



**NFL FLAG**  
**REGIONAL**  
**TOURNAMENT RULE BOOK**

A PROGRAM OF



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# TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES

## I. Format

1. Age brackets are as follows:
  - a. 9-11 Co-Ed (teams may be made up of co-ed, all girls, or all boys)
  - b. 12-14 Boys
  - c. 12-14 Girls
2. Round Robin Tournament – Teams participate in pool play during the morning. First place teams advance to single elimination playoffs in the afternoon with seeding based on team win/loss records during pool play.
3. Check-in for all Regional Tournament will begin at 7:00 am, unless otherwise noted.
4. NFL FLAG tournaments will begin promptly at 9:00 am, unless otherwise noted.
5. Teams and player rosters will be confirmed prior to each tournament.
6. Only one head coach and one assistant coach will be allowed on the sidelines during game. All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. must remain a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
7. Teams must be standing near the end zone of the field for their game and be ready to play 10 minutes before their scheduled game time.
8. The NFL reserves the right to cancel or change the location of a Regional Tournament due to inclement weather.
9. Winners from each bracket advance to the 2010 National Tournament of Champions held in Orlando, FL on February 26, 2011.
  - a. Hotel and airfare will be paid for by the NFL for one coach and up to 10 participants.
10. All decisions made by the National Football League are final.

## II. Coach and Spectator Conduct/Responsibilities

1. Coaches, family members, parents, and spectators are required to observe the contest from designated areas.
2. Coaches are permitted to coach on the sideline at all Regional tournaments however players will coach themselves at Nationals. **NO COACHES WILL BE PERMITTED TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR PLAYERS DURING THE NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS UNLESS A TIMEOUT IS CALLED.**
3. All family members, parents and spectators will observe play from the end zones. We strongly recommend coaches train their players to coach themselves at our Regional tournaments.
4. Participants, coaches, parents, and family members must conduct themselves appropriately during tournament.
5. Inappropriate, rude, or confrontational behavior by coach, team, or parents may lead to disqualification from tournament at the sole discretion of the National Football League.
6. Misconduct may lead to removal from the premises at the sole discretion of the National Football League.

## III. Check In and Registration

1. Participation requirements and check in guidelines are provided to each Head Coach prior to the tournament.
2. NFL FLAG Regional tournament waiver signed by a parent or legal guardian must be submitted to participate. Participants cannot play without a tournament waiver signed by a parent/guardian.
3. A completed 2010 NFL FLAG Regional Tournament waiver and a copy of each player's birth certificate must be submitted at the Player Registration tent.
  - a. A copy of each player's birth certificate is required on-site.
  - b. Original birth certificates will not be accepted.
4. No substitutions will be allowed after the final roster is submitted.

5. Participants must be registered 2010 NFL FLAG participants. The NFL reserves the right to disqualify players and/or their teams if they are not registered as 2010 NFL FLAG participants.
6. Only those registered as 2010 NFL FLAG participants will be eligible to participate in an NFL FLAG Regional Tournament and the National Tournament of Champions.
7. Team check-in and registration ends at 8:30 AM. If a team arrives during or after their first scheduled game, that team will forfeit for the rest of the tournament and cannot advance.
8. The tournament will be held rain or shine.
9. A copy of a birth certificate is required for registration and advancement to the National Tournament of Champions.

## IV. Pool Play

### Players/Game Schedules

1. Pools consist of 4-5 teams. Teams will play a minimum of three games in pool play.
2. Teams must start the game with a minimum of five (5) players. In the event of an injury to one team with insufficient substitute players, that team may play with four players on the field, but no fewer than four.
3. Teams should consist of 8-10 players (5 on the field with substitutes).

### Divisional Tie Breakers

1. 2 Teams Tied for One Place
  - a. Head to head competition
  - b. Total points allowed during tournament play
  - c. Point Differential (total points scored – total points allowed)
  - d. Coin Toss
2. 3 or more teams tied for one place
  - a. Total points allowed during tournament play.
  - b. Point Differential (total points scored – total points allowed)
  - c. Total Points Scored
  - d. Draw for seed: (1-2-3)

### Playoffs and Championship

1. Playoff and championship games will be scheduled after pool play results are received and confirmed.
2. Playoff rounds are single elimination.
3. Divisional Playoff Seeds are determined by:
  - a. Winning percentage in pool play, total wins
  - b. Average points allowed per games
  - c. Average point differential (average points scored – average points allowed)
  - d. Average points scored per game.

# Rules

## I. Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Teams may not choose to defer to the second half.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
6. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

## II. Terminology

- **Boundary Lines** – the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and back of the end zone lines.
- **Line Of Scrimmage** – (LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
- **Line-To-Gain** – the line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
- **Rush Line** – an imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the Line of Scrimmage.
- **Offense** – the squad with possession of the ball.
- **Defense** – The squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
- **Passer** – the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the Quarterback.
- **Rusher** – The defensive player assigned to rush the Quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
- **Downs (1-2-3)** – the offensive squad has three attempts or “Downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the Line to Gain to get another set of downs or to score.
- **Live Ball** – refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties, Live Ball Penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
- **Dead Ball** – refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
- **Whistle** – sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, half time, or the end of the game.
- **Inadvertent Whistle** – official's whistle that is performed in error.
- **Charging** – The movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
- **Flag Guarding** – an act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm.
- **Shovel Pass** – a legal pass attempted beyond the Line of Scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot put type manner.
- **Lateral** – a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – a rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

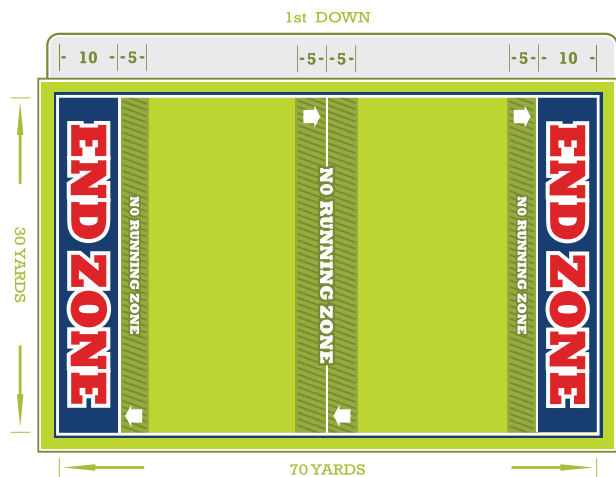


### III. Equipment

1. Participants must bring their flag belts and mouth guards to the tournament. Extras will not be provided.
2. All players must wear flag belts and mouth guards at all times, while on the playing fields.
3. Team identified NFL FLAG Regional Tournament jerseys will be provided.
4. NFL FLAG footballs will be provided by the NFL. Team balls are not allowed.
5. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed, however, cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
6. Players may tape their forearms, hand and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
7. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and dew rags.
8. Players' jerseys must be tucked in to the pants, if they hang below the belt line.
9. We recommend players wear pants or shorts that do not have pockets. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped.

### IV. Field

1. The field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Running Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards. However, some tournaments may use smaller fields due to field space available or to complete tournament scheduling on time.
2. No-Running Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No-Running Zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Running Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).



### V. Rosters

1. Home Teams wear dark color jerseys, Visiting Teams wear light color jerseys.
2. Teams must consist of at least five players. However, we recommend that teams have at least eight players with a maximum of ten players – five on the field, with up to five substitutes.
3. Teams must start the game with a minimum of five (5) players. In the event of an injury to one team with insufficient substitute players, that team may play with four players on the field, but no fewer than four.

## VI. Timing and Overtime

1. Games are played to 20 minutes running time unless one team gains a 28 point advantage which will then end the game. Clock stops only for timeouts or injuries.
2. Halftime is one minute long.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. Each team has one 30-second time out per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. If the score is tied at the end of 20 minutes, an Overtime Period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format is as follows:
  - a. Each team gets one series of up to six plays (possibly more pending penalty enforcement) starting from the team's 5 yard line.
    - i. First possession choice goes to the winner of the regulation coin toss.
    - ii. There is no Sudden Death, each team gets a minimum of one possession.
  - b. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
  - c. There are NO time outs.
  - d. Each team will be scored based on yardage gained or points scored:
    - i. Yardage Gained – Each team will be given one complete series to drive the field as far as they can go. The yardage gained will be noted by the official. The team with the most yardage gained wins. If both teams scored touchdowns and complete the same amount of points in conversions, the process is repeated.
      1. An interception by either team ends the overtime period, and the other team wins.
    - ii. Scoring – Same as regulation. The team with the highest score wins.
      1. Winning through yardage adds 6 points to the final score for the winning team.
  - e. Change of Possession:
    - i. Change of possession takes place when Team A's forward progress is halted on downs or scores a touchdown.
    - ii. Team B takes possession on the same 5 yard line as Team A and advances in the same direction.
  - f. Multiple OT periods:
    - i. First OT period – Shown above
      1. First possession choice goes to the winner of the regulation coin toss.
    - ii. Second OT period
      1. First possession choice goes to the loser of the regulation coin toss.
      2. Scoring teams must go for 2 point PAT.

## VII. Scoring

1. Touchdown: **6 points**
2. PAT (Point After Conversion) **1 point** (5-yard line) or **2 points** (12-yard line)  
Note: 1 point PAT is pass only, 2 point PAT can be run or pass
3. Safety: **2 points**
  - a. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, if a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
4. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether they wish to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 12-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
5. After one team is winning by 28 points or more, the game is over.
6. Forfeits are scored 6-0 for the winning team.
7. The coaches, officials and scorekeeper must initial the score sheet.
8. Field runners will submit their score sheets to the main scoring table.

## VIII. Coaches

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
2. Only two coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines. All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. must remain a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.

## IX. Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - a. The ball hits the ground.
  - b. The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
  - c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
  - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
  - e. The ball carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
  - f. The ball carrier’s flag falls out.
  - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one flag.
  - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
  - i. Inadvertent Whistle.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.

8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
  - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
9. A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official’s rule interpretation. If the official’s ruling is correct, the team will be charged a time out. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.



## X. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
  - a. "Center Sneak" play – The ball must completely leave the center's hands on the snap and he/she must step backwards off the line of scrimmage in order to receive a direct handoff from the QB before advancing the ball.
4. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind.
5. "No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones IF the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No Run Zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
6. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
10. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
11. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
12. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
13. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

## XI. Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.
  - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

## XII. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the Quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have a least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
6. Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

## XIII. Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
  - a. **A legal rush is:**
    - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
    - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
    - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7 yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
    - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
  - b. **A penalty may be called if:**
    - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
    - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside (5 yards LOS and first down).
    - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
  - c. **Special circumstances:**
    - i. Teams are not required to rush the Quarterback, seven second clock in effect.
    - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play, however if they do send a rusher, the rusher must check in with the official.
    - iii. If rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as defender with no offside penalty enforced.
4. Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass, however, NO contact can be made with the Quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a Roughing the Passer penalty.
5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the Quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an Impeding the Rusher penalty. IF the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
6. A sack occurs if the Quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the Quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
  - a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the Offensive team’s end zone.

## XIV. Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

## XV. Formations

1. Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the Center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
  - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - b. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
2. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion.
3. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

## XVI. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well:
  - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
  - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
  - c. Compliment **ALL** players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
  - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
  - b. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.

## XVII. Penalties

### i. General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (spot fouls)
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.  
Players cannot question judgment calls.
5. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed Live Ball then Dead Ball. Live Ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

### ii. Spot Fouls

- Defensive Pass Interference.....First Down
- Stripping..... + 10 yards & First Down
- Defensive Unnecessary Roughness.....+ 10 yards & First Down
- Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier..... - 5 yards & Loss of Down
- Charging..... - 10 yards & Loss of Down
- Flag Guarding..... - 10 yards & Loss of Down
- Offensive Unnecessary Roughness..... - 10 yards & Loss of Down

### iii. Defensive Penalties

- Offside..... + 5 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down
- Illegal Contact (Holding, Blocking, etc.)..... + 5 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down
- Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)..... + 5 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down
- Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)..... + 5 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down
- Roughing the Passer..... + 10 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down
- Taunting..... + 10 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down
- Unnecessary Roughness..... SPOT FOUL, + 10 yards & automatic first down
- Stripping..... SPOT FOUL, + 10 yards & automatic first down
- Defensive Pass Interference..... SPOT FOUL & automatic first down

### iv. Offensive Penalties

- Offside / False Start..... - 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
- Illegal Forward Pass (Pass received behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage).. - 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
- Offensive Pass Interference..... - 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
- Illegal Motion (More than one person moving, false start, etc.)..... - 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
- Delay of Game..... - 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
- Impeding the Rusher..... - 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
- Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier..... SPOT FOUL, - 5 yards & Loss of Down
- Charging.....SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards & Loss of Down
- Flag Guarding.....SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards & Loss of Down
- Unnecessary Roughness.....SPOT FOUL, - 10 yards & Loss of Down