2014

OFFICIAL

PLAYING RULES

OF THE

NATIONAL

FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Roger Goodell, Commissioner

2014 Rules Changes

Rules-Section-Article	
1-3	Extends uprights an additional five feet above the cross bar.
4-3-2, 4-4	The game clock will remain running after a quarterback sack outside two minutes of either half.
12-2-1, 12-2-6, 3-5	Prohibits a blocker from rolling up on the side of the leg(s) of a defender.
14-3-5, 14-4-2, 3	Changes spot of enforcement for certain defensive fouls committed behind the line of scrimmage to the previous spot. Changes spot of enforcement for defensive fouls committed during a running play before a change of possession, and for post-possession fouls committed by the receiving team during punts.
15-2-3	Allows Referee to consult with members of the NFL Officiating department during replay reviews.
15-2-4	Expands reviewable plays to include recovery of a loose ball in the field of play.

PREFACE

This edition of the Official Playing Rules of the National Football League contains all current rules governing the playing of professional football that are in effect for the 2014 NFL season. Member clubs of the League may amend the rules from time to time, pursuant to the applicable voting procedures of the NFL Constitution and Bylaws.

Any intra-League dispute or call for interpretation in connection with these rules will be decided by the Commissioner of the League, whose ruling will be final.

Because inter-conference games are played throughout the pre-season, regular season, and post-season in the NFL, all rules contained in this book apply uniformly to both the American and National Football Conferences.

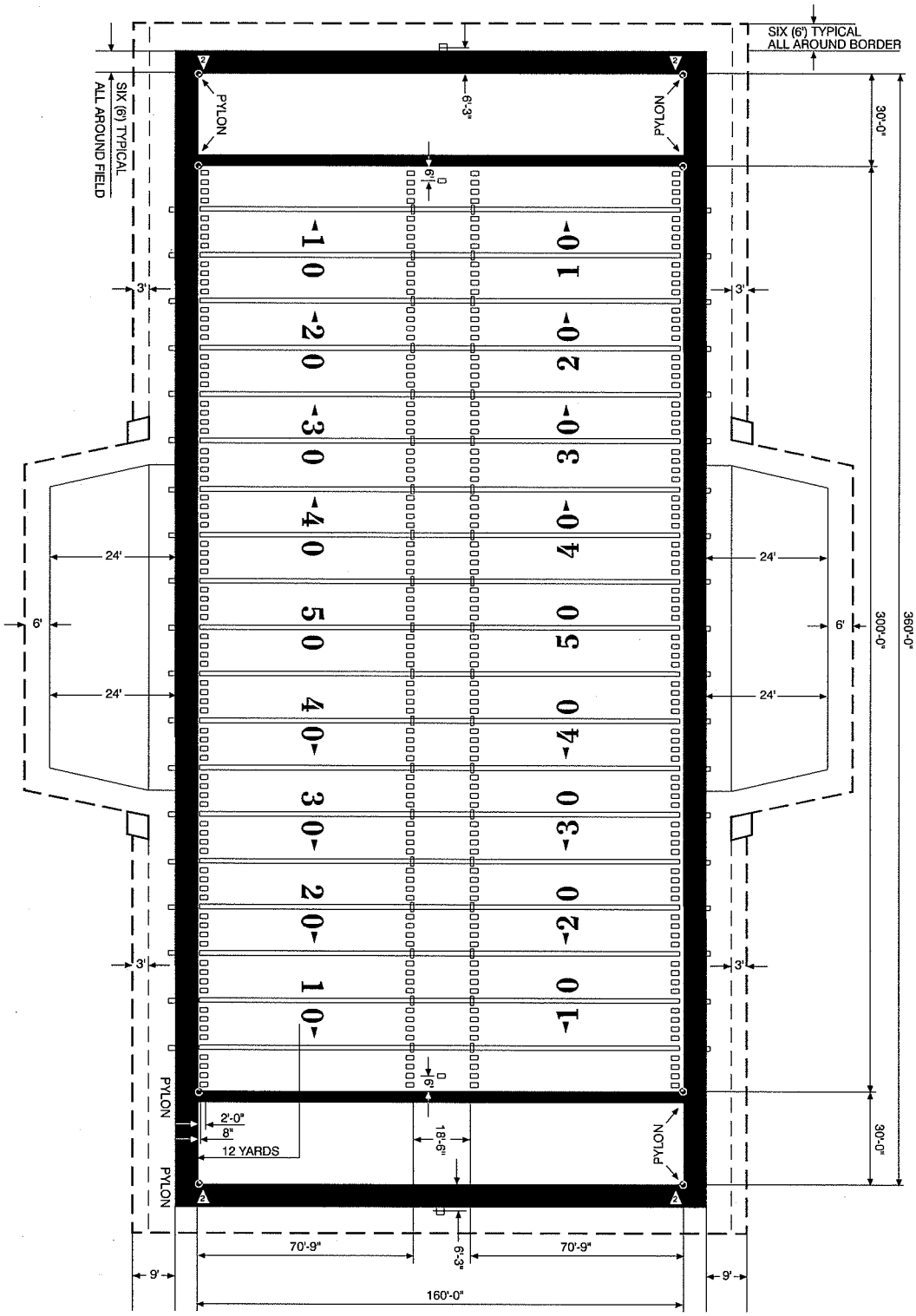
At many places in the text, there are approved rulings which serve to supplement and illustrate the basic language of the rules. Each is headed by an abbreviation, followed by a number (e.g. **"A.R. 3.20"**). The letter "A" in an approved ruling indicates the team that puts the ball in play, and its opponents are designated by the letter "B." Whenever a team is in possession of the ball, it is the offense, and at such time its opponent is the defense. Yard lines and players are indicated by numerals. Thus, for example: "**A.R. 5.1** Third-and-10 on A30. During a run prior to an intended pass by quarterback A1, defensive player B1 holds flanker A2 on the A45…"

Where the word "illegal" appears in this rule book, it is an institutional term of art pertaining strictly to actions that violate NFL playing rules. It is not meant to connote illegality under any public law or the rules or regulations of any other organization.

The word "flagrant," when used here to describe an action by a player, is meant to indicate that the degree of a violation of the rules—usually a personal foul or unnecessary roughness—is extremely objectionable, conspicuous, unnecessary, avoidable, or gratuitous. "Flagrant" in these rules does not necessarily imply malice on the part of the fouling player or an intention to injure an opponent.

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Plan of the Playing Field

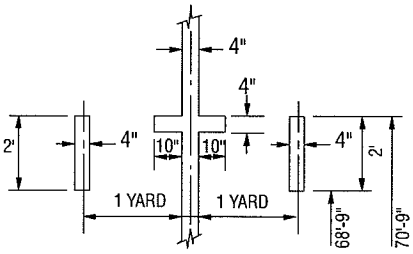


Field Markings

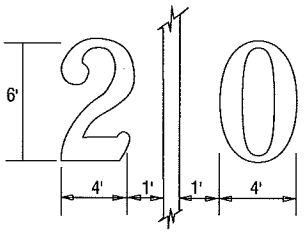
1. The playing field will be rimmed by a solid white border six feet wide along the end lines and sidelines. There will be an additional broken yellow line nine feet farther outside this border along each sideline in the non-bench areas, and such broken line will be continued at an angle from each 30-yard line and pass behind the bench area (all benches a minimum of 30 feet back from the sidelines) at a distance of six feet. In each end zone, this broken yellow line is six feet from the solid white border. These yellow broken lines are to be eight inches wide and two feet long with a space of one foot between them.

   In addition, within each bench area, a solid yellow line six feet behind the solid border will delineate a special area for coaches, behind which all players, except one player who is charting the game, must remain. Furthermore, a broken white line four inches wide and four feet long with a space of two-foot intervals will be marked three feet inside the nine-foot restriction line on the sideline, extending to meet the existing yellow broken line six feet behind both end zones and at each television box outside the bench area.
2. All lines are to be four inches wide, with the exception of the goal line and yellow lines, which are to be eight inches wide. Tolerance of line widths is plus one-fourth inch.
3. All line work is to be laid out to dimensions shown on the plan with a tolerance of plus one-fourth inch. All lines are straight.
4. All boundary lines, goal lines, and marked yard lines are to be continuous lines.
5. The four intersections of goal lines and sidelines must be marked at inside corners of the end zone and the goal line by pylons. Pylons must be placed at inside edges of white lines and should not touch the surface of the actual playing field itself.
6. All lines are to be marked with a material that is not injurious to eyes or skin.
7. No benches or rigid fixtures should be nearer than 10 yards from the sidelines. If space permits, they may be further back.
8. Player benches can be situated anywhere between respective 35-yard lines. Where possible, a continuation of the dotted yellow line is to extend from the 30-yard lines to a point six feet behind the player benches thereby enclosing this area.
9. A white arrow is to be placed on the ground adjacent to the top portion of each number (with the exception of the 50) with the point formed by the two longer sides pointing toward the goal line. The two longer sides measure 36 inches each, while the crossfield side measures 18 inches. The 18-inch crossfield side is to start 15 inches below the top, and 6 inches from the goalward edge of each outer number (except the 50).
10. The location of the inbounds lines is 70'9" for professional football, 60'0" for college football. On fields used primarily by the NFL, the professional inbounds lines should be 4 inches wide by 2 feet long. Alternate college lines, if they are to be included, should be 4 inches wide by 1 foot long.
11. Care must be exercised in any end zone marking, decoration, or club identification at the 50-yard line, that said marks or decorations do not in any way cause confusion as to delineation of goal lines, sidelines, and end lines. Such markings or decorations must be approved by the Commissioner.

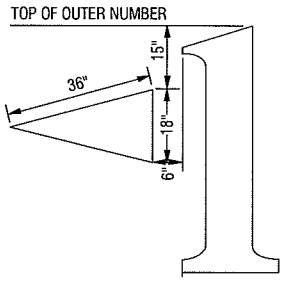
Inbound Yard Markers



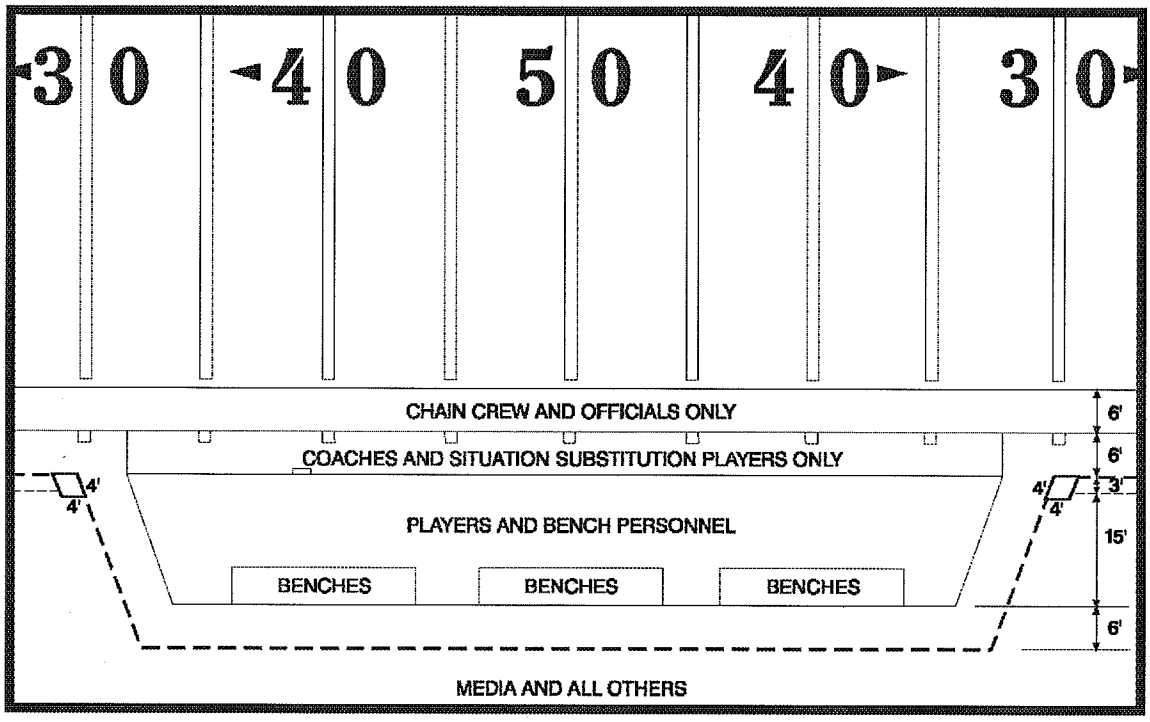
Dimensions for Numerals on the Playing Field



Dimensions for the Directional Arrows



NFL BENCH AREA SHOWING RESTRICTING ZONES



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RULE 1 THE FIELD

SECTION 1 DIMENSIONS

PLAYING LINES. The game shall be played upon a rectangular field, 360 feet in length and 160 feet in width. The lines at each end of the field are termed End Lines. Those on each side are termed Sidelines. Goal Lines shall be established in the field 10 yards from and parallel to each end line. The area bounded by goal lines and sidelines is known as the Field of Play. The areas bounded by goal lines, end lines, and sidelines are known as the End Zones.

The areas bounded by goal lines and lines parallel to, and 70 feet 9 inches inbounds, from each sideline, are known as the Side Zones. The lines parallel to sidelines are termed Inbound Lines. The end lines and the sidelines are also termed Boundary Lines.

FIELD OF PLAY. The surface of the entire Field of Play must be a League-approved shade of green.

The playing field will be rimmed by a solid white border a minimum of 6 feet wide along the end lines and sidelines. An additional broken limit line 6 feet further outside this border is to encompass the playing field in the non-bench areas, and such broken line will be continued at an angle from each 32-yard line and pass behind the bench areas (all benches a minimum 30 feet back from the sidelines). In addition, within each bench area, a yellow line 6 feet behind the solid white border will delineate a special area for coaches, behind which all players, except one player charting the game, must remain. If a club's solid white border is a minimum of 12 feet wide, there is no requirement that the broken restraining line also be added in the non-bench areas. However, the appropriate yellow line described above must be clearly marked within the bench areas.

In special circumstances (for example, an artificial surface in a multi-purpose stadium) and subject to prior approval from the League Office, a club may omit the 6-foot solid white border during the preseason or later period while football overlaps with another sport, and substitute a single 4-inch white line at what normally would be the outer limit of the solid border (6 feet from the sidelines).

SECTION 2 MARKINGS

LINE MARKINGS. At intervals of 5 yards, yard lines (3-12-9) parallel to the goal lines shall be marked in the field of play. These lines are to stop 8 inches short of the 6-foot solid border. The 4-inch wide yard lines are to be extended 4 inches beyond the white 6-foot border along the sidelines. Each of these lines shall be intersected at right angles by short lines 70 feet, 9 inches long (23 yards, 1 foot, 9 inches) in from each side to indicate inbound lines.

INBOUND LINES. In line with the Inbound Lines there shall be marks at 1-yard intervals between each distance of 5 yards for the full length of the field. These lines are to begin 8 inches from the 6-foot solid border and are to measure 2 feet in length.

Bottoms of numbers indicating yard lines in multiples of 10 must be placed beginning 12 yards in from each sideline. These are to be 2 yards in length.

Two yards from the middle of each goal line and parallel to it, there shall be marked in the Field of Play, lines 1 yard in length. All boundary lines, goal lines, and marked lines are to be continuous lines. These, and any other specified markings, must be in white, and there shall be no exceptions without the authorization of the Commissioner. Field numerals must also be white.

Care must be exercised in any end-zone marking or decoration or club identification at the 50-yard line that said marking or decorations do not in any way cause confusion as to delineation of goal lines, sidelines, and end lines. Such markings or decorations must be approved by the Commissioner.

The four intersections of goal lines and sidelines must be marked, at inside corners, by weighted pylons. In addition, two such pylons shall be placed on each end line (four in all).

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

GOAL LINE. All measurements are to be made from the inside edges of the line marking the boundary lines. Each goal line marking is to be in its end zone so that the edge of the line toward the field of play (actual goal line) is 30 feet from the inside edge of the end line. Each goal line is to be eight inches wide.

All lines are to be marked with a material that is not injurious to eyes or skin. It is desirable that the yard line markers be flexible in order to prevent injury. No benches or rigid fixtures should be nearer than 10 yards from sidelines.

GROUND RULES. In League parks where ground rules are necessary, because of fixed conditions that cannot be changed, they will be made by the Commissioner. Otherwise they will be made by mutual agreement of the two coaches. If they cannot agree, the Referee is the final authority after consulting with the crew.

SECTION 3 GOAL

CROSSBAR. In the plane of each end line there shall be a centrally placed horizontal crossbar 18 feet, 6 inches in length, the top face of which is 10 feet above the ground. The goal is the vertical plane extending indefinitely above the crossbar and between the lines indicated by the outer edges of the goal posts.

GOAL POSTS. All goal posts will be the single-standard type, offset from the end line and bright gold in color. The uprights will extend 35 feet above the crossbar and will be no less than 3 inches and no more than 4 inches in diameter. An orange-colored ribbon 4 inches by 42 inches is to be attached to the top of each post.

Note: Goal posts must be padded in a manner prescribed by the League.

SECTION 4 PLAYERS' BENCHES

At the option of the home team, both the players' benches may be located on the same side of the field. In such a case, the end of each bench shall start at the 45-yard line and continue towards the adjacent goal line.

Note: When both benches are so located, the chain crew and linespersons are to operate during the entire game on the opposite side to the benches.

SECTION 5 CHAIN CREW AND BALL BOYS/GIRLS

Members of the chain crew and the ball boys/girls must be uniformly identifiable as specified by the Commissioner. White shirts are to be worn by members of the chain crew.

SECTION 6 SIDELINE MARKERS

The home club must provide and use the standard set of sideline markers that have been approved by the Commissioner.

RULE 2 THE BALL

SECTION 1 DIMENSIONS

The Ball must be a “Wilson,” hand selected, bearing the signature of the Commissioner of the League, Roger Goodell.

The ball shall be made up of an inflated (12½ to 13½ pounds) urethane bladder enclosed in a pebble grained, leather case (natural tan color) without corrugations of any kind. It shall have the form of a prolate spheroid and the size and weight shall be: long axis, 11 to 11¼ inches; long circumference, 28 to 28½ inches; short circumference, 21 to 21¼ inches; weight, 14 to 15 ounces.

The Referee shall be the sole judge as to whether all balls offered for play comply with these specifications. A pump is to be furnished by the home club, and the balls shall remain under the supervision of the Referee until they are delivered to the ball attendant just prior to the start of the game.

SECTION 2 SUPPLY

Each team will make 12 primary balls available for testing by the Referee two hours and 15 minutes prior to the starting time of the game to meet League requirements. The home team will also make 12 backup balls available for testing in all stadiums. In addition, the visitors, at their discretion, may bring 12 backup balls to be tested by the Referee for games held in outdoor stadiums. For all games, six new footballs, sealed in a special box and shipped by the manufacturer to the Referee, will be opened in the officials' locker room two hours and 15 minutes prior to the starting time of the game. These balls are to be specially marked by the Referee and used exclusively for the kicking game.

In the event a home team ball does not conform to specifications, or its supply is exhausted, the Referee shall secure a proper ball from the visitors and, failing that, use the best available ball. Any such circumstances must be reported to the Commissioner.

In case of rain or a wet, muddy, or slippery field, a playable ball shall be used at the request of the offensive team’s center.

The Game Clock shall not stop for such action (unless undue delay occurs).

Note: It is the responsibility of the home team to furnish playable balls at all times by attendants from either side of the playing field.

RULE 3 DEFINITIONS

SECTION 1 APPROVED RULING (A.R.)

An Approved Ruling (A.R.) is a written decision on a given statement of facts and serves to illustrate the intent and application of a rule. Supplemental notes are used to amplify a rule. A Note is more specific and applies to a particular situation. It is also used to indicate pertinent references to other rules.

An Official Ruling (O.R.) is a ruling made in the interim between the annual rules meetings and is official only during the current season.

Technical Terms are such terms that have a fixed and defined meaning throughout the Playing Rules. Because of their alphabetical arrangement in Rule 3, certain ones are used prior to being defined. In such cases they appear in bold type only the first time they are used.

SECTION 2 THE BALL, AND POSSESSION OF THE BALL

Article 1 **Dead Ball.** A Dead Ball is one that is not in play. The time period during which the ball is dead is Between Downs. This includes the interval during all timeouts, including intermission, and from the time the ball becomes dead until it is legally put in play.

Article 2 **Ball Ready for Play.** A Dead Ball is Ready for Play while the 40-second Play Clock is running when the ball is placed down by an official at the spot where the ball will next be put in play, or when the Referee signals for the 25-second Play Clock to start.

Article 3 **Live Ball.** A Live Ball is a ball that is in play. A Dead Ball becomes a live ball when it is:

a) legally kicked on a Free Kick Down (6-1–3); or
b) legally snapped on a Scrimmage Down (7-3–6); or
c) legally kicked on a Fair Catch Kick Down.

It continues in play until the down ends (3-9).

Article 4 **Loose Ball**. A Loose Ball is a live ball that is not in player possession, i.e., any ball that has been kicked, passed, or fumbled. A Loose Ball is considered to be in possession of the team (offense) whose player kicked, passed, or fumbled it (see 9-5-1-exc. 3). It is a Loose Ball until a player secures possession or until the ball becomes dead. If it has not yet struck the ground, a Loose Ball is In Flight.

Article 5 **Fumble.** A Fumble is any act, other than passing, handing, or legally kicking the ball, which results in a loss of player possession. The use of the term Fumble always means that the ball was in possession of a player when the act occurred (8-7).

Note: An intentional fumble that causes the ball to go forward is a forward pass and may be illegal (8-1-1-Pen. a–c).

A.R. 3.1 While runner A1 is in possession, defensive player B1 grabs the ball away from him.
Ruling: Fumble.

A.R. 3.2 While runner A1 is in possession, defensive player B1 kicks the ball away from him.
Ruling: A foul during a fumble. Kicking a ball in player possession is a foul (12-4-2).

Article 6 **Muff.** A Muff is the touching of a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain possession of it.

Note: Any ball intentionally muffed forward is a bat and may be a foul (3-3; 12-4-1; 9-2-2; 3-14-3).

Touching the Ball refers to any contact with the ball. There is no distinction between a player touching the ball with his hands, or with any other part of his body, except as specifically provided for (9-2-2).

Note: The result of the touching is sometimes influenced by the intent or the location.

a) See 6-1-4 and 6-2-4 for touching a free kick.
b) See 6-2-3 for touching a free kick before it goes out of bounds between the goal lines.
c) See 8-1-8 for ineligible offensive player touching a forward pass on, behind, or beyond the line.
d) See 9-2-1, 9-3-1 for touching a scrimmage kick on or behind the line, and also 9-2-4 for being pushed into a kick by an opponent.
e) See 11-4-2 for touching a kick during an attempted field goal.
f) Simultaneous touching by two opponents in an attempt to establish possession of a ball that has been kicked is treated as a first touch by the kicking team.

Article 7 **Player Possession.**

Item 1: Player in Possession. A player is in possession when he is inbounds and has a firm grip and control of the ball with his hands or arms.

Item 2: Possession of Loose Ball. To gain possession of a loose ball that has been caught, intercepted, or recovered, a player must have complete control of the ball and have both feet or any other part of his body, other than his hands, completely on the ground inbounds, and maintain control of the ball long enough to perform any act common to the game. If the player loses the ball while simultaneously touching both feet or any other part of his body to the ground, there is no possession. This rule applies in the field of play and in the end zone.

Item 3: Simultaneous Possession of a Loose Ball. If a Loose Ball is controlled simultaneously by two opponents, and both players retain it, it is simultaneous possession, and the ball belongs to the team last in possession, or to the receiving team when there has been a Free Kick, Scrimmage Kick, or Fair Catch Kick. It is not simultaneous possession if a player gains control first and an opponent subsequently gains joint control.

The terms catch, intercept, recover, advance, and fumble denote player possession (as distinguished from touching or muffing).

Note 1: A player who goes to the ground in the process of attempting to secure possession of a loose ball (with or without contact by an opponent) must maintain control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground, whether in the field of play or the end zone. If he loses control of the ball, and the ball touches the ground before he regains control, there is no possession. If he regains control prior to the ball touching the ground, it is a catch, interception, or recovery.

Note 2: If a player goes to the ground out of bounds (with or without contact by an opponent) in the process of attempting to secure possession of a loose ball at the sideline, he must maintain complete and continuous control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground, or there is no possession.

Note 3: If a player has control of the ball, a slight movement of the ball will not be considered loss of possession. He must lose control of the ball in order to rule that there has been a loss of possession.

A catch is made when a player inbounds secures possession of a pass, kick, or fumble that is in flight (See 8-1-3).

Note 1: It is a catch if, in the process of attempting to catch the ball, a player secures control of the ball prior to it touching the ground, and that control is maintained during and after the ball has touched the ground.

Note 2: In the field of play, if a catch of a forward pass has been completed, and there is contact by a defender causing the ball to come loose before the runner is down by contact, it is a fumble, and the ball remains alive. In the end zone, the same action is a touchdown, since the receiver completed the catch beyond the goal line prior to the loss of possession, and the ball is dead when the catch is completed.

An interception is made when an opponent who is inbounds catches a forward or backward pass or a fumble that has not touched the ground.

A recovery is made when a player inbounds secures possession of a loose ball after it has touched the ground.

Note 1: If there is any question by the covering official(s) as to whether a forward pass is complete, intercepted, or incomplete, it always will be ruled incomplete.

Note 2: Recovery does not imply advance, unless so stated.

Note 3: If a player would have caught, intercepted, or recovered a ball inbounds, but is carried out of bounds, player possession will be granted (8-1-3-Item 6).

SECTION 3 BAT

A Bat is the intentional striking of the ball with any part of the hand or arm. See 12-4-1.

SECTION 4 BLOCKING

Blocking is the act of obstructing or impeding an opponent by contacting him with a part of the blocker's body.

A Block in the Back is a block that is delivered from behind an opponent above his waist. It is not a block in the back:

a) if the opponent turns away from the blocker when contact is imminent, or;

b) if both of the blocker's hands are on the opponent's side.

A Block Below the Waist is when the initial contact with any part of the blocker's body is below the waist of an opponent, other than the runner, who has one or both feet on the ground. A blocker who makes contact above the waist and then slides below the waist has not blocked below the waist. If an opponent uses his hands to ward off a block, and the blocker contacts the opponent below the waist, it is not a block below the waist unless the blocker is obviously intending to deliver a low block.

SECTION 5 CHUCKING

Chucking is intentionally contacting an eligible receiver who is in front of a defender. (See 12-1-5).

SECTION 6 CLIPPING

Clipping is blocking an opponent from behind below the waist, provided the opponent is not a runner. It is not clipping if an opponent turns his back as the block is delivered or about to be delivered.

Note 1: It is clipping (including in close line play) if an offensive player's block (legal or illegal) is followed by the blocker rolling up on the side or back of the legs of the defender.

Note 2: See 12-2-1 for additional interpretations or restrictions concerning clipping in close-line play.

A.R. 3.3 Runner A1 advances 10 yards and is hit from behind by defensive player B1, who throws his body across the back of A1's leg. **Ruling:** Legal and not a clip, because A1 was a runner. If A1 was not a runner, it would have been a clip.

SECTION 7 CLOSE-LINE PLAY

Close-Line Play is contact that occurs in an area extending from tackle to tackle and three yards on either side of the line of scrimmage.

SECTION 8 DISQUALIFIED PLAYER

A Disqualified Player is one who is prohibited from further participation in the game. He must return to his dressing room within a reasonable period of time and is not permitted to reappear in his team uniform or return to any area other than to which spectators have access.

SECTION 9 DOWN

Article 1 **Down.** A Down is a period of action that starts when the ball is put in play (3-2-3) and ends when the ball is declared dead (7-2-1).

A down that starts with a snap is a Scrimmage Down (3-30).

A down that starts with a free kick is a Free Kick Down (6-1-1).

A down that starts with a fair catch kick is a Fair Catch Kick Down (10-2-4; 11-4-3).

Article 2 **Series of Downs.** A Series of Downs is the four consecutive charged scrimmage downs allotted to the offensive team during which it must advance the ball to a yard line called “the line to gain” in order to retain possession (7-1-1).

Article 3 **Line to Gain.** The Line to Gain is the spot 10 yards in advance of the spot of the snap that starts a series, except when a goal line is less than 10 yards from this spot. In that case, the Line to Gain is the goal line.

Article 4 **Charged Down.** A Charged Down is a scrimmage down that is not nullified by a penalty, or during which there is not a change of possession. It counts as a down in a Series of Downs.

Article 5 **First Down.** The initial down in each series is the First Down. If it is a charged down, subsequent charged downs are numbered consecutively (i.e., second down, third down, or fourth down) until a new series is declared for either team (7-3).

SECTION 10 FAIR CATCH

A Fair Catch is an unhindered catch of a scrimmage kick (provided that it has crossed the line of scrimmage), or of a free kick, that is in flight by a player of the receiving team who has legally signaled his intention of attempting such a catch (10-2-1).

Note: For fair-catch kick, see 11-4-3.

SECTION 11 FIELD GOAL

A Field Goal is made by kicking the ball from the field of play through the plane of the opponents’ Goal, which is an area either between the goal posts and above the cross bar, or, if above the goal posts, between the outside edges of the goal posts. A Field Goal is made by a drop kick or a place kick from (a) behind the line on a play from scrimmage or (b) during a fair catch kick. See 11-4-3; 3-9-1; and 10-2-4-a.

SECTION 12 THE FIELD

Article 1 **Boundary Lines.** The Boundary Lines are the End Lines and the Sidelines and enclose the field upon which the game is played.

Article 2 **End Lines.** The End Lines are the lines at each end of the field and are perpendicular to the Sidelines. The End Line is 10 yards from the Goal Line and at the back of the End Zone.

Article 3 **End Zone.** The End Zone is the rectangle formed by the Goal Line, the End Line, and the Sidelines. The Goal Line and the pylons are in the End Zone.

Article 4 **Field of Play.** The Field of Play is the rectangle formed by the Goal Lines and the Sidelines. It does not include the End Zone.

Article 5 **Goal.** The goal is the area above the crossbar between the uprights, or, if above the uprights, the area between the outside edges of the uprights. A team’s Own Goal is the one it is defending. The adjacent goal line is known as its goal line.

Article 6 **Goal Lines.** The Goal Lines are the lines between the Sidelines that separate the End Zone from the field of play. The Goal Lines are vertical planes that are parallel to and 10 yards from the End Lines.

Article 7 **Inbounds Lines.** The Inbounds Lines are hash marks on the Field of Play that are 70 feet nine inches from and parallel to each sideline.

Article 8 **Sidelines.** The Sidelines are the lines on each side of the field and are perpendicular to the End Lines. The Sidelines separate the Field of Play from the area that is out of bounds.

Article 9 **Yard Line.** A Yard Line is any line and its vertical plane parallel to the end line. The Yard Lines (marked or unmarked) in the field of play are named by number in yards from a team’s goal line to the center of the field.

Note: The yard line 19 yards from Team A’s goal line is called A’s 19-yard line. The yard line 51 yards from A’s goal line is called B’s 49-yard line. For brevity, these are referred to as A’s 19 and B’s 49 or A19 and B49.

SECTION 13 FORWARD PROGRESS

Article 1 **Forward Progress.** The Forward Progress of a runner or airborne receiver is the point at which his advance toward his opponent’s goal ends and is the spot at which the ball is declared dead by rule, irrespective of the runner or receiver being pushed or carried backward by an opponent.

Article 2 **Forward, Beyond, or In Advance.** Forward, Beyond, or In Advance Of are terms that designate a point nearer the goal line of the defense. Backward or Behind designate a point nearer the goal line of the offense. A pass parallel to a yard line, or an offensive player moving parallel to it at the snap, is considered backward.

SECTION 14 FOULS AND SPOTS OF ENFORCEMENT, VIOLATION

Article 1 **Types of Fouls.** A Foul is any infraction of a playing rule for which a penalty is prescribed.

a) A Live Ball Foul is a foul that occurs during the period after the snap until the ball is dead.
b) A Dead Ball Foul is a foul that occurs in the continuing action after a down ends, or a taunting foul that occurs at any time.
c) A Foul Between Downs is a foul that occurs after the end of the down and after any continuing action resulting from the down, but prior to the next snap or free kick.
d) A Multiple Foul is one of two or more fouls by the same team during the same down (14-1-3), including dead ball fouls.
e) A Double Foul is a foul by either team during the same down during which both teams commit at least one foul, including dead ball fouls.

A.R. 3.4 A's ball first-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 runs out of bounds on the A45, after which offensive A2 clips on the A30.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on A30. A dead ball foul. See 14-4-9. It happened after the down ended and was a personal foul. See A.R. 14.159.

A.R. 3.5 Defensive B1 holds an offensive player on the line of scrimmage. Defensive B2 was offside.
Ruling: A multiple foul because it was two fouls by the same team during the same down. See 14-1-3.

A.R. 3.6 The offensive team is offside. The defensive team interferes with an eligible receiver downfield. The pass falls incomplete.
Ruling: A double foul because each team committed a foul during the same down. See 14-5-1.

Article 2 **Basic Spot.** The Basic Spot is a reference point for specific types of plays that is used to determine the Spot of Enforcement.

Article 3 **Spots of Enforcement.** The Spot of Enforcement is the spot at which a penalty is enforced. Five such sports are commonly used:

a) The Previous Spot: The spot at which the ball was last put in play.
b) The Spot of the Foul: The spot at which a foul was committed or, by rule, is considered to have been committed.
c) The Spot of a Backward Pass or a Fumble: The spot at which the backward pass or fumble occurred during the down in which there was a foul.
d) The Dead Ball Spot: The spot at which the ball became dead.
e) The Succeeding Spot: The spot at which the ball will next be put in play (i.e., the spot of the ball after enforcement for a foul, or, if there has been no foul, the spot at which the ball became dead.)
f) The End of the Kick: The spot at which possession is gained by or awarded to the receiving team.

Article 4 **Violation.** A violation is an infraction of a playing rule for which a penalty is not prescribed. A violation does not offset a foul.

SECTION 15 HANDING THE BALL

Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without passing or kicking it.

a) Except where permitted by rule, handing the ball forward to a teammate is illegal.
b) Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of attempted handing is a fumble charged to the player that last had possession. A muffed handoff (legal or illegal) is a fumble, and the ball remains alive.
c) A forward handoff occurs when the ball is handed (regardless of the direction of the movement of the ball) to a player who is in advance of a teammate from whose hands he takes or receives it.

SECTION 16 HUDDLE

A Huddle is the action of two or more players in the field of play or in the end zone who, instead of assuming their normal position for the snap, free kick, or Fair Catch kick form a group for receiving instructions for the next play or for any other reason.

SECTION 17 IMPETUS

Impetus is the action of a player who carries the ball or provides the force (i.e., a pass, kick, snap, or fumble) that causes a ball in the field of play to touch or cross a goal line. If a Loose Ball touches or crosses a goal line, the impetus is attributed to the team whose player passed, kicked, snapped, or fumbled the ball, unless an opponent:

a) muffs a ball that is at rest, or nearly at rest; or
b) bats a ball that has been kicked or fumbled; or
c) bats a backward pass after it has struck the ground; or
d) illegally kicks any ball (12-4-2).

Note 1: If a passive player is pushed or blocked into any kicked or fumbled ball or into a backward pass after it has struck the ground, causing the Loose Ball to touch a goal line or anything on or behind a goal line, the impetus is attributed to the pusher or blocker, provided that the pushed (blocked) player was not making an attempt to block an opponent.

SECTION 18 KICKS

Article 1 **Kick.** A Kick is intentionally striking the ball with the knee, lower leg, or foot. A kick ends when a player of either team possesses the ball, or when the ball is dead.

Item 1: Drop Kick. A Drop Kick is a kick by a player who drops the ball and kicks it as, or immediately after, it touches the ground.

Item 2: Placekick. A Placekick is a kick made by a player while the ball is in a fixed position on the ground. The ball may be held in position by a teammate. If it is a kickoff, it is permissible to use an approved manufactured tee.

Item 3: Punt. A Punt is a kick made by a player who drops the ball and kicks it before it strikes the ground.

Article 2 **Kicker**. A Kicker is the player of Team A who legally drop kicks, placekicks, or punts the ball. Team A is identified as the kickers during a down in which there is a scrimmage kick, free kick, or fair catch kick.

Article 3 **Receiver.** A Receiver is any Team B player during a down in which there is a scrimmage kick, free kick, or fair catch kick. Team B is identified as the receiving team during the entire down.

Article 4 **Fair Catch Kick.** A Fair Catch Kick is a drop kick or placekick without a tee from the spot of a Fair Catch in an attempt to score a Field Goal.

Article 5 **Free Kick.** A Free Kick is a kickoff or safety kick that puts the ball in play to start a Free Kick down.

Item 1: Kickoff. A Kickoff is a kick that puts the ball in play at the start of each half, at the start of overtime, after each Try, and after a successful field goal.

Item 2: Safety Kick. A Safety Kick is a kick that puts the ball in play after a safety.

Article 6 **Restraining Lines.** The Restraining Lines are lines which restrict the alignment of the kicking and receiving teams during a Free Kick and Fair Catch Kick.

Article 7 **Scrimmage Kick.** A Scrimmage Kick is a punt, drop kick, or placekick from on or behind the line of scrimmage.

Article 8 **Tee.** A Tee is an approved device that is used to elevate the ball for a placekick during a free kick down.

SECTION 19 LINE OF SCRIMMAGE, NEUTRAL ZONE

Article 1 **Scrimmage Line.** The Line of Scrimmage is the vertical plane of the yard line that passes through the forward point of the ball after it has been made ready for play. The term scrimmage line, or line, implies a play from scrimmage.

Article 2 **Neutral Zone.** The Neutral Zone is the space between the forward and backward points of the ball (planes) and extends to the sidelines. It starts when the ball is ready for play (See Neutral Zone Infraction, 7-4-4).

Article 3 **Player on Line of Scrimmage.** A player of Team A, who is on the line of scrimmage, must have his shoulders facing Team B's goal line.

Item 1: Non-Snapper. If he is not the snapper, no part of his body is permitted to be in the neutral zone at the snap, and his helmet must break a vertical plane that passes through the beltline of the snapper.

Item 2: Snapper. If he is the snapper, no part of his body may be beyond the Neutral Zone.

Note: Interlocking of legs is permissible.

A.R. 3.7 Offensive A1 assumes a three-point stance with his shoulders facing defensive B's goal line. A1's helmet is even with the belt line of the center.
Ruling: A1 is legally on the line.

Article 4 **Encroaching.** A player is encroaching (7-4-3) on the Neutral Zone when any part of his body is in it and he contacts an offensive player or the ball prior to the snap.

Article 5 **Loose Ball Crosses Line of Scrimmage.** A Loose Ball has crossed the line of scrimmage when, as the result of a fumble, pass, or legal kick by a Team A player, it touches the ground or any player or official beyond the neutral zone.

SECTION 20 OFFSIDE

A player is Offside when any part of his body or his person is in the Neutral Zone, or is beyond his free kick line or fair catch kick line when the ball is put in play, unless he is a holder of a placekick for a free kick (6-1-3-b-1) or fair catch kick (11-4-3), or a kicker (6-1-3-b-2). The snapper is Offside if any part of his body is beyond the Neutral Zone. The kicker is not offside unless his kicking foot is beyond his Restraining Line when the ball is kicked.

SECTION 21 OUT OF BOUNDS, INBOUNDS, AND INBOUNDS SPOT

Article 1 **Player or Official Out of Bounds.** A player or an Official is Out of Bounds when he touches a boundary line, or when he touches anything that is on or outside a boundary line, except a player, an official, or a pylon.

Article 2 **Player Inbounds.** A player who has been out of bounds re-establishes himself as an inbounds player when both feet, or any part of his body other than his hands, touch the ground within the boundary lines, provided that no part of his body is touching a boundary line or anything other than a player, an official, or a pylon on or outside a boundary line.

Article 3 **Ball Out of Bounds.**

Item 1: Ball in Player Possession. A ball that is in player possession is out of bounds when the runner is out of bounds, or when the ball touches a boundary line or anything that is on or outside such line, except another player or an official.

Item 2: Loose Ball. A loose ball is out of bounds when it touches a boundary line or anything that is on or outside such line, including a player, an official, or a pylon.

Article 4 Out of Bounds Spot.

Item 1: Loose Ball. If a Loose Ball touches anything on or outside a boundary line, the Out-of-Bounds Spot is the forward point of the ball when the ball crosses the sideline.

Item 2: Runner Out of Bounds. If the ball is in player possession when that player goes out of bounds, the out-of-bounds spot is the forward point of the ball when the ball crosses the side line, or, if the ball does not cross the sideline, the forward point of the ball at the instant the player is out of bounds.

Item 3: Runner Inbounds. If the ball, while in possession of a player who is inbounds, is declared out of bounds because of touching anything that is out of bounds, the out-of-bounds spot is the yard line through the forward point of the ball at the instant of such touching.

Article 5 Inbounds Spot. The Inbounds Spot is a spot on the Inbounds Line (the hash marks) that passes through the spot where the ball went out of bounds between the goal lines.

A.R. 3.8 Runner A1, with his feet inbounds, touches an official who is touching a sideline.
Ruling: Inbounds.

A.R. 3.9 Runner A1, with his feet inbounds, touches any player who is touching a sideline.
Ruling: Inbounds.

A.R. 3.10 Runner A1 fumbles backwards, and the loose ball touches a defensive player B1 who is standing on sideline, and then ball rebounds into the field of play where B1 falls on it.
Ruling: Dead ball and out of bounds as soon as the loose ball touches the player on sideline. Offensive team's ball at the inbounds spot on the yard line where the ball went out of bounds.

A.R. 3.11 Runner A1 touches the defensive team's pylon with any part of his body.
Ruling: Not out of bounds. The runner is not out of bounds until he touches anything other than a player, an official, or a pylon on or outside the boundary line. Position of the ball is determined by its position when the runner touches out of bounds.

SECTION 22 PASS

Article 1 Pass. A pass is the movement caused by a player intentionally handing, throwing, shoveling (shovel pass), or pushing (push pass) the ball (3-25-2). Such a movement is a pass even if the ball does not leave his hand or hands, provided a teammate takes it (hand-to-hand pass).

Article 2 Passer and Passing Team. A player who makes a legal forward pass is known as the Passer until the play ends. The teammates of any player who passes the ball forward (legally or illegally) are known collectively as the Passing Team or Passers.

Article 3 Pass Play. A Pass Play begins with the snap and ends when a forward pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage is caught by a player of either team or is incomplete. After the pass is caught, a Running Play begins.

Article 4 Forward Pass. It is a forward pass if:

a) the ball initially moves forward (to a point nearer the opponent's goal line) after leaving the passer's hand(s); or
b) the ball first touches the ground, a player, an official, or anything else at a point that is nearer the opponent's goal line than the point at which the ball leaves the passer's hand(s).
c) When a Team A player is holding the ball to pass it forward, any intentional movement forward of his hand starts a forward pass.

Item 1: Contact by Team B Player. If a Team B player contacts the passer or the ball after forward movement begins, a forward pass is ruled, regardless of where the ball strikes the ground or a player.

Item 2: Passer Tucks Ball. If the player loses possession of the ball during an attempt to bring it back toward his body, or if the player loses possession after he has tucked the ball into his body, it is a fumble.

Item 3: Passer re-cocks his arm. If the player loses possession of the ball while attempting to re-cock his arm, it is a fumble.

Item 4: Fumbled or Muffed Ball Goes Forward. The fact that a fumbled or muffed ball goes forward is disregarded, unless the act is ruled intentional. If it is intentional, a fumbled ball that goes forward is a forward pass (8-1-1), and a muff is a bat (12-4-1).

A.R. 3.12 A ball legally handed forward to an eligible pass receiver is followed by a forward pass in flight from behind the line.
Ruling: A legal pass because the first handoff is not considered a forward pass.

A.R. 3.13 A ball is legally handed forward to an eligible pass receiver, who muffs the ball and it is recovered by the defensive team.
Ruling: Not an incomplete pass. It is treated as a fumble and the defensive team keeps the ball.

Article 5 Backward Pass. It is a Backward Pass if the yard line at which the ball is first touched by a player or the ground is parallel to or behind the yard line at which the ball leaves the passer's hand. A snap becomes a backward pass when the snapper releases the ball.

Note: If a pass is batted, muffed, punched, or kicked in any direction, its original designation as a Forward Pass or a Backward Pass does not change.

SECTION 23 PENALTY

Article 1 **Penalty.** A Penalty is imposed upon a team that has committed a foul and may result in loss of down, loss of yardage, an automatic first down, a charged timeout, a loss of playing time, withdrawal or disqualification of a player, extension of a period, the award of a score, or a combination of the preceding.

Article 2 **Loss of Down.** The phrase Loss of Down indicates that a team committing a foul will not have the opportunity to repeat the down after enforcement of any yardage penalty.

SECTION 24 PLAYER

A Player is a participant of either team who is in the game.

SECTION 25 PLAYS

Article 1 **Free Kick Play.** A Free Kick Play begins with a legal or illegal free kick and ends when a player of either team establishes possession of the ball, or when the ball is dead by rule. A Running Play begins when a player of Team B establishes possession.

Article 2 **Passing Play.** A Pass Play begins with the snap and ends when a forward pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage is caught by a player of either team or is incomplete. At the instant that a pass is caught, a Running Play begins.

Article 3 **Running Play.** A Running Play begins in the following situations:

a) If there is not a subsequent kick or legal or illegal forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage, a Running Play begins with the Snap.
b) If there is a legal or illegal forward pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, a Running Play begins when the forward pass is caught by a player of either team.
c) If there is a running play followed by an illegal forward pass thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage, or by an illegal forward pass not from scrimmage, a new Running Play begins when the pass is caught by a player of either team.
d) If there is a Free Kick, a Running Play begins when Team B establishes possession of the ball.
e) If there is a scrimmage kick, a Running Play begins when Team B establishes possession of the ball, or when Team A establishes possession of a kicked ball behind the line of scrimmage.
f) If there is a running play followed by a fumble or a backward pass, a new Running Play begins when a player of either team establishes possession of the ball.

A Running Play ends:

a) When the ball is declared dead; or
b) When a runner loses or relinquishes possession by a Fumble or a backward pass; or
c) When a player of either team throws an illegal forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage or when there is not a line of scrimmage.

Note: The running play includes the loose-ball action before a player gains or regains possession or the ball is declared dead.

Article 4 **Scrimmage Kick Play.** A Scrimmage Kick Play begins with the snap. It ends when a player of either team establishes possession of a kicked ball, or when the ball is dead by rule.

Article 5 **Combinations of Plays.** There may be a combination of a Running Play and a Passing Play, Free Kick Play, or Scrimmage Kick Play during the same down, and there may be more than one Running Play or Scrimmage Kick Play during the same down.

SECTION 26 POCKET AREA

The Pocket Area is the area between the outside edges of the normal tackle positions on each side of the center extending backward to the offensive team's end line. After the ball leaves the pocket area, this area no longer exists.

SECTION 27 POST-POSSESSION FOUL

A foul by the receiving team is a post-possession foul if it occurs during a scrimmage kick that crosses the line of scrimmage, provided that the receiving team does not lose possession during the rest of the down. See 9-5-1-Exc. 3.

SECTION 28 RUNNER

A Runner is the offensive player who is in possession of a live ball (3-2-7), i.e., holding the ball or carrying it in any direction.

Note: The statement that a player may advance means that he may become a runner, make a legal kick (9-1-1), make a backward pass (8-7-1), or throw a forward pass (8-1-1) from behind the line of scrimmage.

A.R. 3.14 Receiving team player B1 catches a kickoff, advances, and fumbles. Kicking team player A2 recovers and advances. **Ruling:** While runners B1 and A2 were in possession, there were two running plays during the same down.

SECTION 29 SAFETY

It is a Safety if the spot of enforcement for a foul by the offense is behind its own goal line, or if the ball is dead in possession of a team on or behind its own goal line when the impetus (3-17) comes from the team defending that goal line.

SECTION 30 SCRIMMAGE DOWN, FROM SCRIMMAGE, NOT FROM SCRIMMAGE

A Scrimmage Down is one that starts with a snap (3-32). From Scrimmage refers to any action from the start of the snap until the down ends or until Team B secures possession. Any action that occurs during the down after a change of team possession is Not From Scrimmage.

SECTION 31 SHIFT

A Shift is any simultaneous change of position or stance by two or more offensive players before the snap after the ball has been made ready for play for a scrimmage down, including movement to the line of scrimmage by the offensive team prior to the snap (7-4).

SECTION 32 SNAP AND THE SNAPPER

A Snap is a backward pass that puts the ball in play to start a scrimmage down, either by handing it or passing it backward from its position on the ground. The Snapper is the offensive player who initiates this action. See 7-6 for conditions pertaining to a legal snap.

SECTION 33 SUSPENDED PLAYER

A Suspended Player is one who must be withdrawn, in accordance with Rule 5, for correction of illegal equipment (5-4).

SECTION 34 TACKLE BOX

The Tackle Box is an area extending from tackle to tackle and from three yards beyond the line of scrimmage to the offensive team's end line. After the ball leaves the tackle box, this area no longer exists.

SECTION 35 TACKLING

Tackling is an attempt by a defensive player to hold a runner to halt his advance or bring him to the ground (12-1-5).

SECTION 36 TEAM A AND B, OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

Article 1 **Offense and Defense.** Whenever a team is in possession (3-2-7) of the ball, it is the Offense, and its opponent is the Defense. The team that is the Offense becomes the Defense, and vice versa, when there is a change of possession during the down.

Article 2 **Team A and Team B.** The team that puts the ball in play is Team A, and its opponent is Team B. They remain Team A and Team B until a down ends, even though there may be one or more changes of possession during the down. Team A is always the Offense when a down starts, but becomes the Defense if Team B secures possession during the down. A player of Team A is referred to as A1 and his teammates as A2, A3, etc. The opponents are B1, B2, etc.

Article 3 **Change of Possession.** A change of possession occurs when a player of the defensive team secures possession of a ball that has been kicked, passed, or fumbled by a player of the offensive team, or when the ball is awarded to the opposing team by rule. A change of possession includes, but is not limited to:

a) An interception of a forward pass; or
b) A catch or recovery of a fumble or backward pass; or
c) A catch or recovery of a Scrimmage Kick, Free Kick, or Fair-Catch Kick.
d) When the offensive team fails to reach the line to gain on fourth down.
e) When the offensive team misses a field-goal attempt.

SECTION 37 TIMEOUT OR TIME IN

Article 1 **Timeout.** A Timeout is any interval during which the Game Clock is stopped (4-4) and includes the intermission (4-1-2 and 4-1-3).

During any timeout, including an intermission, all playing rules continue in force. Representatives of either team are prohibited from entering the field, unless they are incoming substitutes, or team attendants or trainers entering to provide for the welfare of a player, and any game-type activities are prohibited on the Field of Play.

Article 2 **Charged Team Timeout**. A Charged Team Timeout is an interval during which the Game Clock is stopped and play is suspended at the request of one of the teams or when it is charged to one of the teams by rule. A Timeout may be granted only when the ball is dead.

Article 3 **Time In.** Time In is any interval during which the Game Clock is running (4-3-2).

SECTION 38 TOUCHBACK

It is a Touchback if the ball is dead on or behind the goal line a team is defending, provided that the impetus comes from an opponent, and that it is not a touchdown or an incomplete pass.

SECTION 39 TOUCHDOWN

It is a Touchdown if any part of the ball is on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line while legally in possession of an inbounds player, provided it is not a touchback.

SECTION 40 TRIPPING

Tripping is the use of the leg or foot to obstruct any opponent (including a runner) (12-1-4-c and 12-1-8).

SECTION 41 TRY

A Try is the attempt by a team that has scored a touchdown to add one point (by a field goal) or two points (by a touchdown) during one untimed scrimmage down (11-3).

SECTION 42 TWO-MINUTE WARNING

The two-minute warning is an automatic timeout that occurs at the conclusion of the last down for which the ball is legally snapped or kicked prior to two minutes remaining on the game clock in the second and fourth periods.

RULE 4 GAME TIMING

SECTION 1 PERIODS, INTERMISSIONS, HALFTIME

LENGTH OF GAME

Article 1 The length of the game is 60 minutes, divided into four periods of 15 minutes each. In the event the score is tied at the end of four periods, the game is extended by an overtime period (or periods) as prescribed in Rule 16.

INTERMISSIONS

Article 2 There will be intervals of at least two minutes between the first and second periods (first half) and between the third and fourth periods (second half). During these intermissions all playing rules continue in force, and no representative of either team shall enter the field unless he is an incoming substitute, or a team attendant or trainer, entering to see to the welfare of a player.

Penalty: For illegally entering the field: Loss of 15 yards from the succeeding spot (13-1-6-Pen.).

The Back Judge times the two-minute intermissions and shall sound the whistle (and signal visibly) after one minute and 50 seconds. The Referee shall sound the whistle immediately thereafter for play to start and for the play clock operator to start the 25-second clock. See 4-6-2.

HALFTIME

Article 3 Between the second and third periods, there shall be an intermission of 12 minutes, plus any prescribed delay times established by the League office for teams to return to their locker rooms. During this intermission, play is suspended, and teams may leave the field. The Back Judge will time halftime. See 13-1-1 for fouls by non-players between halves.

OFFICIAL TIME

Article 4 The stadium electric clock shall be the official time. The game clock operator shall start and stop the clock upon the signal of any official in accordance with the rules. The Side Judge shall supervise the timing of the game, and in case the stadium clock becomes inoperative, or if it is not being operated correctly, the Side Judge shall take over official timing on the field.

Note: Game officials can correct the game clock only before the next legal snap or kick, including an untimed down or try.

SECTION 2 STARTING A PERIOD OR HALF

KICKOFF ON SCHEDULE

Article 1 Both teams must be on the field to kick off at the scheduled time for the start of each half. Prior to the start of the game, both teams are required to appear on the field at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff in order to ensure sufficient time for proper warm-up. Designated members of the officiating crew must notify both head coaches personally of the scheduled time for kickoff prior to the start of each half.

Penalties:

a) For delaying the start of a half: Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the kickoff as determined by 6-1-2-a.
b) For failure to appear on the field at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff: Loss of the coin-toss option for both halves and overtime, and loss of 15 yards from the spot of the kickoff.

TOSS OF COIN

Article 2 Not more than three minutes before the kickoff of the first half, the Referee, in the presence of both team's captains (limit of six per team, active, inactive or honorary) shall toss a coin at the center of the field. Prior to the Referee's toss, the call of "heads" or "tails" must be made by the captain of the visiting team, or by the captain designated by the Referee if there is no home team. Unless the winner of the toss defers his choice to the second half, he must choose one of two privileges, and the loser is given the other. The two privileges are:

a) The opportunity to receive the kickoff, or to kick off; or
b) The choice of goal his team will defend.

Penalty: For failure to comply: Loss of coin-toss option for both halves and overtime, and loss of 15 yards from the spot of the kickoff for the first half only.

For the second half, the captain who lost the pregame toss is to have the first choice of the two privileges listed in (a) or (b), unless one of the teams lost its first and second half options, or unless the winner of the pregame toss deferred his choice to the second half, in which case he must choose (a) or (b) above. Immediately prior to the start of the second half, the captains of both teams must inform the Referee of their respective choices.

A captain's first choice from any alternative privileges listed above is final and not subject to change.

CHANGE OF GOALS

Article 3 At the end of the first and third periods, the teams must change goals. Team possession, the number of the succeeding down, the relative position of the ball on the field of play, and the line to gain remain the same.

SECTION 3 STARTING THE GAME CLOCK

FREE KICK DOWN

Article 1 The game clock operator shall start the game clock (time in) after a free kick when the ball is legally touched in the field of play. The game clock shall not start if:

a) the receiving team recovers the ball in the end zone and does not carry the ball into the field of play;
b) the kicking team recovers the ball in the field of play; or

c) the receiving team signals for and makes a fair catch.

A.R. 4.1 a) With three seconds remaining in the second quarter, A1 attempts an onside kick from the A35. The kick is caught or recovered legally at the A46: a) by A2, b) by B1 who signals for and completes a fair catch, c) by B1 on his feet and he immediately goes to the ground, or d) by B1 on the ground and he makes no effort to get up or advance.
Rulings:
a) A's ball, first-and-10 on A46. Three seconds on the clock. (No time runs off the clock).
b) B's ball, first-and-10 on A46. Three seconds on the clock. (No time runs off the clock).
c) B's ball, first-and-10 on A46. Two seconds on the clock. (One second runs off the clock).
d) B's ball, first-and-10 on A46. Two seconds on the clock. (One second runs off the clock).

A.R. 4.2 b) During the last two minutes of the game, the offensive team safety kicks from the A20.
Ruling: Time in starts when the safety kick is legally touched by any player in the field of play.

SCRIMMAGE DOWN

Article 2 Following any timeout (3-37), the game clock shall be started on a scrimmage down when the ball is next snapped, except in the following situations:

a) Whenever a runner goes out of bounds on a play from scrimmage, the game clock is started when an official spots the ball at the inbounds spot, and the Referee gives the signal to start the game clock, except that the clock will start on the snap:
   1) after a change of possession;
   2) after the two-minute warning of the first half; or
   3) inside the last five minutes of the second half.

A.R. 4.3 With three minutes remaining in the first quarter, back A2 takes a handoff and runs out of bounds at the A27.
Ruling: Stop game clock. Time in on Referee's signal.

A.R. 4.4 B7 intercepts a forward pass and runs out of bounds at the A14.
Ruling: Stop game clock. Time in on snap.

b) If there is an injury timeout prior to the two-minute warning, the game clock is started as if the injury timeout had not occurred.
c) If there is an excess team timeout after the two-minute warning, the game clock is started as if the excess timeout had not occurred.
d) If there is a Referee's timeout, the game clock is started as if the Referee's timeout had not occurred.
e) If the game clock is stopped after a down in which there was a foul by either team, following enforcement or declination of a penalty, the game clock will start as if the foul had not occurred, except that the clock will start on the snap if:
   1) the foul occurs after the two-minute warning of the first half;
   2) the foul occurs inside the last five minutes of the second half; or
   3) a specific rule prescribes otherwise.

A.R. 4.5 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A40 where he is tackled. During A1's run, A2 clipped B1 at the A35.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-20 on A20. Game Clock starts on ready-to-play signal after penalty is enforced except inside the last two minutes of the first half or the last five minutes of the second half.

A.R. 4.6 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A40 and steps out of bounds there. During A1's run, A2 clipped B1 at the A35.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-20 on A20. Game clock starts with Referee's ready signal as ball was dead when runner ran out of bounds, except inside the last two minutes of first half or inside last five minutes of the second half.

f) If a fumble or backward pass by any player goes out of bounds, the game clock starts when an official places the ball at the inbounds line, and the Referee signals that the ball is ready for play.
g) When there is a 10-second runoff, the game clock starts when the Referee signals that the ball is ready for play.
h) During the Try, which is an untimed down.
i) When a specific rule prescribes otherwise.

FAIR CATCH KICK DOWN

Article 3 The game clock operator shall start the game clock for a fair-catch kick down when the ball is kicked.

SECTION 4 STOPPING THE GAME CLOCK

The game clock operator shall stop the game clock (timeout) upon a signal by any official or upon the operator's own positive knowledge:

a) at the end of a down in which there is a free kick or fair-catch kick;
b) when the kicking team recovers a scrimmage kick that has been touched by the receiving team beyond the line of scrimmage;
c) when the ball is out of bounds;
d) when the ball is dead on or behind a goal line;
e) at the end of a down during which a foul occurs;
f) when a forward pass is incomplete;
g) at the time of a foul for which the ball remains dead or is dead immediately;
h) when the Referee signals the two-minute warning for a half;
i) when a down is completed during which or after there is a change of possession; or
j) when any official signals a timeout for any other reason.

Note: No extension of the automatic timeouts in this section shall be allowed unless any player requests a team timeout, or the Referee orders a team timeout or suspends play.

SECTION 5 TIMEOUTS

CHARGED TEAM TIMEOUTS

Article 1 The Referee shall suspend play while the ball is dead and declare a charged team timeout upon the request for a timeout by the head coach or any player (not a substitute) to any official.

Item 1: Three Timeouts Allowed. A team is allowed three charged team timeouts during each half.

Item 2: Length of Timeouts. Charged team timeouts shall be two minutes in length, unless the timeout is not used by television for a commercial break. Timeouts shall be 30 seconds in length when the designated number of television commercials have been exhausted in a quarter, if it is a second charged team timeout in the same dead-ball period, or when the Referee so indicates.

Item 3: Consecutive Team Timeouts. Each team may be granted a charged team timeout during the same dead-ball period, but a second charged team timeout by either team during the same dead-ball period is prohibited. Such team timeouts may follow a Referee's timeout or any automatic timeouts.

Item 4: Unsportsmanlike Conduct. An attempt to call an excess team timeout or to call a second timeout in the same dead-ball period by Team B in an attempt to "freeze" a kicker, will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will subject the offending team to a 15-yard penalty (See 12-3). This will apply to field goal or Try attempts.

Note: If an attempt is made to call a timeout in such situations, the officials shall not grant a timeout; instead, play will continue, and a penalty will be called, with customary enforcement. If a timeout is inadvertently granted, the penalty shall also be enforced. See 12-3-1-v.

INJURY TIMEOUTS

Article 2 If an official determines a player to be injured, or if attendants from the bench come on the field to assist an injured player, an injury timeout will be called by the Referee.

INJURY TIMEOUTS PRIOR TO TWO-MINUTE WARNING OF EITHER HALF

Article 3 When an injury timeout is called, the injured player must leave the game for the completion of one down. The player will be permitted to remain in the game if:

a) either team calls a charged team timeout;
b) the injury is the result of a foul by an opponent; or
c) the period ends or the two-minute warning occurs before the next snap.

At the conclusion of an injury timeout, the game clock will start as if the injury timeout had not occurred. If either team takes, or is charged with, a timeout, the clock will start on the snap.

INJURY TIMEOUTS AFTER TWO-MINUTE WARNING OF EITHER HALF

Article 4 After the two-minute warning of a half, the following shall apply:

a) If a team has not used its three charged team timeouts, the team of the injured player will be charged a team timeout, unless:
   1) the injury is the result of a foul by an opponent;
   2) the injury occurs during a down in which there is a change of possession, a successful field goal, or an attempted Try; or
b) If a team has used its three charged team timeouts, an excess team timeout shall be called by the Referee, unless:
   1) the injury is the result of a foul by an opponent;
   2) the injury occurs during a down in which there is a change of possession, a successful field goal, or an attempted Try; or
c) The player must leave the game for the completion of one down, unless:
   1) the injury is the result of a foul by an opponent; or
   2) either team calls a charged team timeout.

Penalty: For the second and each subsequent excess team timeout after the two-minute warning: Loss of five yards from the succeeding spot for delay of the game.

Note 1: No yardage penalty will be assessed for the first excess team timeout, but a 10-second runoff of the game clock may be applicable pursuant to Note 3 below. At the conclusion of an excess timeout taken while time is in, the game clock shall start with the ready-for-play signal. For any excess timeout charged to the defense, the play clock is reset to 40 seconds.

Note 2: If the Referee has already called an excess team timeout in that half for a team, any subsequent excess timeout for that team will result in a five-yard penalty. (Such penalty shall be considered a foul between downs and will not offset a foul or be part of a multiple foul.)

Note 3: If an excess team timeout is charged against a team in possession of the ball, and time is in when the excess timeout is called, the ball shall not be put in play until the time on the game clock has been reduced by 10 seconds, if the defense so chooses.

A.R. 4.7 Offensive team A, in the last two minutes of the half and the clock running:
a) Is charged its fourth timeout because of an injured player.

Ruling: No five-yard penalty. Player has to be removed. Ten-second runoff. Ball will not be put in play until the Referee blows the whistle and gives the wind-the-clock signal.

b) Is charged its fifth timeout because of an injured player.
Ruling: Five-yard penalty. Player has to be removed. Ten-second runoff. Ball will not be put in play until the Referee blows the whistle and gives the wind-the-clock signal.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:
Note 1: Either half can end as the result of the 10-second runoff referenced above.

Note 2: If an injury timeout is called for both teams during or after a down, charged team timeouts and/or excess team timeouts are charged as appropriate, but no yardage or 10-second runoff penalties shall be enforced.

Note 3: If a foul by either team occurs during a down in which there is also an injury, such foul does not affect the charging of an excess timeout, but it does prevent a 10-second runoff that may result from the excess timeout, because the foul stopped the clock.

Note 4: The Competition Committee deprecates feigning injuries, with subsequent withdrawal, to obtain a timeout without penalty. Coaches are urged to cooperate in discouraging this practice.

Note 5: There can never be a 10-second runoff against the defensive team.

Note 6: See Rule 16 (Sudden-Death Procedures) for application to overtime games.

REFEREE'S TIMEOUT
Article 5 Provided that calling timeout is not in conflict with another rule, the Referee may suspend play and stop the clock (Referee's timeout) at any time without penalty to either team when playing time is being consumed because of an unintentional delay. Such situations include, but are not limited to:

a) when there is the possibility of a measurement for a first down, or if the Referee is consulting with a captain about one;
b) when there is an undue pileup on the runner, or while determining possession after a fumble while time is in;
c) when there is an undue delay by officials in spotting the ball for the next snap;
d) if the snap is made before the officials can assume their positions. See 4-6-5-b if it is a repeated act;
e) when there is an injury to an official or member of the chain crew;
f) during an officials' conference (see 15-1-6); or
g) while repairing or replacing game equipment, except player equipment.

After a Referee's timeout, the game clock will start pursuant to Rule 4, Section 3, as if the Referee's timeout had not occurred.

The time remaining on the play clock shall be the same as when it stopped. See Rule 4, Section 6, Article 3.

SECTION 6 DELAY OF GAME
40-SECOND PLAY CLOCK
Article 1 It is a delay of the game if the ball is not put in play by a snap within 40 seconds after the start of the play clock. The play clock operator shall time the interval between plays upon signals from game officials. The 40-second interval starts when a play ends, unless Article 2 below applies.

25-SECOND PLAY CLOCK
Article 2 In the event of certain administrative stoppages or other delays, a team will have 25 seconds, beginning with the Referee's whistle, to put the ball in play by a snap or a kick. Such stoppages include, but are not limited to:

a) a change of possession;
b) a charged team timeout;
c) the two-minute warning;
d) the expiration of a period;
e) a penalty enforcement;
f) a Try; or
g) a Free Kick.

A 25-second interval will be used in these situations, even if the 40-second clock is already counting down.

INTERRUPTION OF PLAY CLOCK
Article 3 If the play clock is stopped prior to the snap for any reason, after the stoppage has concluded, the time remaining on the play clock shall be the same as when it stopped, unless:

a) the stoppage has been for a charged team timeout, the two-minute warning, the expiration of a period, a penalty enforcement, or an Instant Replay challenge prior to the two-minute warning, in which case the play clock shall be reset to 25 seconds;
b) the stoppage has been for an Instant Replay review after the two-minute warning that results in a reversal, in which case the play clock shall be reset to 25 seconds;
c) the stoppage has been for an excess timeout while time is in that is charged to the defense, in which case the play clock shall be reset to 40 seconds; or
d) fewer than 10 seconds remain on the play clock, in which case it shall be reset to 10 seconds.

BALL REMAINS DEAD
Article 4 If the ball is not put in play within the applicable period, the Back Judge shall blow his whistle for the foul, and the ball remains dead. See 14-4-1-Item 1.

OTHER DELAY OF GAME FOULS

Article 5 Other examples of action or inaction that are to be construed as delay of the game include, but are not limited to:

a) a player unnecessarily remains on a dead ball or on a runner who has been downed;
b) the snapper repeatedly snaps the ball after the neutral zone is established and before all the officials have had a reasonable time to assume their positions (see 7-6-3-c);
c) undue delay by either team in assembling after a timeout;
d) a defensive player aligned in a stationary position within one yard of the line of scrimmage makes quick and abrupt actions that are not a part of normal defensive player movement and are an obvious attempt to cause an offensive player(s) to foul (false start). (The officials shall blow their whistles immediately.);
e) spiking or throwing the ball in the field of play after a down has ended, except after a score

Penalty: For delay of the game: Loss of five yards:

a) from the succeeding spot if it occurs between downs. The ball remains dead; or
b) from the previous spot if the ball was in play.

SECTION 7 ACTIONS TO CONSERVE TIME

ILLEGAL ACTS

Article 1 A team is not permitted to conserve time inside of one minute of either half by committing any of these acts:

a) a foul by either team that prevents the snap (i.e., false start, encroachment, etc.)
b) intentional grounding;
c) an illegal forward pass thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage;
d) throwing a backward pass out of bounds;
e) spiking or throwing the ball in the field of play after a down has ended, except after a touchdown; or
f) any other intentional foul that causes the clock to stop.

Penalty: For Illegally Conserving Time: Loss of five yards unless a larger distance penalty is applicable.

When actions referred to above are committed by the offensive team while time is in, officials will run 10 seconds off the game clock before permitting the ball to be put in play on the ready-for-play signal. The game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal. If the offensive team has timeouts remaining, it will have the option of using a timeout in lieu of a 10-second runoff, in which case the game clock will start on the snap after the timeout. The defense always has the option to decline the 10-second runoff and have the yardage penalty enforced, but if the yardage penalty is declined, the 10-second runoff is also declined.

If the action is by the defense, the play clock will be reset to 40 seconds, and the game clock will start on the ready signal, unless the offense chooses to have the clock start on the snap. If the defense has timeouts remaining, it will have the option of using a timeout in lieu of the game clock being started.

A.R. 4.8 With eight seconds remaining in the first half, A1 throws a backward pass out-of-bounds to stop the game clock.
Ruling: Half over, 10-second runoff for conserving time, unless A has a timeout remaining.

A.R. 4.9 With seven seconds remaining in the first half, guard A1 commits a false start in order to stop the game clock.
Ruling: Half over, 10-second runoff for conserving time, unless A has a timeout remaining.

Note 1: Two successive delay penalties during the same down, is unsportsmanlike conduct (12-3-1-m).

Note 2: Certain acts of delay may involve stopping the game clock immediately. Repeated violations of the substitution rule to conserve time are unsportsmanlike conduct (12-3-1-m and 5-2-2).

SUBSTITUTION VIOLATION INSIDE ONE MINUTE

Article 2 Inside one minute of either half, if there is a violation of the substitution rule while the ball is dead and time is in, in addition to the applicable yardage penalty for illegal substitution, there will be a 10-second runoff pursuant to Article 1 above.

Penalty: For Illegal Substitution: Loss of five yards (unless a larger distance penalty is applicable) and a 10-second runoff.

DEFENSIVE FOULS DURING LAST 40 SECONDS

Article 3 In the last 40 seconds of either half, if there is a defensive foul prior to the snap while time is in, the half will end, unless the defense has timeouts remaining, or the offense chooses to have the Game Clock start on the snap.

Article 4 If a replay review inside of one minute of either half results in the on-field ruling being reversed and the correct ruling would not have stopped the game clock, then the officials will run 10 seconds off the game clock before permitting the ball to be put in play on the ready-for-play signal. All normal rules regarding 10-second runoffs will apply.

SECTION 8 EXTENSION OF A PERIOD OR A HALF

BALL IN PLAY

Article 1 If time expires at the end of any period while the ball is in play, the period continues until the down ends.

PERIOD EXTENDED

Article 2 At the election of the opponent, a period may be extended for one untimed down, if any of the following occurs during a down during which time in the period expires:

a) If there is a live-ball foul by the defensive team that is accepted, the offensive team may choose to extend the period by an untimed down after enforcement of the penalty. If the first or third period is not so extended, any accepted penalty is enforced before the start of the succeeding period.
b) If there is a foul by the offense, there shall be no extension of the period. If the foul occurs on the last play of the half, a score by the offense is not counted. However, the period may be extended for an untimed down, upon the request of the defense, if the offensive team's foul is for:
   1) illegal touching of a kick;

Note: The period may also be extended for a "first touching" violation.

   2) fair-catch interference;
   3) a palpably unfair act;
   4) a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct foul committed prior to an interception of a forward pass, the recovery of a backward pass or fumble, or offensive team failing to reach the line to gain on fourth down; or
   5) a foul by the kicking team prior to a player of the receiving team securing possession of the ball during a down in which there is a safety kick, a scrimmage kick, or a free kick.

c) If a touchdown is made on the last play of a period, the Try attempt shall be made (except during a sudden-death period).
d) If no fair-catch signal is given and the kickers interfere with the receiver's opportunity to catch a kick, the receiving team may extend the period by a down from scrimmage.
e) If a fair-catch is signaled and made, the receivers may choose to extend the period by a fair-catch kick down (10-2-4). If the first or third period is not so extended, the receivers may start the succeeding period by either a down from scrimmage or fair-catch kick (11-4-3).
f) If a fair catch is signaled and the kickers interfere with a receiver's opportunity to catch a kick, the receiving team may extend the period by either a down from scrimmage or a fair-catch kick (10-2-4).
g) If a safety results from a foul during the last play of a half, the score counts. A safety kick is made if requested by the receivers.
h) If a double foul occurs during the last down of either half, the period shall be extended by an untimed down.

Exceptions: The half is not extended if:
   1) both fouls are dead-ball fouls;
   2) if there is a major-minor double foul ("5 vs. 15"), and the major foul is by the offense, or if the major foul is a dead ball foul by the defense (see 14-5-1-Exc 1.); or

Note1: Dead ball personal fouls by either team at the end of a half are enforced on the ensuing kickoff (14-4-9-Exc. a).

Note 2: Dead ball unsportsmanlike or taunting fouls by either team at the end of a half are disregarded.

   3) if there is a double foul with a change of possession ("clean hands" rule, see 14-5-2) that does not involve a replay of the down. If a double foul occurs on the last play of the first or third periods, the period is not extended.

If the first or third period is extended for any reason, or if a touchdown occurs during the last play of such a period, any additional play, including a Try attempt, shall be completed before the teams change goals.

If any period is extended for any reason, it shall continue until the completion of a down free from any foul specified in (a) through (h) above.

A.R. 4.10 Fourth-and-10 on B40. On the last play of the first quarter, offensive team misses an attempted field goal. Defensive team was offside. There is a strong wind at the team's back.
Ruling: Offensive team has option of extending period by an untimed down. It can put ball in play from the B35 and kick the same way. If the period is not extended, it would be fourth-and-five on the B35 at start of second period.

A.R. 4.11 Third-and-10 on A45. Offensive team is offside. Quarterback A1 throws a legal pass which is completed to end A2 who runs for a score. Time for second half expired during play.
Ruling: No score and game over as it was an offensive foul on last play of half.

A.R. 4.12 Fourth-and-10 on A20. A punt is first touched by kicking team player A1 on the A45 as time runs out in the second half.
Ruling: One scrimmage down allowed, if desired, by receivers from the A45. Untimed down as it was a first touch violation.

A.R. 4.13 Defensive B1 intercepts at midfield on the last play of either half. On runback, B2 clips at the A40. A1 piles on after runner B1 is tackled on the A30.
Ruling: Extend the period with an untimed down from A40. B's ball. See 14-3-3.

A.R. 4.14 The offensive team punts as time for the half expires. Defensive player B1 gives a valid fair-catch signal and catches the ball on the A35.
Ruling: The receiving team may extend the period by a fair-catch kick (10-2-5, 11-4-3).

RULE 5 PLAYERS, SUBSTITUTES, EQUIPMENT, GENERAL RULES

SECTION 1 PLAYERS

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Article 1 The game is played by two teams of 11 players each.

PRIOR TO THE SNAP

If Team A has more than 11 players in its formation for more than three seconds, or if Team B has more than 11 players in its formation and the snap is imminent, it is a foul. Once the ball is made ready for play, if either team has more than 11 players in its formation prior to a free kick, it is also a foul. In these instances, game officials shall blow their whistles immediately and not allow the snap or kick to occur.

Penalty: For more than 11 players in the formation prior to the snap or free kick: Loss of five yards from the succeeding spot.

AT THE SNAP

If a team has more than 11 players on the field of play or the end zone when a snap, free kick, or fair-catch kick is made, the ball is in play, and it is a foul.

Penalty: For more than 11 players on the field of play or the end zone while the ball is in play: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.

Note: It is not a foul if a team has fewer than 11 players on the field of play or the end zone when a snap, free kick, or fair-catch kick is made.

PLAYERS NUMBERED BY POSITION

Article 2 All players must wear numerals on their jerseys in accordance with Rule 5, Section 4, Article 3c. Such numerals must be by playing position, as follows:

a) quarterbacks, punters, and placekickers: 1–19;
b) running backs and defensive backs: 20–49;
c) centers: 50–79;
d) offensive guards and tackles: 60–79;
e) wide receivers: 10–19 and 80–89;
f) tight ends and H-backs: 40–49 and 80–89;
g) defensive linemen: 50–79 and 90–99;
h) linebackers: 50–59 and 90–99.

If a player changes his position during his playing career in the NFL, and such change moves him from a position as an ineligible pass receiver to that of an eligible pass receiver, or from a position as an eligible pass receiver to that of an ineligible pass receiver, he must be issued an appropriate new jersey numeral. A change in jersey numeral is not required if the change is from an ineligible position to another ineligible position, or from an eligible position to another eligible position, provided that the player has participated at least one season at his position prior to the change.

Any request to wear a numeral for a special position not specified above (e.g., H-back) must be made to the Commissioner. During the preseason period when playing rosters are larger, the League will allow duplication and other temporary deviations from the numbering scheme specified above, but the rule must be adhered to for all players during the regular season and postseason. Clubs must make numerals available to adhere to the rule, even if it requires returning to circulation a numeral that has been retired or withheld for other reasons. See 5-3-1 for reporting a change of position.

SECTION 2 SUBSTITUTES AND WITHDRAWN PLAYERS

NUMBER OF PLAYERS IN HUDDLE

Article 1 There can never be more than 11 players in the offensive huddle while the play clock is running. It is a foul, the whistle is blown immediately, and the ball remains dead. See 5-2-8-a.

SUBSTITUTE BECOMES PLAYER

Article 2 A substitute becomes a player when he:

a) participates in at least one play (including a play negated by penalty prior to the snap or during the play); or
b) is on the field of play or the end zone when a snap, fair-catch kick, or free kick is made, or when a snap, fair-catch kick, or free kick is imminent.

A player becomes a substitute when he is withdrawn from the game and does not participate in at least one play. A play negated by penalty prior to the snap or during the play counts as a missed play.

LEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS

Article 3 Any number of substitutes may enter the field of play or the end zone while the ball is dead.

ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS

Article 4 If a substitute enters the field of play or the end zone while the ball is in play, it is an illegal substitution. If an illegal substitute interferes with the play, it may be a palpably unfair act (see 12-3-3).

OFFENSIVE SUBSTITUTIONS

Article 5 The following are applicable to any offensive substitute who is entering the game:

a) He must move onto the field of play or the end zone as far as the inside of the field numerals prior to the snap to be a legal substitution. If he does not, and is on the field of play or end zone at the time of a legal snap, he is an illegal substitute.
b) If he approaches the huddle and communicates with a teammate, he is required to participate in at least one play before being withdrawn. Violations of this rule may be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Note: The intent of the rule is to prevent teams from using simulated substitutions to confuse an opponent, while still permitting a player (or players) to enter and leave without participating in a play in certain situations, such as a change in a coaching decision on fourth down, even though he has approached the huddle and communicated with a teammate. Similarly, if a player who participated in the previous play leaves the playing field by mistake, and returns to the playing field prior to the snap, he is not required to reach the inside of the field numerals, provided that the defense has the opportunity to match up with him. However, a substitute (i.e., someone who did not participate in the previous play) is required to reach the inside of the field numerals.

WITHDRAWN PLAYERS

Article 6 A player or players who have been replaced must leave the playing field or end zone on their own team's side between the end lines prior to the next snap, free kick, or fair-catch kick.

DISQUALIFIED AND SUSPENDED PLAYERS

Article 7 A player must be withdrawn and substituted for when he is disqualified (12-2, 12-3) or suspended (5-4). A suspended player may re-enter after at least one legal snap, provided that the reason for his suspension has been corrected. A disqualified player must leave the playing field enclosure and go to the team locker room within a reasonable time.

PENALTIES FOR ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION OR WITHDRAWAL

Article 8 Penalties for illegal substitution or withdrawal are:

a) For 12 or more players in the offensive huddle (whistle blown immediately and ball remains dead): Loss of five yards from the succeeding spot.
b) For a substitute entering the field during a live ball: Loss of five yards.
c) For interference with the play by a substitute who enters the field during a live ball: Palpably unfair act. See 12-3-3.
d) For an offensive substitute who does not move onto the field as far as the inside of the field numerals: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.
e) For an offensive substitute who moves onto the field inside the field numerals and leaves without participating in one play: Unsportsmanlike Conduct. See 5-2-5 Note.
f) For a withdrawn player clearing the field on the opponents' side or across an end line: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.
g) For illegal return of a suspended player: Loss of five yards from the previous spot if discovery is made while the ball is in play, or five yards from the succeeding spot if discovered between downs, in which case the ball remains dead.
h) For return of a disqualified player: Loss of 15 yards from the previous spot if discovery is made while the ball is in play, or 15 yards from the succeeding spot if discovered between downs, in which case the ball remains dead, and, in either case, exclusion from the playing field enclosure.

Note: If the illegal return of a player is not discovered until the end of a down, but prior to the start of the next one, enforcement is from the previous spot when definitely known. Otherwise, enforcement is from the succeeding spot as a foul between downs. See 14-4-9.

PROCEDURE FOLLOWING TIMEOUT OR CHANGE OF POSSESSION

Article 9 Following a timeout or change of possession, the ball will not be declared ready for play until the offense has brought 11 players into its huddle inside the inbounds lines (hash marks). If the offensive team refuses to leave the sideline prior to the ball being declared ready for play, it will be warned once. Thereafter, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Penalty: For Unsportsmanlike Conduct after a warning: Loss of 15 yards from the succeeding spot.

DEFENSIVE MATCHUPS FOLLOWING SUBSTITUTIONS

Article 10 If a substitution is made by the offense, the offense shall not be permitted to snap the ball until the defense has been permitted to respond with its substitutions. While in the process of a substitution (or simulated substitution), the offense is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage and snapping the ball in an obvious attempt to cause a defensive foul (i.e., too many men on the field). If the offense substitutes, the following procedure will apply:

a) The Umpire will stand over the ball until the Referee deems that the defense has had a reasonable time to complete its substitutions.
b) If the offense snaps the ball before the defense has had an opportunity to complete its substitutions, and a defensive foul for too many players on the field results, no penalties will be enforced, except for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct, and the down will be replayed. At this time, the Referee will notify the head coach that any further use of this tactic will result in a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Note: The quick-snap rule does not apply after the two-minute warning of either half, or if there is not a substitution by the offense.

c) On a fourth-down punting situation, the Referee and the Umpire will not allow a quick snap that prevents the defense from having a reasonable time to complete its substitutions. This applies throughout the entire game.
d) If the play clock expires before the defense has completed its substitution, it is delay of game by the offense.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Article 11 Using entering substitutes, legally returning players, substitutes on sidelines, or withdrawn players to confuse opponents, or lingering by players leaving the field when being replaced by a substitute, is unsportsmanlike conduct. See 12-3-1-k. The offense is prevented from sending simulated substitutions onto the field toward its huddle and returning them to the sideline without completing the substitution in an attempt to confuse the defense.

Penalty: For Unsportsmanlike Conduct after a warning: Loss of 15 yards from the succeeding spot.

SECTION 3 CHANGES IN POSITION

REPORTING CHANGE OF POSITION

Article 1 An offensive player wearing the number of an ineligible pass receiver (50–79 and 90–99) is permitted to line up in the position of an eligible pass receiver (1–49 and 80–89), and an offensive player wearing the number of an eligible pass receiver is permitted to line up in the position of an ineligible pass receiver, provided that he immediately reports the change in his eligibility status to the Referee, who will inform the defensive team.

He must participate in such eligible or ineligible position as long as he is continuously in the game, but prior to each play he must again report his status to the Referee, who will inform the defensive team. The game clock shall not be stopped, and the ball shall not be put in play until the Referee takes his normal position.

RETURNING TO ORIGINAL POSITION

Article 2 A player who has reported a change in his eligibility status to the Referee is permitted to return to a position indicated by the eligibility status of his number after:

a) a team time out;
b) the end of a quarter;
c) the two-minute warning;
d) a foul;
e) a replay challenge;
f) a touchdown;
g) a completed kick from scrimmage;
h) a change of possession; or
i) if the player has been withdrawn for one legal snap. A player withdrawn for one legal snap may re-enter at a position indicated by the eligibility status of his number, unless he again reports to the Referee that he is assuming a position other than that designated by the eligibility status of his number.

Penalty: If a player fails to notify the Referee of a change in his status when required: Loss of five yards for illegal substitution.

A.R. 5.1 Offensive tackle A1 is legally shifted to the backfield and is then withdrawn. He returns before the next snap to a tackle position.
Ruling: Illegal. He must stay out one play, unless there is a team time out.

Article 3 Each offensive and defensive team is permitted no more than one player on the field with a speaker in his helmet. Each team is permitted to have a maximum of three active radio receivers to be used on offense by its quarterbacks, and a maximum of two active radio receivers to be used on defense by players who have been designated as a primary and backup user.

Clubs that have a player whose principal position is as a non-quarterback (e.g., wide receiver, running back) and who also is used as a quarterback from time to time must have two helmets for that player—one with and one without radio components.

When a quarterback enters the game for the first time, or re-enters the game if he has previously been in the game and removed, he must report to the Referee.

Whenever the backup defensive user enters or re-enters the game wearing a helmet with a speaker, he must report to the Umpire. If the primary defensive user subsequently re-enters the game wearing a helmet with a speaker, he must report to the Umpire. If the primary and backup players have been removed from the game, no other player may wear the radio speaker in his helmet. Teams must use other methods to communicate signals to their players.

It is not necessary that the offensive player with the speaker in his helmet receive the snap.

For special teams' plays, only one player per team with a receiver will be permitted on the field.

The coach-to-player system is not subject to the equity rule. In the event one club experiences a coach-to-player radio system malfunction or failure, the other club does not have to shut down its system and may continue using it. However, if the coaches' intercom system has been completely shut down on both sidelines pursuant to the equity rule, all coaches' headsets must be removed, and radio communications from the sidelines to the field must be conducted by walkie-talkie only.

All players that have radio components in their helmet must have a decal, supplied by the League, displayed on the midline of the rear of the helmet. Players who have speakers in their helmets must be identified in the Communication System section of the Game Day Administration Report that is submitted to the Referee or a member of his crew no later than one hour and 30 minutes prior to kickoff.

For additional requirements and policies pertaining to the system, including regulations for the storage of a backup helmet for a non-quarterback who is used as a quarterback, or for the backup defensive player's helmet, please refer to the *Policy Manual for Member Clubs/Game Operations.*

Penalty: If a player fails to notify the Referee of a change in his status when required: Loss of five yards for illegal substitution.

SECTION 4 EQUIPMENT, UNIFORMS, PLAYER APPEARANCE

GENERAL POLICY

Article 1 Throughout the game-day period while in view of the stadium and television audience, including during team pregame warm-ups, all players must dress in a professional manner under the uniform standards. The helmet and mandatory padding referenced in Article 3 below are intended to provide reasonable protection to a player while reasonably avoiding risk of injury to other players. The development of Playing Rules should be governed by this Article. Players generally must present an appearance that is appropriate to representing their individual clubs and the National Football League. The term uniform, as used in this policy, applies to every piece of equipment worn by a player, including helmet, shoulder pads, thigh pads, knee pads, and any other item of protective gear, and to every visible item of apparel, including but not limited to pants, jerseys, wristbands, gloves, stockings, shoes, visible undergarments, and accessories such as headwear worn under helmets and hand towels. All visible items worn on game day by players must be issued by the club or the League, or, if from outside sources, must have approval in advance by the League office.

MANDATORY EQUIPMENT, APPAREL

Article 2 Pursuant to the official colors established for each NFL club in the League Constitution and Bylaws, playing squads are permitted to wear only those colors or a combination of those colors for helmets, jerseys, pants, and stockings; provided that white is also an available color for jerseys and mandatory color for the lower portion of stockings. (See 5-3-3-f, "Stockings," below.) Each player on a given team must wear the same colors on his uniform as all other players on his team in the same game. Home clubs shall choose their jersey color (either white or official team color), and visiting clubs must wear the opposite. For preseason, regular season, or postseason games, the two competing teams may wear jerseys in their official colors (non-white), provided the Commissioner determines that such colors are of sufficient contrast.

Article 3 All players must wear the equipment and uniform apparel listed below, which must be of a suitably protective nature, must be designed and produced by a professional manufacturer, and must not be cut, reduced in size, or otherwise altered unless for medical reasons approved in advance by the Commissioner. During pregame team warm-ups, players may omit certain protective equipment at their option, except that helmets, shoulder pads, thigh pads, and knee pads must be worn.

Helmets, face protectors

a) Helmet with all points of the chin strap (white only) fastened and facemask attached. Facemasks must not be more than ⅝-inch in diameter and must be made of rounded material; transparent materials are prohibited. Clear (transparent) plastic eye shields are optional. Tinted eye shields may be worn only after the League office is supplied with appropriate medical documentation and approval is subsequently granted. The League office has final approval. No visible identification of a manufacturer's name or logo on the exterior of a helmet or on any attachment to a helmet is permitted unless provided for under a commercial arrangement between the League and manufacturer; in no event is identification of any helmet manufacturer permitted on the visible surface of a rear cervical pad. All helmets must carry a small NFL shield logo on the rear lower-left exterior, and an approved warning label on the rear lower-right exterior. Both labels will be supplied in quantity by the League office.

Jerseys

b) Jersey must cover all pads and other protective equipment worn on the torso and upper arms, and must be appropriately tailored to remain tucked into the uniform pants throughout the game. Tearaway jerseys are prohibited. Mesh jerseys with large fishnet material (commonly referred to as "bullet-hole" or "port-hole" mesh) are also prohibited. Surnames of players in letters a minimum of 2½ inches high must be affixed to the exterior of jerseys across the upper back above the numerals; nicknames are prohibited. All jerseys must carry a small NFL Shield logo at the middle of the yoke of the neck on the front of the garment. All fabrics must be approved by the League office prior to production.

Numerals

c) Numerals on the back and front of jerseys as specified under NFL rules for the player's specific position. Such numerals must be a minimum of 8 inches high and 4 inches wide, and their color must be in sharp contrast with the color of the jersey. Smaller numerals should be worn on the tops of the shoulders or upper arms of the jersey. Small numerals on the back of the helmet or on the uniform pants are optional.

Pants

d) Pants must be worn over the entire knee area; pants shortened or rolled up to meet the stockings above the knee are prohibited. No part of the pants may be cut away unless an appropriate gusset or other device is used to replace the removed material. All pants must carry a small NFL Shield logo on the front left groin area of the pants, midway between the fly opening and side seam, and ½-inch below the belt.

Shoulder Pads, Thigh Pads, and Knee Pads

e) Shoulder pads, thigh pads, and knee pads which have been approved by the League office. All pads must be covered by the outer uniform. Knee pads must be at least ¼-inch thick and must cover the knees. Basketball-type knee pads are permitted, but must be covered by the outer uniform. Punters and placekickers may omit thigh and knee pads.

Stockings

f) Stockings must cover the entire area from the shoe to the bottom of the pants, and must meet the pants below the knee. Players are permitted to wear as many layers of stockings and tape on the lower leg as they prefer, provided the exterior is a one-piece stocking that includes solid white from the top of the shoe to the mid-point of the lower leg, and approved team color or colors (non-white) from that point to the top of the stocking. Uniform stockings may not be altered (e.g., over-stretched, cut at the toes, or sewn short) in order to bring the line between solid white and team colors lower or higher than the mid-point of the lower leg. No other stockings and/or opaque tape may be worn over the one-piece, two-color uniform stocking. Barefoot punters and placekickers may omit the stocking of the kicking foot in preparation for and during kicking plays.

Shoes

g) Shoes must be of standard football design, including "sneaker" type shoes such as basketball shoes, cross-training shoes, etc. Each team must designate a dominant base color for its shoes, either black or white (with shoelace color conforming to the dominant base color of the tongue area of the shoe). Each team must also designate one of its Constitutional uniform colors as a dominant team color for its shoes. Each team must also designate one of its Constitutional uniform colors as a secondary team color for its shoes. Each team may also designate a third uniform color as a tertiary team color that may be used for accents on its shoes. The designation of team shoe colors as described above must be reported by each team to the League office no later than July 1 each year. Each player may select among shoe styles previously approved by the League office. All players on the same team must wear shoes with the same dominant base color. A player may wear an unapproved standard football shoe style as long as the player tapes over the entire shoe to conform to his team's selected dominant base color (i.e., white or black). Logos, names, or other commercial identification on shoes are not permitted to be visible unless advance approval is granted by the League office. Size and location of logos and names on shoes must be approved by the League office. When a shoe logo or name approved by the League is covered with an appropriate use of tape, players will be allowed to cut out the tape covering the original logo or name, provided the cut is clean and is the exact size of the logo or name. The logo or name of the shoe manufacturer must not be re-applied to the exterior of taped shoes unless advance approval is granted by the League office. Kicking shoes must not be modified (including using a shoelace wrapped around toe and/or bottom of the shoe), and any shoe that is worn by a player with an artificial limb on his kicking leg must have a kicking surface that conforms to that of a normal kicking shoe. Punters and placekickers may omit the shoe from the kicking foot in preparation for and during kicking plays. Punters and placekickers may wear any combination of the tri-colored shoes provided that the colors are consistent with those selected by the team and with the policy listed above.

OTHER PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT, APPAREL

Article 4 In addition to the prohibited items of equipment and apparel specified above, the following also are prohibited:

Projecting Objects

a) Metal or other hard objects that project from a player's person or uniform, including from his shoes.

Uncovered Hard Objects, Substances

b) Hard objects and substances, including but not limited to casts, guards or braces for hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, hip, thigh, knee, and shin, unless such items are appropriately covered on all edges and surfaces by a minimum of ⅜-inch foam rubber or similar soft material. Any such item worn to protect an injury must be reported by the applicable coaching staff to the Umpire in advance of the game, and a description of the injury must be provided.

Detachable Toe

c) Detachable kicking toe.

Torn Items

d) Torn or improperly fitting equipment creating a risk of injury to other players, e.g., the hard surfaces of shoulder pads exposed by a damaged jersey.

Improper Cleats

e) Shoe cleats made of aluminum or other material that may chip, fracture, or develop a cutting edge. Conical cleats with concave sides or points which measure less than ⅜-inch in diameter at the tips, or cleats with oblong ends which measure less than ¼ by ¾-inch at the end tips are also prohibited. Nylon cleats with flat steel tips are permitted.

Improper Tape

f) Opaque, contrasting-color tape that covers any part of the helmet, jersey, pants, stockings, or shoes; transparent tape or tape of the same color as the background material is permissible for use on these items of apparel. Players may use opaque white, black or one dominant club color tape on hands and arms, provided it conforms to above ("Uncovered Hard Objects, Substances") and below ("Approved Glove Color"). Opaque tape either black or white on shoes is permitted, provided it is black or white to match the selected dominant shoe choice of the Club, and provided it does not carry up into the stocking area.

Items Colored Like Football

g) Headgear or any other equipment or apparel which, in the opinion of the Referee, may confuse an opponent because of its similarity in color to that of the game football. If such color is worn, it must be broken by stripes or other patterns of sharply contrasting color or colors.

Adhesive, Slippery Substances

h) Adhesive or slippery substances on the body, equipment, or uniform of any player; provided, however, that players may wear gloves with a tackified surface if such tacky substance does not adhere to the football or otherwise cause handling problems for players.

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

Article 5 It is recommended that all players wear hip pads designed to reasonably avoid the risk of injury. Unless otherwise provided by individual team policy, it is the players' responsibility and decision whether to follow this recommendation and use such pads. If worn, such pads must be covered by the outer uniform.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Article 6 Among the types of optional equipment that are permitted to be worn by players are the following:

Garments Under Jerseys

a) Quarterbacks will be allowed to wear under the game jersey a solid colored T-shirt, turtleneck, or sweatshirt (consistent with team undergarment color) with sleeves cut to any length, as long as both sleeves are evenly trimmed and the edges are sewn and hemmed. All other players may wear garments under game jerseys only if the undergarment sleeves either (a) are full length to the wrist; or (b) are the half sleeve length as provided by the licensee each of which must be approved by the NFL. Players may not wear long-sleeved undergarments that include pebble-grip sleeves. Any garments under jerseys that are exposed at the neck or sleeve area and that carry an exposed logo or commercial name/identification must be licensed and approved by the League office for wear on the field. All members of the same team who wear approved undergarments with exposed necks or sleeves must wear the same color on a given day, which color must be white or a solid color that is an official team color (solid means that sleeves must not carry stripes, designs, or team names).

Approved Glove Color

b) Gloves, wrappings, elbow pads, and other items worn on the arms below or over the jersey sleeves by interior offensive linemen (excluding tight ends) must be of the color that is mandatorily reported to the League office by the club before July 1 each year. Such reported color must be white, black or other official uniform color of the applicable team, and, once reported, must not be changed throughout that same season. Players at other positions (non-interior linemen) also may wear gloves provided they are either (i) a solid white, solid black, or a solid color that is an official uniform color of the applicable club, (ii) a bi-color combination of black or white with one (1) official uniform color of the applicable team, or (iii) a tri-color combination of black or white, and/or up to two official uniform colors of the applicable club. For clubs with a third official uniform color, player (non-interior linemen) gloves may also incorporate a third official uniform color as an accent only. Clubs are not required to designate to the League office by July 1, the color of gloves that will be worn by their non-interior linemen.

Rib Protectors

c) Rib protectors ("flak jackets") under the jersey.

Wristbands

d) Wristbands, provided they are white or black only.

Towels

e) Towels, provided they are white licensed towels approved by the League office for use on the playing field. Players are prohibited from adding to these towels personal messages, logos, names, symbols, or illustrations. Such towels also must be attached to or tucked into the front waist of the pants, and must be no longer than 6 by 8 inches (slightly larger size may be issued to quarterbacks, or may be folded to these limits for wearing in games). A player may wear no more than one towel. Players are prohibited from discarding on the playing field any loose towels or other materials used for wiping hands and the football. Streamers or ribbons, regardless of length, hanging from any part of the uniform, including the helmet, are prohibited.

Headwear

f) When players are on the field, during the pregame, game, and postgame periods, they may wear approved caps, skull caps and bands, approved cold weather gear, or other approved headwear for medical purposes only, as determined by the Commissioner. Any permissible headwear must be approved by the League office, and if worn under the helmet, no portion may hang from or otherwise be visible outside the helmet. Players are not permitted to wear bandannas, stockings, or other unapproved headwear anywhere on the field during the pregame, game, or postgame periods, even if such items are worn under their helmets.

LOGOS AND COMMERCIAL IDENTIFICATION

Article 7 Throughout the period on game-day that a player is visible to the stadium and television audience (including in pregame warm-ups, in the bench area, and during postgame interviews in the locker room or on the field), players are prohibited from wearing, displaying, or orally promoting equipment, apparel, or other items that carry commercial names or logos/identifications of companies, unless such commercial identification has been approved in advance by the League office. The size of any approved logo or other commercial identification involved in an agreement between a manufacturer and the League will be modest and unobtrusive, and there is no assurance that it will be visible to the television audience.

PERSONAL MESSAGES

Article 8 Throughout the period on game-day that a player is visible to the stadium and television audience (including in pregame warm-ups, in the bench area, and during postgame interviews in the locker room or on the field), players are

prohibited from wearing, displaying, or otherwise conveying personal messages either in writing or illustration, unless such message has been approved in advance by the League office. Items to celebrate anniversaries or memorable events, or to honor or commemorate individuals, such as helmet decals, and arm bands and jersey patches on players' uniforms, are prohibited unless approved in advance by the League office. All such items approved by the League office, if any, must relate to team or League events or personages. The League will not grant permission for any club or player to wear, display, or otherwise convey messages, through helmet decals, arm bands, jersey patches, or other items affixed to game uniforms or equipment, which relate to political activities or causes, other non-football events, causes or campaigns, or charitable causes or campaigns. Further, any such approved items must be modest in size, tasteful, non-commercial, and non-controversial; must not be worn for more than one football season; and if approved for use by a specific team, must not be worn by players on other teams in the League.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Article 9 Consistent with the equipment and uniform rules, players must otherwise present a professional and appropriate appearance while before the public on game-day. Among the types of activity that are prohibited are use of tobacco products (smokeless included) while in the bench area and use of facial makeup.

Penalties:

a) **For violation of this Section 4 discovered during pregame warm-ups or at other times prior to the game, player will be advised to make appropriate correction; if the violation is not corrected, player will not be permitted to enter the game.**
b) **For violation of this Section 4 that is discovered while player is in the game, and which involves the competitive or player safety aspects of the game (e.g., illegal kicking toe of shoe, an adhesive or slippery substance, failure to wear mandatory equipment), player will be removed from the game until he has complied.**
c) **For any other violation of this Section 4 (e.g., wristbands that are not League-approved, towel with a personal message, impermissible headwear under the helmet) that is discovered while the player is in the game, player will be advised to make appropriate correction at the next change of possession; if the violation is not corrected, player will not be permitted to enter the game.**
d) **For violation of this Section 4 detected in the bench area: Player and head coach will be asked to remove the objectionable item, properly equip the player, or otherwise correct the violation. The involved player or players will not be permitted to enter the game until the player has complied.**
e) **For illegal entry or return of a player suspended under this Section 4: Loss of five yards from succeeding spot and removal until properly equipped after one down. See 3-33.**
f) **For repeat violation: Disqualification from game.**

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Note 1: In addition to the game-day penalties specified above, the Commissioner may subsequently impose independent disciplinary action on the involved player, up to and including suspension from the team's next game—preseason, regular season, or postseason, whichever is applicable.

Note 2: If a player is suspended for having adhesive or slippery substances on his body, equipment, or uniform, he must remain out of the game for one play, even if there is a team time out, the two-minute warning, or the end of a period.

Note 3: If a player (kicker) is suspended for having an illegal kicking shoe, he must remain out of the game for one play, unless there is a team time out, the two-minute warning, or the end of the period.

RULE 6 FREE KICKS

SECTION 1 PROCEDURES FOR A FREE KICK

FREE KICK

Article 1 A free kick is a kickoff or safety kick that puts the ball in play to start a free kick down. It must be made from any point on the kicking (offensive) team's restraining line and between the inbounds lines.

a) A kickoff puts the ball in play at the start of each half, after a try, and after a successful field goal. A dropkick or placekick may be used for a kickoff.

Note: During a placekick on a kickoff, the kicking team may use a manufactured tee that is one inch in height and approved by the League. Once the ball has been placed on the kicking tee, the kicking tee cannot be moved. If the ball falls off the tee, or the tee is moved, the covering officials must stop play and restart the timing process without penalty to the kicking team. If the ball falls off the tee a second time during the same free kick down, the kicking team then must either use a player to hold the ball or must kick it off the ground. The ball may be placed on the ground leaning against the tee, provided the tee is in its normal upright position.

b) A safety kick puts the ball in play after a safety. A dropkick, placekick, or punt may be used for a safety kick. A tee cannot be used for a safety kick.

Penalty: For illegal kick on a free kick down: Loss of five yards.

RESTRAINING LINES

Article 2 The restraining lines for a free kick shall be as follows, unless they are adjusted because of a distance penalty:

a) The restraining line for the kicking team shall be its 35-yard line for a kickoff and its 20-yard line for a safety kick.
b) The restraining line for the receiving team shall be the yard line 10 yards in advance of the kicking team's restraining line.

FREE KICK FORMATION

Article 3 When the ball is kicked on a free kick down:

a) After the ball has been made ready for play, all kicking team (Team A) players other than the kicker must be lined up no more than five yards behind their restraining line; and
b) All kicking team players must be inbounds and behind the ball when it is kicked, except:
   1) the holder of a placekick (3-18-1) may be beyond the line, and
   2) the kicker may be beyond the line, provided that his kicking foot is not beyond the line.
c) At least four players of the kicking team must be on each side of the ball. At least three players must be lined up outside each inbounds line, one of whom must be outside the yard-line number.

Note: A holder for a free kick counts as one of the required four players, regardless of where he is positioned.

d) All receiving team (Team B) players must be inbounds and behind their restraining line until the ball is kicked.

Penalty: For a player being beyond the restraining line when the ball is kicked (offside), a player being out of bounds when the ball is kicked, a kicking team player other than the kicker being more than five yards behind his restraining line, or the kicking team being in an illegal formation when the ball is kicked: Loss of five yards.

e) After the ball is kicked, no more than two receiving team players may intentionally form a wedge in an attempt to block for the runner. An illegal wedge is defined as three or more players lined up shoulder-to-shoulder within two yards of each other.

Note: This does not apply when the kicking team lines up in an obvious onside kick formation.

Penalty: For players intentionally forming an illegal wedge: Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul.

CATCH OR RECOVERY OF A FREE KICK

Article 4 The following applies to the catch or recovery of a free kick:

a) If a player of the receiving team catches or recovers the ball, he may advance.
b) If the ball is declared dead while in the simultaneous possession of two opposing players, the ball is awarded to the receiving team.
c) A player of the kicking team may legally touch, catch, or recover the ball if:
   1) it first touches a receiving team player; or
   2) it reaches or crosses the receiving team's restraining line.
d) The ball is dead if it is caught or recovered by a player of the kicking team. If the catch or recovery is legal, the ball belongs to the kicking team at the dead-ball spot.
e) If the ball comes to rest inbounds after reaching the receiving team's restraining line and no player attempts to possess it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the dead-ball spot.

Note: For illegal catch or recovery, see 6-2-4.

FREE KICK CROSSES GOAL LINE

Article 5 It is a touchback, if a free kick:

a) goes out of bounds behind the receiving team's goal line;
b) strikes the receiving team's goal post, uprights, or cross bar; or
c) is downed in the end zone by the receiving team.

END OF FREE KICK

Article 6 A free kick ends when either team possesses the ball, or when the ball is dead, if that precedes possession. A running play begins when the receiving team establishes possession of the ball.

SECTION 2 OTHER FREE KICK FOULS

BLOCKING

Article 1

Item 1: Kicking Team. After the ball touches a receiving team player, or has reached the receiver's restraining line, a kicking team player may legally block an opponent, and he may use his hands and arms to push or pull an opponent out of the way in a personal attempt to recover the ball.

Prior to the ball touching a receiving team player or reaching the receiving team's restraining line, he may not block or use his hands or arms against an opponent between the restraining lines, except to push or pull aside a receiver who is actively attempting to obstruct his attempt to proceed downfield.

Regardless of the location of the ball, he may legally block an opponent at or beyond the receiving team's restraining line. During the kick, the kicking team is subject to the blocking restrictions of the defense.

Item 2: **Receiving Team.** After the ball is kicked, receiving team players are subject to the blocking restrictions of the offense (see 12-1-1–3), and they may use their hands/arms legally to push or pull an opponent out of the way in a personal attempt to recover the ball.

Penalty: For illegal blocking or use of hands by either team: Loss of 10 yards. See 12-2-5 for penalty for a low block.

RUNNING INTO FREE KICKER

Article 2 A player of the receiving team is not permitted to run into the kicker before he recovers his balance. See also 12-2-6h and 12-2-10 for personal fouls against the kicker.

Penalty: For running into the kicker: Loss of five yards.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS

Article 3 The kicking team may not kick the ball out of bounds or be the last to touch the ball before it goes out of bounds between the goal lines. If the receiving team is the last to touch the ball before it goes out of bounds, the receiving team puts the ball in play at the inbounds spot.

Penalty: For a kickoff out of bounds: The receiving team may elect to take possession of the ball 25 yards from the spot of the kick or at the out-of-bounds spot.

Penalty: For a safety kick out of bounds: The receiving team may elect to take possession of the ball 30 yards from the spot of the kick or at the out-of-bounds spot.

FREE KICK ILLEGALLY TOUCHED

Article 4

Item 1: A player of the kicking team may not touch, catch, or recover the ball before it has reached the receiving team's restraining line, unless it has first been touched by a receiving team player.

Penalty: For illegal touching of a free kick by the kicking team: Loss of five yards, or the receiving team takes possession of the ball at the spot of the illegal touch.

Item 2: If a kicking team player goes out of bounds during the kick, he may not touch or recover the ball beyond the receiving team's restraining line, unless it has first been touched by a receiving team player. If a kicking team player touches the ball before re-establishing himself legally inbounds, it is a free kick out of bounds.

Penalty: For illegal touching of a free kick by the kicking team: Loss of five yards.

SHORT FREE KICK

Article 5 If the ball has not been touched by either team after the kick and rolls dead in the field of play before reaching the receiving team's restraining line, it is a foul.

Penalty: For a short free kick: Loss of five yards.

SECTION 3 ENFORCEMENT OF FOULS

ENFORCEMENT FROM PREVIOUS SPOT

Article 1 If there is a foul during a free kick, the normal enforcement is from the previous spot, and the free kick is made again. However, if the kicking team commits a foul prior to the end of the kick, and the receiving team retains possession throughout the down, it will have the option of enforcing the penalty at the previous spot and replaying the down or adding the penalty yardage to the dead-ball spot.

Exceptions:

a) A personal foul (blocking) after a fair-catch signal is enforced from the spot of the foul
b) A foul for fair-catch interference is enforced from the spot of the foul
c) A foul for interference with the opportunity to make a catch is enforced from the spot of the foul
d) A foul for an invalid fair catch signal is enforced from the spot of the foul
e) A foul for intentionally forming an illegal wedge, whether during the free kick or during the return, is enforced from the spot of the foul

f) For a free kick out of bounds, see Section 2, Article 3
g) For a free kick illegally touched, see Section 2, Article 4
h) Double fouls are enforced according to the customary rules. See 14-5.

Note: The dead-ball spot for free kicks that result in a touchback is the 20-yard line.

RULE 7 BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, SCRIMMAGE

SECTION 1 BALL IN PLAY

Article 1 **Live Ball.** After the ball has been declared ready for play, it becomes a live ball when it is legally snapped or legally kicked (a free kick or fair catch kick). The ball remains dead if it is snapped or kicked before it is made ready for play.

SECTION 2 DEAD BALL

Article 1 **Dead Ball Declared.** An official shall declare the ball dead and the down ended:

a) when a runner is contacted by an opponent and touches the ground with any part of his body other than his hands or feet. The ball is dead the instant the runner touches the ground. A runner touching the ground with his hands or feet while in the grasp of an opponent may continue to advance; or

Note: If, after contact by an opponent, any part of a runner's leg above the ankle or any part of his arm above the wrist touches the ground, the runner is down.

b) when a runner is held or otherwise restrained so that his forward progress ends; or
c) when a quarterback immediately drops to his knee (or simulates dropping to his knee) behind the line of scrimmage;

Note: If a quarterback does not immediately drop to a knee, and contact from a rushing defender is unavoidable, it is not a foul unless the defender commits some other act that would constitute unnecessary roughness.

d) when a runner declares himself down
   1) by falling to the ground, or kneeling, and clearly making no immediate effort to advance, or
   2) by sliding feet first on the ground. When a runner slides feet first, the ball is dead the instant he touches the ground with anything other than his hands or his feet; or

Note: Defenders are required to treat a sliding runner as they would a runner who is down by contact.

1) A defender must pull up when a runner begins a feet-first slide. This does not mean that all contact by a defender is illegal. If a defender has already committed himself, and the contact is unavoidable, it is not a foul unless the defender commits some other act, such as helmet-to-helmet contact or by driving his forearm or shoulder into the head or neck area of the runner.

2) A runner who desires to take advantage of this protection is responsible for starting his slide before contact by a defensive player is imminent; if he does not, and waits until the last moment to begin his slide, he puts himself in jeopardy of being contacted.

e) when a runner is out of bounds; or
f) when an opponent takes a ball that is in the possession of a runner who is on the ground; or

Note: An opponent may take or grab a ball (hand to hand) in possession of a runner who is on his feet or is airborne.

g) when a forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete (see 8-1-4); or
h) when any legal or illegal kick touches the receivers' goal posts or crossbar, unless it scores a field goal (see 9-4-2); or
i) when a loose ball comes to rest anywhere in the field of play, and no player attempts to recover it; the official covering the play should pause momentarily before signaling that the ball is dead. Any legal (or illegal) kick is awarded to the receivers, and any other ball is awarded to the team last in possession. When awarded to a team behind a goal line, the ball is placed on the one-yard line.
j) when any legal or illegal kick is caught or recovered by the kickers, except a scrimmage kick that is kicked from behind the line and is recovered behind the line (not a Try kick). See 9-3-2-Item 3 for exception; or
k) when the defense gains possession during a Try, or it is obvious a Try-kick will not score; or
l) when a touchdown, touchback, safety, field goal, or Try has been made; or
m) when any receiver catches or recovers the ball after a fair catch signal (valid or invalid) has been made, provided the ball has not been touched by an opponent, before or after it strikes the ground; or
n) when an official sounds his whistle erroneously while the ball is still in play, the ball becomes dead immediately;

   1) If the ball is in player possession, the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where it has been declared dead or to replay the down.
   2) If the ball is a loose ball resulting from a fumble, backward pass, or illegal forward pass, the team last in possession may elect to put the ball in play at the spot where possession was lost or to replay the down.
   3) If the ball is a loose ball resulting from a legal forward pass, a free kick, a fair-catch kick, or a scrimmage kick, the ball is returned to the previous spot, and the down is replayed.
   4) If there is a foul by either team during any of the above, penalty enforcement is the same as for fouls during a run, forward pass, kick, fumble, and backward pass. If the team in possession elects to replay the down, the penalty shall be enforced from the previous spot.

A.R. 7.1 Second-and-goal on B2. Runner A1 goes to the line of scrimmage where he is tackled and fumbles. The ball rolls into the end zone when the Referee inadvertently blows his whistle as the ball is loose in the end zone. Defense then falls on the ball.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-goal on B2 (erroneous whistle).

A.R. 7.2 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A2 fumbles a handoff from Quarterback A1 on the A25. The ball is on the A22 when the Referee erroneously blows his whistle.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-10 on A30 (replay).

A.R. 7.3 Second-and-five on A30. During a forward pass, while the ball is in the air, the line judge erroneously blows his whistle. Prior to the whistle Guard A1 held B1 on the A25.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-15 on A20.

A.R. 7.4 A forward pass is intentionally touched by ineligible A1 beyond the line after a whistle sounds. The pass is incomplete.
Ruling: Replay down. Touch occurred after whistle.

o) when a fumble is recovered or caught by a teammate of the fumbling player, and the fumble occurs on a play that is subject to the "two-minute" or "fourth-down" fumble provisions. See 8-7-5 and 8-7-6; or
p) when the ball is out of bounds; or
q) If a loose ball in play strikes a video board, guide wire, sky cam, or any other object, the ball will be dead immediately, and the down will be replayed at the previous spot.

Note 1: If there is not an on-field ruling that the ball struck an object, the Replay Official is empowered to initiate a booth review, even if the event occurs prior to the two-minute warning. If, prior to the two-minute warning, no booth review is initiated by the Replay Official, a coach's challenge is permitted under the established rules for such a challenge.

Note 2: In the event the down is replayed, the game clock will be reset to the time remaining when the snap occurred. All penalties will be disregarded, except for personal fouls or Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls, which will be administered prior to the replaying of the down.

r) when a runner's helmet comes completely off.

Note: The game clock will not stop when this occurs, and the play clock will be reset to 40 seconds. Penalty enforcement following the play is as ordinary for fouls during runs or kicks.

A.R. 7.5 A runner is contacted by an opponent while he is attempting to gain yardage. The contact causes the runner to hit the ground, at which time the ball comes loose.
Ruling: Play is dead when the impact jars the ball loose. No fumble.

A.R. 7.6 Second-and-10 on A30. Offensive End A1 catches a legal forward pass on the A40 where he is stopped by B1, but A1 breaks away and goes back to the A38 in an attempt to break loose. He is tackled on the A38 by B2.
Ruling: A's ball third-and-two on A38. No forward progress is given as he was not stopped before he broke away.

A.R. 7.7 Second-and-10 on A30. Both eligible offensive A1 and defensive B1 leap in the air to catch a forward pass and collide during a legal attempt to catch ball. While in contact with B1, A1 controls the pass and falls to the ground on the 50.
Ruling: Ball is dead at spot. A's ball first-and-10 on the 50.

A.R. 7.8 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 breaks clear and is on the 50 when he slips and falls down. B1 takes the ball from A1's hands when A1 is on the ground.
Ruling: Blow whistle to kill play. May not take ball unless runner is on his feet. A's ball first-and-10 on the 50.

A.R. 7.9 Second-and-10 on A30. A backward pass from the A25 hits the ground on the A20 where a defensive player recovers and runs for a score.
Ruling: Touchdown (8-7-1).

A.R. 7.10 Second-and-goal on B4. Runner A1 gets to the goal line and the ball breaks the plane of the goal line before he is tackled. He then loses the ball and defensive B1 recovers in end zone.
Ruling: Touchdown. Ball dead as soon as it breaks the plane of the goal line in player possession (11-2-1-a).

Article 2 **Ball Touches Official.** The ball is not dead because it touches an official who is inbounds, or because of a signal by an official other than a whistle.

SECTION 3 NEW SERIES OF DOWNS

Article 1 **New Series for Team A.** A new series of four scrimmage downs is awarded to Team A when the following conditions exist:

a) During a given series, the ball is declared dead in possession of Team A while at or beyond the line to gain; or
b) Enforcement of a foul by Team B results in the placement of the ball at or beyond the line to gain, or if the enforcement of a foul awards an automatic first down to Team A; or
c) If there is a change of possession during the down, and Team A has possession at the end of the down; or
d) The kicking team recovers a scrimmage kick anywhere in the field of play after it first has been touched beyond the line of scrimmage by the receivers. See 9-3-2-Item 1; or
e) The kicking team legally recovers a free kick.

Article 2 **New Series for Team B.** A new series of four scrimmage downs is awarded to Team B when the following conditions exist:

a) Team A fails to advance the ball to the line to gain during a series of downs; or
b) There is a change of possession during the down, and Team B has possession at the end of the down, or has been awarded possession at the end of the down; or
c) When the ball is declared dead in possession of the receiving team after a free kick, scrimmage kick, or fair-catch kick.

A.R. 7.11 Second-and-10 on B30. Runner A1 goes to the B25 where he is tackled, fumbles, and defensive player B1 recovers and runs to B28. B1 fumbles and A2 recovers on the B28 where he is downed.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on B28. The ball is dead in the offensive team's possession after having been in the defensive team's possession during same down.

A.R. 7.12 Second-and-10 on B30. A1 throws an incomplete pass. Defensive tackle held the tight end A2 on the line of scrimmage.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on B25. Foul by defense is automatic first down for offensive team unless otherwise specified in 14-1-2-Item 5.

A.R. 7.13 Fourth-and-10 on A30. A punted ball is muffed by receiver B1 on the B35. A kicking team player A1 recovers on the B30.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on the B30. Kicking team recovers kick first touched by receiver beyond line. The ball is dead when recovered by A1 (9-3-2-Item 1).

A.R. 7.14 Fourth-and-10 on A30. Punt is first touched by kicking team player A1 on B35 and then muffed by receiver B1. Kicker A2 recovers on B30.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B35. Illegal touch. It was first touched by the kickers and not the receiving team (9-3-2-Item 2).

A.R. 7.15 Fourth-and-10 on A30. A punt is blocked and rolls beyond the line to A35 where receiver B1 tries to recover but muffs it back to the A28 where kicker A1 falls on it.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on A28. Ball first touched beyond line by receiver (9-3-2-Item 1).

Article 3 Forward Part of Ball. The forward part of the ball in its position when it is declared dead in the field of play shall be the determining point in measuring any distance gained or lost. The ball shall be rotated so that its long axis is parallel to the sidelines before measuring, while maintaining the forward most point.

Note: When an airborne player of either team completes a catch or interception inbounds after an opponent has driven him backward, the ball is declared dead, and forward progress is awarded at the spot where initial contact by the opponent was made after the player established firm grip and control of the ball while in the air.

SECTION 4 ACTION AT OR BEFORE THE SNAP

Article 1 Ball Ready for Play. After the neutral zone has been established (ball is made or declared ready for play), an offensive player may not make a false start, a defensive player may not encroach (initiate contact with a member of the offensive team) or commit a neutral zone infraction, and no player of either team may be offside when the ball is put in play.

Article 2 False Start. It is a False Start if the ball has been placed ready for play, and, prior to the snap, an offensive player who has assumed a set position charges or moves in such a way as to simulate the start of a play, or if an offensive player who is in motion makes a sudden movement toward the line of scrimmage. Any quick abrupt movement by a single offensive player, or by several offensive players in unison, which simulates the start of the snap, is a false start.

Exceptions:
This does not apply to an offensive player under the center who turns his head or shoulders, unless the movement is an obvious attempt to draw an opponent offside.

Note: See 4-6-5-d, for actions by a defensive player who attempts to cause an offensive player to commit a false start.

Item 1: Interior Lineman. It is a False Start if an interior lineman (tackle to tackle) takes or simulates a three-point stance, and then changes his position or moves the hand that is on the ground.

Item 2: Change of Stance. An interior lineman who is in a two-point stance is permitted to reset in a three-point stance or change his position, provided that he resets prior to the snap.

Item 3: Eligible Receiver. If an eligible receiver who is on the line changes his stance, or moves to another position on the line or in the backfield, he must reset prior to the snap.
If an eligible receiver who is in the backfield changes his stance, or moves to another position in the backfield that is closer to the line of scrimmage or to a position on the line, he must reset prior to the snap. (For a backfield player who is moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage, see Article 7.)

Item 4: Player Under Center. It is legal for a player who has taken a position under or behind the center to go in motion, whether he has placed his hands under center, on his knees, or on the body of the center. However, it is a False Start if the action is quick and abrupt. If the player fails to come to a complete stop for at least one second prior to the ball being snapped, it is an illegal shift. See 7-4-8.

Item 5: Shotgun Formation. A player who is in position to receive the snap in shotgun formation is permitted to shift his feet prior to the snap, but any quick and abrupt movement is a False Start. This includes thrusting his hands forward when there is not a simultaneous snap.

Item 6: Attempt to Draw Offside. Any obvious attempt by the quarterback or other player in position to receive the snap to draw an opponent offside is a False Start.

Penalty: For a False Start: Loss of five yards from the line of scrimmage. The foul is enforced prior to the snap.

Note: The official shall blow the whistle immediately. The penalty for a False Start shall be enforced regardless of whether the snap is made or there is a reaction by the defense.

A.R. 7.16 Second-and-10 on the B40. Quarterback A1 bobs his head in an exaggerated manner prior to the snap and draws the defense into the neutral zone.
Ruling: Penalize five yards for false start. Blow the whistle immediately.

A.R. 7.17 Second-and-10 on A30. Offensive team breaks from huddle and all linemen except Tackle A1 assume a three-point stance. Tackle A1 rests his elbows on his knees in a crouched position. After a second, A1 assumes a three-point stance. When he started his move to a three-point stance, defensive B1 charges across line and contacts Tackle A1.
Ruling: Penalize B1 for encroachment. A1's move was legal. Blow the whistle immediately. A's ball second-and-five on A35.

A.R. 7.18 Second-and-10 on A30. Offensive interior lineman moves his feet abruptly after taking a three-point stance to make himself more comfortable. The ball is then snapped and defensive player B1 gets quarterback A2 to fumble and B1 recovers on A25.
Ruling: False start. Blow whistle immediately on lineman's movement.

A.R. 7.19 Third-and-10 on A30. Quarterback A1 places his hands on side of snapper. Ball goes through A1's legs to Back A2 who completes a pass to the A40.
Ruling: Backward pass. A's ball first-and-10 on A40.

Article 3 **Encroachment.** It is Encroachment if a defensive player enters the neutral zone and contacts an offensive player or the ball prior to the snap, or if he interferes with the ball during the snap. The play is dead immediately.

Penalty: For Encroachment: Loss of five yards from the line of scrimmage. The foul is enforced prior to the snap.

Article 4 **Neutral Zone Infraction.** It is a Neutral Zone Infraction when:

a) a defender moves beyond the neutral zone prior to the snap and is parallel to or beyond an offensive lineman, with an unimpeded path to the quarterback or kicker, even though no contact is made by a blocker; officials are to blow their whistles immediately; or
b) a defender enters the neutral zone prior to the snap, causing the offensive player(s) in close proximity (including a quarterback who is under center) to react (move) immediately to protect himself (themselves) against impending contact; officials are to blow their whistles immediately. If there is no immediate reaction by the offensive player(s) in close proximity, and the defensive player returns to a legal position prior to the snap without contacting an opponent, there is no foul. A flexed or split receiver is considered to be in close proximity if he is lined up on the side of the ball on which the violation occurs; other offensive players are considered to be in close proximity if they are within two-and-one-half positions of the defender who enters the neutral zone. If the defender is directly over the center, a quarterback under center, the center, and the guards and tackles on both sides of the center are considered to be within close proximity; if the defender is in a gap, the two offensive players on either side of the gap are considered to be within close proximity (including a quarterback under center, if applicable); or
c) a player, after he has received a warning, enters into the neutral zone. It is a foul, even if he returns to a legal position prior to the snap without contacting an opponent or causing a reaction (movement) by an offensive player in close proximity.

Note: During the last two minutes of a half, after the ball has been spotted for the succeeding down at the line of scrimmage and the offense is legally set, if the ball is snapped before all members of the defensive team are on their side of the line of scrimmage, play shall be stopped immediately, and the defensive team penalized five yards for a neutral zone infraction.

Penalty: For Neutral Zone Infraction: Loss of five yards from line of scrimmage. Foul is enforced prior to snap.

Article 5 **Offside.** A player is offside when any part of his body is in or beyond the neutral zone or beyond a restraining line when the ball is put in play.

Penalty: For offside: Loss of five yards.

A.R. 7.20 Second-and-10 on B30. Defensive tackle B1's initial charge into neutral zone makes offensive guard A1 directly across from him flinch and draw back.
Ruling: Blow the whistle immediately. Penalize B1 for a neutral zone infraction. A's ball second-and-5 on B25.

A.R. 7.21 Second-and-10 on B30. Defensive back B1 runs toward the line of scrimmage as if he is going right over guard A1. He stops on the defensive side of the neutral zone but guard A1 in a three-point stance picks up.
Ruling: Penalize offensive A1 for false start. A's ball second-and-15 on B35. Blow the whistle immediately.

A.R. 7.22 Second-and-10 on A30. Defensive player B1 jumps across the line and contacts offensive player A1 prior to the snap.
Ruling: Blow whistle immediately and kill play. A's ball second-and-five on A35. Encroachment.

A.R. 7.23 Second-and-10 on B35. Receivers A1 and A2 shift positions, and a defensive player B1 charges into the neutral zone and is in the neutral zone at the snap.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-5 from B30. Defensive offside.

A.R. 7.24 Second-and-5 on 50. Receivers A1 and A2 shift positions, and defensive player B1 charges into the neutral zone and makes contact.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on B45. Encroachment.

A.R. 7.25 Third-and-7 on B25. Offensive upback A2 moves abruptly (simulating the snap) when he goes in motion prior to the snap.
Ruling: A's ball third-and-12 on B30. Blow whistle immediately. False start.

Article 6 **Complete Stop.** All offensive players are required to come to a complete stop and be in a set position simultaneously for at least one second prior to the snap.

Article 7 **Illegal Motion.** When the ball is snapped, one player who is lined up in the backfield may be in motion, provided that he is moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage. No player is permitted to be moving toward the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. All other players must be stationary in their positions.

Penalty: For a player illegally in motion at the snap: Loss of five yards.

A.R. 7.26 Third-and-one on the B40. Quarterback A1 stops about a yard behind the center and then moves forward and takes the snap and goes to the B38.
Ruling: Illegal motion. Cannot be moving forward at snap. A's ball third-and-six on B45.

A.R. 7.27 At the snap, offensive back A1 is on the line of scrimmage and in motion along line.
Ruling: A1 is illegally in motion as he was not playing a backfield position.

A.R. 7.28 The offensive Team A has eight players on the line. End A1 on line runs behind line to lead interference and at the snap is three yards behind the line.
Ruling: Illegal motion as end A1 was not playing in a backfield position at the snap. The distance behind the line at the snap is not a factor.

A.R. 7.29 After a huddle or shift, offensive halfback A1 assumes a position on the end of the line and offensive end A2 assumes a position one yard behind the line (no change in their eligibility status). End A2 only in motion parallel to line at snap.
Ruling: End A2 legally in motion as he was playing in a backfield position at the snap.

A.R. 7.30 After a huddle or shift, Halfback A1 assumes a position on the end of the line and End A2 assumes a position one yard behind the line (no change in their eligibility status). Halfback A1 only is in motion parallel to line at snap.
Ruling: A1 illegally in motion as he was not playing in a backfield position at the snap.

Article 8 **Shifts.** The offensive team is permitted to shift and have two or more players in motion multiple times before the snap. However, after the last shift, all players must come to a complete stop and be in a set position simultaneously for at least one second.

If any eligible backfield player goes in motion (one at a time) after the last shift and comes to a complete stop, there is no requirement for a full second pause before a second player can legally go in motion.

However, if the first player has not come to a complete stop when the second player goes in motion, it is another shift and requires another simultaneous stop for at least one second by all players.

It is also an illegal shift if a player under or behind center goes in motion and fails to come to a complete stop for at least one full second prior to the snap, or before a second player goes in motion.

Note: The offensive team must present a legal formation both before and after a shift.

Penalty: For an illegal shift: Loss of five yards.

A.R. 7.31 Team A shifts and comes to a stop for one second. Offensive End A1 then goes out along his line and stops. Back A2 then moves and the ball is snapped less than one second after End A1 stops.
Ruling: Legal play. Movement of End A1 and Back A2 are not simultaneous.

A.R. 7.32 After a shift or a huddle, the offensive players come to a stop and remain stationary. Before the lapse of one second, Back A1, who did not shift or huddle, starts and is in motion backward at snap.
Ruling: Illegal shift. All eleven players must come to an absolute stop for one second.

SECTION 5 POSITION OF PLAYERS AT THE SNAP

Article 1 **Offensive Team.** The offensive team must be in compliance with the following at the snap:

a) It must have seven or more players on the line (3-19); and
b) Eligible receivers must be on both ends of the line, and all of the players on the line between them must be ineligible receivers.
c) No player may be out of bounds.

Note: Offensive linemen may lock legs.

Penalty: For illegal formation by the offense: Loss of five yards.

A.R. 7.33 Fourth-and-10 on B35. On a field-goal attempt, Tackle A1 and Guard A2 lock their legs as they line up. The field goal is good.
Ruling: Field goal good, no foul.

SECTION 6 PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY

Article 1 **Ball in Play.** The offensive team must put the ball in play with a snap at the spot where the previous down ended, unless the enforcement of a penalty moves the ball to another spot or the down ended outside the inbounds lines. If a fair-catch kick is chosen after a fair catch, 10-2-1 and 11-4-3 apply.

Article 2 **Snap at Inbounds Spot.** The ball is next put in play (snap) at the inbounds spot by the team entitled to possession (7-1-1 and 2 and 7-4-1) when:

a) a loose ball is out of bounds between the goal lines;

Exception: The ball is next put in play at the previous spot if a forward pass is incomplete.

b) a runner is out of bounds between the goal lines;
c) the ball is dead in a side zone;
d) the ball is placed in the side zone as the result of a penalty enforcement; or
e) a fair catch is made or awarded in a side zone.

Article 3 **Restrictions for Snapper.** The snap (3-32) may be made by any offensive player who is on the line of scrimmage but must conform to the following provisions:

a) The snap must start with the ball on the ground, with its long axis horizontal and at right angles to the line.
b) It is not necessary that the snap be between the snapper's legs, but it must be one quick and continuous motion of the hand or hands of the snapper. The ball must leave or be taken from his hands during this motion.
c) The snapper may not snap the ball after it is ready for play until all of the officials have had a reasonable time to assume their normal positions. If this occurs, the ball remains dead, and no penalty is assessed unless it is a repeated act after a warning (delay of game).

Penalty: For illegally snapping the ball: Loss of five yards from the line of scrimmage.

Article 4 **Legal Snap.** A snap is a backward pass. The snap must be received by a player who is not on the line at the snap, unless the ball first strikes the ground. If the ball first strikes the ground, or is muffed by an eligible backfield receiver, or quarterback under center, it can be recovered and advanced by any player.

Penalty: For snapping the ball to an ineligible snap receiver: Loss of five yards from the line of scrimmage. The whistle shall be blown immediately.

A.R. 7.34 Fourth-and-10 on A30. The snap first touches the ground and goes off Kicker A1's hands. A defensive player picks it up on the A20 and scores.
Ruling: Touchdown. (8-7-1)

A.R. 7.35 Fourth-and-10 on A30. Snap is high and punter A1 jumps high and muffs the ball, which rolls to the A20. A defensive player B1 picks up the ball on the A20 and scores.
Ruling: Touchdown. (8-7-1)

RULE 8 FORWARD PASS, BACKWARD PASS, FUMBLE

SECTION 1 FORWARD PASS

Article 1 **Definition.** It is a forward pass if:

a) the ball initially moves forward (to a point nearer the opponent's goal line) after leaving the passer's hand(s); or
b) the ball first strikes the ground, a player, an official, or anything else at a point that is nearer the opponent's goal line than the point at which the ball leaves the passer's hand(s).

Note: A ball that is intentionally fumbled and goes forward is a forward pass. A ball that is intentionally muffed, and goes forward or backward, is a batted ball (12-4-1).

When a player is in control of the ball and is attempting to pass it forward, any intentional forward movement of his hand starts a forward pass.

a) If, after intentional forward movement of his hand, contact by an opponent materially affects the passer, causing the ball to go backward, it is a forward pass, regardless of where the ball strikes the ground, a player, an official, or anything else.
b) If, after an intentional forward movement of his hand, the passer loses possession of the ball during an attempt to bring it back toward his body, it is a fumble.
c) If the passer loses possession of the ball while attempting to recock his arm, it is a fumble.

Article 2 **Legal Forward Pass**. The offensive team may make one forward pass from behind the line during each down. If the ball, whether in player possession or loose, crosses the line of scrimmage, a forward pass is not permissible, regardless of whether the ball returns behind the line of scrimmage before the pass is thrown.

Item 1: Illegal Passes. Any other forward pass by either team is illegal and is a foul by the passing team, including:

a) A forward pass thrown when the passer is beyond the line of scrimmage.

Note: It is a forward pass from beyond the line of scrimmage if the passer's entire body and the ball are beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is released, whether the passer is airborne or touching the ground. The penalty for a forward pass thrown from beyond the line is enforced from the spot where the ball is released.

b) A second forward pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage.
c) A forward pass thrown after the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage and has returned behind it.
d) A forward pass thrown after there has been a change of possession.

Item 2: Intercepted Illegal Pass. If an illegal pass is caught or intercepted, the ball may be advanced and the penalty declined.

Penalties:

a) For a forward pass from beyond the line: Loss of down and five yards from the spot of the pass. See S.N. below.
b) For a second forward pass from behind the line, or for a forward pass that was thrown after the ball returned behind the line: Loss of five yards.
c) For a forward pass that is thrown after a change of possession: Loss of five yards from the spot of the pass.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Note 1: Eligibility, pass interference, and intentional grounding rules apply when a forward pass is thrown from behind the line, regardless of whether the pass is an illegal forward pass. Eligibility, pass interference, and intentional grounding rules do not apply if a forward pass is thrown (a) from beyond the line, (b) on a Free Kick play, (c) on a Fair Catch kick play, or (d) after a change of possession.

Note 2: Roughing the passer rules apply on all passes (legal or illegal) thrown from behind the line of scrimmage (12-2-9). If a pass is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage, unnecessary roughness may apply for action against the passer.

Note 3: When a distance penalty in Penalty (a) leaves the ball in advance of the necessary line to gain, it is first-and-10 for the offensive team.

Note 4: See 3-2-4 for the definition of team possession during a forward pass (a loose ball), or for when possession ends.

A.R. 8.1 Second-and-10 on A40. A forward pass is batted back by a defensive player. The ball goes back in the air to the quarterback behind his line. He throws it again to his end who catches it on the B40 and goes for a score.
Ruling: No score. Second-and-15 on A35.

A.R. 8.2 Second-and-18 on A4. A second forward pass from behind A's goal line is caught by offensive end A1 at the A8, where he is tackled.
Ruling: Safety. Safety kick A20.

A.R. 8.3 Second-and-10 on A40. A second forward pass from behind the line is intercepted by the defensive team at midfield. A defensive player returns it for a touchdown.
Ruling: Touchdown. Illegal passes may be caught or intercepted.

A.R. 8.4 A punt is caught on the receiving team's 20-yard line. The player who caught the ball attempts to throw a backward pass, but the ball goes forward and hits the ground. The kicking team falls on it.
Ruling: Illegal forward pass. The ball is dead when it hits the ground. Penalize from the spot of the pass. B's ball first-and-10 on B15 (8-1-2-Pen. c).

A.R. 8.5 A forward pass is intercepted by a defensive player in his end zone. While in the end zone, he attempts to pass backward. The pass goes forward, hits the ground on the one-yard line and is recovered by the first passing team.
Ruling: Safety. Forward pass not from scrimmage in the end zone.

A.R. 8.6 Third-and-10 on B35. A second forward pass is thrown from behind the line to Flanker A1. Defensive player B1 interferes with A1 on the B20, but A1 catches it anyway and is downed on the B20.
Ruling: Double foul. Illegal pass by the offensive team and interference by the defensive team. Interference rules apply on the second forward pass from behind the line. A's ball third-and-10 on B35 (replay).

A.R. 8.7 Third-and-15 on A30. During a forward pass from beyond the line on the A40, offensive player A1 clips on the A40. The pass is incomplete.
Ruling: Choice for defensive team. Loss of down and five from the spot of the pass or loss of 15 from the spot of the pass (unless offensive player fouls behind that spot—spot of foul). A's ball fourth-and-10 on A35 or third-and-20 on A25.

A.R. 8.8 Third-and-15 on A30. During a forward pass from beyond the line on the A40, defensive player B1 tackles A8 by the facemask on the A40. The ball falls incomplete.
Ruling: Double foul (14-5). Replay at the previous spot. A's ball third-and-15 on A30.

Article 3 Completed or Intercepted Pass. A player who makes a catch may advance the ball. A forward pass is complete (by the offense) or intercepted (by the defense) if a player, who is inbounds:

a) secures control of the ball in his hands or arms prior to the ball touching the ground; and
b) touches the ground inbounds with both feet or with any part of his body other than his hands; and
c) maintains control of the ball long enough, after (a) and (b) have been fulfilled, to enable him to perform any act common to the game (i.e., maintaining control long enough to pitch it, pass it, advance with it, or avoid or ward off an opponent, etc.).

Note 1: It is not necessary that he commit such an act, provided that he maintains control of the ball long enough to do so.

Note 2: If a player has control of the ball, a slight movement of the ball will not be considered a loss of possession. He must lose control of the ball in order to rule that there has been a loss of possession.

If the player loses the ball while simultaneously touching both feet or any part of his body to the ground, it is not a catch.

Item 1: Player Going to the Ground. If a player goes to the ground in the act of catching a pass (with or without contact by an opponent), he must maintain control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground, whether in the field of play or the end zone. If he loses control of the ball, and the ball touches the ground before he regains control, the pass is incomplete. If he regains control prior to the ball touching the ground, the pass is complete.

Item 2: Sideline Catches. If a player goes to the ground out-of-bounds (with or without contact by an opponent) in the process of making a catch at the sideline, he must maintain complete and continuous control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground, or the pass is incomplete.

Item 3: End Zone Catches. The requirements for a catch in the end zone are the same as the requirements for a catch in the field of play.

Note: In the field of play, if a catch of a forward pass has been completed, after which contact by a defender causes the ball to become loose before the runner is down by contact, it is a fumble, and the ball remains alive. In the end zone, the same action is a touchdown, since the receiver completed the catch beyond the goal line prior to the loss of possession, and the ball is dead when the catch is completed.

Item 4: Ball Touches Ground. If the ball touches the ground after the player secures control of it, it is a catch, provided that the player continues to maintain control.

Item 5: Simultaneous Catch. If a pass is caught simultaneously by two eligible opponents, and both players retain it, the ball belongs to the passers. It is not a simultaneous catch if a player gains control first and an opponent subsequently gains joint control. If the ball is muffed after simultaneous touching by two such players, all the players of the passing team become eligible to catch the loose ball.

Item 6: Carried Out of Bounds. If a player, who is in possession of the ball, is held up and carried out of bounds by an opponent before both feet or any part of his body other than his hands touches the ground inbounds, it is a completed or intercepted pass.

Article 4 Incomplete Pass. Any forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete and the ball is dead immediately if the pass strikes the ground or goes out of bounds. An incomplete pass is a loss of down, and the ball returns to the previous spot.

Note: If there is any question whether a forward pass is complete, intercepted, or incomplete, it is to be ruled incomplete.

A.R. 8.9 While in midair, a receiver firmly takes hold of a pass, but loses possession of the ball when his shoulder lands on the ground with or without being contacted by an opponent.
Ruling: Incomplete pass. Receiver must hold onto the ball when he alights on the ground in order to complete the reception.

A.R. 8.10 Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is caught by offensive flanker A1 near the sideline. His second step touches the sideline.
Ruling: Incomplete pass. Both feet have to land inbounds. A's ball third-and-10 on B30.

A.R. 8.11 Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is intercepted by defensive player B1. As he lands with the ball in his possession, he straddles the sideline.
Ruling: Incomplete pass. Both feet have to touch inbounds. A's ball third-and-10 on B30

A.R. 8.12 Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is intercepted by defensive player B1 who jumped in from out of bounds to intercept pass. Both feet touch inbounds after interception.
Ruling: Incomplete pass. Both feet have to be inbounds prior to interception. A's ball third-and-10 on B30. See 8-1-8-Note 3.

A.R. 8.13 Second-and-10 on B30. Eligible offensive A1 jumps in air (behind or beyond line) to receive a forward pass and then passes backward to ineligible offensive A2 before he lands.
Ruling: Legal catch.

Article 5 Eligible Receivers. The following players are eligible to catch a forward pass that is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage.

a) Defensive players.
b) Offensive players who are on either end of the line, provided they either have the numbers of eligible players (1-49 and 80-89) or have legally reported to play a position on the end of the line. See 5-1-2.
c) Offensive players who are legally at least one yard behind the line at the snap, provided they either have the numbers of eligible players (1-49 and 80-89) or have legally reported to play a position in the backfield.
d) All other offensive players after the ball has been touched by any defensive player or any eligible offensive player.

Article 6 Ineligible Receivers. All offensive players other than those identified in Article 5 above are ineligible to catch a legal or illegal forward pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, including:

a) Players who are not on either end of their line or at least one yard behind it when the ball is snapped.
b) Offensive players wearing numbers 50-79, unless they have reported a change in their eligibility status to the Referee and have assumed a position on their line or in their backfield as required by Article 5;
c) Players who fail to notify the Referee of being eligible when required;
d) An eligible receiver who has been out of bounds prior to or during a pass, even if he has re-established himself inbounds with both feet or with any part of his body other than his hands.

Exception: If an eligible receiver is forced out of bounds by a foul by a defender, including illegal contact, defensive holding, or defensive pass interference, provided he attempts to return inbounds immediately, he will become eligible to legally touch the pass (without prior touching by another eligible receiver or defender) as soon as he re-establishes himself inbounds with both feet or with any part of his body other than his hands. See Article 8, Note 3.

e) A player who takes his stance behind center as a T-formation quarterback is not an eligible receiver unless, before the ball is snapped, he legally moves to a position at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage or on the end of the line, and is stationary in that position for at least one second before the snap.

Note: If he leaves his position behind the center and does not receive the snap, it is an illegal shift unless he has been stationary for at least one second prior to the snap, or before a second player goes in motion.

Article 7 Legal Touching. A forward pass (legal or illegal) thrown from behind the line may be touched by any eligible player. A pass in flight may be tipped, batted, or deflected in any direction by any eligible player at any time, including such a pass in the end zone. See 12-4-2.

Article 8 Illegal Touching of a Forward Pass. It is a foul for illegal touching if a forward pass (legal or illegal), thrown from behind the line of scrimmage:

a) is first touched intentionally or is caught by an ineligible offensive player; or
b) first touches or is caught by an eligible receiver who has gone out of bounds, either of his own volition or by being legally forced out of bounds, and has re-established himself inbounds.

Penalty: Loss of five yards.

Note 1: If a forward pass (legal or illegal) is caught by an ineligible offensive player, the ball remains alive.

Note 2: The bat of a pass in flight by any player does not end a pass, nor does it change the impetus if the bat sends it in touch.

Note 3: If a player touches the ball after having been out of bounds, but prior to re-establishing himself inbounds with both feet or any part of his body other than his hands, the pass is incomplete, and there is no penalty for illegal touching.

A.R. 8.14 Third-and-10 on B40. A forward pass from behind the line goes off eligible offensive end A1's hands and flanker back A2 catches it in the end zone.
Ruling: Touchdown.

A.R. 8.15 Third-and-10 on B40. On a legal forward pass, eligible end A1 is blocked out of bounds on the B36. He returns to the field of play, catches pass, and scores.
Ruling: No score. The player became an ineligible receiver by going out of bounds. A's ball third-and-15 on B45.

A.R. 8.16 Third-and-10 on B40. On a legal forward pass, eligible end A1 steps out of bounds on the B20. He returns to the field of play and catches a pass after a defensive player touched it. He scores.
Ruling: Touchdown. Legal play as all ineligible receivers become eligible after the defense touches the ball.

A.R. 8.17 Third-and-10 on B40. Eligible end A1 touches a legal forward pass on the B35 and the ball is then touched by ineligible receiver A2 on B35. A defensive player intercepts. He runs it back to the B45 where he fumbles and passing Team A recovers.
Ruling: Legal touch. A's ball first-and-10 on B45.

A.R. 8.18 Second-and-five on B20. A forward pass from behind the line barely touches the crossbar. Eligible offensive end A1 catches the ball in the end zone.

Ruling: No score. The ball is dead immediately upon touching the crossbar (or goal posts). Incomplete pass. A's ball third-and-five on B20.

A.R. 8.19 Second-and-20 on A40. T-Formation Quarterback A1 receives a hand-to-hand snap from center and hands off to back A2 who runs to his right and throws a legal forward pass from behind the line to Quarterback A1. Quarterback A1 catches the pass on the A38 and runs to the 50.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-25 on A35 or A's ball third-and-10 on 50.

A.R. 8.20 Second-and-10 on A40. A legal forward pass touches ineligible guard A1 behind the line. The ball is then intercepted by a defensive player who returns it to the A20.
Ruling: Pass not incomplete when A1 touched by ball. Pass continues in play. B's ball first-and-10 on A20.

A.R. 8.21 Second-and-10 on A40. A legal forward pass is intentionally touched by ineligible guard A1 behind the line. The ball is then intercepted by the defensive team which returns it to the A30, fumbles, and the ball is recovered by the passing team at the A28.
Ruling: Five-yard penalty for touching ineligible receiver behind the line. A's ball second-and-15 on A35.

A.R. 8.22 Second-and-10 on A40. A legal forward pass is intentionally touched by ineligible guard A1 behind the line and is then caught by eligible back A2 who runs to the 50.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-15 on A35.

A.R. 8.23 Fourth-and-two on B4. A legal forward pass accidentally touches ineligible receiver A1 on the B3 and falls incomplete.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B4.

A.R. 8.24 Second-and-15 on A8. A legal forward pass is batted back by a defensive player and the ball lands in the end zone. A defensive player falls on it in the end zone.
Ruling: Incomplete pass. A's ball third-and-15 on A8.

A.R. 8.25 First-and-10 on A30. A legal forward pass is touched simultaneously by two opposing eligible players, A1 and B1. The pass goes in the air where ineligible A2 catches it on the A40 and runs to midfield.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on 50.

SECTION 2 INTENTIONAL GROUNDING

Article 1 **Definition.** It is a foul for intentional grounding if a passer, facing an imminent loss of yardage because of pressure from the defense, throws a forward pass without a realistic chance of completion. A realistic chance of completion is defined as a pass that lands in the direction and the vicinity of an originally eligible receiver.

Item 1: Passer or Ball Outside Tackle Position. Intentional grounding will not be called when a passer, who is outside, or has been outside, the tackle position throws a forward pass that lands at or beyond the line of scrimmage, even if no offensive player(s) have a realistic chance to catch the ball (including when the ball lands out of bounds over the sideline or endline). If the ball crosses the line of scrimmage (extended) beyond the sideline, there is no intentional grounding. If a loose ball leaves the area bordered by the tackles, this area no longer exists; if the ball is recovered, all intentional grounding rules apply as if the passer is outside this area.

Item 2: Physical Contact. Intentional grounding should not be called if:

a) the passer initiates his passing motion toward an eligible receiver and then is significantly affected by physical contact from a defensive player that causes the pass to land in an area that is not in the direction and vicinity of an eligible receiver; or
b) the passer is out of the pocket, and his passing motion is significantly affected by physical contact from a defensive player that causes the ball to land short of the line of scrimmage.

Item 3: Stopping Clock. A player under center is permitted to stop the game clock legally to save time if, immediately upon receiving the snap, he begins a continuous throwing motion and throws the ball directly into the ground.

Item 4: Delayed Spike. A passer, after delaying his passing action for strategic purposes, is prohibited from throwing the ball to the ground in front of him, even though he is under no pressure from defensive rusher(s).

Penalty: For intentional grounding:

a) loss of down and 10 yards from the previous spot; or
b) loss of down at the spot of the foul; or
c) if the passer is in his end zone when the ball is thrown, it is a safety. See 4-7 for actions to conserve time inside one minute of either half.

Note: If the foul occurs less than 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage, but more than half the distance to the goal line, the ball is to be placed at the spot of the pass.

A.R. 8.26 Second-and-20 on A4. A quarterback drops back into his end zone. Just before he is tackled in his end zone, he throws the ball into the ground directly in front of him. A defensive player falls on it.
Ruling: Intentional grounding. Safety.

A.R. 8.27 Second-and-10 on A30. Quarterback A1 throws the ball forward as he stands in the pocket on the A16 to keep from being tackled. The ball lands at the A35 with no eligible receiver in the area.
Ruling: Loss of down at spot of foul as quarterback is more than 10 yards behind the line. Third-and-24 on A16.

A.R. 8.28 Second-and-10 on B20. Quarterback deliberately throws the ball out of bounds to stop the game clock.
Ruling: The pass was not thrown away to prevent loss of yardage. A's ball third-and-10 on B20.

SECTION 3 INELIGIBLE PLAYER DOWNFIELD

Article 1 Legal and Illegal Acts. On a scrimmage play during which a legal forward pass is thrown, an ineligible offensive player, including a T-formation quarterback, is not permitted to move more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage before the pass has been thrown.

Item 1: Legally Downfield. An ineligible player is not illegally downfield if, after initiating contact with an opponent within one yard of the line of scrimmage during his initial charge:

a) he moves more than one yard beyond the line while legally blocking or being blocked by an opponent; or
b) after breaking legal contact with an opponent more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage, he remains stationary until a forward pass is thrown; or
c) after losing legal contact with an opponent more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage, he is forced behind the line of scrimmage by an opponent, at which time he is again subject to normal blocking restrictions for an ineligible offensive player.

Note: If an ineligible offensive player moves beyond the line while legally blocking or being blocked by an opponent, an eligible offensive player may catch a pass between them and the line of scrimmage.

Item 2: Illegally Downfield. An ineligible offensive player is illegally downfield if:

a) he moves more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage without contacting an opponent; or
b) after losing contact with an opponent within one yard of the line of scrimmage, he advances more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage; or
c) after losing contact with an opponent more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage, he continues to move in any direction.

Penalty: For ineligible offensive player downfield: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.

Article 2: After Pass Is Thrown. After the ball leaves the passer's hand, ineligible pass receivers can advance more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage, or beyond the position reached by their initial charge, provided that they do not block or contact a defensive player, who is more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage, until the ball is touched by a player of either team. Such prior blocking and/or contact is pass interference if it occurs in the vicinity of where the ball is thrown.

A.R. 8.29 Second-and-10 on A30. Center A1 blocks his man and drives him to the A35 where he loses contact. He then moves laterally to his right before the ball is thrown and completed to eligible end A2 who is downed on the A45.
Ruling: Ineligible man moved laterally beyond the line after losing contact. Loss of five yards. A's ball second-and-15 on A25.

SECTION 4 LEGAL AND ILLEGAL CONTACT WITH ELIGIBLE RECEIVERS

Article 1 Legal Contact Within Five Yards. Within five yards of the line of scrimmage, a defensive player may chuck an eligible receiver in front of him. The defender is allowed to maintain continuous and unbroken contact within the five-yard zone, so long as the receiver has not moved beyond a point that is even with the defender.

Article 2 Illegal Contact Within Five Yards. Within the five-yard zone, if the player who receives the snap remains in the pocket with the ball, a defender may not make original contact in the back of a receiver, nor may he maintain contact after the receiver has moved beyond a point that is even with the defender.

Note: If a defender chucks a receiver within five yards of the line of scrimmage, loses contact, and then contacts him again within the five-yard zone, it is a foul for illegal contact.

Article 3 Illegal Contact Beyond Five-Yard Zone. Beyond the five-yard zone, if the player who receives the snap remains in the pocket with the ball, a defender cannot initiate contact with a receiver who is attempting to evade him. A defender may use his hands or arms only to defend or protect himself against impending contact caused by a receiver.

Note: If a defender contacts a receiver within five yards of the line of scrimmage and maintains contact with him, he must release the receiver as they exit the five-yard zone. If the defender maintains contact beyond five yards, it is illegal contact.

Article 4 Incidental Contact Beyond Five-Yard Zone. Beyond the five-yard zone, incidental contact may exist between receiver and defender.

Penalty: For illegal contact by the defense: Loss of five yards and automatic first down.

A.R. 8.30 Second-and-10 on A40. Eligible end A1 goes downfield to the B45 and is contacted (chucked) by defender B1 as A1 attempts to evade him. The pass falls incomplete.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on A45. Illegal contact.

A.R. 8.31 Second-and-10 on A40. Eligible receiver A1 is chucked by B1 at the line of scrimmage. B1 then chucks back A2 on the A44 prior to the pass. The pass then falls incomplete.
Ruling: Legal use of hands as A1 and A2 were not the same player.

Article 5 Illegal Cut Block. It is an Illegal Cut Block if:

a) an eligible receiver who takes a position more than two yards outside of his own tackle (flexed receiver) is blocked below the waist at, behind, or beyond the line of scrimmage; or
b) an eligible receiver who is lined up within two yards of the tackle whether on or behind the line, is blocked below the waist after he goes beyond the line of scrimmage (such players may be blocked below the waist at or behind the line of scrimmage).

Penalty: For illegal cut block: Loss of 15 yards and automatic first down.

A.R. 8.32 Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible pass receiver A1 takes a position three yards outside his own tackle and is blocked below the waist at line of scrimmage. The pass falls incomplete.
Ruling: Illegal cut as eligible receiver was more than two yards outside of his tackle. Fifteen-yard penalty. A's ball first-and-10 on A45.

A.R. 8.33 Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible pass receiver A1 lines up one yard outside of his own tackle and is blocked below the waist at the line of scrimmage. Pass falls incomplete.
Ruling: Legal block as receiver was lined up within two yards of the tackle. A's ball third-and-10 on A30.

Article 6 **Defensive Holding**. It is defensive holding if a player grasps an eligible offensive player (or his jersey) with his hands, or extends an arm or arms to cut off or encircle him. See 12-1-6.

Penalty: For holding by the defense: Loss of five yards and automatic first down.

Note: Any offensive player who pretends to possess the ball, and/or one to whom a teammate pretends to give the ball, may be tackled providing he is crossing the line of scrimmage between the offensive tackles of a normal tight offensive line.

Article 7 **End of Restrictions.** If the quarterback or the receiver of the snap demonstrates no further intention to pass the ball (i.e., hands off or pitches the ball to another player, throws a forward or backward pass, loses possession of the ball by a muff that touches the ground or a fumble, or if he is tackled) the restrictions on the defensive team prohibiting illegal contact, or an illegal cut block, against an eligible receiver will end, and a defensive player is permitted to use his hands, arms, or body to push, pull, or ward off an offensive receiver, pursuant to Rule 12, Section 1, Article 5. If the quarterback leaves the pocket area with the ball in his possession, the restrictions on illegal contact and an illegal cut block both end, but the restriction on defensive holding remains in effect.

If a team presents an apparent punting formation, defensive acts that normally constitute illegal contact (chuck beyond five yards, etc.) are permitted, provided that the acts do not constitute defensive holding.

SECTION 5 PASS INTERFERENCE

Article 1 **Definition**. It is pass interference by either team when any act by a player more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage significantly hinders an eligible player's opportunity to catch the ball. Pass interference can only occur when a forward pass is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, regardless of whether the pass is legal or illegal, or whether it crosses the line.

Defensive pass interference rules apply from the time the ball is thrown until the ball is touched. See Article 2 for prohibited acts while the ball is in the air.

Offensive pass interference rules apply from the time the ball is snapped until the ball is touched. See Article 2 for prohibited acts while the ball is in the air and Article 4 for prohibited acts prior to the pass.

Article 2 **Prohibited Acts by both teams while the ball is in the air.** Acts that are pass interference include, but are not limited to:

a) Contact by a player who is not playing the ball that restricts the opponent's opportunity to make the catch.
b) Playing through the back of an opponent in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
c) Grabbing an opponent's arm(s) in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
d) Extending an arm across the body of an opponent, thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, and regardless of whether the player committing such act is playing the ball.
e) Cutting off the path of an opponent by making contact with him, without playing the ball.
f) Hooking an opponent in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that it causes the opponent's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.
g) Initiating contact with an opponent by shoving or pushing off, thus creating a separation in an attempt to catch a pass.

Note: If there is any question whether player contact is incidental, the ruling should be no interference.

Article 3 **Permissible Acts by both teams while the ball is in the air.** Acts that are permissible by a player include, but are not limited to:

a) Incidental contact by an opponent's hands, arms, or body when both players are competing for the ball, or neither player is looking for the ball. If there is any question whether contact is incidental, the ruling shall be no interference.
b) Inadvertent tangling of feet when both players are playing the ball or neither player is playing the ball.
c) Contact that would normally be considered pass interference, but the pass is clearly uncatchable by the involved players, except as specified in 8-3-2 and 8-5-4 pertaining to blocking downfield by the offense.
d) Laying a hand on an opponent that does not restrict him in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
e) Contact by a player who has gained position on an opponent in an attempt to catch the ball.

Note 1: When the ball is in the air, eligible offensive and defensive receivers have the same right to the path of the ball and are subject to the same restrictions.

Note 2: Acts that do not occur more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage are not pass interference, but could be offensive or defensive holding (see 12-1-3 and 12-1-6).

Note 3: Whenever a team presents an apparent punting formation and until the ball is kicked, defensive acts that normally constitute pass interference are permitted against the end man on the line of scrimmage, or against an eligible receiver behind the line of scrimmage who is aligned or in motion more than one yard outside the end man on the line, provided that the acts do not constitute illegal holding. Defensive holding, such as tackling a receiver, still can be called and result in a five-yard penalty from the previous spot, if accepted. Offensive pass interference rules still apply.

Article 4 **Other Prohibited Acts By the Offense.** Blocking more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage by an offensive player prior to a pass being thrown is offensive pass interference. See 8-3-1 for exception for an ineligible offensive player.

Note: It is also pass interference by the offense to block a defender beyond the line while the pass is in the air, if the block occurs in the vicinity of the player to whom the pass is thrown.

Penalty: Pass interference by the defense: First down for the offensive team at the spot of the foul. If the interference is also a personal foul (12-2), the 15-yard penalty for such a foul is also enforced, either from the spot of the foul (for interference), or from the end of the run if the foul for pass interference is declined. If the interference is behind the defensive goal line, it is first down for the offensive team on the defense's one-yard line, or, if the previous spot was inside the two-yard line, halfway between the previous spot and the goal line.

Penalty: Pass interference by the offense: Loss of 10 yards from the previous spot.

A.R. 8.34 Second-and-10 on A30. On a swing pass from behind the line, a defensive player blocks eligible end A1 on the A32 while the ball is in the air. The pass is incomplete behind the line.
Ruling: Defensive pass interference. It is defensive pass interference regardless of whether the pass crosses the line once the ball is thrown. A's ball first-and-10 on A32.

A.R. 8.35 Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible tight end A1 goes across the line at the snap and blocks defensive player B1 on the A35 before eligible flanker A2 catches the ball on the A34. Flanker A2 goes to the A45.
Ruling: Offensive pass interference. Cannot block beyond the line prior to the ball being touched. A's ball second-and-20 on A20.

A.R. 8.36 Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible offensive player A1 touches the ball on the A45 and the ball goes off his hands. Defensive player B1 then blocks eligible A2 and prevents him from catching the ball on the 50.
Ruling: Legal block. The ball was touched. No pass interference. A's ball third-and-10 on A30.

A.R. 8.37 Second-and-10 on A30. On a quick pass over the center, B1 touches the ball on the A35 and it goes high in the air. B2 is about to catch the ball when offensive end A1 shoves him out of the way and catches the ball at the A45.
Ruling: Legal play as the ball was touched by the defense. Interference rules ended when defensive player touched the pass. A's ball first-and-10 on A45.

A.R. 8.38 Second-and-10 on A30. Eligible offensive player A1 and B1 both make a bona fide attempt to catch a pass on the A45. There is contact between them and the pass falls incomplete on the A45.
Ruling: Incomplete pass. Legal play as it was a simultaneous and bona fide attempt by opposing players. A's ball third-and-10 on A30.

A.R. 8.39 Second-and-10 on A30. Tight end A2 blocks B1 on the A35 as the quarterback is looking for an open receiver. A2 then runs to the 50. The quarterback then throws a pass which A2 catches as no one is near him.
Ruling: Offensive pass interference. A's ball second-and-20 on A20.

A.R. 8.40 Second-and-10 on A30. Defensive player B1, beyond the line, has his back to the ball during a forward pass. He makes no attempt to catch it but waves his arms in close proximity to an eligible opponent on the A45, but there is no contact with receiver.
Ruling: No foul. Legal action by defender.

A.R. 8.41 Fourth-and-1 on B4. Offensive end A1 pushes a defensive player out of the way in the end zone to catch a legal pass.
Ruling: Loss of 10 yards from previous spot. A's ball fourth-and-11 on B14.

A.R. 8.42 Second-and-10 on B30. A defensive player pushes eligible offensive player A1 out of the way in the end zone and catches a pass. He returns it to the 50.
Ruling: Defensive pass interference in the defensive end zone. A's ball first-and-goal on B1.

A.R. 8.43 Fourth-and-10 on B15. On a fake field goal attempt place-kick holder A1 stands up and throws a pass to eligible end A2 who pushes defensive player B1 out of the way in the end zone to catch the pass there.
Ruling: Offensive pass interference. A's ball fourth-and-20 on B25.

A.R. 8.44 Second-and-10 on A30. A defensive player clips eligible offensive player A1 on the A45 as he is about to catch a pass. The pass falls incomplete on the 50.
Ruling: Interference is also a personal foul and penalize for both. A's ball first-and-10 on B40.

A.R. 8.45 Second-and-10 on A30. During a pass, defensive player B1 grabs the facemask of offensive eligible player A1 on the A35. The ball is thrown to the 50 where defensive B2 interferes with eligible A2. The pass falls incomplete.
Ruling: Additional yardage would have been tacked on if the personal foul (face mask) was the pass interference at the 50 or if the pass had been completed. A's ball first-and-10 on 50.

SECTION 6 ENFORCEMENT SPOT

Article 1 **Enforcement Spot**. If there is a foul by either team from the time of the snap until a forward pass thrown from behind the line ends, the penalty is enforced from the previous spot. A pass play ends and a running play begins at the instant that a pass is caught.

Exceptions:

a) Pass interference by the defense is enforced from the spot of the foul. If it occurs in the fouling team's end zone, the ball will be placed at the one-yard line, or half the distance to the goal line from the previous spot, whichever is more beneficial to the offense.
b) Intentional grounding is a loss of down at the spot of the foul, or a loss of down and a 10-yard penalty from the previous spot, whichever is less beneficial for the offense. See 8-2-1-Penalty.

c) If there is a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct foul by the defense prior to completion of a forward pass thrown from behind the line, enforcement is from the previous spot or the dead-ball spot, whichever is more beneficial to the offense. If the passing team is fouled and subsequently loses possession after a completion, the passing team retains possession of the ball, and enforcement is from the previous spot.
d) If there is a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct foul by the offense prior to an interception of a forward pass thrown from behind the line, enforcement is from the dead-ball spot. If the intercepting team subsequently loses possession, the penalty is enforced from the spot of the interception, and the intercepting team retains possession.
e) It is a safety when the offensive team commits a foul behind its own goal line.

Note: When the dead-ball spot is normally a touchback, enforcement is from the 20-yard line.

A.R. 8.46 Third-and-10 on A30. During a run prior to an incomplete pass, offensive player A1 holds a defensive player on the A25.
Ruling: Choice for defense. Fourth-and-10 on A30 or third-and-20 on A20 (from previous spot).

A.R. 8.47 Third-and-10 on A30. During a run prior to an intended pass by quarterback A1, defensive player B1 holds flanker A2 on the A45. Quarterback A1 doesn't throw the ball and is downed on the A20.
Ruling: Enforce from the previous spot. A's ball first-and-10 on A35.

A.R. 8.48 Third-and-10 on A40. Defensive player B1 roughs the passer prior to a pass completion to eligible end A1 on the B45. A1 runs to the B40 where he is downed.
Ruling: Personal foul prior to completion of a legal forward pass. Fifteen-yard penalty enforced from the spot where the ball is dead. A's ball first-and-10 on B25.

A.R. 8.49 Third-and-10 on A40. A defensive player roughs the passer as he throws a short swing pass to back A1 who is downed on the A35. The foul is prior to the completion of the pass.
Ruling: Enforce from the previous spot as the usual penalty on a pass. A's ball first- and-10 on B45.

A.R. 8.50 Third-and-10 on A40. Offensive guard A1 clips defensive player B1 as he tries to reach the passer. B2 intercepts the pass and returns it to the A30.
Ruling: Enforce from the spot where the ball is dead. Personal foul prior to interception. B's ball first-and-10 on A15.

A.R. 8.51 Third-and-10 on A40. Defensive player B1 roughs the passer prior to a completed pass to end A1 on the 50. A1 runs to the B40 where he is tackled, fumbles and the defensive team recovers on the B35.
Ruling: Personal foul prior to completion. Enforce from the previous spot and the ball reverts to the offended team. A's ball first-and-10 on the B45.

A.R. 8.52 Third-and-10 on A30. B1 intercepts a forward pass at the B30, runs to the B35, fumbles and Team A recovers. Prior to the pass, A3 cracks back on A26.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B45.

A.R. 8.53 Third-and-10 on A40. Defensive player B1 roughs the passer prior to a completion to eligible end A1 on the B40. A1 goes for a score.
Ruling: Touchdown. Loss of 15 yards on the kickoff. Kick off on A50. See 14-4.

A.R. 8.54 Second-and-10 on A30. During a forward pass the ball goes off eligible end A1's fingers and flanker A2 catches it on the B40. The defensive team was offside.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on B40. Decline foul for offside.

A.R. 8.55 Second-and-10 on A30. A forward pass is caught by ineligible tackle on A28. B1 was offside.
Ruling: Penalties offset. Second-and-10 on A30.

A.R. 8.56 Second-and-10 on A30. A forward pass is caught by ineligible A2 beyond the line. Prior to or during the pass, defensive player B1 strikes A1.
Ruling: Disqualify B1. A's ball first-and-10 on A45 (14-5).

SECTION 7 BACKWARD PASS AND FUMBLE

Article 1 **Backward Pass.** A runner may throw a backward pass at any time (3-22-5). Players of either team may advance after catching a backward pass, or recovering a backward pass after it touches the ground.

Exception: See actions to conserve time (4-7-1).

Note: A direct snap from center to a player in the backfield, a muffed hand-to-hand snap, or a snap that is untouched by any player are backward passes, and the ball remains alive.

A.R. 8.57 Fourth-and-10 on A40. A high snap from center glances off the kicker's hands as he muffs the ball on the A28. The ball rolls to the A25. A defensive player picks it up and goes for a score.
Ruling: Touchdown.

A.R. 8.58 A's ball fourth-and-10 on B20. Direct snap from center on an attempted field goal glances off placekick holder's hands at the B27. Field goal kicker recovers the ball at B30 and runs for a touchdown.
Ruling: Legal touchdown.

Article 2 **Backward Pass Out of Bounds.** If a backward pass goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball is dead (7-6-2-a), and it is next put in play at the inbounds spot. Rule 11 governs if a backward pass is declared dead behind the goal line.

Article 3 **Fumble.** A fumble is any act, other than a pass or kick, which results in a loss of player possession.

Exception: If a runner intentionally fumbles forward, it is a forward pass (3-22).

Item 1: Recovery and Advance. Any player of either team may recover or catch a fumble and advance, either before or after the ball strikes the ground.

Exceptions:
a) Fourth-down fumble. See 8-7-5 below.
b) Fumble after two-minute warning. See 8-7-6 below.

Item 2: Legal Recovery. For a legal recovery of a fumble, see 3-2-7..

Item 3: Out of Bounds. When a fumble goes out of bounds between the goal lines, the following shall apply:
a) If a fumble goes backward and out of bounds, the ball is next put in play at the inbounds spot by the team that was last in possession;
b) If a fumble goes forward and out of bounds, the ball is next put in play at the spot of the fumble by the team that was last in possession;
c) If a ball is fumbled in a team's own end zone and goes forward into the field of play and out of bounds, it will result in a safety, if that team provided the impetus that put the ball into the end zone (See 11-5-1 for exception for momentum). If the impetus was provided by the opponent, the play will result in a touchback;
d) Notwithstanding any of the above, when there has not been a change of possession during the down, and the spot of the ball is not at or beyond the line to gain after fourth down, the ball is awarded to Team B at the spot that the ball is declared dead.

Item 4: Out of Bounds in End Zone. When a fumble goes out of bounds in the end zone, the following shall apply:
a) If a ball is fumbled in the field of play, and goes forward into the opponent's end zone and over the end line or sideline, a touchback is awarded to the defensive team; or
b) If a ball is fumbled in a team's own end zone or in the field of play and goes out of bounds in the end zone, it is a safety, if that team provided the impetus that sent the ball into the end zone (See 11-5-1 for exception for momentum). If the impetus was provided by the opponent, it is a touchback.

A.R. 8.59 Second-and-goal on B4. Runner A1 fumbles at line of scrimmage where ball rolls out of bounds:
a) at one-yard line.
Ruling: A's ball third-and-goal on B4.

b) over end line
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B20.

A.R. 8.60 Second-and-14 on A2. Runner A1 fumbles in end zone. Ball rolls out of bounds.
a) at one-yard line.
Ruling: Safety.

b) in end zone.
Ruling: Safety.

A.R. 8.61 Second-and-14 on A2. B1 intercepts a forward pass on the A20, runs to the A3, and fumbles. The ball rolls into the end zone. A1 picks up the ball in the end zone, is tackled there, and fumbles ball in end zone. The ball rolls out of bounds over the end line.
Ruling: Touchback. A's ball first-and-10 on A20.

A.R. 8.62 Third-and-12 on B22. B1 intercepts forward pass in end zone. Tries to run it out and fumbles in end zone. Ball rolls out of bounds:
a) on B3.
Ruling: Touchback

b) over the end line
Ruling: Touchback

Article 4 **Handing Ball Forward.** No player may hand the ball forward except to an eligible receiver who is behind the line of scrimmage.
a) Loss of player possession by unsuccessful execution of attempted handing is a fumble charged to the player that last had possession.
b) A muffed handoff (legal or illegal) is a fumble, and the ball remains alive.

A.R. 8.63 The ball, moving backward in the hands of offensive player A1, is possessed by offensive player A2 who is in advance of A1.
Ruling: Illegal forward handing unless A2 is behind his line and is eligible to receive a forward pass.

A.R. 8.64 The ball moving forward in the hands of offensive player A1, is possessed by A2 who is behind A1.
Ruling: A backward pass.

A.R. 8.65 Second-and-10 on B30. A ball is handed forward by quarterback to eligible receiver A2 who is behind his line. Receiver A2 muffs ball and defensive player B recovers on the B35 and goes to the 50.
Ruling: Legal advance. It is not a forward pass (3-13.), and it is treated as a fumble. B's ball first-and-10 on 50.

A.R. 8.66 Second-and-10 on B30. A ball is handed backward (no daylight) to ineligible receiver A1 on the B35. A1 muffs the ball and B1 recovers and goes to the 50.
Ruling: Legal recovery. A ball which is handed backward from one player to another (no daylight) and is dropped, shall be treated as a fumble. Either team may recover and advance. B's ball first-and-10 on 50.

Penalty: For handing the ball forward beyond the line of scrimmage: Five yards and loss of down from the spot of the foul.

Penalty: For handing the ball forward to an ineligible receiver behind the line of scrimmage or not from scrimmage: Loss of five yards.

Article 5 **Fourth-Down Fumble.** If a fourth-down fumble occurs during a play from scrimmage:

a) The ball may be advanced by any member of the defensive team.
b) The player who fumbled is the only Team A player permitted to recover and advance the ball.
c) If the recovery or catch is by a teammate of the player who fumbled, the ball is dead, and the spot of the next snap is the spot of the fumble, or the spot of the recovery if the spot of the recovery is behind the spot of the fumble.

Note 1: After a change of possession has occurred, the restrictions in (b) and (c) are no longer in effect for the remainder of the down.

Note 2: The restrictions in (b) and (c) are applicable during the Try throughout the game.

Article 6 **Fumble After Two-Minute Warning.** If a fumble by either team occurs after the two-minute warning:

a) The ball may be advanced by any opponent.
b) The player who fumbled is the only player of his team who is permitted to recover and advance the ball.
c) If the recovery or catch is by a teammate of the player who fumbled, the ball is dead, and the spot of the next snap is the spot of the fumble, or the spot of the recovery if the spot of the recovery is behind the spot of the fumble.

A.R. 8.67 Second-and-10 on B14. On last play of game Team A is behind by 4 points. Quarterback A1 falls back to pass, fumbles, and ball eventually winds up in B's end zone. A2 falls on it.
Ruling: No score. Game over.

A.R. 8.68 Fourth-and-four on B9. Offensive player A1 fumbles (forward unintentionally) on the B9. A1 recovers and goes to the B4.
Ruling: Legal advance as the fumbling player recovered. A's ball first-and-goal on B4.

A.R. 8.69 Fourth-and-four on B9. Offensive player A1 fumbles on the B9 (forward unintentionally). His teammate A2 recovers on the B7 and goes to the B4.
Ruling: Player other than the fumbling player recovered. The spot of the snap is the spot of the fumble (B9). B's ball first-and-10 on B9.

A.R. 8.70 Fourth-and-four on B9. Offensive player A1 fumbles on the B9 and A2 recovers on the B12 and goes to the B4.
Ruling: Other player than the fumbler recovered and spot of next snap is the spot of recovery as it is behind the spot of the fumble. B's ball first-and-10 on B12.

A.R. 8.71 Fourth-and-four on B9. Offensive player A1 fumbles on the B9. Defensive player B1 touches the ball and then offensive player A2 recovers on the B7.
Ruling: Ball is returned to spot of fumble (B9). B's ball first-and-10 on B9.

A.R. 8.72 Fourth-and-four on B9. A1 fumbles on the B9 and the ball rolls out of bounds on the B4 without any player touching it.
Ruling: The ball is next put in play at the spot of the fumble. B's ball first-and-10 on B9.

Article 7 **Enforcement Spot During a Backward Pass or Fumble.**

a) When the spot of the backward pass or fumble is beyond the line of scrimmage, or when there is not a line of scrimmage, and there is a foul during the backward pass or fumble, the Basic Spot is the spot of the backward pass or the spot of the fumble. The three-and-one method of enforcement is used. See 14-3-6.
b) When the spot of a backward pass or fumble is behind the line of scrimmage, all fouls committed by either team, including a foul by Team B in Team A's end zone, are enforced from the previous spot, except a foul by the offense in its end zone is a safety.
c) For enforcement when the offense commits a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct foul prior to the recovery by the defense of a backward pass or fumble. See 14-4-3.

Note: If Team B gains possession in its end zone, and the impetus was by Team A, and Team B fumbles or throws a backward pass in the end zone, and fouls while the ball is loose, the spot of the fumble or the backward pass is considered to be the B20-yard line.

A.R. 8.73 First-and-10 on A40. Runner A1 advances to the 50 where he passes backward. During the backward pass A2 holds on the A45. The ball goes out of bounds on the A48.
Ruling: Enforcement is from the spot of the foul as it is behind the basic spot (14-3-5). A's ball first-and-15 on A35.

A.R. 8.74 Fourth-and-15 on A8. A punt is blocked and the ball is in the end zone when defensive player B1 pushes A1 out of the way to allow his teammate B2 to recover the ball in the end zone.
Ruling: The spot of enforcement is the previous spot as the foul by the defense occurred behind this line. A's ball first-and-10 on A13.

A.R. 8.75 Second-and-10 on B30. Quarterback A1 fumbles on the B32. A defensive player bats the loose ball in flight to the B40 where A1 recovers.
Ruling: The enforcement spot is the previous spot as the foul is behind the line. Illegal bat (12-4-1). A's ball first-and-10 on B20.

A.R. 8.76 Second-and-10 on B30. Quarterback A1 passes backward and a defensive player bats the pass in flight. The ball goes to the B40 where A1 recovers.
Ruling: Legal bat (12-4-1). A's ball third-and-20 on B40.

A.R. 8.77 Second-and-10 on B30. A backward pass or fumble hits the ground on the B35 and a defensive player bats the ball to the B40 where he recovers.
Ruling: Illegal bat of a loose ball. Enforcement is from the previous spot as it is behind the line. A's ball first-and-10 on B20.

A.R. 8.78 B1 intercepts a forward pass in his end zone and advances to his 2-yard line where he fumbles. B1 recovers. During the fumble B2 fouls:

a) in his end zone.
Ruling: Safety. Enforcement is from the spot of the foul as it is not from scrimmage. See 11-5-1 and 14-3.

b) on his 5-yard line.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B1. Enforcement is from the spot of the fumble.

A.R. 8.79 Third-and-15 on B30. B1 intercepts a pass in the end zone and runs it out to the B20 where he throws a backward pass which hits the ground on the B15. A1 recovers on the ground and scores.
Ruling: Legal recovery and advance by A1 (8-7-1). Touchdown Team A.

A.R. 8.80 A backward pass or fumble by offensive Team A on its 4-yard line comes to rest on the 2-yard line. Offensive player A1 blocks B1 into the ball and causes it to cross the goal line.
a) A2 recovers in the end zone.
Ruling: Safety if A2 is downed in the end zone. May advance if he can (3-15).

b) B2 recovers in the end zone.
Ruling: Touchdown.

RULE 9 SCRIMMAGE KICK

SECTION 1 KICK FROM SCRIMMAGE

KICK ON OR BEHIND LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

Article 1 Team A may attempt a punt, drop kick, or placekick from on or behind the line of scrimmage.

Penalty: For a punt, drop kick, or placekick that is kicked from beyond the line of scrimmage or not from scrimmage: Loss of 10 yards from the spot of the kick.

Note 1: This is not considered illegally kicking the ball.

Note 2: The penalty for a punt, drop kick, or placekick from beyond the line is to be enforced from the spot where the ball is punted or kicked when the player's entire body and the ball are beyond the line of scrimmage. This includes either when the player is airborne or touching the ground.

Note 3: A second kick from behind the line of scrimmage is legal provided the ball has not crossed the line.

KICKING TEAM PLAYERS ON LINE DURING KICK

Article 2 During a kick from scrimmage, only the end men (eligible receivers) on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap, or an eligible receiver who is aligned or in motion behind the line and is more than one yard outside the end man, are permitted to advance more than one yard beyond the line before the ball is kicked.

Penalty: For advancing more than one yard beyond the line of scrimmage before the ball is kicked: Loss of five yards.

DEFENSIVE TEAM FORMATION

Article 3 Defensive Team Formation

When Team A presents a punt, field-goal, or Try Kick formation, a Team B player, who is within one yard of the line of scrimmage, must have his entire body outside the snapper's shoulder pads at the snap.
When Team A presents a field-goal or Try Kick formation:

1) No more than six Team B players may be on the line of scrimmage on either side of the snapper at the snap; and

Note: These restrictions do not apply if a team does not present a standard punt, field goal, or Try Kick formation (an equal number of players on the line of scrimmage on either side of the snapper in a tight formation), or if, after the offensive team has assumed a set position, there is a shift, or a player goes in motion.

Penalty: For illegal formation by the defense: Loss of five yards.

2) Team B players cannot push teammates on the line of scrimmage into the offensive formation.

Penalty: For unnecessary roughness: Loss of 15 yards.

BLOCKING DURING KICK

Article 4 The following blocking rules apply during a scrimmage kick down:

a) All players on the receiving team are prohibited from blocking below the waist during a down in which there is a scrimmage kick.
b) Prior to the ball being kicked, the kicking team is subject to the blocking restrictions applicable to the offense, and the receiving team is subject to the blocking restrictions applicable to the defense, except that a kicking team player may use his hands to ward off, push, or pull aside a receiver who is legally or illegally attempting to obstruct his attempt to proceed downfield.
c) After the ball is kicked and goes beyond the line of scrimmage, and until the kick ends (either team secures possession of the ball, or the ball is dead by rule), the kicking team is subject to the blocking restrictions of the defense, and the receiving team is subject to the blocking restrictions of the offense. (For the exception prohibiting a block in the back by the kicking team while the ball is in flight, see 12-1-3 b Note). After the kick ends, both teams are subject to the normal restrictions applicable to offense and defense.

Exception: If the ball goes beyond the line of scrimmage and returns behind the line untouched by the receiving team beyond the line, the blocking restrictions do not change, and the kicking team continues to be subject to the blocking restrictions of the offense and the receiving team to the blocking restrictions of the defense.

d) After the ball has been kicked, and until the receiving team establishes possession, the yardage for penalties by either team should be enforced as for offensive fouls, unless the ball does not go beyond the line of scrimmage, or the ball goes beyond the line and returns behind the line untouched by the receiving team beyond the line.

Note: It is a foul for unnecessary roughness if a player of the receiving team goes out of bounds and contacts a kicking team player who is out of bounds. (12-2-6-c)

KICKING TEAM PLAYER VOLUNTARILY OUT OF BOUNDS

Article 5 During a punt that crosses the line of scrimmage, and prior to a change of possession, it is a foul if a kicking team player goes out of bounds voluntarily (without being contacted) prior to the end of the kick.
If a member of the kicking team is forced out of bounds, or goes out of bounds voluntarily, and does not attempt to return inbounds in a reasonable amount of time, it is a foul for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. (12-3-1-t)

Penalty: Loss of five yards.

SECTION 2 TOUCHING A SCRIMMAGE KICK

TOUCHING BEHIND THE LINE

Article 1 Any touching of the ball behind the line of scrimmage by a kicking team player is legal, even if the ball has crossed the line and returns behind the line.

FIRST TOUCHING BEYOND THE LINE

Article 2 "First touching" is when a player of the kicking team touches a scrimmage kick that is beyond the line of scrimmage before it has been touched by a player of the receiving team beyond the line. If the ball is first touched by a player of the kicking team, it remains in play. First touching is a violation, and the receivers shall have the option of taking possession of the ball at the spot of first touching, provided no penalty is accepted on the play, or at the spot where the ball is dead. First touching does not offset a foul by the receivers; if there is a foul by the receivers that is enforced, either before or after the first touching violation, the violation is disregarded, and the penalty is enforced as is customary.

Note 1: If the receiving team gains possession, subsequently loses possession, and fouls after the kicking team gains possession, the spot of first touching is disregarded, and the kicking team retains possession. Enforcement of the receiving team's foul is as customary.

Note 2: If the receiving team fouls during the kick, gains possession, subsequently loses possession, if the kicking team accepts the penalty, the first-touch violation is disregarded. The ball reverts to the receiving team, and its penalty is enforced from the end of the kick, or the spot of the foul, whichever is less beneficial to it. If the kicking team declines the penalty, it is the receiving team's ball at the spot of the first-touch violation.

Note 3: There may be multiple "first touch" spots, if more than one player of the kicking team touches the ball before it is touched by a player of the receiving team.

Note 4: A Team B player is deemed not to have touched a kick if such touching occurs in the immediate vicinity of the line in an attempt to block the kick.

Note 5: If a player of the kicking team touches the goal line with any part of his body while touching the ball, the ball is dead, and the result of the play is a touchback.

Note 6: The spot of first touching is normally the yard line at which the ball is when touched. If the first touching occurs while the ball is in the air above or beyond the goal line, and prior to the ball touching the goal line or the ground beyond the goal line, the spot of first touching is deemed to be the spot from which the touching player left the field of play, but in no event inside the receiving team's one-yard line.

Note 7: If a distance penalty for a foul by the receivers is enforced, the violation by the kickers is disregarded.

KICKING TEAM PLAYER OUT OF BOUNDS

Article 3 A player of the kicking team, who has been out of bounds, may not touch or recover a scrimmage kick beyond the line of scrimmage until it has been touched by a kicking team player who has not been out of bounds, or until it has been touched by a player of the receiving team beyond the line.

Note: If a player touches or recovers the ball before he has re-established himself inbounds, the ball is out of bounds at the spot of the touch, and there is no foul.

Penalty: For illegal touching of a scrimmage kick: Loss of five yards. If the illegal touching is inside the receiver's five-yard line, in addition to the other specified options, the receiving team may elect to take a touchback.

BLOCKED INTO KICK

Article 4 There is no distinction between a player touching a ball or being touched by it, but a player is not considered to have touched the ball if he is blocked into it by an opponent, provided he is in a passive position and not blocking. A player who is engaged with and blocking his opponent when he contacts the ball is deemed to have touched the ball.

SECTION 3 CATCH OR RECOVERY OF A SCRIMMAGE KICK

KICKERS CATCH OR RECOVER BEHIND LINE

Article 1 When a scrimmage kick is caught or recovered by the kicking team behind the line of scrimmage, the kicking team may advance, even if the ball has crossed the line and returned behind the line. (3-25-4)

Note: If the kicking team catches or recovers a kick behind the line during a try-kick, the ball is dead as soon as it is evident that the kick has failed, and no advance is permitted. (11-3-2)

Item 1: Same Series of Downs. If the ball has returned behind the line untouched by the receiving team beyond the line, and the kicking team catches or recovers the ball, the existing series of downs continues unless the kicking team advances the ball to the line to gain, in which case there is a new series of downs.

Item 2: New Series of Downs. If the ball has returned behind the line after being touched by the receiving team beyond the line, and the kicking team catches or recovers the ball, by rule there has been a change of possession, and the kicking team will be awarded a new series of downs.

KICKERS CATCH OR RECOVER BEYOND LINE

Article 2 When the kickers catch or recover a kick beyond the line of scrimmage, the ball is dead at the spot of recovery, even if a member of the receiving team has first touched the ball.

Item 1: Legal Catch or Recovery. If the receiving team touches the ball beyond the line, a subsequent catch or recovery by the kicking team is legal, but the ball is dead. In the event of such a catch or recovery, it is first-and-10 for the kickers, or if the ball is caught or recovered by the kickers in the receiver's end zone, it is a touchdown for the kickers. (7-3-1-d)

Item 2: Illegal Catch or Recovery. If the kickers catch or recover a kick beyond the line that has not been touched beyond the line by the receiving team, the ball is dead, and it is first-and-10 for the receivers at the spot of catch or recovery (see 11-4-2 for missed goals). If a kick from behind the line is touched by the receiving team behind the line, such touching does not make the kicking team eligible to catch or recover the kick beyond the line.

Item 3: Touchback. If a player of the kicking team illegally catches or recovers a scrimmage kick, other than a field goal attempt from beyond the 20-yard line, and carries the ball across the goal line, or touches the goal line with any part of his body while in possession of the ball, the ball is dead, and the result of the play is a touchback. For a missed field goal from beyond the 20-yard line. (11-4-2)

RECEIVERS CATCH OR RECOVER

Article 3 If the receivers catch or recover any kick, they may advance. For fair catch exception, see 10-2. For exception for a ball that has crossed the goal line. (9-4)

SIMULTANEOUS CATCH OR RECOVERY

Article 4 When a legal kick is simultaneously caught or recovered anywhere by two eligible opposing players, or if the ball is lying on the field of play with no player attempting to recover it, it is awarded to the receivers. (7-2-1-i)

SECTION 4 BALL CROSSES GOAL LINE, TOUCHES GOAL POSTS, OUT OF BOUNDS, DEAD IN FIELD OF PLAY

BALL CROSSES RECEIVERS' GOAL LINE

Article 1 If a scrimmage kick crosses the receiver's goal line from the impetus of the kick, the following shall apply:

a) If the ball has not been touched by a player of the receiving team beyond the line of scrimmage, it is dead immediately, and the result of the play is a touchback, when:
   1) it touches the ground on or behind the receiver's goal line,
   2) it touches a player of the kicking team who is touching the ground on or behind the receiver's goal line, or
   3) it touches a player of the kicking team who has touched the ground on or behind the receiver's goal line and has not re-established himself in the field of play. See 11-4-2 for options for missed field goals beyond the 20-yard line.

b) If the receivers catch the ball in the end zone, or recover it in the end zone after touching it in the field of play or the end zone, they may advance.

c) If the kickers catch or recover the ball in the end zone after the receivers first touch the ball in the field of play or the end zone, it is a touchdown for the kickers.

d) If there is a spot of first touching by the kickers outside the receivers' 20-yard line, the receiving team has the option to take possession of the ball at the spot of the first touching.

e) If the scrimmage kick is a punt, and the ball goes out of bounds in the field of play after being touched by a receiver in the end zone or in the field of play, it is the receiving team's ball at the out-of-bounds spot.

KICK TOUCHES RECEIVERS' GOAL POSTS

Article 2 If a missed field goal or try, or a punt, has touched the receiver's goal post, uprights, or crossbar, the ball is dead in the receiver's end zone, and all customary rules pertaining to punts, missed field goals, and tries apply.

KICK TOUCHES KICKERS' GOAL POSTS

Article 3 If a scrimmage kick touches the kickers' goal post, uprights, or crossbar, the ball is dead, and it is a safety. See 11-5-1.

BALL OUT OF BOUNDS OR NOT RECOVERED IN FIELD OF PLAY

Article 4 If a scrimmage kick goes out of bounds between the goal lines or is lying in the field of play with no player attempting to recover it, it is the receiver's ball at the dead-ball spot, unless the special rules for missed field goals in 11-4-2 apply.

SECTION 5 SPOTS OF ENFORCEMENT

SPOTS OF ENFORCEMENT

Article 1 If there is a foul from the time of the snap until a legal scrimmage kick ends, enforcement is from the previous spot. This includes a foul during a run prior to a legal kick, and running into or roughing the kicker (12-2-10). If the offensive team commits a foul in its own end zone, it is a safety.

Exception 1: Unless the kick is a missed field-goal attempt, if there is a foul by the kicking team, the receiving team will have the option of taking the penalty at the previous spot and replaying the down, or adding the penalty yardage on to the dead-ball spot.

Note 1: The dead-ball spot for kicks that result in a touchback is the 20-yard line.

Note 2: If there is a foul for an illegal touch inside the five-yard line, the receiving team also has the option of accepting a touchback.

Exception 2: Fair catch interference, interference with the opportunity to make a catch, an invalid fair-catch signal, or a personal foul (blocking) after a fair-catch signal are enforced from the spot of the foul.

Exception 3: If the receiving team commits a foul during a kick that crosses the line of scrimmage, the penalty for its infraction will be enforced as if it had been in possession of the ball at the time the foul occurred (a post-possession foul) provided that

the receiving team does not lose possession of the ball at any time during the down. The penalty shall be enforced from whichever of the following spots is least beneficial to the receiving team:

a) end of the kick; or
b) the spot of the foul.

Note 1: If the least beneficial spot is in the end zone, the spot of enforcement is the 20-yard line, unless enforcement results in a safety (14-4).

Note 2: When the receiving team commits a foul during a kick that crosses the line of scrimmage, and there is a first-touch violation by the kicking team, if the receiving team possesses the ball and subsequently loses possession, the ball reverts to the receiving team. Its penalty shall be enforced from the end of the kick, or the spot of the foul, whichever is less beneficial to it, and the violation by the kickers is disregarded (See Section 2, Article 2). If the kicking team declines the penalty, it is the receiving team's ball at the spot of the first-touch violation.

Item 1: The spot of the first-touch violation is not used.

Item 2: If a distance penalty for a foul by the receivers is enforced, the violation by the kickers is disregarded.

When Team B establishes possession of the ball, a scrimmage kick ends, and a running play begins, and fouls that occur thereafter are enforced from the dead-ball spot or the spot of the foul (three-and-one method, 14-3-6).

RULE 10 OPPORTUNITY TO CATCH A KICK, FAIR CATCH

SECTION 1 OPPORTUNITY TO CATCH A KICK

INTERFERENCE

Article 1 During a scrimmage kick that crosses the line of scrimmage, or during a free kick, members of the kicking team are prohibited from interfering with any receiver making an attempt to catch the airborne kick, or from obstructing or hindering his path to the airborne kick, and regardless of whether any signal was given.

Item 1: Contact with Receiver. It is interference if a player of the kicking team contacts the receiver, or causes a passive player of either team to contact the receiver, before or simultaneous to the receiver touching the ball.

Item 2: Right of Way. A receiver who is moving toward a kicked ball that is in flight has the right of way. If opponents obstruct his path to the ball, or cause a passive player of either team to obstruct his path, it is interference, even if there is no contact, or if he catches the ball in spite of the interference, and regardless of whether any signal was given.

Note: It is not a foul if a kicking team player is blocked into the receiver, or the contact is the result of a foul.

Penalties:

a) **For interference with the opportunity to make a catch when a prior signal has not been made: Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul, and the offended team is entitled to put the ball in play by a snap from scrimmage. See 4-8-2-g.**
b) **For interfering with a fair catch after a signal: Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul. A fair catch is awarded even if the ball is not caught. See 10-2-4.**

SECTION 2 FAIR CATCH

DEFINITION

Article 1 A Fair Catch is an unhindered catch of an airborne scrimmage kick that has crossed the line of scrimmage, or of an airborne free kick, by a player of the receiving team who has given a valid fair catch signal.

FAIR CATCH SIGNAL

Article 2

Item 1: Valid Fair-Catch Signal. A fair-catch signal is valid if it is made while the kick is in flight by a player who fully extends one arm above his helmet and waves it from side to side. A receiver is permitted to legally raise his hand(s) to his helmet to shield his eyes from the sun, but is not permitted to raise them above his helmet except to signal for a fair catch.

Item 2: Invalid Fair-Catch Signal. If a player raises his hand(s) above his shoulder(s) in any other manner, it is an invalid fair-catch signal. If there is an invalid fair-catch signal, the ball is dead when caught or recovered by any player of the receiving team, but it is not a fair catch. (The ball is not dead if it touches an opponent before or after it strikes the ground. See Article 3b).

Note: A fair-catch signal given behind the line of scrimmage on a scrimmage kick is ignored and is neither valid nor invalid.

Penalty: For an invalid fair-catch signal: Loss of five yards from the spot of the signal.

Item 3: Muff. After a valid fair-catch signal, the opportunity to catch a kick does not end if the ball is muffed. The player who signaled for a fair catch must have a reasonable opportunity to catch the muffed ball before it hits the ground without interference by members of the kicking team, and regardless of whether the ball strikes another player or an official.

Penalty: For interference with the opportunity to make a fair catch after a muff: A fair catch is awarded at the spot of the interference even if the ball is not caught.

Item 4: Intentional Muff. An intentional muff forward prior to a catch in order to gain ground is an illegal bat (see 12-4-1).

Item 5: Illegal Block. Until the ball touches a teammate or an opponent, a player who makes a valid or invalid fair-catch signal is prohibited from blocking or initiating contact with a player of the kicking team.

Penalty: For an illegal block after a fair-catch signal: Loss of 15 yards from the spot of the foul.

RESTRICTIONS

Article 3

a) If a player of the receiving team makes a valid fair-catch signal, and the ball is not touched by a player of the kicking team, the following apply:
   1) If he catches the ball, it is dead immediately, and it is a fair catch. If he muffs the ball, but catches it before it touches the ground, it is also a fair catch. After a fair catch, the ball is next put in play by the receiving team at the dead-ball spot (or at the succeeding spot after enforcement of any applicable penalties). See Article 4.
   2) If he recovers the ball after it strikes the ground, it is dead immediately, but it is not a fair catch.
   3) If the ball is caught or recovered by a teammate who did not make a valid fair-catch signal, the ball is dead immediately, but it is not a fair catch. The ball will next be put in play by a snap by the receiving team at the dead-ball spot (or at the succeeding spot after enforcement of any applicable penalties).
b) If the ball touches a player of the kicking team, before or after it strikes the ground, any player of the receiving team may catch or recover it and advance. If a player of the receiving team who has given a valid fair-catch signal catches the ball before it hits the ground and elects not to advance the ball, it is a fair catch.

c) If a receiver has made a fair catch, an opponent is prohibited from blocking or tackling him, or causing a passive player of either team to contact him. Incidental contact is not a foul.

Penalty: For illegal contact with a player who has made a fair catch: Loss of 15 yards from the dead-ball spot and disqualification if flagrant.

PUTTING BALL IN PLAY AFTER FAIR CATCH

Article 4 After a fair catch is made, or is awarded as the result of fair-catch interference, the receiving team has the option of putting the ball in play by either:

a) a fair-catch kick (drop kick or placekick without a tee) from the spot of the catch (or the succeeding spot after enforcement of any applicable penalties) (3-10 and 11-4-3), or
b) a snap from the spot of the catch (or the succeeding spot after enforcement of any applicable penalties).

Note: A receiver may make or be awarded a fair catch in his end zone. If there is fair-catch interference or illegal contact with the receiver after he has made a fair catch, the 15-yard penalty is enforced from the receiver's 20-yard line, and the option for a fair-catch kick is awarded.

EXTENSION OF A PERIOD

Article 5 If time expires during a play in which a player has signaled for a fair catch, the following shall apply:

a) If the player makes a fair catch, the receiving team may elect to extend the period with a fair-catch kick, but does not have the option to extend the period by a snap from scrimmage.
b) If the kicking team interferes with a receiver who has signaled for a fair catch, the receiving team will be awarded a 15-yard penalty and the option to extend the period by attempting a fair-catch kick or by a snap from scrimmage.

RULE 11 SCORING

SECTION 1 VALUE OF SCORES

Article 1 **Winning Team.** The team that scores the greater number of points during the entire game is the winner.

Note: If a team forfeits a game, the opponent will be declared the winner by a score of 2-0, but the points will not be added to the winning team's record for purposes of offensive production or tie-breakers.

Article 2 **Types of Scoring Plays.** Points are scored as follows:

a) Touchdown: 6 points;
b) Field Goal: 3 points;
c) Safety: 2 points;
d) Successful Try after touchdown: 1 point (Field Goal or Safety) or 2 points (Touchdown)

SECTION 2 TOUCHDOWN

Article 1 **Touchdown Plays.** A touchdown is scored when:

a) the ball is on, above, or behind the plane of the opponents' goal line (extended) and is in possession of a runner who has advanced from the field of play into the end zone; or
b) a ball in possession of an airborne runner is on, above, or behind the plane of the goal line, and some part of the ball passed over or inside the pylon; or
c) a ball in player possession touches the pylon, provided that, after contact by an opponent, no part of the player's body, except his hands or feet, struck the ground before the ball touched the pylon; or
d) any player who is legally inbounds catches or recovers a loose ball (3-2) that is on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line; or
e) the Referee awards a touchdown to a team that has been denied one by a palpably unfair act.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Note 1: The ball is automatically dead when it is in legal possession of a player and is on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line.

Note 2: If a player attempts to catch a pass, the ball is not dead, and a touchdown is not scored, until the receiver completes the catch. See 3-2-7.

A.R. 11.1 Third-and-goal on B2. Runner A1 goes to the goal line with the ball over the plane of the goal line. He is tackled, fumbles, and the defensive team recovers in the end zone.
Ruling: Touchdown. The ball is automatically dead at the instant of legal player possession on the opponent's goal line.

A.R. 11.2 Second-and-10 on B18. A1 takes the handoff and runs down the sideline toward the goal line with the ball in his outside arm. He crosses the goal line plane standing and gets his left foot down in the end zone with the ball to the outside of the pylon.
Ruling: Touchdown. Part of the ball crossing over or inside the pylon only applies to an airborne runner who lands out of bounds.

SECTION 3 TRY

Article 1 **General Rules.** After a touchdown, the scoring team is awarded a Try in an attempt to score one or two additional points during one scrimmage down.

The Try begins when the Referee sounds the whistle for play to start. The spot of the snap shall be:

a) anywhere on or between the inbound lines, and
b) two yards from the defensive team's goal line.

Note 1: All general rules for fourth-down fumbles apply to the Try (See 8-7-5).

Note 2: The Game Clock will not run during the Try.

Note 3: If the ball has been declared ready for play by the Referee, and the offensive team wants to change the location of the ball, they can do so by calling a timeout.

Note 4: See 9-1-3 for restriction applicable to Team B formation at the snap.

Note 5: See 16-1-1 for exception when a touchdown is scored in an overtime period.

RESULTS OF A TRY

Article 2 **Results of a Try.** During a Try, the following shall apply:

a) If a kick results in a field goal by the offense, one point is awarded. An artificial or manufactured tee shall not be permitted to assist in the execution of a Try-kick. (The conditions of 11-4-1 must be met.) The ball is dead as soon as it becomes evident that the kick has failed.
b) If a Try results in a touchdown by the offense, two points are awarded. If a touchdown is not scored, the Try is over at the end of the play.
c) If the defense gains possession, the ball is dead immediately. The defensive team cannot score during a Try.
d) If there is no kick, and the Try results in what would ordinarily be a safety against the defense, one point is awarded to the offensive team.
e) If any play results in a touchback, the Try is unsuccessful, and there shall be no replay.

A.R. 11.3 An attempted Try-kick is blocked. Offensive A1 recovers behind the line and advances across the goal line or recovers in defense's end zone.
Ruling: No score in either case. The ball is dead as soon as its failure as a kick to score a Try is evident.

A.R. 11.4 During a Try, placekick holder A1 fumbles. B1 kicks, bats, or muffs the loose ball (new impetus) on his two-yard line and it goes out of bounds behind the goal line.
Ruling: Ordinarily a safety (11-5-1). Award one point.

Article 3 Fouls Committed During Try

Item 1: Fouls Before the Signal. If there is a foul by either team after a touchdown and before the ready-for-play signal, it is enforced on the next kickoff.

A.R. 11.5 Offensive player A1 clips after runner A2 had scored a touchdown.
Ruling: Penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot which is the spot of the next kickoff. Penalty is not enforced on Try.

Item 2: Fouls Before the Snap. If there is a foul by the offense which causes a play to be whistled dead prior to the snap, it shall be treated the same as if it had occurred prior to a scrimmage play. The whistle shall be blown immediately. (See 7-4-1). If a foul by the defense prevents the attempt of a Try, the offensive team has the option to have the distance penalty assessed on the next Try or on the ensuing kickoff.

Item 3: Fouls by Team A. The following applies if there is a foul by Team A:
a) If there is a foul by the offense during a successful Try, after the penalty the Try shall be repeated, unless the penalty for the foul results in a loss of down.
b) If the penalty for a foul results in a loss of down, the Try is unsuccessful, and there shall be no replay.

Item 4: Fouls by Team B. The following applies if there is a foul by Team B:
a) If the foul results in a safety, the offensive team is awarded one point.
b) If the attempted Try is successful, all fouls committed by the defense will result in the distance penalty being assessed on the ensuing kickoff, unless the offensive team chooses to attempt a retry after enforcement of the penalty.

Note: If the foul is for defensive pass interference, and it is declined, no distance penalty is enforced on the kickoff.

Item 5: Fouls by Both Teams. If there are fouls by both teams during a Try, the Try must be replayed (14-5-1). Normal enforcement rules for double fouls apply.

Item 6: Fouls After a Try. If there is a foul by either team after a Try, it is enforced on the succeeding kickoff. If there are fouls by both teams, normal enforcement rules apply.

A.R. 11.6 During a Try which is unsuccessful, defensive B1 is offside.
Ruling: Replay at previous spot or one yard line.

A.R. 11.7 During a Try which is successful, defensive B1 is offside.
Ruling: Try good and loss of yardage on kickoff against Team B, or retry from B's one-yard line.

Article 4 Kickoff After Try. After a Try, the team on defense during the Try shall receive the kickoff (6-1-1-a).

SECTION 4 FIELD GOAL

Article 1 Successful Field Goal. A field goal is scored when all of the following conditions are met:
a) The kick must be a placekick or dropkick made by the offense from behind the line of scrimmage or from the spot of a fair catch (fair-catch kick). If a fair catch is made or awarded outside the inbound line, the spot of the kick is the nearest inbound line.
b) After the ball is kicked, it must not touch the ground or any player of the offensive team before it passes through the goal.
c) The entire ball must pass through the vertical plane of the goal, which is the area above the crossbar and between the uprights or, if above the uprights, between their outside edges. If the ball passes through the goal, and returns through the goal without striking the ground or some object or person beyond the goal, the attempt is unsuccessful.

Note: See 9-1-3 for restriction applicable to Team B formation at the snap.

Article 2 Missed Field Goals. If there is a missed field-goal attempt, and the ball has not been touched by the receivers beyond the line in the field of play, the following shall apply:
a) If the spot of the kick was inside the receivers' 20-yard line, it is the receivers' ball at the 20-yard line or
b) If the spot of the kick was from the receivers' 20-yard line or beyond the receivers' 20-yard line, it is the receivers' ball at the spot of the kick.

Note: These options apply only if the ball has been beyond the line.

Exception 1: If there is a missed field-goal attempt and the ball is touched by the receivers beyond the line of scrimmage in the field of play, all general rules for a kick from scrimmage will apply, and the special rules pertaining to field goals in (a) and (b) are not applicable. If a foul occurs during the missed field-goal attempt, Rule 9-5-1 governs.

Exception 2: If a field-goal attempt from anywhere on the field is blocked, and the ball has not been beyond the line, general rules for scrimmage kicks apply, and the special rules pertaining to field goals in (a) and (b) are not applicable.

Exception 3: If the ball has gone beyond the line and returns behind the line untouched by Team B beyond the line, and either team recovers and attempts to advance the ball, all special rules for missed field goals in (a) and (b) are no longer applicable,

and general rules for scrimmage kicks apply. If either team recovers and does not attempt to advance the ball, Team B has the option to take the ball at the dead-ball spot or the spot of the kick.

Exception 4: If the receiving team commits a post-possession foul during the kick, all special rules for missed field goals in (a) and (b) are no longer applicable, and general rules for scrimmage kicks apply.

Note: If the ball has not been touched by the receivers beyond the line in the field of play and goes out of bounds in the field of play after being touched by a receiver in the end zone, it is the receiving team's option to take the ball at the spot of the kick or the receiving team's 20-yard line.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Note 1: If the receivers do not touch the ball beyond the line of scrimmage in the field of play or in the end zone, and the ball bounces back into the field of play after it touches the ground on or behind the receiver's goal line, it is the receivers' ball at the spot of the kick. If the attempt was from inside the 20-yard line, it is a touchback. The ball is dead as soon as it touches the ground in the end zone.

Note 2: If the ball goes out of bounds after it is first touched by the receivers beyond the line of scrimmage in the field of play, it is the receivers' ball at the out-of-bounds spot.

Note 3: If the receivers first touch the ball beyond the line of scrimmage in the field of play or in the end zone, and the kickers recover, the ball belongs to the kickers at the spot of recovery. If the recovery is in the end zone, it is a touchdown.

Note 4: If the receivers first touch the ball beyond the line of scrimmage in the field of play, and without any new impetus, the ball rolls into the end zone where it is declared dead in the possession of the receivers, it is a touchback.

A.R. 11.8 Fourth-and-10 on B35. On a field-goal attempt, the ball is kicked from the B42 and is wide and goes over the end line.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B42. The defensive team takes possession at the spot of the kick.

A.R. 11.9 Fourth-and-10 on B35. A field-goal attempt is kicked from the B42, and is missed and:
a) the ball rolls dead on the B10.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B42.

b) B1 touches and downs the ball on the B10.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B10.

c) B1 fair catches the ball on the B10.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B10.

A.R. 11.10 Fourth-and-10 on B35. On a field-goal attempt B1 catches the ball on the B10 and:
a) returns the ball to the B24.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B24. If the receiving team advances a missed field goal, it continues as any other play. However, if the ball hits the ground in the end zone before it is touched by the receiving team, it is dead and cannot be advanced.

b) returns the ball to the 50.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on 50.

A.R. 11.11 Fourth-and-10 on B30. A field-goal attempt is kicked from the B37 and is partially blocked behind the line and the ball rolls out of bounds on the B5:
a) without touching any receiver beyond the line of scrimmage.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B37.

b) touching a receiver beyond the line of scrimmage.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B5 (the spot of out of bounds).

A.R. 11.12 Fourth-and-10 on B21. A missed field goal is kicked from the B28 and hits in the end zone and bounces back into the field of play to the B3 where:
a) no receiver touches the ball.
Ruling: Ball dead. B's ball first-and-10 on the B28.

b) receiver B1 falls on the ball at the B3.
Ruling: Ball dead. B's ball first-and-10 on the B28.

c) B1 picks up the ball on the B3 and runs to the B10.
Ruling: Ball dead. B's ball first-and-10 on the B28.

d) B1 picks up the ball, runs to the B10, is tackled and fumbles. A1 recovers and is downed on the B8.
Ruling: Ball dead. B's ball first-and-10 on the B28.

A.R. 11.13 Fourth-and-10 on B35. On a missed field-goal attempt B1 touches the ball on the B4 and the ball then rolls into the end zone (or over the end line) where it is declared dead in possession of Team B.
Ruling: Touchback. B's ball first-and-10 on B20.

A.R. 11.14 Fourth-and-two on B10. A field goal is good. B1 punched A2 on the scrimmage line.
Ruling: Option for Team A. Score for field goal or A's ball first-and-goal on B5. See 14-4-9. Disqualify B1. If a score taken, it is 15-yard penalty against Team B on kickoff (14-3-4).

Article 3 **Fair-Catch Kick.** The rules for a field-goal attempt from scrimmage apply to a field-goal attempt following a Fair Catch (a Fair-Catch Kick).

Exceptions:

a) The fair-catch kick line for the kicking team is the yard line through the most forward point from which the ball is kicked.
b) The fair-catch kick line for the receiving team is the yard line 10 yards in advance of the kicking team's fair-catch kick line.

Note: Though a fair-catch kick is not a free kick, the rules for a free-kick formation apply (6-1-3). However, the kicking team cannot possess the ball unless it has first been touched or possessed by the receivers.

A.R. 11.15 On a fair-catch kick from the B45, kicker A1 touches and falls on the ball on the B33 without any receiver touching the ball.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B45 (spot of kick). The clock is started when the ball is kicked.

A.R. 11.16 On a fair-catch kick from the B45, the ball goes out of bounds on the B10:
a) without touching any player.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B45. The clock starts when the ball is kicked.

b) after touching any kicking team player.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B45. The clock starts when the ball is kicked.

Article 4 **No Tee.** An artificial or manufactured tee shall not be permitted to assist in the execution of a field goal.

Article 5 **Ball Next in Play.** After a field goal, the team scored upon will receive the kickoff. See 6-1-1-a.

SECTION 5 SAFETY

Article 1 **Safety.** It is a Safety:

a) if the offense commits a foul in its own end zone or;
b) when an impetus by a team sends the ball behind its own goal line, and the ball is dead in the end zone in its possession or the ball is out of bounds behind the goal line.

Exceptions:

It is not a safety:

1) If a forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage is incomplete in the end zone.
2) If a defensive player, in the field of play, intercepts a pass or catches or recovers a fumble, backward pass, scrimmage kick, free kick, or fair catch kick, and his original momentum carries him into his end zone where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession. The ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where the player's foot or other body part touched the ground to establish possession.
   a) If a player of the team which intercepts, catches, or recovers the ball commits a foul in the end zone, it is a safety.
   b) If a player who intercepts, catches, or recovers the ball throws a completed illegal forward pass from the end zone, the ball remains alive. If his opponent intercepts the illegal pass thrown from the end zone, the ball remains alive. If he scores, it is a touchdown.
   c) If a player of the team which intercepts, catches, or recovers the ball commits a foul in the field of play, and the ball becomes dead in the end zone, the basic spot is the spot of the change of possession.
   d) If the spot where possession changed is inside the one-yard line, the ball is to be spotted at the one-yard line.

Note 1: A ball in the end zone which is carried toward the field of play is still in the end zone until the entire ball is in the field of play (3-12-4).

Note 2: The impetus is always attributed to the offense, unless the defense creates a new force that sends the ball behind its own goal line by muffing a ball which is at rest or nearly at rest, or by illegally batting or illegally kicking a ball (3-17).

A.R. 11.17 Second-and-10 on A6. Quarterback A1 throws a backward pass which is batted by defensive B1. The ball goes out of bounds behind the goal line.
Ruling: Safety. Legal bat and no change of impetus.

A.R. 11.18 B1 muffs a punt on his 5-yard line. In attempting to recover, he forces the ball (new impetus) into his end zone. See 3-17.
a) where he recovers and is downed there.
Ruling: Safety.

b) where he recovers and advances.
Ruling: Legal advance.

c) where kicking team player recovers.
Ruling: Touchdown.

A.R. 11.19 B1 catches a punt on the B4. He fumbles the ball on the B4 and kicking team player A1 bats the loose ball. The ball rolls over the end line.
Ruling: Touchback. See 11-6-1 and 12-4-1.

A.R. 11.20 B1 fumbles after catching a punt on the B5 and it crosses his goal line. Kicking team player A1 recovers while he is touching the sideline.
Ruling: Safety. If it had been a muff (no new impetus or change of possession) and the same situation, it would be a touchback (11-6-1).

A.R. 11.21 Second-and-10 on B20. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass on the B2. His momentum carries him into the end zone where he is downed.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B2.

A.R. 11.22 Second-and-10 on B20. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass on the B4 and his intercepting momentum carries him into the end zone. He then runs it out to the B35.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B35.

A.R. 11.23 Second-and-10 on B20. B1 intercepts a pass on the B6 and his momentum carries him into the end zone where he is tackled, fumbles and passing team player A1 recovers there.
Ruling: Touchdown Team A. Kickoff on A35.

A.R. 11.24 Second-and-10 on B20. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass on the B4 and his momentum carries him into the end zone where he is downed.
a) B2 clipped in the end zone.
Ruling: Safety.

b) B2 clipped on the B2.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B1.

A.R. 11.25 Second-and-15 on A4. Runner A1 fumbles a handoff on his 5-yard line. The ball rolls into the end zone where A1 bats or kicks the ball across the end line to prevent a recovery by the defense.
Ruling: Safety, whether the penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul or is declined.

A.R. 11.26 Receiver B1 recovers a free kick in his end zone. While advancing, he fumbles while still in the end zone. The fumble is on the ground on the B2 where B3 deliberately kicks it.
Ruling: Safety. The spot of enforcement is from the spot of the fumble.

A.R. 11.27 B1 catches a kickoff and makes a forward pass from behind his goal line.
Ruling: Safety. Team A may intercept and advance.

A.R. 11.28 Second-and-15 on A2. Runner A1 is downed two yards behind his goal line.
a) A2 holds anywhere in the field.
Ruling: Safety (14-2-2).

b) B1 holds at A1.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on A6 (12-1-6-Pen.).

A.R. 11.29 Second-and-16 on A4. Quarterback A1 drops back to pass and throws a legal forward pass complete to end A2 who runs for a touchdown. Prior to the completion offensive tackle A3 holds in the end zone.
Ruling: No touchdown. Safety.

Article 2 **Ball in Play After Safety.** After a safety, the team scored upon must put the ball in play by a free kick (punt, dropkick, or placekick) from its 20-yard line. An artificial or manufactured tee cannot be used. See 6-1-2 and 6-1-3.

Exception: For extension of either half, see 4-8-2-g.

SECTION 6 TOUCHBACK

Note: A touchback, while not a score, is included in this rule because, like scoring plays, it is a case of a ball that is dead on or behind a goal line.

Article 1 **Definition.** It is a Touchback if the ball is dead on or behind the goal line a team is defending, provided that the impetus comes from an opponent, and that it is not a touchdown or an incomplete forward pass.

Note: A ball in the end zone which is carried toward the field of play is still in the end zone until the entire ball is in the field of play (3-12-4).

Article 2 **Touchback Situations.** When a team provides the impetus (3-17) that sends a loose ball behind its opponent's goal line, it is a touchback:

a) if the ball is dead in the opponent's possession in its end zone; or
b) if the ball is out of bounds behind the goal line (see 8-7-3-Item 4-a); or
c) if a scrimmage kick has not been touched by a player of the receiving team beyond the line of scrimmage, and the ball:
   1) touches the ground on or behind the receiver's goal line,
   2) touches a player of the kicking team who is touching the ground on or behind the receiver's goal line, or
   3) touches a player of the kicking team who has touched the ground on or behind the receiver's goal line and has not re-established himself in the field of play (see 11-4-2-b for exception for a missed field goal from beyond the 20-yard line); or
d) if any legal or illegal kick touches the receivers' goal posts, crossbar, or uprights, other than one which scores a field goal; or
e) if the kickers interfere with the opportunity to catch an airborne kick or with a fair catch behind the receivers' goal line (10-1-1 and 10-2); or
f) if a player of the kicking team illegally catches or recovers a scrimmage kick in the field of play, and carries the ball across the goal line, or touches the goal line with any part of his body while in possession of the ball. For exception for a missed field goal from beyond the 20-yard line, see 11-4-2-b.

Note 1: If the impetus is a scrimmage kick, and there has been a spot of first touching by the kickers beyond the receivers' 20-yard line, the receivers shall have the option of taking possession of the ball at the spot of first touching.

Note 2: The impetus is not from a kick if a muff, bat, juggle, or illegal kick of any kicked ball (by a player of either team) creates a new momentum which sends it on, above, or behind the goal line. See 3-17.

A.R. 11.30 Quarterback A1 throws a legal pass which is intercepted in the end zone by defensive B1. B1 tries to run it out and is downed in the end zone.
Ruling: Touchback. B's ball first-and-10 on B20.

A.R. 11.31 A punt is caught in end zone by defensive B1 who tries to run it out. He is tackled, fumbles and kicking team player A1 recovers in end zone.
Ruling: Touchdown for A1.

A.R. 11.32 Fourth-and-10 on B35. A1 is touching the goal line with his foot when he downs the punted ball on the one-yard line in the field of play.
Ruling: Touchback.

Article 3 **Ball Next in Play.** After a touchback, the team that has been awarded a touchback next snaps the ball at its 20-yard line from any point on or between the inbound lines.

RULE 12 PLAYER CONDUCT

SECTION 1 BLOCKING, USE OF HANDS AND ARMS

Article 1 Legal and Illegal Block. A player of either team may block (obstruct or impede) an opponent at any time, provided that the act is not:

a) pass interference (see Rule 8, Section 5, Article 1);
b) illegal contact (see Rule 8, Section 4);
c) fair catch interference or interference with the opportunity to catch a kick (see Rule 10, Section 1, Article 1);
d) clipping against a non-runner (see Section 2, Article 1); or
e) an illegal chop block (see Section 2, Article 3); or
f) an illegal crackback block (see Section 2, Article 2); or
g) an illegal low block during a free kick, scrimmage kick, or after a change of possession (see Section 2, Article 5); or
h) unnecessary roughness (see Section 2, Article 6); or
i) roughing the passer (see Section 2, Article 9); or
j) an illegal cut block (see Rule 8, Section 4, Article 5); or
k) roughing the kicker or holder (see Section 2, Articles 10 and 11); or
l) offensive (see Section 1, Article 3(c)) or defensive (Section 1, Article 6) holding; or
m) illegal use of hands (see Section 1, Article 3(a); or
n) an illegal block in the back above the waist (see Section 1, Article 3(b)); or
o) tripping (see Section 1, Article 4(c) and Article 8); or
p) an illegal peel back block (see Section 2, Article 4); and
q) an illegal blindside block (see Section 2, Article 7(a)(8).

Penalty: For illegal use of hands, arms, or body by the offense: Loss of 10 yards.

Article 2 Legal Block by Offensive Player. An offensive player is permitted to block an opponent by contacting him with his head, shoulders, hands, and/or outer surface of the forearm, or with any other part of his body that is not prohibited by another rule.

A blocker may use his arms, or open or closed hands, to contact an opponent on or outside the opponent's frame (the body of an opponent below the neck that is presented to the blocker), provided that he does not materially restrict him. The blocker immediately must work to bring his hands inside the opponent's frame, and as the play develops, the blocker is permitted to work for and maintain his position against an opponent, provided that he does not illegally clip or illegally push from behind.

An offensive player is permitted to use his hands or arms to restrict an opponent:

a) **If he is a runner.** A runner may ward off opponents with his hands and arms. He may also lay his hand on a teammate or push him into an opponent, but he may not grasp or hold on to a teammate; or
b) **During a loose ball that has touched the ground.** An offensive player may use his hands/arms legally to block or otherwise push or pull an opponent out of the way in a personal attempt to recover the ball. See specific fumble, pass, or kick rules and especially 6-2-1; or
c) **During a kick.** A kicking team player may use his hands/arms to ward off or to push or pull a receiver who is legally or illegally attempting to obstruct his attempt to proceed.

Article 3 Illegal Block by Offensive Player. It is a foul if an offensive blocker:

a) Thrusts his hands forward above the frame of an opponent to contact him on the head, neck, or face

Note: Contact in close-line play that is not direct and forcible is not a foul.

Penalty: For illegal use of hands by the offense: Loss of 10 yards.

b) Blocks an opponent (from behind) in the back above the opponent's waist, or uses his hands or arms to push an opponent from behind in a manner that affects his movement, except in close-line play.

Note: The prohibition applies to a player of the kicking team while the ball is in flight during a scrimmage kick.

The use of hands on the back is not a foul when:

1) a player of the kicking team is warding off a player of the receiving team while going downfield under a kick, provided that he does not block or push him from behind; or
2) a player is making a personal attempt to recover a loose ball; or
3) the opponent turns away from the blocker; or
4) both of the blocker's hands are on the opponent's side. (If either hand is on the back, it is a foul.)

A.R. 12.1 Second-and-10 on B30. A2 pushes B1 from behind above the waist at the B25. Runner A1 is down on B15.
Ruling: Illegal block above the waist. A's ball second-and-15 on B35.

Penalty: For an illegal block in the back above the waist by the offense: Loss of 10 yards.

c) Use his hands or arms to materially restrict an opponent or alter the defender's path or angle of pursuit. It is a foul regardless of whether the blocker's hands are inside or outside the frame of the defender's body. Material restrictions include but are not limited to:
   1) grabbing or tackling an opponent;
   2) hooking, jerking, twisting, or turning him; or

3) pulling him to the ground.

Penalty: For holding by the offense: Loss of 10 yards.

Blocking Notes:

1) When a defensive player is held by an offensive player during the following situations, Offensive Holding will not be called:
   a) if the runner is being tackled simultaneously by another defensive player;
   b) if the runner simultaneously goes out of bounds;
   c) if a Fair Catch is made simultaneously;
   d) if the action clearly occurs after a forward pass has been thrown to a receiver beyond the line of scrimmage;
   e) if the action occurs away from the point of attack and not within close line play;
   f) if a free kick results in a touchback;
   g) if a scrimmage kick simultaneously becomes a touchback;
   h) if the action is part of a double-team block, unless the defender splits the double team, gets to the outside of either blocker, or is taken to the ground.
   i) if, during a defensive charge, a defensive player uses a "rip" technique that puts an offensive player in a position that would normally be holding.

Exception: Holding will be called if the defender's feet are taken away from him by the offensive player's action.

2) If a blocker fall on or pushes down a defender whose momentum is carrying him to the ground, Offensive Holding will not be called unless the blocker prevents the defender from rising from the ground.

3) If the official has not seen the entire action that sends a defender to the ground, Offensive Holding will not be called.

Article 4 Other Prohibited Acts. No offensive player may:
   a) pull a runner in any direction at any time; or
   b) use interlocking interference, by grasping a teammate or by using his hands or arms to encircle the body of a teammate; or
   c) trip an opponent; or
   d) push or throw his body against a teammate to aid him in an attempt to obstruct an opponent or to recover a loose ball.

Penalty: For assisting the runner, interlocking interference, tripping, or illegal use of hands, arms, or body by the offense: Loss of 10 yards.

A.R. 12.2 Second and goal on B2. Runner A1 gets to the line of scrimmage and is stopped but A2, who is behind him, pushes him from behind and shoves him over the goal line.
Ruling: Touchdown.

Article 5 Legal Use of Hands or Arms by Defense. A defensive player may use his hands, arms, or body to push, pull, or ward off offensive players:
   a) when he is defending himself against an obstructing opponent while attempting to reach the runner; or
   b) when an opponent is obviously attempting to block him; or
   c) in a personal attempt to reach a loose ball that has touched the ground during a backward pass, fumble, or kick; or
   d) during a forward pass that has crossed the neutral zone and has been touched by any player.

Exception 1: An eligible receiver is considered to be an obstructing opponent only to a point five yards beyond the line of scrimmage unless the player who receives the snap demonstrates no further intention to pass the ball (including handing off the ball, pitching the ball, or moving out of the pocket). See 8-4-1–4 for rules applicable to Illegal Contact with an eligible receiver.

Exception 2: See 8-4-5 for rules applicable for an Illegal Cut Block against an eligible receiver.

A.R. 12.3 Defensive B1 blocks offensive A1 which allows B2 to recover a loose ball.
Ruling: Legal block. Cannot use hands unless it is a personal attempt to recover, but may block.

Article 6 Defensive Holding. It is a foul for defensive holding if:
   a) a defensive player tackles or holds any opponent other than a runner, except as permitted in Article 5; or
   b) during a punt, field goal attempt, or Try-kick attempt, B1 grabs and pulls an offensive player out of the way, allowing B2 to shoot the gap (pull-and-shoot) in an attempt to block the kick, except if B1 is advancing toward the kicker.

Note: Any offensive player who pretends to possess the ball, and/or one to whom a teammate pretends to give the ball, may be tackled until he crosses the line of scrimmage between the tackles of a normal tight offensive line.

Penalty: For defensive holding: Loss of five yards and an automatic first down.

A.R. 12.4 Second-and-10 on B40. Defensive B1 holds offensive end A1 on the line of scrimmage. QB A2 cannot throw the ball and is tackled at the 50.
Ruling: Not a forward pass. Enforcement is from the previous spot. A's ball first-and-10 on B35.

A.R. 12.5 During a pass behind the line (forward or backward), B1 uses his hands on potential receiver A1 who is behind A's line. B1 is not using his hands to ward off A1, to push or pull A1 out of the way in order to get to the runner (passer), or to push or pull him out of the way in an actual attempt to catch or recover a loose ball.
Ruling: Holding by the defense. Loss of five yards and first down for Team A.

Article 7 **Illegal Use of Hands by Defense.** It is a foul if a defensive player thrusts his hands forward above the frame of an opponent to contact him on the neck, face, or head.

Note: Contact in close-line play that is not direct and forcible is not a foul.

Penalty: For Illegal Use of Hands by the Defense: Loss of five yards and an automatic first down.

Article 8: Tripping by Defensive Player. A defensive player is prohibited from tripping an opponent, including the runner.

Penalty: For tripping by the defense: Loss of 10 yards and an automatic first down.

SECTION 2 PERSONAL FOULS

Article 1 **Clipping.** There shall be no clipping against a non-runner. This does not apply to offensive blocking in close-line play where it is legal to clip above the knee(s), but it is illegal to clip at or below the knee(s). If an offensive player's block (legal or illegal) is followed by the blocker rolling up on the back or side of the leg(s) of a defender, it is clipping, including in close-line play. Close-line play is that which occurs in an area extending laterally to the position originally occupied by the offensive tackles and longitudinally three yards on either side of the line of scrimmage. See 3-7, close-line play.

Exception: An offensive lineman may not clip a defender above the knees who, at the snap, is aligned on the line of scrimmage opposite another offensive lineman who is more than one position away, and the defender is responding to the flow of the ball away from the blocker.

Example: Tackle cannot clip nose tackle on a sweep away.

Note: If there is a block from the side, or if an opponent turns his back as the block is being made, it is not clipping if the opponent is able to see or ward off the block. Provided the blocker does not roll up on the back or side of the opponent's leg(s).

a) When a blocker, who is moving in the same direction as an opponent, initially contacts the opponent on his side, and subsequently contacts the opponent below his waist from behind, it is not clipping if the contact is continuous.

b) Clipping shall not be called if an official has not observed the blocker's initial contact with an opponent.

Penalty: For clipping: Loss of 15 yards.

A.R. 12.6 Second-and-10 on B30. B1 is hit from behind, below the waist, at the B25 by A2 throwing his body across the back of B1's legs. Runner A1 is downed on B15.
Ruling: Clipping. A's ball second-and-20 on B40.

Article 2 **Illegal Crackback Block.** It is an Illegal Crackback Block if a defensive player is contacted below the waist within an area five yards on either side of the line of scrimmage, including within close-line play, by an offensive player who is moving toward the position from which the ball was snapped, and:

1) The offensive player was aligned more than two yards outside an offensive tackle (flexed) when the ball was snapped; or
2) The offensive player was in a backfield position when the ball was snapped and moved to a position more than two yards outside an offensive tackle.

Note 1: If there is a broken play, significantly changing the original direction, the crackback block is legal. When the change in direction is the result of a designed play (reverse), the restriction remains in effect.

Note 2: A player who is protected from a crackback block is also a defenseless player (see Article 7).

Penalty: For an Illegal crackback block: Loss of 15 yards.

A.R. 12.7 Second-and-10 on A40. Flanker A1 sets up five yards outside of offensive tackle A2. At the snap, A1 comes back and crackback blocks B1. Contact is made at the A38 behind the offensive tackle's original position. Runner goes to 50.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-25 on A25. Illegal crackback block. Penalize from previous spot.

Article 3 **Chop Block.** A Chop Block is a block by the offense in which one offensive player (designated as A1 for purposes of this rule) blocks a defensive player in the area of the thigh or lower while another offensive player (A2) engages that same defensive player above the waist.

Legal Chop Blocks

A Chop Block is a legal block in the following situations on Running Plays.

a) Offensive players A1 and A2, who are initially aligned adjacent to each other on the line of scrimmage, may chop a defensive player.
b) Offensive players A1 and A2, who are initially aligned more than one position away from each other on the line of scrimmage, may chop a defensive player when the flow of the play is toward the block.
c) A1 is lined up in the backfield at the snap and subsequently chops a defensive player engaged above the waist by A2, and such block occurs outside the area originally occupied by the tight end on either side.

Illegal Chop Blocks

All other Chop Blocks are illegal, including in the following situations:

Forward pass plays and kicking plays:

a) A1 chops a defensive player while the defensive player is physically engaged above the waist by the blocking attempt of A2.

b) A2 physically engages a defensive player above the waist with a blocking attempt, and A1 chops the defensive player after the contact by A2 has been broken and while A2 is still confronting the defensive player.
c) A1 chops a defensive player while A2 confronts the defensive player in a pass-blocking posture but is not physically engaged with the defensive player (a "lure").
d) A1 blocks a defensive player in the area of the thigh or lower, and A2, simultaneously or immediately after the block by A1, engages the defensive player high ("reverse chop").

Note 1: Each of the above circumstances, which describes a chop block foul on a forward pass play, also applies on a play in which an offensive player indicates an apparent attempt to pass block, but the play ultimately becomes a run.

Note 2: Each of the above circumstances, which describes a chop block foul on a kicking play, also applies on a play in which an offensive player indicates an apparent attempt to kick protect, but the play ultimately becomes a run.

Running Plays:

e) A1 is lined up in the backfield at the snap and subsequently chops a defensive player engaged above the waist by A2, and such block occurs on or behind the line of scrimmage in an area extending laterally to the positions originally occupied by the tight end on either side.
f) A1, an offensive lineman, chops a defensive player after the defensive player has been engaged by A2 (high or low), and the initial alignment of A2 is more than one position away from A1. This rule applies only when the block occurs at a time when the flow of the play is clearly away from A1. Example: C and RT on NT on sweep to left.

Penalty: For an Illegal Chop Block: Loss of 15 yards.

Article 4 Illegal "Peel Back" Block. A player who is aligned in the tackle box when the ball is snapped cannot initiate contact on the side and below the waist against an opponent if:

a) the blocker is moving toward his own end line; and
b) he approaches the opponent from behind or from the side.

Note: If the near shoulder of the blocker contacts the front of his opponent's body, the "peel back" block is legal.

Penalty: For illegal "peel back" block: Loss of 15 yards.

Article 5 Blocking Below the Waist on Kicks and Changes of Possession. Blocks below the waist are prohibited in the following situations:

a) By players of either team after a change of possession; or
b) By players of the kicking team after a Free Kick, Safety Kick, Fair Catch Kick, Punt, Field Goal Attempt, or Try Kick; or
c) By players of the receiving team during a down in which there is a Free Kick, Safety Kick, Fair Catch Kick, Punt, Field Goal Attempt, or Try Kick.

Penalty: For illegally blocking below the waist: Loss of 15 yards.

A.R. 12.8 Third-and-6 on B26. B1 intercepts a forward pass in the end zone and runs it out to the B31. During B1's run, A2 blocks B3 low from the side at B28, so that A4 could tackle B1 at the B31.
Ruling: Illegal block. B's ball first-and-10 on B46.

Article 6 Unnecessary Roughness. There shall be no unnecessary roughness. This shall include, but will not be limited to:

a) Using the foot or any part of the leg to strike an opponent with a whipping motion;
b) contacting a runner when he is out of bounds;

Note: Defensive players must make an effort to avoid contact. Players on defense are responsible for knowing when a runner has crossed the boundary line, except in doubtful cases where he might step on a boundary line and continue parallel with it.

c) a player of the receiving team who has gone out of bounds contacting a kicking team player out of bounds during the kick. If this occurs on a kick from scrimmage, post-possession rules will apply if appropriate (9-5-1);
d) running, diving into, or throwing the body against or on a runner whose forward progress has been stopped, who has declared himself down by going to the ground untouched and has made no attempt to advance (see 7-2-1-a, d);
e) running, diving into, or throwing the body against or on any prostrate player either before or after the ball is dead;
f) throwing the runner to the ground after the ball is dead;
g) unnecessarily running, diving into, cutting, or throwing the body against or on a player who (1) is out of the play or (2) should not have reasonably anticipated such contact by an opponent, before or after the ball is dead;
h) a kicker/punter, who is standing still or fading backward after the ball has been kicked, is out of the play and must not be unnecessarily contacted by the receiving team through the end of the down or until he assumes a distinctly defensive position. However, a kicker/punter is a defenseless player through the conclusion of the down (see 12-2-7);
i) using any part of a player's helmet (including the top/crown and forehead/"hairline" parts) or facemask to butt, spear, or ram an opponent violently or unnecessarily;
j) grabbing a helmet opening of an opponent and forcibly twisting, turning, or pulling his head.

Penalty: For unnecessary roughness: Loss of 15 yards. The player may be disqualified if the action is judged by the official(s) to be flagrant. If the foul is by the defense, it is also an automatic first down.

Note: When in question about a roughness call or potentially dangerous tactics, the covering official(s) should always call unnecessary roughness.

A.R. 12.9 Third-and-20 on A30. Runner A1 runs to the A33, where he is tackled by B1, who hooks his fingers under the front of the runner's helmet, but not his facemask, and forcibly twists his head.
Ruling: 15 yards for unnecessary roughness. It is an automatic first down. A's ball first-and-10 on A48.

Article 7 Players in a Defenseless Posture. It is a foul if a player initiates unnecessary contact against a player who is in a defenseless posture.

a) Players in a defenseless posture are:
   1) A player in the act of or just after throwing a pass (passing posture);
   2) A receiver attempting to catch a pass; or who has completed a catch and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a runner. If the receiver/runner is capable of avoiding or warding off the impending contact of an opponent, he is no longer a defenseless player;
   3) A runner already in the grasp of a tackler and whose forward progress has been stopped;
   4) A kickoff or punt returner attempting to field a kick in the air;
   5) A player on the ground;
   6) A kicker/punter during the kick or during the return (Also see Article 6(h) for additional restrictions against a kicker/punter);
   7) A quarterback at any time after a change of possession (Also see Article 9(f) for additional restrictions against a quarterback after a change of possession);
   8) A player who receives a "blindside" block when the path of the offensive blocker is toward or parallel to his own end line, and he approaches the opponent from behind or from the side, and
   9) A player who is protected from an illegal crackback block (see Article 2);
   10) The offensive player who attempts a snap during a Field Goal attempt or a Try Kick.

b) Prohibited contact against a player who is in a defenseless posture is:
   1) Forcibly hitting the defenseless player's head or neck area with the helmet, facemask, forearm, or shoulder, even if the initial contact is lower than the player's neck, and regardless of whether the defensive player also uses his arms to tackle the defenseless player by encircling or grasping him; or
   2) Lowering the head and making forcible contact with the top/crown or forehead/"hairline" parts of the helmet against any part of the defenseless player's body; or
   3) Illegally launching into a defenseless opponent. It is an illegal launch if a player (i) leaves both feet prior to contact to spring forward and upward into his opponent, and (ii) uses any part of his helmet (including the top/crown and forehead/"hairline" parts) to initiate forcible contact against any part of his opponent's body. (This does not apply to contact against a runner, unless the runner is still considered to be a defenseless player, as defined in Article 7.)

Note 1: The provisions of (b) do not prohibit incidental contact by the mask or helmet in the course of a conventional tackle or block on an opponent.

Note 2: A player who initiates contact against a defenseless opponent is responsible for avoiding an illegal act. This includes illegal contact that may occur during the process of attempting to dislodge the ball from an opponent. A standard of strict liability applies for any contact against a defenseless opponent, even if the opponent is an airborne player who is returning to the ground or whose body position is otherwise in motion, and irrespective of any acts by the defenseless opponent, such as ducking his head or curling up his body in anticipation of contact.

Penalty: For unnecessary roughness: Loss of 15 yards and an automatic first down. The player may be disqualified if the action is judged by the official(s) to be flagrant.

Article 8 Initiating Contact with the Crown of the Helmet. It is a foul if a runner or tackler initiates forcible contact by delivering a blow with the top/crown of his helmet against an opponent when both players are clearly outside the tackle box (an area extending from tackle to tackle and from three yards beyond the line of scrimmage to the offensive team's end line). Incidental contact by the helmet of a runner or tackler against an opponent shall not be a foul.

Note: The tackle box no longer exists once the ball leaves the tackle box.

Penalty: Loss of 15 yards. If the foul is by the defense, it is also an automatic first down. The player may be disqualified if the action is flagrant.

Article 9 Roughing the Passer. Because the act of passing often puts the quarterback (or any other player attempting a pass) in a position where he is particularly vulnerable to injury, special rules against roughing the passer apply. The Referee has principal responsibility for enforcing these rules. Any physical acts against a player who is in a passing posture (i.e. before, during, or after a pass) which, in the Referee's judgment, are unwarranted by the circumstances of the play will be called as fouls. The Referee will be guided by the following principles:

a) Roughing will be called if, in the Referee's judgment, a pass rusher clearly should have known that the ball had already left the passer's hand before contact was made; pass rushers are responsible for being aware of the position of the ball in passing situations; the Referee will use the release of the ball from the passer's hand as his guideline that the passer is now fully protected; once a pass has been released by a passer, a rushing defender may make direct contact with the passer only up through the rusher's first step after such release (prior to second step hitting the ground); thereafter the rusher must be making an attempt to avoid contact and must not continue to "drive through" or otherwise forcibly contact the passer; incidental or inadvertent contact by a player who is easing up or being blocked into the passer will not be considered significant.

b) A rushing defender is prohibited from committing such intimidating and punishing acts as "stuffing" a passer into the ground or unnecessarily wrestling or driving him down after the passer has thrown the ball, even if the rusher makes his initial contact with the passer within the one-step limitation provided for in (a) above. When tackling a passer who is in a defenseless posture (e.g., during or just after throwing a pass), a defensive player must not unnecessarily or violently throw him down and land on top of him with all or most of the defender's weight. Instead, the defensive player must strive to wrap up the passer with the defensive player's arms.
c) In covering the passer position, Referees will be particularly alert to fouls in which defenders impermissibly use the helmet and/or facemask to hit the passer, or use hands, arms, or other parts of the body to hit the passer forcibly in the head or neck area (see also the other unnecessary roughness rules covering these subjects). A defensive player must not use his helmet against a passer who is in a defenseless posture—for example, (1) forcibly hitting the passer's head or neck area with the helmet or facemask, even if the initial contact of the defender's helmet or facemask is lower than the passer's neck, and regardless of whether the defensive player also uses his arms to tackle the passer by encircling or grasping him; or (2) lowering the head and making forcible contact with the top/crown or forehead/"hairline" parts of the helmet against any part of the passer's body. This rule does not prohibit incidental contact by the mask or non-crown parts of the helmet in the course of a conventional tackle on a passer.
d) A defensive player is prohibited from clubbing the arm of a passer during a pass or just after a pass has been thrown; however, a defensive player may grasp, pull, or otherwise make normal contact with a passer's arm in attempting to tackle him;
e) A rushing defender is prohibited from forcibly hitting in the knee area or below a passer who has one or both feet on the ground, even if the initial contact is above the knee. It is not a foul if the defender is blocked (or fouled) into the passer and has no opportunity to avoid him;

Note 1: A defender cannot initiate a roll or lunge and forcibly hit the passer in the knee area or below, even if he is being contacted by another player.

Note 2: It is not a foul if the defender swipes, wraps, or grabs a passer in the knee area or below in an attempt to tackle him.

f) A passer who is standing still or fading backward after the ball has left his hand is obviously out of the play and must not be unnecessarily contacted by an opponent through the end of the down or until the passer becomes a blocker, or a runner, or, in the event of a change of possession during the down, until he assumes a distinctly defensive position. However, at any time after the change of possession, it is a foul if:
   1) an opponent forcibly hits the quarterback's head or neck area with his helmet, facemask, forearm, or shoulder, or
   2) if an opponent lowers his head and makes forcible contact with the top/crown or forehead/"hairline" parts of his helmet against any part of the quarterback's body. This provision (ii) does not prohibit incidental contact by the mask or the helmet in the course of a conventional block.
g) When the passer goes outside the pocket area and either continues moving with the ball (without attempting to advance the ball as a runner) or throws while on the run, he loses the protection of the one-step rule provided for in (a) above, and the protection against a low hit provided for in (e) above, but he remains covered by all the other special protections afforded to a passer in the pocket (b, c, d, f, and g), as well as the regular unnecessary roughness rules applicable to all player positions. If the passer stops behind the line and clearly establishes a passing posture, he will then be covered by all of the special protections for passers.
h) The Referee must blow the play dead as soon as the passer is clearly in the grasp and control of any tackler behind the line, and the passer's safety is in jeopardy;

Penalty: For Roughing the Passer: Loss of 15 yards and an automatic first down; disqualification if flagrant.

Note 1: When in doubt about a roughness call or potentially dangerous tactic against the quarterback, the Referee should always call roughing the passer.

Note 2: See 8-6-1-c–d for personal fouls prior to completion or interception.

Article 10 Roughing/Running into the Kicker. No defensive player may run into or rough a kicker who kicks from behind the line unless such contact:
a) is incidental to and occurs after the defender has touched the kick in flight;
b) is caused by the kicker's own motions;
c) occurs during a quick kick or a rugby-style kick;
d) occurs during or after a run behind the line;
e) occurs after the kicker recovers a loose ball on the ground; or
f) occurs because a defender is pushed or blocked (causing a change of direction) into the kicker; or
g) is the result of a foul by an opponent.

Item 1: Roughing the kicker. It is a foul for roughing the kicker if a defensive player:
a) contacts the plant leg of the kicker while his kicking leg is still in the air; or
b) slides into or contacts the kicker when both of the kicker's feet are on the ground. It is not a foul if the contact is not severe, or if the kicker returns both feet to the ground prior to the contact and falls over a defender on the ground.

Note: When in doubt, it is a foul for roughing the kicker.

Item 2: Running into the Kicker. It is a foul for running into the kicker if a defensive player:
a) contacts the kicking foot of the kicker, even if the kicker is airborne when the contact occurs; or

b) slides under the kicker, preventing him from returning both feet to the ground.

Penalties:

1) **For roughing the kicker: Loss of 15 yards from the previous spot (personal foul) and an automatic first down. The player may be disqualified if the action is flagrant.**
2) **For running into the kicker: Loss of five yards from the previous spot (not a personal foul). There is not an automatic first down.**

A.R. 12.10 Kicker A1 in punt formation muffs a snap. He recovers on the ground and then kicks. A1 is run into, blocked, or tackled by B1 who had started his action when A1 first recovered.
Ruling: Legal action by B1.

A.R. 12.11 Fourth-and-12 on B30. On a field-goal attempt which is not good, receiver B1 runs into the kicker without touching the ball.
Ruling: A's ball fourth-and-7 on B25. Running into the kicker. If the field goal had been good, no penalty would be enforced on the succeeding kickoff, since it was not a personal foul.

Article 11 Roughing the Holder. It is a foul for roughing the holder if a defensive player forcibly contacts the holder of a place kick, unless the contact:

a) is incidental and occurs after the defender has touched the kick in flight;
b) is caused because a defender is blocked into the holder; or
c) occurs after the holder recovers a ball that has touched the ground.

Penalty: For roughing the holder: Loss of 15 yards from the previous spot (personal foul) and an automatic first down. The player may be disqualified is the action is flagrant.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Note 1: Any unnecessary roughness committed by defensive players is roughing the kicker or holder. The severity of the contact and the potential for injury are to be considered.

Note 2: When two defensive players are making a bona fide attempt to block a kick from scrimmage (punt, drop kick, and/or placekick), and one of them runs into the kicker or holder after the ball has left the kicker's foot at the same instant the second player blocks the kick, the foul for running into the kicker or holder shall not be enforced, unless in the judgment of the Referee, the player running into the kicker or holder was clearly the direct cause of the kick being blocked.

Article 12 Striking, Kicking, or Kneeing Opponents. All players are prohibited from:

a) striking an opponent with his fists;
b) kicking or kneeing an opponent; or
c) striking, swinging at, or clubbing the head, neck, or face of an opponent with the wrist(s), arm(s), elbow(s), or hand(s).

Exceptions: Contact to the head, neck, or face of an opponent with the palm of the hand is permitted by a defensive player:

1) who is attempting to ward off an offensive player at the line of scrimmage, provided that it is not a repeated act against the same opponent during any one contact; or
2) in a personal attempt to recover a loose ball.

Penalty: For fouls in (a) through (c): Loss of 15 yards. If any of the fouls is judged by the official(s) to be flagrant, the offender may be disqualified as long as the entire action is observed by the official(s). If the foul is by the defense, it is also an automatic first down.

Article 13 Striking With Forearms or Elbows. A player in blocking shall not strike an opponent below the shoulders with his forearm or elbows by turning the trunk of his body at the waist, pivoting, or in any other way that is clearly unnecessary.

Penalty: For striking an opponent below the shoulders with the forearm or elbow: Loss of 15 yards. If the foul is by the defense, it is also an automatic first down.

A.R. 12.12 Second-and-10 on A30. Defensive player B1, on his initial charge, head slaps an offensive tackle on the helmet once with his open hand trying to get at runner A1. A1 is downed on the A35.
Ruling: Illegal. A's ball first-and-10 on the 50.

A.R. 12.13 Second-and-10 on A30. Defensive player B1, on his initial charge, head slaps an offensive tackle on his helmet repeatedly with his open hand in trying to get at a runner. The runner is downed on the A35.
Ruling: Illegal. Loss of 15 yards. A's ball first-and-10 on the 50.

Article 14 Twisting, Pulling, or Turning the Facemask. No player shall grasp and control, twist, turn, push, or pull the facemask of an opponent in any direction.

Note: If a player grasps an opponent's facemask, he must immediately release it. If he does not immediately release it and controls his opponent, it is a foul.

Penalty: For twisting, turning, pushing, pulling, or controlling the mask: Loss of 15 yards. The player may be disqualified if the action is flagrant. If the foul is by the defense, it is also an automatic first down.

A.R. 12.14 Third-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 runs to the A33, where he is tackled by B1, who incidentally grasps A1's facemask on the tackle, but it is not a twist, turn, or pull.
Ruling: A's ball, fourth-and-seven, on A33. No Foul.

Article 15 Horse-Collar Tackle. No player shall grab the inside collar of the back or the side of the shoulder pads or jersey, and pull the runner toward the ground. This does not apply to a runner who is in the tackle box or to a quarterback who is in the pocket.

Note: It is not necessary for a player to pull the runner completely to the ground in order for the act to be illegal. If his knees are buckled by the action, it is a foul, even if the runner is not pulled completely to the ground.

Penalty: For a Horse-Collar Tackle: Loss of 15 yards and an automatic first down.

Article 16 Use of Helmet as a Weapon. A player may not use a helmet that is no longer worn by anyone as a weapon to strike, swing at, or throw at an opponent.

Penalty: For illegal use of a helmet as a weapon: Loss of 15 yards and automatic disqualification. If the foul is by the defense, it is also an automatic first down.

Article 17 Illegal Cut Block. See 8-4-5.

SECTION 3 UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Article 1 Prohibited Acts. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct. This applies to any act which is contrary to the generally understood principles of sportsmanship. Such acts specifically include, among others:

a) Throwing a punch, or a forearm, or kicking at an opponent, even though no contact is made.
b) Using abusive, threatening, or insulting language or gestures to opponents, teammates, officials, or representatives of the League.
c) Using baiting or taunting acts or words that engender ill will between teams.
d) Prolonged or excessive celebrations or demonstrations by an individual player. Players are prohibited from engaging in any celebrations or demonstrations while on the ground. A celebration or demonstration shall be deemed excessive or prolonged if a player continues to celebrate or demonstrate after a warning from an official.
e) Two or more players engaging in prolonged, excessive, premeditated, or choreographed celebrations or demonstrations.
f) Possession or use of foreign or extraneous object(s) that are not part of the uniform during the game on the field or the sideline.
g) Using the ball or any other object including pylons, goal posts, or crossbars, as a prop.
h) Unnecessary physical contact with a game official.
i) Removal of his helmet by a player in the field of play or the end zone during a celebration or demonstration, or during a confrontation with a game official or any other player.

Exceptions: It is not a foul if:
(1) a timeout has been called for reasons of injury, television break, or charged team timeout; or
(2) it is between periods.

Note 1: Under no condition is an official to allow a player to shove, push, or strike him in an offensive, disrespectful, or unsportsmanlike manner. Any such action must be reported to the Commissioner.

Penalty: (for a through i): Loss of 15 yards from the succeeding spot or whatever spot the Referee, after consulting with the crew, deems equitable. If the foul is by the defense, it is also an automatic first down.

Note 2: Violations of (b) or (c) (above), which occur before or during the game, may result in disqualification in addition to the yardage penalty. Any violations at the game site on the day of the game, including postgame, may result in discipline by the Commissioner. Any violation of (g) above may result in disqualification and also will include discipline by the Commissioner. An official must see the entire action for a player to be disqualified.

Note 3: Violations of (b) will be penalized if any of the acts are committed directly at an opponent. These acts include, but are not limited to: sack dances; home run swing; incredible hulk; spiking the ball; spinning the ball; throwing or shoving the ball; pointing; pointing the ball; verbal taunting; military salute; standing over an opponent (prolonged and with provocation); or dancing.

Note 4: Violations of (c) will be penalized if any of the acts occur anywhere on the field. These acts include, but are not limited to: throat slash; machine-gun salute; sexually-suggestive gestures; prolonged gyrations; or stomping on a team logo.

Note 5: Violations of (d) will be penalized if they occur anywhere on the field other than the bench area.

Note 6: If any foreign object(s) are deemed a safety hazard by the game officials, in addition to a yardage penalty, the player will be subject to ejection from the game, whether he uses the object or not.

j) Using acts or words by the defensive team that are designed to disconcert an offensive team at the snap. An official must blow his whistle immediately to stop play.
k) Concealing the ball underneath the uniform or using any article of equipment to simulate a ball.
l) Using entering substitutes, legally returning players, substitutes on sidelines, or withdrawn players to confuse opponents, including lingering by players leaving the field after being replaced by a substitute and an offensive player lining up or going in motion less than five yards from the sideline in front of his team's designated bench area. However, an offensive player is permitted to line up less than five yards from the sidelines on the same side as his team's player bench, provided he is not in front of the designated bench area. See 5-2-2.

m) Attempting to conserve time inside one minute of either half by repeatedly violating the substitution rule while the ball is dead and time is in. See 4-7-2.
n) Two successive delay-of-game penalties during the same down.
o) Jumping or standing on a teammate or opponent to block or attempt to block an opponent's kick.
p) Placing a hand or hands on a teammate or opponent to gain additional height to block or attempt to block an opponent's kick.
q) Picking up a teammate to block or attempt to block an opponent's kick.
r) Running forward and leaping in an obvious attempt to block a field goal or Try Kick and landing on players, unless the leaping player was originally lined up within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped.
s) Goal-tending by a defensive player leaping up to deflect a kick as it passes above the crossbar of a goalpost. The referee may award three points for a palpably unfair act (12-3-3).
t) A punter, placekicker, or holder who simulates being roughed or run into by a defensive player.
u) If a member of the kicking team is forced out of bounds, or goes out of bounds voluntarily, and does not attempt to return inbounds in a reasonable amount of time.
v) Attempting to call an excess or illegal timeout to "freeze" a kicker prior to a field goal attempt or a Try Kick when:
   1) a team has already been charged a timeout during the same dead ball period; or
   2) a team has exhausted its three charged team timeouts that are permitted in a half.

If an attempt is made to call a timeout in these situations, the officials shall not grant a timeout, play will continue, and a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be enforced after the down has been completed. The penalty shall also be enforced if a timeout is inadvertently granted.

Note: The Referee (or another official) will notify the Head Coach (i) that two charged timeouts by the same team in the same dead ball period are not permitted, and (ii) when he has exhausted his three charged team timeouts in a half.

Penalty: For unsportsmanlike conduct (j) through (v): Loss of 15 yards from:
a) the succeeding spot if the ball is dead.
b) the previous spot if the ball was in play.

If the infraction is flagrant, the player is also disqualified. If the foul is by the defense, it is also an automatic first down.

Article 2 **Fouls to Prevent Score.** The defense shall not commit successive or repeated fouls to prevent a score.

Penalty: For successive or repeated fouls to prevent a score: If the violation is repeated after a warning, the score involved is awarded to the offensive team.

Article 3 **Palpably Unfair Act.** A player or substitute shall not interfere with play by any act which is palpably unfair.

Penalty: For a palpably unfair act: Offender may be disqualified. The Referee, after consulting his crew, enforces any such distance penalty as they consider equitable and irrespective of any other specified code penalty. The Referee may award a score. See 15-1-3.

SECTION 4 ILLEGAL BATS AND KICKS

Article 1 **Illegal Bat.** It is an illegal bat if:
a) any player bats or punches a loose ball in the field of play toward his opponent's goal line; or
b) any player bats or punches a loose ball (that has touched the ground) in any direction, if it is in either end zone; or
c) an offensive player bats a backward pass in flight toward his opponent's goal line.

Exception: A forward pass in flight may be tipped, batted, or deflected in any direction by any eligible player at any time.

Note: If a forward pass that is controlled by a player prior to completing the catch is thrown forward, it is an illegal bat. If it is caught by a teammate or intercepted by an opponent, the ball remains alive. If it is not caught, the ball is dead when it hits the ground.

Penalty: For illegal batting or punching the ball: Loss of 10 yards.

Article 2 **Illegally Kicking Ball.** No player may deliberately kick a loose ball or a ball that is in a player's possession.

Penalty: For illegally kicking the ball: Loss of 10 yards. If the foul is by Team A before possession changes during a scrimmage down: Loss of down and loss of 10 yards except for a foul by Team A beyond the line of scrimmage during a scrimmage kick, in which case there is no loss of down.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Note 1: If a loose ball is unintentionally touched by any part of a player's leg (including the knee), it is not considered kicking and is treated as touching.

Note 2: If the penalty for an illegal bat or kick is declined, the procedure is the same as though the ball had been muffed. However, if the act (impetus) sends the ball behind a goal line, 3-17 applies.

Note 3: The penalty for Articles 1 and 3 does not preclude a penalty for a palpably unfair act. See Palpably Unfair Act (12-3-3).

Note 4: The ball is not dead when an illegal kick is recovered.

A.R. 12.15 Second-and-15 on A2. Quarterback A1 fumbles a snap in the end zone. While the ball is loose on the ground there, A1 deliberately kicks it. The ball is last touched by B1 before going out of bounds on A's 2-yard line.
Ruling: Safety. See 8-7-3-Item 3-c and 11-5-1.

RULE 13 NON-PLAYER CONDUCT

SECTION 1 NON-PLAYER CONDUCT

NON-PLAYER FOULS

Article 1 There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by a substitute, coach, attendant, or any other non-player (entitled to sit on a team's bench) during any period or timeout (including between halves).

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Note 1: "Loud speaker" coaching from the sidelines is not permissible.

Note 2: A player may communicate with a coach provided the coach is in his prescribed area during dead-ball periods.

Article 2 Either or both team attendants and their helpers may enter the field to attend their team during a team timeout by either team. No other non-player may come on the field without the Referee's permission, unless he is an incoming substitute (5-2-2).

During any team timeout, all playing rules continue in force. Representatives of either team are prohibited from entering the field unless they are incoming substitutes, or team attendants or trainers entering to provide for the welfare of a player, and any game-type activities are prohibited on the Field of Play.

BENCH CREDENTIALS

Article 3 With the exception of uniformed players eligible to participate in the game, all persons in a team's bench area must wear a visible credential clearly marked "BENCH." For all NFL games—pre-season, regular season, and post-season the home club will be issued a maximum of 27 credentials and the visiting club will be issued a maximum of 25 credentials for use in its bench area. Such credentials must be worn by coaches, players under contract to the applicable club but ineligible to participate in the game, and team support personnel (trainers, doctors, equipment men). From time to time, persons with game services credentials (e.g., oxygen technicians, ball boys/girls) and authorized club personnel not regularly assigned to the bench area may be in a team's bench area for a brief period without bench credentials. Clubs are prohibited from allowing into their bench areas any persons who are not officially affiliated with the club or otherwise serving a necessary game day function.

RESTRICTED AREAS

Article 4 All team personnel must observe the zone restrictions applicable to the bench area and the border rimming the playing field. The only persons permitted within the solid six-foot white border (1-1) while play is in progress on the field are game officials. For reasons involving the safety of participating players whose actions may carry them out of bounds, officials' unobstructed coverage of the game, and spectators' sightlines to the field, the border rules must be observed by all coaches and players in the bench area. Violators are subject to penalty by the officials.

MOVEMENT ON SIDELINES

Article 5 Coaches and other non-participating team personnel (including uniformed players not in the game at the time) are prohibited from moving laterally along the sidelines any further than the points that are 18 yards from the middle of the bench area (i.e., 32-yard lines to left and right of bench areas when benches are placed on opposite sides of the field). Lateral movement within the bench area must be behind the solid six-foot white border (see Article 4 above).

NON-BENCH AREAS

Article 6 Clubs are prohibited from allowing into the non-bench areas of field level any persons who have not been accredited to those locations by the home club's public relations office for purposes related to news media coverage, stadium operations, or pregame and halftime entertainment. The home club is responsible for keeping the field level cleared of all unauthorized persons. Photographers and other personnel accredited for field-level work must not be permitted in the end zones or any other part of the official playing field while play is in progress.

Penalty: For illegal acts under Articles 1 through 6 above: Loss of 15 yards from team for whose supposed benefit foul was made. (Unsportsmanlike Conduct.)

Enforcement is from:

a) the succeeding spot if the ball is dead.

b) whatever spot the Referee, after consulting with crew, deems equitable, if the ball was in play.

For a flagrant violation, the Referee may exclude the offender or offenders from the playing field enclosure for the remainder of the game.

PALPABLY UNFAIR ACT (NON-PLAYER)

Article 7 A non-player shall not commit any act which is palpably unfair.

Penalty: For a palpably unfair act, see 12-3-3. The Referee, after consulting the crew, shall make such ruling as he considers equitable (15-1-3). (Unsportsmanlike Conduct.)

Note: Various actions involving a palpably unfair act may arise during a game. In such cases, the officials may award a distance penalty in accordance with 12-3-3, even when it does not involve disqualification of a player or substitute. See 17-1.

Article 8 Non-player personnel of a club (e.g., management personnel, coaches, trainers, equipment men) are prohibited from making unnecessary physical contact with or directing abusive, threatening, or insulting language or gestures at opponents, game officials, or representatives of the League.

Penalty: Loss of 15 yards. (Unsportsmanlike Conduct.) Enforcement is from:

- **a) the succeeding spot if the ball is dead;**
- **b) the previous spot if the ball was in play; or**
- **c) whatever spot the Referee, after consulting with the crew, deems equitable. (Palpably Unfair Act.)**

Note: Violations which occur before or during the game may result in disqualification in addition to the yardage penalty. Any violation at the game site on the day of the game, including postgame, may result in discipline by the Commissioner.

RULE 14 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT
(Governing all cases not otherwise specifically provided for)

SECTION 1 GENERAL RULES

Article 1 Refusal of Penalties. Unless expressly prohibited, the penalty for any foul may be declined by the offended team, and play proceeds as though no foul had been committed. The yardage distance for any penalty may be declined, even though the penalty is accepted.

Note: If the defensive team commits a foul during an unsuccessful Try, the offensive team may decline the distance penalty, and the down is replayed from the previous spot.

Exception: If there is a Double Foul, enforcement is pursuant to Section 5 below.

Note: In all situations, a disqualified or suspended player must be removed, including when the foul that led to the disqualification or suspension is declined, a penalty for another foul is chosen (Multiple Foul), or fouls by both teams offset (Double Foul).

A.R. 14.1 Second-and-10 on A30. A legal forward pass is completed to end A1 on the A45 where he is downed. Defensive B1 held flanker A2 on the A35 prior to the pass.
Ruling: Declines holding penalty which would have been five yards from the previous spot and a first down. A's ball first-and-10 on A45.

A.R. 14.2 Second-and-10 on A30. On a legal forward pass, B1 interferes with eligible A1 on the B40 where the ball falls incomplete. B2 strikes A2 on the line of scrimmage.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on B40. Pass interference foul is accepted. B2 is disqualified even though no distance penalty is enforced for that foul.

Article 2 Number of Down After Penalty

Item 1: Foul by Team A. If the ball is behind the line to gain after the enforcement of a distance penalty for a foul by Team A that occurs prior to (between downs) or during a play from scrimmage, the number of the ensuing down remains the same, unless it is a combination penalty involving loss of down (see Item 2).

Item 2: **Combination Penalty.** A combination penalty involving both distance and loss of down is enforced for the following fouls:

a) A forward pass from beyond the line (8-1-2-Pen. a); or
b) A forward pass that is intentionally grounded (8-2-1); or
c) Handing the ball forward beyond the line of scrimmage; or
d) Kicking a Loose Ball.

If a loss-of-down penalty is enforced prior to fourth down, the number of the ensuing down is one greater than that of the previous down. If it is enforced on fourth down, the ball is awarded to Team B; if there is a combination penalty on fourth down, the distance penalty is also enforced.

Item 3: Line to Gain and Change of Possession. If a change (or multiple changes) of possession is negated by enforcement of a penalty against Team A during a play from scrimmage, the line to gain for Team A remains the same.

A.R. 14.3 Second-and-10 on A30. Team A is offside. A legal forward pass is intercepted by defensive B1 on the 50. B1 runs to the A40, fumbles, and A2 recovers there.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-15 on A25. (If Team B refused the penalty, it would have been A's ball first-and-10 on A40).

Item 4: Ball in Advance of Line to Gain. If the ball is in advance of the line to gain after the enforcement of a distance penalty for a foul by Team A during a play from scrimmage, it is first-and-10 for Team A. It is also first-and-10 after enforcement for a Dead Ball Foul (Section 4, Article 9) by Team A at the end of a play from scrimmage when there has not been a change of possession.

Exception: A foul against an official, regardless of when it occurs, is always treated as a Foul Between Downs (14-4-9). See 12-3-1-h.

A.R. 14.4 Second-and-4 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the B45. During the run, A2 clipped on the 50.
Ruling: After the penalty, the ball is still in advance of the necessary line for the first down. A's ball first-and-10 on A35.

Item 5: Foul by Team B. After a penalty for a foul by Team B prior to (between downs) or during a play from scrimmage, the ensuing down is first-and-10 for Team A.

Exceptions are:
a) offside;
b) encroachment;
c) Neutral zone infraction;
d) Delay of game;
e) Illegal substitution;
f) Excess time out;
g) Running into the kicker;
h) More than 11 players on the field at the snap;
i) More than 11 players in the formation prior to the snap; and

j) Illegal formation by the defense during a scrimmage kick play.

For the above exceptions, the number of the down and the line to gain remain the same unless a distance penalty places the ball on or in advance of the line to gain, in which case it is first-and-10 for Team A.

A.R. 14.5 Second-and-15 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A35. During the run defensive B1 held on the line of scrimmage.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on A40.

A.R. 14.6 Third-and-10 on B40. The defensive team is offside and A1 gains one yard.
Ruling: A's ball third-and-5 on the B35.

A.R. 14.7 Third-and-3 on B40. The defensive team is offside and A1 gains one yard.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on the B35.

Item 6: Foul After Change of Possession. If there is a foul, including a dead-ball foul, after team possession has changed during a down, following enforcement of a distance penalty, it is first-and-10 for the team that was in possession at the time of the foul.

A.R. 14.8 Third-and-10 on B48. B1 intercepts a pass and runs to the B45 where he steps out of bounds, after which B2 clips on the 50.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B30.

A.R. 14.9 Second-and-10 on A30. B1 intercepts a legal forward pass on the A40. He fumbles and A1 recovers on the A25. A1 runs to the A45. During A1's run A2 clipped on the 50.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on A30.

Item 7: Foul Between Downs. If there is a Foul Between Downs, the down remains the same, unless enforcement of the foul results in a first down.

Item 8: Double Fouls. If there is a Double Foul during the down, and the fouls offset, the down is replayed, and the number of the down remains the same.

Article 3: Choice of Penalties (Multiple Fouls). If there is a Multiple Foul (3-14-1-d) during the down, only one penalty may be enforced after the Referee has explained the alternatives to the offended team.

Exceptions:
a) A foul against an official is not part of a Multiple Foul and will be enforced in addition to any other foul.
b) If there is a personal foul that is also defensive pass interference, both fouls may be enforced.

A.R. 14.10 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A35. During the run, A2 clipped on the A30. Team A was offside.
Ruling: A multiple foul and only one penalty can be enforced. Option for defensive Team B. A's ball second-and-15 on A25 (offside) or A's ball second-and-25 on A15 (clip). If both declined, it is third-and-five on A35.

A.R. 14.11 B1 makes an invalid fair catch signal at the B20. The ball goes over his head, lands at the B3-yard line and bounces into the end zone. Before the ball went into the end zone B1 blocked A4 at the B22.
Ruling: Multiple fouls but only one can be enforced. Option for Team A. B's ball first-and-10 on B11 (UNR) or B's ball first-and-10 on B15 (IFC).

A.R. 14.12 B1 intercepts a pass in the end zone. He runs and is downed in the end zone. B2 holds in the end zone during B1's run. B3 clips after the ball is dead.
Ruling: Safety, safety kick B20. In order to get the safety A must accept the hold, and multiple fouls against B cannot be enforced here so the clip does not carry over.

A.R. 14.13 B1 fumbles after catching a punt on his two-yard line. In attempting to recover in the end zone, he deliberately kicks the ball out of bounds behind the goal line.
a) B2 clips on his four yard line during the fumble.
Ruling: Safety, safety kick B10. Result of the play is a safety so the clip carries over to the safety kick.

b) B2 clips on his 4 after the ball is out of bounds.
Ruling: Safety. Safety kick B10.

A.R. 14.14 Second-and-10 on A28. Quarterback A1 completes a pass to end A3 at the A45. Tackle A6 and back A2 chop blocked B5 at the A26. After the play, A6 grabbed the Referee to argue the call.
Ruling: Both fouls enforced. A's ball second-and-31 on A7.

SECTION 2 SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT FOR PENALTIES

Article 1: Half-Distance Penalty. If the enforcement of a distance penalty would move the ball more than half the distance from the spot of enforcement to the offender's goal line, the penalty shall be half the distance from the spot of enforcement to its goal line. This general rule supersedes any other general or specific enforcement of a distance penalty.

Exceptions:
a) See Rule 8-2-1 for enforcement for intentional grounding.
b) See Rule 12-3-3 for enforcement for a palpably unfair act.

A.R. 14.15 Second-and-20 on B24. A legal forward pass is caught by end A1 on the B12 and he runs to the B10. B1 roughed the passer.
Ruling: Half the distance from the end of the run. A's ball first-and-goal on B5.

Article 2: Foul Behind a Goal Line.
a) When the spot of enforcement for a foul by the defense is behind the offensive goal line, a distance penalty is enforced from the goal line. However, if the play results in a touchback, the penalty is enforced from the 20-yard line. See Section 4, Article 6 for fouls during a backward pass or fumble and Section 4, Article 4 (b), Note, for exception when a player's momentum carries him into the end zone.

b) When the spot of enforcement for a foul by the offense is behind the offensive goal line, it is a safety.

c) When the spot of enforcement for a foul by the offense is behind the defensive goal line, a distance penalty is enforced from the goal line.

A.R. 14.16 First-and-10 on A3. Runner A1 is tackled in his end zone. During A1's run, B2 grabs A2 by the facemask in the field of play.
Ruling: Enforce from the goal line. A's ball first-and-10 on B15.

A.R. 14.17 Second-and-15 on A4. Runner A1 is downed in the end zone. During the run A2 held on the A10.
Ruling: Safety. Decline penalty.

A.R. 14.18 Second-and-goal on B2. Runner A1 fumbles into B's end zone. B1 recovers in his end zone and runs with the ball before being downed behind the goal line. While B1 is a runner, B2 fouls in the end zone.
Ruling: Safety.

A.R. 14.19 Second-and-10 on A30. A1 crosses the goal line. During A1's run, A2 clips in B's end zone before A1 crosses the goal line.
Ruling: Enforcement is from the goal line. A's ball first-and-10 on B15.

Article 3: Foul During a Score. If a team commits a personal or unsportsmanlike conduct foul, or a palpably unfair act, during a down in which the opponent scores, the penalty is enforced on the succeeding free kick (unless the score resulted from the enforcement). On a successful Try kick, any foul by the defense may be enforced on the succeeding free kick.

Exception: If a personal foul, unsportsmanlike conduct foul, or a palpably unfair act occurs on a successful field goal or Try kick, the scoring team has the option to begin a new series (after a field goal) or to replay the down (after a Try) following enforcement of the penalty from the previous spot, and the score does not count.

A.R. 14.20 Second-and-10 on B30. A legal forward pass is caught by end A1 who then runs for a score. Prior to the pass, B1 roughs A2 on the line of scrimmage.
Ruling: Touchdown. Kickoff on A50.

A.R. 14.21 Second-and-15 on A2. Runner A1 is downed in the end zone. A2 clipped in the end zone during the run.
Ruling: Safety. Free kick from A10. The personal foul is penalized from the succeeding spot (A20) as the foul did not result in a score.

A.R. 14.22 B1 clips during a kickoff. B1 muffs the kick on the B5 and forces it into his end zone (new impetus) where he recovers and is downed.
Ruling: Safety. Team B free kicks from its 10 as the penalty is also enforced for the clip from the succeeding spot (B20).

A.R. 14.23 Second-and-12 on A4. Runner A1 fumbles in his end zone, where B1 recovers. During A's run, A2 holds anywhere.
Ruling: Touchdown Team B. Kickoff at B35. Decline foul.

A.R. 14.24 Fourth-and-10 on B24. During a successful field goal attempt, B1:
a) is offside.
Ruling: Points awarded. Decline foul.

b) roughs the kicker.
Ruling: Point awarded and enforce on kickoff or A's ball first-and-10 on B12.

A.R. 14.25 During a successful Try-kick, B1:
a) is offside.
Ruling: Point awarded. Enforce five-yard penalty against B on kickoff (See 11-3-3-Item 4-b) or retry at B1.

b) roughs the kicker.
Ruling: Point awarded. Enforce the penalty on the succeeding kickoff (See 11-3-3-Item 4-b) or retry at B1.

SECTION 3 SPOT FROM WHICH PENALTY IS ENFORCED

Article 1: Governing Provisions. The general provisions of Rule 14 govern all spots of enforcement, except for specific enforcements designated elsewhere in these rules.

Article 2: Foul by Non-Player. Penalties for fouls committed by non-players shall be enforced as provided for in Rule 13.

Article 3: Enforcement Spot Not Governed. When the spot of enforcement is not governed by a general or specific rule, it is the spot of the foul.

Article 4: Spots of Enforcement. The Spot of Enforcement is the spot at which a penalty is enforced. There are six spots that are commonly used:

a) The Previous Spot: The spot at which the ball was last put in play.
b) The Spot of the Foul: The spot at which a foul was committed or, by rule, is considered to have been committed.
c) The Spot of a Backward Pass or a Fumble: The spot at which the backward pass or fumble occurred during the down in which there was a foul.
d) The Dead Ball Spot: The spot at which the ball became dead.
e) The End of the Kick: The spot at which possession is gained by or awarded to the receiving team.
f) The Succeeding Spot: The spot at which the ball will next be put in play (i.e., the spot of the ball after enforcement for a foul, or, if there has been no foul, the spot at which the ball became dead).

Article 5: Basic Spot. The Basic Spot is a reference point that is used to determine the Spot of Enforcement for fouls committed pursuant to the Three-and-One Method of Enforcement. It is applicable for fouls committed during (i) a running play or (ii) a backward pass or fumble.

a) For fouls committed during a running play which is not followed by a change of possession, the Basic Spot is the dead-ball spot.
b) For fouls committed during a running play which is followed by a change of possession, the Basic Spot is the spot where possession is lost.
c) For fouls committed during a backward pass or fumble, the Basic Spot is the spot of the backward pass or the spot of the fumble.

A.R. 14.26 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A35. Defensive B1 illegally uses his hands at the A45 during run.
Ruling: The defensive foul is in advance of the basic spot. Penalize from the basic spot (A35). A's ball first-and-10 on A40.

A.R. 14.27 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A35. Offensive player A2 holds at the A45.
Ruling: The offensive foul is in advance of the basic spot. Penalize from the basic spot (A35). A's ball second-and-15 on A25.

A.R. 14.28 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A40. An offensive player holds at the A35.
Ruling: The offensive foul is behind the basic spot. Penalize from the spot of the foul (A35). A's ball second-and-15 on A25.

A.R. 14.29 Second-and-10 on A30. Quarterback A1 is downed on the A40. Offensive player A2 held on the A25.
Ruling: Penalize 10 yards from the previous spot as the offensive foul was behind the line of scrimmage. A's ball second-and-20 on A20.

A.R. 14.30 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is downed on the A25. An offensive player held on the A32.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-20 on the A20. The offensive runner was downed behind the line of scrimmage. Enforcement is from the previous spot. Team B has option of refusing the penalty and taking the result of the play which would then be A's ball third-and-15 on the A25.

Article 6: Three-and-One Method of Enforcement. For fouls committed during a run, a fumble or a backward pass, the penalty is enforced from the Basic Spot if:
a) the defense fouls in advance of the Basic Spot;
b) the defense fouls behind the Basic Spot; or
c) the offense fouls in advance of the Basic Spot.

If the offense fouls behind the Basic Spot, enforcement is from the spot of the foul (three-and-one method of enforcement).

Exceptions for fouls committed by the offense:

1) Fouls committed by the offense behind the line of scrimmage, except for fouls committed in the end zone, are enforced from the previous spot. See Rule 8-2-1 for enforcement for intentional grounding.
2) If the offense commits a foul in its end zone that is accepted, it is a safety.
3) If the offense commits a foul beyond the line of scrimmage and the Basic Spot is behind the line of scrimmage, enforcement is from the previous spot. If the dead-ball spot is in the offensive end zone, it is a safety, regardless of where the foul occurs.
4) If the offense commits a foul in the defense's end zone prior to scoring a touchdown, enforcement is from the goal line.

Exception for fouls committed by the defense:

1) When the Basic Spot is behind the line of scrimmage, and the defense has committed a foul either behind or beyond the line of scrimmage, the penalty is enforced from the previous spot.

SECTION 4 SPOTS OF ENFORCEMENT

Article 1: Foul Before or At the Snap.

Item 1: Before the Snap. A foul that occurs prior to the snap is enforced from the succeeding spot, and the down remains the same, unless enforcement of the foul results in a first down.

Item 2: At the Snap. A foul that occurs at the snap is enforced from the previous spot, and the down is repeated, unless enforcement of the foul results in a first down.

Article 2: Foul Committed During Running Play. For a foul committed during a running play when there is not a subsequent change of possession during the down, the Basic Spot is the dead-ball spot. The three-and-one method of enforcement is used (see Section 3, Article 6).

Note: A foul during a run prior to a forward pass or kick from behind the line is enforced as a foul during a passing play or during a scrimmage kick.

Article 3: Foul Committed During Running Play Before Change of Possession. When a foul occurs during a running play, and the run in which the foul occurs is followed by a change of possession, the Basic Spot is the spot where possession is lost. The three-and-one method of enforcement is used (see Section 3, Article 6).

Note1: If the foul is by the defensive team, the ball reverts to the offensive team prior to enforcement of the foul.

Note 2: If the foul is by the offensive team, the defense must decline the penalty to retain possession. However, if the foul by the offense was a Personal Foul or Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul, the defense may elect to retain possession, and the penalty shall be enforced from the dead-ball spot.

Note 3: If there are Multiple Fouls by the defense, the enforcement shall be that which is most beneficial to the offense.

When the offense commits a foul during a running play, and the run in which the foul occurs is followed by a change of possession, the defense must decline the penalty to retain possession. However, if the foul by the offense was a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct foul, the defense may elect to retain possession, and the penalty shall be enforced from the dead-ball spot.

A.R. 14.31 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A40 where he fumbles and B1 recovers. During A1's run, B2 held on the A32.
Ruling: Penalize from the spot of the foul or fumble, whichever is less beneficial to A. A's ball first-and-10 on A37.

A.R. 14.32 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A40 where he fumbles and B1 recovers. During A1's run, B2 held on the A45.
Ruling: Enforce from the spot where the offensive player A1 lost possession as the foul was in advance of where he lost possession. A's ball first-and-10 on A45.

A.R. 14.33 Second-and-10 on A30. QB A1 scrambles to A20, fumbles and B1 recovers. During A1's scramble, B2 holds at A22.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on A30. Enforcement is from the spot of the foul or fumble, whichever is less beneficial to A, but the ball must at least get back to the previous line of scrimmage.

Article 4: Foul Committed after Change of Possession (End Zone Enforcement). If there is a foul by either team after a change of possession, and the dead-ball spot is in Team B's end zone, enforcement shall be as follows:

a) Fouls by Team A:
   1) If the impetus that sent the ball in touch was provided by Team B, enforcement is from the goal line. See Note below for exception when a player's momentum carries him into the end zone.
   2) If the impetus that sent the ball in touch was provided by Team A, enforcement is from the 20-yard line.

b) Fouls by Team B (Team A impetus):
   1) If Team B does not attempt to advance the ball, regardless of whether its foul occurs in the end zone or in the field of play, enforcement is from the 20-yard line.
   2) If Team B attempts to advance the ball, and the spot of its foul is in the end zone, the result is a safety.

Note: If a Team B player's original momentum carries him into his end zone, where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession, the dead-ball spot is considered to be the spot at which the player established possession. See 11-5-1-Exc. 2.

c) Fouls by Team B (Team B impetus):
   1) Regardless of whether the foul is in the field of play or in the end zone, the result is a safety.

Note: Dead-ball fouls by either team are enforced from the succeeding spot.

A.R. 14.34 Receiver B1 fumbles after catching a punt on his one-yard line. The ball enters the end zone where B1 recovers and attempts to run it out. B1 is downed in the end zone. During B1's run A1 clipped anywhere.
Ruling: Enforce from the goal line. B's ball first-and-10 on B15.

A.R. 14.35 B1 intercepts a pass in his end zone, attempts to run it out, but is tackled there. During B1's run A1 clips anywhere.
Ruling: Enforce from the B20. B's ball first-and-10 on B35.

A.R. 14.36 B1 intercepts a pass in his end zone and gives himself up by going to the ground. B2 grabs A1 by the facemask (anywhere) as B1 is going to the ground.
Ruling: Enforce from the B20. B's ball first-and-10 on B10.

A.R. 14.37 B1 intercepts a pass in his end zone and runs with the ball. B2 clips during B1's run anywhere in the field of play. B1 is downed in the end zone.
Ruling: Enforce from the B20. B's ball first-and-10 on B10.

A.R. 14.38 B1 intercepts a pass in his end zone and runs with the ball. B2 clips in the end zone during B1's run. B1 is downed anywhere.
Ruling: Safety. Safety kick B20.

A.R. 14.39 B1 intercepts a pass at his 2-yard line and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where he is eventually downed after trying to run it out. During the run, A2 blocks low anywhere.
Ruling: Enforce from the spot where possession was gained which is considered the dead-ball spot. B's ball first-and-10 on B17.

A.R. 14.40 B1 intercepts a pass at his 4-yard line and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where he is eventually downed after trying to run it out. During the run, B2 blocks low:
a) at the B6.
Ruling: Enforce from the spot where possession was gained which is considered the dead-ball spot. B's ball first-and-10 on B12.

b) at the B2.
Ruling: Enforce from the spot of the foul which is behind the dead-ball spot. B's ball first-and-10 on B1.

c) in the end zone.
Ruling: Safety. Safety kick B20.

A.R. 14.41 B1 intercepts a pass at his 2-yard line and takes the ball back into his own end zone while trying to avoid a tackle and is downed there. During the run, B2 blocks low anywhere.
Ruling: Safety. Safety kick B10. Result of the play is a safety so the personal foul carries over to the safety kick.

Article 5: Foul Committed During Passing Play. If there is a foul by either team from the time of the snap until a forward pass thrown from behind the line ends, the penalty is enforced from the previous spot. A pass play ends and a running play begins at the instant that a pass is caught.

Exceptions:

a) Intentional grounding is a loss of down at the spot of the foul, or a loss of down and a 10-yard penalty from the previous spot, whichever is less beneficial for the offense. If the foul occurs less than 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage, but more than half the distance to the goal line, the ball shall be placed at the spot of the pass. (If the pass is thrown from the end zone, it is a safety).

b) Pass interference by the defense is enforced at the spot of the foul. If it occurs in the fouling team's end zone, the ball will be placed at the one-yard line, or half the distance to the goal line from the previous spot, whichever is more beneficial to the offense.
c) It is a safety when the offensive team commits a foul behind its own goal line.
d) If there is a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct foul by the defense prior to the completion of a forward pass thrown from behind the line, enforcement is from the previous spot or the dead-ball spot, whichever is more beneficial to the offense. If the passing team is fouled and subsequently loses possession after a completion, the passing team retains possession of the ball, and enforcement is from the previous spot.
e) If there is a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct foul by the offense prior to an interception of a forward pass thrown from behind the line, enforcement is from the dead-ball spot. If the intercepting team subsequently loses possession, the penalty is enforced from the spot of the interception, and the intercepting team retains possession.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:
Note 1: The penalty for a forward pass from behind the line after the ball has been beyond the line, or for a second forward pass from behind the line, is enforced from the previous spot, unless the spot of the pass is behind the passer's goal line, in which case it is a safety.

Note 2: If a forward pass is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage, or when there is no line of scrimmage, it is a foul during a running play.

A.R. 14.42 Second-and-10 on A40. Quarterback A1 standing at the A27 intentionally grounds the ball.
Ruling: A's ball third-and-23 on the A27.

A.R. 14.43 Second-and-10 on A12. Quarterback A1 standing at the A3 intentionally grounds the ball.
Ruling: A's ball third-and-19 on the A3.

A.R. 14.44 Second-and-15 on A4. Quarterback A1 throws a legal pass which is incomplete. A2 held in end zone.
Ruling: Safety, SK A20.

Article 6: Foul During a Backward Pass or Fumble.
If there is a foul by either team during a backward pass or fumble, the Basic Spot is the spot of the backward pass or fumble. The three-and-one method of enforcement is used (see Section 3, Article 6).

Note 1: If Team B gains possession in its end zone, and the impetus was provided by Team A, if Team B fumbles or throws a backward pass in the end zone and fouls while the ball is loose, the spot of the fumble or the backward pass is considered to be the B20-yard line.

Note 2: If a Team B player's original momentum carries him into his end zone, where he fumbles the ball, the spot of the fumble is considered to be the spot at which the player established possession. See 11-5-1-Exc. 2.

A.R. 14.45 First-and-10 on A20. A1 runs to the A34 and fumbles the ball. B1 recovers at the A32. During the loose ball, B2 held anywhere.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on the A39.

A.R. 14.46 First-and-10 on A20. A1 runs to the A24 and fumbles the ball. A1 recovers at the A25. During the loose ball A2 held:
a) on the A22
Ruling: A's ball first-and-18 on the A12.

b) on the A19
Ruling: A's ball first-and-20 on the A10.

A.R. 14.47 First-and-10 on A20. A1 runs to the A34 and fumbles the ball. B1 recovers at the A32. During the loose ball B2 held anywhere.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on the A39.

A.R. 14.48 B1 intercepts a pass in his end zone. He attempts to run it out, but fumbles and the ball goes out of bounds at the B3. During the loose ball:
a) A2 blocks low anywhere.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B35.

b) B2 blocks low on the B2.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B1.

c) B2 blocks low in the end zone.
Ruling: Safety. Safety kick B20.

A.R. 14.49 B1 intercepts a pass on the B2 and his original momentum carries him into the end zone. He attempts to run it out, but fumbles and the ball goes out of bounds at the B4. During the loose ball:
a) A2 blocks low anywhere.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B17.

b) B2 blocks low on the B4.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on the B1.

c) B2 blocks low in the end zone.
Ruling: Safety. Safety kick B20.

Article 7: Foul During Free Kick Play. If there is a foul during a free kick, enforcement is from the previous spot, and the free kick is made again. However, if the kicking team commits a foul prior to the end of the kick, and the receiving team retains

possession throughout the down, it will have the option of enforcing the penalty at the previous spot and replaying the down or adding the penalty yardage to the dead-ball spot.

Exceptions:

a) A personal foul (blocking) after a fair-catch signal is enforced from the spot of the foul.
b) A foul for fair-catch interference is enforced from the spot of the foul.
c) A foul for interference with the opportunity to make a catch is enforced from the spot of the foul.
d) A foul for an invalid fair catch signal is enforced from the spot of the foul.
e) A foul for intentionally forming an illegal wedge, whether during the free kick or during the return, is enforced from the spot of the foul.
f) For a free kick out of bounds, see 6-2-3.
g) For a free kick illegally touched, see 6-2-4.
h) Double fouls are enforced according to customary rules.

Note: The dead-ball spot for free kicks that result in a touchback is the 20-yard line.

A free kick ends when Team B establishes possession. Fouls by Team A prior to the time that Team B establishes possession are offensive fouls. If Team A legally recovers a free kick, there is no change of possession. After Team B establishes possession, a running play begins, and fouls that occur thereafter are enforced from the dead-ball spot or the spot of the foul (three-and-one method).

Article 8: Foul During Scrimmage Kick Play. If there is a foul from the time of the snap until a legal scrimmage kick ends, enforcement is from the previous spot. This includes a foul prior to a legal kick, and running into or roughing the kicker (12-2-10). If the offensive team commits a foul in its own end zone, it is a safety.

Exception 1: Unless the kick is a missed field goal attempt, if there is a foul by the kicking team, the receiving team will have the option of taking the penalty at the previous spot and replaying the down, or adding the penalty yardage on to the dead-ball spot.

Note 1: The dead-ball spot for kicks that result in a touchback is the 20-yard line.

Note 2: If there is a foul for an illegal touch inside the five-yard line, the receiving team also has the option of accepting a touchback.

Exception 2: Fair catch interference, interference with the opportunity to make a catch, an invalid fair catch signal, or a personal foul (blocking) after a fair catch signal are enforced from the spot of the foul.

Exception 3: If the receiving team commits a foul during a kick that crosses the line of scrimmage, the penalty for its infraction will be enforced as if it had been in possession of the ball at the time the foul occurred (a post-possession foul), provided that the receiving team does not lose possession of the ball at any time during the down. The penalty shall be enforced from whichever of the following spots is least beneficial to the receiving team:

a) The end of the kick; or
b) The spot of the foul.

Note 1: If the least beneficial spot is in the end zone, the spot of enforcement is the 20-yard line.

Note 2: If the receiving team commits a foul during a kick that crosses the line of scrimmage, and there is a first-touch violation by the kicking team, if the receiving team possesses the ball and subsequently loses possession, the ball reverts to the receiving team, and its penalty shall be enforced from the end of the kick, or the spot of the foul, whichever is less beneficial to it.

Item 1: The spot of the first-touch violation is not used.

Item 2: If a distance penalty for a foul by the receivers is enforced, the violation by the kickers is disregarded.

When Team B establishes possession of the ball, a scrimmage kick ends, and a running play begins, and fouls that occur thereafter are enforced from the dead-ball spot or the spot of the foul (three-and-one method).

Article 9: Dead Ball Foul and Foul Between Downs. A Dead Ball Foul is a foul that occurs in the continuing action after a down ends, or a taunting foul that occurs at any time. The penalty for a Dead Ball Foul is enforced from the succeeding spot, and the down counts.

A Foul Between Downs is a foul that occurs after the end of the down and after any continuing action resulting from the down, but prior to the next snap or free kick. The penalty for a Foul Between Downs is enforced from the succeeding spot, and the down counts, but it cannot be combined with a Live Ball Foul or a Dead Ball Foul to create a Multiple or Double Foul. A Foul Between Downs is always enforced separately from any other foul. A foul against an official, regardless of when it occurs, is always treated as a Foul Between Downs. See 12-3-1-h-pen.

Exceptions:

a) If there is a personal foul by either team following the end of the second or fourth periods, the penalty yardage will be enforced on the second-half kickoff or the kickoff in overtime, unless it is part of a Double Foul (See Section 5).
b) If there is an unsportsmanlike conduct foul or taunting foul by either team following the end of the second or fourth periods, the penalty yardage will not be enforced, unless it is part of a Double Foul (See Section 5). However, if the foul occurs after any continuing action resulting from the down, the penalty yardage will be enforced on the second-half kickoff or the kickoff in overtime.

Item 1: Dead Ball Foul by Team A. If there is a Dead Ball Foul by Team A after a down in which Team A has made a first down, after enforcement of the penalty it will be first-and-10 for Team A. If there is a Foul Between Downs after a down in which Team A has made a first down, after enforcement of the penalty it will be first-and-25 for Team A.

Item 2: Dead Ball Fouls by Both Teams. Dead Ball Fouls by both teams are offset at the succeeding spot, and the down counts, but any disqualified player or players must be removed pursuant to Rule 5, Section 2, Article 7.

Item 3: Live Ball and Dead Ball Fouls. Live Ball Fouls and Dead Ball Fouls combine to create Double Fouls or Multiple Fouls, and all customary rules for enforcement apply.

Exceptions:

a) If there is a 5-yard vs. 15-yard Double Foul on the last play of a half, and the 15-yard penalty is for a Dead Ball personal foul by either team, the penalty yardage will be enforced on the second half kickoff or the kickoff to start overtime. If the Dead Ball Foul is an unsportsmanlike conduct or taunting foul, the penalty yardage will not be enforced. In either case, there will be no extension of the period. See 14-5-1-Exc.

b) If the scoring team commits a Dead Ball Foul after a score, and its opponent's Live Ball Foul is not for unsportsmanlike conduct or unnecessary roughness, the opponent's foul is disregarded, the score counts, and the offensive team's Dead Ball Foul is enforced on the kickoff. If the opponent's foul is for unsportsmanlike conduct or unnecessary roughness, the score counts, and both fouls are enforced on the kickoff.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

Note 1: When a foul occurs simultaneously with the ball becoming dead, it is considered to be a Dead Ball Foul.

Note 2: The succeeding spot for a foul that occurs after a touchdown and before a whistle for a Try is the next kickoff.

Note 3: The time between downs includes the interval during all timeouts (including intermissions). See 3-38-1.

A.R. 14.50 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 goes out of bounds on the A35. Offensive player A2 then clips B1 either on the A40 or A30.
Ruling: A's ball third-and-20 on A20. Dead ball foul so down counts and enforce from succeeding spot.

A.R. 14.51 Fourth-and-10 on A30. A punt goes to the B30 where kicking team player A1 downs it, after which:
a) kicking team player A2 clips any place on the field.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B45.

b) receiver B1 commits a personal foul any place on the field.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B15.

A.R. 14.52 Third-and-8 on B12. A legal forward pass is incomplete. After the incompletion:
a) B1 knocks A1 to the ground.
Ruling: Enforce from the succeeding spot (B12). A's ball first-and-10 on B6.

b) A1 clips.
Ruling: Enforce from the succeeding spot (B12). A's ball fourth-and-23 on B27.

A.R. 14.53 Fourth-and-5 on B14. A legal forward pass is incomplete, after which A1 clips B1 and B2 knocks A2 to the ground.
Ruling: Fouls are offset at the succeeding spot. B's ball first-and-10 on B14.

A.R. 14.54 Third-and-five on A30. Offensive team is offside and runner A1 gets tackled at the line of scrimmage. A2 clips just before the ball is declared dead.
Ruling: If defensive team B declines both penalties, it is fourth-and-five on the A30. If the penalty for clipping is enforced, it is third-and-20 on A15, since it was a live-ball foul.

SECTION 5 FOULS BY BOTH TEAMS (DOUBLE FOULS)

Article 1: Double Foul Without Change of Possession. If there is a Double Foul (3-14-1-e) during a down in which there is not a change of possession, the penalties are offset, and the down is replayed at the previous spot. If it is a scrimmage down, the number of the next down and the line to gain is the same as for the down in which the fouls occurred.

Exception:

If one or more fouls by one team includes a 15-yard penalty, and the penalty for the foul or fouls committed by the other team is for a five-yard penalty without an automatic First Down, a loss of down, or a 10-second runoff (15 yards versus five yards), the 15-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot, and the five-yard penalty is disregarded. Five vs. 15 enforcement cannot be declined by the team that committed the minor foul, except as described in (ii) below. See 4-8-2-c-Exc. 2 and 14-4-9-Exc. (a) and (b) for dead ball fouls at the end of a half.

1) If one of the fouls is a Dead Ball Foul for delay of game for spiking the ball and the opponent's foul is a Live Ball Foul, the team that committed the delay of game foul, in addition to Article 1 and Exc. (a), will have the option to decline the foul committed by its opponent and be assessed the penalty for delay from the dead-ball spot.
2) If both fouls are Dead Ball Fouls or are treated as such (14-4-9), the penalties are offset, and the ball is next put in play at the succeeding spot.

Note: Disqualification of one or more players is enforced, even though the penalties are offset.

A.R. 14.55 Second-and-20 on A30. Runner A1 goes to the A35. During the run A2 holds B1 who then punches A2.
Ruling: Disqualify B1. Penalties offset. A's ball second-and-20 on A30.

A.R. 14.56 Second-and-10 on A30. Runner A1 is out of bounds on the A40, after which A2 clips any place. Team B was offside.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-25 on A15. 5 vs. 15 enforcement.

A.R. 14.57 Third-and-eight on B10. A2 is offside and B1 slugs on the B6 during the play. Runner A1 scored on the play.
Ruling: Disqualify B1. A's ball first-and-goal on B5. 5 vs. 15 enforcement.

A.R. 14.58 Second-and-10 on B40. B2 is offside and A1 completes a pass to eligible receiver A3 who is tackled at the B17. A3 then gets up and spikes the ball in the field of play.
Ruling: A's ball first-and-10 on B22 (decline B's foul and enforce A's from dead-ball spot).

A.R. 14.59 Second-and-10 on A30. A1 is downed at the A35, A1 and B2 strike each other with their fists.
Ruling: Fouls offset at succeeding spot and both players are disqualified. A's ball third-and-5 on A35.

A.R. 14.60 Fourth-and-10 on B18. A forward pass falls incomplete in the end zone, after which A1 clips B2 who then strikes A1.
Ruling: Disqualify B2. B's ball first-and-10 on B18.

Article 2: Double Foul with a Change of Possession. If there is a Double Foul during a down in which there is a change or changes of possession, including if one of the fouls is a post-possession foul by Team B during a scrimmage kick, the team last gaining possession will keep the ball after enforcement for its foul, provided it did not foul prior to last gaining possession ("clean hands").

If the team last in possession does not have "clean hands" when it establishes possession, the penalties offset, and the down is replayed at the previous spot.

Exceptions:

a) If Team A fouls during a kickoff, punt, safety kick, fair catch kick, or field goal attempt prior to the change of possession, Team B may elect to replay the down at the previous spot.
b) If a safety results from the enforcement of a foul by Team B, the down is replayed at the previous spot.
c) If both teams foul after the last change of possession (Double Foul After Change of Possession), the team last in possession shall retain the ball at the spot of its foul or the dead-ball spot, whichever is less beneficial for it. If its foul is a Dead Ball Foul, the ball is put in play at the dead-ball spot. If the least beneficial spot is normally a touchback, the ball is placed on the 20-yard line. If it is normally a safety, the ball is placed on the one-yard line. On kicking plays, Team B shall also have the option in (a) above.

A.R. 14.61 Second-and-10 on B40. Offensive Team A is offside. B1 intercepts a forward pass and runs it back to the A30. On the runback, B2 clips on the B45.
Ruling: Team B gained possession prior to its foul so it keeps ball and foul is enforced. B's ball first-and-10 on B30.

A.R. 14.62 On the kickoff to start the game, kicking team player A1 is offside. Receiver B1 catches the ball in the end zone and runs it back to the A20. On the runback, B2 clips on the A26.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on A41.

A.R. 14.63 Fourth-and-10 on A40. Kicking team player A1 is offside. A punt hits on the B20 where receiver B1 picks it up and runs to the 50. On B's runback, B2 clips on the B40.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B25.

A.R. 14.64 Fourth-and-10 on A40. Kicking team player A1 is offside. A punt hits on the B20 where receiver B1 picks it up and runs for a touchdown. After B1 scores, B2 clips on the A10.
Ruling: Touchdown Team B. Kickoff B20. Clean hands score.

A.R. 14.65 Second-and-10 on B45. B1 intercepts a pass on the B10 and runs it back to the A30. On the runback, B2 clips on the A35 and A1 piles on runner B1 after he is tackled on the A30.
Ruling: Team B retains ball at spot of its foul. B's ball first-and-10 on A35.

A.R. 14.66 B1 receives a kickoff in the end zone and clips there. The runner advances to the B25 and is piled on by A1.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B1.

A.R. 14.67 A kickoff is illegally out of bounds on the B30. After the ball is out of bounds:
a) A1 clips and B2 blocks below the waist.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B30 or rekick A35.

b) A1 clips and B1 punches A1.
Ruling: B's ball first-and-10 on B30 or rekick A35. B1 disqualified.

A.R. 14.68 Second-and-10 on B30. Offensive A1 offside. B1 intercepts in the end zone and clips there. Runner B1 is downed on the B10.
Ruling: Replay. A score cannot result from one of the fouls of a double foul. A's ball second-and-10 on B30.

A.R. 14.69 Second-and-five on B45. Team A is offside. B1 intercepts a pass on the B10 and runs it back to the B30 and is tackled and fumbles on the B30 where A1 recovers. On B1's run, B2 clipped on the B25.
Ruling: A's ball second-and-5 on B45. Team A did not get ball clean so fouls offset.

A.R. 14.70 B1 receives a kick at the B10, advances to the B40 and fumbles when he is tackled. A2 recovers. During B1's run, B2 clips at the B30, after which A1 trips B3.
Ruling: Rekick A35. Team A did not get ball clean.

A.R. 14.71 Second-and-10 on B45. B1 holds tight end A1 on the line of scrimmage. B2 intercepts the ball on the B10 and runs it back to the B30 where he is tackled, fumbles, and A2 recovers the ball. A2 runs to the B20. On A2's run, A3 holds on the B25.
Ruling: Team A keeps the ball as it gained possession prior to its foul. A's ball first-and-10 on B35.

RULE 15 OFFICIALS AND INSTANT REPLAY

SECTION 1 OFFICIALS

Article 1 Game Officials
The game shall be played under the supervision of seven officials: the Referee, Umpire, Head Linesman, Line Judge, Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge. In the absence of seven officials, the crew is to be rearranged according to the remaining members of the crew**.**

Article 2 Jurisdiction
The officials' jurisdiction begins 100 minutes before the scheduled kickoff and ends when the Referee declares the final score.

Article 3 Referee's Authority
The Referee is to have general oversight and control of the game. The Referee is the final authority for the score. If there is a disagreement between members of the crew regarding the number of down, any decision, or the application, enforcement, or interpretation of a rule, the Referee's decision will be final. The Referee's decisions upon all matters not specifically placed under the jurisdiction of other officials by rule are final.

Article 4 Responsibilities and Mechanics
Officiating responsibilities and mechanics are specified in the Mechanics Manual, published annually by the National Football League.

SECTION 2 INSTANT REPLAY

The League will employ a system of Instant Replay Review to aid officiating as defined below. The following procedures will be used:

Article 1 Coaches' Challenge. In each game, a team will be permitted two challenges that will initiate Instant Replay reviews. The Head Coach will initiate a challenge by throwing a red flag onto the field of play before the next legal snap or kick. Each challenge will require the use of a team timeout. If a challenge is upheld, the timeout will be restored. A challenge will only be restored if a team is successful on both of its challenges, in which case it shall be awarded a third challenge, but a fourth challenge will not be permitted under any circumstances.

Note 1: If there is a foul that delays the next snap, the team committing that foul will no longer be able to challenge the previous ruling. A team may challenge any reviewable play (see Article 4 below) except when the on-field ruling is a score for either team, an interception, a fumble or backward pass that is recovered by an opponent or goes out of bounds through an opponent's end zone, or a muffed scrimmage kick recovered by the kicking team. A team is also prohibited from challenging any ruling after the two-minute warning of each half, and throughout any overtime period.

Note 2: A team that is out of timeouts or has used all of its available challenges may not attempt to initiate an additional challenge. If a team initiates a challenge when it is not permitted to do so, it will be charged a timeout.

Penalty: For initiating a challenge when a team has exhausted its timeouts: Loss of 15 yards.

Article 2 Replay Official's Request for Review. After all scoring plays, interceptions, fumbles and backward passes that are recovered by an opponent or go out of bounds through an opponent's end zone, muffed scrimmage kicks recovered by the kicking team, after the two-minute warning of each half and throughout any overtime period, any Replay Review will be initiated by a Replay Official from a Replay Booth comparable to the location of the coaches' booth or Press Box.

Note 1: There is no limit to the number of Replay Reviews that may be initiated by the Replay Official. His ability to initiate a review will be unrelated to the number of timeouts that either team has remaining, and no timeout will be charged for any review initiated by the Replay Official.

Note 2: The Replay Official must initiate a review before the ball is next legally put in play.

Article 3 Review by Referee. All Replay Reviews will be conducted by the Referee on a field-level monitor after consultation with the covering official(s), prior to review. During the review, the Referee will consult with designated members of the Officiating department at the League office. A decision will be reversed only when the Referee has *indisputable visual evidence* available to him that warrants the change.

Note 1: Time Limit. Each review will be a maximum of 60 seconds in length, timed from when the Referee begins his review of the play at the field-level monitor.

Note 2: All reviewable aspects of the play may be examined and are subject to reversal, even if not identified in a coach's challenge or if not the specific reason for a Replay Official's request for review.

Article 4 Reviewable Plays. The Replay System will cover the following play situations only:

a) Plays involving possession, including:
   1) Whether a pass was complete, incomplete, intercepted in the field of play, at sideline, goal line, end zone, and end line.
   2) Whether a loose ball was recovered in the field of play, at sideline, goal line, end zone, and end line.
   3) Whether a player (passer) fumbled or threw a pass.
   4) Whether a pass has been thrown forward or backward.
   5) Whether there has been an illegal forward handoff.
   6) Whether a runner fumbled or was down by contact.

b) Plays involving touching, including:
   1) Whether a forward pass has been touched by any player.
   2) Whether a runner is down by defensive contact.
   3) Whether a loose ball has been touched by a player.
   4) Whether the ball has touched a pylon.
   5) Whether a kick has been touched.
   6) Whether a loose ball in play has struck a video board, guide wire, Skycam, or any other object.
c) Plays governed by the goal line, including:
   1) Scoring plays, including the ball breaking the plane of the goal line.
      a) Whether a Field Goal or Try attempt has crossed below or above the crossbar, inside or outside the uprights when it is lower than the top of the uprights, or has touched anything.
   2) Whether there has been a touchback, when the on-field ruling involves a runner's momentum.
d) Plays governed by the sidelines, including:
   1) Whether a runner/receiver is in or out of bounds.
   2) Whether a loose ball touches a boundary line or anything on or outside such line.
e) Plays governed by the end lines, including:
   1) Whether a runner/receiver is in or out of bounds.
   2) Whether a loose ball is in or out of bounds.
f) Plays governed by the line of scrimmage, including:
   1) Whether a forward pass has been thrown from beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.
   2) Whether a forward pass has been thrown from behind the line of scrimmage after the ball has been beyond the line.
g) Other.
   1) The position of the ball with respect to a first down.
   2) Whether more than 11 players were on the field at the snap.

Note 1: If an on-field ruling of a dead ball (down by contact, out of bounds, or incomplete forward pass) is changed, the ball belongs to the recovering player at the spot of the recovery, and any advance is nullified. If the ball goes out of bounds in an end zone, the result of the play will be either a touchback or a safety.

Note 2: If the on-field ruling is a dead ball, any recovery must occur in the continuing action following the loss of possession.

Note 3: If the Referee does not have indisputable visual evidence as to which player recovered the loose ball, or that the ball went out of bounds, the ruling on the field will stand.

Article 5 Non-Reviewable Plays include, but are not limited to:
a) Status of the play or game clock.
b) Proper down.
c) Penalty administration, including the spot of a foul.
d) Runner ruled down by defensive contact or out of bounds (not involving fumbles or the line to gain).
e) The position of the ball not relating to first down or goal line.
f) Field-goal or Try attempts that cross above either upright without touching anything.
g) Erroneous Whistle.
h) Quarterback "spike" to kill clock.

RULE 16 OVERTIME PROCEDURES

SECTION 1 OVERTIME PROCEDURES

Article 1 If the score is tied at the end of the regulation playing time of all preseason, regular season, and postseason NFL games, a system of modified sudden-death overtime shall be in effect, pursuant to the following.

Article 2 At the end of regulation playing time, the Referee shall immediately toss a coin at the center of the field, in accordance with rules pertaining to a usual pregame toss (4-2-2). The visiting team captain is to again call the toss.

Article 3 Following an intermission of no more than three minutes after the end of the regular game, the extra period shall commence.

a) Both teams must have the opportunity to possess the ball once during the extra period, unless the team that receives the opening kickoff scores a touchdown on its initial possession, in which case it is the winner, or if the team kicking off to start the overtime period scores a safety on the receiving team's initial possession, in which case the team that kicked off is the winner.
b) If the team that possesses the ball first does not score on its initial possession, the team next scoring by any method shall be the winner.
c) If the team that possesses the ball first scores a field goal on its initial possession, the other team (the second team) shall have the opportunity to possess the ball.
    1) If the second team scores a touchdown on its **possession**, it is the winner.
    2) If the second team scores a field goal on its possession, the team next scoring by any method shall be the winner.

Note 1: If the second team loses possession by an interception or fumble, the down will be permitted to run to its conclusion, but if the second team's possession has legally ended with the fumble recovery or interception, any subsequent action will not affect the outcome of the game. (If the change of possession occurs in the second team's end zone, the score counts.)

Note 2: Fouls by one or both teams after the change of possession, or a subsequent loss of possession by the team that intercepted the pass or recovered the ball, cannot change the result. The team that received the opening kickoff is the winner, since the second team had possession of the ball and failed to score.

Note 3: In such situations, if the player who intercepts the pass or recovers the fumble goes to the ground and makes no effort to advance, the covering official will blow his whistle to end the game.

Note 4: If the second team loses possession by an interception or fumble, but the first team committed a foul prior to the change of possession, the second team's possession has not legally ended, and the game cannot end on the down. However, in certain situations (see Approved Ruling 16.24) the second team cannot decline the penalty and accept the result of the play, no matter how beneficial, because it would create a second possession for itself. It must accept the penalty enforcement, which will extend its initial possession.

Note 5: The situation in (4) may also affect the team that receives the opening kickoff during its first possession. If there is a foul by the second team followed by a double change of possession, and the first team declines the penalty and accepts the result of the play, the second team has had its required possession, and the first team has possession of the ball for the second time and needs only a field goal to win. However, if it accepts the penalty, it will extend its initial possession (see A.R. 16.25).

d) A player is in possession when he is in firm grip and control of the ball inbounds (3-2-7). The defense gains possession when it catches, intercepts, or recovers a loose ball.
e) The opportunity to possess applies only during kicking plays. A kickoff is the opportunity to possess for the receiving team. If the kicking team legally recovers the kick, the receiving team is considered to have had its opportunity. A punt or field goal attempt that crosses the line of scrimmage and is muffed by the receiving team is considered to be an opportunity to possess for the receiving team. Normal touching rules by the kicking team apply.
f) All replay reviews will be initiated by the Replay Official. Coaches' challenges will not be allowed.

Article 4 The following shall apply to overtime games in the preseason and regular season.

a) There shall be a maximum of one 15-minute period, even if the second team has not had an opportunity to possess the ball or if its initial possession has not ended. If the score is tied at the end of the period, the game shall result in a tie.
b) Each team shall be entitled to two time outs, and if there is an excess time out, the usual rules shall apply (4-5). The general provisions for the fourth quarter of a game, including timing, shall apply.

Article 5 The following shall apply to overtime games in the postseason:

a) If the score is tied at the end of a 15-minute overtime period, or if the second team's initial possession has not ended, another overtime period will begin, and play will continue, regardless of how many 15-minute periods are necessary.
b) Between each overtime period, there shall be a two-minute intermission, but there shall be no halftime intermission after the second period. At the beginning of the third overtime period, the captain who lost the coin toss prior to the first overtime period shall have the first choice of the two privileges in 4-2-2, unless the team that won the coin toss deferred.
c) At the end of the first and third extra periods, etc., teams must change goals in accordance with 4-2-3.
d) Each team is entitled to three time outs during a half. If there is an excess timeout, the usual rules shall apply (4-5).

(e) At the end of a second overtime period, timing rules shall apply as at the end of the first half. At the end of a fourth overtime period, timing rules shall apply as at the end of the fourth quarter.
(f) At the end of a fourth overtime period, there will be another coin toss pursuant to Section 1, Article 2, and play will continue until a winner is declared.

Article 6 Disqualified player(s) shall not re-enter during any extra period or periods in the preseason, regular season, and postseason.

Article 7 Except as provided for above, all other general and specific rules shall apply during any extra period or periods in the preseason, regular season, and postseason.

RULE 17 EMERGENCIES, UNFAIR ACTS

SECTION 1 EMERGENCIES

NON-PLAYER ON FIELD

Article 1 If any non-player, including photographers, reporters, employees, police or spectators, enters the field of play or end zones, and in the judgment of an official said party or parties interfere with the play, the Referee, after consulting the crew (13-1-7 and 15-1-3), shall enforce any such penalty or score as the interference warrants.

FIELD CONTROL

Article 2 If spectators enter the field and/or interfere with the progress of the game in such a manner that in the opinion of the Referee the game cannot continue, he shall declare time out. In such a case, he shall record the number of the down, distance to be gained, and the position of the ball on the field. He shall also secure from the Line Judge the playing time remaining and record it. The Referee shall then order the home club through its management to have the field cleared, and when it is cleared and order restored and the safety of the spectators, players and officials is assured to the satisfaction of the Referee, the game must continue even if it is necessary to use lights.

GAME CALLED

Article 3 If the game must be called due to a state or municipal law, or by darkness if no lights are available, an immediate report shall be made to the Commissioner by the home club, visiting club, and officials. On receipt of all reports, the Commissioner shall make a decision which will be final.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Article 4 The NFL affirms the position that in most circumstances all regular-season and postseason games should be played to their conclusion. If, in the opinion of appropriate League authorities, it is impossible to begin or continue a game due to an emergency, or a game is deemed to be imminently threatened by any such emergency (e.g., severely inclement weather, lightning, flooding, power failure), the following procedures (Articles 5 through 11) will serve as guidelines for the Commissioner and/or his duly appointed representatives. The Commissioner has the authority to review the circumstances of each emergency and to adjust the following procedures in whatever manner he deems appropriate. If, in the Commissioner's opinion, it is reasonable to project that the resumption of an interrupted game would not change its ultimate result or adversely affect any other inter-team competitive issue, he is empowered to terminate the game.

LEAGUE AUTHORITY

Article 5 The League employees vested with the authority to define emergencies under these procedures are the Commissioner, designated representatives from his League office staff, and the game Referee. In those instances where neither the Commissioner nor his designated representative is in attendance at a game, the Referee will have sole authority; provided, however, that if the Referee delays the beginning of or interrupts a game for a significant period of time due to an emergency, he must make every effort to contact the Commissioner or the Commissioner's designated representative for consultation. In all cases of significant delay, the League authorities will consult with the management of the participating clubs and will attempt to obtain appropriate information from outside sources, if applicable (e.g., weather bureau, police).

LATER DATE

Article 6 If, because of an emergency, a regular-season or postseason game is not started at its scheduled time and cannot be played at any later time that same day, the game nevertheless must be played on a subsequent date to be determined by the Commissioner.

PRE-GAME THREAT

Article 7 If there is deemed to be a threat of an emergency that may occur during the playing of a game (e.g., an incoming tropical storm), the starting time of such game will not be moved to an earlier time unless there is clearly sufficient time to make an orderly change.

INTERRUPTED GAME

Article 8 If, under emergency circumstances, an interrupted regular-season or post-season game cannot be completed on the same day, such game will be rescheduled by the Commissioner and resumed at that point.

ALTERNATE DATES, SITES

Article 9 In instances under these emergency procedures which require the Commissioner to reschedule a regular-season game, he will make every effort to set the game for no later than two days after its originally scheduled date, and he will attempt to schedule the game at its original site. If unable to do so, he will schedule it at the nearest available facility. If it is impossible to schedule the game within two days after its original date, the Commissioner will attempt to schedule it on the Tuesday of the next calendar week in which the two involved clubs play other clubs (or each other). Further, the Commissioner will keep in mind the potential for competitive inequities if one or both of the involved clubs has already been scheduled for a game following the Tuesday of that week (e.g., Thanksgiving).

POST-SEASON INTERRUPTION

Article 10 If an emergency interrupts a post-season game and such game cannot be resumed on that same date, the Commissioner will make every effort to arrange for its completion as soon as possible. If unable to schedule the game at the same site, he will select an appropriate alternate site. He will terminate the game short of completion only, if in his judgment, the continuation of the game would not be normally expected to alter the ultimate result.

GAME RESUMPTION

Article 11 In all instances where a game is resumed after interruption, either on the same date or a subsequent date, the resumption will begin at the point at which the game was interrupted. At the time of interruption, the Referee will call time out and he will make a record of the following: the team possessing the ball, direction in which its offense was headed, position of the ball on the field, down, distance, period, time remaining in the period, and any other pertinent information required for an efficient and equitable resumption of play.

SECTION 2 EXTRAORDINARILY UNFAIR ACTS

COMMISSIONER AUTHORITY

Article 1 The Commissioner has the sole authority to investigate and take appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective measures if any club action, non-participant interference, or calamity occurs in an NFL game which he deems so extraordinarily unfair or outside the accepted tactics encountered in professional football that such action has a major effect on the result of the game.

NO CLUB PROTESTS

Article 2 The authority and measures provided for in this entire Section 2 do not constitute a protest machinery for NFL clubs to avail themselves of in the event a dispute arises over the result of a game. The investigation called for in this Section 2 will be conducted solely on the Commissioner's initiative to review an act or occurrence that he deems so extraordinary or unfair that the result of the game in question would be inequitable to one of the participating teams. The Commissioner will not apply his authority in cases of complaints by clubs concerning judgmental errors or routine errors of omission by game officials. Games involving such complaints will continue to stand as completed.

PENALTIES FOR UNFAIR ACTS

Article 3 The Commissioner's powers under this Section 2 include the imposition of monetary fines and draft-choice forfeitures, suspension of persons involved in unfair acts, and, if appropriate, the reversal of a game's result or the rescheduling of a game, either from the beginning or from the point at which the extraordinary act occurred. In the event of rescheduling a game, the Commissioner will be guided by the procedures specified in 17-1-5–11, above. In all cases, the Commissioner will conduct a full investigation, including the opportunity for hearings, use of game video, and any other procedure he deems appropriate.

RULE 18 GUIDELINES FOR CAPTAINS

SECTION 1 GUIDELINES FOR CAPTAINS

Article 1 One hour and thirty minutes prior to kickoff: Respective coaches designate a maximum of six captains per team.

Article 2 **Coin toss:**

a) Up to six captains per team can participate in the coin toss ceremony (active, inactive, or honorary); only one captain from the visiting team (or a captain designated by the Referee if there is no home team) can declare the choice of the coin toss.
b) The team that won the toss may then have only one captain declare its option.
c) The team that lost the coin toss may then have only one captain declare its option.

Article 3 **Choice on Penalty Option:** Only one captain is permitted to indicate the team's penalty option.

Article 4 **Change of Captains:**

a) The coach has the prerogative of informing the Referee when he wishes to make a change in team captains; or
b) A captain who is leaving can inform the Referee which player will act as captain in his place when he is substituted for; or
c) When a captain leaves the game, the incoming substitute is permitted to inform the Referee which player the respective coach has designated as captain.

Note: A captain on the field has no authority to request a change of fellow team captain when that captain remains on the field.

Distance Penalties

Loss of Five Yards

Second and each subsequent team timeout after the two-minute warning.....4-5-4

Delay of game, i.e.,

exceeding 40/25 seconds in putting ball in play..... 4-6-1

repeatedly snapping ball before Referee can assume normal position……4-6-5

runner remaining on ball or opponent remaining on runner to consume time……4-6-5

undue delay in assembling after a time out…..4-6-5

undue delay in assembling after time out…….....4-6-5

defensive abrupt non-football movements…….....4-6-5

spiking or throwing the ball in the field of play…..…4-6-5

taking the ball from a downed runner causing delay……...4-7-1

Illegal substitution, i.e.,

substitute entering during play, withdrawn player on field at snap or free kick (unless interference) or withdrawing on opponent's side or across endline……5-2-8

Illegal kick at free kick (ball remains dead and replay)……6-1-1

Violation of free kick formation (includes kickoff), i.e.,

kickers failing to be behind ball or inbounds (except placekick holder)……6-1-3

receivers failing to be inbounds or behind their free kick line……..6-1-3

kicking team player (other than kicker) more than five yards behind restraining line.....6-1-3

less than four kicking team players on each side of kicker.....6-1-3

Making short free kick……6-2-5

Illegally touching free kick (a) before it goes 10 yards or (b) after being out of bounds……6-2-4

Illegal position of Team A players at the snap, i.e.,

having fewer than seven players on line…….....7-5-1

having player neither on nor one yard behind his line unless man under center……7-5-1

Illegally lining up over center…….....9-1-3

More than six players on line of scrimmage on either side of center……..9-1-3

Player entering neutral zone contacts opponent.....7-4-3

Being offside at snap……7-4-5

Neutral zone infraction……..7-4-4

Player not reporting change in eligibility……..5-3-1

more than eleven men on field at snap or in formation.....5-1-1

Illegal motion by Team A at snap, i.e.,

player not being stationary (except) one only in motion clearly backwards……7-4-7

single player not moving clearly backward at snap…….. 7-4-7

Pausing less than one second after a shift…….....7-4-8

Being out of bounds at snap…….....7-5-1

Not snapping ball when prescribed…….....7-6-3

Illegally snapping ball i.e.,

failing to make backward pass……7-6-3

failing to place ball on ground as specified…….....7-6-3

Failing to give impulse by continuous motion or sliding hands along ball before snap……7-6-3

Snapper restrictions ……7-6-3

False start……7-4-2

Snap going to receiver on line……..7-6-4

Making forward pass in field of play not from scrimmage…….....8-1-2

Second forward pass……..... 8-1-2

Pass after ball crossed line of scrimmage and returned……..8-1-2

Illegal touch of forward pass……8-1-8

Ineligible player downfield on pass. ……..8-3-1

Illegal Forward Handling……8-7-4

Ineligible player downfield on kick…….....… 9-1-2

Kicking team player voluntarily out of bounds during a punt……9-1-5

Making invalid fair-catch signal…….....10-2-2

Illegal use of hands by defense, i.e.,

to hold an opponent who is not the runner other than to ward off an opponent.....……12-1-6

Running into kicker behind his line (not roughing).....12-2-10

Loss of Ten Yards

Pass interference by Team A……8-5-4

holding, illegal use of hands, arms or body on offense, illegal block in the back above the waist……..... 12-1-3

Tripping.....12-1-4, 12-1-8

Assisting runner……12-1-4

Batting or punching ball, when loose (unless a pass), towards opponents' goal line or in any direction if in endzone……12-4-1

Loss of Fifteen Yards

Not being able to start each half on scheduled time……4-2-1

Interfering with fair catch (and catch awarded)…….....10-1-1

Tackling or blocking maker of a fair catch or avoidable running into……10-2-3

Head Slap……12-2-12

Striking, kneeing and kicking (also disqualification)……12-2-12

Striking opponent below shoulders with forearm or elbow by turning or pivoting……..12-2-13

Twisting, turning or pulling of opponent's facemask……12-2-14

Blocking below waist on kicks and change of possession….12-2-5

Roughing the kicker……12-2-10

Falling on or piling on a prostrate player…….....12-2-6-d

Unnecessary roughness (also disqualification when flagrant), i.e.,

striking an opponent with foot or shin in a whipping motion……12-2-6-a

tackling runner who is out of bounds…….....12-2-6-b

running into, throwing body against a player obviously out of the play or after the ball is dead……12-2-6

Initiating contact with the crown of the helmet……12-2-8

running into from behind or dropping body across back of legs of opponent who is not the runner (clipping)……..12-2-1

Illegal crackback……12-2-2

Peel-back block……12-2-4

Blindside block……12-2-7

Roughing the passer…….....12-2-9

Chop block……12-2-3

Illegal block after fair catch signal…….....10-2-2

Unsportsmanlike conduct by players (also disqualification when flagrant), i.e.,

using abusive or insulting language or gestures to players or officials or continuing acts……..12-3-1-b
taunting…….12-3-1--c
player pushing, shoving, or laying hand on official…….12-3-1-h
attempting to disconcert Team A at snap by words or signals……..12-3-1-j
concealing the ball under clothing or substituting article for ball……12-3-1-k
lingering……12-3-1-l
leverage……12-3-1-p
repeatedly violating substitution rule in attempt to conserve time……12-3-1-m
violating 40-second rule more than twice (same down) after a warning……12-3-1-n
leaping to attempt to block a field goal or point after touchdown unless the player was lined up on the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped…….12-3-1-r
a punter, placekicker or holder who simulates being roughed or run into by a defensive player…….12-3-1-t
receiving team forming illegal wedge on free kick.....6-1-3
Illegal conduct by non-players (also exclusion for flagrant violations), i.e.,
player on field communicating other than to coach in prescribed area……..13-1-1
team representatives using unsportsmanlike conduct during game or between halves or sitting on bench when not qualified…….13-1-3
non-players going on field without permission (other than team attendants during a team time out)…..13-1-2
non-players moving along boundary lines (unless substitute warming up or coach in prescribed area)…….13-1-5
Loss of Half Distance to Goal Line
Pass interference by Team B in its end zone and previous spot is inside its 2-yard line……8-5-4
Distance penalty enforced from a spot between goal lines carrying ball more than half the distance to either goal line…….14-2-1
Ball placed on 1-Yard Line
Pass interference by Team B in its end zone and previous spot is outside its 2-yard line…….8-5-4
Withdrawal Penalties
Excess time out……..4-5-4
Player being disqualified, suspended (illegal equipment), or replaced…….5-4-1
Illegal return (loss of five also)…….5-2-8
Disqualification Penalties
Disqualification always occurs in combination with a 15-yard penalty. Exceptions to distance penalties:
Both teams committing disqualifying fouls (double foul)……..14-5
Distance being declined……14-1
Loss of 15 yards
Flagrant striking, kicking, or kneeing an opponent or striking him on head or neck with heel, back or side of hand wrist, elbow, or forearm…….12-2-12

Flagrant roughing of kicker…….12-2-10
Flagrant roughing of passer…….12-2-9
Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct by players…..12-3-1
Player using a helmet as a weapon…….12-2-16
Disqualified player returning (exclusion from field enclosure)……5-2-7
Suspended player illegally returning……5-2-7
unnecessary physical contact with game official.....12-3-1-h
Loss of Ball Penalties
Ball being behind necessary line at end of fourth down……..7-1-1
Kickers first touching kick (not a free kick in field of play)……9-2-2
Kickers illegally touching free kick before it travels ten yards..... 6-2-4
Interfering with fair catch (also fair catch allowed)……..10-1-1
Disqualification for Entire Game
Repeat violation by player wearing or displaying illegal equipment……5-4-9
Charged Time Out Penalties
Taking time out for injured player during last two minutes of either half (withdrawal only when fourth time out – also loss of five when fifth or more)……4-5-4
Time Penalty
Actions to conserve time……4-7-1
Fouling by defense, illegal touching or fair-catch interfering by offense or fouling by both teams at end of half during play in which time expires (extend quarter)……4-8-2
Replay Penalties
Team B fouling on Try which fails……11-3-3
Committing double foul unless dead-ball fouls by both teams after ball is dead ……14-5
Scoring Penalties
Try Awarded
Team B committing a foul during a Try which would ordinarily result in a safety……11-3-3
Score Awarded
Repeated fouling by defense to prevent score…..12-3-2
Touchdown Awarded
Committing palpably unfair act which deprives opponent of a touchdown……12-3-3 and 13-1-7
Safety
Offense fouling anywhere, and spot of enforcement is behind its own goal line……11-5-1 and 14-2-2
Intentional grounding in own end zone…….8-2-1
Score Not Allowed
Offending team scores after foul during down in which time expires for half (also no extension of time)…..4-8-2

Unsuccessful Try
Team A committing foul during a Try which would ordinarily result:
in loss of down or in a touchback……..…11-3-2
in loss of ball in field of play (not during a kick).....11-3-2
Team B recovering ball……..…11-3-2
New Series Penalties
Team B committing a foul during play from scrimmage giving Team A first down irrespective of distance penalty (automatic first down)..……..……14-1-2
Team B committing a foul not giving Team A first down unless enforcement places ball in advance of necessary line, i.e.,
excess time out……..……..…4-5-4
delay of game……..……..4-6
illegal substitution…….……..5-2-8
illegal equipment (suspension)…….……..…5-4-9
encroachment ….....…7-4-3
offside.....7-4-5
neutral zone infraction.....7-4-4
Illegal formation……9-1-3
running into kicker.....12-2-10
more than eleven players on field at snap or in formation.....5-1-1
Team B interfering in field of play with a pass from behind line (distance penalty in addition when personal foul)……..…8-5-1 and 12-2-11
Combination Penalties
Loss of Down and Five
Making a forward pass from scrimmage from beyond the line……..…8-1-2
Loss of Down and Ten
Intentionally grounds pass (from behind line)….....…8-2-1
illegally kicked ball.....12-4-3
Loss of ball and Fifteen
Interfering with a possible fair catch in field of play (also fair catch)……..……10-1-1
Touchback
Kickers illegally touching kick (not free kick) inside receiver five-yard line……..…9-2-3
Fair-catch interfering or running into maker of in receiver's end zone……..……10-1-1
Score, Distance or Disqualification
Referee makes equitable ruling:…….……15-1-3
player committing palpably unfair act.…….....…12-3-3
non-player committing palpably unfair act.…….....13-1-7
Miscellaneous Situations
Safety
Ball in possession of team behind or out of bounds behind own goal line and impetus which sent it in touch came from player of that team.....……..11-5-1
Kickoff Out of Bounds Between Goal Lines
Receiver's ball at inbounds spot when last touched by them……..…6-2-3
Receiver's ball 25 yards from spot of kick.....…….....6-2-3
Ball Remains Dead
Actions which delay game……..…4-6-1
Snapping before Officials assume normal position…….....4-6-1
Ball Dead Immediately
Committing acts designed to consume time…….....…4-7-1
Kickers recovering free kick……..……6-1-4
Kickers advancing after recovery of a scrimmage kick unless behind line other than a Try-kick (9-3-1)…….....9-3-2
Any kick touching receiver's goal post or cross bar unless scoring field goal…….....…6-1-5; 9-4-2; and 11-6-2
Official sounding whistle (even when accidental).....…7-2-1
Any receiver catching after fair-catch signal unless first touched by kickers…….....……..……10-2-3
Penalty Enforced From Goal Line
Defense fouling and spot of enforcement is behind goal line of offense……..…14-2-2
Runner crosses opponent's goal line and spot of enforcing foul by teammate during run is behind defense goal line…….....……14-2-2
Penalty Enforced on Next Free Kick
A team scoring and opponents commit a personal or unsportsmanlike conduct foul or a palpably unfair act, during down……..……..14-2-3

TABLE OF FOUL CODES

PENALTY	FOUL CODE
Chop Block	CHB
Clipping	CLP
Crown of Helmet	COH
Defensive Delay of Game	DOD
Defensive Holding	DH
Defensive Offside	DOF
Defensive Pass Interference	DPI
Defensive Too Many Men on Field	DTM
Delay of Game	DOG
Delay of Kickoff	DOK
Disqualification	DSQ
Encroachment	ENC
Facemask (15 Yards)	FMM
Fair Catch Interference	FCI
False Start	FST
Illegal Bat	BAT
Illegal Blindside Block	BLI
Illegal Block Above the Waist	IBW
Illegal Contact	ICT
Illegal Crackback	ICB
Illegal Cut	ICU
Illegal Formation	ILF
Illegal Forward Handing	IFH
Illegal Forward Pass	IFP
Illegal Kick/Kicking Loose Ball	KIK
Illegal Motion	ILM
Illegal Peel Back	IPB
Illegal Shift	ISH

PENALTY	FOUL CODE
Illegal Substitution	ILS
Illegal Touch—Kick	ITK
Illegal Touch—Pass	ITP
Illegal Use of Hands	ILH
Ineligible Downfield Kick	IDK
Ineligible Downfield Pass	IDP
Intentional Grounding	ING
Invalid Fair Catch Signal	IFC
Horse Collar	HC
Kickoff Out of Bounds	KOB
Leaping	LEA
Leverage	LEV
Low Block	LBL
Neutral Zone Infraction	NZI
Offensive Holding	OH
Offensive Offside	OOF
Offensive Pass Interference	OPI
Offensive Too Many Men on	OTM
Offside on Free Kick	OFK
Player Out of Bounds on Punt	POP
Roughing the Kicker	RRK
Roughing the Passer	RPS
Running into the Kicker	RNK
Short Free Kick	SFK
Taunting	TAU
Tripping	TRP
Unnecessary Roughness	UNR
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	UNS

TEAM ABBREVIATION CODES

Arizona Cardinals	ARZ	Miami Dolphins	MIA
Atlanta Falcons	ATL	Minnesota Vikings	MIN
Baltimore Ravens	BLT	New England Patriots	NE
Buffalo Bills	BUF	New Orleans Saints	NO
Carolina Panthers	CAR	New York Giants	NYG
Chicago Bears	CHI	New York Jets	NYJ
Cincinnati Bengals	CIN	Oakland Raiders	OAK
Cleveland Browns	CLV	Philadelphia Eagles	PHI
Dallas Cowboys	DAL	Pittsburgh Steelers	PIT
Denver Broncos	DEN	St. Louis Rams	SL
Detroit Lions	DET	San Diego Chargers	SD
Green Bay Packers	GB	San Francisco 49ers	SF
Houston Texans	HST	Seattle Seahawks	SEA
Indianapolis Colts	IND	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	TB
Jacksonville Jaguars	JAX	Tennessee Titans	TEN
Kansas City Chiefs	KC	Washington Redskins	WAS

Official Signals



1

TOUCHDOWN, FIELD GOAL, or SUCCESFUL TRY
Both arms extended above head.



2

SAFETY
Palms together above head.



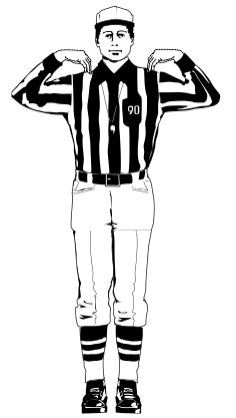
3

FIRST DOWN
Arms pointed toward defensive team's goal.



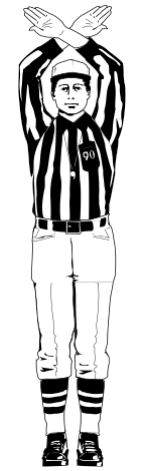
4

CROWD NOISE, DEAD BALL, or NEUTRAL ZONE ESTABLISHED
One arm above head with an open hand.
With fist closed: **Fourth Down.**



5

BALL ILLEGALLY TOUCHED, KICKED, OR BATTED
Fingertips tap both shoulders.



6

TIME OUT
Hands crisscrossed above head.
Same signal followed by placing one hand on top of cap: **Referee's Time Out.**
Same signal followed by arm swung at side: **Touchback.**



7

NO TIME OUT or TIME IN WITH WHISTLE Full arm circled to simulate moving clock.



8

DELAY OF GAME OFFENSE/DEFENSE or EXCESS TIME OUT Folded arms.



9

FALSE START, ILLEGAL FORMATION, KICKOFF OR SAFETY KICK OUT OF BOUNDS, or KICKING TEAM PLAYER VOLUNTARILY OUT OF BOUNDS DURING A PUNT Forearms rotated over and over in front of body.



10

PERSONAL FOUL
One wrist striking the other above head.
Same signal followed by swinging leg: **Roughing Kicker.**
Same signal followed by raised arm swinging forward: **Roughing Passer.**
Same signal followed by grasping facemask: **MAJOR Facemask.**



11

HOLDING
Grasping one wrist, the fist clenched, in front of chest.



12

ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS, ARMS, OR BODY Grasping one wrist, the hand open and facing forward, in front of chest.



13

PENALTY REFUSED, INCOMPLETE PASS, PLAY OVER, or MISSED GOAL
Hands shifted in horizontal plane.



14

PASS JUGGLED INBOUNDS AND CAUGHT OUT OF BOUNDS
Hands up and down in front of chest (following incomplete pass signal).



15

ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS
One hand waved behind back followed by loss of down signal (23) when appropriate.



16

INTENTIONAL GROUNDING OF PASS
Parallel arms waved in a diagonal plane across body. Followed by loss of down signal (23).



17

INTERFERENCE WITH FORWARD PASS or FAIR CATCH
Hands open and extended forward from shoulders with hands vertical.



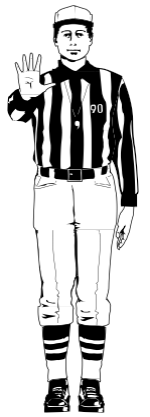
18

INVALID FAIR-CATCH SIGNAL
One hand waved above head.



19

INELIGIBLE RECEIVER or INELIGIBLE MEMBER OF KICKING TEAM DOWNFIELD
Right hand touching top of cap.



20

ILLEGAL CONTACT
One open hand extended forward.



21

OFFSIDE, ENCROACHMENT, OR NEUTRAL ZONE INFRACTION
Hands on hips.



22

ILLEGAL MOTION AT SNAP
Horizontal arc with one hand.



23

LOSS OF DOWN
Both hands held behind head.



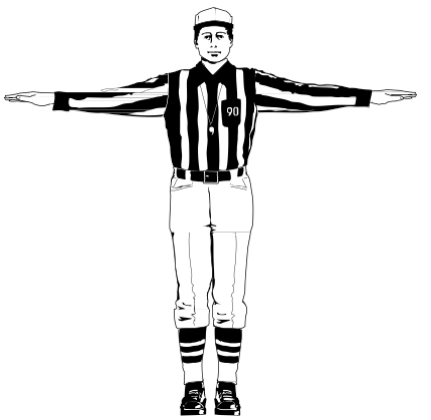
24

INTERLOCKING INTERFERENCE, PUSHING, or HELPING RUNNER
Pushing movement of hands to front with arms downward.



25

TOUCHING A FORWARD PASS OR SCRIMMAGE KICK
Diagonal motion of one hand across another.



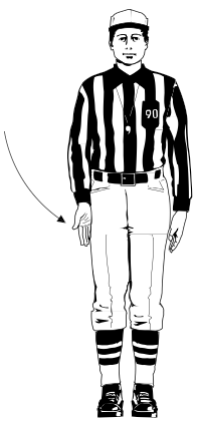
26

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT
Arms outstretched, palms down.



27

ILLEGAL CUT
Both hands striking front of thigh.
ILLEGAL BLOCK BELOW THE WAIST
One hand striking front of thigh preceded by personal foul signal (10).
CHOP BLOCK
Both hands striking side of thighs preceded by personal foul signal (10).
CLIPPING
One hand striking back of calf preceded by personal foul signal (10).



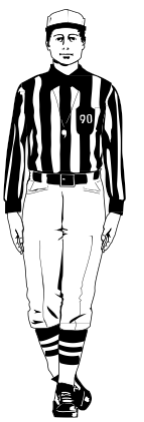
28

ILLEGAL CRACKBACK
Strike of an open right hand against the right mid thigh preceded by personal foul signal (10).



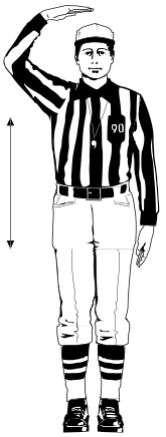
29

PLAYER DISQUALIFIED
Ejection signal.



30

TRIPPING
Repeated action of right foot in back of left heel.



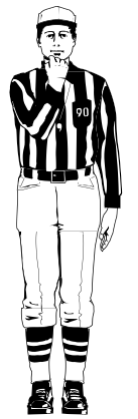
31

UNCATCHABLE FORWARD PASS
Palm of right hand held parallel to ground above head and moved back and forth.



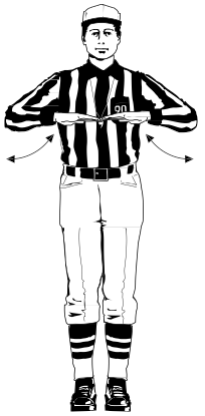
32

ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION, 12 MEN IN OFFENSIVE HUDDLE, or TOO MANY MEN ON THE FIELD
Both hands on top of head.



33

FACEMASK
Grasping mask with one hand.



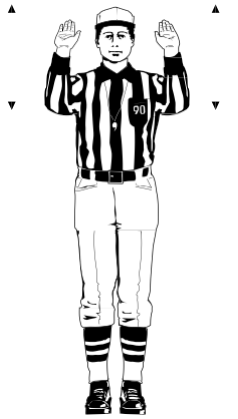
34

ILLEGAL SHIFT
Horizontal arcs with two hands.



35

RESET PLAY CLOCK— 25 SECONDS
Pump one arm vertically.



36

RESET PLAY CLOCK— 40 SECONDS
Pump two arms vertically.

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