

## **MCFFU 9-Man Ineligible Rules**

In order to make our game easier to officiate and easier to find competent officials, we need to streamline our rules for the ineligible style. We've all played in tournaments where the rules are unknown to us before game-time, and where the officials lack certification. By basing our rules on National Federation of High School rules, with modifications, we can ensure a higher level of officiating nationally. **Each league/tournament can continue to run under its own rules. These rules are for the National Tournament Series and any other tournament/league that wishes to use them.**

Listed below are the modifications for your recommendation. They are a combination of USFTL, AFTFL and various league rules. Please contact Andy Hoffman ([ahoffman@mcfu.com](mailto:ahoffman@mcfu.com)) with any questions, comments, or proposals.

### **Modifications:**

**1) The Game.** The game consists of two 22 minute halves, with the first 20 minutes being a running clock. During the running clock, the only time stoppages will be after scores and for timeouts (both team and injury). The officials will also encourage the speeding up of play by calling out when a team has ten seconds to get the snap off, as well as during penalty discussions. The two-minute warning will be administered by NFL standards. During the last two minutes of each half, the clock will stop on penalties, scores, incomplete passes, time-outs and out of bounds.

**2) The Players.** Each team will have a maximum of 9 players on the field, and a minimum of 7. Offensively, there will be 3 ineligible interior linemen (one guard on each side of the center), and the offense must have a minimum of 5 on the line. Defensively, the team can line up anywhere behind the neutral zone, unless a player is head up on the center, in which case he must be a yard off the ball.

**3) Ending a play.** A play is complete when a player scores, the ballcarrier runs out of bounds, a pass falls incomplete, or when a ballcarrier no longer has his flags attached to his belt, or he is in contact with the ground with any part of his body other than his knee or hand while being/having been touched by an opposing player, or the ball is fumbled and touches the ground. Examples: A player catches a ball without his flags (player is down where ball is caught). A player falls down without being touched (he may get up and continue running).

**4) Penalties.** High school rules apply, with the following modifications.

- A penalty can be accepted or declined by the team for which the penalty has been assessed.
- In a case where there are consecutive offsides penalties against the defense, but the first one was declined, the penalty will be 10 yards.
- Any player caught securing his flags in a matter in which they were not intended will be ejected and his team assessed an unsportsmanlike foul (15 yards).
- Any player who purposefully removes a flag before a player possesses the ball will be assessed a 15 yard penalty from the end of the run. Last man rules apply in this situation.
- Defensive holding has two definitions. Holding a receiver before the pass is thrown is a 10 yard penalty and automatic first down. Holding a ballcarrier in order to remove his flags is 5 yard penalty from the end of the play and a repeat of the down (if not a first down). Defensive holding will not be called if the ballcarrier is wearing loose fitting clothing (non-football pants or shorts) and the defender inadvertently grabs his shorts/pants in an attempt to pull the flag.
- A tackle is the deliberate use of physical force in order to send a ballcarrier to the ground or out of bounds. This is unsportsmanlike conduct, and includes a 15 yard penalty from the end of the run.
- Any unsportsmanlike act can be cause for ejection, based on the judgment of the officials.
- All blocking is to be above the waist, and two on one blocking is legal. An illegal block is assessed 15 yards from the point of the foul or the end of the play, whichever is more beneficial to the defense, with a replay of the down.
- Flag guarding is the use of your arms, hands or the ball to prevent someone from pulling your flag. Flag guarding is a spot foul, and will be assessed 5 yards from the spot where the flag guarding occurred.
- Stiff arms to the frame of the defender (shoulders, chest and below) are legal. A stiff arm to the head is an unsportsmanlike foul, and will be assessed 15 yards from the spot of the infraction. A stiff arm to the arm (elbow and below) is considered flag guarding and will be penalized as such.
- Defensive pass interference will be assessed to the spot of the foul or 15 yards, which ever is deemed most advantageous to the offense. (NFL rules)
- If, in the opinion of the officials, the ballcarrier is prevented from scoring by the last defender committing a penalty, the play shall result in a touchdown/conversion.

**5) Extra points.** Extra points can be made either by run/pass or kick. An attempt from the 3 yard line is worth 1 point. However, a team may elect to go for two points by run or pass from the 10 yard line. In a case where there are not goalposts, all attempts will be for two points from the 3 yard line. In the case of an interception or blocked kick that is caught before hitting the ground, the defensive team may return the try for 2 points.

**6) Overtime.** Overtime is held in the same fashion as the high school/collegiate level. Each team will begin with the ball first and goal from the 20 yard line, and cannot gain a first down unless by penalty. If a team

scores, they may attempt an extra point for either 1 or 2. If the game is still tied after each team has made its attempt, then the process will be repeated until one team finishes ahead. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> overtime, all extra points must be for 2 points from the 10 yard line.

**7) Mercy Rule.** If one team is leading by 28 points with two minutes remaining in the game, the game will be called. If at any time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half one team takes a 40 point lead, the game will be called at that point.

**8) Uniforms.** During all National Tournament Series events, the teams will be expected to be dressed uniformly with individual numbers, including football pants, and with shirts not hindering the ability to grab the flag. Individual events can also require that teams be in uniform. **In 2007, all MCFU tournaments are to be played by teams in uniform and wearing football pants.**

**9) Flags.** All teams will use sonic-boom style flags.

**10) Kickoffs.** All kickoffs are live, and use high school rules with modifications. The receiving team will have 5 men between 20-25 yards from the kicking point. There are no onside kicks in flag football. In the second half, if the losing team kicks off, and the opposing team is not able to return the kick to the 20 yard line or beyond, then the ball will be turned over to the kicking team at the 50 yard line. A kickoff that goes into the end zone can be returned or downed for a touchback (NFL rules).

**11) Punts.** All punts are live, and use high school rules with modifications. Outside receivers can release at the time of the snap. A punt that lands in the end zone can not be returned. A punt that is touched (including blocks and muffs) is dead when it touches the ground. The defensive (non-punting team) cannot rush directly over the center.