Our Governing Philosophy:

1) We live our motto: It Is All About the Kids!

2) **PICK 6:**
   - P: Positive coaching
   - I: Instructing the fundamentals
   - C: Communicate, communicate, communicate
   - K: Kids are the reason we are here!
   - 6: Six degrees of respect: players, parents, officials, coaches, opposing team, field-staff

3) Our aim is to be safe, be fair and to have fun.

4) Remember: Flag football is a technical and finesse game versus the brute strength game of traditional tackle football.

5) Remind yourself and others that no one will get drafted by an NFL team from this league, so just relax and enjoy.

6) Pick 6 retains the right to amend, update or edit these rules as situations requires.

7) Pick 6 staff have the authority to make on-the-spot rulings on any dealings regarding this league.

8) When more details are needed than are outlined in our Rule Book, game officials will defer to the most current National Federation of High Schools Rule Book.

9) This document uses the pronouns "he", "his" and "him" for readability and is not an act of gender bias, the program seeks and encourage female participants.

Our Game Officials:

1) Our officials are young adults learning a craft and responsibility, please treat them with the same respect you want for your children and set a positive example.

2) Remember, No Officials = No Games.

3) Our officials administer the rules of this league not any other organization; not the NFL, NCAA etc.

4) Our officials are encouraged to use the ‘preventative style’ of officiating allowing officials to talk to, remind and help players avoid violations whenever feasible. Cautions and teaching points are appropriate most times.

5) It is not the mission of game officials to flag every small, nuanced infractions of traditional football rules (ex: breaking the huddle incorrectly, being an inch offside, etc.) or other insignificant issues that do not produce a ‘significant unfair advantage’.

Your Required Personal Conduct:

1) Players, coaches and spectators, and officials must keep their comments profanity free.

2) Disrespectful language, racist, sexist, homophobic remarks, obscene gestures / behavior, and bullying are prohibited.

3) Foul play will not be tolerated.

4) Any staff member that hears or sees anything that leads them to believe an infraction of the required personal conduct standards outlined has been committed, the person responsible may dismissed from the park.

5) If Pick 6 Staff determines an individual is not able to calm themselves down or willing to remove themselves from the complex they have the authority to forfeit the game.

6) Fighting will lead to an immediate ejection, possible suspension or even a lifetime exclusion.

7) Alcohol, intoxicants, smoking, vaping, weapons and pets are prohibited on our rented fields. Pick 6 staff, players and spectators must comply with the rented-facility’s rules.
Your Required Team Conduct:

1) For the safety of our officials and their ability to administer the game all team personnel and spectators must remain at least two-yards off the sideline and inside the designated team boxes.
2) Pick 6 staff at each site will determine where spectators can and cannot be and will err on the side of safety for our players and officials.
3) If teams cannot agree on a sideline to occupy, a game official will conduct a coin toss and assign sidelines.
4) Officials may require that boom-boxes or other noise producing devices be turned off or eliminated as they interfere with the game official’s ability to communicate and administer the game.
5) Drones and other aerial vehicles / cameras are not allowed during Pick 6 events.
6) Teams are required to clean up their garbage after contests.

Our General Format:

1) This is a minimal-contact 5v5 NFL Flag recreational league.*
2) A maximum of five-offensive and five-defensive players are allowed on the field during live plays.
3) A minimum of three players must be fielded to start or continue a contest.
4) The opposing team is not required to ‘adjust down’ when a team cannot field five opposing players. But may do so to show sportsmanship.
5) If a team ‘borrows’ a player from another team to help fill a roster, the game will be recorded as a forfeit but the game shall be played.
6) All players are eligible receivers.
7) When possible the field dimensions are a high school regulation field played sideline-to-sideline plus marked end zones. When games are held on a non-regulation field, the dimensions shall be 25-yards wide by 50-yards long plus end zones.
8) Teams take possession of the ball at their own 10-yard line (orange cone).
9) Teams have four downs to successfully advance to the next line-to-gain and earn a new set of downs or score.
10) When a team fails to achieve the line-to-gain the ball will change possession with the new offensive team taking possession on their own 10-yard line. There is no physical punting
11) “No Run Zones” are delineated by blue cones. These zones are five-yards from the mid-field line-to-gain and five-yards from the goal-line.
12) “No Run Zones” are enforced as a safety measure to discourage power-runs, diving, etc. near line-to-gain markers. When the ball is spotted inside a “No Run Zone” the offense must execute a passing play.
13) Yellow cones represent the only “1st Down” marker on the field.
14) The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull or the ball carrier left the field-of-play.
15) Team rosters are limited to 12-players.

* While this is a minimal-contact recreational league, contact does occur on occasion. The vast majority is unintentional and insignificant. Players and parents must understand that contact is impossible to avoid and is usually a result of bodies moving in space simultaneously and the simply the nature of the sport. It is the job of each player, team captains, coaches and officials to keep contact and collisions to a minimum through self-control, training and enforcement. Any significant contact may result in a penalty.
Coaches on the Field / Bench Fouls:

1) Coaches, both on and off the field, are allowed to give verbal guidance during the play (e.g., “Joe is open on the right side”, “spike the ball”, “cover your man” etc.)
2) Coaches who elect to be on the field cannot interfere with a play in any physical way (examples may include: inadvertent screening or blocking, blocking the lines-of-sight, impeding a player or referee or otherwise becoming entangled in the play). If they do, his team will incur a Bench Foul. See the Unfair Acts Rule.
3) Coaches are prohibited from ‘chasing the play down field’ in the way a game official does.
4) Coaches that are legally on the field during a live play must be 5 yards deeper than their deepest player.
5) One defensive coach may stand in the huddle but must be completely off the field prior to the snap.

Uniform and Equipment:

Safety:
1) Players may not wear hard, unyielding, or stiff material items that in the view of the officiating crew may present a hazard to other players.
2) Players MUST properly wear a protective mouthpiece (in their mouth) while on the field-of-play.
3) Players should wear pants or shorts that do not have pockets, belt loops, zippers, or exposed draw strings. If pants or shorts have pockets, they must be taped shut.
4) Players must wear close-toed shoes. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed.
5) Players may wear eye protection to include prescription glasses or flexible sunglasses.
6) Players may wear a face shield molded to the face with no protrusions to protect against facial injury.
7) Jewelry that in the judgement of a game official might endanger other players must be removed before play or taped to the body.
8) Player’s finger nails must be trimmed or taped over to protect opponents. Alternatively, players may wear gloves to protect their opponents.
9) Players may wear knit or stocking-style caps.
10) Soft-shelled helmets designed for flag football players (e.g., the EliteTek brand, et. al.), may be worn.
11) Baseball-style caps cannot be worn on the field of play.

Flag Belts:
1) Every member of a team on the field must wear a flag belt provided by PICK 6.
2) Flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction.
3) If a player chooses to wear a hand towel, or any other object, on their waist it will be treated as part of the flag belt.
4) Flags cannot be the same/similar color as a player’s pants/shorts. Similar is at the official’s discretion.

Team Jerseys:
1) Players must wear jerseys provided by Pick 6.
2) Home teams will wear dark colors, Away will wear light colors.
3) If a player does not have a team jersey, it is permissible to, at the Pick 6 staff's discretion, wear a ‘street shirt’.
4) It is the team coach’s responsibility to clear a non-team jersey / street shirt with the game official or Pick 6 Staff prior to the player taking the field of play.
5) All players are to wear his team jersey as an outer garment. It is not permissible to wear jackets, rain gear, etc., over the team jersey while on the field of play. It is permitted while in the team box area.
6) Players must strive to ensure their jerseys are long enough to remain tucked in during the entire play. If a jersey is not long enough to remained tucked (ex: taller player) the player must wear the belt over the jersey.
7) When a shirt is untucked at the snap a ‘holding’ call on a defender is unlikely when a defender is making a fair and legal attempt at the ball carrier’s flag and ends up with their opponents’ jersey in lieu of the flag belt.

Teaching Lesson: Keep them tucked.
8) Hoodies must be worn on the head or tucked under the jersey while on the field to avoid being pulled (horse collar).

**Miscellaneous Uniform / Gear Issues:**
1) Players may wear a headband made of non-abrasive material. Rubber or elastic bands may be used in hair.
2) Players may tape forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear soft gloves, elbow pads, shin guards, and knee pads.
3) Unyielding items such as braces, casts, or anything with exposed metal are not allowed.
4) Footballs must be pebble grained leather or rubber covered and meet these sizes: Pre K – 2d grade: pee-wee football, 3d – 6th grade: junior football, 7th grade and above: youth football.

**Game Clock:** *(It is our intent to complete a game within one hour)*

1) Games are 40 minutes (two 20 minute halves).
2) Officials may stop the clock as needed.
3) Halftime is one minute.
4) Each team will have one time outs per half.
5) Team timeouts are 30 seconds. After 30 seconds the official will audibly place the offense on a 30-second play clock.
6) Time outs will not roll over from the first half to second half.
7) Team coaches are encouraged to yell “clock?” or “clock check?” in lieu of “time?” to avoid confusion when requesting a team timeout.
8) The clock will run continuously during the first 19-minutes of each half unless a team timeout is used or play is stopped by an official (e.g. deal with an injury, challenge, referee conference, etc.)
9) A “stop-clock” or “pro-clock” will be in effect in the last one minute of the first and second half.
10) Officials will give a verbal one-minute warning as close as possible to the actual one-minute mark but will not interrupt a live play.
11) The one minute warning will stop the clock.
12) The time remaining on the clock will be announced after every play inside the final one minute of each half.
13) The clock will not run during point-after-touchdown attempts (PATs) in last one-minute of each half.
14) Pick 6 Staff may enter the field during any dead ball situation to address matters they believe should not wait till half-time or the end of the game by calling a ‘Staff Time-Out’.

**Clock Mechanics:**

1) The offense has a 30-second play clock to snap the ball before a delay of game penalty is assessed.
2) Teams will receive one courtesy warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
3) No period or half can end if there is an obvious timing error or any other irregularity has occurred.
4) When officials go to the ‘stop clock’ or ‘pro-clock’ mechanic the clock will stop / start as listed below:
   a. Defense gains possession of the ball / on the snap
   b. Inadvertent whistle / at the ready
   c. Incomplete passes / on the snap
   d. Intentional grounding / at the ready
   e. Offense achieves a first down / clocks stops till referee whistles the ready to play whistle
   f. Out-of-bounds plays with a player in possession of the ball / on the snap
   g. Loose ball out-of-bounds / on the ready
   h. Penalty administration (other than Delay of Game) / depends on previous play
i. Delay of game / on the snap
j. Referee timeout / at the Referee’s discretion
k. Team timeout / on the snap
l. Injury / when player is removed from field (depending on the status of clock on previous play)
m. Touchdown or Safety / on the next snap after the PAT attempt. PATs are untimed downs during ‘stop/pro clock mechanics’.

**Coin Toss:**

1) Coaches or team captains are required to bring their game ball(s) to the coin toss for inspection.
2) Game Officials will conduct a pre-game safety check to ensure players and equipment are safe and ready for competition.
3) Game officials will confirm with team coaches during the coin toss that the teams are prepared to play in a sportsmanlike manner and are properly and legally equipped (pockets, flags, contrasting colors, unyielding materials, etc.).
4) Game officials will issue a warning about unsportsmanlike conduct, excessive rough play, etc. during the coin toss.
5) First possession is decided using a coin (ball marker (puck) may act as a coin).
6) The head official will ask the ‘calling captain’ their choice of “heads” or “tails”. The official will ask the opposing team to repeat and confirm the choice before flipping the coin. The head official will then confirm the call.
7) The team winning the toss shall choose one of the following options (always confirm with coach):
   a. Begin on offense
   b. Begin on defense
   c. Designate which goal their team will defend
   d. Defer their choice to the second half
8) The loser of the coin toss shall make a choice of the remaining options.
9) Before the start of the second half, the choice of options shall be reversed.
10) If a coach does not attend the coin toss, the opposing team will win the toss.
11) In order to keep to schedule, the game clock shall start one minute after the coin toss formalities have concluded, regardless if the teams have taken the field or not.

**Scoring:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Touchdown</th>
<th>• 6 points with the chance to go for a 1-, or 2-point after touchdown attempt (PAT).</th>
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</table>
| Point After Touchdown (PAT) | • 1 point from the 5-yard line, pass play only  
• 2 points from the 10-yard line, run or pass  
Interceptions during PAT attempts are automatic dead ball |
**Point After Touchdown (PAT):**

1) Following a touchdown, once the scoring team has informed an official of which point conversion choice they want to attempt the decision cannot be changed unless the scoring team uses a team timeout.
2) If a penalty occurs during an extra point attempt, the penalty will be assessed but the extra point value remains the same.
3) Decisions cannot be changed after a penalty.
4) Unsportsmanlike conduct and personal fouls during successful touchdown attempts will be assessed at half the distance to the goal during the PAT attempt (e.g., 2-point PAT attempts will be spotted at the 5-yard line and 1-point attempts at the 2 ½-yard line). All other defensive penalties may be declined by the offense and the score will stand.
5) Dead ball fouls committed by the offense that do not carry a loss-of-down penalty will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.
6) Fouls by the offense during a PAT attempt that carry a loss-of-down penalty (flag guarding, illegal advancement, illegal pass, etc.) will result in the PAT being “no good” and the attempt will not be repeated.
7) Fouls committed by the offense in unsuccessful PAT attempts will be declined by the defense and the PAT will be “no good” and will not be replayed.
8) Fouls simultaneous to the snap (illegal shift, illegal motion) if accepted, will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.
9) Fouls by the defense during an unsuccessful PAT attempt will result in a retry after the options are administered. The offense may opt to accept or decline penalty yardage before the retry.
10) Interceptions on any PAT cannot be returned by the defense.

**Safeties:**

A safety occurs when the ball becomes dead in the offense’s end zone or the offense commits a foul in their end zone. Examples include:

- a. Fumbles or muffed snaps in, or out of, your opponent’s end zone (to include sides and end line).
- b. A player in possession of the ball has their flag pulled in the end zone.*
- c. The ball carrier going out-of-bounds behind the goal line.*
- d. The ball is snapped out of the end zone.
- e. The offense commits a foul inside the end zone*

*Exceptions:

b. A flag pull immediately after an interception in the end zone is a touchback, not a Safety.
c. An intercepting player going out of bounds behind the goal line immediately after an interception in the end zone is a touchback, not a Safety.
e. If the ball is intercepted in the end zone and the intercepting team fouls in the end zone prior to the ball being brought back into the field of play (example: flag guarding) the result of the play will be a touchback and the foul will be administered from the touchback spot. This will not result in a Safety.
Onside Play Option:

1) This option is only available to the team behind in score during the final one minute of either half and only immediately after the trailing team has scored.
2) This is an untimed down.
3) This option is not available after the trailing team has scored a safety.
4) This option is never available to the team ahead in points.
5) After the trailing team has scored, the team coach of the trailing team must inform the game officials they intend to attempt an onside play.
6) The ball is placed at the offensive team’s 10-yard line, going out.
7) This play is treated exactly like a fourth down play including the assessment of penalties.
8) The offense must advance the ball to or past midfield after all live ball penalties have been accessed in order to retain the ball.
9) Dead ball penalties will not be considered in determining if the line-to-gain was achieved.
10) If the offense retains the ball the next zone-line-to-gain will be established.
11) If the offense does not retain the ball, the defense will take possession of the ball at mid-field, 1st and goal-to-go.
12) Interceptions returned to the end zone by the defense during an onside play are worth six points and a PAT attempt.
13) There is no limit to the amount of onside plays a team may use as long as the provisions of lines 1, 2 and 3 of this section are still valid.

Mercy Rule:

The mercy rule will be automatically invoked if the score differential reaches 17 or more points during the final two minutes of the second half or 34 or more points at any time in the second half.

Challenge Procedure:

1) Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.
2) Generally, officials are happy to answer quick response questions during the game if they do not impede the game. The priority is to spot the ball then address questions without impeding the play clock.
3) If a captain or head coach believes an official has made a procedural error they may call for a timeout. If the head official agrees that there has been a procedural error (e.g., wrong down, incorrect penalty yardage, etc.) the procedural error will be addressed and the timeout will not be charged.
4) The challenge must be made to an official before the next snap.
5) In the event the captain or head coach loses a procedural challenge and the captain’s team did not possess a legal team timeout a fifteen-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be assessed.
6) Only procedural issues may be addressed, not an official’s judgment call or no-call.
7) If the protesting team is unsatisfied with the game official’s ruling of the challenge and would like to elevate the challenge to a Pick 6 Staff member in charge of the site, they may do so.
8) If the challenge is ultimately lost, the protesting team will lose all remaining timeouts in the game.
9) If the team doesn’t possess any timeouts at all they will be assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
10) If a challenge is ultimately won, the timeout will not be charged and the game will resume per normal clock mechanics and rules.
11) If a team insist on challenging a judgement call they will automatically lose the challenge. Field officials are encouraged to inform team coaches of this prior to a Pick 6 Staff member arriving.
OFFENSE:

1) Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped. After all players have ‘set’ one player may go ‘in motion’.

2) Any quick / abrupt movement by a single or multiple offensive players in unison, which simulates the snap, is a false start. This includes, but not limited to, a quarterback thrusting his hands forward when there is not a simultaneous snap. This is a judgement call.

3) All players must substitute from their sideline only. This allows the defense to be aware of their presence and avoids deceptive plays by the offense.

4) It is a dead ball foul if any player on offense enters the neutral zone before the snap. (neutral zone infraction)

5) The ball must be snapped between the center’s legs.

6) ‘Center Sneaks’ are not allowed (Illegal Advancement). The ball must completely leave the center’s hand and the center take at least one step forward or backward to receive a hand off or a pass.

7) Direct snaps are legal to any player not on the line-of-scrimmage. The player receiving the snap is considered the passer and cannot run the ball past the line-of-scrimmage.

8) The ball will be declared dead if any portion of the ball carrier’s body other than their hands or feet (knee, elbow, buttocks, ball-in-hand, etc.) touches the ground.

9) The offense is always responsible for retrieving the ball and returning it an official or to the line of scrimmage quickly at the end of each play.

10) For safety reasons, when players relay the ball to an official please use short underhand tosses. This protects other players and speeds the game along.

Screening / Blocking:

1) Physical-contact blocking (as seen in traditional football) and non-contact blocking ‘screen blocking’ (as seen in basketball) are not allowed (even if unintentional). This is a difficult transition for traditional football players.

2) A penalty may be called even when an offensive player is accidentally obstructing a defender.

3) Offensive players must be aware that they may be penalized for blocking by simply chasing the play and providing an inadvertent block or screen.

4) Blocking clarified: When an offensive player either makes contact with a defensive player that impedes the defender from getting to the ball carrier OR takes a position (generally less than two normal strides away from a defender) that the defender COULD NOT AVOID contact with the offensive player while in pursuit of the ball carrier’s flag. The game official will consider if ‘an unfair advantage’ was gain by the offense when considering screen blocking calls and reserves the right to ‘wave it off the flag’ if the officiating team determines no ‘unfair advantage was gained’.

5) Passers caught between a ball carrier and a rushing defender will not be considered to be screening if there is no clear and obvious attempt to be doing so.

6) Offensive players that remain in their initial position after the snap or do not leave their initial position are not considered to be screening.

7) Defensive contact-type ‘pick plays’ (often seen in basketball) or ‘rub routes’ during a receiver’s pass route are not allowed.

Fumbles and Muffs:

1) Fumbles are a “dead ball” when they hit the ground.

2) If a lateral, muffed or fumbled ball is intercepted before becoming dead it remains a “live ball”.
3) Forward fumbles that hit the ground will be marked where the ball carrier’s feet were when he/she lost control and not the spot where the ball hit the ground.
4) Backward fumbles are marked where they hit the ground.
5) Muffed snaps will be marked where the ball hit the ground.

Running / Jumping / Diving:

1) Ball carriers are allowed to slightly leave their feet, jump, and spin as evasive maneuvers in order to advance the ball as long as they do not put another player’s safety at risk. This is a judgment call by the game officials.
2) Not every insignificant jump or small hop constitutes a safety issue and player safety risk is at the discretion of each official.
3) Jump cuts or leaping between two defenders is allowed if they do not initiate noteworthy contact with the defender or put another player’s safety at risk. This is a judgment call by the game officials.
4) Ball carriers may not hurdle over another player.
5) Ball carriers may not dive, lunge, or fall forward in a perceived intentional manner in order to advance the ball or achieve a line-to-gain. This is a judgment call by the game officials.
6) Ball carriers may extend the ball out in front of them to gain additional yardage.
7) Diving by the defense to capture a ball carrier’s flag is legal. However, game officials may still make judgment calls about contact. Teaching Point: Play the flag, not the player’s body.
8) If a defender trips a ball carrier while pursuing the offensive player from the rear and the ball carrier goes to the ground (typically seen in break-away plays), even if the defender is making a fair and reasonable attempt to capture the ball carrier flag, the defender will be called for Illegal Contact.
9) Ball carriers must make every effort to avoid a defender who has established a stationary position (charging).
10) Runners may leave their feet to avoid collision or falling on another player.
11) Passers may jump vertically to throw the ball over a taller defender.
12) The offense may use multiple backward passes, hand-offs, pitches or laterals.

Flag Guarding including Stiff-Arming:

1) The ball carrier’s flags must be accessible to the defense throughout the play.
2) Flag guarding is the act of a ball carrier denying a defender the opportunity to capture their flag in any physical way.
3) Flags may not be tucked in pants, tucked under jerseys, worn improperly, looped around the waist belt, or knotted.
4) The ball carrier shall not flag guard by flailing of arms, using their hands, arms, elbows or extremely dipped shoulders to deny the opportunity of an opponent to remove a flag.
5) The ball carrier may not swat a defender’s hands away nor pin the flag against their body using the ball or hands.
6) An official may call flag guarding if they feel that a ball carrier’s natural running motion gave the ball carrier a decisive advantage over the defender and the running motion caused part of the ball carrier’s body to block a de-flagging attempt.
7) What constitutes flag guarding is up to the official’s judgment. We recommend you carry the ball with your hands held high on the body to avoid flag guarding. This is one of the most difficult transitions for traditional football players.
8) Flag guarding shall not be called if there is no defensive player within reasonable distance to capture the flag.
9) The ball carrier may bend at the knees to dip low, side cut, skip, or take short hops.
10) Extreme low dips (sometimes called a “duck-walk”) are legal and do not constitute flag guarding in themselves, as long as the flag carrier’s flags are still exposed and the defensive player isn’t physically impeded (i.e. the ball carrier isn’t using his arms, hands, shoulder, ball, etc. to impede the defender. Normally flag guarding can be avoiding while “duck-walking” when the ball carrier keeps his hands and elbows high on the body (ex: at shoulder-level).
11) No penalty will be called if a ball carrier simultaneously flag guards as the defender pulls the flag.
12) Tampering with the flag in any way to gain advantage is illegal.
13) Examples of flag guarding: stiff arming, pinning the flag, swatting, using the ball as a stiff arm, etc.

**Pass Plays:**

1) Only one forward pass per play
2) Once the ball has passed the line-of-scrimmage it cannot be returned to behind the line-of-scrimmage and thrown forward legally.
3) If any portion of the passer’s body is behind the line-of-scrimmage it is a legal pass.
4) A passer may jump vertically to throw the ball over a defender.
5) All players are eligible to receive a pass unless they have stepped out-of-bounds of their own accord.
6) Players may re-establish themselves in the field of play and catch the ball if another player has touched the ball first.
7) Any offensive player who receives either a forward or backward handoff behind scrimmage can pass the ball from behind the line-of-scrimmage.
8) Backward passes (lateral's, pitches, etc.) are allowed anywhere on the field.
9) If the passer’s flag has been pulled while the passer still has the ball in their hand it is a sack. There is no allowance given for the passer’s arm being in motion at the time of the sack. Ball in hand at all equals a sack.
10) An underhand forward pass (shovel pass) is legal and if it is dropped, it is ruled an incomplete pass, not a fumble.
11) An underhand pass backward that is dropped is ruled a fumble and the down counts. The ball is spotted where it hit the ground.
12) If a pass is tipped or blocked by a defender and the passer catches the ball, the play is will be whistled dead.

**Batting:**

1) Any pass or fumble in flight may be batted in any direction, by an eligible receiver, unless it is a backward pass batted forward by the passing team.

**Intentional Grounding:**

1) A passer may not throw the ball into the ground to avoid a loss of yardage or conserve time.
2) An exception to this rule is it is legal to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball to the ground immediately (spiking) after receiving either a direct hand-to-hand snap or from the “shot-gun” formation.
3) The spike must be fluid and immediate after the snap or it is intentional grounding.
4) A pass may not be intentionally thrown into an area not occupied by an offensive receiver.
5) Passers may not throw the ball out-of-bounds to stop the clock as in NFL or NCAA games.
Catches:

1) A pass is completed when an offensive player simultaneously places at least one foot inbounds and maintains possession of the ball.
2) If the ball comes out of the receiver’s grasp due to contact with the ground or while going to the ground the pass is incomplete.
3) Simultaneous catches between a defensive and offensive player go to the offense.
4) In the event of a bobbed catch, i.e., the ball is batted about by the receiver in an attempt to catch it, and the intended receiver is de-flagged before taking full possession there is no penalty for early flag pull.
5) Whether or not a ball is tipped or touched in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls anywhere on the field (roughing, personal fouls, illegal contact, etc.).
6) If a receiver steps out-of-bounds of their own accord and is the first to touch a pass, it is an incomplete pass.

DEFENSE:

1) Stripping or attempting to strip the ball from a player’s hand, including the quarterback, is illegal.
2) Defensive teams may not attempt to confuse the offensive team by simulating their signals or cadence.
3) There are no “free plays” for the offense. After the game official blows the ready-for-play whistle and the snapper puts their hand(s) on the ball, no player may enter the neutral zone until the ball is moved to start the snap. Entering the neutral zone before the snap is known as “offside” or encroachment which causes the play to be immediately blown dead.

Rushing the Passer:

1) Before each play is allowed to begin an official will mark off a 7-yard rush line.
2) Defensive players that ‘rush the passer’ must begin the play at this seven-yard mark or further away from the line-of-scrimmage.
3) The rushing defensive player must have a clear path to the passer and any interference by the offense to impede his or her path will consider screening.
4) Players not rushing the passer may defend the line-of-scrimmage but not enter the backfield unless the ball is handed-off or touches another player.
5) If the ball makes contact with any player other than the player that took the snap, the defense is eligible to cross the line-of-scrimmage.
6) The offense may not use any deceptive measures to ‘trick’ the defense to rush early (i.e. hiding or obscuring the ball or having both the passer and a back run with the ball simultaneously as seen in run-pass-option). The benefit of the doubt will be given to the defense when the offense attempts to use deceptive measures.
7) A defensive player that insignificantly crosses the rush line before the snap and immediately self-corrects and returns to his side of the rush line before he rushes is not penalized. Think ‘re-set’.
8) A defensive player that insignificantly crosses the line-of-scrimmage after the snap and immediately self-corrects and returns to his side of the line-of-scrimmage is not penalized. Think ‘re-set’

Roughing:

1) Defensive players must make a concerted effort to avoid charging into the passer.
2) To assist defensive players to avoid unnecessary contact with the passer the covering official will endeavor, but is not required, to announce “balls away” when the ball has left the passer’s hand.
3) In general, defensive players may not “crash” the passer’s throwing arm, shoulder or body even if the ball is touched first.
4) An insignificant “brush-by” may be allowed by the referee but is not guaranteed. This is a judgement call.
5) Making contact with the passer while blocking a pass or attempting to block a pass may result in a roughing the passer penalty.
6) Whether or not a ball is tipped in the air has no bearing on the play as it applies to fouls (roughing, personal fouls, etc.).
7) A roughing penalty will not be enforced if a passer initiates contact with a defensive player while in the throwing motion; for example, during the passer’s follow through the player’s arm makes contact with an opponent’s hand, arm, or shoulder. In this instance the impetus of the contact is the action of the passer and not the defender. This is a judgment call.
8) It is a personal foul if the passer’s follow through hand or arm makes significant contact with an opponent’s head, neck or face (Personal Foul, Contact above the Shoulders).

Flag Pulling Mechanics:
1) Flag pulling is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball.
2) Legal flag pulls must begin with the hands leading toward the opponent’s hips and flags.
3) No player has the right to over-aggressively ‘body up’, ‘wrap up’, ‘play through’, ‘bull rush’, charge, spear or lead with a shoulder against an opponent even to capture a flag.
4) Pushing out on the sidelines is not permitted unless the defense was making a fair, legal, and reasonable attempt to pull the ball carrier’s flags, i.e. the defender’s hands were aimed low at the ball carrier’s hips and flags and not high up on the body.
5) Pushing, striking, holding, slapping or tripping while attempting to pull a flag is not permitted.
6) Defenders may dive when attempting to pull flags.
7) A defensive player may not pull the flag of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
8) Any defensive player who removes the flag from an offensive ball carrier is encouraged to show good sportsmanship and hold the flag above their head to assist the officials in locating the spot where the capture occurred.
9) Players may be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct for throwing, spiking, obscuring, or delaying the ball carrier in recovering their pulled flag.
10) If a ball carrier’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play the ball carrier will be ruled down.
11) If a receiver has an incomplete flag belt when they catch the ball the play will be called dead where the receiver caught the ball. No one-hand touch requirements, etc.
12) When a ball carrier flag guards and a defensive player pulls the ball carrier’s flag simultaneously, no penalty will be called for flag guarding.
13) A missing flag violation will not delay the game or stop a live play.

Pass Coverage / Interference:
1) Pass interference normally occurs above the waist; entangled feet are not considered pass interference.
2) Incidental contact is not considered pass interference.
3) A player may “find” their opponent by reaching out and placing a hand on him/her as long as touching does not delay or impede him/her. This is not considered pass interference.
4) Contact away from the direction of the pass is not considered pass interference.
5) Examples of pass interference include:
   a. Shoving or pushing off to create separation.
   b. Playing through the back.
   c. Hook and turn: grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.
   d. Not playing the ball: the defender is looking at the receiver and contact materially impedes the receiver.
   e. Arm bars, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.
f. Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched, commonly seen through “pick plays”.
g. Cutting off the path of a receiver by being in front of them and slowing down or being beside them and “riding” them off their path to the ball.

6) Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference.
7) A player may use their arms or hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver’s view (face guarding) of the ball without turning their own head to play the ball as long as contact is not made with the receiver.

Interceptions:

1) Intercepted passes during normal play are live ball plays and may be returned.
2) Intercepted passes during Point After Touchdown (PAT) attempts may not be returned and are automatic dead balls.
3) In the event of an interception, the intercepting team must secure the ball with “clean hands,” i.e., they must not have committed a foul before or simultaneous to the interception.
4) If the intercepting team gained the interception with “clean hands” they will be awarded a first down where the ball becomes dead (flag pull, stepping out-of-bounds, fumbled, etc.)
5) Fouls by the intercepting team after an interception will be assessed from the spot of the foul.
6) Fouls by the intercepted team after the interception will be assessed at the end of the run.

Overtime:

1) Only one coin toss is allowed during overtime regardless of the number of overtime periods played.
2) If additional overtimes are played, the captains will alternate choices (for example: the winner of the overtime coin toss chooses defense. If there is another overtime period the loser of the overtime coin toss now gets to choose).
3) For winning the coin toss, a team may choose offense or defense
4) The game official will choose which direction the overtime periods will be played.
5) Teams will have only 1-play per possession and will alternate until we have a winner.
6) Teams will have a choice to go for 1-point (from the 5, pass play only) or 2-points (10-yard line run or pass play).
7) Each team is allowed one timeout per each overtime period.
8) Interceptions are returnable in overtime for two points.
9) Penalties are administered as during the regular game.
10) The goal line shall always be the line-to-gain in overtime, regardless of the number of overtimes played.

Ending the Game / Forfeits:

1) The game may not end with a penalty unless it is declined.
2) Penalties by the offense that include a loss of down with time expired in either half (i.e., there is no time on the clock) will not extend the half or game.
3) Offsetting penalties will not extend the half or game.
4) Forfeits are recorded as 1-0.
5) No period or half can end if there is an obvious timing error or any other irregularity has occurred.
6) Once score cards are signed the final score is official unless a Pick 6 Staff member finds extenuating circumstances.
   (see Unfair Acts Rule).
OFFICIATING:

1) Officials should aim to assist teams to avoid penalties (preventative officiating). Cautions and teaching points are appropriate at most times.
2) Prior to a snap, officials can require and warn players to adjust their flags to their proper alignment. Repeated warnings of this nature can result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
3) Officials can perform random checks of flags to test for tampering.
4) Officials must highly endeavor to announce down and distance before any snap. While it always the team captain’s responsibility to be game aware, the officiating crew should always endeavor to keep captains informed.
5) No penalty or penalty flag stops a live play.
6) When an official throws a penalty flag it should be left on the ground until the ball becomes dead and penalty enforcement is complete.
7) It is not the mission of the game officials to flag every small, nuanced infraction of traditional football unless it produces a significant unfair advantage.
8) When throwing the ball to an official please use short underhand tosses.
9) Officials do not have to call everything they see but they must see everything they call.
10) Game officials may not use any recording or replay in making any decision relating to the game.
11) Officials must not tolerate taunting, baiting, and unsportsmanlike acts.
12) All officials will respect the calls of other officials. However, it is purely acceptable for an official to ‘come over the top’ of another official if the official had a better angle or saw something the other did not.
13) Safety issues are an official’s judgement call.

Marking the Spot:

1) The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull or the ball carrier left the field-of-play.
2) A ball spotter, ball marker, or line judge shall be used to mark the line-of-scrimmage. We recommend a non-trip hazard object like a soft, pliable indoor hockey puck or similar item. The marker will be placed along the line-of-scrimmage.
3) If a ball carrier’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play the ball carrier will be ruled down.
4) If a defensive player initiates contact with a ball carrier while making an attempt to capture the ball carrier’s flag and that force causes the ball carrier backward prior to the flag being captured ‘forward progress’ will be awarded as long as the ball carrier does not make a move under their own power to continue the play.
5) Flag guarding is notionally and effectively the end of the play. However, the play will be allowed to come to its natural dead-ball situation without the whistle being blown.
6) If the ball is intercepted in the end zone and intercepting team fouls in the end zone prior to the ball being brought back into the field (example: flag guarding) the result of the play will be a touchback and the foul will be administered from the touchback spot. This will not result in a safety.
7) If the entire ball is brought back into the field of play and then a foul occurs anywhere on the field, including the end zones, the penalty will be administered from the spot of the foul.

Penalty Enforcement:

1) Penalties are assessed for live balls before dead balls.
2) Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
3) Fouls simultaneous to the snap (illegal shift, illegal motion, illegal formation, etc.), if accepted, will result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed. Officials shall not stop these plays but rather play them out because the foul occurred “simultaneous to the snap” and not before the snap.
4) An official shall have the authority to rectify an error and correct a down until the series has ended.
5) Penalties associated with automatic first downs: An offended team may accept the automatic first down portion of a penalty but decline the yardage portion of the penalty enforcement or they may accept both the yardage and the automatic first down.

**Establishing Zone-Line-to-Gain:**

1) For live ball fouls, the penalty yardage will be marked off first, then the next line-to-gain (first-down marker) will be established.
2) On a change of possession, all live-ball penalties will be administered prior to determining the next line-to-gain. Once that line is established all dead ball penalties will be administered.
3) To determine if a first down was achieved on any given running or passing play, the official will mark off any un-administered live-ball penalty yards before making the determination.
4) If a penalty awards an automatic first down (e.g., roughing the passer) and the original line-to-gain was not achieved after the yardage was resolved, the original line-to-gain will remain in effect.

**Pace of Play:**

1) Officials will hustle but not hurry. They must control the game and not let an anxious team set the pace.
2) If a snap occurs before the officials are ready, ready-to-play whistle or announcement, the ball will be blown dead and the quarterback issued a warning for the first offense. For the second offense a delay of game penalty will be incurred.
3) Officials may stop the clock as they see fit in order to administer a fair, controlled contest.
4) Offensive teams may not take advantage of defensive substitutions to run “quick snap” plays to catch defensive teams not ready.

**Contact Above the Shoulders (Personal Foul):**

Safe play is our utmost concern. Officials will penalize any noteworthy contact above the shoulders (head, neck, or face) between players, even if accidental.

**Holding:**

Holding is a judgement call. Officials will penalize any noteworthy hold that provides a significant unfair advantage. A simple tug or momentary grasp may not necessarily constitute holding. Holding is an attempt to gain a physical advantage by using hands or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or restraining an opponent. Be aware defenders will be given the benefit of the doubt if the ball carrier’s shirt is untucked.

**Illegal Contact:**

*Note: Illegal Contact is the most contentious rule in flag football just as blocking and charging are in basketball.*

1) Definition of Illegal Contact: In the opinion of the game official, when one player uses enough force to knock another to the ground by pulling, tripping, bear-hugging, charging, sweeping, flinging, shoving, etc. Whether or not the player goes to the ground is irrelevant.
2) It is possible for a player(s) to go to the ground and it not be considered Illegal Contact, such as unintentional collision, i.e., the runner and defender meeting in the same space during the play, when a defender is making a fair and reasonable attempt to capture the ball carrier’s flag and the ball carrier is making a fair and reasonable attempt to avoid the defender. Simply stated, two solid objects tried to occupy the same space at the same time.
3) If a defender trips a ball carrier while pursuing the offensive player from the rear and the ball carrier goes to the ground (typically seen in break-away plays), even if the defender is making a fair and reasonable attempt to capture the ball carrier flag, the defender will be called for Illegal Contact.
4) Incidental contact between opponents that does not grant either player an advantage should not be penalized.
Contact in a Minimum-Contact Game:

On any given collision or contact, a game official has six options to use at his discretion:
- Make “no call” if he thinks the contact was accidental and incidental
- Issue cautions / warnings to the team coach in lieu of assessing penalties
- Call Illegal Contact on the Defense, if they feel the defender is the aggressor
- Call Illegal Contact on the Offense, if they feel the offensive player is the aggressor
- Call Off-Setting Penalties (referee cannot tell who was the aggressor)
- Eject a player if the referee feels the contact was intentional or egregious

Teaching point: Normally the player that ‘drops his shoulder’ first is deemed the aggressor.

Cool Down Period:

1) Before, or instead of, disqualification or ejection an official may order (but is not required to) a player a “cool down” period if the official chooses.
2) Players should think of this ‘cool down’ as a warning before being ejected and be thankful for it.
3) This period will consist of five plays and will be tracked by the official that ordered the ‘cool down’.
4) The player must be off the field for five plays regardless. A score or other event does not release the player back to the field. They must stay off the field for five plays.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct:

1) Disrespect toward an official, coach, spectator or another player will constitute unsportsmanlike conduct.
2) Players shall not ‘showboat’, taunt, spike the ball or flag belt toward an opponent, or be excessive in any way, to include using force against or verbally attack or harass another player. Celebrations are fine but keep them short, conservative and not directed at your opponents.
3) Use of inflammatory words or slurs is prohibited.
4) If Unsportsmanlike Conduct occurs during a live play and the team did not score on that play, the penalty will be assessed from the new line of scrimmage, i.e., will be added to or subtracted to the end of the play.

Disqualifications and Ejections:

1) Disqualifications, Ejections and Unsportsmanlike Conduct are the only three penalties that cannot be declined. They are completely the option of the game officials. The yardage portion of the penalty may be declined but infraction itself cannot.
2) The difference between disqualification and ejection is completely the determination of the presiding referee and may not be appealed.
3) Disqualifications are normally reserved to address lower-level transgressions.
4) A disqualification will last for the remainder of the contest the player was disqualified for.
5) A disqualified player may play in the next scheduled contest.
6) An ejected player may not play in the next scheduled contest. They must sit out at least one game.
7) Any official may disqualify a player. To eject a player all officials must unanimously agree to the ejection.
8) Ejections / disqualifications may occur for but are not limited to:
   a. A second unsportsmanlike or personal foul on a single player
   b. Any act deemed egregious by the head official
   c. Disrespectfully addressing or intentionally touching a game official
   d. Four unsportsmanlike and /or egregious personal fouls by one team (forfeiture)
   e. Fighting
**Fighting:**

1) Fighting will lead to immediate ejection, possible suspension or lifetime exclusion.
2) Fighting is any act or attempt to act by a player or non-player to strike or engage a player or non-player in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempting to or striking with the arms, hands, legs, feet, or foreign object whether or not there was contact.
3) Any player who comes off the sideline to participate in a fight will be disqualified or ejected.
4) If either team leaves the bench during a fight the game will be forfeited immediately.

**Bench Fouls:**

Teams may incur bench fouls for a variety of reasons to include but not limited to:

1) Players on the sidelines or spectators interfering with play or an official
2) Disrespect toward officials or other players or non-players
3) Players or non-players in the designated restricted zone during a live play
4) Non-players on the field of play
5) Teams not remaining in the designated team box

**Unfair Acts Rule:**

1) Neither team shall commit any act(s) which, in the judgment of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game.
2) The head official or other Pick 6 Staff member may enforce any penalty or remedy any situation with anything he/she considers equitable -- including the award of a first down, a line-zone-to gain, a replay, a score, forfeiture, removal of forfeiture or any administrative issue or situation not specifically covered in these rules.
3) If an ineligible player (ex: not on the roster, previously disqualified or previously ejected) is discovered by any means (ex: observation, challenge, etc.) participating in a live ball play that team will forfeit the game.

**Inadvertent Whistle:**

1) If an official blows an inadvertent whistle they will declare the ball dead where the ball was at the time the inadvertent whistle. The team against which the action offended may have the option of accepting the play (i.e., the yards gained and the down advances) or replaying the down from the original line-of-scrimmage.
2) If the ball was in the air when the inadvertent whistle occurred it will be returned to the line-of-scrimmage and the down will be replayed.
3) If a penalty marker is thrown prior to an inadvertent whistle, an accepted penalty will be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, the inadvertent whistle is disregarded.
4) When an inadvertent whistle is triggered by an unfair act or an act used to deceive or confuse a game official the officiating crew may use their collective judgement to fairly adjudicate the situation. It may result in yardage awarded, a score granted, and/or the guilty player disqualified, etc. It is solely up to the officiating crew to decide.

**Last Player Rule and Penalty:**

1) If the last defensive player physically contains the ball carrier (e.g., bear hugs, flagrantly holds, pushes the ball carrier out-of-bounds, tackles, attempts to tackle, etc.) without making a clear, legal attempt to pull the ball carrier’s flag, the offensive team will be awarded at least one line-zone-to-gain distance from the spot of foul and an automatic first down.
2) In the spirit of the Unfair Acts Rule: Officials have the discretion to award a score if a flagrant foul occurred inside the final line-zone-to-gain or they reasonably believe a foul is the only thing that prevented the ball carrier from scoring. To evoke this rule we require there must be total agreement of all game officials that saw the foul.

Thunder and Lightning Protocol:

1) Practice and competitions will be suspended immediately when lightning is detected within 10 miles.
2) All athletes and spectators should seek safe shelter during severe weather (but not under trees).
3) Play shall not resume for at least 30-minutes after the last sight of lightning or sound of a thunderclap.
4) All coaches and officials are encouraged to download and use the free app ‘My Lighting Tracker’.

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<td>Illegal Advancement (Diving, Running in No Run Zone, etc.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Spot of the Foul for Diving, Previous Spot ‘No Run’ Issues</td>
<td>Yes, Loss of Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illegal Forward Pass</td>
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<td>Spot of the Foul</td>
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<td>Yes, Loss of Down</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Spot of the Foul</td>
<td>Yes, Loss of Down</td>
<td>Hands Behind Back +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offensive Pass Interference</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Previous Spot</td>
<td>Yes, Loss of Down</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intentional Grounding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Previous Spot or Spot of Foul. Whichever penalizes the offender worse</td>
<td>Yes, Loss of Down</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Major Holding (major impediment, twist or reroutes the body)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>End of the run or spot of the foul. Whichever penalizes the offender worse</td>
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<td>Fighting: Offender must leave venue immediately or risk forfeiting the game</td>
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<td>Second Personal Foul and / or Unsportsmanlike Conduct by a player <em>disqualification</em></td>
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<td>End of the run or spot of the foul. Whichever penalizes the offender worse</td>
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<td>Contact Above Shoulder</td>
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<td>Point After Touchdown</td>
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<td>Contact: Minimal Contact</td>
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<td>Contact: Official's Options</td>
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<td>Running / Jumping / Diving</td>
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<td>Setting Prior to Snap</td>
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<td>Sideline Control</td>
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<td>Fighting</td>
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<td>Flag Wearing</td>
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<td>Thunder or Lighting Protocol</td>
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<td>Fumbles / Muffs</td>
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<td>Uniform Belts</td>
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<td>Vaping, smoking, etc.</td>
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<td>Inadvertent Whistle</td>
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<td>Last Player Rule</td>
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</table>
Basic Field Layout:

Game Officials Mechanics:

2 Officials: Run / Pass (Line to Gain 10+ yards or more)

2 Officials: Run / Pass (Line to Gain 5 yards or less)

Note the DJ doesn’t need to stay on the rush line once it is set, he can move forward or backward as appropriate while monitoring the rush line.

2 Officials: Run / Pass (Inside Red Zone)

2 Officials: Run / Pass (Inside 10 yards)

2 Officials: Run / Pass (Reverse Mechanics)