

## Big D Sports – Official Coed Flag Football Rules

### Apparel/Clothing

**Shirts/Jerseys:** Uniforms and/or numbers are not required. Teams must designate their team color during registration. Each player on a team must wear **identical colored** shirts/jerseys. During each game, a team must wear shirts that have a distinguishable color from the opposing team's shirts. A team may be required to wear different colored shirts if the opposing team has shirts of:

- The same color
- A different shade of the same color (Carolina blue/light blue; light green/forest green; dark grey/light grey; maroon/red)
- A color that can be confused with their color (navy blue/black/purple; white/ light grey; yellow/neon green)

**Pockets/Belt Loops:** Shorts or any legwear with pockets and/or belt loops are not allowed. Players will not be allowed to play if they are wearing any shorts or legwear with pockets and/or belt loops. Players may play in the game once he or she is wearing the appropriate shorts or legwear. Merely covering, taping, or turning the pockets/belt loops inside out is not acceptable.

**Shirt/Jersey Length:** Shirts, jerseys or any clothing tops must be long enough to tuck in so that they remain tucked in shorts/legwear during the entire game, or short enough so there is a minimum four (4) inches from the bottom of the shirt to the player's waistline. Shirts must not cover up flags or flag belts for any reason. **If you choose to wear leggings, yoga pants, or similar, your shirt still must be tucked in.**

**Short /Legwear Colors:** Players are encouraged to avoid selecting flags that match their shorts or legwear. Each field will offer two colors of flags for players to choose from.

**Shoes/Footwear:** Shoes must be worn at all times. Sneakers and rubber-cleated shoes will be allowed. Any metal cleats, open-toed, open-heeled or hard-soled shoes will not be allowed.

**Towels:** Towels (or any other objects) may not hang from a player's waist or otherwise interfere with the possible removal of a flag. However, towels may be used and kept on the ground by the ball before the snap. If a player is wearing a towel and the towel is removed during the course of the play, then the towel will be treated as a flag.

**Hats/Headwear:** All billed hats or visors must be worn with the bill towards the back.

**Jewelry:** All jewelry must be removed (including watches, earrings, bracelets, etc.). **Any fitness watch must be covered with a wristband or removed.**

**Pads:** Pads (leg, knee, ankle, arm and/or elbow) that are worn must be soft and pliable.

**Other equipment:** Helmets, football shoulder pads and the use of other dangerous equipment is prohibited.

Any clothing/apparel in question should be brought to the attention of the referee. Big D staff and the referee will make all final decisions with regard to discrepancies in apparel.

### Team/Player Requirements

**Rosters/Player Eligibility:** It is the responsibility of the team captains to maintain their rosters. Big D Sports staff and the referees will assist in any discrepancies with regards to the coed ratios and player eligibility. All roster check requests must be made to Big D Sports staff prior to the first play of the game. **Players should have their ID available for every game. If a player does not have a valid ID, they may be asked to leave the game.**

- Teams may add substitute players to their game day roster without penalty so long as the substitute players are not currently a rostered player for another team in the league.
- A team may choose to bring on a maximum of three players from another team's roster, to get them to 8, so long as those players are in the same division. However, doing so will result in a 7 point penalty and the opponent will have the option both halves.

**Minimum Number of Players at Game Time:** Each team must have six (6) players, with a minimum of two (2) females, on the field at game time in order to begin play (see below if one or both teams are short at game time).

**Failure to Have the Minimum Number of Players at Game Time:**

- If a team does not have the minimum number of players to begin, then the team at full strength will be awarded with seven (7) points. The team that is short-handed will have five (5) minutes to field the minimum number of players. The game clock will begin at this time. If the short-handed team does not have the required minimum number of players at the end of the five minute period, then they will have to forfeit the game. Game play will begin as soon as the minimum number of players is met on both sides.
- If neither team has the minimum number of players to begin, then the 7-point penalty will not be enforced. Both teams must field the minimum number of players within five (5) minutes after game time. If neither team has the minimum number of players at the end of the five minute period, then both teams will forfeit the game. **BE ON TIME!**
- The two team captains can agree to proceed with an official game if Big D Sports staff allows it. However, the team on the verge of forfeiting cannot force an official game to take place, nor is the opposing team required to allow an official game to take place. The Big D Sports staff will ultimately make this decision after talking with both captains.

## **General Rules**

**Players on the Field:** Games are played with a maximum of eight (8) players on the field per team. Each team may play no more than five (5) males at any time.

**Field of Play:** The field of play is 80 yards long x 35 yards wide, divided into six (6) zones of 10 yards each and two (2) end zones of 10 yards each. The area inside the field of play is considered "in-bounds". The sidelines, end lines and anything outside the field of play is considered "out-of-bounds".

**Game Ball:** Each team must provide their own football(s).

- A male passer/quarterback must throw with an official-sized NCAA /NFL football.
- A female passer/quarterback has the option of throwing with an official-sized NCAA/NFL football or a junior-sized football.
- **Game balls must be properly inflated. If an official determines that a game ball is under-inflated, that ball will be removed from play and a league game ball will be provided. An under-inflated ball may be put back into play after being properly inflated.**

Big D staff and referees are not obligated to handle and retrieve footballs. Each team is responsible for handling and retrieving their own football at all times.

**Game Officials:** At least two (2) referees will be provided by Big D Sports to officiate and enforce the rules of the game. The referees' responsibilities include:

- Starting the game on time
- **Validating game balls and proper flags**
- Overseeing the game clock and play clock
- Announcing the start and end of each half
- Announcing the down, line-to-gain and open/closed play
- Announcing the rush-count
- Verify pass completions and flag pulls
- Verifying touchdowns and PATs
- Assessing penalties
- Settling disputes and disputed calls

All referees' judgment decisions are final. Any excessive player disagreements with the referees will result in an ejection from the game (and/or league), if deemed necessary.

**Scorekeeping:** It is the responsibility of both team captains to help keep track of their scores. Big D Sports staff and the referees will assist in the tracking of scores and any discrepancies with the scores. The game's final score must be verified by both team captains with Big D Sports staff at the end of the game.

**Game Duration and Intermission:** A regulation game shall consist of two (2) halves with a five (5) minute intermission. Each half is twenty (20) minutes long. The game clock will run continuously during the first 18 minutes of each half.

**Coin Toss:** A coin toss will be used to determine the first offensive possession in the first half. The team that wins the coin toss shall choose one of these three options:

- Offense or defense (opposing team chooses the direction)
- The direction of play (opposing team can choose offense or defense), or
- Defer their choice of the first two options until the second half.

The team that loses the coin toss will have choice at the second half, unless the team that won the coin toss defers their choice.

**Substitutions:** Free substitution is allowed after a play is ruled "dead" (provided the substitution does not delay the game).

- An offensive player may not enter the field unless he/she joins the huddle and is part of the huddle at the time when it breaks.
- **A last second substitute that does not join the huddle, must come onto the field at least four (4) yards from the sideline.**
- Each team may not have more than eight (8) players on the field when the ball is snapped.

***Penalty: Illegal Substitution – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage***

**Start of Play:** At the start of each half, the ball will be spotted on the offensive team's 10-yard line. After a team scores a touchdown (and attempts the PAT), the ball will be spotted on the opposing team's 10-yard line for their offensive possession.

**Play Clock:** The offensive team has 35 seconds to put the ball in play after referee signals "ready for play". The 35-second play clock will begin immediately following the whistle ending the previous play.

**Penalty: Delay of Game – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage**

**Series of Downs:** During an offensive possession, each series starts with a "1<sup>st</sup> down". Within each series of four (4) downs, the offense must advance the ball forward past two (2) cones from the initial offensive line of scrimmage. The second cone signifies the "line-to-gain". If the ball carrier reaches the line-to-gain, then the offense will be awarded a "1<sup>st</sup> down", a new series of four downs and the initial offensive line of scrimmage will be spotted at the end of the previous play. **However, if the "line-to-gain" was achieved but a penalty's result pushes the line of scrimmage behind the "line-to-gain", no new first down has been established.**

**Turnover-on-Downs:** Turnover-on-downs occurs when the offense:

- Fails to reach the line-to-gain (or score a touchdown) within a series of four downs, or
- Commits a penalty (on 4<sup>th</sup> down) that results in a Loss of Down.

The opposing team will gain offensive possession with a series of four downs from the final spot of the previous play.

**Legal Catch:** For a catch to be legal, the player (1) must possess the ball, (2) come down with one foot in-bounds, and (3) must not have any other body part touching out of bounds. If at the time of the catch the first foot touches out of bounds before the second foot touches in-bounds, then the catch is not legal. A catch made in-bounds by a kneeling (or prone) player is legal and the play is dead at that spot. If a player loses the ball simultaneously while returning to the ground, then the catch is not legal. A player may make a legal catch as long as he/she doesn't make intentional contact with an opposing player.

**Dead Ball (End of Play):** A live ball becomes "dead" and ends the play when:

- The ball touches the ground
  - o On a fumble
  - o On a pitch, lateral or backwards pass
  - o On a forward pass
  - o On a punt (spotted where the ball initially hits the ground)
  - o On a snap from the center (spotted where the ball initially hits the ground)
  - o As a means to help the ball-carrier regain/maintain balance (spotted where ball initially hits the ground)
- The ball-carrier carries the ball out of bounds
- An opposing player removes the ball-carrier flag
- The ball-carrier touches the ground with any part of their body (other than their hands or feet)
- A touchdown, successful PAT, touchback or safety occurs
- A referee blows his/her whistle to signify the end of a play (ball spotted at the moment the whistle was blown if the whistle was inadvertent)

**Time-Outs:** Each team is allowed two (2) time-outs per half. Each time-out will be one (1) minute long. The game clock will stop during time-outs in both halves. The 35-second play clock will resume after the time-out expires. Time-outs called after a touchdown will result in the PAT attempt being an un-timed play. Time-outs not used in the first half will not carry over into the second half.

**Two-Minute Warning:** The game clock will stop when there are two (2) minutes remaining in each half. During the two-minute warning, the game clock will stop again in the following situations:

- Team time-out – game clock starts on the next snap
- Incomplete forward pass (legal or illegal) – game clock starts on the next snap
- Ball-carrier runs out of bounds – game clock starts on the next snap
- First downs
  - o A team is awarded a new series of four downs – game clock starts on the “ready-for-play” whistle
  - o Penalties – depending on the penalty, the clock will start either at the snap or the “ready-for-play” whistle (ask your official)
- Touchdowns – after the PAT attempt, game clock starts on the next snap
- Touchback – game clock starts on the next snap
- Safety – game clock starts on the next snap
- Inadvertent whistle – game clock starts on the “ready-for-play” whistle

**Touchdowns:** A touchdown is awarded when:

- A forward pass is caught by an offensive player inside the opposing team’s end zone, or
- When a ball-carrier advances so that the ball crosses the vertical plane of the opposing team’s goal line. The ball-carrier’s body doesn’t have to cross the goal line.
- **Touchdown – 6 points.**

**PAT/Conversion Attempts:** The team that scores a touchdown is given the choice of attempting a point-after-touchdown (PAT) for 1 or 2 points. Once the team makes the choice, the choice may only be changed if a time-out is called.

One-point conversion

- Play starts from the 3-yard line.
- **Successful conversion = 1 point**
- One-point attempts cannot be returned by the opposing team for a score, if intercepted.

Two-point conversion

- Play starts from the 10-yard line
- **Successful conversion = 2 points**
- Two-point attempts can be returned by the opposing team for a score (2 points), if intercepted.

All PATs/conversions must be forward pass plays. If the PAT attempt ends as a running play, then a penalty will be enforced.

***Penalty: No-Run Violation - PAT attempt is nullified.***

If the offense scored a touchdown on a “2<sup>nd</sup> Open” play and didn’t meet the “Female-Play” requirement on the “2<sup>nd</sup> Open” play, then the PAT attempt will be considered a “Closed” play. If the offense doesn’t meet the “Female-Play” requirement on the “Closed” play, then a penalty will be enforced.

***Penalty: “Closed” Play Violation - PAT attempt is nullified.***

**Touchdown/PAT Verification:** The referees have the right to verify a touchdown or successful PAT by requiring the player that scored to raise his/her arms, so the referees can de-flag the player. If the player is not de-flagged with one good pull, and the referees determine the flag belt has been secured illegally, then the touchdown or PAT is nullified. The player is disqualified and a penalty will be enforced.

***Penalty: Illegally Secured Belt - 10 yards from the previous spot; Loss of Down for the touchdown attempt; PAT attempt is nullified.***

**Safeties:** A safety occurs when the ball-carrier causes the ball to be ruled “dead” inside their own end zone. The scored safety will be awarded to the opposing team when:.

- An offensive ball-carrier is ruled down inside their own end zone
- A ball-carrier throws a backwards pass/lateral/pitch or fumbles a ball that:
  - o Touches the ground inside their own end zone
  - o Travels out of bounds behind their own goal line
- A direct snap that:
  - o Touches the ground inside their own end zone
  - o Travels out of bounds behind their own goal line
- A penalty is committed while the ball-carrier is inside their own end zone

The opposing team that is awarded the safety will also gain offensive possession at their own 10-yard line (no punts or free kicks).

### **Safety – 2 points**

**Touchbacks:** A touchback occurs when:

- A defensive player does not advance the ball out of their own end zone and the play is ruled “dead” after:
  - o Intercepting a pass
  - o Catching a punt
- An offensive player punts a ball that:
  - o Touches the ground inside the defensive team’s end zone
  - o Travels out of bounds behind the defensive team’s goal line
- An offensive player fumbles the ball forward that:
  - o Touches the ground inside the defensive team’s end zone
  - o Travels out of bounds behind the defensive team’s goal line

The defensive team that is awarded the touchback will gain offensive possession at their own 10-yard line.

**End of Game:** The team with the higher score at the end of regulation wins the game.

**Ties:** If the score is tied at the end of regulation during the regular season, then the game will officially end in a tie. Overtime periods will only be played during for playoffs.

**Mercy Rule:** If at any point during the last two (2) minutes of the second half a team is ahead by 18 or more points, then that team wins.

**Forfeits:** If a team is required to forfeit a game, then the opposing team will be awarded an 18-0 victory.

**Suspended Play:** Big D Sports staff and referees may temporarily halt the game due to inclement weather, unsafe field conditions and/or hostile circumstances. The staff and referees may resume the game if conditions improve within a reasonable amount of time. If the game doesn’t resume, then:

- If the game is halted during the first half, the game will be suspended and resumed at a later date.
- If the game is halted at any point during the second half, the determination to resume the game at later date will be determined by the league staff.

## Rules Pertaining To Flags

**Flags/Flag Belts:** Flags and flag belts will be provided by Big D Sports. Flag belts must be worn tight across the hips with a flag to the side of each hip. Any excess to the flag belt should be properly secured or tucked in to the player's legwear. Players caught wearing non-Big D Sports flags/belts and players wearing loosely worn flag belts will be penalized.

**Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.**

Players caught playing with altered flags/belts will be disqualified for the remainder of the game. A second offense will result in disqualification for the remainder of the season. Additionally any offensive gain by the ejected player on the previous play will be nullified and the down played over.

**De-flagging a Player:** If the flag is removed from the ball-carrier's flag belt, then the ball is declared dead and the play ends. The player who removes the flag from the ball-carrier should immediately hold the flag above his/her head to assist the referees in locating the spot where the flag-pull occurred. A player may dive to remove a flag as long as no contact is made with the opposing team. If the excess portion of a ball carrier's flag belt is pulled, it will be treated the same as a flag being removed from the flag belt.

**Flag Falls Out On Its Own:** When the ball-carrier loses his/her flag accidentally or inadvertently, play shall continue. De-flagging of such a player reverts to a one-hand tag/touch of said player.

**Spotting the Ball:** The position of the ball, not the flag(s) when a ball carrier is deemed down will determine the spot of the next line-of-scrimmage.

**Flag Guarding:** The ball-carrier shall not interfere with an opponent's ability to remove their flag by using their hands, arms, or the ball. This includes:

- Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
- Placing the ball over the flag to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
- Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.

**Penalty: Flag Guarding - 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.**

**Stiff-Arming:** A ball-carrier may not stiff-arm in order to prevent an opponent from removing the flag.

**Penalty: Personal Foul - 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.**

**Illegal De-flagging:** Intentionally pulling or removing a flag from an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player is illegal.

**Penalty: Illegal De-flagging - 10 yards from the point of infraction.**

**Contact during De-flagging:** A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock down the ball-carrier in an attempt to remove the flag. Nor shall an offensive player hold, block (via a moving screen) or run through a defensive player trying to remove the flag.

**Penalty: Illegal contact – 10 yards from the spot of the foul.**

## Offensive Gameplay

**Offensive Line of Scrimmage:** The offensive line of scrimmage is the yard line and its vertical plane which passes through the point of the ball and is nearest the offensive team's end zone. A colored

disc will signify this line. All offensive players may not cross the offensive line of scrimmage prior to the snap.

**Offensive Formations:** The formation of an offensive team must have a minimum of five (5) players on the offensive line of scrimmage.

***Penalty: Illegal Formation - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.***

It must be clear who the eight offensive players are on each play. The intent of this rule is to eliminate all “sleeper” or “hideout” plays. See substitution rule on page 3.

***Penalty: Illegal Participation - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.***

**Players in Motion (Pre-Snap):** Only one offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap. This motion must not be toward the defense’s goal line. (If two or more players go in motion before the snap, then this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap).

***Penalty: Illegal Procedure - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.***

**Snapping the Ball/Direct Snaps:** An offensive player (center) snaps the ball to begin the play. The snap must be done between their legs or from a side stance. The center may snap the ball by straddling the line of scrimmage. The center (after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball) may not move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion from the ground. Once the ball is snapped, the ball is “live”. ***Penalty: Illegal Procedure – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.***

**Receiving the Snap:** The offensive player who receives the direct snap must be the player that calls for the snap, and must be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive line of scrimmage. Direct snaps to players on the offensive line of scrimmage are illegal. A player in motion may also take a legal direct snap.

***Penalty: Illegal Procedure - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.***

**Forward Pass Plays:** A forward pass play consists of an offensive player (passer) throwing the ball forward to another offensive player. The passer must make the forward pass from anywhere behind the offensive line of scrimmage. All other offensive players are eligible to receive a forward pass. Only one (1) forward pass can be made during a down. If the passer makes a forward pass after crossing the offensive line of scrimmage or an offensive player makes a second forward pass, then a penalty will be enforced.

***Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards from the point of infraction or line of scrimmage; Loss of Down***

**Complete/Incomplete Pass:** If an offensive player legally catches a forward pass, then the pass is ruled as “complete”. If the catch was not legal, then the pass is ruled as “incomplete”. If an offensive player steps out-of-bounds on their own accord and comes back in-bounds to make a catch, then the pass is ruled as “incomplete”. However, if the offensive player is forced out-of-bounds by defensive contact, then the offensive player may reestablish themselves in-bounds and make a legal catch.

**Backwards Pitch/Lateral/Pass:** A ball-carrier may pitch/lateral/pass the ball backwards prior to being de-flagged. If the ball hits the ground, then the ball will be considered dead at that spot.

**Intentional Grounding:** Intentional grounding will be called at the official’s discretion. A passer will be flagged for intentional grounding if:

- Intentionally throwing at the feet of a receiver.
- Significantly overthrowing an eligible receiver
- Throwing the ball into an area with no receiver around.

**Penalty: Intentional Grounding - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage; Loss of Down.**

**Clock Play:** Inside the final two (2) minutes of each half, a passer may ground the ball at their feet in order to stop the game clock. Grounding of the ball must happen immediately after taking the snap. If the ball is not clocked immediately, but done to avoid a sack, the offense will be flagged for intentional grounding.

**Penalty: Intentional Grounding - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage; Loss of Down.**

**Running Plays:** The offense may attempt to advance the ball by use of running plays. Running plays will be defined as:

- An offensive player taking a direct snap and attempting to gain positive yardage without the use of a forward pass.
- An offensive player receiving a handoff from another offensive player behind the offensive line of scrimmage and attempting to gain positive yardage.
- An offensive player receiving a pitch/lateral/backwards pass from an offensive player behind the offensive line of scrimmage and attempting to gain positive yardage.

**Offensive Screen Blocking:** An offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The offensive blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at their sides or behind their back. Any use of the arms, elbows, legs or knees by the offensive blocker to initiate contact is illegal. An offensive blocker may use his/her feet in order to gain position before, during and after screen blocking. The offensive blocker must remain set once the defensive player is within two steps of the blocker. Also, the offensive blocker may not run in front of the ball-carrier to block or get in the way of a defensive player.

**Penalty: Illegal Blocking - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage (if penalty occurs in the offensive backfield) or 10 yards from the point of infraction (if penalty occurs down field); Replay the down if penalty accepted.**

**Interlocked Interference:** Teammates of a ball-carrier or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.

**Penalty: 10 yards from the point of infraction**

**No-Run Zone:** The no-run zone is the area starting from the opposing team's 10-yard line to the opposing team's goal line. Any play that begins within the no-run zone (including the 10-yard line) and going into the opposing team's end zone must be a forward pass play (not a running play). Once a series has reached the no-run zone, all subsequent plays in that possession will also be forward pass/no-run plays.

**Penalty: No-Run Violation - 5 yards from previous spot; Loss of Down**

**“Female-Play” Requirement:** A “Female-Play” involves a female offensive player executing one of the following:

- Attempting a legal forward pass (as previously defined) to any offensive receiver beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Being the intended receiver of a legal forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Making positive yardage on a legal run play.

If an intended female receiver (beyond the offensive line of scrimmage) catches a forward pass and successfully pitches, laterals or passes the ball backwards to a male offensive player, then the “Female-Play” requirement is met.

If a male receiver (beyond the offensive line of scrimmage) catches a forward pass from a male passer and attempts to pitch, lateral or pass the ball backwards to a female offensive player, then the “Female-Play” requirement is **NOT** met.

If an intended female receiver (beyond the offensive line of scrimmage) initially touches a forward pass and a male receiver catches the ball, then the “Female-Play” requirement is met.

If a female ball-carrier (behind the offensive line of scrimmage) receives a hand-off and attempts a forward pass (complete or incomplete), then the “Female-Play” requirement is met as long as the referees verify the female ball-carrier became a female passer.

**Open/Closed Play:** The offense must meet the “Female-Play” requirement at **least once** within three (3) consecutive downs. To help facilitate the offense’s distribution of the football to male and female players, each down will be designated as a “1<sup>st</sup> Open”, “2<sup>nd</sup> Open” or “Closed” play.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Open/2<sup>nd</sup> Open – Any offensive player (male or female) is allowed to advance the ball.
- Closed – The “Female-Play” requirement must be met.
- Each new offensive possession starts with a “1<sup>st</sup> Open” play.
- If the offense meets the “Female-Play” requirement on any down, then the next down will be a “1<sup>st</sup> Open” play.
- If the offense doesn’t meet the “Female-Play” requirement on the “1<sup>st</sup> Open” play, then the next down will be a “2<sup>nd</sup> Open” play.
- If the offense doesn’t meet the “Female-Play” requirement on the “2<sup>nd</sup> Open” play, then the next down will be a “Closed” play.
- If the offense doesn’t meet the “Female-Play” requirement on the “Closed” play, then a penalty will be enforced and the next down will be a “Closed” play.

***Penalty: “Closed” Play Violation - Loss of Down; ball goes back to the line of scrimmage (unless the previous play ended with negative yardage behind the line of scrimmage)***

**4<sup>th</sup> Down (“Play or Punt”):** On 4<sup>th</sup> down, the offense has the choice to run another offensive play or punt the ball to the defense. The decision must be announced to the referees. If the offense wants to change their decision, then they must use a time-out.

**Punting the Ball:** Any offensive player (male or female) may punt the ball towards the opposing team’s end zone. The ball may be punted anywhere from behind the offensive line of scrimmage. A direct snap to the punter is not required. Players on the punting team may not move until the ball is punted. Fake punts and quick kicks are not allowed.

***Penalty: Delay of Game - 5 yards from the previous spot.***

## **Defensive Gameplay**

**Defensive Line of Scrimmage:** The defensive line of scrimmage is the yard line and its vertical plane which passes one yard from the point of the ball and is nearest the defensive team’s end zone. A colored disc will signify this line. Defensive players may not cross the defensive line of scrimmage prior to the snap.

**Protecting the Center:** Defenders may be one (1) yard on either side of the center at the defensive line of scrimmage, or four (4) yards if choosing to play head up on the center.

**Rushing the Passer:** Defensive players may not cross the offensive line of scrimmage until the referee has completed the rush-count ("One-Bud, Two-Bud, Three-Bud, Four-Bud, GO!" or a similar four-count plus "GO!"). Once the referee announces "GO!" any defensive player(s) may cross the offensive line of scrimmage to rush the passer. Any defensive player crossing the offensive line of scrimmage before "GO!" will be charged a blitz or assessed a penalty if they have already used all their blitzes in the half. If the passer hands off/passes/pitches/laterals the ball before "GO!", then the rush-count ends and the defensive player(s) may cross the offensive line of scrimmage.

***Penalty: Illegal Rush – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.***

**Blitzing the Passer:**

The defense is allowed two (2) blitzes per half. This allows the defensive player(s) to forgo the referee's rush-count and break the offensive line of scrimmage to blitz the passer. In order for the blitz to be considered legal, the defensive player(s) cannot cross the offensive line of scrimmage until the passer has **touched the ball** from the direct snap. A penalty will be assessed if any defensive player uses a blitz before the passer touches the ball. Defensive players cannot use a blitz during no-run zone plays. A penalty will be assessed if any defensive player uses a blitz during no-run zone plays. If a defensive player commits an illegal blitz penalty and the offense accepts the penalty, then the defense will not be charged with a blitz.

***Penalty: Illegal Blitz – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage***

**Roughing the Passer:** Defensive players must make a definitive effort to avoid contact with a passer. Any contact with the passer shall be flagged. Incidental contact with the passer will not be flagged.

***Penalty: Roughing the Passer - 10 yards from the end of the play (if positive yardage is gained) or 10 yards from the line of scrimmage; automatic first down.***

**Interceptions:** An interception is a legal catch made by a defensive player that results in a change of possession. A player may attempt to intercept a forward pass, backwards pass, pitch or lateral.

**Illegal De-flagging of a Receiver:** If an eligible receiver is de-flagged prior to touching the ball on a pass attempt, defensive pass interference will be called.

***Penalty: Illegal De-flagging - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage; automatic 1st down***

**Holding:** The defensive player shall not intentionally or accidentally hold, grasp, or obstruct forward progress of an eligible receiver or a ball carrier during the act of removing the flag. This includes but it not limited to the grasping of clothing or the flag belt.

***Penalty: Holding - 10 yards from the point of infraction; replay the down.***

**Jamming/Bump & Run:** There shall be no jamming, bumping, checking, pushing or other intentional contact between a defensive player and an offensive player. Both offense and defense are limited to screening an opponent.

***Penalty: Illegal Use of Hands - 10 yards from the point of infraction.***

**Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense:** Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used to grab or push the opponent aside. The

application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the referees. A defensive player that is rushing the passer may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance.

**Penalty: *Illegal Use of Hands - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage (if penalty occurs in the offensive backfield) or 10 yards from the point of infraction (if penalty occurs downfield); replay the down if penalty accepted.***

**Stripping/Tripping/Illegal Contact:** It is illegal to steal or attempt to steal (strip) the ball from the ball-carrier, trip an opponent, contact an opponent who is on the ground, make unnecessary contact with an opponent, deliberately dive or run into an opponent or tackle the ball carrier or push the ball carrier out of bounds to stop the play. If a player attempting a diving flag removal trips the ball-carrier, then a penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul. This is considered a non-contact league, so all players should do their best to avoid contact. When running passing routes, the player with the initial standing position does not have to move.

**Penalty: *Personal Foul - 10 yards from the spot of the foul; flagrant offenders will be ejected***

**Dead Ball Penalties on touchdown/PAT:** Any dead-ball penalty occurring during a touchdown or a successful PAT will be assessed on the next play from scrimmage at the 10-yard line when the defense becomes the offense.

**Receiving the Punt:** The defense will receive the ball if the offense chooses to punt on 4<sup>th</sup> down. Any defensive player may catch a punt and advance it towards the opposing team's end zone. However, if the ball hits the ground before a defensive player catches it, then the play is ruled dead at the spot the ball hits the ground. Defensive players may not attempt to block a punt. This includes but is not limited to raising their hands, jumping, using a "human pyramid" or supporting each other in any manner. The defense must have a minimum four (4) players on the line of scrimmage. Players at the line of scrimmage may not move until the ball is punted.

**Penalty: *Illegal Procedure - 5 yards from the previous spot.***

## Player Conduct

**Taunting:** Spiking, taunting, and any intentional antagonizing of the opposing team will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Penalty: *Taunting - Dead ball; 10 yards from the new line of scrimmage.***

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Include but are not limited to:

- Intentionally kicking the ball in anger
- Intentionally kicking at any opposing player
- Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player
- Fighting an opposing player
- Intentionally making physical contact with Big D Sports staff or a game official
- Disrespectfully addressing Big D Sports staff or a game official
- Using profanity, vulgar language or gestures

**Penalty: *Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10 yards from the line of scrimmage; the offender may be disqualified if flagrant***

**Personal Fouls:** Include but are not limited to:

- Intentionally punching, striking, stripping, stealing or attempting to steal the ball from the ball-carrier
- Tripping an opposing player
- Making contact with an opposing player who is on the ground

- Throwing the ball-carrier to the ground
- Deliberately driving or running into a defensive player
- Clipping an opposing player
- Tackling the ball-carrier

**Penalty: Personal Foul – 10 yards from the point of the infraction; the offender may be disqualified if flagrant**

## **Summary of Fouls and Penalties**

### **For Automatic First Downs**

During the enforcement of a penalty that carries an automatic first down, but where the penalty yardage does not cross the previous line to gain, the previous line to gain shall remain in place for the new series of downs.

### **Loss of 5 Yards**

- Delay Of Game - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal Rush - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal Blitz - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Encroachment - Dead ball; enforced from the line of scrimmage
- False Start - Dead ball; enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal Formation - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal Forward Pass - Enforced from the point of infraction and loss of down
- Illegal Procedures – Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal Shift/Motion - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal Snap - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal Substitution - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- No-Run Violation – Enforced from the line of scrimmage and loss of down. Still a no-run zone play

### **Loss of 10 Yards**

- Defensive Use Of Hands - Enforced from the point of infraction
- Face Guarding – Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Flag Guarding - Enforced from the point of infraction and loss of down
- Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Player Disqualification) - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Flagrant Personal Fouls (Player Disqualification) - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Holding - Enforced from the point of infraction. Replay down
- Illegal Contact – Enforced from point of infraction
- Illegal De-flagging - Enforced from the point of infraction
- Illegal Participation - Enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal Screen – Enforced from the line of scrimmage if penalty occurred in backfield; from the point of infraction if penalty occurred downfield
- Illegally Secured Belt on Touchdown/PAT (Player Disqualification) - Enforced from the line of scrimmage and loss of down, touchdown is nullified; PAT attempt is nullified
- Intentional Grounding - Enforced from point of infraction and loss of down
- Interlocked Interference - Enforced from the point of infraction
- Jumping/Hurdling - Enforced from the point of infraction
- Offensive Pass Interference - Enforced from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
- Personal Foul - Enforced from the point of infraction

- Roughing The Passer - Enforced from the line of scrimmage or added to the end of the play (whichever is greater) and automatic 1st Down
- Stiff-Arming - Enforced from the point of infraction and loss of down
- Stripping - Enforced from the point of infraction
- Taunting/Spiking the Ball - Enforced from the new line of scrimmage
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct - Dead ball; enforced from line of scrimmage. Others from the point of infraction

### **Spot Foul**

- Defensive Pass Interference - automatic 1st down
- Altered Equipment - Player Disqualification, nullification of previous play

## **Playoff Procedures**

### **Player Eligibility:** To be eligible for playoffs:

- Players must be listed on one (1) official team roster as a “roster” player. A rostered player cannot be listed on more than one (1) official roster. Or the player must be listed on the team’s official roster as a “substitute”.
- **Players must have played with their official team or as a substitute for at least two (2) regular season games.**
- Players must have signed the team’s official roster sheet.
- Players must be in good standing (no league suspensions or expulsions)
- Players must be able to produce ID if requested.

Players in the league can be on one team’s official roster and may sub on other teams in the same division during the regular season. However, if a player’s official team does not make the playoffs, then that player is not eligible to play with the playoff team(s) that he/she subbed with. Big D staff and opposing team captains have the right to verify player eligibility by requesting a roster and ID check.

**Coin Toss:** During playoffs, there is no coin toss. The higher-seeded team has earned the first half option.

**Overtime in Playoffs:** Ties at the end of regulation during the playoffs will result in an overtime period.

- **Coin Toss in Overtime:** There is no coin toss. The higher-seeded team has the choice of three options:
  - o Offense or defense (opposing team chooses direction)
  - o The direction (opposing team will start on offense)
- **Time-Outs in Overtime:** Each team is awarded one (1) time-out per overtime period. Time-outs are one (1) minute long. Time-outs will not carryover from regulation or into any additional overtime periods.
- **Penalties in Overtime:** Penalties are assessed similar to the regulation game
  - o Dead ball penalties after a touchdown are penalized on the PAT attempt.
  - o Dead ball penalties following a successful PAT shall be enforced at the succeeding spot, if accepted.
- **Offensive Possession:** Each team will have one (1) offensive possession in the overtime period. Once the first team completes their offensive possession, the second team will gain offensive possession. **Each offensive possession will begin at mid-field.**

- **Series of Downs:** The offense will be given four (4) downs to either score or accumulate as many yards as possible. A winner will be determined by either the score or the team that gains the most yards (if no score) during the overtime period. If teams are tied at the end of the first overtime period, a second overtime period will consist of one play from mid-field. The winner will be determined by either the score or the team that gains the most yards (if no score).
- **PATs/Conversions in Overtime:** PATs/Conversions in overtime will follow the same rules as regulation play.
- **Interceptions in Overtime:** When a pass is intercepted, the offense loses possession. The team on defense gains offensive possession unless:
  - o The interception did not result in a score, the overtime period has ended and the score is still tied.
  - o The defense was leading in the overtime period. The game ends.
  - o The defense returned the interception for a touchdown. The game ends.
  - o The defense returned the interception for a score on a 2-point conversion to break the tie. The game ends.