

GAME RULES

FOOTBALL OUTDOOR – MEN’S 6 v 6

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. 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. For men’s football, the rosters are open to only players who identify as men (“male players”).

Each team shall have no more than 6 players on the field. A team must have at least 4 rostered players to start a game and avoid a forfeit. To avoid forfeits, see “Picking up Players Policy” on our website under League Info. **Any picked up players 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.

ROSTER. There is no limit to the number of players on team roster. Players may be added to the team's roster up until the playoffs.

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

Playing on multiple teams within the same division...in divisions where they are multiple conferences, a player is now eligible to play on two rosters in the same division, provided the two teams are in separate conferences. Please note, however, come playoffs, 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 **twenty-two 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.

OFFICIAL GAME:

Once a game passes the half way point of the second half (9:59 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.
- An interception will result in a team losing its possession – they may not be returned for any points.
- The game will be decided when one team scores more points in the rotation.
- No 1st downs will be awarded except in the case of a penalty.

PLAYING THE GAME

PRE-GAME COIN TOSS/BEGINNING OF GAME:

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. Choices will change at the start of the second half (i.e. 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-yd line

TIME:

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

- On the first offense - Warn the team
- On subsequent offenses - Penalize the offense 5 paces/yards

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.

During the final 2 minutes of the game, the referee will stop the clock if:

- 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)
- Change of possession, including a turn over on downs and the ball being placed at the 10 yard line.
- A penalty which must be marked off occurs
- A team calls a time out
- If a team is up by 14 points or more, the clock runs continuously during the last two minutes of play

THE CLOCK DOES NOT STOP ON FIRST DOWNS OR FUMBLES.

FLAGS:

It is each player's responsibility to have his or her 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 QB **MUST** self-hike the ball. To self-hike the ball, the quarter back must stand on the line of scrimmage and hold the ball off the ground. 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.

GENERAL RULES:

- There is **NO** bump and run
- Only one player in motion at a time and there is no forward motion
- All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the QB after he hands off or laterals the ball behind the line of scrimmage.

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 an underhand pitch of the ball to a fellow team member next to you or behind you. Laterals are legal only behind the line of scrimmage. A lateral is NOT a forward pass and cannot be picked off in mid-air. A picked off lateral is a fumble and the ball is spotted at the point of the fumble and the offense retains possession

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. This player must also take possession across the line of scrimmage.

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 carrier's 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:

1. pushing an opponent's hand away from the flag;
2. pushing an opponent or stiff arming;
3. lowering an arm to shield the flag;
4. dipping the shoulder;

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.

FIRST DOWNS:

Each team may earn only one first down during each drive. A first down may be achieved by:

1. 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.**
2. 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 one first down.
3. 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 an offensive player appear to both have possession or are struggling for possession, the reception is granted to the offense.

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.

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 5 yards from the goal line. If a team chooses to try for 2 points, the ball will be placed at the 20 yd. line.

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.

If a two point conversion is intercepted it may be run back for two points.

TOUCHDOWNS AND POINT AFTER ATTEMPTS:

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.

TIE BREAKER POLICY TO DETERMINE PLAYOFF SEEDING:

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