

# GAME RULES

## FOOTBALL OUTDOOR – COED 6v6

### EQUIPMENT

BSSC will provide each player with a team t-shirt of a designated color. Each player is required to wear that shirt or a shirt of the same color to each game. If the opposing team captain does not approve of the color of the shirt then that player must change shirts, or will not be allowed to play. The game official must be involved in this decision. Always bring an extra white T-shirt in case you play a team with a similar shirt color.

BSSC provides one set of flags per team, and Teams should agree on a ball, which must be a properly inflated, regulation size NFL or NCAA ball.

Players may not wear loose or bulky jewelry (e.g. hoop earrings, large rings, watches, loose neck chains and bracelets). Wedding bands are OK.

No metal cleats are allowed.

### PLAYERS, ROSTERS, ELIGIBILITY

**PLAYERS.** There can be any number of players on a team roster, and rosters are open to players of all gender identities and expressions. For coed football, rosters must have a minimum of 2 players who identify as women ("female players"). After this minimum is satisfied, all other roster spots are open to any gender.

Each team shall have no more than 6 players on the field, including at least 2 female players. A team must have at least 5 rostered players, including at least one female player, to start a game. If a team does not start at least 1 female player, in a total of 5 players, that team shall forfeit the match. To avoid forfeits, see "Picking up Players Policy" on our website under League Info. **Any players picked up must already be in the BSSC flag football league and cannot be from a team that plays in a higher division.** Once additional rostered players arrive, any players who were picked up **MUST** stop playing.

**Rosters.** No limit to the number of players on team roster. Captains can add players to their online roster up until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the season. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> week the rosters are frozen and only rostered players can play for remainder of season. The \$25/non-member fees are charged at this time, too. Any roster additions (of non-BSSC members) must be accompanied by the \$25/non-member payment. Any "special circumstances" for roster additions or subtractions must be presented to the Program Manager in writing and cleared before the player can play in their first game for that team.

**There are additional roster restrictions for leagues with multiple divisions.** Over the past several seasons, many individuals, including referees, have expressed concerns about lower division teams being comprised primarily of players from upper division teams. Therefore, in an effort to balance the level of competition, the following policy is in effect.

#### Leagues with 3 Divisions:

- A D1 team – has no restrictions
- A D2 team's roster cannot have more than two (2) players whose names appear on a D1 team roster
- A D3 team's roster cannot have ANY players on its roster who play in another division.

#### Leagues with 2 Divisions:

- A 1<sup>st</sup> Division team – has no restrictions
- A 2<sup>nd</sup> Division team cannot have more than two (2) players whose names appear on a 1<sup>st</sup> Division team roster

Playing on multiple teams within the same division...in divisions where there are multiple conferences, a player is eligible to play on two rosters in the same division, provided the two teams are in separate conferences. Please note for Playoffs, that scheduling requests aimed at avoiding conflicts may not be honored. **Please plan your team roster accordingly!**

**ELIGIBILITY.** All players must be listed on and have signed their team's official roster in order to be eligible to play. A player is eligible to appear on multiple rosters if they play on multiple teams within the same division or if there are no divisions. In order to be eligible for playoffs, players must have played in a minimum of 3 games during the regular season.

## GAME DURATION

Each game consists of two **22-minute** halves. The clock will start running at the scheduled game time unless the previous game is running behind. If a team is late to their game, they will lose that time. The clock will only stop for injury time-outs, time-outs requested by either team, or referee charged time-outs.

### TIME-OUTS:

Each team is allowed two 45-second time outs per game. During the first 40 minutes of play, if a team calls a timeout after a touchdown, prior to the extra point attempt, the clock **WILL START** when the offense snaps the ball to attempt the Point After Try (PAT).

### OFFICIAL GAME:

Once a game passes the half way point of the second half (10:59 remaining on the clock), a game will be considered official. If a game has to be stopped and cannot resume play for any reason after that point and before the final buzzer, the score at the time of interruption will be considered the final score.

### OVERTIME:

- During regular season play, all ties will be scored as a tie
- Playoffs – Four-Downs and Out format applies
- A coin toss with the winning team deciding on first or second possession.
- Teams will attempt to score in the same end zone.
- Each team will then have 4 downs to score from 20-yard line.
- If a team scores, they will have the opportunity to go for 1 or 2 on the PAT. (If the game is still tied after 3 OT rotations, teams must go for 2 on the PAT)
- A female must be used within the first three plays
- An interception will result in a team losing its possession – the ball may not be returned for any points.
- The game will be decided when one team scores more points in the rotation.
- No 1<sup>st</sup> downs will be awarded expect in the case of a penalty

## PLAYING THE GAME

### PRE-GAME COIN TOSS:

A coin toss will determine starting possession. The winner of the toss will have choice of offense, defense, or direction. The loser of the toss will have the remaining option. Start of game situation will change at the start of the second half (e.g. team that starts the game on offense will start the second half on defense)

Note: For Playoff games, the higher seeded team automatically “wins” the toss.

### START OF GAME:

Play starts on the 20-yard line.

For every play, once the ball has been spotted, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. If the referee feels that this is being taken advantage of (delay of game), they can rule accordingly:

- On the first offense - Warn the team
- On subsequent offenses - Penalize the offense 5 paces/yards (the team cannot re-huddle)
- After the penalty is marked off the ball **MUST** be snapped within 5 seconds or it will be loss of down
- Within the last two minutes of each half, the clock will stop on delay of game penalties.

A two-minute warning is given in the second half – *the clock does NOT stop at 2 minutes.*

- If a team is up by 14 points or more, the clock runs continuously during the last two minutes of play.

If during the final 2 minutes of the game the score differential is 13pts or less, the referee will stop the clock when:

- an incomplete pass is thrown
- a player ends play by going out of bounds
- either team scores (the clock remains stopped until the opposing team snaps the ball after the PAT attempt; the clock does not run during extra points)
- a change of possession occurs
- a penalty which must be marked off occurs
- a team declares a punt (the clock will resume for the punt and the ensuing return. It will then be stopped when the returnee is tackled, up until their first snap from the line of scrimmage.)
- a team calls a time out

### *THE CLOCK DOES NOT STOP ON FIRST DOWNS OR FUMBLES*

#### **FLAGS:**

It is each player's responsibility to have their flags positioned squarely over each hip. If a player begins a play without two flags or if the entire flag is not accessible, and that player takes possession of the ball (i.e. a hand-off, reception, hike to the quarterback, interception, fumble recovery) the play is called dead at the spot that possession was taken.

If an offensive player without both flags accessible takes possession in their own end-zone, it is ruled a safety. If a defensive player takes possession in their own end-zone, it is ruled a touchback. If either team takes possession in the opponent's end-zone, it is a touchdown.

If an offensive player loses their flag prior to gaining possession of the ball, the play is blown dead once possession is gained. An exception to this would be if the defense pulls the offensive player's flag early. In this case, the defense is now responsible to pull the remaining flag.

#### **STARTING PLAY / HIKING THE BALL:**

The offense has two options to start each play:

1. The ball can be placed on the ground and hiked through the air to the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is in the air, the play has started and the defense can start counting for their rush.
2. The quarterback can "self-hike" by standing at the scrimmage line with the ball off the ground. There are no silent snaps. The quarterback must use some type of cadence. They do not, however, have to move back when they hike the ball. Penalty for a silent snap will be – 5 pace/yard penalty, repeat of down. If the play starts with the ball on the ground, and the offensive player self-hikes the ball, the play will be considered illegal and a loss of down will be assessed. If a team member is to hike the ball, the ball must stay on the ground until hiked.

If the ball is off the ground and the player hikes the ball, it will be considered a change of possession and the defense may rush in immediately. NOTE: It is the center's responsibility to not interfere with the defensive pass rushers right to pursue the quarterback laterally down the line of scrimmage. Any interference will be considered blocking.

No one on the offensive team can be moving forward at the time the play is started.

**The DEFENSE must be on the field and set BEFORE the ball is hiked on a change of possession.**

#### **QUARTERBACK RESTRICTIONS:**

The Quarterback is not eligible to run the ball downfield. The QB must either lateral the ball or throw the ball. Even after the 5 second count has passed and a defender is in the backfield, the quarterback may not run the ball downfield (past the line of scrimmage). Penalty for doing so is a loss of down.

#### **LATERALS:**

A lateral is pitch of the ball (overhand OR underhand) to a fellow team member next to you or behind you. Laterals are legal only behind the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is lateraled, the player who formerly had

possession of the ball may go downfield and be considered a receiver. A lateral CAN be picked off. A dropped lateral is a fumble (see fumbles).

### **PASS RECEPTIONS:**

A legal pass reception requires that the receiver have **one foot** in bounds at the time control is achieved. No part of the body may be touching an area out of bounds.

### **SAFETIES:**

A safety will be scored if a player is:

- Tagged down in their own end zone (except in a punt return)
- Runs out of bounds in their own end zone
- Snaps the ball out of the end zone
- If the offense fumbles the ball in their own end zone

As a result, the team on defense receives 2 points, and the team must now punt a “free” kick from their own 20 yard line.

Also, a player having intercepted a pass or received a punt in the end zone cannot be tagged in the end zone for a safety unless they have previously crossed the plane of the end zone with the ball.

### **NO BLOCKING:**

Blocking is considered the movement, **whether deliberate or unintentional**, that impedes a defensive player’s pursuit of the ball carrier, unless movement is to avoid personal injury (as interpreted by the referee). This also includes the deliberate or unintentional movement of limbs by a stationary player. More leeway may be given to players moving at the time of a reception, but this is up to the referee’s discretion.

A violation of this rule will result in the play being called dead and the ball being spotted at the point of the infraction, or the ball carriers position at the time of the infraction, whichever is in favor of the defensive team. If the referee considers the blocking incident excessively aggressive, a 15-yard penalty will be assessed from the spot of the ball (or to the one-yard line if the offense is under 15 yards from their own goal line). Depending on the severity of the infraction, the offending player may be ejected from the game and/or league.

### **PASS RUSHING:**

The defense may not pursue the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage until completing a five-second count, at **normal speaking cadence, as determined by the referee**. After the five second count is completed, any number of defensive players may rush behind the line of scrimmage. If the defense rushes prematurely, the offense may either play the down over or decline the penalty.

If the ball changes possession in the backfield (i.e. handed off) the defense may rush in immediately. If the offense fakes a change of possession and the defense advances behind the line of scrimmage, no foul will be called if the defense returns to in front of the line of scrimmage immediately, and continues the five-second count.

### **TACKLING:**

A player is “tackled” by removing at least one flag from the ball carrier’s belt. If a flag is removed by a defensive player, prior to full possession (as determined by referee), the offense is not considered tackled and play continues with no infraction charged. **Players may not leave their feet in attempts to “tackle” the ball carrier (leaving one’s feet does not include tripping, stumbling or losing one’s balance, as determined by the referee)**. If a player is determined by the referee to have dived after a flag and succeeded in pulling a player’s flag, such a play will be considered “no tackle” (similar to pulling a flag early). The play shall be allowed to continue with the second flag now having to be pulled in order for a tackle to occur. The purpose of this rule is for the safety of both the offensive and defensive player

### **FLAG GUARDING:**

An offensive player may not avoid a tackle by guarding their flag. Flag guarding consists of the following:

- pushing an opponent’s hand away from the flag;
- pushing an opponent or stiff arming;
- lowering an arm to shield the flag;
- dipping the shoulder;

- jumping

If a player is called for flag guarding, the play is dead at the point of the infraction. **Spinning to avoid a tackle is legal, as long as none of the above listed events occur simultaneously.**

#### **FEMALE PLAYER INVOLVEMENT:**

Every third play must **significantly involve** a female player, meaning:

1. a female player is the quarterback and attempts to throw the ball to a receiver, who is forward of the line of scrimmage. However if the quarterback is sacked without making a pass, it is referee's discretion if an attempt to make a legitimate play has been made.
2. a female player is the running back and attempts to advance the ball forward of the line of scrimmage
3. a female player is either a) clearly the intended receiver of an incomplete pass, or b) the resultant receiver.

If a male player on the offense tips a forward pass with any part of his body and a female player does NOT catch the ball, the play is considered to NOT have significantly involved a female player, regardless of whether they were the intended receiver.

Failure to involve a female player will result in the loss of down. The subsequent play must significantly involve a female player. If the infraction occurs on a fourth down, the result is a change of possession.

If a play was required to have significantly involved a female player, and the defense commits a foul resulting in the down having to be replayed, the subsequent play does not need to significantly involve a female player.

The cycle for involving female players does not stop after a touchdown. **If a touchdown is scored after two consecutive plays not significantly involving a female player, the PAT must significantly involve a female player.** An infraction of this rule on the PAT will result no points and change of possession.

The cycle starts anew with a change of possession.

#### **FIRST-DOWNS:**

Each team may earn only one first down during each drive. A first down may be achieved by advancing the ball and flags to or past the 50 yd line cone. **No diving over the line will be allowed. A ball spotted on the line shall be considered a first down.**

A first down may also be awarded due to a defensive foul (i.e. interference). A defensive foul is the only way that a team may be awarded more than two first downs.

Both the ball and the flags must be over the goal line in order for it to count as a touchdown or extra point. No diving over the line will be allowed.

#### **FOURTH DOWNS:**

At each fourth down, the offensive team must state whether it plans to go for it or flip the field. If they elect to go for it and are not successful, the opposing team will get possession at the spot of the ball. If they elect to flip the field the opposing team will have possession on their own 20.

#### **TURNOVERS:**

##### FUMBLES

If a player fumbles the ball, the play is dead at the spot where the player loss possession. If a player on either team takes possession of the ball, prior to the ball hitting the ground, possession goes to that team and that player may attempt to advance the ball towards their own end zone. There is no stripping of the ball.

##### INTERCEPTIONS

Interceptions of forward passes may be advanced. If a defensive and offensive player both appear to have possession or are struggling for possession, the reception is granted to the offense.

***On an interception if a defensive player uses excessive force to tackle the receiver half the distance of the goal will be awarded. On a 2-point conversion the 2 points will be awarded.***

## **FORWARD PROGRESS/BREAKAWAY RULE:**

Once, in the referee's judgment, a player has stopped their forward progress, the referee shall whistle the play dead.

Rationale: The purpose of this league is not to not score or show up the other team. If you have a chance to score and want to, do so. If you don't want to score, step out of bounds. Showing up another team, whether intentionally or unintentionally, by standing still inches from the goal line doesn't look good and could be perceived as poor sportsmanship.

## **PENALTIES**

Normal rules and penalties of the NCAA apply unless exceptions have been made herein. Some common examples of penalties include:

### **Illegal Contact**

- In cases where the person(s) acting as the offensive lineman, initiates any contact (at the ref's discretion), it will be ruled a 5 pace/yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and we will replay the down.
- If this contact is deemed excessive by the ref, an "**unnecessary roughness**" penalty of 10 paces/yards can be assessed in addition to the "illegal contact". Thus, making the total penalty 15 paces/yards.
- If contact occurs down field, it will be ruled a 5 pace/yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and we will replay the down. (penalty may be declined by offense)
- Other forms of illegal contact include: Tripping, Clipping, Contact to the head, Contact with a player already on the ground, Deliberately running into a player, Tackling, & Throwing a player to the ground

### **Offsides – (Offensive)**

- 5 paces/yards, play is ruled dead immediately, no option to decline, down is replayed

### **Defensive Offsides/Illegal or Early Rush**

- 5 paces/yards – **Offense has the option to decline the penalty and accept results of the play.**
- If offsides is called on a gender play and the offense ACCEPTS the penalty then next play does not have to be a gender.

### **Offensive Picking/Interference**

- The offensive team may not initiate a pick (i.e. an offensive player attempts to block, or "**screen**", a defensive player away from the person they are guarding, thereby freeing up that offensive player) while in motion. 5 pace/yard penalty from the line of scrimmage, loss of down (i.e. if it was 1<sup>st</sup> down during the penalty, it is now 2<sup>nd</sup> down).
- If a catch is made after a clear pick, it will be ruled "no catch". 5 pace/yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down
- Some acceptable incidental contact will occur while running routes and within the normal course of play, and will not be called.

### **Unnecessary Roughness**

- This includes any illegal tag such as grabbing jerseys or excessive pushing.
- This will result in a 10 pace/yard penalty from the point of infraction AND automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- **Extreme roughness will result in ejection from the game and/or the league if deemed necessary by the referee and league staff.**

### **Defensive Pass Interference**

- Ball is spotted at the point of the infraction and offense is awarded an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down **\*1<sup>st</sup> downs earned by penalties do not count towards your limit of two (2).**
- If the pass interference is in the endzone, the ball comes out to the 1 pace/yard line and it will be 1<sup>st</sup> down. Offense has the option to decline the penalty and accept results of the play.

## Defensive Holding

- 5 pace/yard penalty from line of scrimmage, replay down
- Offense can accept or decline penalty

## Defensive Checking

- 5 pace/yard penalty from line of scrimmage, replay down
- The “bump and run” will not be allowed
- No player may initiate contact at the line of scrimmage
- There is no 5-yd Bump Zone

## Miscellaneous

- If the player calling the cadence does not receive the snap, the play will not stand and result in a 5 pace/yard penalty and repeat the down
- One person must call the cadence and receive the snap – violation of this will result in a 5 pace/yard penalty and repeat of down
- Silent snaps will not be allowed – 5 pace/yard penalty, repeat of down
- The QB may not be in motion and then receive the snap – this will result in a 5 pace/yard penalty and repeat of down
- If the QB crosses the line of scrimmage and then throws a forward pass it is an illegal forward pass and it will be a 5 pace/yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
- If the ball hits the ground on the snap for either a pass or running play, the play is “dead”, the ball is spotted where it hit the ground. It is also a loss of down.
- Loss of down penalties which occur on 4<sup>th</sup> down will result in change of possession.

## SCORING

### POINT AFTER TRY:

After a touchdown is scored, each team is allowed a PAT for either 1 or 2 points. If a team chooses to try for 1 point, the ball will be placed half way between the goal line and the 20 yd line (orange cone) from the goal line. If a team chooses to try for 2 points, the ball will be placed at the 20 yd line (at the orange cone). You CANNOT run back a PAT that is for 1 point, but you CAN if it is for 2 points.

**On an interception of a 2-point attempt if a defensive player uses excessive force to tackle the receiver impeding them from scoring the 2-points will automatically be awarded.**

The clock does not stop during a PAT, except within the last two minutes of a game when the clock is stopping. A PAT is allowed if the touchdown was scored as time ran out to end either half.

### TOUCHDOWNS AND POINT AFTER ATTEMPTS:

**The ball and both flags must break the plane of the goal line in order for it to count as a touchdown or extra point. No diving over the line will be allowed.**

## Tie Breaker Policy to determine seeding playoff seeding:

1. Any team with 2 forfeits is automatically out of playoffs
2. Any team with 1 forfeit is automatically seeded lower
3. Head to Head (only if all tied teams played each other and equal number of times)
4. Record against common opponents (only used if all teams do not play each other)
5. d) Strength of schedule (Total winning percentage of all teams played against, cannot be used if all teams play ALL the same teams).
6. Record against each common opponent starting at the top, one team at a time.
7. Coin Toss

If multiple teams are tied, go through criteria one at a time until one team is determined stronger (or weaker) than the rest, then start at the top again with the “new” tied teams.

**Note on Sportsmanship:**

At no time should there be any verbal or physical abuse directed toward an opposing team, an opposing player, or a game official. Such actions will not be tolerated. Teams can and should expect the game official to be impartial and fair. Game officials should expect teams to be respectful of calls. Nothing good will come out of making a scene. If you believe there has been a misinterpretation of a rule or if there has been a lack of enforcement of rules, teams should adhere to the ruling at that moment and then contact me after the game to discuss the matter. Remember, however, that sometimes a player's perception of what is or of what is not being called can be clouded, as most players believe they are not at fault while others are always at fault. Don't let the competitive nature of the game get in the way of rationale thinking. If a player takes matters into their own hands and does something foolish, they will have lost their chance to make their case without having to face the consequences.

**Ejections**

Any ejection will result in an automatic one game suspension, which must be served during the team's next scheduled game. Ejections may be appealed to the Program Manager who will then collect all information and make the final decision. If the individual ejected from the game cannot be identified, the team captain will serve any suspension.

**Boston Ski & Sports Club reserves the right to add, delete or modify any rule at any time.**