



**CINCINNATI**  
**SPORTS LEAGUES**

**OFFICIAL COED FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

(FIRST DOWN BY YARDAGE/ TEAM REFEREES)

**OVERVIEW**

FLAG BELTS MUST BE WORN BY ALL ON THE FIELD

8 players on the field (5 Males/3 females)

Two 20-minute halves

**MUST CROSS TWO 10 YARD MARKERS FOR A FIRST DOWN**

6 point touchdowns

Choice of 1 or 2 extra points on PAT's (*3 paces/yards for 1 Pt., 10 paces/yards for 2 pts.*)

Dead ball on all fumbles

Quarterbacks cannot snap the ball to themselves

Running clock except for final two minutes of 2nd half

Ties during regular season stay as a tie

**2-POINT CONVERSION ATTEMPTS MAY BE INTERCEPTED AND RETURNED FOR 2 POINTS**

**LATERALS MAY BE INTERCEPTED BY THE DEFENSIVE TEAM AND MAY BE ADVANCED FOR FURTHER YARDAGE**

REFEREES WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SHOUTING OUT THE RUSH COUNT FOR BOTH TEAMS. THE RUSH WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

“1-MISSISSIPPI, 2-MISSISSIPPI, 3-MISSISSIPPI, 4-MISSISSIPPI, 5-MISSISSIPPI, GO!!”

PLAYERS ACTING AS OFFENSIVE LINEMAN MUST HAVE HANDS BEHIND THEIR BACK WHEN PROTECTING THEIR QUARTERBACK FROM PURSUING DEFENSIVE RUSHERS. THERE IS NO CONTACT AT OR BEHIND THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.

Four-Downs-and-Out format applies for ties in the playoffs.

Receivers need only one foot in-bounds with possession of the ball to be considered “in bounds”

**COIN FLIP/BEGINNING OF GAME**

- The team that wins the coin flip (or a one-time Ro-Sham-Bo) at the start of the game must choose one of three options: 1) offense; 2) defense, 3) direction (TEAMS CANNOT DEFER). Teams flip flop direction, and the team that started the game on defense will start the second half on offense. There are no kick-offs. Play starts 10 paces from the goal-line.

**TEAM SIZE**

- Each team shall field no more than 8 players, with at least three women (five men, three women.) at any one time. Teams not able to field a "full" team **may** play with a minimum of 6 players (4 men and 2 women). Teams not able to field the minimum number of players (6) may play a “legal” game with the consent of the opposing captain and/or league staff. **(Please note: if a team arrives with less than 6 players a “forfeit win” is also an option for the opposing captain.)** Games will start no later than 10-minutes past the scheduled start time. At that time, it is up to the referee or staff member and opposing captain to allow play.

- If a team substitutes players during the game, they must do so from the same sideline the entire game.
- Eligible receivers must be on the playing field *before* the cadence is started.

### CO-ED RULES

- There is no **maximum** limit to the amount of females which must be on the field. To ensure coed participation, a penalty will ensue if the offensive team fails to use a female as an operative player within 3 consecutive downs.

#### An Operative Player is defined as a player who:

- is the intended receiver in the eyes of the official
- runs the ball as the primary runner (does **not** have to cross line of scrimmage)
- receives the snap as the QB and must attempt to be the person who initiates the ball crossing the line of scrimmage – unless she is sacked.
- receives the snap and immediately spikes the ball at her feet in order to stop the clock in the last 2 minutes.

#### An Operative Player is NOT defined as a player who:

- hands off the football
- snaps the ball into play
- receives a hand-off only to give it back to a male before crossing the line of scrimmage

#### Examples:

- a pass deflected by a male and caught by a female **is** a female play
- a pass intended for a female (in the eyes of the referee) that is deflected by a female, **and** caught by a male **counts** as a female play
- a pass thrown by a male, caught by a male, immediately pitched to a female (“the hook and ladder”) **does not** constitute a female play - no matter how far the female advances with the ball after the pitch
- a pass intentionally grounded by a female in the last 2 minutes of the second half in order to stop the clock **counts** as a female play
- if a female pitches the ball to a male behind the line of scrimmage, it **will not** result in a female play

The penalty for running 3 consecutive plays without a female as an Operative Player will be loss of down (i.e. if it was 1<sup>st</sup> down during the penalty, it is now 2<sup>nd</sup> down) and the female must now be the operative player on the next play. If on this play a male catches or runs the ball: loss of down, the play is ruled "dead", and the ball is brought back to the line of scrimmage, and the next play must be a female play.

Plays utilizing a female and resulting in “loss of down” penalties, will still be considered “female” plays. Plays utilizing a female resulting in a non-loss of down penalty will not count as a gender play (i.e. the play never existed).

The slate is clean for extra points and punts and everyone is eligible.

### THE DREADED SACK

If a male is the QB on a play which could either be to a male or female and the QB is sacked the ball is spotted where he was sacked and the play stands as a male play, no matter who was the intended receiver. If a team was **forced** to use a female as the operative player and the male QB is

sacked the play stands as a female play and the offensive team does **not** have to use a female on the next play.

### **TIME**

Play will be divided into (2) 20-minute halves. Teams flip flop direction, and the team that started the game on defense will start the second half on offense. There will be a running clock maintained by a referee except for the final 2 minutes of play. During the first 38 minutes, the clock runs continuously with the exception of time-outs and serious injury. Each team is allowed two (one-minute) time outs per game. In the first 38 minutes, if a team calls a timeout after a touchdown, prior to the extra point attempt, the clock will not start until the defensive team takes over on offense and snaps the ball.

There will be a **2-minute warning**. Clock will stop at the 2 minute mark or if a play is in progress the clock will stop at the conclusion of the play.

**During the final 2 minutes of the game, the referee shall stop the game clock if:**

- an incomplete pass is thrown
- a player ends play by going out of bounds
- either team scores (clock will remain off until the opposing team snaps the ball after the PAT attempt; the clock does not run during extra points)
- change of possession
- a penalty which must be marked off occurs
  - ◆ Defensive penalties: Clock will immediately re-start once the penalty is marked off.
  - ◆ Offensive penalties: Clock will re-start when the ball is snapped.
- a team declares a punt and their “30 seconds” (see below) has elapsed - the clock will resume for the punt and the ensuing return. It will be stopped when the returnee is tagged and up until their first snap from scrimmage.
- A team calls a time out.

**\*\*\*THE CLOCK DOES NOT STOP ON FIRST DOWNS OR \*FUMBLES.**

- **\*EXCEPTION:** Clock will stop on a fumbled exchange between the center and quarterback.

For the entire game, the offensive team has **30** seconds to snap the ball once the ball has been spotted (i.e. offensive person is tagged) If the referee feels that this is being taking advantage of, they can:

- On the first recognized abuse - Stop the clock.
- On subsequent abuses - Stop clock, and penalize the offense 5 paces/yards.

*\*\* If a team is up by 17 points or more, the clock runs continuously during the last two minutes of play.*

### **TIE GAMES/SCORING**

Games ending in a tie score will be recorded as tie games during regular season play. Please refer to the OVERTIME section for ties during the playoffs. Touchdowns are awarded 6 pts. Extra points: 3 paces/yards off the goal line = 1 pt., 10 paces/yards = 2pts. ***New rule: 2-point conversion attempts may be intercepted and returned for 2 points with the defense retaining possession at their 10 pace/yard line. One-point conversion attempts CANNOT be intercepted and returned.***

### **FIRST DOWNS**

Each team shall have 4 downs to either score or earn another first down. First downs are earned by moving the ball across two successive cones.

## **PUNTS**

A punt must be declared and cannot be faked. All punts are "free" punts. A team need not snap during a punt, a dropped snap during a punt is not a fumble. **Punts must be kicked.** Punts cannot be thrown. Punts are "open" plays meaning, there are no **Male/Female rules for punts.** There is no minimum number of players required on the line of scrimmage during a punt. **NO DOWNFIELD BLOCKING or BLOCKING AT THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.** The kicking team may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.

The receiving team may not raise hands or jump to block a punt. If a punt is "shanked" and caught it is a live ball and is returnable. If the ball comes into contact with the ground after it has been punted it is a dead ball, spotted at the point where it hit the ground, and may not be returned. A punt through the endzone comes back to 10 paces/yards off the goal line. If a player drops the ball in the endzone, the ball is again spotted 10 paces/yards out from the goal line and is **not** counted as a safety.

## **CONTINUANCE OF PLAY**

**Play shall continue until:**

- Ball-carrier's flag has been completely pulled from his/her belt.
- Ball-carrier leaves the field of play
- Ball-carrier scores
- Ball touches the ground as a result of a fumble, punt or incomplete pass (the ball is not an extension of the arm. If the ball is pinned between the ground and the ball-carrier's hand, the play is dead)
- Ball-Carrier's knee touches the ground
- An offensive player may not advance the ball by jumping or diving. Diving / jumping, where offensive player is initiating contact (in the eyes of the referee) will result in the player being down at his point of takeoff

## **SPOT OF THE BALL**

The ball will be spotted where the ball is at the time the ball carrier's flag has been completely pulled from his/her belt. If the ball crosses the plane of the goal line before the ball carrier is downed, it will result in a touchdown (ball extension)

## **TURNOVERS**

A change of possession can only occur due to downs or an interception on a forward pass. A fumble is not a turnover. The ball is dead at the point of the fumble and the offense retains possession. **A lateral is not a forward pass but may be picked off in mid-air.** A picked off lateral may be advanced until the player possessing the ball is downed successfully by the opposing team.

## **RUSH**

In order to better standardize the rush, all referees will be responsible for shouting out the rush count for both teams. The rush will be as follows: **“1-MISSISSIPPI, 2-MISSISSIPPI, 3-MISSISSIPPI, 4-MISSISSIPPI, 5-MISSISSIPPI, GO!!”** (Other acceptable variations can be used: i.e. 1-One thousand..., 1-Mississippi..., etc.) When the ref/counter says “Go”, the defense may cross the line of scrimmage and pursue the quarterback.

### **NO CONTACT AT THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE**

Players acting as offensive lineman must have hands behind their back when protecting their quarterback from pursuing defensive rushers. There is no contact at or behind the line of scrimmage. Offensive lineman can position their body at any particular angle in an attempt to the direct the rushers to a particular area, but they may not physically direct them.

### **PENALTIES**

Normal rules and penalties of the NCAA apply unless exceptions have been made herein.

#### **Some Common Examples of Penalties:**

##### Illegal Contact - At or Behind the Line of Scrimmage:

- In cases where the person(s) acting as the offensive lineman, initiates any contact (at the ref’s discretion), it will be ruled a 5 pace/yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and we will replay the down. If this contact is deemed excessive by the ref, an **“unnecessary roughness”** penalty of 10 paces/yards can be assessed in addition to the “illegal contact”. Thus making the total penalty 15 paces/yards.

##### Illegal Contact - Down Field:

- 5 paces/yards from point where ball carrier is at the time of infraction.

##### Offsides/Illegal or Early Rush (Offensive & Defensive):

- 5 paces/yards, play is ruled dead immediately, no option to decline, down is replayed.

##### Illegal Motion:

- Players may not be in motion towards the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. This will result in a dead ball, 5-yd penalty, and repeat the down.

##### Offensive Picking/Interference:

- The offensive team may not initiate a pick/block while in motion. 5 pace/yard penalty from the line of scrimmage, loss of down (i.e. if it was 1<sup>st</sup> down during the penalty, it is now 2<sup>nd</sup> down). If a catch is made after a clear pick, it will be ruled no catch, 5 pace/yard penalty from line of scrimmage, and loss of down.

Remember: Some acceptable incidental contact will occur while running routes and within the normal course of play, and will not be called.

##### Unnecessary Roughness:

- This includes any illegal tag such as grabbing jerseys or excessive pushing etc. This behavior will result in a 10 pace/yard penalty from point of the infraction and automatic first down. Extreme roughness will result in ejection from the game and or league if deemed necessary by the referee and league staff.

##### Defensive Pass Interference:

- Ball is spotted at the point of the infraction and offense is awarded an automatic first down. If the pass interference is in the endzone, the ball comes out to the 1 pace/yard line and it will be 1st down.

#### Defensive Holding:

- 5 pace/yard penalty from line of scrimmage, replay down. Offense can accept or decline the penalty.

#### Defensive Checking:

- 5 pace/yard penalty from line of scrimmage, replay down. The “bump and run” will not be allowed. No player may initiate contact at the line of scrimmage. There is no 5-yard Bump Zone.

#### Safeties:

- A safety will be scored if a player is:
  1. - tagged down in their own endzone (not on a punt return)
  2. -runs out of bounds in their own endzone
  3. -snaps the ball out of the endzone
  4. -if the offense fumbles the ball in their own endzone

As a result, the team on defense, receives 2 points, and the team on offense must now punt a “free” kick from their own 10 paces/yard line.

Also, a player having intercepted a pass or received a punt in the endzone, cannot be tagged in the endzone for a safety unless he/she has previously crossed the plane of the endzone with the ball.

#### Miscellaneous:

- Sneak Plays:
  - If the player calling the cadence does not receive the snap, the play will not stand and result in a 5 pace/yard penalty and repeat of the down .
  - One person must call the cadence and receive the snap – violation of this will result in a 5 pace/yard penalty and repeat of down.
  - Silent snaps will not be allowed – violation of this will result in a 5 pace/yard penalty and repeat of down.
- The QB may not be in motion and then receive the snap – this will result in a 5 pace/yard penalty and repeat of down.
- If the QB crosses the line of scrimmage and then throws a forward pass the defense can either decline the penalty or it will be a 5 pace/yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and loss of down (i.e. if it was 1<sup>st</sup> down during the penalty, it is now 2<sup>nd</sup> down).
- If the ball hits the ground on the snap for either a pass or running play, the play is "dead", the ball is spotted where it hit the ground, and it is a loss of down (i.e. if it was 1<sup>st</sup> down during the bad snap, it is now 2<sup>nd</sup> down).
- The QB may NOT snap the ball to him/herself. If the QB does snap to him/herself, play will stop immediately and it will result in a 5-yd penalty and repeat the down.
- Loss of down penalties which occur on 4<sup>th</sup> down will result in change of possession.

#### **Flag Specifics**

- 1.) **NO FLAG GAURDING\*\*\*\*\*Will result in a 5 paces/yard penalty from the spot of the infraction**
- 2.) **Shirts must be tucked in and flags securely attached.**
- 3.) **Any ball carrier whose flags (in the refs opinion) are not accessible to be pulled will be removed from the game, until the corrections are made.**
- 4.) **Players may leave their feet to pull a flag, offensive players may execute spin moves.**
- 5.) **Belt grabbing will result in a 5 paces/yards penalty from the end of the play.**
- 6.) **Any belt grabbing at the end of a half or game will result in a 5 paces/yard penalty, if this infraction occurs with in 5 paces/yards of the goal line, then the ball will be spotted at the one.**

### **OVERTIME**

During regular season play, all ties will be scored as a tie. In the playoffs, however, the Four-Downs and Out format will apply. A coin toss (or Ro-Sham-Bo) with the winning team deciding on first or second possession. Teams will attempt to score in the same end zone. Each team will then have 4 downs to score from 10 paces/yards from the goal line. If a team scores, they will have the opportunity to go for one or two on the PAT. A female must be used once within the first three plays or on the 1st and 4th downs when applicable. An interception will result in a team losing its possession. The game will be decided when one team scores more points in the rotation. No 1<sup>st</sup> downs will be awarded except in the case of a penalty. Interceptions will result in a turnover and may not be returned for any points.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- Receivers need only one foot in bounds for a reception. If in the referees eyes a receiver would be able to legally catch a pass but, was pushed out of bounds by a defender while in the air a catch will be awarded.
- Receivers intentionally leaving the field of play are ineligible to receive a pass. This includes the back of the endzone.
- Excessive roughness can get a player/team ejected from the game and or league.
- Diving into or over a defensive player, where offensive player is initiating contact (in the eyes of the referee) will result in the player being down at his point of takeoff
- A player who catches the ball and lands with 1 or 2 feet across the goal line, but is tagged before he/she pulls the ball across the plane of the goal will not be awarded a touchdown. The ball will be spotted at the point of where the ball was at the time he/she was called "down".
- The defense cannot hit the QB's throwing arm for any reason while the ball is in the QB's possession. Penalty will result in 10 yards/paces from the line of scrimmage and automatic first-down.