

# MCFFU\USSSA 8-MAN ELIGIBLE RULES HOTSHEET

## SECTION I. PARAMETERS OF THE GAME

### **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 6 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: 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: 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.
  - 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 during any altercation on the field will be ejected from the game. Discretion of these ejections are under the jurisdiction of the game day officials and/or tournament staff.
- Rule 2.** A player ejected for fighting will be ejected from the 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.
- Rule 3.** Teams are not allowed to leave any trash on their sidelines. All teams are responsible for the items left on their sideline.
- Rule 4.** The tournament staff, game official or designee may impose a fine not to exceed \$100.00 for a team leaving their sideline or team area unclean by way of trash and other team items that are to be discarded.
- Rule 5.** Any fine imposed as a result of violating **SECTION I; Article F; Rule 3 and 4** 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.

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.

**Rule 1.** Each offensive player and any player wishing to possess and advance the ball must wear a standard triple threat flag belt around the waist with three (3) sewn on standard flags not altered in any way placed at the hips and directly in the back of the player wearing the flag belt. The flag belt must be worn properly by securing the manufacture's clasp on the belt which cannot be tied or looped at all.

**Rule 2.** The entire flag belt must be visible including the belt and all three sewn on flags.

**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 caught 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**

- Rule 1.** Teams are required to have a uniformed look, meaning same basic color jerseys with numbers on the front and/or back.
- Rule 2.** Pants or shorts 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 competing teams have the same basic color jersey the home team will have the choice of which jersey they would like to wear.  
**a.)** During pool play games if a home team is not designated then the home team will be decided by a coin toss.
- 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 will solicit a 10 yard penalty at the beginning of each half at the discretion of the Referee.
- 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 untucked jerseys may nullify defensive holding penalties against the ball carrier as described in **SECTION II; Article E; Rule 1; f and g**
- Rule 7.** Half cut jersey shall not extend past the waistline nor cover any portion of the flags or flag belt.

## **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 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> overtime period.
- e.)** A team only has the choice to attempt a 2 point conversion during the 2<sup>nd</sup> overtime period.

- f.) If the score is still tied after the 2<sup>nd</sup> overtime is completed the game will enter into a 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> overtime period with each team having an attempt per series until a winner is determined.
  - iii. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> overtime period will require the teams to attempt a 1 or 2 point extra point conversion. After the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.**

## **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: 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: E****De- Flagging****Rule 1. Flag Belt removal**

- a.) The offensive player must have full possession of the ball before they can be legally de-flagged.
- b.) Once the flag belt is disengage at the clasp it is considered a de-flag. A flag belt hanging on the uniform or belt is considered a de-flag if contact was made by a defender or not on if the flag belt is not secured properly.
- c.) **The defender must make a “legitimate attempt” at the flag(s) 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.**
- d.) 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.
- e.) 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.
- 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 does not have on a flag belt then the defender must touch the ball carrier with two (2) hands between the shoulders and knees.**

**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 belt 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: M****Flag Belt falls off Inadvertently**

- Rule 1.** If the ball carrier flag belt 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.
- Rule 2.** If the ball carrier loses his flag belt 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.
- Rule 3.** If a defender intercepts the ball and does not have on a flag belt 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 a flag belt to start the play a penalty can be thrown for illegal equipment.

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

## **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: P**      **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 assessed

- a.) 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.
- b.) 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.
- c.) If a penalty is assessed 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.
  - i. 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
- d.) 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.
  - i. 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.
  - ii. 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.
  - iii. Offsetting live ball penalties on the kick-off will result in a re-kick.

## Rule 10. KICK OFF TEAM

- a.) The kicking team must remain behind the restraining line until the ball is kicked.
- b.) After the ball is kicked and the kicking team catches and possesses 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).
- c.) 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:

- a.) Must line up minimum of 4 player 10 yards from the kicking team's restraining line and within a half (1/2) yard of the receiving team's restraining line.
- b.) Any muffs will be dead at the spot
  - i. If the ball carrier muffs the ball forward the spot of the ball is where the ball carrier touched the ball
  - ii. If the ball carrier muffs the ball backwards the spot of the ball is where the ball hits the ground.
- c.) The returning player has no "halo" but cannot be touched by a member of the kick off team prior to receiving the ball.
- d.) The returning player may not be interfered with during an attempt to catch the ball

## Rule 12. FREE KICK AFTER SAFTEY

- a.) Team must either punt the ball or kick the ball using a holder. A tee may not be used
- b.) 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.
- c.) 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

### 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 all players on the line of scrimmage except for the punter on declared punts.
- g.) During the "declared punt" no one from the kicking team or the return team's defensive line can move until the ball is kicked.
- h.) Four (4) players from the receiving team must be on the line of scrimmage during a declared punt.

## Rule 2. EXTRA POINT – KICKING

- a.) The team kicking for the extra point must declare they are kicking. 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 4 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 2 hands while on the ground or de-flags 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 a score of 1 or 2 points depending on the original spot 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 kicking team must have at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage.
- c.) The center and guards feet must be touching in order for the defensive rushing restrictions to be enforced.
- 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 2 hands while on the ground or de-flags him.
- h.) **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.
- i.) **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: S 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 4 offensive players must be on line of scrimmage and set for the offense at the snap.

### Article: T Offensive Line

**Rule 1.** The linemen are allowed to come off the line for running plays or to receive a pass immediately after the snap.

**Rule 2.** The 2 closest players to the center (within 5 yards horizontally and 1 yard vertical on either side of the center will be considered the offensive line in which case the alignment guidelines will apply to these players regarding a legal formation.

**Rule 3.** The offensive line will consist of the center and the 2 closest players (guards) who may not be more than 1 yard vertical and 5 yards horizontal of the center to be considered on the line. Any players beyond 5 yards horizontal and 1 yard vertical of the center must be directly up on the line to be counted on the line of scrimmage for a legal formation.

**Rule 4.** All offensive linemen eligible to receive forward passes or hand offs.

### Article: V 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 a delay of the game penalty will be called.

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

### Article: X 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:**

- a.) Hurdle over a downed player to avoid contact.
- b.) Spin.
- c.) Extend his arm with the ball in hand while running to gain better field position.
- d.) Compact body without extending body parts to absorb potential contact
- e.) 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**

**Rule 3.** Ball carriers **are not allowed to:**

- a.) Flag Guard. **See: Flag Guarding**
- b.) Leave feet by “**vertically**” jumping, hurdling a defender not on the ground or diving to avoid a de-flag. (**Flag Guarding**)
- c.) Dive to advance the ball in order to gain extra yards or avoid a defender.
- d.) 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.
- e.) Lower head or bend over in which either action gives the ball carrier a decisive advantage over a defender attempting a de-flag.
- f.) Charge.
- g.) Get back up once he hits the ground.

**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: Y**      **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- 2**      **Scrimmage Formations**

**Rule 1.** At all times the team with possession must have at least four (4) players on the line of scrimmage. **See: Line of Scrimmage.**

**Rule 2.** At the start of a play, offensive players must be at least four (4) 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 8 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 four (4) 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) of 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.