

## **FOOTBALL RULES SUMMARY**

### **FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS**

#### **A. POSSESSION**

- 1 A LIVE BALL IS ALWAYS IN POSSESSION OF A TEAM.
- 2 A LIVE BALL IS IN PLAYER POSSESSION OR IT IS LOOSE.
- 3 A LOOSE BALL IS IN POSSESSION OF THE TEAM WHOSE PLAYER WAS LAST IN POSSESSION OF THE BALL.
- 4 A PLAYER IN POSSESSION OF A LIVE BALL IS A RUNNER.
- 5 A PLAYER CANNOT FUMBLE PRIOR TO GAINING POSSESSION
- 6 NO FOUL CAUSES LOSS OF THE BALL.
- 7 AFTER A DISTANCE PENALTY, THE BALL BELONGS TO THE TEAM WHICH WAS IN POSSESSION AT THE TIME OF THE FOUL. TEAM POSSESSION MAY THEN CHANGE IF A NEW SERIES IS AWARDED.
- 8 POSSESSION OF A LIVE BALL IN THE OPPONENT'S END ZONE IS ALWAYS A TOUCHDOWN.

#### **B. DOWN**

- 1 A DOWN BEGINS WHEN THE BALL BECOMES LIVE AND ENDS WHEN IT BECOMES DEAD.
- 2 WHETHER THE NEXT DOWN WILL BE FIRST IS DETERMINED AT THE TIME THE BALL BECOMES DEAD AND AFTER CONSIDERING ANY ACT, EXCEPT A NONPLAYER OR UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL, WHICH OCCURS DURING THE DOWN.
- 3 IF 'R' IS THE FIRST TO TOUCH A SCRIMMAGE KICK BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE , A NEW SERIES WILL BE AWARDED THE TEAM IN POSSESSION AT THE END OF THE DOWN.  
EXCEPTIONS: A FOUL THAT OCCURS PRIOR TO CHANGE OF POSSESSION AND IS ACCEPTED. A DOUBLE FOUL OR AN INADVERTENT WHISTLE.
- 4 THE ONLY FOULS BY THE DEFENSE THAT CAUSE AN AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN ARE:
  - A) PASS INTERFERENCE
  - B) ROUGHING THE KICKER/HOLDER
  - C) ROUGHING THE PASSER
  - D) ROUGHING THE SNAPPER.
- 5 IF THE PENALTY IS ACCEPTED FOR ANY LIVE BALL FOUL BY EITHER TEAM THAT OCCURRED ON THE LAST TIMED DOWN OF THE PERIOD, THEN THE PERIOD MUST BE EXTENDED BY AN UNTIMED DOWN.  
( Exception: Loss of down penalty, the period is not extended ).

### **C. DEAD BALL**

- 1 AN OFFICIALS WHISTLE SELDOM KILLS THE BALL. IT IS ALREADY DEAD.
- 2 NO LIVE BALL FOUL CAUSES THE BALL TO BECOME DEAD.
- 3 A DEAD BALL MAY BECOME LIVE ONLY BY A FREE KICK OR A LEGAL SNAP.
- 4 CATCHING THE BALL IS ALWAYS PRECEDED BY TOUCHING THE BALL, THUS IF TOUCHING THE BALL CAUSES THE BALL TO BECOME DEAD THE CATCHING HAS NO SIGNIFICANCE.

### **D. KICKS-GENERAL**

- 1 A KICK ALWAYS ENDS AS SOON AS A PLAYER SECURES POSSESSION.
- 2 RECEIVERS CAN CATCH OR RECOVER A KICK AND ADVANCE UNLESS A VALID OR IN-VALID FAIR CATCH SIGNAL HAS BEEN GIVEN BY ANY MEMBER OF THE RECEIVING TEAM.
- 3 IF A LEGAL KICK IS CAUGHT IN OR BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE TO R'S GOAL LINE ON A FREE KICK AND BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE TO THE GOAL LINE ON A SCRIMMAGE KICK BY A RECEIVER AFTER HE HAS SIGNALLED FOR A FAIR CATCH, IT IS A FAIR CATCH AND THE BALL BECOMES DEAD AS SOON AS IT IS CAUGHT.
- 4 A FAIR CATCH MAY BE MADE OF ANY FREE KICK WHICH IS IN OR BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE TO R'S GOAL LINE OR A SCRIMMAGE KICK WHICH IS BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE TO R'S GOAL LINE.
- 5 ANY KICK THAT IS NOT A SCORING ATTEMPT BECOMES DEAD (RESULT IS A TOUCHBACK) WHEN IT BREAKS THE PLANE OF R'S GOAL LINE.
- 6 NO KICK MAY BE LEGALLY BATTED UNLESS IT IS AN ATTEMPT TO BLOCK THE KICK IN OR BEHIND THE NEUTRAL ZONE, OR IF A GROUND SCRIMMAGE KICK WHICH IS BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE IS BATTED BY K TOWARDS HIS OWN GOAL LINE. ALSO, A SCRIMMAGE KICK IN FLIGHT BEYOND THE NEUTRAL MAY BE BATTED OR CAUGHT BY 'K' WHEN NO PLAYER OF 'R' IS IN POSITION TO CATCH THE KICK.
- 7 FIRST TOUCHING OF A KICK BY 'K' IS ALWAYS IGNORED IF THE PENALTY IS ACCEPTED FOR A FOUL DURING THE DOWN.

### **E. FREE KICKS**

- 1 THE RULES FOR THE THREE FREE KICK ARE THE SAME. EXCEPTION: A KICKOFF FOLLOWING A TRY OR A FREE KICK FOLLOWING A SAFETY CANNOT SCORE A FIELD GOAL.
- 2 FREE KICK LINES ARE ALWAYS 10 YARDS APART.
- 3 A FREE KICK IS NOT REPEATED UNLESS A FOUL OCCURS PRIOR TO CHANGE OF POSSESSION AND THE PENALTY REQUIRES A REPLAY OF THE DOWN OR THERE WAS A DOUBLE FOUL.

## **F. SCRIMMAGE KICKS**

- 1 TOUCHING OF A LOW SCRIMMAGE KICK BY ANY PLAYER IS IGNORED IF IT OCCURS IN OR BEHIND THE EXPANDED NEUTRAL ZONE. SUCH TOUCHING MAY CAUSE THE BALL TO GO OUT OF BOUNDS.
- 2 A SCRIMMAGE KICK RECOVERED IN OR BEHIND THE NEUTRAL ZONE MAY BE ADVANCED BY K OR R.

## **G. PASSES**

- 1 A PLAYER WHO IS ELIGIBLE AT THE START OF THE DOWN REMAINS ELIGIBLE THROUGHOUT THE DOWN.
- 2 OFFENSIVE INTERIOR LINEMEN ARE PROHIBITED FROM ADVANCING BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE ONLY DURING A FORWARD PASS WHICH CROSSES THE NEUTRAL ZONE, BUT THEY MAY ADVANCE AFTER THE BALL IS IN FLIGHT.
- 3 A HANDED BALL IS NOT A PASS.
- 4 ANY PASS IN FLIGHT MAY BE BATTED IN ANY DIRECTION BY AN ELIGIBLE RECEIVER.  
EXCEPTION: A BACKWARDS PASS MAY NOT BE BATTED FORWARD BY THE PASSING TEAM.
- 5 A FORWARD PASS INTERFERENCE FOUL CAN ONLY OCCUR BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE.

## **H. BLOCKING**

- 1 BLOCKING BY EITHER TEAM IS PERMISSIBLE, UNLESS IT IS KICK-CATCHING INTERFERENCE, PASS INTERFERENCE, A PERSONAL FOUL OR AN ILLEGAL BLOCK.

## **I. FOULS**

- 1 NO LIVE BALL FOUL CAUSES THE OFFICIAL TO SOUND HIS WHISTLE IMMEDIATELY.
- 2 A LIVE BALL FOUL FOLLOWED BY A DEAD BALL FOUL BY THE OPPONENT IS NOT PAIRED TOGETHER TO FORM A DOUBLE FOUL.
- 3 IT IS A FOUL TO BAT ANY LOOSE BALL WHICH HAS TOUCHED THE GROUND. EXCEPTION: 'K' CAN LEGALLY BAT A GROUNDED SCRIMMAGE KICK TOWARD HIS OWN GOAL.
- 4 A FOUL DURING A TRY IS NOT PAIRED WITH A DEAD BALL FOUL TO MAKE A DOUBLE OR MULTIPLE FOUL.
- 5 A DOUBLE FOUL RESULTS WHEN EACH TEAM COMMITS FOULS OTHER THAN UNSPORTSMANLIKE DURING THE SAME LIVE BALL PERIOD.

## **J. PENALTY MEASUREMENTS**

- 1 THE DISTANCE PENALTY FOR ANY FOUL MAY BE DECLINED.
- 2 PENALTIES ARE EITHER 5,10 OR 15 YARDS.
- 3 ANY LIVE BALL FOUL IS PENALIZED ACCORDING TO THE ALL BUT ONE ENFORCEMENT PRINCIPLE EXCEPT:
  - A) FOULS WHICH OCCUR SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE SNAP.
  - B) A FOUL BY 'B' DURING A SUCCESSFUL KICK TRY WHEN THE SCORE IS ACCEPTED.
  - C) A NONPLAYER OR UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL.
  - D) ROUGHING THE PASSER WHEN THE LAST RUN ENDS BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE AND THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION.
- 4 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT FOR ANY DEAD BALL, NONPLAYER OR UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL IS FROM THE SUCCEEDING SPOT.
- 5 THE PENALTY FOR ANY ONE OF THE ILLEGAL PASSES IS A LOSS OF FIVE YARDS AND THE DOWN IS COUNTED EXCEPT FOR A FORWARD PASS FOLLOWING A CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION.
- 6 THE PENALTY FOR OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE INCLUDES LOSS OF DOWN.
- 7 NO PENALTY DIRECTLY RESULTS IN A SAFETY, HOWEVER, IF A DISTANCE PENALTY IS ENFORCED FROM BEHIND THE OFFENDER'S GOAL LINE TOWARDS HIS END LINE, IT RESULTS IN A SAFETY.
- 8 THE PENALTY FOR A LIVE BALL FOUL BY THE DEFENSE IS ADMINISTERED FROM THE BASIC SPOT. EXCEPTION: WHEN THE ENFORCEMENT SPOT IS IN THE END ZONE (THE ENFORCEMENT SPOT THEN BECOME THE GOAL LINE).
- 9 THE LOSS OF DOWN ASPECT OF ANY PENALTY HAS NO SIGNIFICANCE FOLLOWING A CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION OR IF THE LINE TO GAIN HAS BEEN REACHED AFTER ENFORCEMENT.