0 RULES

The referee must apply the rules, assess penalties and make decisions on disputes or situations not covered by the rules. The referee's decision on any in-game situation is final.

The English version of the MFL rulebook will supersede any case where there is a discrepancy between the English and French versions of this rulebook.

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# 1 GAME/EQUIPMENT

**1.1** The game shall be played between 2 teams each with 6 players on the field, but with no team roster size limitations. Teams may play with a minimum of 5 players. If fewer than 5 players are available to start a game then the game start time will be delayed, but the opposing team will be awarded 6 points when the game start time is reached.

Every 5 minutes after the scheduled game start time an additional 6 points will be awarded to the opposing team. At half time the score will be 30-0 against the team unable to field a full roster.

After 30 minutes from the scheduled game start time, if a team is still unable to field a team with a minimum of 5 players, then they will forfeit the game.

If a team is reduced to fewer than 5 players due to an injury or an ejection, they may continue to play with fewer than 5 players.

**1.2** The game shall be played under the supervision of 2 or more officials.

**1.3** Each team shall designate to the referee NO MORE than 2 players as its field captains

**1.4** All team members must wear jerseys of the same color shade if possible. If both teams are wearing similar colored jerseys, the away team will be required to wear pinnies, both in the regular season and in the playoffs. Jerseys must be tucked into a player’s pants/shorts at ALL times, and the flag belt must be visible at ALL times. Failure to do so will result in an Equipment Violation penalty.

**1.5** No hard headgear is permitted on the field (e.g. baseball caps, helmets and so on). Headwear that does not endanger or offend other players is legal, to the referee's discretion.

**1.6** Any pants, shorts, or shirts with pockets (including sewn up pockets) are not permitted due to the high risk of injuring fingers while attempting to deflag an opponent. Any player with pockets will be asked to leave the field of play until they can change clothing. ***Penalty: 10 yard dead ball foul applied at point of next scrimmage and AFD.***

A player may wear pants with zippered pockets, but they cannot unzip them at any point from the start of the game until the end. This includes during half time and while they are subbed out of a game.

**1.7** A towel, a pair of gloves, or a playsheet hanging from a player's waist will be treated as flags. Therefore if any item hanging from the waist is pulled off, the play will be whistled dead and the player considered tackled.

**1.8** Hand warmers are not allowed to be worn during a game as the openings pose the same risk as pockets.

**1.9** All running shoes and cleats are legal EXCEPT metal, spiked cleats of any kind.

**1.10** Teams can use a ball provided by the league (if available) or use their own ball as long as it conforms to normal NFL/NCAA/CFL regulations.

**1.11** All players must be wearing a flag belt to legally participate in a play and they must have one flag on each hip and one directly behind them. Flags that are out of place in the opinion of the referee will result in that player being “down by reach”, which is any legitimate attempt by an opposing player to reach for the flags of the player, whether contacting them or not.

**1.12** A flag belt must be worn securely around the waist or higher and cannot hang low around the hips or butt. Loose and low hanging belts are penalties: 5 yards previous LOS down repeated or (if seen during a play) option for 5 yards from end of play downs continue. A player shall not gain an advantage by wearing their belt loosely (so that the flags move while they run) or wearing it low (in order to force tacklers to drop lower to grab their flags), so the penalty is enforced with the assumption that the player was attempting to gain an advantage with the officials not noticing the infraction.

**1.13** A forfeited game will result in a score of 25 (or the actual points scored by the non-forfeiting team if greater than 25) to 0 being assigned to the game, except in the result of a dual forfeit, in which case the game counts as a loss for both teams and a score of 25-25 will be assigned to the game.

**1.14** A smaller than regulation ball can be allowed to be used by certain QBs with league exception. No other player may throw a forward pass with such a ball. The penalty is 5 yards and loss of down.

**1.15** No equipment can be worn that facilitates anyone not on the field to communicate with anyone on the field.

# 2 GAME ADMINISTRATION

**2.1** Captains are required to meet with the referees **3** minutes prior to the start of the game.

**2.2** Beginning in the third game of a season,failure to have the correct player jersey numbers entered on the website will result in a delay of game penalty to begin the game and the automatic loss of the coin toss.

**2.3** The coin toss will take place with the visiting team’s captain making the choice of heads or tails. The winning team can choose from the following three options:

a) To start on offense or defense

b) The goal the team will defend

In the playoffs there will be no coin toss and the HOME team (highest seed) will have the first choice of option.

The team not having the first choice of options shall exercise the remaining option.

*The team that starts on offense in the first half will automatically start on defense in the second half.*

**2.4** Barring a penalty, a team will always begin the half with the ball at their own 5-yard line.

**2.5** Playing time for each half is 22 minutes long with one untimed play to end the half. The Game Clock is stopped on change of possession, after scoring plays (and remains stopped until the next snap by the scored upon team), and on all penalties. The game clock remains stopped on ACCEPTED penalties if the accepting team requests for it to remain stopped and restarts on DECLINED penalties if the clock was previously running, otherwise both clocks start upon administration (defined as the referee announcing whether the penalty is ACCEPTED or DECLINED and the bags being set) of the penalty.

The play clock shall be stopped during the administration of a penalty and shall be started at 25 seconds on the play in whistle from the referee.

The game clock shall be stopped during any discussion of a play by referees and restarted on the play in from the referee.

On a play with an accepted penalty penalty, the non-offending team may choose to stop the game clock if desired. They must let the referee know they are exercising this option.

**2.6** Once the game clock has expired, the next play blown in will be announced as the last play of the half before it is indicated as ready to play.

Exceptionally, during the winter season the play clock will be continuous running time and each half will end with 5 untimed plays, the first of which will be the first play blown in after the game clock has expired. Converts count as plays for this purpose, though the half will be extended by 1 play for the convert attempt if the last play of a half is a touchdown. This will only be done if necessary, so it will not be done if it is the end of the game and the scoring team has the lead.

For these last 5 plays, accepted penalties that are enforced from the line of scrimmage will not count as a play, but penalties enforced from the spot of the foul (added on to the result of the play) will. This includes defensive pass interference.

In games where the “last 5 plays” timing is in effect, if there are fewer plays left than needed for a team that is losing to be able to equal or beat the score of their opponent, the referee will end the game at that point. This should take into account downs remaining on the current series for the team on offense if they are leading as well as plays needed for scores, converts, and onside kicks (if applicable).

Note that if a timeout is called after the game clock has expired, but the upcoming play had already been blown in and was not the last play, then the play blown in after the timeout is over is considered to be the same play as the one before the timeout was taken and therefore will not be the last play even though it was blown in with no time remaining on the game clock. This is known as the Stephen Harripersaud rule.

**2.7** There will be a five-minute break between the first and second half.

**2.8** *Teams will each have a total of 3 timeouts per half, which can be used at any time while the ball is dead.* A team timeout must be called if there is an injured player in the last two minutes of each half. *Play Clock restarts on the whistle. Game Clock will start on the snap following a timeout.*

Any member of a team may call a timeout, whether on the field or not. Additional team members who are at the field, but not playing in the game may call timeouts as well, though they must be declared to the officials as a member of the team and eligible to call timeouts before the start of the game.

Exceptionally, during the winter season teams will only have one timeout per half and it will reset the play clock to 25 seconds. This is to allow the offense to avoid a delay of game penalty without using too much of the allotted game time.

If a team calls a timeout when they have none remaining and it is granted by an official, this shall result in a delay of game penalty. The clock shall run or remain stopped at the discretion of the non-offending team, as usual.

**2.9** Referees will give a *two minute* warning at an appropriate break in the play when there *are two minutes* or less remaining until the final play.

**2.10** The last play of a half will be the first play blown in after the game clock has hit 0 seconds. The referee will announce that it is the last play prior to blowing that play in. Once the last play is completed the referee will signal the end of the half/game. A convert will be the last play if the scoring play occurred with 0 seconds on the clock. An untimed convert will be added to a half if the scoring play occurred during the last play.

**2.11** A half cannot end on an accepted penalty. If there is a penalty on the last play of a half, after the penalty is assessed an untimed down will be added to the half.

**2.12** It is possible to end a game early.

1. If the team with the greater score is in possession of the ball and has a sufficient number of downs to end the game taking their opponents remaining timeouts into account, the winning team may decide to end the game. The losing team may also ask to end the game at this time.
2. If a team is leading by at least 9points ~~and is in possession of the ball~~, the last play at the end of running time in the second half will not be played.

**2.13** At the referee’s discretion, a team may be forced to punt or have a convert attempt automatically fail due to an attempt to intentionally delay or prolong a game. An example would be multiple pre-snap penalties (false start, delay of game) in order to allow time for late arriving players to join the game.

# 3 RUSHER/PASSER

**3.1** The legal rush zone is seven yards in front of the LOS aligned with the placement of the ball. The seven-yard rusher line will be marked with a bag prior to each play. The legal rush zone is one yard directly to the left or right of the rusher bag and no more than two yards directly to the left or right away from it**.**

**3.2** One player that lines up in the legal rush zone prior to the offense being legally set qualifies to be the designated rusher. The offense is legally set once all offensive players are in a position for one full second where the ball can be legally snapped. If the offense leaves a formation where they are legally set, the rusher has the right to change sides of the rusher bag or the defense can set a different legal rusher.

**3.3** Any designated rusher loses protection if they are outside the legal rush zone at the snap. They also lose protection if they are lined up on the bag or if they switch sides of the rusher bag once the offense is legally set to run a play (ball set, receivers set and motionless, one player set at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage, at most one receiver in motion moving laterally or away from the LOS). This loss of protection remains even if the rusher changes back to their initial side of the rusher bag.

**3.4** The designated rusher has **straight-line immunity**, the center must get out of the way and cannot remain stationary if this would cause them to be in the way of the rusher. The center may run straight or to either side but they must avoid the designated rusher. All other offensive players must avoid the designated rusher as well.

**3.5** The designated rusher has the right to run at the **ball carrier** and take **the straightest path**, even on a roll out. If the rusher deviates from their straight line path for any reason or intentionally slows down to cause interference, they lose their immunity.

**3.6** Only one player can be a designated rusher and only they have protection in the legal rush zone. The designated rusher getting protection must declare to the offensive team if asked by any player on the offense. They can declare by raising their hand to be visible to the offensive team after the offense has broken the huddle and must do so reasonably quickly (1 or 2 seconds, at the discretion of the referee). If there are more than one defensive players lined up in the legal rush zone when the offense is legally able to snap the ball, one must declare as the designated rusher (though the defense may change rusher configuration if the offense changes formation in such a way as they cannot legally snap the ball as described in rule 3.2). Therefore, if there are 2 potential legal rushers and no one declares, no one has protection. Note that if there are 2 legal rushers set at any point after the offense is set for the final time before a snap, they must declare one as the rusher to have immunity, regardless of how many players are legally lined up to rush at the time of the snap.

More than one player declaring as the designated rusher results in no defensive player having immunity.

After requesting that the rusher declare themselves, the offense must give 1 full second after the rusher declares themselves before snapping the ball.

**3.7** All defensive players can legally cross the LOS once any other defensive player has crossed the LOS legally. Any defensive player can also legally cross the LOS if the ball is handed off (or lateralled), a hand off is faked, an offensive player is within arms reach of the quarterback, or a forward pass is thrown.

**3.8** Any defensive player who at any point after the snap is lined up 7 or more yards away from the LOS may be the first player to cross the line of scrimmage. They have no straight line immunity.

**3.9** A defensive player who crosses the LOS illegally (i.e. not in any legal way described above) is offside and incurs a penalty, administered at the end of the play.

**3.10** Any contact to the quarterback's body above the shoulders (including the arm and hand) during the throwing motion is considered to be roughing the passer (L10 PLS or PBD, AFD).

Contacting the ball while in the hand of the quarterback above their shoulders or forcing the ball back into the hand of the quarterback will also be considered roughing the passer.

Additionally, any forcible contact with the body of the passer during the throwing motion will be considered roughing the passer. The throwing motion includes the follow through of the arm and body. This does not include incidental contact on the follow through, such as the arm or hand contacting the rusher after the hand has passed below the thrower’s shoulders.

4 OVERTIME/TIE GAME

**4. 1** Both during the regular season and in the playoffs, if the score is tied at the end of regulation, the teams will proceed to overtime.

**4.2** At the start of the overtime period, the referee will meet with the captains: in the regular season a coin toss will take place with the visiting team’s captain making the choice of heads or tails, during the playoffs the captain of the home team (highest seed) will have the choice to start on offense or defense or the goal the team will defend.

**4.3** The first team on offense will have the choice to go for 1 point (from the 5-yard line), 2 points (from the 10-yard line). The second team will now have the same choice to go for 1 or 2 points. If a team is leading once both teams have had an offensive attempt then that team is declared the winner and the game is over. If the score remains tied at this point, the teams reverse order of making 1 or 2 point attempts and the process is repeated.

NOTE: In games involving a running time clock, the first team on offense must attempt a 1 point convert and if successful the second team on offense must attempt a 2 point convert. Additionally in such games, a delay of game penalty results in a failed attempt.

Additionally, in these seasons, two penalties committed on separate attempts by the offense during the same convert will result in an automatic failure of the convert and similarly two penalties committed by the defense on separate attempts during the same convert attempt will result in an automatic success of the convert, with 1 or 2 points being awarded based on what the scoring team was attempting prior to the second defensive penalty.

**4.4** An interception in overtime CAN be returned for a score and is worth the amount of points being attempted by the offense.

**4.5** There are no timeouts allowed in overtime. Technical timeouts called by the referee may still occur.

# 5 FORMATION/MOTION

**5.1** No receiver lined up on the LOS may be within 1 yard of the center.

**5.2** The center must line up so that their feet are aligned so that the LOS marker bag is between them or aligned with one of them.

**5.3** The quarterback must be a minimum of five yards behind the snapper when receiving the snap.

**5.4** The snap must be made in one smooth motion, otherwise it is an illegal snap, which will be penalized as a false start.

**5.5** The player accepting the snap may not receive the ball while making forward progress towards the line of scrimmage in order to gain an advantage. The penalty is Illegal Procedure and the play will not be whistled dead. Moving laterally to receive the snap is legal. In addition, stepping forward to field an errant snap is acceptable as long as it is not deemed by the referee to be granting an advantage to the offense.

**5.6** ONE receiver may be in motion laterally or backwards before the ball is snapped. All other players must be motionless for one full second before the snap. A player in motion moving towards the LOS at the time of the snap will be flagged for Illegal Motion.

**5.7** The defense must allow a 1 yard neutral zone. The penalty is Offside and the play will not be whistled dead. The ball can be scrimmaged inside the 1 yard line and the 1 yard neutral zone must still be enforced.

**5.8** All defensive players must be at least 3 yards away from the center downfield or 1 yard away to either side.

# 6 TIMING OF A PLAY

**6.1** The ball is whistled in before each play. Once the previous play is whistled dead, the offensive team has 45 seconds to snap the ball. The Referee will whistle the play in once the markers are set, officials are in position and ready, and all members of the offensive team are behind the line of scrimmage. The referee will give a 20 seconds warning and a 10 seconds warning. If the play clock expires and the play has not commenced the offence will be penalized with a Delay of Game penalty.

**6.2** If the play clock is under 20 seconds at the time the play is to be whistled in, the referee has the option to reset the play clock to 25 seconds prior to whistling in the play.

**6.3** All players on the field must be wearing their belts with three flags attached when the ball is snapped. If a player is not wearing a belt when the snap is made they will be penalized (whether on offense or defense).

If a player is missing one or more flags or their flags are displaced (i.e. not having one at the back and one to each side) they will be down when judged to be touched while in possession of the ball. Players will also be ruled down if, under the referee’s discretion, a defender makes a legitimate attempt to reach to make a tackle on a player with a missing or displaced flag.

This rule is to prevent a ball carrier from gaining any advantage from missing a flag. Referees will do their best to alert players to misplaced flags, but the onus is on the player to ensure their flags are correctly positioned.

**6.4** Any deliberate action that delays the game will be penalized as Delay Of Game (5 yards) OR Unsportsmanlike conduct (10 yards) and a warning can be given.

While using winter season timing rules, multiple pre-snap penalties on a drive or any pre-snap penalty deemed by the referee to be an intentional attempt to manipulate the game clock will have a loss of down added to the normal enforcement of the penalty.

**6.5** No player may enter the field of play after the snap of the ball. Doing so is an Illegal Substitution penalty (5 yards from previous LOS down repeats or option to decline).

**6.6** An offensive team can only huddle with 6 players at one time. A player can be removed from the huddle and be replaced in the huddle as long as the huddle has not been broken.

A defensive team must only have 6 players or fewer on the field once the offense is set for one full second and can legally snap the ball. No additional defensive players may enter the field after this point. If the offense changes formation in such a way to no longer be legally capable of snapping the ball, defensive players can once again enter the field of play.

Violation of either of these rules is an Illegal Substitution penalty.

7 DEAD BALL/ SPOTTING/ LEGAL PASSES

**7.1** A ball is declared dead when it is carried out of bounds; after a touchdown, safety or successful or failed PAT; or when a forward pass hits the ground, referee or any other object on the sideline.

**7.2** There are no fumbles. A ball is whistled dead when a backward pass, a dropped ball or a missed snap hits the ground. Laterals are NOT permitted past the LOS or after a forward pass has been completed, ball is dead where the attempted lateral occurs. A lateral CAN be intercepted. The play is only dead once the ball is caught by a player on the team that lateralled the ball or the ball contacts the ground.

**7.3** A pass is complete when the player has possession of the ball throughout the act of having two feet in bounds (both feet, not the same foot twice), or any other part of their body besides their hands on the ground in bounds. Additionally, the player must then either perform a movement common to the game (or maintain control long enough that they could have) or survive contact with the ground without losing control of the football.

A foot is defined as the part of the foot that was touching the ground when contact with the out of bounds area occurs.

EXAMPLE 1: A player lands inbounds on their toes, but they subsequently bring their heel down out of bounds. *The play is an incomplete pass as the foot is defined in this instance as the full foot (toe and heel) and the heel was out of bounds.*

EXAMPLE 2: A player lands inbounds on their toes and drags them out of bounds. *The play is a complete pass as the feet in this instance are defined as just the toes as they were the only parts touching the ground when the player went out of bounds and they were inbounds at the time of the catch.*

**7.4** A player in possession of the ball who is on the ground (knee down, rear end down, back down) is immediately ruled down.

**7.5** The ball will be spotted where the player’s flag belt was when they were deflagged. A player is considered deflagged when the flag is popped out, not when it hits the ground.

The exact position of the spot is the furthest part of the belt towards the opposing team’s goal line. Therefore, a touchdown is scored if any part of the belt breaks the plane of the goal line and, similarly, a safety is only awarded if no part of a runner’s belt is outside of their own goal line.

**7.6** If a player not in possession of the ball loses their flag during a play they remain eligible to catch a pass. If they catch a pass, that player must be touched by a defender with one hand to be called down.

If a player is deflagged by an opponent illegally (i.e. when they do not have possession of the ball and are not in the process of making a catch), then they may complete the play with one fewer flag and are not down by touch. If the player was intentionally deflagged by an opponent, this is a minor foul. Note that it is a minor foul on either the offense or defense to intentionally deflag an opponent during the course of play.

**7.7** In the case of a muffed snap, play is dead, DC from PLS.

**7.8** If a player is pushed out of bounds by a defender before landing in bounds with the ball, the referee may judge that the player would have landed in bounds and award a catch. The ball will be spotted at the point of contact regardless of where the ball is caught. Similarly, this applies to contact on a pass completed in bounds where the contact moves the receiver towards their goal line and therefore the ball will be advanced to the point of initial contact.

**7.9** All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.

An offensive player going out of bounds and coming back into the field of play and touching the ball is an Illegal Touching penalty. Note that a defensive player is allowed to leave the field of play and return and still play the ball, as long as they start the play in the field of play. *If a player is forced out by a defender they may return and catch a pass legally.*

**7.10** A forward pass must be thrown from behind the LOS. If the passer crosses the LOS they are no longer eligible to throw a pass and will be penalized for an illegal forward pass. The non-offending team can now take the result of the play, or L5 from PLS AND DC and **on 4th Down, loss of 5 and loss of ball** at the PLS. **Note:** The passer is considered over the line when all parts of their body are completely over the line of scrimmage, whether in contact with the ground or not.

**7.11** Once a ball carrier passes the LOS, they cannot return behind the line and attempt a forward pass. Rule as illegal forward pass, loss of 5, loss of down at PLS or option and **on 4th Down, loss of 5+ball** at the PLS.

**7.12** A pass thrown out of bounds or towards the ground with no receivers in the area to avoid a loss of yards shall be considered grounding at the discretion of the head referee.Penalty is L5, LOD, DC. On 4th down it will be L5 + Ball ***Note:*** *Grounding while in a player’s own endzone is a safety touch.*

**7.13** When a team is in the red zone, it will not be permitted to attempt an underhanded forward pass. Rule as illegal forward pass, loss of 5 + LOD, DC at PLS or option and **on 4th Down, loss of 5 + ball** at the PLS. Overhanded shovel passes are legal though.

**7.14** A simultaneous catch between an offensive player and a defensive player will be awarded to the offensive player.

**7.15** A player who has lost their balance and is in the process of falling to the ground in the opinion of the referee will be ruled down at the point of the start of their fall if there is a defender close to them. As long as there is no opposing player near the runner, they may attempt to regain their balance without being whistled down.

A runner may use a hand to maintain their balance, but similarly if there is an opposing player in the area they will be ruled down for safety reasons.

**7.16** A player may not complete a forward pass to themselves, unless the ball is touched by a defensive player after the ball leaves the passer’s hand and before they catch it.

**7.17** An offensive player may not intentionally deflect a live ball to a teammate to be caught. Doing so results in an incomplete pass.

**7.18** If a player who is out of bounds contacts a pass, the pass is immediately incomplete.

**7.19** If there is an inadvertent whistle during a play that affects the outcome of the play, the negatively affected team can decide to take the result of the play or replay the down at the previous line of scrimmage. The referees may also deem that neither team was negatively impacted by the inadvertent whistle and the play will stand.

# 8 SERIES

**8.1** A team with possession of the ball has 4 plays to advance the ball 10 yards from the ball’s starting position through the result of a pass or run play or through a defensive penalty. Once the ball has been advanced past this 10 yard mark a new set of 4 plays is given to the offensive team with a new 10 yard mark set from the previous dead ball position. A play is defined as the action from the snap of the ball to begin the play and ending with the dead ball whistle.

**8.2** No kicking plays are executed. If a team wishes to concede its possession to the other team (usually in order to prevent turning the ball over on downs on 4th down) they can ask to “punt” and this will result in the opposing team gaining possession on its own 5-yard line (barring a penalty).

**8.3** If the offensive team decides to run a play on fourth down and they do not gain the necessary yards, it will result in a turnover on downs at the PLS or the PBD.

**8.4** A punt counts as a play, therefore if there is one play remaining in the half/game and the team in possession of the ball is elects to punt then the half/game is over

# 9 RUNNING

**9.1** No running zones (red zones) are located 5 yards from each defensive end zone. These red zones are enforced to avoid short yardage, power-running situations. Once the ball has reached the 5 yard line, the rest of the drive is considered to take place in the red zone, regardless of subsequent losses of yardage or penalties.

**9.2** The ball carrier is allowed to run with the ball on a play where the LOS is outside the red zone.

**9.3** A player who receives a handoff behind the LOS is permitted to throw the ball from behind the LOS. Once the quarterback hands off, pitches or passes the ball to another player behind the LOS, all defensive players are eligible to cross the LOS.

**9.4** If there is a fake handoff/pitch then any player on defense can then cross the LOS wherever they were legally positioned on the field of play (1 yard from the LOS) and try to tackle the ball carrier. A fake handoff/pitch includes any offensive player passing within **reasonable** arms length of the QB, whether or not the QB turns to them or extends their arm to them.

**9.5** A player is not permitted to toss the ball up to himself to avoid being de-flagged while in possession of the ball (unless the ball is touched/tipped by a defensive player). Judged as an illegal forward pass.

**9.6** No diving is permitted with the intention of gaining yards. The ball will be spotted where the player began to dive. In addition, a blatant dive in a crowd will be assessed a UR penalty. **Note:** A player is allowed to dive in attempting to catch or intercept a ball as well as attempting to deflag an opponent, though on a completed catch the ball will be spotted where they started their dive.

**9.7** For the safety of the ball carrier, a player that loses their balance and falls while carrying the football will be marked down where they began to fall. This prevents defensive players from needing to reach in and deflag a falling runner who is vulnerable to dangerous contact. A ball carrier may use their hand or the ball to maintain their balance, but will be considered down if there are any defenders close enough to tackle them, with this distance being decided at the referee’s discretion.

**9.8** A player in possession of the ball is not permitted to lead with their head or shoulder in order to gain yardage or to run in any manner deemed dangerous by the referee. Any defensive player who has established their position before deflagging their opponent must be avoided by the ball carrier. If the runner knowingly runs into the defensive player, who has already established their position, the former will be penalized. The same can be said for a defensive player who uses their body to obstruct the path of the ball carrier rather than going for the flag. In both cases, the penalty is a UR.

**9.9** Leaping or diving forward (jumping) in order to gain extra yardage is illegal. However, a player may leave their feet while spinning or juking or in any hopping motion in which neither knee is raised significantly off the ground (leading with a knee), otherwise the play should be blown dead immediately and the ball is dead at the spot the player left their feet.

**9.11** A pass CAUGHT behind the LOS by any player will be considered a RUN. **Exception:** A pass tipped by the defense that is caught by an offensive player behind the LOS, even in the red zone. A passer who receives the tipped pass can run with the ball and will be credited with both the pass completion and reception.

**9.12** A team may not run the ball on two consecutive plays.

**9.13** The penalty for an illegal run is **loss of 5, DC**, and **on 4th Down, L5, loss of ball** from the PLS. This applies to running on two consecutive plays and an illegal run in the red zone.

# 10 METHOD OF SCRIMMAGE

**10.1** Once the bags are set by a referee no player on either team may encroach on the LOS (players will be warned before being penalized). A player who deliberately touches the ball or makes contact with one or more opponents will be assessed an OC (players can be warned before being penalized if the contact is minor).

**10.2** The snapper must set the ball on the ground before snapping it to the quarterback. Once the ball is set the snapper cannot simulate the start of the play with any motion before they snap the ball. Any movement simulating the beginning of a play after the ball is set in the snapper’s hand will result in a false start penalty for the offense. The snapper is allowed to stand up with or without the ball to reset their stance, as long as the motion is not sudden or indicative of the beginning of a play.

**10.3** The snapper must pass the ball backward~~,~~ from its position on the ground, with a continuous motion.

**10.4** A snap which fails to be fielded by the quarterback (a muffed snap) will end the play with downs continuing at the previous line of scrimmage. A snap caught by the quarterback as it simultaneously hits the ground, in the opinion of the referee, will not be blown dead and the play will continue.

**10.5** A quarterback may drop to a knee to field an errant snap and will not be ruled down as long as the player comes to their feet immediately and, at the discretion of the referee, is in no danger of being contacted by an opposing player.

# 11 INTERFERENCE/CONTACT

**11.1** Pass interference (PI) is any contact or screening by a player that is not making an active play on the ball that prevents a receiver or defender from catching a pass. Actions that constitute pass interference include (but are not limited to): contacting a receiver while not playing the ball, playing through an opponent, grabbing an arm, hooking the receiver, pushing off an opponent.

A player may make contact with a ball in the air even if they are not making a play on it without being called for PI; however, intentionally screening the vision of the receiver (not simply raising your arms, but putting hands into the face of the receiver) is still PI.

Pass interference does not apply at or behind the line of scrimmage, though other penalties (illegal contact, holding, etc) can still be called.

For defensive pass interference, the ball must have already left the quarterback's hand when the foul occurs, otherwise it is illegal contact. There is no such requirement for offensive pass interference.

**11.2** Pass interference is a judgment call and a referee reserves the right to view any contact as incidental.

**11.3** Illegal contact occurs in an obvious passing situation when the receiver is interfered with before the pass is thrown, and it may be called against the defense *only*. Illegal contact is 5 yards from the previous line of scrimmage (PLS) and AFD. There is no bumping or contact on a receiver at the line of scrimmage (or within any distance from the LOS) in the MFL.

**Note :** A PI can be waived off if the pass is deemed to be uncatchable.

# 12 SCORING

**12.1** A touchdown is scored as soon as a legal ball carrier’s belt makes contact with the plane of the end zone line. The player's belt does not need to cross the line and the position of the ball is irrelevant.

**12.2** After a player scores a touchdown the referee will immediately signal a touchdown. The referee may check that a player’s flags are legally set and positioned after a score. If a flag is out of position or illegally attached in any way then the player will receive an illegal flag penalty and the TD will not count, DR.

**12.3** A touchdown will count for 6 points and will be followed by a Point After Touchdown attempt (PAT) (also referred to as a convert attempt). After a touchdown, the scoring team has the choice to either go for a one-point convert from the 5-yard line or a two-point convert from the 10-yard line. The scoring team may also decline to attempt a convert.

In seasons using a running clock, the team that has allowed the score may immediately concede the convert giving the scoring team 2 points.

Additionally in these seasons, two penalties committed on separate attempts by the offense during the same convert will result in an automatic failure of the convert and similarly two penalties committed by the defense during the same convert attempt will result in an automatic success of the convert, with 1 or 2 points being awarded based on what the scoring team was attempting prior to the second defensive penalty.

**12.4** The 5-yard red zones apply during all convert attempts from the 5-yard line. **Note:** an illegal run on a convert attempt from the red zone results in a failed convert as it is a loss of down penalty.

**12.5** The defensive team can return an interception on a convert. The ball is considered live until the interceptor is deflagged or out of bounds. If the ball is returned back into the opposite end zone, the returning team will be awarded the amount of points the opponent was attempting to convert (1 or 2 points).

**12.6** If a ball carrier is deflagged in their own end zone, crosses their own dead ball line (back of the end zone) or sidelines in the end zone, a safety touch (two points) is awarded to the opposing team.

The exception to this rule is a defensive player who intercepts a pass in their own end zone (or has their momentum during the process of intercepting the pass carry them into their own end zone) and who has not yet left their end zone, in which case the play will result in a touchback with the defending team beginning a new offensive possession starting on their own 5-yard line.

If a spot foul offensive penalty occurs in the offensive team’s end zone while the ball is in the end zone then the defense will receive a 2 point-safety touch score if they accept the penalty.

**12.7** If a safety is awarded, the defensive team also gains possession of the ball at their own 5-yard line.

# 13 HAND GUARDING/FLAG GUARDING/PICKS

**13.1** Ball carriers are not permitted to guard their flag in any way to gain an advantage. Using hands, elbows or the ball as shields for their flags is illegal. If the ball carrier stiff-arms, swats the opponent’s hand or performs any action that prevents a defender from deflagging him, they will be penalized for flag guarding which will result in a dead play at POF aka the referee blows the whistle and the play is dead at POF. **Note :** A flag guard by the offense in their endzone is a safety touch.

If a defender in a legitimate attempt to deflag a runner inadvertently knocks the ball out the ball carrier’s hands while they are carrying the ball flag belt high, this will be judged as flag guarding and the play will be dead at point of contact with the ball.

**13.2** A hand guard involving a swinging motion of the offending player’s arm or an arm extended stiff arm motion is Unnecessary Contact (5 yards at spot of foul, downs continue). Note that if first down yardage is gained prior to the offense, the following play will be first and ten.

**13.3** Setting pick plays (blocking a defender while running a pass pattern) is illegal, and will result in an offensive pass interference penalty.

**13.4** Once a player catches a forward pass or the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage all other offensive players are expected to stop moving OR move out of the way of the play (without interfering with any opponents) until the play is over. If a player runs alongside a teammate down the field the play will be whistled dead for illegal blocking. On an interception, the same is true for defensive players other than the intercepting player.

# 14 SUSPENSIONS, UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS AND OBJECTIONABLE CONDUCT

**14.1** A suspension may occur if a player is ejected from a game for committing a personal foul with intentions to injure another player, as well as any player who verbally abuses an opponent, referee or league official. The league reserves the right to suspend a player for any violation.

**14.2** A referee has the authority to give a warning to a player and after two warnings the player will be automatically ejected from the game. A warning could be the result of an OC or a UR, though they are not limited to these.

**14.3 Unsportsmanlike conduct (UC):** The use of profane, obscene, insulting language or gestures to an opponent, teammate, official, or spectator by any player or occupant of the team bench is prohibited. Unsportsmanlike conduct, including spiking a ball or throwing it at an opponent or official, deliberately delaying the game, or contacting an official, is also prohibited. There will be **zero tolerance** for objectionable conduct. UC results in an automatic first down when called against the defense.

Specifically for language use offenses, a 5 yard penalty with no automatic first down can be applied to use of profane language at the referees discretion. Generally a warning should be given first if the profanity is not aimed at anyone in particular. Offensive language aimed at any player, team, official, or bystander is still an automatic UC penalty of 10 yards and an automatic first down.

Additionally, intentionally making noise (such as yelling) at a receiver attempting to catch a ball is UC, determined at the referee’s discretion.

**14.4 Taunting:** Conduct deemed to be taunting an opponent will be considered Objectionable Conduct with the additional application that if it occurs during the course of a play the penalty is assessed at the spot of the foul. Note that this can result in a scoring play being nullified.

For clarification, this is not for celebration. Excessive celebration falls under normal OC. This rule only applies to clear acts towards the opponent in a taunting manner.

**14.5** **Unnecessary Roughness (UR):** Any deliberate and intentional physical action against an opponent, official, spectator by any player or occupant of the team bench is prohibited. There will be **zero tolerance** for unnecessary roughness. UR results in an automatic first down when called against the defense. Special consideration will be given to players making contact with another player through their blind side when they are aware of the presence of the player they contact. Dangerous play in this regard should always result in a warning and can result in an ejection regardless of a prior UR warning.

**14.6** **Unnecessary contact**: This would be called when a UR is not warranted but there was contact. If the contact is incidental and not excessive in nature, the referee will call Unnecessary Contact. The penalty is L5 PLS, automatic 1st D or L5 PBD, 1st D (defensive penalty) OR L5 PLS, DR or L5 POF DC (offensive penalty).

**14.7 Contacting an official**: A player who intentionally contacts an official will be AUTOMATICALLY ejected from the game and may face a suspension. Any intentional contact with an official before or after the game will result in an AUTOMATIC suspension. Decisions on suspensions and their length will be determined by the league president.

**14.8 Fouls Leading to Ejection** Any penalty can carry an additional warning of ejection. Two such warnings by the same player automatically results in an ejection. All Unnecessary Roughness penalties and carry this warning and Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalties can also include this warning at the referee’s discretion.

**14.9 Players removed temporarily from game** A referee may decide that a player must remain out of a game for a number of plays or until they deem them ready to return. This can occur because of an injury (especially a potential concussion), the behaviour of the player, or any other reason.

# 15 APPLICATION OF PENALTIES

Glossary:

AFD= Automatic First Down

DR= Down Repeated

DC= Downs continue (next down)

LOD=Loss of downs

LOB= Loss of Ball

PLS= Point of Last Scrimmage

POF= Point of Foul

PBD= Point Ball Dead (end of the play)

Option= Let the play stand as it concluded, choice to the non-offending captain.

**15.1 Fouls on converts / PAT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Minor Foul Committed by the Offense** – Choice to the Defense | |
| Successful Attempt | • Re-try the convert **AND**:  • Apply yards on the attempt  \* The offense may choose the change from a 1 pt attempt to a 2 pt and vice  versa. |
| Unsuccessful attempt | • The convert fails |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Minor Foul Committed by the Defense** – Choice to the Offense | |
| Successful Attempt | • The convert succeeds |
| Unsuccessful attempt | • Re-try the convert **AND**:  • Apply yards on the attempt (Ball can be spotted at the 5 ½ for 2 points)  \* The offense may change from a 1 pt attempt to a 2 pt and vice versa.  \* If the first attempt is a 1-point convert, the maximum penalty application on a subsequent 2-point try is 5 yards. |

**15.2 Fouls on scrimmage plays**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Minor Offensive Fouls**: |  |
| Offside | L5 PLS, DR or Option |
| False Start  Illegal Formation / Motion | L5 PLS  L5 PLS, DR or Option |
| Rusher Interference | L5 PLS, DR or Option |
| Offensive Pass Interference | L5 PLS, LOD or Option |
| Flag Guarding / Clothing covering flag | Play is dead at POF |
| Intentional Early Deflag  Jumping | L5 PLS, DR or Option  Play is dead where the player jumps |
| Delay of Game | L5 PLS, DR NO OPTION |
| Intentional Grounding | Intentional grounding, L5, LOD, DC or POF (for Point of Foul), LOD, DC |
| Illegal Touching | L5 PLS, LOD, DC or Option |
| Blocking | Play is dead where the block occurs |
| Illegal Forward Pass | L5, LOD, DC at PLS or Option |
| Illegal Run | L5, LOD |
| Forward Pass By Ineligible QB | L5, LOD |
| Illegal Substitution | L5 PLS, DR or Option |
|  |  |
| **Minor Defensive Fouls:** |  |
| Offside | L5 PLS, DR or Option |
| Illegal Formation | L5 PLS, DR or Option |
| Holding (ball carrier) | L5 PBD, AFD or L5 POF, AFD or L5 PLS, AFD |
| Intentional Early Deflag | L5 PLS, AFD or Option |
| Illegal Contact / holding a receiver | L5 PLS AFD or Option |
| Pass Interference | POF AFD |
| ~~Illegal Substitution~~ | ~~L5 PLS, DR or Option~~ |
|  |  |
| **Major Fouls:** |  |
| Unnecessary Contact | Offense: L5 PLS DR or L5 POF DC  Defense: L5 PLS, AFD or L5 PBD, AFD |
| Unnecessary Roughness | Offense: L10 PLS DR or L10 POF DC  Defense: L10 PLS, AFD or L10 PBD, AFD and possible warning |
| Unsportsmanlike conduct | L10 PLS DR or L10 POF DC or L10 PBD DC, AFD if on the defense and possible warning |
| Pockets | *L10 point of next scrimmage. If against defense AFD as these are Objectionable conduct fouls.* |
| Diving (if players in the vicinity) | L10 PLS DR / L5 POF DC / L5 PBD DC, |
| Roughing the Passer | L10 PLS or PBD, AFD and possible warning |
|  |  |
| **Miscellaneous** |  |
| No flag belt / Illegal flag / Equipment Violation | L5 PLS, DR or Option |
| Too many men on the field (Illegal Participation) | L5 PLS, DR or Option |
| Intentionally kicking the ball (during the play) | By offense, play is dead, DC  By defense, L5 at PLS, DR, if intentional, L5 at PLS, AFD, |
| Intentionally kicking the ball (after the play is over) | Delay of game penalty, L5 PLS or PBD. An UC can be added/ so is a warning |

**Note:** For an offensive foul that occurs AFTER a 1st down is gained, the only application is POF DC, the foul can no longer be applied at PLS.

**15.3 Fouls on scoring plays** If a minor foul occurs on a play resulting in a touchdown, the non-offending team has the option of the penalty or the score.

If a major foul occurs on a touchdown or convert, the non-offending team may apply it on either the convert attempt or on the first play of the next drive.

A convert can only be replayed in this case if it was a defensive penalty on a failed convert or an offensive penalty on a successful convert. If neither of these is the case, the penalty will be applied on the upcoming drive.

If it is applied on the convert, the offense may choose a 2 point attempt and apply the penalty (putting the line of scrimmage at the 5 ½) or take the normal penalty yardage application; however, the normal red zone restrictions will still apply regarding running plays.

**15.4 Fouls on the last play of a half**

Minor Fouls:

* An accepted defensive foul occurring on the last play of a half will extend the half by 1 untimed play. This includes games played with a “last 5 plays”.

Major Fouls:

* In addition to the options for minor fouls, any major foul can be carried over to the 1st play of the following half or overtime.
* If a major foul occurs on a touchdown on the last play of the 1st half, the non-offending team may apply it on either the convert attempt or on the first play of the next drive.

**15.5 Fouls behind the LOS** Both offensive and defensive penalties behind the LOS will be applied from the LOS,

**15.6 Fouls in Own End Zone by Offense** If the ball carrier commits a foul in their own end zone, a safety touch is awarded to the defense.

**15.7 Fouls Near the Goal Line:** The ball may never be advanced more than half the distance remaining from the LOS to the goal line by a penalty. The penalty yardage will be equal to half the distance remaining to the goal line in these cases.

Additionally, the offense can always elect to have the penalty yardage place the ball on the opponent’s 5 ½ yard-line instead of inside the red zone if a penalty would result with the ball being placed in the red zone. This no longer applies on a drive where the offense has already entered the red zone.

**15.8 Penalties during the last play**

* An accepted offensive penalty which does not result in a loss of down will be enforced and the ensuing play will be the last play, barring further penalties.
* Defensive penalties extend the half by one play, making the ensuing play the last play, barring further penalties.

**15.9 Dead ball fouls on 4th Down** If the offense fails to gain the yardage for a first down, the ball has been turned over to the other team. If the defense on the play commits a major foul after the ball is dead, there is no automatic first down. The penalty is applied on 1st down after the turnover.

**15.10 Double fouls** When a team has been guilty of two or more fouls on the same play, the non-offending team may take its choice of one of the penalties. If one of the fouls is a major foul, it shall be added to the penalty chosen, at the point of application of the penalty chosen.

**15.11 Dual fouls**

* A dual foul situation occurs when each team has committed one or more fouls on the same play.
* Penalties committed during a play with dual fouls offset
  + Exception: If only one team commits a major foul, then the major foul(s) is enforced and the minor foul(s) are ignored
* After a play with dual fouls, the following play is repeated with the same down and distance as the play with the dual fouls
  + Exception: If there is a change of possession during a play with dual fouls the following scenarios are possible:
    - If at least one foul committed by the defensive team occurs before the change of possession, then the offense maintains control of the ball and normal procedures are followed
    - If all of the defensive team’s fouls occur after the change of possession, then the defense gains possession of the ball and all penalties committed by the team gaining possession are enforced while the fouls committed by the team losing possession are ignored

**15.12 Dead ball fouls** When a player is assessed a dead ball foul, the only application possible is at the point of the next scrimmage. Examples include objectionable conduct between plays and penalties for playing with pockets. These fouls cannot be used to cancel the previous play, such as a score. Additionally, these fouls never offset penalties that occurred during the play.

**15.13 Last Man Back** An illegal act which in the opinion of the referee prevents a score will result in the score being awarded to the non-offending team. This is also known as the “Last Man Back” rule.

Note that despite the name, the offending player does not need to be the last defender back for the defense. This ruling can be applied to any illegal act which prevents a score, such as a goal line situation where clearly a hold prevents a ball carrier from crossing the goal line before being deflagged or a roughness penalty that causes a receiver to drop a ball that would have otherwise been caught.

A score can include a touchdown or a convert, including an interception being returned for either type of score.

# 16 ROSTER REGULATIONS

All roster regulations are subject to exception by the league.

A team’s opponent cannot decide to allow any exceptions regarding roster regulations.

Any game can result in a forfeit for a team violating these regulations.

If both teams violate any roster regulation rules, then the game is counted as a loss for both teams with a score of 25-25 assigned to the game.

**16.1 Substitute player limits**

Players are considered a substitute if they are not on the official league roster for a team that they are playing on. A team may only use substitutes to bring their roster for a game up to a maximum of 6 players.

During the regular season only, quarterbacks who do not play on defense do not count against the cap of 6 players for the purposes of this rule, meaning that a team can have 7 players with subs if they have a quarterback who does not play defense. During the playoffs, the maximum of 6 players applies whether your quarterback plays on defense or not.

The team must designate this player before the game and they can only play at the quarterback position. If the player receives a pass (not including a deflected pass that they both threw and caught) or if they play a down on defense, their team will forfeit the game due to violating the maximum subs limits. Failure to designate this player before the game automatically assumes that the quarterback receiving the first snap of the game will be the designated player.

The only exception to this rule is an injury where the injured player does not return to the game. This would then allow the quarterback to play defense. There are no other exceptions.

Examples that will lead to a forfeit include, but aren’t limited to :

* A temporary injury where a player takes only a couple of plays off and the designated quarterback plays on defense for a few plays.
* A player leaving the game for a non-injury related reason and the designated quarterback plays on defense.
* Changing quarterbacks during the game with the designated quarterback playing offense or defense. If you are benefiting from the additional sub due to your QB not playing defense and you decide to bench that QB, he can no longer play in the game.
* Having players running late while the designated quarterback plays on defense for a few plays until they arrive and then having the late players enter the game. Your options here would be to play with 5 players on defense until the late player arrives or if your QB played defense, then the late players cannot enter the game.

A team can have a quarterback as a substitute, regardless of the number of players attending the game, as long as that player only plays at the quarterback position. The penalty for this player catching a pass (not including a deflected pass that they both threw and caught) or participating on defense will lead to a forfeit.

**16.2 Maximum subs in a game**

A team can have at most 2 substitute players on their roster for a game. This includes any QB sub as well. Additionally, there is no rule on the minimum roster players, but per rule 1.1, a team must have 5 players to start the game, meaning that 3 roster players is the minimum for a team willing to play with 5 players or 4 roster players for a team fielding 6 players.

**16.3 Playoff eligibility**

A minimum of 5 games played is required for a player to participate in the playoffs.

It is a team’s responsibility to make sure all their players are eligible for games they participate in. Failure to do so will result in forfeiting any game where an ineligible player participates in any play.

Note that league exceptions are often made here for players suffering injuries or joining a team after the start of a season, but this exception must be made in writing to allow an ineligible player to play.

**16.4 QB eligibility**

Divisions have a maximum quarterback rating associated with them. No player may throw a forward pass for a team playing in a division where that player’s quarterback rating is above the division quarterback rating cap. Doing so results in a forfeit. This penalization can be applied retroactively even if the violation is not penalized during the week that it occurred. It is up to a given team to make sure that all players throwing a forward pass for their team can do so legally. Write to the league prior to your game if you think that a given player may throw a forward pass.

**16.5 Playoff Substitutes**

For a substitute player to be eligible to play in the playoffs, they must have played at least 1 complete season (not including the season that the playoffs are part of). A complete season is defined by a player having played in a minimum 5 games played in that season.

**16.6 Rating Caps**

Divisions have rating caps that a team’s rating must be equal to or less than in order for that team to be eligible to play in. These caps must be respected throughout the season and not just during a given game. They can be found in section 16.12 and teams will be informed of any divisional cap changes before the beginning of a season.

A team’s Offensive Rating is the sum of the ratings of the 5 highest Offensive Ratings of players on the team’s roster plus the Quarterback Rating of the team’s assigned quarterback.

The assigned quarterback for a team will not have their offensive rating considered when determining the 5 highest Offensive ratings on the team, unless they catch a pass during a game. In this case the player’s offensive rating will be used instead when calculating the team’s offensive rating for the event if it is higher than their QB rating.

Similarly, any player who is not the assigned quarterback for a team who throws a pass will use the higher of their offensive and quarterback ratings as their rating that contributes to the offensive rating of the team.

Note that in these cases it is possible for the team's offensive rating to include multiple quarterback ratings or none.

A team’s Defensive Rating is the sum of the ratings of the 6 highest Defensive Ratings of players on the team’s roster.

The Overall Rating of a team is the sum of the team’s Offensive Rating and Defensive Rating.

The Overall Rating is what is used for determining the maximum team rating cap per division.

Teams also have ratings for each game they play in and this is calculated in the same way as normal, except only participating players are used to determine the ratings.

A team cannot use a substitute player in a game that would raise any of their ratings above the cap for that game.

Each division has a default rating for players who have not played enough games to receive a rating from the league.

**16.7 Substitute Ratings**

Divisions may have a maximum substitute rating associated with them and specific rating caps for substitute QBs. They can be found in section 16.12. No player may sub for a team in a division if either their offensive or defensive rating is above this value.

Any substitute player in a game will also have their ratings counted towards the team’s offensive, defensive, and overall ratings unless they are a quarterback sub with the roster exceeding 6 players. By rule, in this case, a quarterback sub can then only play at the quarterback position. Therefore, their offensive and defensive ratings can be ignored because if they catch a pass or play a down on defense, it will be a forfeit as stated in 16.1.

A substitute used which results in the team violating any ratings cap will result in a forfeit by that team. It is the team’s duty to verify that they do not violate the rating caps with any substitutes that they use.

Similarly to regular roster players, a non-assigned quarterback substitute who throws a pass or an assigned quarterback sub who receives a pass will use the higher of their offensive or quarterback ratings when determining the team’s offensive rating.

**16.8 Pre-Game Roster Requirements**

Team rosters are required to be complete with all players having unique assigned numbers that are correct and worn during gameplay. Failure to have the full and correct roster and numbers on the website before the start of a game will result in a team being penalized at the start of the game. If starting on offense, the penalized team will start on their 1-yard line. If starting on defense, the non-offending team will start their first drive on their 15-yard line. In both cases it will be 1st and 10.

**16.9 Emergency Subs**

Scorekeepers will not add subs to a team roster at the start of a game, except in the case of emergency subs. Subs who are registered and added through the website will appear on the app, so only those players already on the app are eligible to play.

Emergency subs are only for cases where a player gets injured during a game, once it has already started. They must be taken from registered MFL players who are available at the field and only from players whose highest division played in is lower than the team taking the sub, with the exception of all players from the lowest 2 divisions being eligible to sub for all teams. If multiple subs are available who qualify, a team’s opponent chooses which sub will be taken.

The maximum number of players a team can have with emergency subs is 6. There are no exceptions to this maximum. A team is permitted to have an additional non-roster player available to play due to injury, but in this case the injured player is ineligible to return to play in that game and all other roster regulation rules still apply.

**16.10 New Players to the League and Players Added During Season**

A new player to the league or a player added to a roster after the first game of a season will be added conditionally on a probationary period. The league reserves the right to remove a player added to a roster in this way or ask the team to make modifications to their roster until the player has participated in 5 games. This is to prevent teams from becoming unbalanced for their division by adding new players or players after their initially submitted roster.

**16.11 Players Removed During Season**

If a player is removed from a roster during a season, they can only be added back with league permission.

**16.12 Rating Caps Per Division**

The current rating and default caps for each division are listed below.

During the regular season, a substitute quarterback can have a QB rating that is 10 points higher than the sub rating for the division or they can have the QB rating for the division, whichever is lower. During the playoffs the normal sub cap applies for the QB with no additional 10 point allowance.

Montreal Division 1

Team cap: 1045

QB cap: None

Sub cap: 85

Default Rating: 75

Montreal Division 2

Team cap: 980

QB cap: None

Sub cap: 80

Default Rating: 70

Montreal Division 3

Team cap: 915

QB cap: 85

Sub cap: 75

Default Rating: 65

Montreal Division 4

Team cap: 840

QB cap: 80

Sub cap: 70

Default Rating: 55

Montreal Division 5

Team cap: 765

QB cap: 75

Sub cap: 65

Default Rating: 50

# 17 TEAM PLAYOFF QUALIFICATIONS

# 

# 17.1 The number of teams qualifying for the playoffs is determined by the number of teams in the division as follows:

# 

# 5-7 team divisions have 4 teams qualify

8-9 team divisions have 6 teams qualify (first and second place teams have byes)

# 

# 10-11 team divisions have 7 teams qualify (first place team has a bye)

# 

# 12-16 team divisions have 8 teams qualify

17+ team divisions will be determined on a case by case basis

# 

# 17.2 The qualifiers for divisions in the winter season are determined on a case by case basis and do not necessarily follow rule 17.1

# 

**17.3** If a division has conferences within it, the top seeds of each conference will be placed at the top of the standings for the division, in regular tie breaking order amongst them.

# 18 STANDINGS TIE BREAKER PROCEDURES

**18.1 Two team ties** A tie in points between two teams (and only two teams) is sorted in this order:

1 - Head-to-head record between the two teams (best win-loss percentage in games among the teams)

2 - Fewest points against

3 - Highest points differential

4 - Aggregate score of games between the tied teams

5 - Strength of victories (determined by the win-loss records of opponents in games where the team won)

6 - Strength of schedule (determined by the win-loss records of each team’s opponents)

7 - Coin toss

**18.2 More than two teams tied** A tie in points between more than two teams is sorted in this order (note: If only two teams remain tied after any step, tie breaker reverts to step 1 of the two team tie format):

1 - If all teams have played an equal number of games against each other, the teams will be sorted by the record of each team in the games played amongst themselves.

2 - Fewest points against

3 - Highest points differential

4 - Aggregate score of games between the tied teams

5 - Strength of victories (determined by the win-loss records of opponents in games where the team won)

6 - Strength of schedule (determined by the win-loss records of each team’s opponents)

7 - Coin toss

**18.3 Teams with forfeits** A team that has forfeited a game during the season automatically loses any tie breaker between two teams and is placed at the bottom of any multi-team ties. If multiple teams in a tie breaker have forfeited games they are ordered by the number of forfeits they have, with the higher seed given to the team with fewer forfeits. If the tied teams have the same number of forfeits, then the regular tie breaking procedures are used.

# 19 PENALTY DEFINITIONS

**Minor Offensive Fouls**

**Offside** - A player with any part of their body touching the ground beyond the LOS at the time of the snap. Unlike a false start, this foul is not blown dead - the play continues.

**False Start** - Any movement towards the line of scrimmage by any offensive player, occurring before the ball is snapped and after the player has set (i.e. the player is not moving) with enough motion to potentially indicate the start of the play.

This includes any sudden motions, faltering steps, heavily leaning forward (not simply a small lean, but beginning to bend over), or simply starting a route early.

Note: This does not only apply to players on the line of scrimmage, but to all set offensive players.

Note: If a player crosses the line of scrimmage after being set, this is always a false start and not an offside, unless the player is simply adjusting their stance and ends up offside at the time of the snap. However, this will almost always be a false start.

**Illegal Formation** - The center must have the LOS bag lined up between their feet. “Between” is defined as a straight line of infinite length drawn from the rusher bag through the LOS bag must pass through or between the rusher’s feet.

The player receiving the snap must be lined up at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.

No offensive player may be lined up on the line of scrimmage within 1 yard of the center.

Failure to abide by any of these regulations is an Illegal Formation.

**Rusher Interference** - Any impeding of the player who has rusher immunity from their straight line to the quarterback . Note that the rusher must maintain their path from their current position towards the current position of the quarterback (defined as any player with the ball who is still eligible to throw a forward pass) or they forfeit their immunity.

**Offensive Pass Interference** - Offensive Pass Interference can occur from the time the ball is snapped until the time the ball is caught. See defensive pass interference for definition.

**Flag Guarding / Clothing covering flag** - If a ball carrier has any part of their upper body in the path of a player attempting to make a tackle on them, the play will be whistled dead at the spot for flag guarding. Similarly, if a ball carrier's clothing is covering any part of the flag beyond the connection point, they will be whistled down as soon as a tackler is reaching for them and within potential distance to make a tackle, at the discretion of the referee.

**Intentional Early Deflag** - A player who intentionally deflags a player on the opposing team before they are eligible to be tackled will be penalized for an intentional early deflag. Additionally, the player who had their flag taken early is allowed to play with one fewer flag for the remainder of the play and is not down by reach.

**Jumping** - A ball carrier leaving their feet and raising a knee to a point at or near parallel with the ground will have the play blown dead. This is for safety reasons and the degree of the knee being raised to be dangerous is at the discretion of the referee.

**Delay of Game** - If the offensive team fails to snap the ball before the play clock reaches zero seconds.

**Intentional Grounding** - Any pass deemed to be thrown by the quarterback in order to avoid a sack where no eligible receiver was in the area of the pass. Whether a receiver is in the area of a pass is left to the discretion of the officials, but it is a large area and the ball does not have to have had any realistic chance of being caught.

**Illegal Touching** - A receiver leaving the field of play (any contact with the out of bounds area) and re-establishing themselves in bounds and then touching a forward pass. Note that the player must fully re-establish themselves in bounds with 2 feet and a football move, similarly to how a catch is completed. Note that a receiver who has gone out of bounds and has not re-established themselves as inbounds is considered to still be out of bounds.

**Blocking** - Any player on the offense other than the ball carrier continuing to move after a run has been initiated (the ball carrier has crossed the LOS with the ball) or a forward pass has been completed. Generally a few steps are given to account for momentum and players who are both unaware of the situation and not affecting the opposing team are given more leeway here. Note that a team after intercepting a pass is considered the offense for the purposes of this rule.

**Illegal Forward Pass** - A forward pass thrown after the ball carrier has fully crossed the line of scrimmage OR a second forward pass thrown after one has already been completed on the same play.

Note to fully cross the line of scrimmage that all parts of the thrower’s body must have passed beyond the plane of the line of scrimmage and this includes parts not in contact with the ground.

**Illegal Run** - Any run on a drive after the offense has entered the red zone OR any run after the offense previously ran on a play on the same drive. A convert is not considered part of a drive.

**Forward Pass By Ineligible QB** - Any forward pass thrown (whether completed or not) by a quarterback whose QB Rating is above the QB Rating Cap for the division. Note that there are additional penalties for this and these can be found in Section 16.

**Illegal Substitution** - An offensive team that breaks their huddle with more than 6 players.

**Minor Defensive Fouls**

**Offside** - A defensive player is offside if they were not at least seven yards away from the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap and then crosses the line of scrimmage before any other player on their team legally crosses the line of scrimmage. This rule no longer applies if an offensive player comes within arms reach of the quarterback at any time during a play.

**Illegal Formation** - All defensive players must be at least 1 yard away from the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. Additionally, no defensive player may be within 3 yards of the line of scrimmage if they are not lined up at least one full yard to the left or right of the center.

**Holding (ball carrier)** - Any grabbing of a ball carrier or their clothing for a long enough duration to impede the player is a holding penalty. A quick grab and release in the area of the flag is not holding. Also, a ball carrier who has a loose shirt (not tucked in) below the belt will not benefit from a holding call if this loose shirt is held by an opponent. This is to prevent an advantage to a ball carrier given that it is very easy to accidentally grab a loose shirt in the area of the flags.

**Intentional Early Deflag** - A player who is intentionally deflagged early by an opposing player is called for an Intentional Early Deflag. A player can deflag an opponent a moment before they catch the ball, but not more than a second before they do. Note that in the case of an early deflag (intentional or not), the ball carrier is not down by reach and instead gets to complete the play with the advantage of having one fewer flag.

**Illegal Contact / Holding a receiver** - Impeding the route of a receiver by either stepping into their path, pushing them, or holding them **before the ball is thrown** is Illegal Contact or Holding (as appropriate). Note that a defender who is not moving does not need to move out of the way of a receiver; however, a defender that has started moving cannot be in the path of the receiver even if that path would take them through the defender. Essentially, in this case, the defender must get out of the way of the receiver.

**Pass Interference** - Defensive pass interference rules apply from the time the ball is thrown until the ball is touched.

It is pass interference by either team when any act by a player significantly hinders an eligible player’s opportunity to catch the ball. Pass interference does not apply when the forward pass was illegal.

(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; or

(g) Initiating contact with an opponent by shoving or pushing off, thus creating separation.

**Major Fouls**

**Unnecessary Contact** - Forcible contact to an opposing player that is not simply the inevitable contact from deflagging a ball carrier or running with the ball is Unnecessary Contact. This includes a ball carrier who does not try to deviate from the path of an opposing player that has established their position, a defender stepping into the path of a ball carrier, stiff arms, intentional swinging hand guards, and any other contact deemed by the officials to be beyond the normal contact involved in flag football.

**Unnecessary Roughness** - Forcible contact to an opposing player that is reckless, extreme, or dangerous is Unnecessary Roughness. These penalties automatically carry a warning for ejection (two such penalties is an automatic ejection) and can result in an immediate ejection by a referee if they deem the action worthy of it.

Tackling, intentional forcible pushing, swinging through the quarterback’s throwing hand, dangerous play, forcible contact to the head, and any other heavy or dangerous contact is Unnecessary Roughness.

Note that specifically on a play on a ball in the air, if one player is aware of another player, it is their responsibility to not play the ball through the unaware player. This contact can be very dangerous and will generally result in Unnecessary Roughness.

**Unsportsmanlike conduct** - 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. Additionally, spiking the ball is prohibited

(e) Unnecessary physical contact with a game official.

Note that an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty (such as taunting) can be penalized at the spot of the foul if it happens during a play.

**Pockets** - Having pockets on any part of your clothing that is not zippered up is an equipment violation. When this is called, the application depends on when the call is made. If it is made before a play is whistled in then the non-offending team can choose for the foul to override the last play or not. If it is made after a play is blown in, it is enforced from the current line of scrimmage.

**Diving (if players in the vicinity)** - Leaving your feet and reaching forward in an attempt to gain yards or avoid a tackle is a Diving penalty. This only applies if there are players in the area who could be at risk, otherwise the ball is simply moved back to where the ball carrier left their feet as normal.

**Roughing the Passer** - Roughing the Passer constitutes the following:

(a) Any contact with the quarterback’s body above the shoulders.

(b) Forcibly contacting the football as it is leaving or has just left the quarterback’s hand so that it is pushed back towards their hand/arm

(c) Forcibly contacting the quarterback’s body during any part of their throwing motion including the follow through. The contact must be enough to in some way impede the quarterback’s ability to throw and cannot simply be the normal contact expected in deflagging a player

# 20 ONSIDE KICK

The onside kick rule is only applicable during the winter season.

To attempt on onside kick, a team must :

* Be losing.
* Be in the second half.
* Have a timeout remaining.
* Not have already attempted one during the game.
* Have just scored a touchdown and completed the convert play (whether successful or not).
* Declare their intention to attempt the onside kick immediately after the convert.
  + If the rusher bag is set for the ensuing drive, it is too late and consuming a timeout at this point does not change that.

*How does it work?*

* A team gets one try from their own 5 yard line to advance the ball past midfield.
* If they are successful, they retain possession at their own 5 yard line, first down and 10.
  + This includes even if they score on the attempt. No points will be awarded.
* If they do not make it to midfield, the opponent takes over at the 5 yard line of the team that failed the onside attempt.
* Just like a convert, if attempted in the last 5 plays, an onside attempt consumes a play.
* If a team chooses an onside attempt, they may not punt on this play, they must run a scrimmage play.
* The onside kick will be done from the end of the field that was scored on to avoid wasting time by switching sides.
* Scorekeepers: we do not put in the play for the onside kick. It doesn't count in any way for stats. Just manually add the points if needed (defensive score). Manually change possession if the attempt is successful.

*What happens if the defense scores on an onside attempt?*

* If the defense scores during the onside attempt (safety, interception returned for a touchdown), the points will count and they will gain possession on their own 5 yard line.
  + If the defense scores a touchdown on the onside attempt, they will have the usual choice of a convert attempt.

**Penalty applications regarding an onside attempt:**

* If a penalty is carried over from a convert, it can be applied on the onside kick attempt.
* If either team commits a pre-snap foul on the onside attempt, the yardage is applied and the attempt is repeated.
* If the team attempting an onside kick commits a foul before crossing midfield, they automatically fail their attempt. No yardage will be applied on the ensuing drive unless it was a major foul.
* If the team attempting an onside kick commits a foul after crossing midfield, the attempt is successful. The yardage will then be applied from their own 5 yard line taking into account the “half the distance to the goal” rule.
* A penalty resulting in an automatic first down will not automatically result in a successful onside attempt. The penalty yardage will be applied and the onside kick will be tried again.
* If the team attempting the onside kick achieves midfield because of the yardage application of a penalty, it will result in a successful onside attempt.
* If both teams commit fouls during the play, the dual foul situation occurs as normal.
* The last man back rule applies, though the offense can still not be awarded points on an onside try.