

MCFFU/USSSA 9-MAN INELIGIBLE



RULEBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The following is the MCFFU/USSSA 9-Man Ineligible rules and regulations adopted by the MCFFU/USSSA BOARD AND COMPETITION COMMITTEE. The MCFFU/USSSA 9-Man Ineligible circuit operates within the ideas of competitive play, good sportsmanship, team/league development, and community service. The MCFFU/USSSA prohibits all forms of unnecessary roughness, unjust tactics and unsportsmanlike conduct. It is the responsibility of players, coaches, officials and team supporters to maintain the highest ethical standards. Deliberately violating the rules is unacceptable and indefensible. No true athlete should violate any of the unwritten rules which exist for the good of our 9-Man Ineligible game. Coaches and Team Delegates will be responsible for conduct of their players as they all are a reflection of the 9-Man athletes nationwide. The negative actions of a few individuals may ruin the reputation, enjoyment and integrity of the 9-Man Ineligible game for all.

MCFFU/USSSA COMPETITION COMMITTEE

The MCFFU\USSSA COMPETITION COMMITTEE was established fall season 2008. The role of this committee is to create, mandate and amend by-laws and playing rules which will continue to improve the quality of play and operation for the MCFFU. The committee consist MCFFU\USSSA Administrators, Certified Officials and representatives from each region participating in all MCFFU\USSSA activities. With regards to rules development, player safety, and sportsmanship all matters pertaining to the rules for the MCFFU\USSSA will be delegated by the committee. If a playing rule is not clearly defined in this rulebook then the NFL rules will be used in lieu of the rule(s) in question. Approved tournament policy, rule(s) and regulation(s) distributed prior to the tournament supersede all relevant items listed in the rulebook. The rules and regulations may be amended quarterly by no less than two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the committee. Amendments shall be effective immediately unless otherwise indicated by the amendment.

CODE OF ETHICS

- All MCFFU\USSSA participants will be mannerable and respectful to opponents, officials, organizers, teammates and spectators on the field as well as off the field.
- Fans that show disrespect to opposing players also become a liability rather than asset Therefore, fans need to be educated and included in the code of ethics to promote a healthy and positive atmosphere for all involved.
- All MCFFU\USSSA participants will be courteous to all opposing players and fans.
- All MCFFU\USSSA participants will refrain from acts of discourtesy, such as derogatory remarks addressed toward players, taunting action and cheering decisions made by officials against the opposing team.
- All MCFFU\USSSA participants will refrain from slander and derogatory comments grounded and ungrounded.
- All MCFFU\USSSA participants will graciously accept the decisions of the officials during and after the contest for and against your team.
- All MCFFU\USSSA participants will continue to exemplify competitive play with legal actions conducive to safe participation for all players.
- All MCFFU\USSSA participants will refrain from the use of profanity at all times.
- All MCFFU\USSSA participants will embrace the true foundation of sportsmanship and fellowship during all activities as well as foster a sense of responsibility to project a positive image for all male athletes.

SECTION I. PARAMETERS OF THE GAME

Article: A **Game Cancellation**

- Rule 1.** The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff or designee shall promptly inform each team contact of game cancellations and the team contact shall assume the responsibility of informing his/her team members.
- Rule 2.** Canceled games shall be rescheduled at the discretion of the MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff.
- Rule 3.** The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff or Referee (White Hat) will decide whether or not the weather and/or field conditions will allow for safe participation for both teams.

Article: B **Forfeits**

- Rule 1.** Forfeiting any game of a tournament after the first game will eliminate the violating team from the remainder of said event without refund.
- a.)** Special circumstances may be submitted to the tournament staff for review to determine provisional adjustments for forfeiting teams.
- Rule 2.** A team will suffer a forfeit for any of the following:
- a.)** Teams must start and maintain the game with at least 7 players.
- b.)** Quitting in defiance of the referee's decision(s).
- c.)** Fielding a player who is ineligible during any game.
- d.)** Refusal to follow instructions mandated by the MCFFU/USSSA Staff, Competition Committee and/or tournament staff.
- e.)** Player (participant) refusal to leave the field and sideline after an ejection.
- f.)** Failure to comply with the guidelines listed in the rulebook and discussed verbally or through written communication prior the tournament or polices/rules decided on during the tournament in order to maintain a positive image for MCFFU/USSSA events.

Article: C **Player Eligibility**

- Rule 1.** All player(s)/participant(s) must be in good standing with the MCFFU/USSSA organization and its affiliates. The status of a player/participant will be governed by the organization's policy and procedures as well as the items noted in the 9-Man Ineligible rulebook.
- Rule 2.** All player(s)/participant(s) must complete a waiver, sign the team roster and/or complete a request for special participation for a specific event.
- Rule 3.** All player(s)/participant(s) must be 18 years of age no later than the first day of the event for which they are participating or submit a special participation request to the MCFFU/USSSA staff or Tournament Director which will require authorization for participation from a parent or guardian.

Article: D **Player (Participant) Ejection**

- Rule 1.** All ejections are governed by the MCFFU/USSSA Staff, Competition Committee or Tournament Staff and administered by the game day officials.
- Rule 2.** The officials at their discretion within the rules may eject a player (participant) or levy a penalty of game time participation. **For Example:** an official may penalize a player (participant) by requiring the player (participant) to leave the playing field for a play, series, or half without administering an ejection. This option is at the discretion of the official and may be accompanied with a penalty.
- Rule 3.** A player (participant) will be ejected from the game and must leave the side line for the following infractions:
- a.)** Fighting regardless of who initiated the confrontation.
- b.)** Excessive profanity on the field or sidelines (may or may not receive an official's warning).
- c.)** Flag tampering.
- d.)** (2) flagrant 1 personal fouls in a game.
- e.)** (1) flagrant 2 personal fouls in a game.
- f.)** Conduct unbecoming towards an MCFFU/USSSA Staff, game official, tournament staff, opponent, or bystander.

Article: E **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

- Rule 1. UNFAIR ACTS:** No participant is allowed to use unfair acts that interfere, taunt, or diminish the integrity of the game in which case the safety for the participants is threatened and the reputation of the MCFFU/ USSSA organization and their associates are damaged.
- a.) If a team refuses to play within two(2) minutes after being ordered to play by the referee, or if the game is delayed by an obviously unfair or unsportsmanlike act not specifically covered by the rules, the Referee (White Hat) may enforce any penalty he considers equitable, including the awarding of a score.
 - b.) If a team refuses to play or repeat unfair acts the Referee (White Hat) after one(1) warning may forfeit or postpone the game until fair play may resume.
- Rule 2. UNSPORTSMANLIKE ACTS:** There shall be no unsportsmanlike act that interferes with an orderly game administration on the part of players, substitutes, coaches, authorized attendants or any other persons subject to the rules, before the game, during the game or between games.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- Use of foul language, profanity, baiting or taunting of an opponent.
- Any unethical offensive gestures physically or verbally towards MCFFU/USSSA Staff or Tournament Staff.
- Contact or arguing with a referee.
- Any unethical offensive gestures or language defiance of the official's judgment or decision.
- Any unethical offensive gestures physically or verbally towards all participants including fans.
- Taunting an opponent before, after or during a game.
- Conduct detrimental to the positive image of 9-Man Ineligible flag football.
- Flag Tampering

Article: F **Prohibited Acts**

- Rule 1. Fighting is strictly prohibited at all MCFFU/USSSA events.**
- a.) Any player (participant) involved in a fight will be ejected from the game and the next game and is also subject to all rules listed in **SECTION I; Article F under the full discretion of the game day officials and tournament staff.**
 - b.) Any player (participant) throwing a punch regardless if the punch makes contact or not will be ejected from the game.
 - i. A punch is defined as any action with the intent to strike an individual by hand or with any object that may cause physical harm. The manner and velocity of the said action will not be considered and all punching, pushing, ball throwing, kicking, slapping, poking, and intentional actions making contact to the restricted area of any player are considered punches.
 - c.) Any player leaving the sideline to enter the field during any altercation on the field will be ejected from the game. Discretion of these ejections is under the jurisdiction of the game day officials and/or tournament staff which may also be accompanied with a "team" fine up to \$250.00 dollars.
- Rule 2.** A player ejected for fighting will be ejected from the game, the next game and possibly the entire tournament.
- a.) If a player is found to be the initiator of the fight or continues to act in a threatening manner after intervention by the MCFFU/USSSA staff, tournament staff, and game day officials that player will be ejected for the entire tournament.
 - b.) If a player is found to be defending himself in a fight after a brief investigation by the MCFFU/USSSA staff, tournament staff, and game day officials that player's ejection will be reduced and the said player will be eligible for participation for the remainder of the tournament barring any other specific rule violations.
 - c.) A player ejected for fighting will be fined a mandatory "team" fine of \$250.00 dollars for initiating the fight.
 - d.) A player ejected for fighting can be fined up to \$250.00 dollars for being involved in a fight regardless who initiating the confrontation and regardless if the fight/altercation is within that players own team.
 - e.) A "team" fine may be applied for each separate incident of fighting involving two (2) or more players from opposing teams or teammates. Bench clearing altercations involving entire teams throwing punches in which case all the individuals involved in physically attacking another player cannot not be sorted out will receive a mandatory \$250.00 dollar "team" fine per team in addition to any other fine imposed during the original altercation.
- Rule 3.** Any "team" fine imposed as a result of violating **SECTION I; Article F; Rule 1 and 2** must be paid in cash prior to participating in any game following the reported incident. Failure to pay the fine prior to the start of the violating team's next game may result in a forfeit of that game and any game afterwards until the fine is paid. Special provision may be given per the Tournament Staff in lieu of the fine(s) pending a written or verbal request.
- Rule 4.** Teams are not allowed to leave any trash on their sidelines. All teams are responsible for the items left on their sideline.
- Rule 5.** The tournament staff, game official or designee may impose a "team" fine not to exceed \$100.00 dollars for a team leaving their sideline or team area unclean by way of trash and other team items that are to be discarded.

Rule 6. Any “team” fine imposed as a result of violating **SECTION I; Article F; Rule 4 and 5** must be paid in cash prior to participating in any game following the reported incident. Failure to pay the fine prior to the start of the violating team’s next game may result in a forfeit of that game and any game afterwards until the fine is paid. Special provision may be given per the Tournament Staff in lieu of the fine(s) pending a written or verbal request.

Article: G Personal Fouls Flagrant 1&2

Personal Fouls are defined by rule as a breach of the rules that involve illegal contact with an opponent. Personal fouls may or may not be intentional. With regards to personal foul(s) violations these reprimands are administered at the discretion of the game day officials. Intentional or unintentional harm to a player may result in a personal foul flagrant 1 or personal foul flagrant 2.

Rule 1. Personal foul flagrant 1: (unintentional and/or non- malice) actions resulting in contact made with an opponent to a restricted area or unintentional illegal contact during football actions resulting in a player gaining a substantial advantage against their opponent.

- a.) 2 of these fouls during a game will result in an ejection for that game and the next game accompanied with a report explaining in detail the infractions of the flagrant fouls.
- b.) 4 of these fouls for the tournament will result in the player being banned from participating in the remaining tournament games. The MCFFU/USSSA Staff, Competition Committee and tournament director may review the incidents for all ejections to ensure the proper penalty was levied. In this case the reports for the 2 fouls or 4 fouls will be reviewed by the competition committee and the tournament director who may reach an alternate decision to be administered as the final decision regarding the ejection.

Rule 2. Personal foul flagrant 2: (intentional and/or malice) actions resulting in contact made with an opponent to a restricted area or intentional /unintentional but malicious illegal contact during football actions resulting in a player gaining a substantial advantage against their opponent.

- a.) 1 of these fouls during a game will result in an ejection for that game and the next game accompanied with a report explaining in detail the infractions of the flagrant foul.
- b.) 2 of these fouls for the tournament will result in the player being banned from participating in the remaining tournament games. The MCFFU/USSSA Staff, Competition Committee and tournament director may review the incidents for all ejections to ensure the proper penalty was levied. In this case the reports for the 1 foul or 2 fouls will be reviewed by
- c.) The MCFFU/USSSA Staff, Competition Committee and tournament director may reach an alternate decision to be administered as the final decision regarding the ejection.

Rule 3. No contact to the “restricted area “of any player is allowed. The restricted area being defined as the area above the shoulders and below the waist of a player. Contact by a defender below the waist attempting to de-flag the ball carrier maybe be deemed legal pending the official’s judgment of the defender’s intent.

Rule 4. All defensive personal foul penalties will result in an automatic first down.

MALICE PERSONAL FOUL ACTIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| *Roughing the quarterback | *Ball carrier intentionally lowering the head or shoulder into the defender |
| *Crack back on a player who is no threat | *Defender lowering head into the ball carrier or shoulder into the ball carrier |
| *Contact with an opponent while on the ground | *Intentional contact above the shoulder or below the waist |
| *Striking (non football) | *Kicking *Kneeing * Elbowing |
| *Excessive contact to an unprotected player | *Tackling *Tripping *Fighting |
| *Unnecessary Roughness | *Excessive charging |

Article: H Playing Field

- Rule 1.** The game shall be played by and between two teams on a regulation size football field with the dimensions of 120 yards X 53 yards.
- Rule 2.** The field will be marked in twenty (20) yard intervals with end zones ten (10) yards deep.
- Rule 3.** The field will be lined off clearly designating the Goal lines, End lines and Sidelines.
- Rule 4.** The officials’ jurisdiction for the playing field is the entire length and width of the football field with an additional 10 yards completely around the football field.
- Rule 5.** Sideline players will remain between each twenty (20) yard line marker while fans will be required to remain at least 10 yards away from each sideline and end line or be considered part of that team’s sideline.

- Rule 6.** Portable field goal post may be used for fields without field goal post.
- The portable goal post must meet the inspection and approval of the Tournament Director, Head official, MCFFU/USSSA Staff or Competition Committee member.
 - Upon approval an announcement must be made to all teams participating in the tournament / game prior to the start of the first game for the tournament.
- Rule 7.** Soccer goals may be used if present for fields without field goal post.
- The soccer goal may be modified with extensions and must meet the inspection and approval of the Tournament Director, Head official, MCFFU/USSSA Staff or Competition Committee member.
 - Upon approval an announcement must be made to all teams participating in the tournament / game prior to the start of the first game for the tournament
 - If no modifications are made with extensions then the end post are used as the reference for determining the virtual dimensions for the uprights.

Article: I **Protest**

Protests cannot be made against an official's judgment call. Interpretation of the rule(s) and the application of the rule(s) may be protested regarding the game. All matters pertaining to player eligibility may be protested before or after a contest.

- Rule 1.** Protests must be made following a disputed play and before the snap of the next play.
- Rule 2.** If the protest is not made following the disputed play and before the snap of the next play then the protest option for the play in question is null and void.
- Rule 3.** Rule interpretations and applications will be handled on the field to avoid unnecessary delays and it is the Head Official (white hat or supervising official) who has the final decision.
- Rule 4.** The protesting team must following the protest guidelines or forfeit their right to protest.
- The protesting team will call a time-out after the play in question or before the start of the next play. If a time out is called at any other time, it is charged as a time out and the "incident" will not be discussed.
 - All officials on the field will talk with the "protestor". The "protestor" is required to state their "protest" clearly and concisely, stating which rule they believe to be interpreted or applied incorrectly.
 - The "protestor" has approximately five minutes to state their "protest" regarding the rule in question.
 - The officials will then confer at their discretion to determine whether the rule was interpreted properly.
 - If the officials determine that the "protestor" was correct in their interpretation of the rule then the team will not be charged the time-out and the play will resume according to the correct interpretation.
 - If the officials determine that they interpreted or applied the rules correctly the "protestor" will be charged the time-out and play will resume as it would have prior to the time-out.
- Rule 5.** If the "Protestor/Protesting Team" do not understand or agree with the game officials decisions after the protest has been addressed then a grievance may be filed in writing with the MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff immediately after the game. Until the said grievance has been properly administered by the MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff the officials protest decision will stand.
- "Protestor/Protesting Team" or tournament director must file a written grievance as to the alleged misinterpretation of the rule or any other incidents during the game immediately following the game. A protest fee of \$25.00 in cash must accompany the written grievance.
 - The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff will review the grievance by interviewing the referees, "protesting" and non-protesting team's representatives and/or captains, and field volunteer(s), or any other party deemed to be necessary for a fair disposition.
 - The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff will review the statements of parties and applicable rules to reach a decision.
 - The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff will notify the "protesting" representative in writing of their decision within 1 week or a time deemed reasonable in their discretion.

GRIEVANCE UNFOUNDED: The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff agrees with the officials' decision at the time of the incident, meaning that the rules were interpreted correctly. The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff will notify the officials and teams involved of the decision.

GRIEVANCE FOUNDED NO IMPACT: The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff agrees with "protesting" team, however, the misinterpretation of the rules did not impact the outcome of the game. The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff will notify the officials and teams involved of the decision.

GRIEVANCE FOUNDED IMPACT: The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff agrees with "protesting" team and deems that misinterpretation impacted the outcome of the game. The MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff will notify the officials and teams involved of the decision and the MCFFU/USSSA Tournament Staff will implement a solution or change standings, outcomes, points, replays, etc.

Article: J Challenge

The challenge rule is implemented at the discretion of the tournament director prior to the first game of the tournament. The decision to implement the rule for a tournament will be announced and must be carried out the duration of the tournament. The challenge rule is mandatory for all National Championships and World Championships tournament games. Each team is allowed 1 challenge per contest. This challenge is called a "Lewis". A Lewis is defined as the coach or team captain requesting a clarification and/or a reversal of a judgment call. The Referee will explain to both Coaches/Team Captains their finding(s), an explanation of the finding(s), and their perception of the call in question. During this challenge the officials are required to confer for no more than 2 minutes and explain their finding(s) regarding the Lewis. The Lewis does not guarantee an overturned call. However, it does guarantee that the game officials will confer and if there is conflicting opinions of the call in question then the majority vote between the officials will be the final decision. The vote count will only be disclosed not the actual vote by each official. In the case of a Lewis all officials are equal. A Lewis is different than a protest because no judgment call(s) can be protested.

Rule 1. During the 2nd half under 2 minutes if a team does not have a timeout or during overtime; only the Supervising Official, Referee (white hat), MCFFU/USSSA Staff, Competition Committee member or tournament director can request a Lewis if the team has not used their Lewis and are out of their time outs. The requestor must not have any direct affiliation (i.e. coach, player, partner, or any known conflicts with the opposing team etc...) any information disclosed to this fact and found grounded will nullify the requestor from the process. All requestors for a Lewis in this situation(s) will also follow the guidelines below.

a.) Guidelines

- i.** The team requesting the Lewis must have a timeout before 2 minutes (regulation time) in the second half.
- ii.** The officials will call an Official's timeout.
- iii.** The team requesting the Lewis must state their case clearly without conflict in 1 minute.
- iv.** The team requesting the Lewis must include in their case the following
 - A.** The reason(s)
 - B.** Their perception of what happened
 - C.** Their idea of what the ruling should be
- v.** If the team wins their Lewis they will not be charged a time out.
- vi.** If the team loses their Lewis they will be charged a timeout.
- vii.** No coaching or substitutions are allowed during a Lewis.
- viii.** Teams may get water or attend to injuries.
- ix.** Both teams will get an explanation of the findings.
- x.** The clock will resume exactly where it left off with the exact game situation. For example: If the clock was running at the time of the Lewis it will start back running on the ready whistle.
- xi.** The teams must accept the decision without conflict and refrain from making any negative references regarding the final decision of the Lewis or be penalized 15 yards for each incident and/or a possible ejection from the contest.

Article: K Officials

- Rule 1.** The officials shall govern all players, coaches, trainers, and other persons in the team area. Only authorized persons shall be allowed on the sidelines and field of play. **See: Section I; Article H; Rule 4**
- Rule 2.** The referee (White Hat) has full jurisdiction 1 hour prior to the start of the 1st game.
- Rule 3.** The referee (White Hat) has full jurisdiction 1 hour after the conclusion of the last game.
- Rule 4.** The Head Referee (Officials Supervisor) or Referee (White hat) for the tournament / game has the authority to rule promptly on any game situation not specifically covered in the rules. All matters will be thoroughly explained to both teams and these decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game excluding a protest. The rule interpretation will follow the guidelines of the NFL Rule book if it is not clearly noted in the MCFFU/USSSA 9-Man Ineligible rule book. If The NFL Rule book does not offer a clear explanation/interpretation of the rule for the situation in question or the NFL rulebook is not available for review in a timely manner then the Referee (White Hat), MCFFU/USSSA Staff Tournament Director, or Competition Committee member may render a final decision under the guidelines of fair play and sportsmanship.
- Rule 5.** At any given time, the game will be officiated by no less than two (2) officials and no more than four (4) officials at all levels. The Referee will be recognized as the Head Official (White Hat)" for each sanctioned MCFFU/USSSA game.

- Rule 6.** The Referee (White Hat) will designate the official timekeeper for each game and will notify each team of the designee.
- Rule 7.** The Referee manages ALL games and reserves the right to discipline, forfeit, delay, and postpone at his discretion to preserve the integrity of the games played during MCFFU/USSSA 9-Man ineligible events.
- Rule 8.** If there are only 2 officials during the game they will be the Referee and Line Judge
- Rule 9.** If there are 3 officials during the game they will be the Referee, Line Judge, and Back Judge
- Rule 10.** If there are 4 officials during the game they will be the Referee, Line Judge, Field Judge and Back Judge

Article: L **Equipment**

- Rule 1.** Each eligible offensive player and any player wishing to possess and advance the ball must wear a standard “sonic” flag belt with two (2) sonic flags (14in min) inserted properly not altered in any way with the flag belt properly tightened to prevent the belt from turning or swiveling and belt and both flags clearly visible. Non “sonic” flags (mushroom flags) and flag belts are not permissible.
- Rule 2.** The Inserts for the sonic flags must be worn properly on the belt with the inserts pointing out away from the player’s body.
- Rule 3.** A team’s official game ball must be at least High School regulation and shall not exceed NFL regulation. The preferred type is leather but rubber is permissible. If the game ball is not clearly labeled with the official size by the manufacture the Referee (White Hat) will determine if the game ball in question is permissible.
- Rule 4.** The use of headgear (**excluding head bands, athletic caps and baseball caps worn backwards**), shoulder pads, forearm pads, casts, boxing gloves, uncovered knee and elbow braces, thigh pads, jewelry and any other unyielding equipment are not permissible.
- Rule 5.** Illegal equipment specified and not specified may be measured and/or inspected by the MCFFU/USSSA Staff, Competition Committee member, Tournament Director, or in-game Official for the said equipment to be permissible.
- Rule 6.** Shoes can be screw- ins but must be male type where the steel stem is attached to the detachable cleat. Shoe can also be molded rubber. Baseball cleats of any sort are not permissible.
- Rule 7.** Player wearing non-preferred shoes will be removed from said game and will not be allowed to participate until problem is rectified.
- Rule 8.** Kicking equipment (Block) for extra points and field goals shall not exceed 2 inches in total height.
- Rule 9.** Kicking equipment (Tee) for kick-offs and free kicks shall not exceed 3 inches in total height.

Article: M **Team Uniforms (Uniform Policy)**

- Rule 1.** Teams are required to have a uniformed look, meaning same basic color jerseys/tops with numbers on the front and/or back and the same basic color pants/shorts/bottoms. If a player does not meet these requirements they are unable to participate on the playing field until they are able to meet the requirements of the uniform policy. The referee may enforce a penalty or penalties within the guidelines listed in **SECTION; Article M; Rule 2 – 7.**
- Rule 2.** Pants/shorts/bottoms must contrast the color of the flag and shall not have any pockets. If pockets are present they must be taped or they must be removed or replaced.
- Rule 3.** In the event two (2) competing teams have the same basic color jersey the home team will have the choice of which jersey they would like to wear. The referee for that game and/or tournament director has full discretion on implementing the rule within the guidelines of sportsmanship and fair play. The referee or tournament director may also devise a solution that may require the home team to yield their choice of uniforms and penalize the opposing team a maximum of 15 yards per half for failure to fully comply with the uniform policy provided after the home team has yielded their choice of jersey the opposing team is able to meet the requirements of the uniform policy. If the opposing team still cannot meet the requirements of the uniform policy the referee at his discretion may remove each player on the opposing team from the playing field who does not comply with the uniform policy in addition to the penalty yardage already enforced. The implementation of this rule may be applied to an individual(s) lieu of enforcing the yardage for the team penalty.

- a.) During pool play games if a home team is not designated then the home team will be decided by a coin toss.
- b.) The referee at his discretion may require a uniform to be adjusted in order to uphold the uniform policy and the safety guidelines.
- c.) If a team player does not maintain a uniformed look they may be removed from the game or receive a failure to comply penalty for each incident until they are not able to comply with the rules listed in **SECTION I; Article M**.
- d.) A player may request special participation from the referee or tournament director due to a damaged or tainted uniform provided the player(s) put forth a reasonable effort to comply with the uniform policy prior to, during, and/or after a previous game.

- Rule 4.** Tournament Directors and or staff will not be responsible for distribution of scrimmage vests, teams will be required to maintain a uniformed look, even if it means not wearing jerseys and wearing similar colored tops instead.
- Rule 5.** The lack of a uniformed look for the team will solicit a 15 yard penalty at the beginning of each half at the discretion of the Referee.
- a.) The implementation of this rule may be applied to an individual(s) which will force the individual(s) to leave the playing field in lieu of enforcing the penalty yardage. This implantation is applicable only if the individual(s) asked to leave the playing field leave in a timely manner and the result of their departure places the remaining team members on the field within the uniform policy.
 - b.) If the team in violation of the uniform policy is unable to accommodate the requirements of the uniform policy the referee at his discretion may enforce the failure to comply penalty for each half.
- Rule 6.** Jerseys should be tucked in at all times and should not at any giving point during the game cover any portion of the flags or flag belt. Players with un-tucked jerseys may nullify defensive holding penalties against the ball carrier as described in **SECTION II; Article E; Rule 1; g and h**
- Rule 7.** Half cut jersey shall not extend past the waistline nor cover any portion of the flags or flag belt.

Article: N **Roster Limits**

- Rule 1.** Team Roster limits for all MCFFU/USSSA sanctioned events shall be set at (30) Players for 9 Man Ineligible (A-Pro).
- Rule 2.** Team Roster limits for all MCFFU/USSSA sanctioned events shall be set at (30) Players for 9 Man Ineligible (B-Comp).
- Rule 3.** At the discretion of the Tournament Director, roster limits can be expanded up to Thirty (35) players for 9 Man Ineligible (A) for a fee of thirty (\$30.00) dollars per additional player. The additional fees shall be added to the normal tournament fee for that particular tournament.
- Rule 4.** At the discretion of the Tournament Director, roster limits can be expanded up to Thirty (35) players for 9 Man Ineligible (B) for a fee of thirty (\$30.00) dollars per additional player. The additional fees shall be added to the normal tournament fee for that particular tournament.

Article: O **Regulation Time of Play**

The official playing time for the game is always on the field maintained by the designated official for that game. The designated official if not the Referee should be indicated at the coin toss. If game clocks or scoreboards are available then a designated time keeper pre approved by The MCFFU/USSSA tournament staff or Referee (White Hat) will operate the game clocks or scoreboard.

- Rule 1.** All games shall not exceed forty eight (48) minutes of regular game time monitored by an official or designee responsible for the official game clock. Twenty four (24) minutes of regular "game time" per half (2) or quarters (4) is the maximum time allowed for a sanctioned MCFFU/USSSA 9-Man Ineligible game.
- Rule 2.** The 1st half is a "running clock" stopping only for officials and team's timeouts.
- a.) The first half may also use a regulation 2 minute clock concluding the 1st half if mandated by the tournament staff prior to the start of the first game of the tournament.
 - i. The decision for the regulation clock during the 1st half must be made prior to the start of the first game of the tournament.
 - ii. During penalties the game clock may stop and then start at the snap of the ball if the referee determines that a team is gaining an advantage by committing penalties during the game. This rule may apply during the regular (running clock) playing time and prior to the "regulation time" of the last 2 minutes of the 1st half.
 - b.) The first half may also use a regulation 1 minute clock concluding the 1st half if mandated by the tournament staff prior to the start of the first game of the tournament.

- i. The decision for the regulation clock during the 1st half must be made prior to the start of the first game of the tournament.
 - ii. During penalties the game clock may stop and then start at the snap of the ball if the referee determines that a team is gaining an advantage by committing penalties during the game. This rule may apply during the regular (running clock) playing time and prior to the “regulation time “of the last 1 minute of the 1st half.
 - c.) The first half may also use a modified 2 minute regulation clock where the clock will stop momentarily for all penalties and then restart on the ready for play whistle.
 - i. The modified regulation clock in the 1st half will operate per the officials judgment under the advantage / disadvantage guidelines of a normal game have regulated time per the official’s discretion.
 - d.) If quarters are used in lieu of halves then the clock will start immediately on the ready for play whistle to start the 2nd quarter and 4th quarter unless a time is used to stop the clock.
 - e.) Defensive penalties during the regulation clock do not require the game clock to start on the snap. The officials will administer all advantage/disadvantage principles regarding the management of the game clock during regulated play.
- Rule 3.** The 2nd half is a “running clock” stopping only for official and team timeouts until the last 2 minutes of the game which will begin the “regulation clock”
- a.) The game clock will stop on “out of bounds” plays, timeouts, injuries, fair catches, penalties, 1st downs, and incomplete passes under two (2) minutes in the second half.
 - b.) During penalties the play clock will start back on the Referee’s ready for play whistle depending on the previous play or infraction.
 - c.) During penalties the play clock may start at the snap of the ball if the referee determines that a team is gaining an advantage by committing penalties during the game. This rule may apply during the regular (running clock) playing time and prior to the “regulation time “of the last 2 minutes of the 2nd half.
- Rule 4.** Two Minute Warning: The Referee will announce to both teams the game has reached the two (2) minute warning during each half.
- a.) During the 1st half the clock will stop at the announcement of the 2 minute warning. The Referee will give a short briefing of the game situation and the “running clock” will start back at the snap of the ball unless the 1st half regulation clock was altered by the tournament director prior to the first game of the tournament in which case the official will follow the guidelines of the altered regulation clock procedures noted in the rulebook. **See: SECTION I; Article O; Rule 2.**
 - b.) During the 2nd half the clock will stop at the announcement of the 2 minute warning. The Referee will give a short briefing of the game situation and the “regulation clock” will start back at the snap of the ball.
 - c.) If the 1 minute regulation clock is employed then the officials will announce to both teams that the game has reached the 1 minute warning at the end the 1st half.
- Rule 5.** In order to accommodate daylight restrictions or time restrictions required by the facilities being used, An MCFFU/USSSA Staff, Competition Committee member, tournament director or Head Referee can reduce the time of a half or both halves to either 22 minutes or 20 minutes followed by a modification for a regulation clock during the 1st half only. If the time of play is changed and/or modified both teams will be notified at the start of the game during the coin toss.
- Rule 6.** Half times will not exceed 5 minutes and cannot be less than 1 minute.

Article: P **Timeouts**

- Rule 1.** Each team is awarded three (3) timeouts per half.
- Rule 2.** Timeouts will only be recognized by the players on the field and granted if recognized by any game Official.
- Rule 3.** At least one (1) timeout must be utilized prior to the two minute (2) mark at the end of each half. Failure to utilize a timeout prior to the two minute (2) mark will cause the team to forfeit one (1) of their remaining timeouts for that half. A team cannot carry 3 time outs into the 2 minute warning.
- Rule 4.** A timeout shall not exceed 30 seconds.
- Rule 5.** Consecutive timeouts by any team is permissible provided the team have the timeouts available.
- Rule 6.** Calling timeouts when all are exhausted is considered a delay of game and will draw a 5 yard penalty or possible a 15 yard penalty for excessive delay of game.
- Rule 7.** Equipment and injury timeouts are at the Officials’ discretion, play will resume on the ready whistle depending on the previous play prior to the Official’s timeout.

Article: Q **Overtime Play**

- Rule 1.** There is no overtime play in tournament games using the “pool play” format during the first day. The games can end in a tie.
- Rule 2.** Overtime is allowed on the single elimination day of “pool play” tournament games only.
- Rule 3.** In the event a game is tied at the end of regulation play, the start of each possession in overtime will be the 20 yard line” going in” with 4 downs to score and each team having a chance to score per overtime period.
- Rule 4.** One timeout will be awarded to each team per overtime period. Timeouts will not carry over from regulation play.
- Rule 5.** There will be an intermission period of no more than one (1) minute.
- Rule 6.** Only the offensive team can score during overtime. All interceptions, missed field goals or extra points, blocked field goals or extra points will be blown dead.
- Rule 7.** A coin toss will determine the 1st possession of the overtime period(s) with the team winning the coin toss having the choice to play offense or defense first. The team losing the coin toss for overtime will have the choice of which end of the field the entire overtime period(s) will be played. In the event of a 2nd overtime, the losing team of the initial coin toss will automatically play defense or offense depending on the original decision by the team winning the initial coin toss to start the overtime period. This process will continue to alternate if overtime play continues until a winner is decided by the overtime guidelines listed in **SECTION I; Article Q; Rule 1-8** with the exception of championship games.

The overtime protocol for all non-championship games is:

- a.) Each team will have a set of down(s)(4) for each overtime period barring any penalties or score.
 - b.) Each team will receive 1 timeout per overtime period for the 1st and 2nd overtime periods only.
 - c.) All penalties will be enforced the exact same way they are during the game prior to the overtime period(s)
 - d.) A team has the choice to attempt an extra point conversion for 1 or 2 points after a score during the 1st overtime period.
 - e.) A team only has the choice to attempt a 2 point conversion during the 2nd overtime period.
 - f.) **If the score is still tied after the 2nd overtime is completed the game will enter into a 3rd overtime period in which each team will alternate extra point conversion attempts until a winner is decided. These attempts by both teams will be called “series”. The alternating possession will continue from the previous over time periods and carry over to the series in the 3rd overtime period with alternating “series” until a winner is determined.**
 - i. **The series will start with each team getting a chance at an extra point conversion attempt. It may be either for 1 or 2 points depending on that team’s choice.**
 - ii. **The game will continue with consecutive series in the 3rd overtime period with each team having an attempt per series until a winner is determined.**
 - iii. **During the 3rd overtime the series will alternate possessions in the same manner as full overtime periods.**
- Rule 8.** Field goals are allowed as a scoring option during overtime. Field goal attempts will follow the same guidelines during regulation play with the exception of a missed or blocked field goal attempt cannot be returned for a score during overtime. The attempt will be considered no good and there will be a change of possession or end of the game.
- a.) Extra point kicking attempts are allowed during the 3rd overtime period however the successful kicking attempt can only score 1 point.
- Rule 9.** No Championship games will be decided by **SECTION I; Article Q; Rule 7; f.** Championship games will be determined by full overtime periods until a winner is determined.
- a.) Each team will have a set of down(s) for each overtime period barring any penalties or score.
 - b.) The 1st overtime period will require the teams to attempt a 1 or 2 point extra point conversion. After the 1st overtime period the teams will be required to attempt 2 point conversions for the succeeding overtime period(s) until a winner is determined.
 - c.) The starting possession per overtime period will alternate after the completion of each overtime period if the game remains tied.
 - d.) The championship game over time period(s) will follow the same guidelines as the regular overtime period regarding timeouts and intermission **SEE SECTION I; Article Q; Rule 1-6.**

Article: R **Game Start Time**

- Rule 1.** The game will start no later than eight minutes after the designated time set in the official tournament schedule (The first game of the day receives a 15 minute maximum delay only), after which it will be the Referee's discretion to forfeit the game.
- Rule 2.** Prior to the start of the game the officials may conduct an equipment check involving each team lining up on their side line with a game day official requesting to see the bottom of the cleats, uniform, and flag belts properly fitted, sonic flags properly secured and free of tampering.

Article: S **Speaking Captains**

- Rule 1.** Prior to the start of each game, the Referee will ask each team to designate the speaking captain(s) for the game. The designated player will be the sole representative for team decisions during the entire game and can only be changed if said the said player is disqualified from game or injured.
- Rule 2.** Each team may have an offensive captain; defensive captain and a non-playing sideline coach/captain.
- Rule 3.** Sideline coaches are permitted and must identify themselves prior to the start of any game.
- Rule 4.** Sideline coaches are permitted to solicit a rule clarification from the Referee only but cannot relay a decision to said Referee directly.
- Rule 5.** Speaking Captains can refer to the coach prior to deciding the benefit of a Referee's infraction explanation. Speaking Captains initial decision is irrevocable.

Article: T **Coin Toss**

- Rule 1.** The Referee shall conduct the coin toss duties and designate the "Caller" prior to the actual coin toss. The designated Player/Coach/team representative must make the decision while the coin is in the air. Failure to do so will automatically award the non-calling team the winner of the coin toss. The team winning the coin toss will have the choice(s) to take possession of the ball, defend a particular goal while conceding possession or defer their choice until the second half of said game. The team losing the coin toss will have opposite choices with the exception of the option to defer.
- Rule 2.** A team arriving late on the field prior to the scheduled start time will forfeit their choices and will automatically lose the coin toss.
- Rule 3.** Captains not appearing for the coin toss will automatically lose the coin toss.

Article: U **Starting the Game**

- Rule 1.** The clock will start no later than 1 minute after the coin toss regardless if the teams have initiated play.
- Rule 2.** Kick offs are at the discretion of the tournament director. In the event kick offs are not exercised during a tournament, the ball shall be placed on the twenty five (25) yard line on regulation size fields at the start of each possession, game and half.
- a.)** The decision for kick offs must be made prior to the beginning of the first game for the tournament and enforced for all games during the entire duration of the tournament.
- Rule 3.** After halftime the clock will start on the Referee's ready whistle after a 1 minute kick-off warning.

Article: V **Possession**

- Rule 1.** A team with possession of the ball will have four (4) consecutive downs to advance it's possession to the next zone earning a new set of downs. This will continue until the possessing team scores or fails to advance the ball to the next zone for four more downs.
- Rule 2.** On any down except for 4th down a team can utilize a scrimmage kick (punt) to surrender possession without declaring to the Referee, except on fourth down which the team in possession must declare.
- a.)** The defense will have no rushing restrictions on non-declared punts / legal kicks.
- b.)** The offense will have no alignment restrictions regarding the center and guards on non- declared punts / free kicks.
- c.)** The offense will not have any release restrictions regarding players leaving before the punt on non-declared punts / legal kicks.

Rule 3. On 4th down, a team must declare its option to punt or play to the Referee (White Hat), which will then be declared as official decision unless a timeout is utilized by the possessing team to change the declaration. Once the offense has declared they are punting all punting guidelines will be enforced for that play.

Article: W **Advancement**

- Rule 1.** The ball carrier cannot dive to advance the ball in order to gain an advantage. The Interpretation of this rule will be at the sole discretion of the officials.
- Rule 2.** The ball may be extended for extra gain to cross a plane for advancement or score; it will take precedence over the ball carrier's body. The spot of the ball is at the discretion of the officials.

Article: X **Scoring**

- Rule 1. Touchdowns (6):** By run or pass, a team can score a maximum of six (6) points for each score at any given time of the game.
- Rule 2. Extra points (1 or 2):** Are determined by yardage. If goal posts or substitutes are available at the field location, extra point kicks can only score **1** point regardless of where the ball is placed for the extra point. m good, I sure miss my sister
- a.) An offensive team captain will declare one (1) point or two (2) points to the official and cannot be altered without calling an offensive timeout.
 - b.) The referee / official are responsible for the spot of ball and field announcement once a decision is declared.
 - c.) Rushing restrictions do apply on all extra point kicking attempts once declared. **See: Legal Kicks - SECTION II; Article R; Rule 2; a - i**
 - d.) One (1) point when set at the three (3) yard line by run, pass or kick.
 - e.) Two (2) points when set at the 10 yard line by run or pass.
 - f.) A defensive player may advance to the opponent's end zone on a turnover during a **run or pass** extra point attempt for **2 points** or a **blocked extra point kicking attempt** except for the overtime period in which case the attempt will be "no good".
- Rule 3. Field Goals (3):** If goal posts, approved portable goal post or soccer goal post are available at the field location; field goals can be attempted for 3 points.
- Rule 4. Safety (2):** A team without possession of the ball (Defense) can score by de-flagging an offensive player in the possessing team's end zone or benefiting from an offensive penalty in the end zone.
- a.) If the offensive team gets trapped and is de-flagged in its own end zone with the preceding spot established beyond the goal line the defensive team scores 2 points.
 - b.) If the offensive team drops the ball or commits a penalty in their end zone with preceding spot established beyond the goal line the defensive team scores 2 points.
 - c.) If a player on the defense gains possession of the ball in the end zone and is de-flagged there, it is a touchback, not a safety.
 - i. If a player makes an interception outside of the end zone and his momentum carries him into the end zone and he is de-flagged in the end zone the team making the interception will get the ball at the spot of the interception.
 - ii. If a player makes an interception outside of the end zone and retreats on his own initiative into his own end zone, where he is de-flagged, it is a safety for the other team.
- Rule 5. Returned Extra Points (2):** The defense returning the **run, pass or blocked extra point kicking attempt** during regulation play may be awarded 2 points if the ball carrier for the defense reaches the opposing team's end zone before he is de-flagged.

Article: Y **Mercy Rule**

- Rule 1.** There is no mercy rule during pool play games
- Rule 2.** If the point differential reaches **18 points** within the two minute mark of the second half, the game will automatically end no matter who owns the possession.
- Rule 3.** If the point differential reaches **36 points** at any given point of the game, it will be considered a "Skunk" and will end no matter who owns the next possession.

SECTION II. BASIC RULES OF THE GAME

Article: A **Blocking**

Rule 1. You are allowed to implore multiple styles of blocking:

- a.) Hands extended outward, palms down fingers upward between shoulders and waist frame only
- b.) Chest to chest
- c.) 2 on 1 block down field and at the line of scrimmage.
- d.) Protect yourself with a forearm during block (**Must not extend forearm to “restricted areas”**)
- e.) Block a defender from behind if the original engagement from the front was never broken and the defender spins or turns while the blocker maintains contact the entire block.

Rule 2. While blocking a player you are not allowed to:

- a.) **Hold:** Grabbing the jersey or defender’s body frame outside of shoulders, pulling, hooking or grabbing the shirt inside of the shoulders and not moving with the defender to stay engaged with the block. Grasping, hooking, or pulling the arm or any part of the defenders body.
 - i. Pull
 - ii. Hook
 - iii. Hug
 - iv. Lay on a downed defender
- b.) Elbow or “upward flipper” block.
- c.) Lead with the head.
- d.) Make contact against a player above the shoulders or below the waist.
- e.) Hit a player in the back if contact was broken from frontal engagement or never established.
- f.) Trip.
- g.) Crack back on a player when the ball carrier is down field and will not be de-flagged by the cracked player.
- h.) Leave feet to block.
- i.) Clip.

Article: B **Capture**

Rule 1. When the flag(s) is **CLEARLY** taken from the ball carrier, the play is considered dead and a new line of scrimmage will be established.

Rule 2. The defender who de-flags a ball carrier must immediately hold the flag(s) above his head for clarification and general spotting of the ball.

Rule 3. The defender must attempt to give the ball carrier back his flag(s) after capture.

Rule 4. Purposely throwing the flag(s) away from the ball carrier after capture may result in a delay of game or unsportsmanlike like penalty.

Article: C **Catching**

Rule 1. A legal catch by either an offensive or defensive player is showing complete control of the ball with **one (1)** foot in bounds and either making a football move after controlling the ball or falling to the ground without the ball hitting the ground at all while still in bounds.

Rule 2. If the receiver is air born and lands on the ground in bounds then the receiver must maintain control of the ball after hitting the ground with the ball not touching the field.

Rule 3. A receiver making a catch near the sideline must completely control the ball while inbounds and show complete control while the player is falling out of bounds even when they hit the ground. If the ball comes out after the receiver hits the ground the catch is no good.

Article: D **Chucking Zone**

Rule 1. The chucking zone is five (5) yards off the line of scrimmage, where a defender can make contact with an eligible receiver.

Rule 2. The defender may chuck the eligible receiver as many times as they can with in the 5 yards.

Rule 3. Contact outside of the chucking zone is illegal contact and may result in a penalty.

Article: E **De- Flagging**

Rule 1. Flag removal

- a.) The offensive player must have full possession of the ball before they can be legally de-flagged.
- b.) **The defender must make a “legitimate attempt” at the flag(s) for the de-flag by reaching for the flag(s) at all times with both hands and by keeping his head and shoulders up during contact for the de-flag attempt.**
- c.) If the ball carrier hits the ground as a result of a “legitimate attempt” by the defender the ball will be dead at the spot the ball carrier hits the ground.
- d.) If the flag belt falls of the ball carrier during any contact by the defender the ball will be spotted at the point of contact by the defender.
- e.) **If the ball carrier hits the ground on his own he must be touched by a defender with 1 hand or 2 while any part of the ball carrier’s body is still on the ground with the exception of his feet.**
- f.) A player cannot remove his own flag belt during a play.
- g.) A defender cannot illegally hold, grab or prevent a runner from advancing when attempting to de-flag a ball carrier.
- h.) **Grabbing the ball carrier’s jersey around the waist area (only) that is not tucked in order to de-flag the ball carrier is legal providing the defender is legitimately attempting to de-flag the ball carrier.**
- i.) **Grabbing the shorts or pockets of a ball carrier’s bottoms is legal only if the defender is making a legitimate attempt for the de-flag and he does not significantly control the ball carrier during his attempt at the de-flag.**
- j.) **A holding penalty enforced on the defense during a de-flag attempt of the ball carrier will be enforced 10 yards from the end of the play and a replay of the down if the penalty yardage does not reach the zone to gain.**
- k.) **If the ball carrier has only 1 flag on or no flags on at all then the defender must touch the ball carrier with two (2) hands between the shoulders and knees or pull the remain flag if there is just one (1) flag.**

Article: F **Delay of Game**

- Rule 1.** After the spot is set and the ready for play whistle has been blown, the team in possession of the ball has 25 seconds to begin a play, free kicks and legal kicks are included.
- Rule 2.** If a player intentionally delays the game by throwing an opponent’s flag(s) or, kicking an opponent’s ball away from the nearest player, detaining a player from joining his team, arguing with an official, deliberately advancing a ball after it is blown dead by an official or any other flagrant attempt(s) to delay the game, a penalty will be assessed.
- Rule 3.** Players will not attempt to discuss a call or ruling with the official(s) without calling for a timeout.
- Rule 4.** Excessive delay game action(s) will result in a flagrant delay of game penalty which is a 15 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and may be added to an existing infraction as a dead ball penalty.
- Rule 5.** Flagrant delay of game penalties are not automatic first downs but may warrant a stoppage of the game clock or an automatic 10 second run-off the game clock in conjunction with the penalty yardage accessed if the offending team gains a decisive advantage by intentionally committing the penalty.
- a.) The clock may start on the snap of the ball pending the official’s judgment.
 - b.) The clock may start on the ready whistle pending the official’s judgment.
- Rule 6.** The kicking team has 1 minute to kick off the ball, If team A (kicking team) scores after the conclusion of the extra point attempt(s) team A (kicking team) must kick off the ball by the 1:00 min mark or be penalized 5 yards and charged a timeout. If team A (kicking team) have no timeouts then team B (receiving team) has the options of taking the ball at the 50 yard line or penalizing team A (kicking team) an 10 additional yards and forcing the kick off.
- a.) If the kicking team is penalize by not kicking the ball with in 1 minute during the running clock prior to regulation time then the timeout charge to the kicking team only stops the clock until the Officials marks of the penalty. The ready whistle will restart the clock.
 - b.) If the kicking team does not have any timeouts and the receiving team chooses the option for the kicking team to be penalized an additional 10 yards the clock will continue to run unless the kicking team is gaining a decisive advantage in which case the referee(white Hat) will determine when the clock is to start and/or stop.
 - c.) During regulation time the 1 minute kicking clock is still applicable for all kick-offs.

PENALTY EXAMPLE: 4:00 minutes on the game clock ball marked at the team A’s 40 yard line and **team A** does not kick ball before 3:00 minutes on the game clock. **Team A** will be penalized 5 yards moving the restraining line to **team A’s** 35 yard line and charged a timeout. If **team A** has no timeouts **team B** has the options of taking ball at 50 yd line or penalizing **team A** 10 additional yards moving the restraining line to **team A’s** 25 yard line and forcing the kick off.

Article: G **Diving**

Rule 1. Diving to pull a flag is legal.

Rule 2. Diving to advance the ball gaining an advantage against the defender or for extra yardage is illegal.

Rule 3. Diving to block is illegal.

Article: H **Encroachment / OffSides/ Neutral Zone Infraction**

Rule 1. Any part of the defenders body in the neutral zone when the ball is snapped is considered **Offsides** and may be a free play for the offense.

Rule 2. Any part of the offensive player's body in the neutral zone excluding the center when the ball is snapped is **Offsides** and the play will be blown dead.

Rule 3. A defender in the neutral zone and making contact with an offensive player prior to the ball being snapped is **Encroachment** and will be blown dead by the official. The penalty for encroachment may be declined by the offense.

Rule 4. If a defender has any part of his body in the neutral zone which makes the offensive player feign or a defensive player on the line of scrimmage simulates the start of the play by sudden movements with the sole purpose to draw a false start then a **Neutral Zone Infraction** penalty may be called depending on the judgment of the official. The penalty may be declined by the offense.

a.) The offense of player that feigns must be on the same side of the ball as the defender committing the neutral zone infraction if the false start involves only a receiver otherwise it is a penalty on the defense.

Rule 5. Consecutive Encroachment / Offsides/ Neutral Zone Infraction penalties will be 10 yard penalties in which case the offense has to accept and continue to accept if the penalties continue in succession.

Article: I **End zone Celebrations**

Rule 1. End zone celebrations are acceptable with in the context of the MCFFU/USSSA sportsmanship guidelines

Rule 2. Penalty for excessive celebration can be assessed on the extra point try, the succeeding kick off or succeeding spot in lieu of kick offs.

Article: J **Extended Playing Time**

Rule 1. An un-timed down(s) may extend the 1st half, or ending of the game only when the last timed down one of the following occurs:

a.) A touchdown was scored and the try for the extra point is attempted as a part of the same half or the end of the game if the touchdown ties the score and the extra point try will decide the game.

b.) During pool play the team scoring a touchdown is attempting their extra point try.

c.) There was an inadvertent whistle and the down is to be replayed as a part of the half.

d.) Penalties committed by the defense at the expiration of the 1st half or end of the game.

e.) There was a fair catch interference and the offended team accepts an awarded fair catch. the half may be extended and the ball put in play by a snap.

f.) If there was fair catch interference and the offended team accepts the distance penalty the half will be extended and the ball put in play by a snap.

g.) **Penalties on the offensive team will not extend the half or game if the defensive team accepts the penalty regardless if the offensive team scores.**

Article: K **Fair Catch**

Rule 1. The receiver who has no desire to advance the ball must signal that he is attempting a fair catch by extending the arm above the head and wave from side to side while the ball is in the air.

a.) The receiver must be allowed to catch the ball even if the ball is bobbled without interference from the kicking team.

b.) Once the ball is touched by the receiver he is still protected under the fair catch guidelines.

- c.) If the receiver deflects the ball away from his body and is not in position to complete the catch then another member of the receiving team may receive the ball but not advance the ball or the kicking team may intercept the deflected ball for a turnover but not advance the ball.
- d.) If the player signaling the fair catch does not catch the ball then another teammate may receive the ball but not advance it.
- e.) The player signaling the fair catch may not make any contact with the kicking team before the ball is touch by another player.

Rule 2. Once a fair catch is declared the player signaling the fair catch may not return the ball if the ball is caught or a flagrant delay of the game penalty will be accessed.

Article: L **First Downs**

Rule 1. First downs will be awarded when the offensive team advances the ball from one 20 yard increment zone to the next 20 yard increment zone with in 4 downs or change of possession.

Rule 2. First downs may be awarded by advancement due to the application of a penalty which advances the ball in to the next 20 yard increment zone.

Rule 3. An offensive team may be awarded an automatic first down as a result of selective penalties by the defense.

- a.) Roughing the passer.
- b.) Roughing the center during a Legal Kick.
- c.) Roughing the center.
- d.) Roughing the kicker.
- e.) Roughing the holder.
- f.) Defensive pass interference.
- g.) Defensive holding (eligible receiver).
- h.) Illegal contact.
- i.) Personal foul on the defense.

Rule 4. Gaining a first down during a live ball penalty against the offensive team can not be awarded unless the final spot of the ball is in the zone to gain after the penalty yardage has been marked off.

Article: M **Flag(s) Falls off Inadvertently**

Rule 1. If the ball carrier flag(s) falls off on its own without any contact from the defender the play is to continue and the ball carrier must be touched with 2 hands between the shoulders to knee or the remaining flag pulled.

Rule 2. **If the ball carrier loses a flag(s) moments after contact by a defender then the play should be blown dead by the official and the ball spotted where the contact for the de-flag was made per the officials judgment regardless of where the flag falls off.**

Rule 3. If a defender intercepts the ball and does not have any flags on at all the ball will be blown dead at the spot and the defense will retain the ball at that spot barring any pre-possession penalties.

Rule 4. If an **eligible** receiver does not have on any flags to start the play a penalty can be thrown for illegal equipment.

Rule 5. If an **eligible** receiver does not have on any flags to start the play and receives the ball; the two (2) hand touch rules will apply and an illegal equipment penalty may be accessed from the original line of scrimmage with a replay of the down.

Rule 6. If an **ineligible** lineman receives a tipped pass the ball is blown dead at the spot of possession. **See: Offensive Line**

Article: N **Flag Guarding**

Rule 1. A player may not guard against being de-flagged by using any part of his body past his flag belt.

Rule 2. A player's natural running motion causing a part of the body to temporarily break the plain of the flag belt may not be called by the official as flag guarding.

- a.) It is the official's judgment regarding natural running motion.

- b.) The official may over rule natural motion if he feels that the ball carrier gained a decisive advantage over the defender and the running motion caused a part of the ball carriers body to block the de-flag attempt.
- c.) Bending over to make football moves may not be considered a natural running motion.
- d.) Quick steps to cut by dropping hips, short hops to cut, and legal spin moves may be considered a natural running motion.
- e.) Contact made by a defender placing the runner in an unusual position may not be considered a natural running motion but must be considered on attempts for the de-flag in which the ball carrier may need to maintain balance to gain additional yardage.

Rule 3. Jumping to throw the ball by the quarterback/passers is legal.

- a.) If the quarterback/passers jumps while being pressed by a defender and does not throw the ball it will be consider flag guarding.
- b.) If the quarterback/passers jumps any contact made in attempt to de-flag will not be considered a personal foul as long as the contact is not excessive or to the arm and/or above the shoulders of the quarterback/passers.

Article: O **Flag Tampering**

Rule 1. Tampering with the flag belt and/or flag(s) in any way including tying, using foreign and non foreign materials or manipulating the manufacture's design in order to gain an unfair advantage will result in a 15-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage, loss of down, player ejection for that game and the next game as well as the removal of a score if applicable.

- a.) The final examination of a suspected tampered flag must be done by MCFFU/USSSA staff, competition committee member, tournament director or referee (White Hat) before the ruling listed in **SECTION II; Article O; Rule 1** can be applied.
- b.) Items listed in **SECTION I; Article L; Rule 1,2 and 5** maybe governed under the guidelines in **SECTION II; Article O** per the official's discretion provided the player/team involved in the infraction was warned at least 2 times to properly secure or change their flag belt or flag(s).
- c.) Any alleged flag tampering incidents that cannot be clearly defined as flag tampering but the equipment involved in the allegation is questionable the referee (White Hat) per his discretion may have the equipment removed with no penalty.

Article: P **Inadvertent Whistle**

Rule 1. The whistle blown by any official will end the play regardless of the circumstances.

Rule 2. If the whistle is blown inadvertently the team with the possession of the ball prior to the whistle will have the option of replaying the down or taking result of the play.

- a.) The replaying of the down supersedes all subsequent actions including all live ball penalties with the exception of a flagrant 1 or flagrant 2 personal foul or unsportsmanlike penalties in which case the penalty may be enforced excluding the yards with the official(s) levying a penalty for game time playing suspension and/or an ejection or the penalty being enforced with the yards pending the officials judgment. .
- b.) Taking the result of the play will include all subsequent actions including all live ball penalties as a result of the said play.

Article: Q **Kick Offs**

Rule 1. Starts the game, each half or after a score and extra point attempt.

Rule 2. The ball can be kicked using a kicking tee, held upright on the field by a member of the kicking team, or placed on the field and kicked.

Rule 3. Barring any penalties the kicking team will kick from their own 40 yard line.

Rule 4. Teams line up 10 yards apart from each other.

Rule 5. There are no onside kicks.

Rule 6. The receiving team will always receive the ball (unless the receiving team catches the ball, clearly has possession and laterals to a teammate, which is intercepted by player on kicking team and can be returned for a score.

Rule 7. The receiving team will always receive the ball unless the kicked ball caroms off a receiving team's player and is caught by a member of the kicking team before the ball hits the ground which will be the kicking teams ball at the spot the ball was possessed.

- Rule 8.** The receiving team will always receive the ball unless the receiver muffs the ball into the hands of a member of the kicking team before the ball hits the ground which will be the kicking teams ball at the spot the ball was possessed.
- Rule 9.** All Kicked balls must stay in bounds If kicked out of bounds a penalty will be accessed.
- If a kick off does not travel past the receiving team's 40 yard line the receiving team may elect to spot the ball at their 35 yard line or spot the ball where it went out of bounds.
 - If the ball is kicked out of bounds beyond the receiving team's 40 yard line the ball automatically is spotted at the receiving team's 35 yard line and the receiving team will have a 1st down and 5 yards to go for a first down.
 - If a penalty is accessed and the kicking line is moved either way all penalty enforcement for kicking the ball out of bounds will apply as normal unless excessive penalties move the kicking line to or beyond the receiving teams 35 yard line.
 - If a penalty or penalties moves the kicking line to or beyond the receiving teams 35 yard line a ball kicked out of bounds will give the receiving team a choice to either receive the ball 15 yards from the kicking line or take the ball.
 - There are only 3 scenarios for a re-kick in which case on any of the penalties the team benefiting from the penalty may decline the penalty.
 - In the case of an off sides penalty on the kicking team the receiving team has a choice of a 5 yard penalty added to the end of the run or a 5 yard penalty enforced from the kicking team's restraining line and a re-kick.
 - In the case of an illegal formation on the return team {not enough players on the restraining line (5)}, the kicking team has a choice of a 5 yard penalty enforced from the end of the run or a 5 yard penalty added to the kicking team's restraining line and a re-kick.
 - Offsetting live ball penalties on the kick-off will result in a re-kick.
- Rule 10. KICK OFF TEAM**
- The kicking team must remain behind the restraining line until the ball is kicked.
 - After the ball is kicked and the kicking team catches and posses the ball or touches the ball on the ground the ball will be dead at that spot where the receiving team will take possession of the ball (First down).
 - Has 1 minute to kick off the ball to start the game, half, after a score and/or extra point attempt(s).
- Rule 11. RECEIVING TEAM:**
- Must line up minimum of 5 player 10 yards from the kicking team's restraining line and within a half (1/2) yard of the receiving team's restraining line.
 - Any muffs will be dead at the spot
 - If the ball carrier muffs the ball forward the spot of the ball is where the ball carrier touched the ball
 - If the ball carrier muffs the ball backwards the spot of the ball is where the ball hits the ground.
 - The returning player has no "halo" but cannot be touched by a member of the kick off team prior to receiving the ball.
 - The returning player may not be interfered with during an attempt to catch the ball
- Rule 12. FREE KICK AFTER SAFTEY**
- Team must either punt the ball or kick the ball using a holder. A tee may not be used
 - The ball will be kicked from the team's 20 yard line barring any penalties with the receiving team lining up 10 yards from the kicking team's restraining line.
 - If the ball is kicked out of bounds the receiving team will have a choice to receive the ball **30 yards** from the kick or where the ball went out of bounds.

Article: R **Last Player Rule**

The last player rule is a judgment call by the official(s) regarding the defensive player gaining a decisive advantage by a penalty or unfair act(s) that was the sole reason(s) for the ball carrier not scoring once "inside" the 20 yard line. The rule can only be enforced "inside" the 20 yard line. The illegal act by the defender must begin "inside" the 20 yard line or the last player rule cannot be enforced. The ball carrier must have a "clear path" meaning the defensive player committing the penalty is not obstructing the ball carriers direct path to the end zone and the ball carrier has a reasonable opportunity to score.

- Rule 1.** Should the ball carrier be intentionally pushed out of bounds, tripped, held or intentionally tackled on a "breakaway" play by the last defender within the defending team's 20 yard line, the offensive team will be awarded the appropriate score depending on the scrimmage formation or legal kick attempted. This is a judgment call by the official regarding the intent of the defender and the definition of the ball carrier's "clear path".
- Rule 2.** There can be no score awarded if another defender other than the one that committed the penalty is in between the ball carrier and the goal line with in a reasonable position or radius to make an attempt for the de-flag.
- Rule 3.** All Last Player Rule applications must be after a conference between all officials.

Article: S **Legal Kicks (Scrimmage Kicks)**

Legal kicks have specific guidelines in MCFFU/USSSA games. Legal Kicks are “declared” punts, field goals, and extra point kicking attempts by a player on the team in possession of the ball.

Rule 1. PUNTING: The offensive team wishing to punt on any down must declare a punt in order for the punting rules to apply. If the team does not declare punt then the play will be treated as a normal play for the offense and defense regarding alignment, rushing, and release restrictions.

- a.) The team punting the ball must declare they are punting. If the team does not clearly declare to the Referee and the referee notifies the defense then the play is considered a regular offensive play with no rushing restrictions for the defense.
- b.) **The declaration on 4th down or any down to punt or not to punt cannot be change unless an offensive timeout is called prior to the play or the defensive team commits a penalty that changes the field position for the team possessing the ball. In this case the offensive captain may change his decision without using a time out.**
- c.) The punter cannot take a snap directly from the center; the snap must be a shot gun snap with the ball being snapped between the center's legs at a minimum of 5 yards. If the ball hits the ground during the snap or is dropped to the ground by the punting team the ball is dead at the spot and awarded to the receiving team at the spot where the ball hit the ground.
- d.) The center cannot be blocked until his **body is upright and the ball is kicked.**
- e.) Once declared the offense must punt the ball there are no fake punts.
- f.) The punting team must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage.
- g.) During a declared punt two (2) gunners **are** allowed to run down on the punt once the ball is snapped. The gunners are defined as the players closest to the side line on each side of the center. The rest of the punting team must wait until the ball is kicked.
- h.) The defense cannot rush the center/guard (**A Gap**) under no circumstances unless the linemen feet are not touching and the official has declared the gap eligible for rush after acknowledging the defenders request for clarification.
- i.) Five (5) players from the receiving team must be on the line of scrimmage during a declared punt.
- j.) There are no restrictions to the number of players who are allowed to rush on a declared punt.
- k.) Players from the receiving team can attempt to block the punt by rushing outside of the guards.
- l.) The center and guards feet must be touching otherwise the defense is allowed to rush the center/ guard (**A Gap**) on a declared punt.

Rule 2. EXTRA POINT – KICKING

- a.) The team kicking for the extra point must declare they are kicking. Once the decision is made it cannot be altered In anyway unless an **offensive** time out is called prior to the play. After the conclusion of a live ball play the decision cannot be changed. If the team does not clearly declare to the Referee and the Referee acknowledges the decision by announcing the choice to kick the play is considered a regular extra point attempt with no rushing restrictions for the defense and no faking guidelines for the offense. **There are no 2 point kicks.**
- b.) The kicking team must have at least 5 players on the line of scrimmage.
- c.) The center and guards feet must be touching.
- d.) The linemen and/or offensive players on the line of scrimmage are not allowed to interlock any part of their bodies.
- e.) The ball cannot touch the ground until it is placed on the ground by the holder.
- f.) The defense cannot rush the center/guard (**A Gap**) under no circumstances unless the linemen feet are not touching and the official has declared the gap eligible for rush after acknowledging the defender's request for clarification.
- g.) If the holder still has the ball in his possession while he is still on the ground then play is dead if the defender touches him with 1 or 2 hand while on the ground or de-flag him.
- h.) **Faking extra point kicking attempts are legal.**
 - i. Only the holder can initialize the “fake”.
 - ii. Once the holder moves from his position with the ball the rules apply for any ball carrier with the exception of roughing the passer during a pass attempt.
 - iii. He may advance the ball by running or passing.
 - iv. If the “fake” happens on an extra point and the ball is advanced to the end zone the offensive team will be awarded the 1 or 2 points depending on the original placement of the ball for the extra point kicking attempt.
 - v. Once the fake has been initiated by the holder there are no rushing restrictions for the defense.
- i.) **A defensive player may advance a turnover on a kicking attempt for a score.**
 - i. A faked extra point kicking attempt can be returned for a score if it is intercepted by a member of the defense.
 - ii. A blocked extra point kicking attempt may be advanced for a score as long as the ball does not touch the ground.
 - iii. A missed extra point kicking attempt cannot be returned for a score.

Rule 3. FIELD GOAL – KICKING

- a.) The team kicking the field goal must declare they are kicking. If the team does not clearly declare to the Referee in which case the referee notifies the defense, then the play is considered a regular play with no rushing restrictions for the defense and no faking guidelines for the offense.

- b.) **The declaration on any down to kick a field goal cannot be change unless an offensive timeout is called prior to the play or the defensive team commits a penalty that changes the field position for the team possessing the ball. In this case the offensive captain may change his decision without using a time out.**
- c.) The kicking team must have at least 5 players on the line of scrimmage.
- d.) The center and guards feet must be touching in order for the defensive rushing restrictions to be enforced.
- e.) The linemen and /or offensive players on the line of scrimmage are not allowed to interlock any part of their bodies.
- f.) The ball cannot touch the ground until it is placed on the ground by the holder.
- g.) The defense cannot rush the center/guard (**A Gap**) under no circumstances unless the linemen feet are not touching and the official has declared the gap eligible for rush after acknowledging the defender's request for clarification.
- h.) If the holder still has the ball in his possession while he is still on the ground then play is dead if the defender touches him with 1 or 2 hands while on the ground or de-flag him.
- i.) **Faking field goal kicking attempts are legal.**
 - i. Only the holder can initialize the "fake".
 - ii. Once the holder moves from his position with the ball the rules apply for any ball carrier with the exception of roughing the passer during a pass attempt.
 - iii. He may advance the ball by running or passing.
 - iv. If the "fake" happens on a field goal attempt and the ball is advanced to the end zone the offensive team will be awarded a touchdown.
 - v. Once the fake has been initiated by the holder there are no rushing restrictions for the defense.
- j.) **A defensive player may advance a blocked or missed field goal attempt for a touchdown.**
 - i. A faked field goal attempt can be returned for a score if it is intercepted by a member of the defense.
 - ii. If a blocked or missed kicked does not hit the ground or travels in the end zone without touching the ground it can be advanced by a member of the defense for a score.

Article: T **Line of Scrimmage**

- Rule 1.** There are two lines of scrimmage at the outset of each play: one that restricts the offense and one that restricts the defense. The area between the two lines (representing the length of the ball as extended to both sidelines) is called the neutral zone. Only the offensive player who snaps the ball is allowed to have any part of his body in the neutral zone.
- Rule 2.** The spot of the ball will determine the line of scrimmage after the ball has been declared dead by the game official (s)
- Rule 3.** A minimum of 5 offensive players must be on line of scrimmage and set for the offense at the snap.

Article: U **Offensive Line**

- Rule 1.** The center and 2 guards are ineligible and are not allowed to receive a forward pass, hand off, lateral or snap.
- Rule 2.** The offensive lineman must have at least one (1) of his shoulders (front part) parallel to the line of scrimmage per the official's judgment.
- Rule 3.** The center must be between the 2 guards with no offensive player occupying the space directly in front of them and may be more than 1 yard vertical from the line of scrimmage and 5 yard horizontal from the center to be considered on the line.
- Rule 4.** The linemen are allowed to come off the line for running plays immediately after the snap.
- Rule 5.** Offensive line players may not go down field (more than 2 yards) before the ball is thrown.
- Rule 6.** The offensive line is not eligible to receive the ball either by lateral or forward pass unless it is tipped. In this case the ball will be blown dead at the spot of possession by the ineligible player (offensive lineman).

Article: V **Pass Interference**

Pass interference is a judgment call by the official. When the ball is thrown a potential receiver should not have obstruction by an opposing player. This means their vision should not be blocked and physical contact is illegal. Players should be making a legitimate attempt to make a play on the ball in which case the player must be looking at or for the ball while in flight.

Rule 1. Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include but are not limited to

- a.) Contact by a defender who is not playing the ball and such contact restrict the receiver's opportunity to make the catch.
- b.) Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
- c.) Grabbing a receiver's arm(s) in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
- d.) Extending an arm across the body of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of whether the defender is playing the ball.
- e.) Cutting off the path of a receiver by making contact with him without playing the ball.
- f.) Hooking a receiver in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that it causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.
- g.) Face guarding with no attempt to turn and locate the ball.

Rule 2. Actions that do not constitute defensive pass interference include but are not limited to:

- a.) Incidental contact by a defender's hands, arms, or body when both players are competing for the ball or neither player is looking for the ball. If there is any question whether contact is incidental, the ruling shall be no interference.
- b.) Inadvertent tangling of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball
- c.) Laying a hand on a receiver that does not restrict the receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.

Rule 3. Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to:

- a.) Blocking downfield on a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage by an offensive player prior to the ball being touched.
- b.) Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off thus creating a separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
- c.) Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.

Rule 4. Actions that do not constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to:

- a.) Incidental contact by a receiver's hands, arms, or body when both players are competing for the ball or neither player is looking for the ball
- b.) Inadvertent touching of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball.
- c.) Contact that would normally be considered pass interference, but the ball is clearly uncatchable by involved players this does not permit the defender or receiver to make illegal contact to a player which may result in a personal foul and the penalty yardage assessed but not a spot foul and automatic first down for defensive pass interference and a loss of for offensive pass interference.

Rule 5. An "uncatchable" ruling may be given by the officials for any forward pass which will negate any possible "pass interference" call, however other penalties may be applied such as personal fouls as a result of contact to the restricted areas of an eligible receiver or any player not making an attempt to play the ball.

Article: W **Play Clock**

Rule 1. The play clock is 25 seconds which does not start until the Referee's ready for play whistle has been blown. The countdown of the play clock by the officials is a courtesy.

Rule 2. If the offense does not snap the ball before the play clock expires it will result in a penalty.

Rule 3. Either the Referee or the Back Judge will maintain the play clock.

Article: X **Roughing the Quarterback / Passer**

Rule 1. During the quarterback's pass drop and his throwing motion, the quarterback/passer **CANNOT** be touched above the upper waist. The defender should be attempting to de-flag the quarterback.

Rule 2. The quarterback's/passer's arm and hand may not be touched unless the ball is released and the defender contacting the quarterback/passer arm tipped the released ball prior to contact.

- Rule 3.** The defender cannot touch any part of the quarterback's/passers' arm, hand, shoulder or ball while the ball is still in the hand of the quarterback/passers. The ball is considered an extension of the quarterback's/passers' arm and hand.
- Rule 4.** A defender can attempt to block a pass as long as the quarterback's/passers' throwing motion is not interrupted by contact, to the quarterback's/passers' arm, hand or shoulder which includes excessive contact after the release or contact with the quarterback's/passers' "follow through" even if the "follow through" contacts a defender's arms or hands while the defender's is just raising his arms or hands in attempt to block the pass but does not make contact with the "released" ball.
- Rule 5.** The defender has the right to make a legal attempt to de-flag the quarterback/passers under the guide lines noted in the **Capture, De-Flagging, and Diving** sections of the rulebook.
- Rule 6.** A penalty will be assessed and if roughness is habitual per player or one team, ejection rules may apply.
- Rule 7.** If the quarterback/passers advances past the line of scrimmage, he is declared a runner and is no longer protected under the rules indicated in **SECTION II; Article W; Rules 1 - 5.**
- Rule 8.** Any penalty against the quarterback/passers behind the line of scrimmage is "roughing" and will be enforced the same as any other roughing penalty. This applies to holding penalties as well as personal foul penalties.

Article: Y **Running**

- Rule 1.** Ball carriers are required to run to a "clear field". Should the ball carrier run into a defensive player who has clearly established position a charging penalty maybe assessed. This is a judgment call by the official.
- Rule 2.** Ball carriers are allowed to:
- Hurdle over a downed player to avoid contact.
 - Spin.
 - Extend his arm with the ball in hand while running to gain better field position.
 - Compact body without extending body parts to absorb potential contact
 - Get up if they go to the ground on their own without contact by a defender or prior to being touched while on the ground by a defender.
 - Employ "natural running motion" to make football moves that are not reckless or potentially dangerous to any player on the field. **See: SECTION II; Article N; Rule 2; a – e**
 - Intentionally down the ball by going down on one knee with control of the ball and remain stationary for 1 second. Per the official's judgment the play will be blown dead.
- Rule 3.** Ball carriers are not allowed to:
- Flag Guard. **See: Flag Guarding**
 - Leave feet by "vertically" jumping, hurdling a defender not on the ground or diving to avoid a de-flag. **(Flag Guarding)**
 - Dive to advance the ball in order to gain extra yards or avoid a defender.
 - Diving with clear field from the playing field to the end zone in order to taunt his opponent. The score will be awarded and the penalty will be enforced on the extra point attempt.
 - Lower head or bend over in which either action gives the ball carrier a decisive advantage over a defender attempting a de-flag.
 - Charge.
 - Attempt to run after they have downed the ball. **See SECTION II; Article X; Rule 2; g**
- Rule 4.** If the ball carrier inadvertently touches the ball on the ground the play is considered dead.
- Rule 5.** If the ball carrier touches a knee on the ground the play is considered dead.
- Rule 6.** If the ball carrier does not have his jersey tucked in there can be no holding on the defense if the defender is making a legitimate attempt at the waist to de-flag the ball carrier.
- Rule 7.** If a ball carrier is in clear field and dives into the end zone in order to taunt the opposing team or celebrate the touchdown the score will stand but an unsportsmanlike penalty will be called and enforced on the extra point try or kick off.

Article: Z Rushing

Rule 1. Rushers are allowed to rush immediately at the snap of the ball.

Rule 2. Rushers **are allowed** to do the following:

- a.) Spin
- b.) Rip
- c.) Swim
- d.) Dip
- e.) Bull Rush
- f.) Use hands to discard blocker
- g.) Block pass attempt after the ball has completely left the passer's hand.

Rule 2. Rushers **are not allowed** to do the following:

- a.) Hit a player above his shoulders nor below his waist
- b.) Hold
- c.) Trip
- d.) Drive through the center prior to him raising his head or making an attempt to block.
- e.) Dive into a would be blocker
- f.) Tackle a player

Article: Z-1 Score Verification

The official will verify the equipment of the scoring player after each score in order for the score to be officially awarded to the scoring team. In each case the official is to check the player's flag or flag belt to verify the player did not gain an unfair advantage. The player is to go directly to the official if commanded without making any adjustment to his equipment including flag belt and clothing. Whether the act is intentional or unintentional the official may administer a penalty or spot the ball at a particular spot on the field and the subsequent yardage counts as it would in a regular playing situation with regards to first downs or a turn over on downs.

Rule 1. If the ball carrier's flag is disengaged and hanging on the belt or uniform it would be considered a de-flag by the defender who made the last contact with the ball carrier.

Rule 2. If the ball carrier is missing a flag or does not have any flags on at all then one or all of the following rules may apply.
See: SECTION I; Article E; Rule 1; i and SECTION II; Article M; Rule 1 - 5

Rule 3. The official may overturn a score and assess a penalty or spot the ball if the ball carrier gained an advantage due to unfair acts or tampering with the equipment (gear and uniform), flag(s), or flag belt prior to the official verifying the ball carrier's equipment.

Rule 4. Per the official's " judgment and discretion the ruling(s) per the guidelines listed in **SECTION II; Article; Z-1** maybe applied to the following:

- a.) Inserts for flag(s) incorrectly secured on the belt (**Inserts facing inward towards the ball carrier's body**)
- b.) Flag belt worn loosely to allow the belt to swivel.
- c.) Wearing a non approved flag (Sonic pop), mushroom flags are not permissible.
- d.) Flags not contrasting with the shorts/bottoms of the ball carrier.

Rule 5. If the ball carrier does not report to the official when commanded then the official may enforce a 15 yard penalty for an excessive delay of game on the kick off.

Article: Z- 2 Scrimmage Formations

Rule 1. At all times the team with possession must have at least five (5) players on the line of scrimmage. **See: Line of Scrimmage.**

Rule 2. At the start of a play, offensive players must be at least five (5) yards away from sideline in bounds.

Rule 3. An offensive player cannot enter the field of play when the formation is set for play by the center placing his hand on the ball ready to snap.

- Rule 4.** The team may not break the huddle with more than 9 man players.
- Rule 5.** If the quarterback takes a direct snap he must take a half step back or lateral before he moves forward or diagonal to run the ball himself. Violation of this rule is a 5 yard penalty for illegal offensive rush.
- Rule 6.** A player cannot exit the field on the opposing teams sideline or either end zone.
- Rule 7.** If a team motions a player, he will not be counted as one of the mandatory five (5) players on the line of scrimmage until he resets himself on the line.
- Rule 8.** A defensive team can have as many players on the line of scrimmage it chooses.
- Rule 9. If a defender is head up over the center he must be at least a half (1/2) yard back of the neutral zone.**
- Rule 10.** There are no defensive alignment restrictions other than what is noted in **Section II; Article Z-2; Rule 9.**
- Rule 11.** The center must snap the ball between his legs to legally start any scrimmage play or legal kick.

Article: Z- 3 Spot of the Ball

- Rule 1.** The position of the ball when de-flagged is the spot the official will place the ball for the next play It will not be the position where the ball carrier's flag was pulled, but rather the position of the ball according to the officials judgment .
- Rule 2.** The spot of the ball carrier if the ball is lost is where it lands if the ball falls backwards and where the ball carrier lost it from if the ball goes forward.
- Rule 3.** The officials will use markers to indicate the spot of the ball and the line of scrimmage. The marker(s) may be set by the officials anywhere on the field within 5 yards of the sidelines. Once the maker is set the offensive team may legal set their formation anywhere along the line of scrimmage provided the formation is within the guidelines of **SECTION II; Article T; Rule 1 - 3, Article U; Rule 1 - 3, and Article Z–2; Rule 1 – 7.**

Article: Z- 4 Stiff Arming

- Rule 1.** Stiff arming is legal and may be use to ward off a defender attempting a de-flag. The stiff arm must be with an open hand and cannot at anytime be above the shoulders or below the upper waist of the defender. A legal stiff arm is a judgment call in which case all intentional and unintentional contact made as a result of the stiff arm is at the full discretion of the officials.
- Rule 2.** Ball carriers that are using a stiff arm **are allowed to:**
- Extend their free arm with an open hand make contact between the shoulders and upper waist of a defender in order to thwart or push off that defender's de-flag attempt.
 - Maintain the stiff arm as long as needed.
- Rule 3.** Ball carriers that are using a stiff **are not allowed to:**
- Use closed hand to stiff arm.
 - Load up with excessive action on a stiff arm.
 - Stiff arm in which the hand or any part of the arm blocks the flag or breaks the plane of the flag belt.
 - Stiff arming a player who is diving to attempt a de-flag is illegal (flag guarding).
 - Make contact above the shoulders or below the upper waist.
 - Grab or hold and part of the body or the uniform of the defender while stiff arming.
- Rule 4.** The defender may not grab hold of the arm the ball carrier is using to stiff arm in order to gain an advantage for the de-flag.

Article: Z- 5 Stripping

Rule 1. Stripping of the ball is illegal

Rule 2. The defender is to make a legitimate attempt to de-flag the ball carrier. If the ball is knocked out of the ball carriers hand while the defender is making a legitimate attempt at the flag a penalty may not be called depending on the official's judgment and all loose ball rules for flag football will apply.

Rule 3. During a catching attempt the defender may attempt to strip the ball while the receiver is in the air only. If the receiver is on the ground and have clear possession (control of the ball without juggling) the defender may not attempt to strip the ball. This is a judgment call by the official.

Article: Z- 6 Team Box

Rule 1. Players, coaches, and staff must stand between the between the 20-yd lines.

Rule 2. Teams must use opposite sidelines.

Rule 3. The team area is considered from 20 yard line to 20 yard line and 10 yards from the side line towards the stands.

SECTION III. FOULS and PENALTIES

The MCFFU/USSSA Staff and Competition Committee strives to serve the 9-Man community with just and comprehensive reprimands for fouls / penalties committed during, before and after the game. The judgment and application of the MCFFU/USSSA 9-Man rules are trusted in the hands of dedicated 9-Man officials that certify under the MCFFU/USSSA guidelines. Each situation(s) requiring the application of a penalty due to a rule violation(s) will be administered by a certified or approved official during all sanctioned events.

Article A. Foul / Penalty Notification

- Rule 1.** When a foul occurs during a live ball play, the Referee (White Hat) at the end of the down will notify the offended team's captain of his options. If the penalty is declined the game will resume as normal without any penalties enforced.
- Rule 2.** A captain's choice cannot be reversed once the Referee (White Hat) is informed of their decision and the Referee acknowledge that decision.

Article B. Multiple Fouls / Penalties

- Rule 1.** Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in order of occurrence.
- Rule 2.** All unsportsmanlike fouls are penalized separately, an in addition to those occurring during a down by the same team.
- Rule 3.** When the same team commits two or more live ball fouls, only one penalty may be chosen except when a foul(s) for unsportsmanlike conduct or personal fouls are administered separately with ejections and /or game time suspension.
- Rule 4.** The offended captain may choose which penalty will be administered or he may decline all penalties except for consecutive encroachment/offside penalties against the defense.
- Rule 5.** When both teams commit live ball fouls during the same live ball period and (a) there is no change of team possession, or (b) there was a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down had fouled prior to final change of possession, it is a double foul. In (a) or (b) the penalties offset and the down is replayed.
- Rule 6.** If both teams foul during a play where there is a change of possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball provided they did not commit a penalty prior to the final change of possession and the team currently with possession declined the pre possession penalty.

Article C. Spot Fouls / Penalties

- Rule 1.** Spot fouls are administered with the designated penalty yardage and maybe be coupled with a loss of down.
- Defensive Pass Interference. If interference occurs in the defenders end zone, the ball will be placed on the 1 yard line.
 - Illegal block
 - Holding at or beyond the line of scrimmage
 - Flag Guarding
 - Impeding the runner
 - Illegal forward pass or pitch beyond the established line of scrimmage
 - Away from the play crack back blocks
 - Charging
 - Intentional grounding **within** 10 yards behind the established line of scrimmage.
 - Intentional grounding **beyond** 10 yards the established line of scrimmage.
 - Aiding the runner

Article D. Loss of Down Fouls / Penalties

- Rule 1.** A loss of down may be couple with a foul / penalty that may result in a change of possession for the offending team if the foul /penalty was committed on 4th down and the opposing team accepts the penalty.
- Intentional grounding. It is a ten (10) yard penalty from the spot of the foul unless the quarterback is more than ten yards back of the established line of scrimmage in which case it is placed at the spot with no yardage walked off.
 - Flag Guarding
 - Charging
 - Illegal forward pass
 - Illegal forward lateral
 - Offensive pass interference
 - Flag tampering (15 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage)

SUMMARY OF PENALTIES

Foul / Penalty

Description

5 YARDS

1 Min Kick – Off Violation (Delay, plus time-out)	Not kicking off the ball with in 1 minute of a successful extra point attempt or score.
10 Men in the Huddle	Breaking the huddle with more than 9 players.
Aiding the Runner	Grasping, lifting, pushing in order to assist the runner by a teammate.
Defensive Holding (Automatic First Down)	Holding and eligible receiver.
Delay of Game	Offense not snapping the ball before the play clock expires.
Encroachment	Someone from the defense in the neutral zone and touching an offensive player.
Excessive Time Outs	A team / player calling a time out that is out of time outs.
False Start	The movement by an offensive player simulating the start of the play after she has taken a set position or prior to taking a set position in which the movement of the offensive players simulates the start of the play.
Illegal Contact (Automatic First Down)	Making contact with a receiver pass the chuck zone before the ball is thrown
Illegal Defensive Formation	Less than 5 players on the receiving team's line during a declared punt.
Illegal Equipment	Not having the proper equipment during a play.
Illegal Formation	Less than 5 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of snap
Illegal Forward Pass (Loss of Down)	A player can not throw the ball forward once they are beyond the line of scrimmage
Illegal Motion	More than 1 player in motion paralleled to the line of scrimmage at the snap.
Illegal Offensive Rush	QB not taking a half step back or lateral while under the center for a direct snap.
Illegal Return Formation	Return team not having enough players (5) on the restraining line.
Illegal Rush	Rushing the restricted gap(s) on extra points, punts and field goals.
Illegal Participation (Prior to snap)	Too many players on the field of play
Illegal Procedure / False Start	An offensive player feigning or moving forward during or before the ball is snapped.
Ineligible Player Downfield	Lineman down field more than 2 yards prior to a ball thrown beyond the line of scrimmage.
Illegal Shift	A player shifting his position and not getting set for at least a half of a second before the ball is snapped.
Illegal Substitution	Player entering the field of play while the ball is live (ready for play) or leaving the field through the opposing teams side line or the end zone.
Neutral Zone Infraction	Defensive player penetrating the neutral zone causing and offensive player to false start.
Offside	A player in the neutral zone at the snap of the ball or kicking team off sides
Running into Kicker	Incidental minimum contact with the kicker during a legal kick
Simulating the Snap	Defensive player making sounds that sound like the offensive cadence.

Foul / Penalty

Description

10 YARDS

1 Min Kick – Off Violation (added when no TO's)	Enforced with the 5 yards when a team is out of time outs during the 1 minute Kick off rule.
Charging (Loss of Down)	Intentional not avoiding a defender who has established position.
Consecutive Encroachment/Off sides	Defender committing consecutive neutral zone infractions.
Neutral Zone Infraction	
Flag Guarding (Loss of Down)	Using body part past the waist and around the flags to prevent de-flagging.
Holding (Offensive and Defensive)	Illegal use of hands or body to grab, hook or pull an opponent.
Illegal Block	Blocking above the waste in the rear of the opponent.
Impeding the runner	Delaying the ball carrier with no attempt to de-flag the ball carrier.
Intentional Grounding (Loss of Down)	Purposely throwing the ball away to avoid a sack
Offensive Pass Interference (Loss of Down)	Illegal actions with the receiver gaining an advantage in order to catch a pass.
Stripping	A defender attempting to knock the ball out of the hand of a ball carrier or receiver who has clear possession of the ball.

Foul / Penalty

Description

15 YARDS

Clipping (<i>Personal Foul</i>)	Blocking an opponent in the back below the waist.
Delay of Game to Start the Game or Half	Not legally lined up ready for play after the play clock has expired to start a half.
Elbow or Upward flipper block (<i>Personal Foul</i>)	Extending forearm upward or leading with the elbow from the body to block.
Excessive Delay of Game	Delays causing a decisive disadvantage to the opponent or poor conduct.
Failure to Comply with Uniform Policy	A team or individual not complying with the guidelines listed in the Team Uniform section.
Fair Catch Interference	Interfering with the receiver who has clearly signaled for a fair catch.
Flag Tampering (<i>Loss of Down & Ejection</i>)	Illegally modifying flag belt or flag(s) in order to gain an advantage against the opposing team.
Illegal Crack Back Block (Away from the Play)	A flagrant illegal act in which a player blind sides blocks an opponent who is no threat to the play.
Illegal contact with an official, MCFFU/USSSA Rep	Aggressively approaching an official or MCFFU/USSSA representative.
Illegal Participation – Live Ball	Having too many players on the field involved in a live play.
Illegal use of the hands – to restricted area	Unintentional hands to an opponent's restricted area(s)
Personal Foul	A flagrant illegal act that results in contact to a restricted area of a player.
Personal Foul-Defensive (<i>Automatic First Down</i>)	A flagrant illegal act that results in contact to a restricted area of a player.
Personal Foul-Dead Ball (<i>Automatic First Down</i>)	A flagrant illegal act after the play is blown dead.
Roughing the Center (<i>Automatic First Down</i>)	Illegal contact with the Center.
Roughing the Holder (<i>Automatic First Down</i>)	Illegal contact with the Holder.
Roughing the Kicker (<i>Automatic First Down</i>)	Illegal contact with the Kicker
Roughing the Passer (<i>Automatic First Down</i>)	Illegal contact with the Quarterback or player behind the Line of scrimmage passing the ball.
Tackling	Pulling, throwing, or driving a ball carrier or receiver to the ground with no attempt to deflag.
Tripping	Using legs or arms to make illegal contact with the opponent's legs
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	A foul that taunts or acts in an unsportsmanlike manner which delay or undermine the integrity of the game.
Unnecessary Roughness	A flagrant illegal and excessive act resulting from contact to an opponent who is at a disadvantage or not engaged in a live or dead ball play.