

AIA

Arizona Girls' Flag Football

Rulebook 2024



Arizona Interscholastic Association

AIA Girls Flag Football

Table of Contents

Section 1 – General Rules.....	4
Art. 1 – The Game	4
Art. 2 – Game Length and Clock Stoppages.....	4
Art. 3 – The Field and Field Equipment	5
Art. 4 – Players, Player Equipment, & Coaches Equipment.....	6
Art. 5 – Basic Game Procedures.....	9
Section 2 – Scoring and Change of Possession	12
Art. 1 – Touchdown.....	12
Art. 2 – Extra Point	12
Art. 3 – Field Goal	12
Art. 4 – Change of Possession	12
Art. 5 - Safety	13
Section 3 – Offense.....	14
Art. 1 – First Down.....	14
Art. 2 – Formations and General Rules	14
Art. 3 – Snapping	14
Art. 4 – Quarterback/Passing.....	14
Art. 5 – Running with the Ball.....	15
Art. 6 – Receiving.....	16
Art. 7 - Blocking	17
Section 4 – Defense	19
Art. 1 – Formations and General Rules	19
Art. 2 – Rushing/Blitzing/Contact.....	19

Art. 3 – Flag Removal	19
Art. 4 – Pass Defense.....	20
Section 5 – Special Teams/Kicking.....	22
Art. 1 – Kickoff	22
Art. 2 – Punt	22
Art. 3 – Field Goal and Extra Point Kick	24
Section 6 – Miscellaneous Rules	20
Art. 1 – Onside Kick/Keep the Ball.....	20
Art. 2 – Overtime	20
Art. 3 – Mercy Rule	21
Art. 4 – Sideline Management.....	21
Section 7 – Penalties	22
Art. 1 – Loss of 5 Yards	22
Art. 2 – Loss of 10 Yards	22
Art. 3 – Loss of 15 Yards	22
Art. 4 – Disqualification in addition to Loss of 15 Yards	23
Section 8 Enforcement of Penalties	24
Art. 1 Procedure After A Foul.....	24
Art. 2 Double and Multiple Fouls.....	25
Art. 3 Types of Play.....	26
Art. 4 BASIC SPOTS.....	27
SECTION 9 SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT RULES	28
SECTION 10 ENFORCEMENT SPOTS, ALL-BUT-ONE PRINCIPLE.	29

Section 1 – General Rules

Art. 1 – The Game

1. It is the object of the game for one team to carry or pass the ball across the opponent's goal line or to kick the ball through the opponent's goal by a place kick. The game is won by the team which accumulates the most points.
2. The referee has the authority to rule promptly and in the spirit of good sportsmanship in any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.
3. The officials shall assume authority for the contest, including penalizing unsportsmanlike acts 30 minutes before the scheduled game time or as soon as they can be present.
4. The game officials' authority extends through the referee's declaration of the end of the fourth period or overtime. The game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the game officials had jurisdiction.
5. The referee's decision to forfeit a game is final.
6. Protests of AIA flag rules are not recognized.

Art. 2 – Game Length and Clock Stoppages

- a. Each game shall consist of four 12-minute quarters.
- b. Halftime intermission will be 8 minutes.
- c. The intermission between quarters will be 1 minute.
- d. The clock will run continuously EXCEPT on the following:
 1. Time-outs (3 per half, per team, these do not carry over)
 2. Following a score and during extra point attempts. The clock starts on the next snap.
 3. On change of possession. The clock starts following the next legal snap.

4. Penalties (the clock will start once the ball is placed).
 5. During an injury time-out.
 6. During overtime (there is no game clock).
- e. The 2-minute warning near the end of each half is NOT a timeout. The referee will stop the clock and inform both teams of the playing time remaining in the half. The clock starts again on the next snap. If the current play runs past the 2-minute warning, the clock is stopped immediately after that play completes.
- f. The clock will also stop under two minutes in the half for the following:
1. Incomplete pass (including spiking the ball)
 2. Running out of bounds

Art. 3 – The Field and Field Equipment

- a. Length: 80 or 100 yards of field and two 10-yard end zones
- b. Width: 40 yards
- c. The field shall have a goal post on each end of the field placed so that the front edge of the crossbar is on the same vertical plane as the inside edge of the sideline. The top of the crossbar shall be 10 feet above the ground. The crossbar shall be 23 feet, 4 inches long. The upright shall be 23 feet, 4 inches apart inside to inside and each upright may not exceed 4 inches in width. The uprights shall extend a minimum of 10 feet above the crossbar. The goal posts shall be padded with resilient, shock absorbing material to a height of at least 6 feet above the ground.
- d. Team Area: 2 yards from each sideline and between the 25-yard lines.
- e. The home team will have marked sidelines, end zones, and 20-yard Zone to Gain at each 20 and 40-yard line.
- f. The home team will provide sideline markers at the Zones-to-Gain and pylons.
- g. The home team will provide a Down Marker and volunteer to hold it.

- h. Referees: There shall be three officials in the regular season and four officials in the playoffs.
- i. **Defensive Line of Scrimmage Spotter:** One ball spotter (bean bag or rubber disk) shall mark the defensive scrimmage line and be placed one yard away from the offensive line of scrimmage.

Art. 4 – Players, Player Equipment, & Coaches Equipment

- a. Teams consist of no more than seven players on the field.
- b. Uniforms:
 - 1. All jerseys must have Arabic numbers on the front and back (0-99), clearly visible. The numbers must be centered horizontally and use the same style and color on the front and back. The body of the number must be a single solid color that clearly contrasts with the body color of the jersey.
 - 2. Jersey shall be tucked in and must not cover the flag belt.
 - 3. **No two players of the same team shall participate in the same down wearing identical numbers.**
 - 4. Uniform Colors:
 - i. Visiting Team: Body of the jersey must be white and may only contain the following items in a color that contrasts with white:
 - 1. Jersey numbers as in 1-4-b1,
 - 2. School nickname, school logo, school name and/or player name within the body and/or on the shoulders,
 - 3. A 1 inch stripe that follows the curve of the raglan sleeve or following the shoulder seam in traditional yoke construction; or as decorative stripe(s) added in the shoulder/sleeve area after production, not to exceed 1 inch per stripe and total size of combined stripes not to exceed 3.5 inches,

4. Within the collar, a maximum of 1 inch in width, and/or
 5. As a side seam (insert connecting the back of the jersey to the front), a maximum of 4 inches in width but any non-white color may not appear within the body of the jersey, except in (3) above.
- ii. Home Team: Dark color that clearly contrasts with white and if white appears in the body of the jersey it may only appear as:
1. Jersey numbers as in 1-4-b1,
 2. School nickname, school logo, school name and/or player name within the body and/or on the shoulders,
 3. A 1 inch stripe that follows the curve of the raglan sleeve or following the shoulder seam in traditional yoke construction; or as decorative stripe(s) added in the shoulder/sleeve area after production, not to exceed 1 inch per stripe and total size of combined stripes not to exceed 3.5 inches,
 4. Within the collar, a maximum of 1 inch in width, and/or
 5. As a side seam (insert connecting the back of the jersey to the front), a maximum of 4 inches in width but any white color may not appear within the body of the jersey, except in (3) above.
- iii. Note: One American flag, not to exceed 2 inches by 3 inches, may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel. By state association approval, to allow for special occasions, commemorative or memorial patches, not to exceed 4 square inches, may be worn on the uniform without compromising its integrity.

5. Players shall wear pants or shorts, which shall not have pockets of any

type, exposed drawstrings, belts, and or/belt loops.

6. Pants/shorts shall be the same color and contrast in color with the flags.
7. Shoes: Must be soft, pliable material that covers the foot. Rubber cleats only. No metal cleats or baseball/softball cleats are allowed.

c. Flags

1. A one-piece flag belt (Triple Threat) without any knots. Flags must be secured (stitched) to the belt so they cannot move around on the belt.
2. One flag on each side and one in the center of the back (3 total.)
3. Flags shall be a minimum of 2 inches wide and 14 inches long.
4. Excess material around the waist belt shall be tucked away or removed (jersey must be tucked in).
5. Flags and clips cannot be altered, tied, or have a foreign substance on them.

d. Football

1. Must be a Youth sized ball.
2. Pebble-grained – only rubber, composite, or leather are allowed.
3. Playoffs: Wilson leather GST
4. Color: only brown footballs are considered legal.
5. The ball shall be inflated to 12.5-13.5 pounds per square inch (psi).
6. The offense may provide their own ball during the game.
7. The referee shall be the judge of the legality of any ball offered for play.

e. Additional Player Equipment

1. All players are required to wear a mouthguard.
2. Players may wear eyeglasses.
3. Players may not wear hand warmers or other equipment that goes around the waist, preventing the flag belt from being pulled.

4. Players may wear a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band that contains plays. No playbook may be worn around the waist or flag belt.
 5. Stocking caps (beanies), soft shells, and religious headwear are permissible. No other type of headgear is permitted.
 6. Headwear shall meet the following guidelines: Rubber, cloth, or elastic bands may be used to control hair. Hard items, including, but not limited to, beads, barrettes, and bobby pins, must be secured to the head so as not to pose a hazard to opposing players.
 7. Any player may use football gloves that meet the NOCSAE standard or SFIA specification at time of production and do not have an additional substance (sticky) added to them.
 8. Knee & ankle braces are permitted, but all exposed hinges must be covered.
 9. A player may not wear jewelry. Religious and medical alert medals are not considered jewelry and must be taped down and worn under the uniform.
 10. Hard casts and hard surfaced padding may not be worn unless padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½" thick.
 11. Exposed fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept at an appropriate length (short, near the end of fingers, not visible from the palm side) or covered by approved football gloves or tape.
 12. Hair shall be controlled, so it does not interfere with the flag belt.
 13. The referee shall be the judge for all equipment and/or clothing worn by a player.
- f. Coaches Equipment
1. Electronic communication devices including but not limited to audio recorder, Local Area Network (LAN) phones and/or headsets, mobile

phones, still photograph(s), film, analog or digital video(s) and/or Internet depictions, shall not be used to communicate with a player except during a timeout on the sideline. These items may be used by coaches and nonplayers.

Art. 5 – Basic Game Procedures

a. Coin Toss:

1. Each team may designate a captain to call the coin toss and up to three teammates.
2. The Referee shall ask the visiting captain to choose “heads” or “tails.”
3. The team winning the coin toss has the following options: kick, receive, the end of the field they wish to defend, or defer their option to the 2nd half.
4. The teams shall change goals between the first and second periods and between the third and fourth periods. Team possession, the number of the next down, the relative position of the ball, and the zone to gain remain unchanged.

b. Substitutions:

1. All substitutions must occur during a dead ball period.
2. A replaced player must depart within 3 seconds of the sub's arrival.

c. Ball Spotting:

1. The ball will be placed in the center of the field following each play. Hash marks are NOT used.

d. Coach conference areas:

1. Coach-referee conferences takes place when the referee confers with the Head Coach at the sideline in front of the team box in the field of play.

2. Team Conferences takes place in which one or more coaches and one or more players meet directly in front of the team box within 5 yards of the sideline during a team timeout or officials' timeout.

Section 2 – Scoring and Change of Possession

Art. 1 – Touchdown

- a. 6 points
- b. After all touchdowns, the player must go to the nearest official for a flag check. A teammate shall pull the scoring player's flag in clear view of the official.

Art. 2 – Extra Point

- a. The scoring team may attempt a 1-point or 2-point conversion following a touchdown.
 1. One point = kick attempt from the 5-yard line or a set play from the 5-yard line for 1 point.
 2. 2 points = set play, run or pass from the 10-yard line
- b. An intercepted try attempt CAN be returned for 2 points.

Art. 3 – Field Goal

- a. 3 points
- b. The defense may NOT return a blocked or recovered kick. It is a dead ball, and there is no return attempt on a short/missed field goal.
- c. If a field goal is missed, a change of possession occurs at the line of scrimmage, not where the ball was kicked from.
 - * Exception: If the snap is fumbled, the ball is placed where it first hits the ground.

Art. 4 – Change of Possession

- a. The offense has four downs to move the ball into a new Zone to Gain, End Zone or attempt a field goal. Failure to do so results in a turnover on downs, and the opponent takes possession of the ball at that spot.
- b. Following an Extra Point or Field Goal attempt, possession of the ball will change. (For the exception, see *Keep the Ball rule* in Section 6, Art. 1)
- c. After a score, the possession begins at the offense's 30-yard line. There are

no kickoffs after a score.

Art. 5 - Safety

- a. Two points are awarded to the defense if the offense is stopped in their endzone.
- b. Following a safety, a punt shall occur from the 20-yard line.

Section 3 – Offense

Art. 1 – First Down

- a. The offense has four downs to advance the ball into the next Zone-to-Gain.
- b. The four Zone-to-Gains are marked at each 20 and 40-yard line.
- c. If the offense loses yardage, causing them to cross back into a different Zone-to-Gain, the Down does not reset to first.

Example: 3rd and 12 from own 28. The offense loses 10 yards.

It is now 4th and 22 from own 18.

Art. 2 – Formations and General Rules

- a. All players must have a legally attached flag belt at the snap of the ball.
- b. There is no minimum number of players needed on the Line of Scrimmage.
- c. All offensive players are eligible receivers.
- d. Regular rules of shifting, motion, and procedure apply. Only one offensive player may be in motion at the snap, not moving toward the Line of scrimmage. All players must come to a full stop for at least one second before the snap.

Art. 3 – Snapping

- a. The snapper (center) may snap the ball between the legs or from the side.
 - b. The snapper may have one or both knees on the ground at the snap.
 - c. The ball must be snapped from the ground and ahead of the snapper's foot.
 - d. The ball must be snapped within 25 seconds after the ball is declared ready for play.
- b. The ball must be snapped in a quick and continuous backward motion.

Art. 4 – Quarterback/Passing

- a. The Quarterback shall be considered the first person to touch the ball from the snap.
- b. Any player who is at least 2-yards behind the line of scrimmage may receive the snap.

- c. "Under center" snaps are not permitted.
- d. Fumbled Snap: The Quarterback may attempt to pick up a snapped ball that simultaneously hits the ground and hands. If the ball goes past or hits the ground without being in possession of the ball, the official shall blow the play dead, and the result is a loss of down, with the ball spotted where it first hit the ground behind the line of scrimmage.
- e. There are no restrictions on Quarterback run attempts.
- f. The offense may not throw more than one forward pass per play. Any forward pass must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage.
- g. The offense may throw an unlimited number of backward passes during any play.
- h. It is legal to throw a pass incomplete if an eligible player is in the area OR the pass reaches the line of scrimmage.

Exception: It is legal for a player to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.

Art. 5 – Running with the Ball

- 1. The ball carrier must avoid contact with defenders.
- b. The ball carrier cannot steer blockers into the path of a defender.
- c. It is illegal to hurdle a standing or kneeling player. Hurdling is only allowable if a player is lying on the ground, and not hurdling would result in stepping on the player.
- d. Diving to catch the ball or diving while possessing the ball is legal so long as it does not result in the offensive player initiating contact with a defensive player.
- e. Spearing: It is illegal to run with your head down and make contact with an opponent.
- f. It is illegal to block, swat, grab your flag, use the ball to block the flag, or lower

your shoulder to place the arm over the flag to prevent its removal. This is referred to as *flag guarding*.

- g. It is legal to spin, juke, or jump cut. If the ball carrier's move initiates contact against the defender, a penalty will be called on the offense. The penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul.
- h. A runner is considered down, and the play over, when any body part other than hands or feet touches the ground while in possession of the ball.
- i. It is illegal for any offensive player to remove their own belt once a play has started.
- j. If a ball is fumbled into the opponent's endzone, it will result in a touchback and possession to the opposing team.
- k. Anytime a backward pass or fumble hits the ground, it will result in a dead ball.
 - 1. A fumble or backward pass cannot be recovered and is marked down where the ball first hits the ground. If the dead ball spot is in advance of the spot of a fumble, the ball will be returned to the spot where the player lost possession.
 - 2. A backward pass or fumble can be caught out of mid-air by the defensive team and advanced.

Art. 6 – Receiving

- a. Any offensive player may receive a pass, including the center.
- b. To catch a ball means that a player:
 - a. Secures firm control with hand(s) or arm(s) of a live-ball in flight before the ball touches the ground, and
 - b. Touches the ground inbounds with any part of the body, and then
 - c. Maintains control of the ball long enough to enable that player to perform an act common to the game, i.e., long enough to pitch or hand the ball, advance it, avoid an opponent, etc., and satisfies

paragraph c below.

- c. If a player goes to the ground in the act of catching a pass the player must maintain complete and continuous control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground, whether in the field of play or in the end zone. This is also required for a player attempting to make a catch at the sideline and going to the ground out-of-bounds. If the player loses control of the ball which then touches the ground before they regain control, it is not a catch. If the player regains control inbounds prior to the ball touching the ground it is a catch.
- d. A simultaneous catch or recovery, in which there is joint possession by opposing players, belongs to the team currently in team possession of the ball.

Art. 7 - Blocking

- a. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact.
 - 1. The screen blocker shall not extend arms when screen blocking.
 - 2. Using the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.
 - 3. A player must be on their feet before, during, and after screen blocking.
- b. Screen Blocking Fundamentals – A player who screens shall NOT:
 - 1. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
 - 2. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
 - 3. Take a position so close to the opponent that the opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.
 - 4. After assuming legal screening position, move to maintain the position unless the player moves in the same direction and path as the

opponent.

- c. Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere by screen blocking but shall NOT use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another.

Section 4 – Defense

Art. 1 – Formations and General Rules

- a. All defensive players must have a legally attached flag belt at the snap.
- b. All defensive players must start at least one yard behind the Defensive line of scrimmage. The whole body (foot, hands, head) must be completely behind the field marker or Defensive LOS at the snap of the ball.
- c. There are no restrictions on defensive formations.

Art. 2 – Rushing/Blitzing/Contact

- a. There are no restrictions on rushing the QB. Any defensive player may rush, and there is no maximum number of players who may rush at one time.
- b. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block.
- c. If a screen blocker is moving backward, the defender must go around the block, even if the blocker has not set feet and stopped moving.
- d. Defensive players may NOT use their arms and hands as a wedge to move the opponent.
- e. In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, an opponent may contact the body, but not the face, neck, or any part of the head of the runner with their hands.
- f. An opponent may NOT hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.

Art. 3 – Flag Removal

a. Flag Removal:

1. The Flag is considered "removed" and the play is dead in the following situations:
 - a. When the coupling of the belt is detached.
 - b. If a belt comes off a ball carrier during a down, the play is ruled dead at that spot. If a belt inadvertently comes off a non-ball carrier during a down, the play shall be ruled dead once that

player possesses the ball.

c. If a flag is torn off a flag belt.

2. The defender may NOT strip the ball from the carrier.
3. The defender may NOT bump the ball carrier out of bounds.
4. A player may NOT intentionally remove an opponent's flag belt prior to that player touching the ball. A defender may pull the flag of a receiver who has touched the ball, but not yet gained possession.
5. Upon removing the ball carrier's flag, the defender must either hold the flag up, give it to the offensive player, or drop the flag where they stand. It is illegal to throw the flag belt.

Art. 4 – Pass Defense

- a. Receivers are allowed a free release from the line of scrimmage. No Bump and Run coverage.
- b. Defenders are NOT allowed to play through the receiver to make a play on the ball.
- c. A defender can intercept a pass, fumble, or backward pass and advance the ball.
 1. Momentum Rule – When a defensive player intercepts her opponent's forward pass, fumble, backward pass, or catches a kick between her 5-yard line and the goal line, if her original momentum carries her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in her team's possession behind the goal line, the ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where possession was gained.
- d. It is illegal for a defender to purposely try to remove an offensive player's flag well before their opponent is in possession of the ball. This is unsportsmanlike conduct, and the offensive player may still catch the ball and require a tag to be considered down.
- e. Incidental contact between the receiver and the defender may occur. Players

shall not “gain an advantage” through contact.

Section 5 – Special Teams/Kicking

Art. 1 – Kickoff

- a. A kickoff will ONLY begin each half.
 1. Kickoffs begin from kicking team's 40-yard line and must be kicked off a tee.
 2. The kicking team's defenders shall not cross the line of scrimmage before the ball is kicked.
 3. Receiving team may place returners anywhere 10 yards beyond the line of scrimmage.
- b. A "fair catch" can be called anywhere on the field while the ball is in the air. This results in the ball being placed at the 30. The ball does not have to be caught.
- c. If the ball is kicked out of bounds, the receiving team shall take possession at their own 35-yard line or where the ball went out of bounds plus 5 yards.
- d. Touchback: Any kickoff that crosses the goal line is an automatic touchback at the 30.
- e. Downed ball: If the ball is not touched by receiving team, even if the kicking team touches it first, the ball is considered dead and possession goes to the receiving team.
- f. Live ball: The receiving team may pick up a ball that hits the ground first or is muffed by a receiving player. The referee will blow the play dead if the kicking team is closing in on a loose ball.
- g. Encroachment: Encroachment on a kickoff is a live ball foul. Any encroachment by the kicking team will result in either a re-kick from 5 yards back or an additional 5 yards added to the end of the receiving team's return.
- h. Non-ball carriers may run upfield behind the ball carrier in order to receive a backward pass.

Art. 2 – Punt

- a. All punts are declared. On 4th down, the Referee will ask the offense if they are choosing to punt or run a play from scrimmage. If the offense declares a punt, the referee will inform the defense.
- b. There are no fake punts. Once declared, the ball must be punted unless the offense takes a time out or the period ends.
- c. No rush is allowed toward the punter. Punting team players may only cross the line of scrimmage once the ball is kicked.
- d. The punter must receive the snap from at least 2 yards behind the center.
- e. The punter has approximately 4 seconds to kick the ball once it is snapped.
 1. If the punter mishandles the ball, but can still get the punt off within 4 seconds, it shall be considered legal.
 2. If the kicker cannot kick within 4 seconds, the play is dead and considered a loss of down. Possession goes to the receiving team where the ball first hits behind the line of scrimmage or where the punter stands if holding the ball when the 4 seconds expire and the referee blows the whistle.
- f. The defense can place players anywhere one yard beyond the line of scrimmage. However, they are not required to have anyone directly in front of the line of scrimmage.
- g. Any blocked punt that hits the ground is dead and belongs to the receiving team at the spot where the ball hits the ground.
- h. A ball punted out of bounds is placed nearest the yard line where it first crosses out of bounds, not where it lands.
- i. There is NO fair catch for a punt. If the receiving team does not attempt to catch the ball or pick it up, the referee will blow the play dead. When the whistle is blown, the ball is spotted where the ball lies or where the kicking team touches it.
- j. Rules from Section 5, Art. 1 – d, e, f, g, h also apply to punting. These cover

touchback, downed ball, live ball, encroachment, and backward passes.

Art. 3 – Field Goal and Extra Point Kick

- a. There are no fake kick attempts. All Field Goals are declared.
- b. The ball must be snapped to a placeholder, and the placeholder may receive the snap anywhere at least 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- c. The defense may NOT rush the kicker. They may attempt to jump up (not forward) and block the kick at the line of scrimmage.
- d. The kicker has approximately four seconds to kick the ball once it is snapped.
 1. If the snap is mishandled, but the kicker can still kick the ball within 4 seconds, the kick shall be considered legal.
 2. If the kicker cannot kick the ball within 4 seconds, the attempt shall be considered “no good,” and thus, no points will be awarded.
- e. Kickers may use up to a 2-inch block with a placeholder. A placeholder must be kneeling (one or both knees on the ground) before the ball is snapped.
- f. An unsuccessful field goal will belong to the defense at the previous spot. An unsuccessful extra-point kick will be dead once it is clear that the kick will not be successful.

Section 6 – Miscellaneous Rules

Art. 1 – Onside Kick/Keep the Ball

- a. *Keep the Ball* refers to a decision by a scoring team to keep the ball rather than give back possession. This option only applies in the second half to a team trailing in score.
- b. The offense will take possession on their own 25-yard line. The down shall be 4th & 15.
- c. If the offense changes its decision without taking a timeout, a 5-yard delay of game penalty will be assessed, and the opponent will take over on their own 35-yard line.

Art. 2 – Overtime

- a. A coin toss will begin the first overtime. The team winning the coin toss shall be given the choice of offense or defense first or designating the end of the field at which the ball will be put into play, and the team losing the coin toss may choose the remaining option.
- b. Possession begins on the opposing 10-yard line at 1st & Goal. Each team has one set of downs to score.
- c. The same end of the field shall be used by both teams during the two sets of downs to ensure equal game conditions.
- d. The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime shall be declared the winner.
- e. If the score remains tied after each team has been given one series of downs in an overtime period, then the procedure shall be repeated with other overtime periods until a game winner is determined. In this case, there shall be an intermission of two minutes. At the subsequent meeting of team captains, the loser of the first overtime coin toss will be given first choice of the options. If additional overtime periods are required, then first options will be alternated with no additional coin toss.

- f. Interceptions can be returned for a touchdown. If the defensive team scores a touchdown or safety, the game is ended. If an interception does not result in a score, the next possession begins at the 10 yard line.
- g. Each team is allotted one time-out per overtime period. These do not carry over.
- h. The line to gain is always the goal line regardless of whether or not a penalty enforcement places the ball more than 10 yards from the goal line to start a new series.

Art. 3 – Mercy Rule

- a. The clock will continue to run once a team is ahead by at least 28 points, except during time-outs, at the end of a quarter, and during an injury time-out.

Art. 4 – Sideline Management

- a. Team boxes will be positioned between the 25-yard lines.
- b. A non-player shall not be outside the team box unless to become a player or to return as a replaced player. No player, nonplayer, or coach shall be in the restricted area (within two yards of the field) when the ball is live.

Section 7 – Penalties

Art. 1 – Loss of 5 Yards

- a) Delay of Game.
- b) Encroachment.
- c) Failure to wear required player equipment, including a flag belt at the snap.
- d) False Start.
- e) Helping the runner.
- f) Illegal Formation (including QB under center).
- g) Illegal Forward Handoff.
- h) Illegal Forward Pass (also loss of down).
- i) Intentional Grounding (also loss of down).
- j) Illegal Procedure (including running a play after declaring a punt).
- k) Illegal Shift or Illegal Motion.
- l) Illegal Substitution.
- m) Rushing the kicker.
- n) Too many players on the field.

Art. 2 – Loss of 10 Yards

- a) Block in the back.
- b) Defensive holding.
- c) Illegal contact.
- d) Defensive holding of the player in order to remove the flag.
- e) Flag guarding.
- f) Illegal blocking.
- g) Illegal flag belt removal.
- h) Illegal hurdling.
- i) Offensive holding.
- j) Stripping the ball.

Art. 3 – Loss of 15 Yards

- a) Pass Interference (automatic first down if by the defense).
- b) Roughing the passer (automatic first down).
- c) Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
- d) Personal foul.
- e) Unintentional contact with an official in the restricted area while the ball is live.
- f) Kick/Punt catch interference.
- g) Throwing a flag belt after deflating the runner in a taunting manner.
- h) Illegally secured flag belt (loss of down for offense).

Art. 4 – Disqualification in addition to Loss of 15 Yards

- a) Fighting: Any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage a player or nonplayer in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.
- b) Flagrant Foul: A foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury, and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.
- c) Intentional contact with a game official.
- d) A second unsportsmanlike penalty by the same player or nonplayer.
- e) Substitute leaving the team box during a fight.

Section 8 Enforcement of Penalties

Art. 1 Procedure After A Foul

- a. When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both teams. He shall inform the designated representative of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. In case of a double foul, the designated representative is not consulted since the penalties offset. The choice of options may not be revoked. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted either team.
- b. When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free kick or snap, the covering official shall not permit the ball to become alive. The referee shall notify both teams, and the designated representative of the offended team will be presented with the options and the effect of acceptance or declination on the down and distance to be gained. The designated representative may accept or decline the penalty.
- c. 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.
- d. When the same team commits a live-ball foul followed by one or more dead-ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.
- e. Enforcement of a penalty cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the prescribed penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the spot of enforcement to the goal line.

Art. 2 Double and Multiple Fouls

- a. It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, during the same live-ball period in which:
 1. There is no change of team possession, unless all fouls committed by R are post-scrimmage kick fouls; or
 2. There is a change of team possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession unless all fouls committed by R are post-scrimmage kick fouls; or
 3. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul at any time during the down.
 4. In (1), (2) or (3), the penalties cancel and the down is replayed.
- b. If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession and the play does not have a post-scrimmage kick foul, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided:
 1. The foul by the team last gaining possession is not prior to the final change of possession, and
 2. The team last gaining possession declines the penalty for its opponent's foul(s), other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In this case, the team that was not last in possession has no penalty options until the team last in possession has made its penalty decision

on the fouls prior to the change of possession. After that decision by the team last in possession, the team not last in possession may decline or accept the penalty for the foul by the team last in possession or choose which penalty to have enforced in the case that the team last in possession committed more than one foul following the change.

- c. If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession and all R fouls are post-scrimmage kick fouls, then R may retain the ball, provided R declines the penalty for K's foul(s), other than a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul. In this case, K has no penalty options until R has made its penalty decision. After that decision by R, K may decline or accept the penalty for the foul by R or choose which penalty to have enforced in the case that R committed more than one foul following the change.
- d. When two or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team (multiple fouls), only one penalty may be enforced. The designated representative of the offended team may choose which one shall be administered, or all penalties may be declined. When a team commits a nonplayer or unsportsmanlike foul during that same down, it is administered from the succeeding spot as established by the acceptance or declination of the penalty for the other foul.
- e. Enforcement of penalties for unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or deadball fouls:
 - 1. Penalties for dead-ball fouls, other than when both teams commit unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls prior to the completion of penalty administration for those fouls, are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. A dead-ball foul is not coupled with a live-ball foul or another dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.
 - 2. If both teams commit unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball

personal fouls prior to the completion of penalty administration for those fouls, the distance penalty for an equal number of 15-yard unsportsmanlike, nonplayer or dead-ball personal fouls will offset. Any remaining penalties will be enforced separately and in the order of occurrence.

3. A disqualified player or nonplayer shall be removed.
- f. A foul during a try is not paired with a dead-ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

Art. 3 Types of Play

- a. A loose-ball play is action during:
 1. A free kick or scrimmage kick.
 2. A legal forward pass.
 3. A backward pass (including the snap), illegal kick or fumble made by A from in or behind the neutral zone and prior to a change of team possession.
 4. NOTE: The run(s) which precedes such legal or illegal kick, legal forward pass, backward pass or fumble is (are) considered part of the action during a loose-ball play.
- b. A running play is any action not included under 8-3a.
- c. The end of the run is:
 1. Where the ball becomes dead in the runner's possession.
 2. Where the runner loses possession if the run is followed by a loose ball.
 3. The spot of the catch or recovery when the momentum rule is in effect.

Art. 4 Basic Spots

- a. If a foul occurs during a down, the basic spot is determined by the action that occurs during the down. This is the basic spot for penalty enforcement.

- b. The basic spot is the previous spot:
 - 1. For a foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick.
 - 2. For a foul which occurs during a loose ball play, as defined in 8-3a. See 9-e for special enforcement on roughing the passer.
 - 3. For a foul which occurs during a down in which a legal kick occurs and an inadvertent whistle ends the down prior to possession by either team.
 - 4. For any foul by A when enforcement would otherwise be from behind the previous spot.
 - 5. For any foul by B when the end of the related run is behind the previous spot.
 - 6. EXCEPTION: The basic spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the succeeding spot for fouls by K during a legal free or scrimmage kick down (other than kick catch interference) prior to the end of the kick when K will not be next to put the ball in play.
- c. The basic spot is the spot where the kick ends when R commits a post-scrimmage kick foul. R fouls behind the post-scrimmage kick spot are spot fouls.
- d. The basic spot is the spot where the related run ends for a foul which occurs during a running play as defined in 8-3b.
- e. The basic spot is the succeeding spot:
 - 1. For an unsportsmanlike foul.
 - 2. For a dead-ball foul.
 - 3. For a nonplayer foul.
 - 4. When the final result is a touchback.
 - 5. The succeeding spot may, at the option of the offended team, be the subsequent spot for: fouls by the nonscoring team during a touchdown (following the last change of possession), unsportsmanlike

conduct or non player fouls by either team during a down in which a touchdown is scored, fouls after a touchdown but prior to the ready for play, on a successful field goal, or on a successful try.

- f. The basic spot is the 30-yard line for fouls by either team when the opponent of the team in possession at the time of the foul is responsible for forcing the ball across the goal line of the team in possession and the related run ends in the end zone.
- g. The basic spot is the goal line for fouls, which are committed during running plays by the opponent of the team in possession at the time of the foul when the team in possession is responsible for forcing the ball across its own goal line, and the related run ends in the end zone.

SECTION 9 SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT RULES

- a. The following fouls have special enforcement provisions and options for the offended team:
 - 1. Free kick out of bounds untouched by R. (5-1c)
 - 2. Unfair acts.
 - 3. A foul by the opponent of the scoring team on a successful try. (8-4-e5)
 - 4. A foul by the opponents of the scoring team on a successful field goal. (8-4-e5)
 - 5. Fouls that occur during or after a touchdown scoring play. (8-4-e5)
 - 6. Roughing the passer. (9f)
- b. The enforcement spot for any foul by the defense is the goal line when the run ends in the end zone and would result in a safety.
- c. The score is nullified if the penalty is accepted for a foul, other than nonplayer or unsportsmanlike, by A which occurs during a down resulting in a successful try, field goal or touchdown.
- d. If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement

is from on or behind its goal line, it is a safety.

- e. The enforcement spot is the dead ball spot for roughing the passer when the dead ball spot is beyond the neutral zone and there has been no change of team possession.
- f. A disqualified player shall be removed.

SECTION 10 ENFORCEMENT SPOTS, ALL-BUT-ONE PRINCIPLE

Unless otherwise listed in Sections 8 and 9, a penalty for a foul occurring during a play is enforced from the basic spot with the exception of: a foul by the offense which occurs behind the basic spot during a loose ball play or running play. This particular foul is enforced from the spot of the foul.