

## Section 1

**RULE 2 — DEFINITIONS****Section 1. The ball: Live, Dead, Loose****Live and Dead Ball**

ARTICLE 1. A live ball is a ball in play while a down is in progress. A dead ball is that period between downs when the ball is not in play.

**Loose Ball**

ARTICLE 2. A loose ball is a live ball not in player possession. i.e. Any kick, pass or fumble.

**When Ball is Ready-for-Play**

ARTICLE 3. A dead ball is ready-for-play when the Referee: a. If time is in, sounds whistle and signals "ready-for-play." b. If time is out, sounds the whistle and signals either "start the clock" or "ball ready-for-play."

**In Possession**

ARTICLE 4. "In Possession" is an abbreviation meaning "in possession of a live ball." A player is a possession when both holding and controlling the ball. A team is in possession: when one of its players is in possession; while a punt, drop kick, or place kick is being attempted; while a forward pass thrown by one of its players is in flight, or during a fumble, backward pass, or illegal forward pass.

**Catch, Interception, Recovery**

ARTICLE 5. A catch is an act of establishing player-possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble before it hits the ground is an interception. Securing possession of a live ball after it strikes the ground is "recovering" it. If a player attempts a catch, interception, or recovery while in the air the ball must be in control when the player returns to the ground inbounds.

**Section 2. Blocking**

ARTICLE 1. Blocking is legally obstructing an opponent by contacting the opponent with any part of the blocker's body. Blockers must be on their feet before, during, and after contact is made with an opponent. Two on one blocking shall be limited to the area on and behind the neutral zone. Under no condition shall a high-low or rolling block be permitted.

Blocker is allowed to contact only that portion of the opponent's body between the waist and shoulders. Exception: A blocker who loses personal body control due to an opponent's aggressiveness after contact shall not be penalized.

Contact with an opponent may occur only between the opponent's waist and neck. There shall be no cross body blocking. No downfield blocking.

Offensive players may use an extended arm (pro block) provided palms are facing opponent and blocker is either stationary or moving backward.

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When using a hand or forearm block, the elbow must be outside the shoulder. The blocker's hands may not be locked. The blocker may not swing, throw, or flip the elbow or forearm. The hands may be closed or cupped but the palms may not be facing the opponent being blocked.

Downfield blocking is defined as a runner moving in advance of the ball carrier (screening), such player not in legal position to assist ball carrier by being able to receive legal handoff or backward pass - whether or not contact with an opponent occurs.

### Section 3. Clipping

ARTICLE 1. Clipping is running or diving into the back, or throwing or dropping the body across the back of the leg or legs of an opponent or pushing an opponent in the back other than the runner.

### Section 4. Down and Between Downs

ARTICLE 1. A down is a unit of the game which starts, after the ball is ready-for-play, with a snap or free kick and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.

### Section 5. Fair Catch

ARTICLE 1. A fair catch is a catch of a kick untouched beyond the neutral zone, by a player of the receiving team, who has signalled their intention by extending one arm and hand only above the head and waving the hand from side to side of the body more than once.

ARTICLE 2. An invalid signal is any signal by a player that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal.

ARTICLE 3. An illegal fair catch signal is a valid or invalid signal given by any member of the receiving team after the kick is touched by any member of the receiving team or after the kick has touched the ground.

### Section 6. Foul and Violation

ARTICLE 1. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. A violation is a rule infraction for which no penalty is prescribed and which does not offset the penalty for a foul.

### Section 7. Fumble—Muff—Batting—Touching Ball

#### Fumble

ARTICLE 1. A fumble is loss of ball by a player in possession during an unsuccessful attempt to hold, handoff, backward pass, or kick the ball.

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**Muff**

ARTICLE 2. A muff is an unsuccessful attempt to catch or recover a ball, the ball being touched in the attempt.

**Batting**

ARTICLE 3. Batting the ball is intentionally striking a loose ball with the arm or hand.

**Touching Ball**

ARTICLE 4. Touching the Ball denotes any contact with it.

**Section 8. Goal Lines**

ARTICLE 1. Each goal line is a vertical plane separating an end zone from the field of play.

**Section 9. Handing the Ball**

ARTICLE 1. Handing the ball is transferring player-possession from one teammate to another without throwing, fumbling or kicking it.

**Section 10. Huddle**

ARTICLE 1. A huddle is two or more offensive players grouped together after the ball is ready for play before or after they have assumed a scrimmage formation prior to the snap.

**Section 11. Hurdling**

ARTICLE 1. Hurdling is an attempt by the runner to jump with both feet foremost over any player(s) still on their feet.

**Section 12. Kicks**

**Legal and Illegal Kicks**

ARTICLE 1. A legal kick is a punt, drop kick or place kick by a player of the team in possession when such kick is permitted by rule. Deliberately kicking the ball in any other manner is illegal. Any kick continues to be a kick until it is caught or recovered by a player or becomes dead.

**Punt**

ARTICLE 2. A punt is kicking the ball by the player who drops it and kicks it before it strikes the ground.

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**Drop Kick**

ARTICLE 3. A drop kick is kicking the ball by the player who drops it and kicks it as it touches the ground or as it is rising from the ground.

**Place Kick**

ARTICLE 4. A place kick is kicking the ball from a fixed position either on the ground or on a tee. The ball may be held in possession by any player of the kicking team. If a tee is used, it may not elevate the ball's lowest point more than two inches above the ground.

**Free Kick**

ARTICLE 5. A free kick is a kick made under restrictions which prohibit either team from advancing beyond established restraining lines until the ball is kicked.

**Kickoff**

ARTICLE 6. A kickoff is a free kick which starts each half and follows each try-for-point, or field goal and must be a place kick or a drop kick. A kickoff following a safety may be a punt, drop kick, or place kick.

**Scrimmage Kick**

ARTICLE 7. A scrimmage kick is a kick by Team A during a scrimmage down before team possession changes. It is made under restrictions which prohibit either team from advancing beyond established scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked.

**Section 13. Return Kick**

ARTICLE 1. A return kick is a kick by a player of the team in possession after change of team possession during a down and is a legal kick.

**Section 14. The Neutral Zone**

ARTICLE 1. The neutral zone is the space between the two free kick lines during a free kick and between the two lines of scrimmage during a scrimmage down and is established when the ball is ready for play.

**Section 15. Encroachment**

ARTICLE 1. Encroachment denotes the position of a player, except the Snapper or the kicker and holder of a place kick for a free kick, any part of whose person is beyond their scrimmage line or their restraining line anytime after the ready for play signal and before the ball is put in play.

**Section 17****Section 16. Passes****Passes**

ARTICLE 1. Passing the ball is throwing it. A pass continues to be a pass until caught, intercepted, or the ball becomes dead.

**Forward and Backward Pass**

ARTICLE 2. A forward pass is a live ball thrown toward the opponents' end line. A backward pass is a live ball thrown toward or parallel to the Passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or recovered by a player or becomes dead.

**Section 17. Penalty**

ARTICLE 1. A penalty is a loss imposed by rule upon a team which has committed a foul.

**Section 18. Removing the Flag**

ARTICLE 1. When the flag is cleanly taken from a ball carrier the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removed the flag from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag above his head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

ARTICLE 2. In an attempt to remove a flag from a ball carrier, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders of an opponent with their hands, but not their or any part of their head. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.

ARTICLE 3. The flag may be dropped at the spot of capture by the defense with no penalty. A defensive player may leave his feet to secure a flag.

**Section 19. Scrimmage****Scrimmage**

ARTICLE 1. A scrimmage is the interplay of the two teams during a down in which play begins with a snap.

**Scrimmage Line**

ARTICLE 2. The scrimmage line for each team is the yard-line and its vertical plane which passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. An offensive player is on the line of scrimmage when facing the opponent's goal with the line of the shoulders approximately parallel to the scrimmage line and with the head breaking the plane of an imaginary line drawn through the waistline of the snapper and parallel to the line of scrimmage. Defensive players must remain one yard off the ball (line of scrimmage) until ball is snapped.

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**Stance**

ARTICLE 3. All players of both the offense and the defense may take any stance. Players' hands on their knees is permissible.

**Backfield Line**

ARTICLE 4. The backfield line is a vertical plane one yard behind and parallel to the scrimmage line of the offensive team.

**Section 20. Shift**

ARTICLE 1. A shift is a simultaneous change of position by two or more offensive players after the ball is ready-for play for scrimmage and before the next snap.

**Section 21. Snapping the Ball**

ARTICLE 1. Snapping the ball (a snap) is handing or passing it back from the position on the ground. In a legal snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous motion of the hand or hands during which the ball actually leaves the hand or hands. The ball may not be raised to more than a 45 degree angle at the snap and the long axis of the ball must be at right angles to the scrimmage line. Must pass through snappers legs, snapper facing down field.

**Section 22. Spots**

**Enforcement Spot**

ARTICLE 1. An enforcement spot is the point from which the penalty for a foul is enforced.

**Previous Spot**

ARTICLE 2. The previous spot is the point from which the ball was last put in play.

**Succeeding Spot**

ARTICLE 3. The succeeding spot, as related to a foul, is the point at which the ball would have been put in play if that foul had not occurred.

**Dead Ball Spot**

ARTICLE 4. The dead ball spot is the point at which the ball last became dead.

**Spot of the Foul**

ARTICLE 5. The spot of the foul is the point at which that foul occurs. If out-of-bounds between the goal lines it shall be the intersection of the nearer inbounds line and the yard-line, extended, through the spot of the foul.

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**Out-of-Bounds Spot**

ARTICLE 6. The out-of-bounds spot is the point at which the ball becomes dead because of going or being declared out-of-bounds.

**Inbounds Spot**

ARTICLE 7. The inbounds spot is the intersection of the nearer inbounds line and the yard-line passing through the dead ball spot, or the spot where the ball is left in a side zone by a penalty.

**Section 23. Team and Player Designations**

**Offensive and Defensive Team**

ARTICLE 1. The offense is the team in possession. At such time the opponent is the defense. Team A is the team which puts the ball in play. The opponent of Team A, the team which does not put the ball in play, is Team B.

**Kicker**

ARTICLE 2. The Kicker is any player who makes a punt, drop kick or place kick.

**Lineman and Backfieldman**

ARTICLE 3. A lineman is any player on his scrimmage line when the ball is snapped; a back is any player who is at least one yard behind that line when the ball is snapped.

**Passer**

ARTICLE 4. The passer is the player who has thrown a legal forward pass. He remains the passer while the ball is in flight.

**Player**

ARTICLE 5. A player is any one of the participants in the game.

**Ball Carrier**

ARTICLE 6. The ball Carrier is a player in possession of a live ball.

**Snapper**

ARTICLE 7. The Snapper is the player who snaps the ball.

**Substitute**

ARTICLE 8. A substitute is a replacement for a player or a player vacancy.

**Disqualified Player**

ARTICLE 9. A disqualified player is one who becomes ineligible for further participation in the game.

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**Section 24. Tripping**

ARTICLE 1. Tripping is using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent (including the ball carrier) below the knee.

**Section 25. Yardline**

ARTICLE 1. A yardline is a line in the field of play parallel to the end line between the goal lines.

**Section 26. Deflagging**

ARTICLE 1. Deflagging is the legal removal of a flag of an opponent in possession of the ball. Pushing, striking, holding, or slapping are not permitted. Defensive player may leave feet to secure Flag. Offensive Player may not protect or Guard Flags. *Penalty: 10 yards.*