ACFL 2015 Fall A League (9 on 9) Rules Enhancements

September 7, 2015 Rev 0

The ACFL (8 on 8 Immediate Rush) rules will be the governing rule set for the 9 on 9 (Flag A) immediate Rush league with some modifications.

9 on 9 immediate rush modifications:

1 – Field dimensions are 100 yards + two 10 yard end zones by 54 yards wide.

2 – Kick offs will be from the 40 yard line with a 20 yard restraining line**, unless modified by penalty enforcement**

> **KICKOFFS: Kickoffs will be from the 40 yard line. Tees are allowed. Kicking off a team mates foot is not allowed. If no tee is available, team mate may hold ball on ground. The receiving team (R) will line up at their 40 yard line and must have a minimum of five (5) players within 5 yards of its restraining line. Note: There will always be a 20-yard restraining zone. There are no onsides kicks. Any kick that lands between the restraining lines is live and may be advanced. *Any kick that goes out of bounds ,untouched by R, between the restraining lines comes in to play at the out of bounds spot.* Any kick that goes out of bounds, *untouched by R, beyond R's restraining line* and before the goal line comes in to play at the receiving team's 35 yard line (25 yards from K's restraining line) . Any kick that touches the ground in the end zone and is not returned will be declared a touchback and will come out to the 20 yard line. Any player(s) crossing their restraining line before the kick will be flagged for offsides. This is considered a " live " ball foul and a five-yard penalty will be enforced, if accepted, and the ball will be rekicked –**

NOTE 1 : A KICKOFF/ FREE KICK TOUCHED BY ANY MEMBER OF THE KICKING TEAM IN THE NEUTRAL ZONE IS DECLARED DEAD IMMEDIATELY . THE RECEIVING TEAM HAS THE OPTION OF 1). ACCEPTING A 15 YARD UNSPORTSMANLIKE PENALTY FROM THE SPOT OF THE TOUCH AND PUTTING BALL IN PLAY ,FIRST DOWN OR 2). ACCEPTING A 10 YARD PENALTY ENFORCED FROM THE SPOT OF THE KICK AND HAVING THE BALL REKICKED.

REMEMBER, THERE ARE NO ONSIDE KICKS. **(This is still under advisement)**

NOTE 2 : A KICKOFF/ FREE KICK, FIRST TOUCHED BY ANY MEMBER OF THE KICKING TEAM ,BEYOND THE NEUTRAL ZONE, THAT CONTINUES TO MOVE, IS CONSIDERED A "LIVE" BALL AND MAY BE PICKED UP AND ADVANCED BY THE RECEIVERS

2a – Free Kick after a Safety :

Safeties are allowed.. A safety is scored when the offensive team commits a penalty in its end zone or commits a fumble in its end zone. A safety is two points and the team (Team R) , who scored the safety receives the ball by a free kick The Free Kick after a safety occurs from Team K's 20 yd line and Team R's restraining line is Team K's 40 yd line (a 20yd restraining zone) line and Team R must have a minimum of five (5) players within 5 yards of its restraining line. .The ball may be place kicked (from tee or while being held on the ground by a teammate) or punted in the proximity of the center of the yard line. This is considered a free kic*k.*

3 – On offense, there must be **a minimum of** 5 men on the line of scrimmage **in a balanced** formation.

OFFENSIVE ALIGNMENT: At the snap the offense must line up in a balanced line (both offensive tackles covered by an eligible receiver) with a minimum of five players on the line of scrimmage. The tackle, center, and tackle are ineligible. To be a legal participant *in a play from scrimmage* , a player must have been in the previous play , be in the huddle or *report in as a substitute within 5 yards of the spot of the ball.* No players can "sneak" into the play from the sideline. Non compliance is considered illegal participation.

Definitions:

- It is an illegal motion (live ball) penalty if a player is moving toward the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap *or* if two players are in motion at the time of the snap.
- It is an illegal shift penalty (live ball) if after a huddle or shift all offensive players do not come to a complete stop for at least one (1) second before the snap.

4 - No defensive alignment rules.

5 – Drop kicks are allowed on all kicks except extra points.

6 – Hash marks will be used for placement of the football. On those fields where there are no hash marks, the official shall place two (2) cones side by side, 18 yards in from each sideline , on both end lines. These cones will provide a visual aid for the officials to identify the approximate location of the hash mark.

Other basic rules for 9 on 9 immediate rush that will be in place:

1 – First downs will be every 20 yards (these will be stationary 20/40/40/20).

2 – All fumbles or muffs that hit the ground are dead at that spot. Any fumble or muff that is intercepted (caught in the air) remains live.

3 – Blocking must be open hand to the chest. No blocking below the waist or crack back blocks.

4 – ***Definition of Roughing the Passer :***

Roughing the passer is defined as while the passer is in the act of throwing a forward pass:

- *Any contact is made with the passer's throwing arm/ hand whether the ball is touched or not*
- *Any contact is made above the passer's shoulders, including an attempt to make a "tackle".*
- *Any physical contact is made to the passer including pushing , shoving ,lowering of shoulder to knock the passer over, etc. while attempting to make the flag-pull.*

. Definition of QB sack: The QB is considered to be " sacked " when a defender pulls his flag prior to the ball being released, as in a forward or backward pass or hand-off. The position and/or motion of the QB's arm has no bearing on the call.

5 – No Flag guarding.

6 – Stiff arms must be open handed and to the chest of the defender. Any contact above the shoulders of a defender will be a **foul.**

7 – Bumping (chucking) of an offensive receiver is allowed within the first 5 yards only.

8 – No rushing the A gap on **Declared** Punts, extra points and field goals.

9 – **PUNTS: Immediate Rush** A team may declare to punt the ball at any time. A snap is mandatory.

During a down in which a punt is declared, the ball MUST be punted.

For any down in which a punt is declared :

A). The defensive team can rush the punter immediately after the snap but not through the A gap.*(The penalty options are to 1). accept result of the play or 2).. accept a 15 yard penalty from the LOS and* an automatic 1st down) . .

B). The receiving team must have a minimum of four (4) players on the line of scrimmage *with the internal 3 men head up .*

C) .There will be no movement down field by either team until the ball is punted.

D). Punts do not have to be declared. If not declared, the A gap protection is not in place.

Any contact made with the punter ***is a penalty whether kick is touched or not .*** . The defense cannot rush through either lane next to the center *unless the center or guard steps out to block an outside*

opponent ignoring the man head up from him, leaving a natural gap.(this is referred to as an "A" Gap infraction) If a snap is fielded cleanly, even if it hits the ground first, the kick may still be attempted. If the punter *fumbles* (drops) the snap the play is dead. The defense cannot **dive** to block the punt or come in contact with the punter . ***(This is a penalty whether kick is touched or not)*** Players can jump, as long as they land on their feet, but remember there can be no contact with the center. If a team declares they want to punt and then decides to go for it instead, a time-out must be used to declare the switch. If the team wants to switch and they don't have any time-outs left, they can take a delay of game penalty and then switch.

If a snap is fielded cleanly, even if it hits the ground prior to reaching the punter, the punt may still be attempted. If the punter 1). is hit by the snap and it hits the ground or 2). *fumbles* (drops) the snap or 3). has an errant snap goes over his head or to his right or left in the air and hits the ground beyond where he is standing, the play is dead at the spot it hits the ground and the down counts .

A punt may be advanced out of the end zone.

If the receiving team commits a penalty , prior to change of possession, during a down in which a punt has been declared, the kicking team may choose to accept the result of the play or accept the penalty. If the kicking team accepts the penalty, they may choose to run a play from scrimmage or to punt. Whatever their choice, the kickers will not be charged with a timeout (or delay of game penalty if there are no timeouts remaining).

NOTE : A PUNT ,TOUCHED BY ANY MEMBER OF THE KICKING TEAM ,THAT CONTINUES TO MOVE, IS CONSIDERED A "LIVE" Ball AND MAY BE PICKED UP AND ADVANCED BY THE RECEIVER. **THE RECEIVERS HAVE THE OPTION OF TAKING THE BALL AT THE SPOT(S) WHERE THE KICKING TEAM FIRST TOUCHES THE BALL .**

10 – No contact can be made with the kicker or the holder on field goals and extra points and no contact with the Punter.

11. EXTRA POINTS: : Immediate Rush. A one (1) point try may be kicked or attempted with a run/pass play with the line of scrimmage being the three-yard-line. Upon announcing an extra point kick attempt, the offense must send two players, from their sideline, out to hold up the portable goal posts on fields with no regular goal posts. The holder must set up a minimum of seven yards from the center. The defense cannot rush through either lane next to the center *unless the center or guard steps out to block an outside opponent ignoring the man head up from him, leaving a natural gap.(this is referred to as an "A" Gap infraction)* If a snap is fielded cleanly, even if it hits the ground first, the kick may still be attempted. If the

holder *fumbles* (drops) the snap the play is dead. The defense cannot **dive** to block the kick or come in contact with the holder or kicker. . ***(This is a penalty whether kick is touched or not)*** Players can jump, as long as they land on their feet, but remember there can be no contact with the center. These are defensive penalties, the extra point will be ruled "good" automatically and a 15-yard penalty assessed from the succeeding spot on the ensuing kickoff. The referee has the option of ejecting any player who comes in contact with the kicker or holder. Kicking blocks are legal. Kicking shoes are legal. *The play is dead immediately after all missed Extra Point attempts.* A two point try may be attempted with a run/pass play from the ten-yard-line. If the defense intercepts the ball on an extra-point attempt they can return the ball and if they score they will be awarded the same number of points that the offense was attempting. *If an intercepting player goes into the endzone trying to avoid being tackled and is tackled in the endzone a safety is declared and one(1) point is added to the opponent's score. (this includes a play where the interception was caught in the endzone and the interceptor comes out of the endzone and goes back in).*

If a team declares they want to go for a one point conversion and then decides to go for a two point conversion (or vice versa) a time-out must be used to declare the switch. ***If the team wants to switch and they don't have any time-outs left, they can take a delay of game penalty and then switch****. This option is not permitted after the acceptance of a penalty.*

12 – Fair catches are allowed. Kick Catching interference is a foul :

Kick Catching Interference:

While any kickoff, kick after safety or punt is in flight, no player from the kicking team shall touch the ball nor obstruct any receiver's path to the ball .

These restrictions do not apply after a receiver has touched the ball.

Exception : A player on the kicking team may catch , bat or touch a punt in flight if no player from the receiving team is in position to catch the ball.

Penalty for kick catching interference :

The receiving team may accept a 10 yard penalty from previous spot and replay down or accept a 10 yard penalty from spot of foul.

13 – No pushing a player out of bounds. Runners and receivers cannot be pushed out of bounds.

14 – No lowering of the shoulder when running the ball. A ball carrier must make an attempt to avoid a defender trying to pull the flag.

15 – Rule for Receiver/ Definition of a Catch :

: A receiver must have *two feet* in bounds to make a reception. A receiver cannot step out of bounds, on his own, and come *back onto the field and touch the ball*. This is considered illegal participation*. The player may return to block or "tackle" the ball carrier.*

". There is no ball-stripping or deflagging a receiver before the ball arrives"

16 -Rule for Forward Pass:

There is only one forward pass per play. Ball must be snapped to the QB or another back. Intentional grounding will not be called if the QB is outside the tackles *AND THE FORWARD PASS REACHES THE PROXIMITY OF THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE(LOS).* During the last two(2) minutes of each half, the QB may spike the ball (from *under* center or shotgun), immediately upon catching the snap, to stop the clock. This is defined as a "quick spike." Ineligible receiver(s) may not proceed down field, beyond two (2) yards from line of scrimmage (neutral zone extended) until the forward pass, including a screen pass, is in flight. The penalty is ineligible receiver down field if the pass is untouched or illegal touching. if the pass is touched by the ineligible receiver(s). *You may not lateral back to someone behind the line of scrimmage once you've crossed it and have that person throw a forward pass. Nor can you step over the line of scrimmage and go back behind it and pass.* These are both illegal forward pass penalties.

> ***18a : Definition of QB sack: The QB is considered to be " sacked " when a defender pulls his flag prior to the ball being released, as in a forward or backward pass or hand-off. The position and/or motion of the QB's arm has no bearing on the call.***

17- Rule for Ball Carrier

The spot of the ball is always the torso of the ball carrier at the time of flag removal *OR THE FLAG FALLING TO THE GROUND. Ball Is dead at the spot.* It is illegal for the ball carrier to: 1). Flag shield 2). Run directly at a defender including lowering head and/or shoulders (charging) 3). Crawl 4). Dive,(defined as not landing on your feet). A "stiff arm " may be used (open hand between shoulders and waist of defender). *Should contact be made above the shoulders, to the neck, face , head, etc , this will be considered an illegal stiff arm and be penalized 15 yards from the spot of the foul and the down counts .* A ball carrier that falls to the ground may get up and advance unless " one hand touched " while on the ground.

The defense cannot push a ball carrier out of bounds. If a ball carrier loses his flag for any reason, the ball is dead at the spot. The defense cannot use contact to break up a pass play, they must truly be "going for the ball ".You cannot hold the jersey to pull the flag or tackle a ball-carrier (if it prevents a TD, the ref can award a TD). You cannot "stand up" the ball carrier to pull a flag.

NOTE 1: If any player either starts a play without one or two flags, or loses one or two flags during the play *and subsequently* becomes a ball carrier, the play ends and the ball is dead at the spot of possession.

Note 2: Should a defender deflag a receiver before the ball arrives / is touched by receiver (per Rule 17), the play is dead at the spot of the one hand touch. A 10 yard penalty will be assessed on the defense from the end of the run and the down *will be replayed*.

Note 3: Should a defender deflag a receiver after the ball arrives / is touched by a receiver and is subsequently caught/ possessed by a receiver, the play is dead at the spot of the *one hand touch*. There is no penalty.

***Note 4 :*After the deflag, should the receiver intentionally touch/bobble the ball to avoid immediate possession and subsequently catch /possess the ball, the play is immediately dead and the ball is spotted at the spot of the initial touch/bobble. A 10 yard penalty will be assessed on the offense from that spot and the down counts**

18: **GAME DAY WAIVER:** Every participant must *legibly print* and sign *their name on the* game-day waiver prior to participation. *This includes a team receiving a forfeit win . Should a player play without signing the game day waiver, the team will be assessed a 15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.* The waiver, provided to all coaches, must be signed by the entire team and turned in to the referee before the start of the game. For players arriving late, the team has the option of using a time-out to allow that team member(s) to sign the waiver and join the game OR wait until halftime to sign the player in. Of course, if the team chooses to wait until half-time that player(s) cannot play until they sign in. If there are no time-outs remaining, the team may opt to take a Delay of Game penalty to allow the player to sign in. **4. ROSTERS and PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY:** Rosters will be limited to a of **20** players. Teams will be charged $40 for each player over 20.

AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THE 5TH GAME OF THE REGULAR SEASON, ALL TEAM ROSTERS ARE FROZEN. NO TEAM MAY ADD A NEW PLAYER TO THEIR ROSTER NOR MAY ANY NON ROSTERED PLAYER PLAY IN ANY GAMES.

Keep in mind, whenever adding players, that the new player must sign an individual insurance waiver/registration form and submit it to the league prior to participation. A player must play in at least half of the team's regular season games to be considered eligible for the playoffs. That player's name and signature must appear on half of the game day sign in forms to be eligible. However, in the case where a player is injured and is unable to play for the half of the regular season games but can come back in time for post season, there is an exception. Injured players can receive attendance credit by being present at the game and printing and signing name on waiver and writing "IR" next to it (signature must match that which was submitted on the Preseason Waiver). If the injured player signs his name on half of the Gameday Waivers, he will be eligible come playoff time. In the event that it is not physically possible for a player to attend half the games to sign in for eligibility, special circumstances may be reviewed by the league.

Any player on a team that forfeits a game will NOT receive credit for a game played (to determine playoff eligibility). All players on the team that receives a forfeit win will receive credit for a game played

(Head coaches must call Jeff Thomas (J.T.) at 914-629-4865 prior to eligibility expiration.)