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1 / RULES

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice to start on offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. The team that begins on offense to start the game will begin on defense to start the second half.
3. The team preparing to go on offense, whether at the start of the 1st or 2nd half of the game or after a score by the opposing team, will start with the ball on their own 15 yard line.
4. With the start of each play, the offense must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage and 3 players off the line of scrimmage. The defense must line up at least one yard off the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
5. All offensive players can run the ball and are eligible receivers. No player on the line of scrimmage may receive the snap. Only one forward pass per down.
6. The ball may be run, passed forward, laterally, or backward. Running plays must be outside the tackles (tackle box) prior to reaching the line of scrimmage, unless the ball is physically taken outside the tackle box by means of a run or pass behind the line of scrimmage and then brought back inside the tackle box. Once the ball carrier comes back inside the tackle box, it is now considered open and the run can take place inside the tackle box. Outside the tackle box is defined as 5 feet on either side of the center. Any running play that takes place inside the tackle box or does not go outside the tackle box before coming back into the tackle box prior to reaching the line of scrimmage will result in an offensive penalty. Once past the line of scrimmage the ball may not be passed forward, however it can be passed laterally or backward. A team has four downs to get a first down (15 yards).
7. All offensive plays within 5 yards or less of the opponent's goal line must be a passing play. No running plays within 5 yards or less of the opponent's goal line.
8. No defensive player can line up over the center and no blitzes over the center are allowed. The center must be allowed to raise head (blocking position) after the snap and before any contact. Only one defensive player can rush the quarterback beyond the line of scrimmage and that one player must line up at least 10 yards from the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped to start the play.
9. A physical block is not permitted at the line of scrimmage. Arms must be across the chest with elbows in. Blocking beyond the line of scrimmage is not permitted at any time and at no time are offensive players permitted to leave their feet or raise their hands above waist level in an attempt to block an opponent. Players on the line of scrimmage that do not go beyond the line of scrimmage must maintain a position with arms across chest and cannot seek to initiate contact with any defensive player.
 - a. No use of the hands (open or closed fists) with open palms towards the defensive player to hold, contact, hit, punch, sting, or grab at the opponent's body (arms should not be extended).
 - b. No contact above shoulders or below waist.
 - c. No "lead blocking" – running into or extending arms causing a collision or attempting to make contact with a defender. No "Screen type blocking" is allowed beyond the line of scrimmage.

d. Once the ball is advanced by an offensive player beyond the line of scrimmage, no other offensive player can interfere in the play either by blocking or running along side the ball carrier to serve as a screen.

10. If the offense fails to obtain a first down, the offensive team can transfer possession to the defensive team by announcing this decision to the referees and the opposing team and advancing the ball 30 yards from the line of scrimmage at which point the opposing team takes possession on offense. In any case in which the 30 yards would place the ball inside the 10 yard line, the receiving team would start on offense on their own 10 yard line.

2 / EQUIPMENT

1. Each team must provide its players with an official flag belt, flags and team jersey. Flags cannot be the same color as shorts or pants. The standard size is 2" in width and 16.5 inches in length. Flags may not be wrapped around the belt or in any way attached to except in the normal matter (Velcro). Teams will use TDJ footballs for 7/8 grade games and K2 footballs for 5/6 grade games provided by the hosting school. Soft foam helmets are optional.

2. Players must wear shoes. Cleats may not be allowed at certain locations. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.

3. Players must wear mouth pieces during practices and games. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads.

4. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.

5. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.

6. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.

3 / FIELD

1. The field dimensions are 80 yards (240') by 43 1/3 yards (130') wide consisting of 10 yard end zones. Midfield will be at the 30 yard line. Optional field dimensions may be 70 yards in length consisting of 10 yard end zones with midfield at the 25 yard line based on availability of hosting locations.

2. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

4 / ROSTERS

1. Teams must consist of at least six players with a maximum of eight players on the field.

2. Teams may start games with a minimum of six players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with five players on the field but no fewer than five.
3. Each team may have one coach on the field while on offense or defense.
4. Players in 6th grade are allowed to “play up” on a 7th/8th grade team if your parish is sponsoring a team or is part of a merged team. This must be approved by your Parish Pastor. This only applies to players in 6th grade (no 4th graders can “play up” on 5th/6th), further, they may not play on more than one team. It will not be permitted for a player to play at their current grade level AND ALSO “play up” a level.

5 / TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock with two 20 minute halves. Clock stops for timeouts or injuries. Clock will also stop after each extra point attempt and will not resume until the ensuing offensive snap after the extra point attempt. Referee will spot the ball on the 15 yard line after a touchdown and the offense will have 30 seconds to snap the ball.
2. Halftime is two minutes.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. Each team has two 60-second timeouts per half with no carryover of unused timeouts to the 2nd half. Only the on-field coach can call a timeout. Game clock will resume on the snap of the ensuing play.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play and both teams are lined up ready to restart the play.
7. In playoff games only, if the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner

Overtime format is as follows:

- a. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - i. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - ii. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
- b. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense’s 5-yard line for one point or the defense’s 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.

- i. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
 - ii. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
- c. Both teams must “go for two” from the 10-yard line starting with the third round of overtime.
- d. The final points earned by the winning team in the final overtime will be added onto the winning team’s total score. The losing team will not receive any additional points.
 - i. Example: End of regulation time, score is 14-14. Team A scores one point and Team B score two points. Team B wins with a final score of 16-14. Points are only added to total score from final round of overtime.
- e. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- f. There are no timeouts.

6 / SCORING

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line).
 - a. Note: 1 point PAT is pass only; 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
 - b. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
3. Safety: 2 points
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground or if a snapped ball lands beyond the end zone.
5. Forfeits are scored 28-0 for the winning team.

7 / COACHES

1. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and division. Upon the snap, coaches must be behind the deepest offensive and defensive players and out of the action. Coaches can

assist in the alignment of their team to facilitate a fast-paced game but may not provide extra instruction or make audibles to play calls once the huddle is broken.

8 / LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the line of scrimmage and the 10-yard “Bandit”/“Blitzer” line.
 - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone.
3. In regards to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
4. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
5. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
6. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
7. Any official can whistle the play dead.
8. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground
 - i. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball can be picked up by the quarterback only and play continues. In this instance, the “Bandit”/“Blitzer” is still the only defensive player allowed beyond the line of scrimmage. If touched by the “Bandit”/“Blitzer” or any other offensive player, the play is dead at the spot the ball is touched. In any other fumble scenario, the play is dead and the ball is placed where it hits the ground.
 - b. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled
 - c. The ball-carrier steps out of bound
 - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is score
 - e. Any part of the body other than feet or hands touches the ground
 - f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out
 - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s)
 - h. The 7 second pass clock expires
 - i. Inadvertent whistle

9. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:

- a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
- b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

9. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

9 / RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot. A player cannot score a touchdown by reaching the ball across the goal line if the player's feet are not across the goal line prior to their flag being pulled. Both feet must also be across the goal line.

2. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.

- a. "Center sneak" play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.

3. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

4. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush. The ball must completely leave the original ball carrier's hands before any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage with the exception of the Bandit/Blitzer.

5. Running plays must be outside the tackle box (tackle box) prior to reaching the line of scrimmage, unless the ball is physically taken outside the tackle box by means of a run or pass behind the line of scrimmage and then brought back inside the tackle box. Once the ball carrier comes back inside the tackle box, it is now considered open and the run can take place inside the tackle box. Outside the tackle box is defined as 5 feet on either side of the center. Any running play that takes place inside the tackle box or does not go outside the tackle box before coming back into the tackle box prior to reaching the line of scrimmage will result in an offensive penalty.

6. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.

7. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.

8. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.

9. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding. Ball carriers must run with elbows at a 90 degree angle. Running with arms straight down or swinging by their side may result in a flag guarding call at the referees discretion.

10 / PASSING

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received either behind or beyond the line scrimmage, but throws made inside the tackle box must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage.

a. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.

a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

b. Officials count off the 7-second rule as they would visually signaling a 3-second call in basketball with the final 3 seconds counted off verbally so the quarterback can hear it.

11 / RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).

2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.

3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

5. Interceptions change possession at the point of the interceptions and are returnable.

6. The play is blown dead immediately if an interception is made on an extra-point try. There are no returns on that play.

12 / RUSHING THE PASSER

1. Only one player can rush the quarterback beyond the line of scrimmage and that one player (“Bandit”/“Blitzer”) must line up at least 10 yards or more from the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped to start the play. The referee will designate a rush line 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. If the “Bandit”/“Blitzer” starts towards the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped, she must return to the initial 10-yard spot before rushing the quarterback unless the ball is handed off before the “Bandit”/“Blitzer” passes the line of scrimmage.
2. No other defender can cross the line of scrimmage other than the “Bandit”/“Blitzer” and rush the quarterback until the ball leaves the quarterback’s hand. Even in the case of a fumbled snap by the quarterback, the “Bandit”/“Blitzer” is the only defensive player allowed beyond the line of scrimmage. An infraction will result in a penalty.
3. Once the ball is handed off or passed to another offensive player (possession of ball transferred) then the remaining defense may rush or pursue to the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. Defensive players must be one yard off the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
4. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
5. Teams are required to identify their rusher (“Bandit”/“Blitzer”) to the defensive backfield official before each play.
6. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
7. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
 - a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

13 / FLAG PULLING

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. Excessive contact by a defensive player while attempting to pull the ball-carrier’s flag may result in a penalty at the discretion of the referees.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier’s possession at any time.
4. If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender’s access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football

jersey. Both of the ball-carrier's elbows must be kept at a 90 degree bent angle while in possession of the ball to avoid a flag guarding call.

14 / FORMATIONS

1. Offenses must have five players on the line of scrimmage and three players off the line of scrimmage.

a. Players off the line of scrimmage may consist of:

i. Quarterback, 2 Running Backs

ii. Quarterback, 2 Receivers

iii. Quarterback, 1 Running Back and 1 Receiver

b. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.

EXAMPLE: An offensive player lined up on the line of scrimmage can never go in motion. A player in motion must start from a running back or receiver position to adhere to the rule.

c. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.

2. Movement by a player who is set (on the line of scrimmage) or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.

3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave her hands.

15 / UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.

4. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:

a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.

- b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
- C. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

USA FOOTBALL RECOMMENDATION: AT THE JUNIOR LEVEL, MOVE ANY PLAYER WHO COMMITS AN UNSPORTSMANLIKE OR DANGEROUS ACT FROM THE FIELD TO RECEIVE INSTRUCTION FROM A COACH AND A COOLING OFF PERIOD. OFFICIALS CAN EJECT THE PLAYER AT THEIR DISCRETION IF THERE IS CONTINUED INFRACTIONS THAT ARE DEEMED INTENTIONAL.

7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:

- a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field.
- b. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.

8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:

- a. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- b. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

16 / PENALTIES

General

1. The officials will call all penalties.
2. Game officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
4. Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
5. Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference - Automatic first down with the ball marked at the spot of the foul. End zone fouls are spotted at the 1 yard line.

Holding - Automatic first down with the ball marked at the spot of the foul. End zone fouls are spotted at the 1 yard line.

Stripping - 10 yards and automatic first down.

Tackling – 10 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down.

Offensive spot fouls

Downfield blocking - 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and loss of down unless past the first down marker after marking off the 10 yard penalty.

Charging - 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and loss of down unless past the first down marker after marking off the 10 yard penalty.

Flag guarding - 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul and loss of down unless past the first down marker after marking off the 10 yard penalty.

Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness - 10 yards and automatic first down

Defensive Unsportsmanlike conduct - 10 yards and automatic first down

Offside - 5 yards from line of scrimmage

Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 10-yard marker) - 5 yards from line of scrimmage

Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball) - 5 yards from line of scrimmage

Roughing the passer - 5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

Taunting - 5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness - 10 yards and loss of down

Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct - 10 yards and loss of down

Running play inside the tackles (tackle box) prior to reaching the line of scrimmage or before taking the ball outside the tackle box before coming back into the tackle box – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage

Running play within 5 yards or less of the opponent's goal line – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage

Offside / false start - 5 yards from line of scrimmage

Illegal forward pass - 5 yards from line of scrimmage

Offensive pass interference - 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Illegal motion (More than one person moving) - 5 yards from line of scrimmage

Delay of game - 5 yards from line of scrimmage

Other penalties

Pushing opposing player without going for a flag - 10 yards from the spot of the foul.

More than 8 players on the field - loss of 5 yards.

More than 1 coach on the field - first offense a warning and then loss of 5 yards.

17 / TERMINOLOGY

BOUNDARY LINES - The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS) - an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.

LINE-TO-GAIN - The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.

OFFENSE - The team with possession of the ball.

DEFENSE - The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.

PASSER - The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.

RUSHER/BLITZER/BANDIT - The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.

DOWNS (1-2-3-4) - The offensive team has four attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.

LIVE BALL - Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

DEAD BALL - Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.

WHISTLE - Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.

INADVERTENT WHISTLE - Official's whistle that is performed in error.

CHARGING - An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.

FLAG GUARDING - An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm. Both elbows of the ball-carrier must be kept at a 90 degree angle while in possession of the ball.

SHOVEL PASS - A legal pitch attempted beyond the line of scrimmage.

LATERAL - A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT - A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS/ISSUES REGARDING RULES, CONTACT:

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