



NYGFL Rule Book (Updated 2025)

RULE 1: THE GAME, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

Section 1 General

- 1.1.1. In flag football, each team must begin with either 5 to 7 players but may continue with fewer players if no substitutes are available after the scheduled playing time. Each team may play with up to 7 players regardless of the number of opposing players.

Section 2 Field and Markings

- 1.2.1. When possible, the field will be rectangular with the preferred dimensions of 60 yards by 30 yards (plus two end zones of 10 yards deep), although facility limitations may cause the field dimensions to be modified. All non-players, coaches, and substitutes must remain on the sideline outside of the 10-yard line.

Section 3 Game Equipment

- 1.3.1. Teams will provide their own footballs. Either team may use their opponent's ball at any time. The Referee may authorize substituting a non-sanctioned ball. Teams may have a towel with the center or quarterback to dry the ball between plays. Any towel or other item in a player's waistband shall be deemed a "flag" for purposes of deflagging a runner.
- 1.3.2. Equipment such as beanbags and pucks may be used to indicate field of play markings such as the line of scrimmage, rush zone, and line to gain.
- 1.3.3. Each team will designate up to two players as Captains. Captains will confer with officials when necessary. If a decision is offered to a team, a Captain's first choice is final. Decisions involving penalties will be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.
- 1.3.4. Players on each team must wear numbered team jerseys and league approved shorts. The shorts worn must be a solid color. Shorts may not have belt loops or pockets. Players must not wear metal cleats.
- 1.3.5. Players must wear a belt around their waist that includes three flags, two of which hang at the player's side and one which hangs on the posterior side. The flags must contrast with the player's pants. Flags may not be looped around the inside of the belt before securing the belt. The flags shall be freely removable. Flags shall be at least 2 inches wide and 12 inches long at all times.
- 1.3.6. Players are highly encouraged to wear an intraoral mouth and tooth protector.

1.3.7. Players may wear soft pads, pliable pads, pliable elastic joint braces, and stocking caps or other caps without hard bills. Hard bill caps may only be worn backwards. Players may wear prescription or athletic safety eyeglasses. Eyeglasses or sunglasses must be plastic sport frames; otherwise large goggles must be worn over glasses.

1.3.8. Illegal equipment includes:

- a. Any pads with hard components such as those for shoulder, hand, forearm or thigh, unless specifically authorized by the Head Referee.
- b. Watches, rings, or other jewelry.

RULE 2: DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

Section 1 Team and Player Designations

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

2.1.2. A quarterback is a player who receives the ball at the snap.

2.1.3. A runner is a player who is in possession of a live ball.

2.1.4. A pass rusher is a defensive player who must start completely behind the rush indicator to crossing the line-of-scrimmage.

Section 2 Ball-Status, Catching, and Touching

2.2.1. A live ball is a ball in play while a down is in progress. A dead ball is a ball not in play and indicates that the game is between downs.

2.2.2. A loose ball is a pass, kick, or otherwise not in player possession .

2.2.3. A catch is an act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble is an interception. If a player attempts to catch or intercept a loose ball while they are in the air, the ball must be in the player's possession when they return to the ground in-bounds before touching out-of-bounds.

- a. EXCEPTIONS: If a player catches a pass and is pushed out-of-bounds, the pass is considered complete if an official judges that the player would have caught the ball in-bounds if not for the pushing.

2.2.4. A simultaneous catch is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by players in-bounds.

2.2.5. A muff is touching a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to secure possession. This includes an accidental kick.

Section 3 Blocking, Rushing, and Deflagging

- 2.3.1. Blocking is legally obstructing an opponent via contact with the hands or body. A blocker can contact only that portion of the opponent's body between the waist and shoulders and the blocker's hands or forearms must be in front or to the side of the player being blocked. This initial point of contact against an opponent must be with either open hands with palms contacting an opponent or a forearm. Players must block with hands and elbows within the frame of their body.
- a. EXCEPTIONS: a blocker who loses personal body control due to an opponent's aggressiveness after contact shall not be penalized if he contacts an opponent other than as specified.
- 2.3.2. Pass rushing is the act of crossing the line-of-scrimmage to interfere with a passing play and/or deflag the passer. When encountering a blocker from the offense, a pass rusher must (a) avoid contact with the blocker or (b) clearly change direction to move around the blocker. If a pass rusher tries to move around the blocker and the blocker moves into the path of the pass rusher, there is no charging. Any legal defensive player is eligible to pass rush.
- 2.3.3. Deflagging is intentionally removing the runner's flags. Flag-guarding is when the runner intentionally slaps or obstructs the free action of an opponent's hand during a deflagging attempt.

Section 4 Shift

- 2.4.1. A shift is the action of offensive player(s) who, after a huddle or after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

Section 5 Down and Series

- 2.5.1. A down is a unit of the game which starts with a legal snap or kick after the ball is declared ready-for-play and which ends when the ball becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.
- 2.5.2. The line-to-gain is the yard line established when a new series (1st down) occurs. Unless there is a penalty, the line-to-gain for a new series is 10 yards in advance of the ball when played for the first down of the series. If the line-to-gain extends into the end zone, the goal line is the line-to-gain.

Section 6 Out-of-Bounds

- 2.6.1. A ball in player possession is out-of-bounds when the runner of the ball touches anything, other than another player or game official, which is on or outside the sidelines or end line. It is considered a legal catch if, after the ball is caught while the receiver was in the air, the first foot of the receiver to touch the ground is in-bounds

a. EXCEPTION: The cones marking the sideline, goal line, and backline are considered in-bounds.

2.6.2. The offense starts a down behind the line-of-scrimmage and the defense starts a down beyond the line-of-scrimmage. The rush line extends five yards past the line-of-scrimmage on the B-team's side of the ball.

Section 7 Kicks

2.8.1. Kicking the ball means intentionally striking the ball with the knee, lower leg, or foot. A kick ends when a player gains possession of when the ball becomes dead.

2.8.2. A scrimmage kick is a punt from, at, or behind the kicker's line-of-scrimmage. For announced punts, a scrimmage kick formation must be used – consisting of a formation where all the teammates of the kicker, except the kicker, must be within 1 yard of the line-of-scrimmage. The kicker must be 5 yards behind the line-of-scrimmage when they receive the snap and must attempt to kick the ball within 5 seconds from nearby the set position. An announced punt also requires that the receiving team have four players within 1 yard beyond their line-of-scrimmage until after the ball is kicked. No receiver may cross or move off the line-of-scrimmage until after the ball is kicked.

Section 8 Advancing the Ball

2.8.1. The ball may be advanced by a scrimmage running play or a scrimmage passing play.

2.8.2. Only one scrimmage running play may be used during each possession. A scrimmage running play does not include a legal forward pass.

a. NOTE: Point after conversions are considered a separate series, so a scrimmage running play is allowed for Try-For-Point plays.

Section 9 Snap

2.9.1. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the hand(s) during which the ball leaves the hand(s) of the snapper and touches the quarterback before it touches the ground.

Section 10 Handing the Ball

2.10.1. Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without passing.

Section 11 Passing the Ball

2.11.1. Passing the ball is throwing it. The initial direction determines whether a pass is forward or backward.

- 2.11.2. A pass ends when it is caught or not caught, touches the ground, or is out-of-bounds.
- 2.11.3. A passer is a player who throws a forward pass.
- 2.11.4. A catchable forward pass is an untouched legal forward pass beyond the neutral zone where a Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch the ball. When in question, a forward pass is deemed catchable.

Section 12 Foul

- 2.12.1. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. The type of fouls are:
 - a. Player – A foul, other than unsportsmanlike, by a player in the game (hereafter referred to as a foul)
 - b. Non-player or Unsportsmanlike – A non-contact foul during the down which is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.
 - c. Double – One or more live ball fouls, other than unsportsmanlike, committed by the same team during the same down at such a time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.
 - d. Multiple – Two or more live ball fouls, other than unsportsmanlike, committed by the same team during the same down at such time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.
 - e. Dead Ball – A foul that occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before a ball is next legally snapped or free-kicked.
 - f. Simultaneous with Snap(live) – An action or game situation that becomes an infraction when the ball is snapped.
- 2.12.2. No foul causes loss of the ball. No live ball foul causes the ball to become dead.

Section 13 Spots Used in Administration

- 2.13.1. The previous spot is where the ball was last snapped.
- 2.13.2. The spot where a run ends is where the runner loses player possession.
- 2.13.3. The succeeding spot, as related to any non-player, unsportsmanlike, or dead foul, is where the ball would next be snapped if a foul had not occurred. The succeeding spot is the 10-yard line after a score unless adjusted by a foul.
- 2.13.4. The spot of a player foul is where the foul occurs. A ball carrier is down when they have their flags seized, at the spot where the flag is pulled, not the location of the ball.

Section 14 Hurdling

- 2.14.1. Hurdling is the runner jumping so that both feet leave the ground at the same time. The runner may not hurdle to prevent being deflagged. The runner may step over an opponent who is lying prone. This is a variation of flag guarding.

Section 15 Tripping

- 2.15.1. Tripping is obstructing an opponent below the knee.

Section 16 Time-Outs

- 2.16.1. Each team is allowed two charged time-outs per half. The duration of each charged time-out is 30 seconds.
- 2.16.2. An official may suspend play with an official's time-out to administer a penalty, review a misapplied rule, or manage other game-related contingencies. Official's time-outs are discretionary.

Section 17 Ready-for-Play

- 2.17.1. A ready-to-play signal is an indication by the referee that a snap may occur. It is a short blast of the whistle given after administration duties are complete, e.g administering a penalty and/or after the ball is spotted for the succeeding down. The ready-for-play signal is given during a dead ball interval. A ball may not be legally snapped until the ready-for-play is given.

Section 18 Rule

- 2.18.1. A rule is one of the groups of regulations that govern the game. A game regulation, commonly called a rule, sometimes states what a player may do, but if there is no such statement for a given act (such as faking a pass), it is assumed that they may do what is not prohibited. In like manner, a game regulation sometimes states or implies that the ball is dead or that a foul is involved. If it does not, it is assumed that the ball is alive and that no foul has occurred to affect the given situation. If a foul is mentioned, it is assumed that it is not part of double or multiple fouls unless so stated or implied.

RULE 3: PERIODS, TIME FACTORS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Section 1 Length of Periods (Halves)

- 3.1.1. The game shall be played in two periods (from now on called a "half") of 22 minutes. The clock will run continuously, except for team or official timeouts.
- 3.1.2. A game shall last only as long as the time it has been allotted. A team that does not have at least four players present to play within at the scheduled start of the game shall forfeit the game. The score of a forfeit game shall be 21-0. Ten (10) minutes before the end of the allotted time, both Teams will be warned.

- 3.1.3. During the last two minutes of each half, the clock will run continuously with the following exceptions: the clock will stop for player's time-outs, official's time-outs, penalties, first downs, scoring plays, a change of possession, incomplete passes, and when a player is deflagged out of bounds.
- 3.1.4. A half may be shortened by agreement of opposing coaches and the Head Referee.
- 3.1.5. Games interrupted because of events beyond the control of the officials shall be continued from the point of interruption unless the teams and the NYGFL board agree to otherwise. When weather conditions are construed to be hazardous, the officials are authorized to delay or suspend the game.
- 3.1.6. There may be up to a 5-minute intermission between the halves when time allows.

Section 2 Starting and Ending Each Half

- 3.2.1. Three minutes before the start of the game, the officials and team captains will meet at midfield. One team will arbitrarily be assigned heads and the other assigned tails. The Head Referee will toss a coin to determine which team is permitted a choice of options. The options are: starting on offense, starting on defense, or defending a goal. The captain who loses the toss will choose from the remaining options. The second half mirrors the first half.
- 3.2.2. The team that begins on offense will start at their 10-yard line.
 - a. If the field has been shortened, the referee may change the start to the 5-yard line.
- 3.2.3. Two minutes before the end of both halves, the clock operator will notify both teams and officials of the time remaining.
- 3.2.4. If a dead ball, unsportsmanlike conduct, or non-player foul occurs after either half ends, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot.

Section 3 Starting and Stopping the Clock

- 3.3.1. At the beginning of both halves, the clock shall start when the ball is hiked on the first play.
- 3.3.2. Each team is permitted four timeouts in the game and can use up to three per half. If a team uses no timeouts in the first half, they will have three remaining in the second half.
- 3.3.3. Time-outs will last 30 seconds; the ready-for-play signal will be given immediately after the time-out expires.
- 3.3.4. Clock starts at the ready to play whistle for the following: an official's timeout, a penalty conference.
- 3.3.5. Clock starts on the snap for the following: team timeouts, an incomplete pass (under 2 minutes in each half), out of bounds deflagging (under 2 minutes in each half), two-minute warning, touchdowns, and all change of possessions (under 2 minutes in each half).

Section 4 Ball Ready-for-Play and Delay

- 3.4.1. The ball is declared ready-for-play when, after it has been placed for a down, the referee gives the ready-for-play signal.
 - a. Note: On a punt, the kicker must kick the ball within 5 seconds of the snap.

- 3.4.2. Action or inaction that delays putting the ball in play is a delay of game and will result in a 5-yard penalty. This includes:
- a. Failing to snap the ball within 25 seconds after the ready-for-play signal.
 - b. Unnecessarily carrying the ball after it becomes dead or intentionally consuming time when the down ends.
 - c. No change in the ruling occurs after a coach-referee conference during which the referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule after all permissible timeouts have been used.
 - d. Failure of offense to retrieve the ball following a play.
 - e. Snapping the ball before the ready-for-play signal.

Section 5 Substitutions

- 3.5.1. No substitutes shall enter during a down. Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball becomes live.

RULE 4: BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT-OF-BOUNDS, & DEFLAGGING

Section 1 Putting the Ball in Play

- 4.1.1. A snap shall put a ball in play for each scrimmage down. After putting a ball in play, the ball remains alive until the down ends.
- 4.1.2. After a dead ball has been declared ready-for-play, it becomes live when it is legally snapped. The ball remains dead and the down has not begun if:
- a. A snap is attempted before the ball is ready-for-play.
 - b. There is an illegal snap or other snap infraction.
 - c. A dead ball foul occurs.

Section 2 Dead Ball and End of the Down

- 4.2.1. The ball becomes dead, and the down is ended when:
- a. A live ball goes out of bounds.
 - b. The runner goes out-of-bounds or allows any part of their body except the hand or foot to touch the ground.
 - i. Note: Down does not end if a ball touches the ground while still in control of a player.
 - c. The runner is deflagged.
 - i. Note: If a runner's flag falls off accidentally, they are not considered down until being touched by a defender.
 - d. Any fumble or muffed ball, including a punt muffed in flight, touches the ground except a snapped ball dropped by the punter. If a loose ball touches the ground, it becomes dead where the ball hits the ground (unless it is fumbled forward, in which case it becomes dead where the runner lost possession).
 - e. Any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete.
 - f. Any loose ball is simultaneously caught by opposing players.

- i. Note: In the event of a simultaneous catch, the ball belongs to the team that currently has possession.
 - g. Any member of the kicking team catches or possesses a kicked ball, or touches a grounded, kicked ball.
 - h. A kicked ball becomes loose behind the line of scrimmage.
 - i. The passer passes to himself.
 - j. Following a valid or invalid fair catch signal that is given by the receiver and the ball is caught by the receiver.
 - k. Any score occurs.
 - l. A runner has less than three flags and is touched by an opponent between the shoulders and waist, including touching a runner whose three flags are not reasonably in proper position (unless misadjusted by action during a down).
 - m. An official inadvertently sounds their whistle.
- 4.2.2. When an inadvertent whistle is blown by an official, the ball is dead at the point when the whistle was blown. The team against which the inadvertent whistle was blown has the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.

Section 3 Dead Ball Spot, Out-Of-Bounds, and In-Bounds Spots

- 4.3.1. The dead ball spot is the spot under the foremost point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule.
- 4.3.2. When a runner goes out-of-bounds, the in-bounds spot is fixed by the yard line through the foremost point of the flag at the time the runner crosses the plane of the sideline.
- 4.3.3. If a ball is declared out-of-bounds and the out-of-bounds spot is between the goal lines, the ball shall be put in play at the in-bounds spot unless a forward pass is involved. If the out-of-bounds spot is behind a goal line, it is a safety or a touchback.

Section 4 Deflagging

- 4.4.1. The runner is considered de-flagged when a player clearly detaches the runner's flags. The player should hold the flags over his head at the spot of the deflagging.
- 4.4.2. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down to remove the flag.
- 4.4.3. The runner must keep flags on each side of his body at waist level and across the posterior. Flags not in proper position will cause a runner to be considered deflagged when touched. Allowances will be made for flag position shifts because of action that occurs during the down.
- 4.4.4. If a runner has less than three flags and is touched by an opponent between the shoulders and waist, the runner is deflagged. The ball becomes dead at the spot where the ball was when the runner is touched.
- 4.4.5. A ball carrier is down where the ball is when the flags are pulled.

RULE 5: DOWNS AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

Section 1 Series of Downs

- 5.1.1. A team in possession of the ball shall have four consecutive downs (a series) to advance to the line-to-gain. Any down may be repeated if provided for by the rules (usually as a result of a penalty).

Section 2 Down and Possession After Penalty

- 5.2.1. When a penalty is declined, the number of the next down is the same as if the foul had not occurred. If a double foul occurs during a down, the number of the next down is the same as that of the down in which the foul occurred. After a distance penalty, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the time of the foul.
- 5.2.2. Dead Ball: The number of the next down is the same as that of the down during which the foul occurred unless penalty acceptance includes a 1st down, loss of down, or the measurement/advance results in a 1st down.
- 5.2.3. When a foul by A or B occurs before a scrimmage down or simultaneously with the snap, the number of the next down after measurement is the same as the number established before the foul occurred unless measurement for a foul by B results in a 1st down.

Section 3 Line-To-Gain

- 5.3.1. The line-to-gain is established at the beginning of each half on Team A's 10-yard line, provided that field length allows.

RULE 6: KICKING THE BALL AND FAIR CATCH

Section 1 Punts

- 6.1.1. On 4th down and before the ready-for-play signal, the captain(s) of Team A will be given the option for punt protection or to use a scrimmage play; they must declare this option quickly, and the referee will announce this decision to the opposing team. The decision is irrevocable.
 - a. If the down is replayed, the team will be provided the same scrimmage play/punt option.
 - b. If the team takes a time-out, they are entitled to change the decision.
- 6.1.2. If a team chooses protection, they must attempt a punt. Punting team must be in a scrimmage kick formation and an attempt to punt must occur within 5 seconds after the punter receives the snapped ball. Except for the kicker, all Team A players must be on the LOS. Four members of the receiving team must be on their respective LOS when the ball is kicked. Minor encroachments will be tolerated.
 - a. NOTE: Team A may punt, unannounced, on any down. However, the ball must be kicked from behind the line-of-scrimmage.
- 6.1.3. Any receiving team member may catch and advance a punt. If a receiving team member touches the ball in flight and the ball then touches the ground (muffs the kick), the ball becomes dead.
- 6.1.4. Any kicking team may obtain possession of a punt after the receiver has touched it and before it touches the ground (catch a muffed kick). If any kicking team member touches a grounded kicked ball, it becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team.

- 6.1.5. Touching of a low punt by any player is ignored if the touching is in the expanded neutral zone or on the kicking team's side of the line-of-scrimmage.
- 6.1.6. When any punt goes out-of-bounds in the end zone or becomes dead in the end zone, it is a touchback. When any punt goes out-of-bounds in the field of play, the ball will be put in play at the in-bounds spot.
- 6.1.7. Any kicked ball is not dead if it touches the ground and remains in-bounds beyond the line-of-scrimmage. It may be advanced by any receiving team member or becomes dead if any kicking team member touches the grounded ball. Any grounded, kicked ball that moves behind the LOS becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team.

RULE 7: KICKING THE BALL AND FAIR CATCH

Section 1 Before the Snap

- 7.1.1. No player shall encroach upon the neutral zone by touching the ball or an opponent after the ball is declared ready-for-play and until it is snapped. *Encroachment (dead ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*
- 7.1.2. After the ball is ready-for-play and before the snap, no false start shall be made by any Team A player. A false start is classified as:
 - a. A shift or feigned charge that simulates the action at the snap.
 - b. Any act that is clearly intended to cause an opponent to encroach

If a false start causes Team B to encroach, only the false start is penalized. If offensive movement is caused by an irregularity, such as calling players off the line for a receiving signal or Team B stepping into the neutral zone too soon, the accidental false start is ignored. *False Start (dead ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*

- 7.1.3. The snapper may make preliminary adjustments to the ball before assuming a set position, and before Team A lineman has assumed positions on their lines. During these adjustments, the snapper may slightly lift the ball off the ground for lateral rotation without changing the location of the ball, tilting the ball, or removing their hand(s).
- 7.1.4. The snapper may make preliminary adjustments to the ball before assuming a set position, and before Team A players have assumed positions on their line. During these preliminary adjustments, the snapper may slightly lift the ball off the ground for lateral rotation without changing the location of the ball, tilt of the ball, or remove their hand(s).
- 7.1.5. After gripping the ball, the snapper may not:
 - a. Fail to clearly pause before the snap.
 - b. Remove both hands or slide their hand(s) along the ball.
 - c. Make any movement which simulates a snap.
 - d. Lift or move the ball in any way other than a legal snap.

An illegal snap or other snap infraction causes the ball to remain dead. *Snap Infraction (dead ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*

Section 2 Position and Action During the Snap

- 7.2.1. There are no restrictions to the number of Team A players that must be on the LOS.
- 7.2.2. After the ball is ready-to-play, each Team A player must momentarily be within 15-yards of the ball before the snap. *Illegal Formation (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*
- 7.2.3. Only one Team A player may be in motion at the snap and then only if such motion is not toward the LOS. *Illegal Motion (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*
- 7.2.4. After a huddle or shift, all Team A players shall come to an absolute stop and remain stationary, simultaneously, without pronounced movement of hands, feet, head, or body for at least one second before the snap. *Illegal Shift (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*
- 7.2.5. At the snap, Team A players on the LOS must have both feet outside of the outside foot of the player next to him. *Illegal Snap (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*
- 7.2.6. No defensive player shall be in the neutral zone at the time of the snap. *Offsides (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*

Section 3 Handing and Advancing the Ball

- 7.3.1. Any player may hand the ball backward at anytime.
- 7.3.2. During a down, a Team A player may hand the ball forward behind the line to a teammate. *Illegal Forward Handing = 5-yard penalty and Loss of down*
- 7.3.3. In each possession, Team A may use only one scrimmage running play, where the runner crosses the LOS. Any number of backward passes and hand-offs may be used before the runner crosses the LOS. If a shovel or screen pass is used, its initial direction determines whether it is a forward or backward pass. **In each possession, Team A may use one designated 1-yard running play. Example, the referee will ask the captain our QB (when 1 yard or shorter and when team A has a run) if they would like to use their one designated run. This is not available to Team A under two minutes or at the goal line.**
- 7.3.4. If more than one scrimmage running play is used during a series, play shall continue until the ball becomes dead by rule. All Team A progress beyond the LOS is negated. The ball will be spotted at the previous spot (spot of the snap) unless Team A controls the ball behind the previous spot or if there was a change of possession. If Team A controls the ball behind the previous spot, the down counts and the ball is spotted at the end of the run. If there was a change of possession, a new series would be awarded.
 - a. Note: Only one scrimmage running play is allowed per possession; the other downs must include a forward pass.

Section 4 Fumble and Backward Pass

- 7.4.1. During any down, any player in possession may make a backward pass or may lose possession through a fumble. There is no limit to the number of backward passes that may be made, including backward passes beyond the LOS.

- 7.4.2. Any player that catches a fumble or backward pass before it hits the ground may advance the ball. If a fumble or backward pass hits the ground, it becomes dead where the ball hit the ground unless it is fumbled forward – in which case the ball is dead where the runner loses possession. If a backward pass or fumble goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines, becomes dead in-bounds, or is caught simultaneously by opposing players, then the ball belongs to the passing/fumbling team unless lost after 4th down. If a fumble or backward pass is out-of-bounds and becomes dead behind a goal line, the ball belongs to the team defending their goal, resulting in either a touchback or a safety.

Section 5 Forward Pass

7.5.1. Classification of Forward Passes

- a. Legal Forward Pass: From in or behind the neutral zone
- b. Illegal Forward Pass: When the quarterback's entire body is over the LOS. (Ball remains alive until declared dead by rule.)
- c. Completed Forward Pass: Pass caught by any player or pass simultaneously caught by opposing players (during which the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team).
- d. Incomplete Forward Pass: Pass which touches the ground; pass which goes out-of-bounds; pass possessed by a player who is in the air but first touches the ground out-of-bounds.
 - i. Note: Exception to this is noted in Rule 7.5.5.

- 7.5.2. It is a legal forward pass if during a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a player of Team A throws the ball with both feet of the passer on their side of the LOS when the ball is released. Only one legal forward pass (including a forward shuffle or screen pass) is permitted per down.

- a. Note: Intentional grounding is allowed.

7.5.3. An illegal forward pass includes:

- a. A pass from Team B's side of the LOS.
- b. A pass after team possession has changed during the down.
- c. Any forward pass after a scrimmage running play has been established.

- 7.5.4. If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is complete, the ball may be advanced when caught by any player. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by opponents, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passer's team.

- 7.5.5. If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete, the ball becomes dead when the pass touches the ground or goes out-of-bounds. It is also incomplete when a player in the air possess the pass, but their first contact with the ground or with anything other than a player or game official is on or outside a boundary. (Note: the first foot needs to be in-bounds). When contact by an opponent causes a receiver, who is airborne, to first contact the ground out-of-bounds, the pass is complete if the covering official judges that the receiver would have landed in-bounds if no contact had occurred. To complete the catch, the airborne player must have possession of the ball when they touch the ground. When an incompleteness occurs, the down counts unless the pass is after a series has ended. If the pass is legal and incomplete, the passer's team next snaps the ball from the spot of the previous snap – unless possession is lost after a 4th down. If the penalty for an illegal pass is accepted, measurement is from the spot of said pass. If the offended team declines the distance penalty, it has the choice of having the

down counted at the spot of the illegal pass. If the illegal pass is caught or intercepted, the offended team has the option of having the ball put in play as determined by the action which followed the catch.

- 7.5.6. No player of Team A or Team B shall interfere with an opponent beyond the LOS during a legal forward pass. For Team A, the restriction begins at the time of the snap; for Team B the restriction begins pass the 5-yard “chuck zone”. The restriction does not apply if the pass does not cross the line. It is interference if any player who is beyond the neutral zone intereferes with an opponent’s opportunity to move toward, catch, or bat a catchable ball. *Pass Interference (spot foul) = Spot of Infraction + Automatic First Down*
- a. Note: If Pass Interference by either team’s player is conspicuously intentional or unsportsmanlike, their team is penalized another 10 yards. If the foul is flagrant (e.g. tackling a receiver before the ball is caught), the offending player may be ejected.
 - b. Exceptions to Interference include:
 - i. Unavoidable contact occurs when two or more players are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch, or bat a catchable ball.
 - ii. If the ball has been touched by Team A or Team B, restrictions end for all players.
 - iii. If contact on a Team A is immediately made by a Team B lineman and contact does not continue beyond the expanded neutral zone. (What is commonly referred to as “face-guarding”).
- 7.5.7. The rusher that is closest to the rushing marker is permitted a clear path to the quarterback; offensive players must give way to the rusher. Once the quarterback alters their position along with the rusher, the clear path is eliminated. *Rusher Interference (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*
- 7.5.8. The passer may not pass to himself/herself. However, a passer may catch their own pass if the ball is first touched by an opponent.
- 7.5.9. It is illegal pass-play contact when any player who is beyond the neutral zone intentionally obstructs an opponent’s opportunity to move freely about the field. For Team A, the restriction begins when the ball is snapped.
- a. Note: A defender must use a legal block before the restriction.

RULE 8 SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACKS

Section 1 Value of Scores

- 8.1.1. The game is won by the team that accumulates the most points.
- a. Touchdown 6 points
 - b. Safety (points awarded to opponent) 2 points
 - c. Successful Try-For-Point (from either run or pass)
 - i. From the 10-yard line 2 points
 - ii. From the 5-yard line 1 point
 - d. A game may be ended early if Mercy Rules become enacted. The Mercy Rules thresholds are:
 - i. If a team is ahead by 25 points or more at the 5-minute mark of the second half, the score of the game is finalized. If both captains agree, the teams will continue playing until the 2-minute mark; otherwise the game is over.

- ii. If a team is ahead by 17 points or more at the 2-minute mark of the second half, the game is over.

Section 2 Touchdown

- 8.2.1. Possession of a live ball in the opponent's end zone is always a touchdown.
 - a. It is a touchdown when the runner advances from the field of play so that the waist/flags penetrate the opponent's goal line (vertical plane).
 - b. It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player in-bounds on while the ball is on or behind the opponent's goal line.
- 8.2.2. If an opponent of the scoring team commits a foul during a down in which a touchdown is scored and there is no change in possession; or there was a change of possession and the opponent committed a foul after the final change of possession, the following rules apply:
 - a. Any foul that carries a 5-yard penalty is automatically declined.
 - b. The offended team may choose to enforce the penalty for any other foul on the try-for-point or the subsequent possession following the try-for-point.
- 8.2.3. If either team commits a foul following a down in which a touchdown is scored, and before the initial ready-for-play signal on the try, the offended team may choose to enforce the penalty on the try-for-point or the subsequent possession following the try.
- 8.2.4. If during a touchdown-scoring play in which there is no change of possession, the opponent of the scoring team commits one or more fouls that carry a penalty of 10-yards, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot or may choose to have the penalty enforced on the start of the subsequent drive, with the penalty enforced from the 10-yard line.

Section 3 Try-For-Point

1 point conversion from the 5

2 point conversion from the 10

Exception: If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the game, the try-for-point shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game.

Interceptions during a try-for-point attempt are allowed. Team will be awarded two points.

Team may change their decision to attempt a 1-point or 2-point play only after a team timeout is used.

Fouls committed during a try-for-point play shall be handled as follows:

- If during a successful try-for-point O commits a loss of down foul, no point(s) are scored and there is no replay.
- If during a successful try-for-point D commits a foul, O is given the choice of accepting the penalty and replaying the down following measurement or accepting the results of the play administered from the succeeding spot.

- If O (with no loss of down) during a successful try-for-point, the down is replayed after measurement.
- If during an unsuccessful try-for-point a foul is committed by O, there is no replay. If D commits a foul, the down is replayed after measurement.
- If either team commits a dead ball foul before the try-for-point, the down is played after measurement.
- If a double foul occurs, the down is replayed.

Section 4 Safety and Touchback

A safety occurs when:

A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across their own goal line and it becomes dead there in their team's possession.

Exception: When D intercepts a forward pass or catches a kick between their 5-yard line and the goal line and the receiver's original momentum carries him/her into the end zone, where the ball is declared dead in their team's possession, or the play goes out-of-bounds in the end zone, the ball will be placed at the spot where either the pass was intercepted or the kick was caught.

Section 5 Onside Try

Section 5 Onside Play

- Onside kick alternative rule beta test: "With four or less minutes remaining in the game, any team A captain (whose team is behind in the score), following a scoring play, may make an election to attempt an "on-side" play following the try by taking a charged team time out and notifying the referee. The Referee shall stop the game clock and the "on-side" play will be attempted, if allowed by rule, following the try."
 - A team can only use this play with **4 minutes** or less remaining in the game.
 - The team must be trailing to execute after scoring a touchdown & try.
 - **A trailing team captain must use a charged team timeout after** a score and inform the referee of their intent to execute an "onside play". If the trailing team has no timeouts remaining, this option is not available.
 - The trailing team gets one play – **4th & 15 from the team's own 15**.
 - The clock will start on the snap of the 4th & 15 play.
 - The trailing team cannot 'use a run' on the 4th & 15 play, but if the team succeeds in converting the 4th & 15 play, then the run is available for the rest of the team's drive.
 - If the trailing team doesn't convert the 4th & 15, the leading team gets the ball at the succeeding spot.
 - If a team is trailing after the touchdown is scored, but is then tied or ahead after the extra point (try) is attempted, the onside play attempt will not be available to them.
 - A team captain may ask to use this play by using a charged team timeout either after the touchdown is scored or after the try is scored. If a team uses this timeout after the touchdown (with more than 2 minutes remaining in the half), then the try is an untimed down, and the clock will next start on the snap with the 4th & 15 play.
 - Once the team uses the timeout to go for the 4th & 15 play, that decision is irrevocable.

- If team A is down by 8 points, scores a touchdown, and takes the timeout to declare an onside play attempt before the try – however, they convert the 2-point try and are now tied, then that team would not get their timeout back, and would now be ineligible to go for the onside kick alternative play.

Section 6 Tie Games and Overtime Procedure

If, at the end of a playoff game, both teams have identical scores, the tie will be resolved by one or more series of unlimited downs. All game rules apply, except: Regular season games can and will end in a tie.

- Ball placed on the 10; first and goal.
- No try will be made if the winner of the game has been determined;
- Each team will be permitted one timeout, each team is guaranteed one possession.
- Only non-player, unsportsmanlike, dead ball fouls, or defensive fouls during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try-for-point are penalized from the succeeding spot.

There will be a 3-minute intermission during which both teams may confer with their coaches. All officials and team captains will meet at midfield for the coin toss after the intermission. The winner of the toss will be given a choice of defense.

Each possession starts at the 10-yard-line. Series alternate until one team has scored more points than the other. If after two possessions each the score is still tied, teams must go for 2 points after scoring. The possessions snake structure.

Note: Overtime is considered a new series. Therefore, no more than one scrimmage running play may be used per overtime series. Intercepted passes end the possession, play is whistled dead.

RULE 9 CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS

Section 1 Illegal Use of Hands, Holding, and Blocking

An offensive player shall not use a blocking technique that:

Uses hands, arms, or legs to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle, or hold to restrain an opponent.
Illegal Use of Hands (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty; Holding (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty

A defensive player shall not use a technique that:

Uses hands, arms, or legs to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle, or hold to restrain an opponent.

A defensive player may not intentionally push or block a runner who is near the sideline.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct (live ball foul) = 10-yard penalty

No player shall intentionally deflag a player who is not a runner before the player contracts the ball.
Illegal Deflagging (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty

No runner shall be allowed to “flag guard” to prevent being deflagged. *Flag Guarding (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*

Prohibited flag guarding actions include:

- Stiff arm
- Using hands or the ball below the waist to protect the flag.
- Hurdling
- Lowering the head to interfere with being deflagged.
- A runner may not charge into a potential deflagger.

Note: A runner may spin to avoid being deflagged

No player may trip an opponent. *Tripping (live ball foul) = 10-yard penalty*

No player may intentionally strip the ball from the runner. *Stripping (live ball foul) = 5-yard penalty*

Note: Any contact with a runner must be an attempt to deflag.

Section 2 Personal Foul

No player shall commit a flagrant foul.

Striking an opponent with a fist, locked hand, forearm, elbow, knee, or foot.

Note: Fighting causes all fighters to be ejected, regardless of whom started the fight.

Flagrant personal fouls carry a penalty of mandatory disqualification for the rest of the game and the team’s next game. A team may forfeit a game if it allows a disqualified player to become a player.

Ejected players must leave the playing area.

No player shall physically or verbally assault an official.

Misconduct towards an official (dead ball foul) = 10-yard penalty

Note: At the official’s discretion, a player may be ejected for four or eight downs for such acts that are considered major, but not flagrant.

When attempting to block a pass, the defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid contact with the passer’s arm (who has thrown or is throwing) A defensive player may not forcibly contact the passer’s arm above the elbow (from elbow to shoulder). *Roughing the Passer (live ball foul) = 10-yard penalty and automatic first down*

- Note: When a defensive player is attempting to remove the flag from the quarterback, reasonable contact is permitted.

Section 3 Non-Contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Players

No player may act in an unsportsmanlike manner during the game or intermission.

- Abusive or insulting language or gestures
- Baiting acts, words, or insignia worn which engenders ill will
- Using disconcerting acts or words before the snap in an attempt to interfere with Team A's signal or movements
- Intentionally swinging an arm or fist at any player
- Spiking the ball or throwing the ball in the air or from the field of play.

Unsportsmanlike acts carry a 10-yard penalty that shall be enforced from the succeeding spot

Section 4 Illegal Participation

Unless blocked or pushed out-of-bounds, no player shall participate by touching the ball after having been out-of-bounds during the down. *Illegal Participation = 5-yard penalty*

Illegal participation also includes 8 or more players participating at the snap

Section 5 Illegal Batting

Any pass in-flight may be batted in any direction unless it is a backward pass behind the line-of-scrimmage batted forward by the passing team. *Illegal Batting (live ball foul) = 10-yard penalty*

Section 6 Non-contact Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Non-Players

No coach shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner during the game or intermission. Examples of such actions include:

- Using profanity, insulting, or vulgar language and/or gestures
- Disrespectfully addressing an official

Attendants and coaches may not enter the field except during a time-out or unless sanctioned by the referee.

Non-Player fouls carry a 5-yard or a 10-yard penalty, depending on the infraction.

Section 7 Unfair Acts

No player or non-player shall hinder play by an obviously unfair act which has no specific rule covering the infraction. Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game.

- Note: Repeated fouls will cause the game to be forfeited
- Referees may enforce any penalty that they consider equitable for the unfair act, including the award of a score.

Section 8 Protests and Suspensions

The "Protest and Suspension Committee" shall consist of five members: League Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner of the Open Division, Assistant Commissioner of the Women's Division,

Director of Referees, and a fifth member (chosen by unanimous vote by the NYGFL board). This committee will adjudicate protests and suspensions initiated by a formal, written request by any member of the League affected by the incident in question.

- a. Any member of the Committee may recuse themselves if they believe there to be a conflict of interest. Additionally, four of the five Committee members may insist that the 5th member recuse themselves if they believe there to be a conflict of interest.
- b. A recused member(s) will be replaced by an appointee selected unanimously by the Board.

9.8.2. Rules administration, game scores, and player and non-player behavior, attitude, and conduct, as well as other matters, may be protested. The protest must be written and submitted to the Committee within 48 hours from the event being protested. The protest must include the nature of the grievance and the resolution sought.

9.8.3. The initiator of the request as well as any named individuals within the request shall be asked to present their sides of the incident to the committee. The Committee shall also invite any other parties it feels might be pertinent to their decision making. The Committee shall reach, by majority decision and separate considerations, the determination of responsibility or fault of the incident, as well as an appropriate response.

Section 9 Summary of Penalties

Offensive Penalties

- a. Delay of Game: 5 yards
- b. False Start 5 yards (dead ball)
- c. Offsides 5 yards
- d. Snap Infraction 5 yards (dead ball)
- e. Illegal Motion 5 yards
- f. Illegal Forward Pass 5 yards
- g. Pass interference 10 yards
- h. Rusher Interference 5 yards
- i. Illegal Pass-Play Contact 5 yards
- j. Flag Guarding 5 yards
- k. Personal Foul 10 yards
- l. Unsportsmanlike 10 yards
- m. Illegal Participation 5 yards (Player out of bounds and/or 8 players at snap/player without flags)
- n. Holding 5 yards
- o. Illegal Block 5 yards (spot foul)
- p. Excessive Force Block 10 yards
- q. Uniform Violation 5 yards

Defensive Penalties

- r. Holding the runner 5 yards (added to end of run)
- s. Encroachment 5 yards
- t. Offsides 5 yards
- u. Pass interference Spot foul; first down

- v. Illegal Pass-Play Contact 5 yards
- w. Stripping the ball 5 yards (spot foul)
- x. Personal Foul 10 yards (bull rush)
- y. Bull Rush 5 yards
- z. Unsportsmanlike 10 yards
- aa. Roughing the Passer 10 yards
- bb. Illegal de-flagging 5 yards
- cc. Uniform Violation 5 yards

RULE 10 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

Procedure After a Foul

When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains. Inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of the penalty acceptance or declination and shall, for each available choice, indicate to the captain the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or the situation is a double foul, there is no loss of distance.

- a. In the case of a double foul, the captains are not consulted since the penalties offset.
- b. The captain's choice, once made, may not be revoked.

When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or before a snap, the official shall not permit the ball to become live. The referee shall notify the captains and the captain of the offended team will be presented with the options as well as the effect of acceptance or declination on the down and distance to be gained. The captain may accept or decline the penalty.

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.

When the same team commits a live ball foul followed by one or more dead ball fouls, all fouls may be penalized.

Double and Multiple Fouls

It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike, within the same live ball period during which there is no change of possession, there is a change of possession and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to the final change of possession, or there is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

- a. In all cases the penalties cancel and the down is replayed.

If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not before the final change of possession, and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul, other than unsportsmanlike.

When two or more live ball fouls (multiple fouls) are committed by the same team, only one penalty may be measured, except when foul(s) for unsportsmanlike conduct occurs. In such cases, the penalty (or penalties) for unsportsmanlike conduct is administered from the succeeding spot as established by

the acceptance or declination of the penalty for the previous foul. When only one penalty is to be administered, the offended captain may choose which one it shall be, or they may decline all penalties.

Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of their occurrence. A dead ball foul is not coupled with a live ball foul or another dead ball foul to create a double or multiple foul situation.

A foul during a conversion is not paired with a dead ball foul to create a double or multiple foul.

Types of Play and Basic Enforcement Spots

If a foul occurs during a down, the basic enforcement spot is fixed by the type of play. There are two types of play: loose ball play and a running play. Loose ball play is action during the scrimmage kick, legal forward pass, or a backward pass or fumble made by Team A from on or behind its line of scrimmage. A loose ball also includes the run or runs which precede such a legal forward pass, kick, or fumble. A running play is any action not included in loose ball play.

If a foul occurs during loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot.

If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends. The run ends where the player loses possession if his run is followed by a fumble or pass. If the runner does not lose possession, his run ends where the ball becomes dead.

Administering Penalties

The penalty for any dead ball foul, any non-player foul, or an unsportsmanlike foul is administered from the succeeding spot (the 3- or 5-yard line after a touchdown).

The penalty for a foul that occurs simultaneously with a snap is administered from the previous spot.

Special Enforcement

Measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the ordinary distance penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the spot of enforcement to the goal line.

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 the goal line, it is a safety.

- a. For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot is on or behind the offended team's goal line, any measurement is from the goal line.

If there is a foul during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try-for-point, the penalty must be declined for the score to count.

The referee's decision to forfeit a game is always final.