

# OWIFA Contact Flag Football Rulebook

Last Revision: January 23rd, 2024



Created in collaboration between the OWIFA Executive Board and Ontario post-secondary institution representatives, including coaches, captains, and team executives.

	2
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>3</b>
Field Dimensions	3
Equipment	3
Game Overview	4
Officials	4
a. Head Official	4
b. Downfield Official	4
c. Line Official (optional)	4
<b>GAMEPLAY</b>	<b>5</b>
General Rules of the Game	5
Players on the Field	5
Positioning and Eligibility Of Receiver	5
Completed Pass or Intercepted Pass	6
Fumbles	6
Dead Ball Declared	7
"Punts"	8
<b>BLOCKING AND CONTACT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>PENALTIES, QB SNEAKS AND BALL CARRIER CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SCORING</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS AND 1-PT CONVERSIONS</b>	<b>12</b>
Kicking (Applies to Both FGs and 1-PT Conversions)	12
<b>PENALTIES</b>	<b>13</b>
Roughing the Passer	14
Pass Interference	15
Pass Interference by the Defense	15
Pass Interference by the Offense	15
Additional Clarification in Assessing Penalties	15
<b>IN CASE OF INJURY</b>	<b>17</b>
Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion	17

# INTRODUCTION

This document contains a detailed overview of the rules and regulation of Women's Contact-Flag Football in Ontario. The official rules are based on the Ontario Post-Secondary Flag Football Rules and Ontario University Association (OUA) Men's Football Rules. These rules also include a combination of tournament rules hosted by McMaster University, the University of Toronto, and Wilfrid Laurier University prior to 2017.

If a rule is not specified in detail here, the default is Football Canada's Tackle Amateur Rulebook and/or Football Canada's Non-Contact Flag rulebook.

**Changes/updates for the 2023-2024 season are highlighted in red.**

## GENERAL

### Field Dimensions

Width: 45 Yards

Length: 45 Yards

End Zone length: 10 Yards

Total length: 65 yards

### Equipment

1. Mouthguards are mandatory at all times.
2. Footballs must be composite and either junior (preferred) or youth sized. Teams must supply their own balls at their offence's discretion.
3. Jerseys must include a number and are tucked into pants during gameplay.
4. Pants cannot have untaped pockets near the waist.
  - a. **Pant pockets should be sewn (preferential) or zipped**
5. Softshell helmets are optional and must not have any hard plastics.
6. Flags must be pop-socket/suction cup flags.
  - a. Flags must be worn unwrapped and uncovered by any shirt or sweater.
  - b. Flags must be worn on hips at the side of the body.
  - c. There will be no flag that is the same color as the respective team's bottoms.
7. No screw-in cleats will be permitted. Sharks, molded soccer cleats and turf shoes are allowed.
8. Penalties if equipment guidelines are not followed include:
  - a. 1st infraction will result in a warning being issued to player
  - b. 2nd and any subsequent infractions will result in a 5 yard penalty
9. Officials will complete an equipment check before each team's first games.

## Game Overview

1. Minimum 20 players and maximum 50 players per team.
2. All skilled positions (including defenders), and eligible receivers must wear flags.
3. The ball carrier may not use their hands to protect their flags from a defensive player. This will be assessed as a 5 yard flag guarding penalty from the spot of the foul.
4. The ball carrier may not leave the ground (i.e. no jumping) in an attempt to make the defensive player miss their flag, and they may not spin in an attempt to evade a defensive player. This will be assessed as a dead ball from the spot of the occurrence and will be assessed as a 5 yard penalty.
5. Each game will begin with one round of a 'Rock, Paper, Scissors' match or a coin toss where the captain designated by the referee must choose "heads" or "tails" prior to the referee's toss. Of the two choices, **unless the winner of the toss defers her choice to the second half**, she must choose one of two privileges, and the loser is given the other. The two privileges are:
  1. Choice of ball (offense) at the 10 yard line.
  2. Choice of endzone her team will defend (defence).

## Officials

1. Officials are responsible for ensuring the game is run on time and appropriately.
2. Officials are expected to assume one of the following roles:
  - a. **Head Official**
    - i. Remains in the offensive backfield on the opposite sideline to the Downfield Official
    - ii. Main downs keeper, and is responsible for setting the **Line of Scrimmage (LOS)** based on the line judge and marks the first down (10 yards away) using a cone/bag/marker
    - iii. In charge of the game/time clock, and stopping the game clock during the last 5 plays
    - iv. Blows in the whistle for the play clock to begin (**25 second huddle**)
    - v. Look for sacks, safeties and any penalties (e.g. Holding, improper blocking, fumbles, and roughing the passer)
  - b. **Downfield Official**
    - i. Remains in the defensive backfield on the opposite sideline of the Head Official
    - ii. Mark the LOS where the flag is pulled and supports the keeping track of downs
    - iii. Look for offside and downfield penalties (e.g.. Pass interference)
  - c. **Line Official (optional)**
    - i. Remain along the sideline at the LOS
    - ii. Assumes some of the responsibilities of the line and backfield Official, including marking and setting the LOS based on the line referee and/or the first down marker, and looking for penalties along the LOS (ie. offsides, encroaching, holding, etc)
    - iii. **NOTE:** This official is optional during playoff games

# GAMEPLAY

## General Rules of the Game

1. Each game will consist of two 20-minute halves (a total of 40 minutes of gameplay), with a five (5)-minute halftime.
  - a. Offensive drives will begin on the ten-yard line at the beginning of each half.
  - b. Any offensive drives after a touchdown (TD), point after attempt, safety or field goal (FG) will also begin from this point.
2. The offense will have four downs to attempt to gain ten yards for another first down
3. The ball must be snapped within **25 seconds** once the play is blown in.
4. **All players** must wear mouth guards at all times while playing on the field.
5. Each team is given two timeouts per half.
6. The game clock remains running until the game clock stops in the last 5 plays of gameplay during the final (second half) 2 minutes of the game.

## Players on the Field

1. Only 11 players allowed on the field at one time for each team
2. Seven players (no more, no less) must be on the offensive LOS at the snap of the ball. **A regulation offensive set in 11x 11 gameplay consists of: 5 offensive linewomen (OL) and 2 receivers on the line of scrimmage that protect each side of the line**
3. Only eligible receivers (see below) will be allowed to catch the ball. The reception of a ball by an ineligible receiver will result in a 5-yard penalty applied to the original LOS.
4. Defensive linewoman may not line up directly in front of an offensive lineman (i.e. head-to-head). They must “shade” (face toward each other but shoulder-to-shoulder) to one side or the other of their opponent for safety reasons (avoid head-to-head collisions). Defensive linewomen who do not shade will be provided with a warning. If a repeated occurrence, an illegal formation on the defense will be called and ruled as a 5-yard penalty, repeat down.
5. **No player of either team shall encroach on the neutral zone (1 yard in advance of the line of scrimmage, extending from sideline to sideline) until the ball is snapped. Except that the head, arms, hands of the centre may be in advance of the line of scrimmage.**
  - a. If Team A (Offense) goes offside and passes the neutral zone (more than 1 yard past the line of scrimmage), before the ball is snapped, the officials shall stop the play immediately. Team A will be issued a 5 yard penalty and have their down repeated
  - b. If Team A is in the neutral zone at the snap, the play will continue, and Team A will be penalized for offside afterwards. Team B can either decline the penalty and take the result of the play or issue the 5 yard penalty against Team A and repeat the down
  - c. If Team B (Defense) lines up offside or is in the neutral zone at the snap, the play will continue and Team B will be penalized for offside afterwards. Team A can either decline the penalty and take the result of the play or issue the 5 yard penalty against Team B and repeat the down

- d. If Team B is more than one yard offside or makes contact with Team A prior to the snap, the officials shall stop the play immediately. Team B will be issued a 5 yard penalty and the down will be repeated

## Positioning and Eligibility Of Receiver

On all plays at least five offensive line players, including the center, shall be identified as ineligible pass receivers by not wearing flags, and must be positioned in a continuous, unbroken line. In addition, one player at each end of the line shall be identified as an eligible pass receiver. Any other offensive player is an eligible pass receiver, if so identified by wearing flags and, at the snap of the ball, is not a line player and is clearly occupying a backfield position.

The following players are eligible receivers:

1. Any offensive player who is identified by flags as an eligible receiver and who, at the snap of the ball, is occupying a position either at the end of the line of scrimmage or in the backfield at least one yard back of the line of scrimmage.
2. Any player of the defensive team, whether or not the pass is legally thrown.

**NOTE:** If the ball is touched by an opposing, defensive player, all players of both teams become eligible receivers, including the offensive and defensive lines women (if flags are not worn by this group, the one hand touch rule applies).

If an eligible flagged player participates at an ineligible receiver position (within one yard of the line of scrimmage tackle to tackle), her team will be warned once. If this occurs a second time, a procedure penalty shall be called.

When an ineligible receiver is the first offensive player to catch or deliberately touch the ball, it will result in a 5 yard penalty

**NOTE:** An offensive player wearing flags, who is in forward motion from a backfield position and within one yard of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped, shall remain eligible as a pass receiver.

## Completed Pass or Intercepted Pass

A player who makes a catch may advance the ball. A forward pass is complete (by the offense) or intercepted (by the defense) in the field of play, at the sideline, or in the end zone if a player, who is inbounds:

1. Secures control of the ball by stopping the rotation in her hands or arms prior to the ball touching the ground;
2. Touches the ground inbounds with one foot or with any part of her body other than her hands;
3. And, after 1. and 2. have been fulfilled, performs any act common to the game (e.g., tuck the ball away, take an additional step, turn upfield, or avoid an opponent), or she maintains control of the ball long enough to do so.

## Fumbles & Laterals

1. Fumbles and laterals are allowed.
2. Fumbles are dead balls at the spot the ball hits the ground.
3. Dropped laterals and backward passes are dead balls.
4. Yards cannot be lost from a fumbled snap behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be returned to the previous line of scrimmage.
  - a. Intentional grounding of the ball by an offensive player that is trying to avoid a loss will result in a loss of yards and the down
5. The ball is dead and may not be advanced when it contacts the ground:
  - a. If a fumble occurs down field and after the LOS, the ball will be marked dead at the point of the fumble.
  - b. A fumbled or bad snap that is not gained in position by the quarterback behind the LOS including in their own end zone or out of the back of the endzone will result in a loss down but not yardage or safety. The ball will then be placed at the previous LOS.
  - c. Intentional grounding by an offensive player who is trying to avoid a loss of yards will result in a loss of yards and the down.
6. The ball must be visible at all times, never "hidden" in any manner whether inside a jersey or in the hood of a jersey.
7. Stripping of the ball is not allowed by either offence or defence. This increases the likelihood of injury. A ball intentionally stripped by a player will result in a 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

## Dead Ball Declared

An official shall declare the ball dead and the down ended:

1. When the ball carrier is flagged by an opponent. The ball is dead at the body of the ball carrier where the flag was pulled. A runner touching the ground with her hands, feet, or body while in the grasp of a defender or within 5 yards of a defender will be blown dead; A runner makes contact with the ground with her hands or feet, slips and falls with her body and is clear of defenders of greater than 5 yards, can continue to advance
  - a. **NOTE:** If the ball carrier loses one or both flags accidentally prior to the play or during the play that was not the result of a flag pull, the play will be blown dead upon one hand touch.
2. When a quarterback immediately drops to her knee (or simulates dropping to her knee) behind the line of scrimmage.
  - a. **NOTE:** If a quarterback does not immediately drop to a knee, and flagging from a rushing defender is unavoidable, it is not a foul unless the defender commits some other act that would constitute unnecessary roughness.
3. When a runner declares herself down by:
  - a. Falling to the ground, or kneeling, and clearly making no immediate effort to advance.
4. When a runner is out of bounds.
5. When a forward pass (legal or illegal) is incomplete.
6. When a touchdown, safety, field goal, or try has been made.
7. When an official sounds the whistle erroneously while the ball is still in play, the ball becomes dead immediately.

- a. If the ball is in player possession, the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where it has been declared dead or to replay the down.
  - b. **NOTE:** If there is a foul by either team during any of the above, and the team in possession at the time of the erroneous whistle elects not to replay the down, penalty enforcement is the same as for fouls during a run, forward pass, and backward pass. If the team in possession elects to replay the down, all penalties will be disregarded, except for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, which will be administered prior to the replaying of the down. If the down is replayed, the game clock will be reset to the time remaining when the snap occurred, and the clock will start on the snap.
8. When the ball is out of bounds
  9. If a loose ball in play strikes an object not part of the field, the ball will be dead immediately, and the down will be replayed at the previous spot. This is at the discretion of the Officials but includes and is not limited to:
    - a. A spectator accidentally in the game of play
    - b. A bird or animal in the way of the ball
    - c. Any wires or decor that might be on/above the field (if it is indoors or under a bubble, this can be an issue)

**Placement of the Ball:** If the ball becomes dead within 15 yards of either Sideline, or goes Out of Bounds, it shall next be scrimmaged 15 yards in from such Sideline at the yardage point where it becomes dead.

## "Punts"

"Punts" can be taken by a team at any point during their 4 downs. "Punts" made before reaching the halfway point will result in the opposing team's offense starting on the 15-yard line. "punts" made after the halfway point will result in the opposing team's offense starting on the 10-yard line.



# BLOCKING AND CONTACT CONSIDERATIONS

## Blocking:

Contact blocking is allowed between the shoulders and waist only (a.k.a. “inside the frame”). All blocking outside the traditional ‘free blocking zone’ must INITIATE with open hands and not the elbows/shoulders (i.e. players cannot begin a block with their shoulders). The ‘free blocking zone’ is a rectangular area extending five yards on either side of where the ball is snapped and three yards on either side of scrimmage.

1. No contact of any kind is allowed above the shoulders of an opponent.
2. Absolutely no intentional tackling of the ball carrier. There must be an obvious intention to grab the flags.
  - a. If a player is deemed to tackle a ball-carrying opponent to the ground, a 10 yard penalty will be assessed.
  - b. If a defender grabs and holds a ball-carrying opponent’s clothes but does not use it to bring her to the ground, a 5 yard holding penalty will be assessed.
  - c. Blockers must be on their feet before, during and after contact is made with their opponents.
3. All blocking is done with the hands within the shoulder blades (within the framework of the body).
  - a. A bump on receivers is allowed within 5 yard of the line of scrimmage.
  - b. A bump down field will result in a 5-yard penalty for illegal contact.
4. Only types of blocking allowed are straight run/pass blocks, and reach blocks and must happen between the shoulders
  - a. Downfield run blocking for the ball carrier is allowed. Players outside the tackle box can only run block if they are within the defender's frame with their hips facing upfield, and making contact with their hands first.
  - b. Downfield pass blocking is allowed as long as the blocker is not running towards their endzone to make a blind-side block

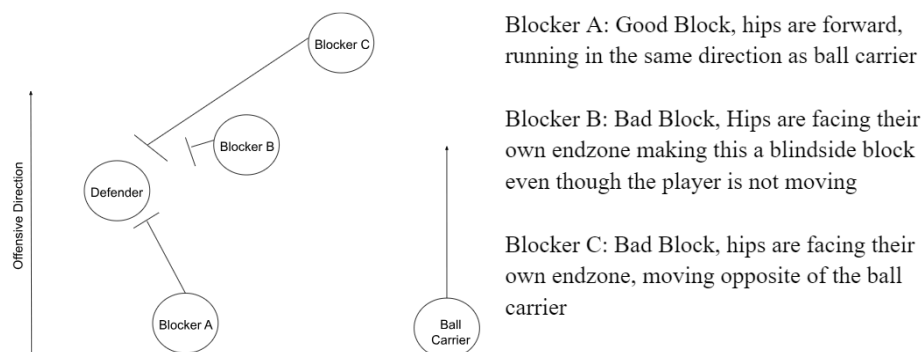


Image 2

Example of a legal block. Credits to the University of Toronto coaches for the diagram

5. If an offensive player loses the flag without being flagged they are downed by one hand touch.

6. Ineligible receivers shall not go downfield beyond the neutral zone, unless they make contact with an opponent in the neutral zone and maintain this contact as they move downfield. However, should such player lose contact and no longer take part in the play, that player shall not be penalized

**7. Illegal blocks include:**

- a. Leading with the shoulder outside the 'free blocking zone'
- b. Pulling inside or outside of the box
- c. Comeback blocks by receivers: block an opponent from the blindside, at their waist or below, from anywhere on the field
- d. No cross blocks
- e. Low/chop/cut blocks: An attempt by a player to block an opponent at the thigh level or lower.
- f. Crack blocks
  - i. Blocking below the waist is illegal.
  - ii. Crack-back block: A blind-side block on a player by an opponent who starts downfield and then cuts back toward the original spot of the ball to make contact.
- g. No cut blocks: An offensive line technique that consists of an offensive player knocking a defensive player down by hitting their knees
- h. Blind-side block: Engaging an opponent who does not see the blocker approaching with anything other than fully extended arms and open palms.
- i. Clipping: A player hitting an opponent from behind.
- j. Tripping: A player using their leg or foot to stop an opponent's forward motion.
- k. Hook or hug block: A player gaining advantage of an opponent by turning or detaining the opponent by illegally tackling or using arms around the body, waist, shoulders or arms.
- l. Rolling blocks: A player on the ground attempting to block or engage an opponent by moving or turning over and over on an axis.
- m. Dive blocks: A player leaving their feet to engage an opponent.
- n. Making contact with an opponent while swinging or flipping hands, arms or elbows.
- o. Slapping, punching, or swinging at an opponent with hands, arms or elbows.
- p. Grabbing or holding an opponent's jersey while blocking.
- q. Interlocking of blocker's fingers or hands.
- r. Laying on a downed defender
- s. Swim moves (a player using a maneuver similar to a freestyle swimming stroke to get past an opponent) are legal. However, if the swim move results in contact to an opponent above the shoulder (neck, head, or face) it is illegal.
- t. Blocking downfield while the ball is in the air is pass interference except if the pass is behind the line of scrimmage.

**Note:** Two-on-one blocking is permitted as long as both blockers are engaging the opponent above the waist.

**Note:** If a player turns to expose their back, it is not an illegal block as long as their opponent maintains contact with the player from the initial block.

### Rushing:

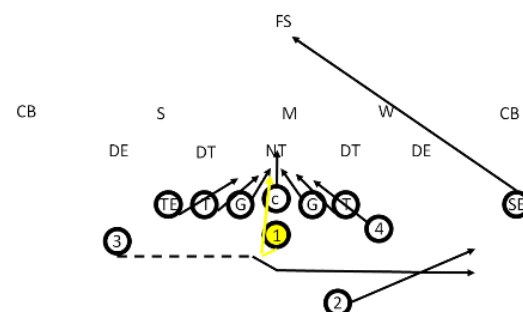
1. Defensive lineman may not line up directly in front of an offensive lineman (i.e. head-to-head). They must “shade” (face toward each other but shoulder-to-shoulder) to one side or the other of their opponent for safety reasons.
2. The center is considered a defenseless player while their head is down in the snapping position and cannot be contacted until they assume a blocking position.

## PENALTIES, QB SNEAKS AND BALL CARRIER CONSIDERATIONS

1. No QB Sneaks. The Quarterback may not make an attempt to break the line of scrimmage, from under center, between the tackles. If starting under center, the QB must make a noticeable effort to move laterally or with a drop step out of under center before gaining yards. This includes no wedge formations.

1. **Wedge formations** include:

1. 5 blockers on the line with 2 or more blockers within the tackle box that block inside the tackles of the offensive line at full speed. The ball carrier moves directly from a snap or from a handoff/toss/pitch. Lineswomen and ball carriers then run forward at full speed.



2. **Example of an illegal wedge formation on the right.** Credits to [Youth Football Online](#)

3. **Video example of an illegal wedge formation play:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXu8bTNyrtw&t=8s&ab\\_channel=KevinShearer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXu8bTNyrtw&t=8s&ab_channel=KevinShearer)

2. A ball carrier who intentionally makes contact with a defender in a “truck stick” manor or a ‘stiff arm’ will be assessed a non-avoidance penalty and be assessed a 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul

## SCORING

1. A touchdown is worth 6 points.
2. After the touchdown, the team may choose 1 of the 3 options for a 1 or 2 point conversion:
  - a. Kick for **1 point** at the 10 yard line or a play at the 2 yard line (this is ONLY for tournaments with no uprights), or **2 extra points** will be an additional down played on the 5 yard line.

- b. There will be only one attempt unless a flag is thrown. If the play results in a flag, the team which receives the penalty will choose to accept or decline the penalty which will either result in a good extra point attempt or a repeat of down.
  - c. **NOTE:** Please refer to 'Field Goal Attempts and 1-PT Conversions' for rules related to kicking
- 3. A safety will be awarded to the defending team if an offensive player's flag is grabbed within the offensive team's end zone. A safety is worth **2 points**. The resulting play after a safety will give the team the ball that scored the safety on their own 10 yard line.
- 4. There will be no overtime during round robin play. Playoffs will have overtime.
  - a. **NOTE re: OVERTIME (Shootout):** Each team will get 1 possession from the 5-yard line (attacking the same endzone). If you score, the other team gets a possession. If you do not score, the other team can score to win it. If defense intercepts on the first play (Possession), they must return it all the way for a touchdown or the other team gets a chance to win it afterwards. If Team A fails to score, Team B can score to win. Every team gets a possession and it's a shootout. **No timeouts are given in overtime.**
- 5. A tie at the end of the round robin play will be broken by (in order):
  - a. Head-to-head
  - b. Common opponents
  - c. Points differential
  - d. Points against
  - e. Points for
  - f. **Note:** If teams are all square across the board, the decision will come down to a game of Rock-Paper-Scissors at the discretion of all head coaches involved. It will be a best 2 out of 3 scenario.

## FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS AND 1-PT CONVERSIONS

**NOTE:** This section is only applicable to tournaments with uprights available. Tournaments with uprights unavailable on each field will not have FG attempts included as a scoring option.

- 1. Field goals may be taken from anywhere on the field at any time. A field goal is marked from the spot of the ball at that distance from the goal line
  - a. The holder must be located 7 yards from the line of scrimmage

### Kicking (Applies to Both FGs and 1-PT Conversions)

- 1. A snapper will line up with the ball on the line of scrimmage, lined up 7-yards behind them will be the holder, and behind them the kicker
- 2. Once the whistle is blown in by the referee, the same rules apply in that the ball must be snapped within 20 seconds after the ball is blown in.
- 3. Holders must be on one knee to receive the snap (the 'holding position')

4. Once the ball is snapped, the kicker will have 3 steamboats to attempt the kick after the snap, this will be timed at the Officials discretion (Officials can call out the steamboats).
5. Any snaps that are not caught directly by the holder from the long snapper are dead balls and considered missed attempts. **HOLDERS MAY NOT CHASE DOWN MISSED SNAPS AND MUST BE ABLE TO CATCH THE SNAP FROM THE HOLDING POSITION.**
6. Any kicks taken after the three steamboat count of the referee will be subject to a 5 yard penalty, and reattempted.
7. A made field goal is worth 3 points and results in the ball being placed on the opponent's 10-yard line.
  - a. A missed field goal results in the ball being placed at the original spot of the ball before the field goal attempt and a change of possession.
8. At no point during the field goal attempt can the opposing team yell, taunt, or scream at the kicker. Any of these actions will result in a re-attempt of the kick and a 5-yard penalty will be added to the place of the ball.
9. Players and coaches must also stand clear of the uprights.

# PENALTIES

	Yardage	Where is the Penalty Assessed?	Loss of Down?
Flag Guarding	5	Spot of foul	Yes
Illegal Advancement	5	Spot of foul	Yes
Illegal Forward Pass	5	Previous spot or spot of the foul, whichever penalizes the offensive side more	Yes
Intentional Grounding	5	Spot of the foul.	Yes
Offensive Pass Interference	10	Previous spot	No
Defensive Pass Interference	Spot of foul	Spot of the foul	Automatic 1st Down
Personal Foul/Illegal Personal Contact (including contact above the shoulders: head, neck, face)	10	End of the play or previous spot whichever penalizes the offender more	By the Offense: Loss of Down
			By the Defense: Automatic 1st Down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Failure to comply with a game official	10	End of the play or previous spot whichever penalizes the offender more	By the Offense: Loss of Down
			By the Defense: Automatic 1st Down
Roughing the Passer	10	End of the play or previous spot whichever penalizes the offender more	By the Defense: Automatic 1st Down
False Start	5	Previous spot	No
Snap Infraction	5	Previous spot	No
Delay of Game	5	Previous spot	No
Offside / Encroachment	5	Previous spot	No
Cool Down Period	0	Player sent off field for 5 plays	No
Illegal Substitution or Illegal Participation	5	Previous spot	No
Equipment Violation (improper flag size)	5	Warning issued first. Previous spot	No
Illegal Formation	5	Previous spot	No
Attempted Stripping	5	End of the run or spot of the foul whichever penalizes the offender more	No
Illegal Contact (non-avoidance)	5	Previous spot	No
Early Flag Pull	5	End of the completion or if no completion, previous spot	No

Illegal Touching	5	Previous	Yes
<b>Illegal Block</b>	<b>5</b>	End of the run or spot of the foul whichever penalizes the offender more	No
Holding	5	End of the run or spot of the foul whichever penalizes the offender more	No
Tackling	10	End of the run or spot of the foul whichever penalizes the offender more	No
Charging	10	End of the run or spot of the foul whichever penalizes the offender more	No (warning issued, then on second penalty, ejection or disqualification)
No Mouth Guard	10	Previous Spot	No (warning issued then on second penalty, ejection or disqualification)

## Roughing the Passer

Because the act of passing often puts the quarterback (or any other player attempting a pass) in a position where she is particularly vulnerable to injury, special rules against roughing the passer apply. The referee has principal responsibility for enforcing these rules. Any physical acts against a player who is in a passing posture (i.e. before, during, or after a pass) which, in the referee's judgment, are unwarranted by the circumstances of the play will be called as fouls.

The referee will be guided by the following principles:

1. Pass rushers or a defensive player are responsible for being aware of the position of the ball in passing situations
2. The referee will call roughing the passer on the following grounds:
  - a. The referee will use the release of the ball from the passer's hand as their guideline that the passer is now fully protected;
  - b. The rusher must be making an attempt to avoid contact while going for the flag of the passer and must be controlled while flag pulling including not running through/into the passer and instead past her hips with clear intent of the flag
  - c. Physical contact or hits of the passer during/after the pass is made
  - d. A defensive player in the way of the passer arm during her throwing motion including clubbing the arm of a passer during a pass or just after a pass has been thrown
3. Incidental or inadvertent contact by a player who is easing up or being blocked into the passer will not be considered significant
4. A passer who is standing still or fading backward after the ball has left her hand is obviously out of the play and must not be unnecessarily contacted by an opponent through the end of the down or until the passer becomes a blocker, or a runner, or, in the event of a change of possession during the down, until she assumes a distinctly defensive position.

Roughing the passer will result in a loss of 10 yards and an automatic first down; or disqualification if flagrant.

**NOTE:** When in doubt about a roughness call or potentially dangerous tactic against the quarterback, the Referee should always call roughing the passer.

## Pass Interference

### Pass Interference by the Defense

A first down will be given for the offensive team at the spot of the foul. If the interference is also a personal foul, the 10-yard penalty for such a foul is also enforced, either from the spot of the foul (for interference), or from the end of the run if the foul for pass interference is declined. Additionally, the following rules will apply

1. If the interference is behind the defensive goal line, it is first down for the offensive team on the defense's one-yard line.
2. If the previous spot was inside the two-yard lines of the endzone, the ball will be spotted halfway between the previous spot and the goal line.

### Pass Interference by the Offense

This will result in a loss of 10 yards from the previous spot.

## Additional Clarification in Assessing Penalties

1. During the "last 5 plays" (until end of game):
  - a. Penalties issued that result in loss of down also result in a loss of a play from the play count
  - b. Penalties resulting in repeating of the down will not count towards the final play count
2. Field goals and "punts" count towards the final play count.
3. Point After Attempts do not count towards the final play count.
4. It is the responsibility of the defender to make an honest effort to grab the flag and avoid contact. Tackling penalty will be charged if incidental or intentional contact occurs.
5. Holding is defined as the use of the hands and/or arms to grasp or encircle an opponent and is illegal if the hold has an impact on the play.
6. If a defender grabs and holds a ball-carrying opponent's clothes in an attempt to pull the flag but does not use it to bring her to the ground, a 5 yard holding penalty will be assessed.

**NOTE:** A non-avoidance penalty will be assessed if the ball carrier does not make an attempt to avoid contact with the defenders. Additionally:

1. Flagrant misconduct foul will result in a **ten yard penalty plus an ejection from the game**. Ejection from the tournament may be considered and used at the convener's discretion.
  - a. Both Officials plus the Head Official will be involved in these discussions.
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will be given to any player or coach that delays the game by unnecessary action (e.g. leaving the bench to argue a call without permission from the official).

**Note:** 1 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for one given athlete, coach, or spectator will result in a warning. 2 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will result in an ejection from the



game and a 1 game suspension. 3 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will result in tournament removal and suspension

1. Officials have the final say in decisions in a game, any further questions should be discussed, but rule clarifications are allowed to be requested.
2. Intentional wrapping, safety pinning or other ways of improperly securing the flag will result in a loss of a down and a warning to the team. A second infraction will result in ejection from the game and a 1 game suspension.
3. Accidental contact will result in a whistle and the ball will be placed at the point where contact occurred.
4. A full breakdown of the Code of Conduct can be found on [owifa.ca](http://owifa.ca).

## IN CASE OF INJURY

1. If a player is injured, they must remain down.
2. An injury timeout will be incurred. The official will stop the clock and gameplay at this point. The player is to be removed off the field for the game to continue. **The player must sit out for at least 1 play.**
3. If at any point during the tournament a player is injured they are to report to the therapy room/hospital/physician for assistance. All players are highly encouraged to bring their health card to the tournament in case of serious injury.
4. If a player sustains a head injury through contact or fall they are encouraged to see the therapist regardless of perceived severity. If a player should fall and hit their head against the ground, they are not to be moved until a therapist/first aid responder has seen them.

## Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and is not limited to only the following signs and symptoms.

1. Loss of Consciousness
2. Memory Loss (can't remember game they just played, the date, where they are, their name)
3. Confusion (repeating words/questions, slurring speech, unable to concentrate)
4. Dizziness, a change in vision, and/or ringing in ears
5. Issues with Balance (i.e. being unable to stand and/or walk)