

GENERAL RULES FOR FOOTBALL

A. Intoxicants/Illegal substances

- 1) The Columbus City Ordinance prohibits alcohol in city parks. There is to be **no** alcohol or illegal substances used, during any league or tournament contest or on any undesignated recreational area before, during or after any set of games.
- 2) Any individual found in violation of this rule will be ejected from the game and must leave the premises. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the game and may result in an individual or team suspension from future league participation.
- 3) An opponent can protest consuming alcohol on the field, or in spectator areas while engaged in a game. Official must be notified and regular procedures must be followed for filing a protest with the Sports Section within two business days.

B. Team Franchise

- 1) The franchise belongs to:
 - a) The sponsor of the team (person paying the fee)
 - b) The Captain listed on the roster form
 - c) The majority members of the team
- 2) Any attempt to manipulate a franchise or registration form to gain a spot in our leagues may result in the dismissal of the team from our program.
- 3) The Sports Section reserves the right to remove a franchise from our program in the event of three forfeits throughout the season.

C. Team Captain

- 1) **The team captain is designated on the roster form.**
- 2) Team captain is responsible for knowing all the rules and regulations governing Columbus Recreation and Parks leagues and notifying their players of these rules.
- 3) Team captain also serves as the liaison between the Sports Section and the players.
- 4) **It is the responsibility of the captain to ensure accurate contact information is on file with the Sports Section (address, phone numbers, and e-mail). If the captain cannot be reached with the information on file, the Sports Section will not be held accountable.**

D. Rosters

- 1) Roster forms are due prior to the third game of the season. They can be faxed, mailed, or hand delivered at the office or field.
- 2) If any game is protested concerning eligibility and the team in question does not have a roster on file with the Sports Section, the game will result in a forfeit.
- 3) **Roster Limits:** Roster forms are not to include more than 30 players. All players listed in excess of the limit will be ineligible.
- 4) A Roster form must be submitted for each league a team enters.
- 5) Additions or deletions to roster forms must be made in writing by the captain, completed and on file in the Sports Section by 5:00 pm Monday thru Friday. **NO DEADLINE FOR ROSTER CHANGES; however to be eligible for playoffs you must have competed in at least 3 games.**
- 6) Playing under an assumed name will result in game forfeiture, suspension of the player and team captain.
- 7) Team Captains must list **first** and **last** names of all players on the scorecard provided to them by the umpire. The name on lineup must be written as it appears on the roster.

E. Player Eligibility

- 1) A player can be a member of only one team in the same league. A player is considered a member of the team for which they **first play for** in a regulation game. A player's name on several rosters in the same league is not a rules infraction.
- 2) A player may not transfer from one team to another in the same league.
- 3) All players must be a minimum age of eighteen (18) to be eligible to participate.

F. Eligibility for Postseason Play

- 1) **Each player must have participated in at least 3 regular season games, for a team in order to be eligible for the playoffs for that team.**
- 2) If a team receives a forfeit during the season, every player on that team's roster at the time of the forfeit will receive credit for one game played.

- 3) If a team forfeits during the season, that team will receive no credit for a game played for any player on their roster.

G. Zero Tolerance Policy

- 1) Zero Tolerance Policy: Unsportsmanlike or abusive behavior by spectators, players or teams **will not** be tolerated. Individual and team penalties will be given by administrators of the program and will be based on the severity of the action(s). The team captain is responsible for the actions of all of his/her players and spectators. Their actions will directly affect the eligibility status of the team. Penalties for individuals and teams are not progressive. They include probation, suspension or total elimination from participation.
- 2) Any violation of the Zero Tolerance Policy will warrant a minimum (1) one game suspension and the player will be placed on probation the remainder of the season. The Sports Section will make a determination if a longer penalty is warranted as to the severity of the situation.
- 3) Anyone ejected for unsportsmanlike behavior **must leave** the facility immediately. Failure to do so could result in the game being forfeited.
- 4) After an incident is reported, the Sports Section will review the situation, collect any necessary information and make a decision. It is the right of every player or team that is suspended to appeal the decision to the Columbus Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee.

H. Columbus Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee

- 1) The Purpose of the Advisory Committee is to help shape the direction of football for the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department.
- 2) The Committee will hear appeal cases from suspensions, and make recommendations to the Recreation Administrative Coordinator of the Sports Section.
- 3) The Committee also aids in deciding protests, interpreting rules, implementing new rules and are involved in anything else that the Coordinator of the Sports Section brings to the Committee.

I. Protest and Appeals

- 1) **Protests** may not be made on judgment calls. They may be made on only rule interpretations and eligibility issues.
 - a) The Team Captain must tell the official of their intent to protest a **rule interpretation** at the time of the infraction. The official is to notify the other team and note the conditions surrounding the protest.
 - b) **The Team Captain or team representative must file a protest form with the Sports Section within two business days of the game played. It must reach the office by 5:00 pm accompanied by a \$30.00 protest fee to be valid. Holidays, Saturdays and Sundays are not considered a business day.**
 - c) If the protest is valid, the \$30.00 protest fee is returned. It may take several weeks to receive the refund.
 - d) All protests concerning **player eligibility** may skip step (a) go directly to step (b)
- 2) **Appeals** of a decision by the Sports Section concerning a protest or a suspension must be made in writing and on file with the office no later than 3 business days from notification
 - a) The appeal should describe specific reasons why the offending party disagrees with the decision by the Sports Section.
 - b) The appeal should also list the availability of the offending party to meet with the Advisory Committee for a formal hearing.
 - c) The Coordinator of the Sports Section determines if a hearing is needed and forwards the information to the Advisory Committee. If no hearing is needed, the Coordinator determines the next course of action.
 - d) In the case of no hearing, the decision by the Coordinator is final. In the case of a hearing, the decision by the Advisory Committee, subject to approval from Coordinator, is final.

**** Please Read ****

The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department reserves the right to remove or adjust teams in any city football leagues.

RULE POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Minimum on line of scrimmage at snap; 4 players.
2. **2 on 1 blocking permitted**
3. If a player's knee touches the ground, the ball is dead at the spot. One exception: The holder's knee can be up or down on an extra point or field goal.
4. **Diving:** Diving to pull a flag or make a tag is legal. Diving to block is illegal. Diving to advance the ball is illegal.
5. Passer's arm in motion and ball in his/her hand; the passer is down if deflagged or legally touched.
6. **Snaps:** All snaps that hit the ground are dead.
7. Direct snaps are legal. (Exception; on a declared punt, the punter must be 5 yards back.)
8. **Touch:** 2 hands simultaneously between shoulders and knees.
9. **Inadvertent whistle:** the team in possession may elect to put the ball into play where declared dead or replay the down.
10. Onside kicks are illegal.
11. Kickoffs need not be possessed. Muffed kicks are dead by rule.
12. **Punts:** If you want no rush; ask ref. for protection. No one can move till the ball is kicked. Punts that hit the ground may be picked up and advanced. Muffs are dead at the spot.
13. **Fumbles:** Fumbles are dead at the spot.
14. **Center:** You cannot touch the center until he takes one step toward his pattern, or assumes a blocking position.
15. **Chucking Receiver:** The defense may chuck the receiver 1 time until 5 yards off line of scrimmage.
16. **Forward Pass:** Only one forward pass per down.
17. **Roughing the Quarter Back:** Is an automatic 1st down, plus a 10-yard penalty. Penalty yardage will be tacked on to any gain.
18. **Extra Point and Field Goal Tries:** There is no rushing between the guard and center. No 3-point stances. The center cannot block, but is eligible. The holder's knee can be up or down.
19. The ball may be advanced beyond the spot of the snap and then lateral on run back behind the spot before a legal forward pass is made.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S.F.T.L. RULES AND THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS RULEBOOK.

- Line to gain will be 20's, 40's, and goal lines.
- Eight players for Flag and seven players for touch.
- Three officials (Ref., linesman, and back judge) in league play.
- Can use any legal football.
- Only the field captains are to communicate with the Game Officials preferably the Referee.
- All pads are illegal regardless of injury. Metal on knee braces must be padded. Columbus requires that all cleats be one piece molded rubber sole. No softball/baseball cleats. (Exception-kicking shoe-for one play only).
- Player must be on his feet when blocking. Contact allowed between waist and shoulders only. Cannot leave feet to block; only feet can be in contact with ground during the block. No low blocks are permitted. Stiff-arming is illegal as are crab blocks.
- Touching is with two hands **simultaneously** between the shoulders and the knees of the ball carrier. Pushing, striking, jamming, lapping, and holding are not permitted. Tackling is grounds for **disqualification** and **suspension**.
- There must be at least 4 offensive players on the line of scrimmage. Be lenient, linesman will help teams lineup, and players should check with him for "okay."
- Watch for movement that simulates a snap. A snap must go between the center's legs. It is legal to snap off a towel. The snap/ball is dead if it strikes the ground.
- The hash marks will be the uprights of the goal posts.
- Timing rules - 2 halves, 22 minutes each - The first 20 minutes of each half the clock will stop only for scores and time-outs. The last 2 minutes conform to

regular Federation timing rules. The two-minute warning stops the clock. (Starts on next snap).

- Teams may exchange goals at the half dependent upon the chosen options.
 - If one team is 17 points ahead when the 2-minute warning for the second half is given, the game is over.
 - **Overtime Procedure.** Same as OHSAA Modification. Our teams will start 1st and goal on the ten. Same options - take the ball 1st or 2nd - Goal to defend/attack. We will use this procedure only in play-offs and tournaments. In league play, each team will be given one opportunity from the 10 yd line to score, if game is still tied, the score will be recorded as a tie.
 - Each team may use 3 charged time outs per half; however, **only 2** may be used in the last 2 minutes.
 - When a backward pass, center snaps or fumble strikes the ground, the ball is dead. The only exception is the snap on a free punt or protected kick between the goal lines.
 - Between the goal lines the field is divided into five 20-yard zones. A team has 4 downs to advance the ball to the next zone line.
 - **FREE KICK.** Receivers will have 4 players within 5 yards of their free kick line. There is **NO** inside kick in league play. A receiver may: advance the ball out of the end zone, advance a grounded muff or squib kick (if he is in no imminent danger), advance the ball to just short of the 20,40, etc. and stop or drop to one knee or drop the ball.
 - If a free kick goes out of bounds on or inside the 35-yard line, last touched by K, the result is R's ball on the 35. Outside the 35 place the ball on the inbound spot on that yard line. No penalty or rekick.
 - Scrimmage Kick or Punt. On fourth down, the captain of the team in possession may ask for a free punt or protected kick. The defense will have 4 players on the line of scrimmage. Both teams will line up; the center will snap the ball (between his legs), and play will begin when the ball is kicked. (In the last 2 minutes, the clock will start on the kick.) If the receiver muffs the ball and it strikes the ground, it is dead at that spot (if in the end zone - touchback.)
 - The center is protected from contact for 1 step (forward or backward) or until he assumes a blocking position at the spot of the snap. There will be no rush over the center or in the center-guard gaps on the point after touch down or field goal attempt.
 - All players must be 5 yards from the sideline at the snap – coach them. (Same for free kick).
 - Passes - all players are eligible - 1 chuck only within 5 yds of spot of snap. If the receiver muffs (bobbles or juggles) the ball and then is tagged before catching it, the tag counts. One forward pass per down. If the passer is tagged while the ball is still in his hand, the tag counts.
 - **Try For Point** - Run, Pass, or Kick from the 3 for 1 point; Run, pass or kick from the 10 for 2 points. Use Federation rules governing the holder.
 - **Safety** - If the receivers - muff the kick after a safety ball is dead.
 - One team only on each sideline - between the 40 yard lines (Columbus Rules).
 - Follow Federation Penalty Enforcement - Exceptions 5 or 10 yard penalties - only unsportsmanlike = 15 yards. Defensive pass interference = spot & 1st down. Roughing the passer = 10 yards & 1st down or result of the play + 10 yards & 1st down.

1. FLAG REQUIREMENTS: Flag-A-Tag Three-Flag Belts are the official flags for all divisions. The flags must be a contrasting color to the player's pants or shorts. Any player caught tampering with their flags will be ejected.
2. Teams must have Jerseys or T-shirts that are alike and opposite the color of the other team. The Jersey must be either long enough to tuck in during the whole game or about 4 inches from the bottom of the jersey to the players waistline. An official will measure this by using a closed fist to measure the distance from the bottom of the jersey to the waistline.
3. Each player must wear pants or shorts and they must be a different color than the flags worn. It must be contrasting so that the flags can be seen.
4. Any type of hat is allowed, as long as there is no hard material in its composition. Baseball caps must be worn backwards so that the bill of the hat covers the neck not the face to be legal.
5. No pads are allowed to be worn on the upper body. Soft pliable pads can be worn on the ankles or legs and women may wear breast protectors as long as they are soft and pliable. It is at the referee's discretion as to the use of padding to cover an injury. Check with the officials before the game to see if this type of padding you are using is legal.
6. Every player is encouraged to wear a mouth guard but ultimately it is up to each player if they wish to wear one. The USFTL requires mouth guards for all Tournament play.
7. Gloves are legal to wear as long as they are soft and pliable and have no hard protective areas on them. Spray stick-um is legal, however, paste stick-um is illegal.
8. Any equipment worn that does not adhere to the rules will have to be removed in order to play. Many times this may include jewelry. Not all officials require the removal of jewelry but do not be surprised if at a tournament you are asked to remove any jewelry including earrings.
9. Before the start of the game if darkness threatens the playing time may be shortened if it is mutually agreed upon by both teams. The playing time can be shortened at any point in the game if this is agreed upon. The referee has the authority to fix any time discrepancies as long as the period has not ended, after the period is over it cannot be changed.
10. A period can be extended if the half ends and the extra point after a touchdown has not been tried, or if a penalty has occurred and is accepted, and for an inadvertent whistle.
11. The referee will keep the playing time on the field.
12. Timeouts will last 30 seconds. Refer to the rules of each type of play to find out how many time outs are given to each team. The referee will warn the team charged with the timeout when 5 seconds remains before the timeout is over.
13. If a player is injured and the referee calls a timeout for the injured player-this player must be replaced for at least one play before they can reenter the game. When a coach wants a referee-coach conference to talk about a rule or some other problem, that team will be charged with a timeout unless the ruling on the field is changed then the timeout gets charged to the official.
14. Delay of a half will count as a 10-yard penalty that is assessed on the kickoff. It is the team captain's responsibility to have his players ready to go after half time. Halftime lasts no longer than five minutes and no less than one minute.
15. Delay of game happens when the offense does not run a play before the 25-second play clock expires. The official that is nearest to the huddle will count the time (usually the

referee). The offense will be warned when only ten seconds remain before a penalty is assessed. This includes not punting the ball right after it is snapped. Delay of game is a 5-yard penalty.

16. Substitutions can take place during the game, but must occur between plays. No player substitution can happen during a live play. No player may substitute after a substitution penalty. This happens when more than the allowed number of players are on the field during a live play or a substituted player does not leave the field before the next play starts. This is a 5-yard penalty.

17. Any player that has an open wound may not reenter the game until the bleeding has stopped and the wound is covered. An official must check the covering before the player is allowed back into the game.

18. There are no fumbles in flag football. When the ball hits the ground or any part of a ball carrier other than the hands or feet touch the ground the ball is dead. If a player attempts to catch a kick and drops the ball-the ball becomes dead where it hits the ground. This also includes the ball hitting the ground when a ball carrier drops the ball it is also dead where it hit the ground.

19. Inadvertent whistles happen when one of the officials sounds the whistle before the play was actually dead. The result of this is that the play is over before the ball was actually dead. In this case the offense has the option to replay the down or to take the ball where the ball was blown dead.

20. When the ball or a player goes out-of-bounds the ball is ruled dead where the ball crossed out of bounds. This counts if the ball is fumbled. If the ball goes out-of-bounds before it hits the ground the ball is dead where it went out-of-bounds.

21. The offense is responsible for retrieving the ball after an offensive play. The ball is not used to spot the line of scrimmage. An orange puck is used to mark the line of scrimmage. The snapper shall bring the ball to the line of scrimmage when the player comes to the line to start the next play. No one will retrieve the ball except for the offense. Failure to do so can result in a delay of game penalty.

22. The official that is watching the line of scrimmage will call out to the offense or defense if one of them is over the line. If the player that is over does not move before the ball is snapped a penalty will occur. This is encroachment on the defense and offside on the offense. This is a 5-yard penalty unless it occurs two times in a row on the defense. The second encroachment penalty will result in a 10-yard penalty.

23. The offensive players may not move after they are set. Motion is allowed but the motion cannot be toward the line of scrimmage and only one player may move at a time. If multiple players are going to move the first player must be set and not in motion before the next player moves. More than one player in motion is a penalty that is 5 yards.

24. The defense can chuck the receivers but this must be done within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage. Any contact after that is illegal and brings with it an interference penalty, which is 10 yard and automatic first down. Offensive interference is 10 yards and loss of down.

25. A player may not intentionally ground the ball to avoid a loss of yardage. In the last two minutes of the game a quarterback is allowed to throw the ball into the ground right after the snap is received. This can be done to stop the clock. The quarterback may not try to run a play then spike the ball. This is a penalty and is considered intentional grounding, which is a 5-yard penalty and loss of down.

26. Pass interference occurs when one of the players going for the ball pushes off or uses the other player to advance the position the player is in. Any contact that hinders the other

player is pass interference and comes with a penalty. If the offensive player is the guilty party the penalty is a loss of down and 10 yards. If the defense is the guilty party the offense will get the ball at the spot of the foul and its and automatic first down.

27. Roughing the passer is a 10-yard penalty and an automatic first down. This occurs when a defensive player hits the quarterback or hits the quarterbacks arm before the ball is out of his hands. The 10 yards is in addition to any yardage gained on the play the foul occurred. Example: If the ball is passed and completed for 10 yards and the quarterback is roughed the result is the 10 yard gain plus the 10 yard penalty and automatic first down.

28. Flag guarding is when the runner uses hand or the ball to cover the flags so they cannot be pulled off. This is a 10-yard penalty plus a loss of down. This includes lowering the shoulder or placing the arm over the flags.

29. Any player on their team cannot help the ball carrier. This is called helping the runner and is a 5-yard penalty.

30. A stiff arm by the ball carrier is guarding the flag but it is considered a personal foul. A stiff arm results in a 10-yard penalty. (Loss of Down) **

31. The defense cannot hold or obstruct the runner in any way. Holding the runner up or obstructing the runner while in the act of removing the flags is a personal foul and gives the offense 10 yards.

32. No player may dive to advance the ball. This is considered to be personal foul and is a 10-yard penalty.

33. Any legal forward pass is considered complete when caught and the player receiving the ball lands with at least one foot in bounds.

34. No defensive player may swat at the ball or try to dislodge the ball from the runner's hands. This is a 10-yard penalty.

35. Flags cannot be tampered with in any way at any time. If an official tries to pull your flag off and it does not come off normally it will be visually inspected. If the flag is found to be tampered with by tying it or knotting it or obstructing the flags normal usage the player can and will be disqualified and any play that resulted in a touchdown or score or positive yardage will be brought back to the original line of scrimmage penalized 10 yards and a loss of down.