are high, and tension between players is elevated. Communication between game officials and players are the first line of defense against unsportsmanlike incidents. The second way game officials deal with player dissent, is with penalties. Game officials are encouraged to penalize players and teams as soon as they feel the situation warrants action.

- o **Ejection** – If a player continues to ignore the warnings of the game officials, and/or a penalty flag is not enough action for a player's transgression, a game official may eject a player from a game. The ejection may be for any period of time ranging from a play to an entire game, at the discretion of the game officials. No league fees will be refunded.
- o **Suspension** – If a player is ejected from a game, and a game official feels the transgression exceeded the jurisdiction of the field officials, TUFF League will review the matter with all parties involved. After information is gathered, the league may suspend a player/team for any period of time, at the discretion of TUFF League's commissioner. No league fees will be refunded.

RULE 6

Summary of Penalties

PENALTY	5 yards	10 yards	15 yards	Auto 1st Down	Loss of Down
Delay of Game	●				
Diving	●				
False Start	●				
Flag Guard	●				
Illegal Formation	●				
Illegal Motion	●				
Illegal Run	●				●

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Illegal Snap	●				
Impeding the Rusher	●				●
Kicking a Fumble	●				
Substitution Infraction	●				
Defensive Holding	●				
Offsides	●				
Defensive Illegal Contact		●		●	
Offensive Illegal Contact		●			●
Illegal Rush		●			
Intentional Grounding		●			●
Illegal Blocking		●			●
Stripping		●			
Substitution Infraction		●			
Defensive Pass Interference			●	●	
Offensive Pass Interference			●		●
Roughing the Passer			●	●	
Unsportsmanlike Conduct			●		