



**CANADA**

## **2023 NON-CONTACT RULE CHANGES FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The following rule changes, clarifications, and corrections, approved by the Non-Contact Rules Committee, are for immediate distribution and implementation. ***(The changes are highlighted)***. They will be added to the next printed edition of the Rule Book due in May 2023.

## Definitions

### ADD:

**Dipping** - Dipping is an attempt by the runner, with continuous movement, to avoid a flag pull by extra bending of the knees and lowering the level of the flags significantly compared to regular running. Dipping is legal.

**Diving** - Diving is an attempt by the runner to avoid a flag pull by leaning the upper body forward, with or without jumping, dipping or spinning. Diving is a type of flag guarding and is illegal.

**Jumping** - Jumping is an attempt by the runner to avoid a flag pull by pushing off the ground and thus raising the level of the flags significantly compared to regular running. Jumping is a type of flag guarding and illegal.

**Right of Place (ROP)** - Right of place is given to any stationary players who maintains normal player posture and make no movements in any horizontal direction to change their position. A purely vertical movement, including a lift from the ground, in order to throw or catch a pass does not mean that a previously established right of place has been lost. Right of place supersedes right of way when determining who is guilty of a foul.

**Right of Way (ROW)** - Right of way is given to a player according to rule who has established a direction of movement in a regular manner and does not alter that direction. A player with right of way has a higher privilege when determining who is guilty of a foul than all other players except those with right of place.

**Spinning** - Spinning is an attempt by the runner to avoid a flag pull by rotation of the body along the vertical axis. Spinning is legal if the height of the flags is not significantly raised. Spinning combined with dipping is legal, combined with jumping is illegal.

Reason for change: Addition of terms that are talked about, but not defined

## **General Rules**

**Prior to the "Equipment" section, ADD:**

### **Gameplay Principles:**

The most important principle of the rules is to **avoid any significant and impactful contact**.

The first important aspect of this principle is to make the flags an easy target. The runner is restricted from using anything other than legal flags and legal tactics (e.g. spinning) to restrict an opponent's access to their flags. In return the flag puller must take all reasonable steps to minimize contact during the act of removing the flag from an opponent.

The second important aspect of this principle is Right of Place (RoP) and Right of Way (RoW), which determine who is charged with avoiding contact. As a general rule, priority is given to the offense up to the point before the ball is passed or handed off and to the defense thereafter. However, these rights must not be abused to provoke contact. Intentionally contacting an opponent, even with RoW priority, will be penalized. Ball carrier must try to avoid defenders. Defenders cannot jump in front of a ball carrier and declare RoP. RoP can be clearly defined at the snap or if a position is taken with regard to an opponent that clearly gives the ball carrier enough time to avoid the defender.

### **Positioning Principles:**

Right of Place (RoP) and Right of Way (RoW), as defined earlier, offer an excellent starting point for understanding the interaction between offensive and defensive players on the football field. Here is the order of RoP and various Rights of way.

1. Right of place
2. Right of way of rusher to the Quarterback
3. Right of way of receivers
4. Right of way

**Reason for change:** Better intro into the rulebook explaining important principles that are relevant throughout

**Rule 4, 2.3**  
**Game Time Responsibility**

**ADD**

**2.3 – Whenever the game clock is stopped, it will start again on the next snap.**

Reason for change: Clarity around stoppages.

**Rule 4, 8 – 8.1**

**ADD:**

**8 - Pro Clock**

**8.1: In the last two minutes of both halves, the clock will stop in the following circumstances:**

- To award a first down, also after a change of team possession
- To complete a penalty
- When the ball or the runner goes out of bounds
- When a pass or fumble (forward or backward) strikes the ground
- When a score is made and during and after the following PAT
- When a charged timeout is granted

**8.2 - At the 2-minute mark of the 2nd half, the Pro Clock will be cancelled when the point spread is 25-points or more. Once the pro clock is cancelled, the pro clock can not be reinstated for the game.**

*Leagues have the option to run a pro-clock or straight time.*

Reason for change: For leagues/tournaments that want to run a pro clock- this outlines the rules on how to do so.

**Rule 5, 2.6**

**General Play**

All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offensive 5-yard line.

**Replace with:**

All possession changes, except interceptions **from scrimmage play**, start on the offensive 5-yard line.

**Defensive interceptions that give the defense possession between their own 1- and 4-yard line will be brought to the 5-yard line for the start of their next possession.**

Reason for change: Two parts: Distinguishing that interceptions on a PAT do not result in the defense getting possession where down.

*And*

Starting on the 5-yard for consistency and not punishing the defense for an interception return between their 1- and 4-yard line.

### **Rule 5, 2.11**

#### **General Play**

In youth play (U18 and below) forward passes/pitches/handoffs are not allowed behind the line of scrimmage. U20 and over forward passes/pitches/handoffs are allowed however, once received the offense can no longer make another pass/pitch/handoff to another offensive player.

#### **Replace with:**

In all age groups, forward passes/pitches/handoffs are allowed behind the line of scrimmage. However, once received the offense can no longer make another pass/pitch/handoff to another offensive player.

Reason for change: Removing restrictions for younger players

### **Rule 9, 1.1**

#### **Huddle**

The team on offense has 20 seconds to put the ball in play and teams will be notified verbally when there are 10 seconds left. The officials will give a reasonable period of time for both teams to regroup and will then whistle the 20 seconds period to start. If the ball is not put in play before the end of the 20 seconds, the offense will receive a penalty for a delay of game violation.

#### **Replace with:**

The team on offense has 25 seconds to put the ball in play and teams will be notified verbally when there are 10 seconds left. The officials will give a reasonable period of time for both teams to regroup and will then whistle the 25 seconds period to start. If the ball is not put in play before the end of the 25 seconds, the offense will receive a penalty for a delay of game violation.

Reason for change: Finding better balance between the old 30-second clock and the newer 20-second clock.

### **Rule 10, 1.9**

#### **Running**

Spinning is allowed, but the ball carrier cannot dive forward or jump to avoid a defensive player or gain yardage (no diving). 1 foot, at least, must remain in contact with the ground.

#### **Replace with:**

Spinning and dipping is allowed, but the ball carrier cannot dive forward or jump to avoid a defensive player or gain yardage (no diving).

Reason for change: Clarifying / allowing dipping. Spinning and dipping definition being added earlier make the last sentence moot.

### **Rule 10, 1.11**

#### **Running**

The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's hips are when the flag is pulled not where the ball is. The ball shall be placed so the long axis is parallel to the sidelines..

#### **Replace with:**

The ball is spotted **at the center of** the ball carrier's hips are when the flag is pulled not where the ball is. The ball shall be placed so the long axis is parallel to the sidelines.

**Reason for change:** Clarifying where the ball should be spotted. Removes 'front' or 'back hip' debate.

### **Rule 12, 1.1**

#### **Rushing**

All players who rush the passer must be 7-yards for 5v5 and 5-yards for 7v7 from the line of scrimmage at any point after the ball has been snapped. Both the line of scrimmage and the rusher line will be marked with a bean bag. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. The rusher must rush continuously, in a direct path towards the quarterback if they are in the pocket or are rolling out. Once the ball is handed off, tossed, pitched or lateraled or a fake handoff, toss, pitch or lateral occurs, the 7- or 5-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go across the line of scrimmage from anywhere on the field.

#### **Replace with:**

All players who rush the passer must be 7-yards for 5v5 and 5-yards for 7v7 from the line of scrimmage at any point after the ball has been snapped. Both the line of scrimmage and the rusher line will be marked with a bean bag. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage **after the snap**. The rusher must rush continuously, in a direct path towards the quarterback if they are in the pocket or are rolling out. Once the ball is handed off, tossed, pitched or lateraled or a fake handoff, toss, pitch or lateral occurs, the 7- or 5-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go across the line of scrimmage from anywhere on the field.

**Reason for change:** Editorial. Clarifying when players can be *at* the line of scrimmage.

## **Rule 13, 1.2**

### **Flagging**

Defensive players are not allowed to pull an opponent's flag unless they are the ball carrier. A flag cannot be pulled until the ball carrier has the ball in their hands. This is known as an Illegal Flag Pull. The penalty, regardless if the pass is complete or incomplete results in an automatic first down 5-yards from where the ball is caught.

#### **Replace with:**

Defensive players are not allowed to pull an opponent's flag prior to them gaining possession- or touching the ball with the intent of gaining possession. This is known as an Illegal Flag Pull penalty. If a flag is pulled early and:

- The ball is caught, the penalty results in an automatic first down 5-yards from where the ball is caught.
- The ball is not caught, the penalty results in an automatic first down 5-yards from the line of scrimmage.

Reason for change: More details around a penalty being called if there is a penalty or not if the ball is caught. The old rule contradicted itself saying there must be a ball carrier, but if the pass is incomplete, the same penalty can still be called and applied to the spot of the *catch*.

## **Rule 17, 8.1**

### **Pass Interference – Non-Catchable Pass**

When an official considers a pass cannot be caught even with extraordinary effort, no pass interference penalty shall be assessed even when pass interference occurs by either team. Therefore, no penalty call either way.

#### **Add After:**

An official may still call illegal contact if they deem the act to be intentional/severe.

Reason for change: Uncatchable balls do not permit defensive players from hitting, or making forcible contact with opponents.

## **Rule 18, 1.3**

***NOTE: This rule will be moved to Rule 5, 2.18***

### **Sportsmanship**

After the center sets the ball for the snap, a defender cannot move directly in front of the center and prevent the center from moving forward after the snap. Any defensive player must be at least 3-yards from the center directly in front of them or 1 yard on either side at the time of the snap if intending to assume a stationary position.

#### **Replace with:**

**(7v7 only)** After the center sets the ball for the snap, a defender cannot move directly in front of the center and prevent the center from moving forward after the snap. Any defensive player must be at least 3-yards from the center directly in front of them or 1 yard on either side at the time of the snap if intending to assume a stationary position.

Reason for change: Very difficult for defenses to cover the center on the smaller field. Very rarely enforced in the 5v5 game.

## Rule 18, 3.1

ADD:

### 3 – **Offensive Language**

3.1 - Any player, team official, or bench occupant, who engages in verbal taunts, insults, or intimidation based on Discriminatory Grounds shall in addition to an objectionable conduct penalty be removed/disqualified for the remainder of the game. Such player, team official or bench occupant shall be subject to such further discipline as the supervising body (ie. League, tournament, etc.) may decide.

Discriminatory Grounds include, but are not limited by:

- i. Race, national or ethnic origin, skin color, or language spoken;
- ii. Religion, Faith, Beliefs;
- iii. Age;
- iv. Sex, Sexual Orientation, or Gender Identify/Expression'
- v. Martial or Familial Status;
- vi. Genetic Characteristics;
- vii. Disability

Reason for change: Clarification on what type of language is against the rules.

## Rule 19, 2.5

### **Interference**

Players also have a Right of Place which supersedes all other rights on the field when they are stationary and not moving their feet or body to affect the play.

Add After:

If the center snaps the ball and does not move, no penalty shall be called.

Reason for change: Clarifying the most prevalent use case for this rule.



**Rule 19, 3.1 – 4.1**  
**Illegal Re-Entry – Illegal Participation**

**Illegal Re-Entry**

**3.1** A player who steps out of bounds during the play cannot re-enter the field to play the ball, pursue a ball carrier or pursue an intended receiver. A player who is pushed out of bounds by an opponent or goes out of bounds as a result of a slippery field is not considered to have gone out of bounds unless that player makes not immediate effort to get back in bounds. Violation of these rules is an Out of Bounds penalty.

**Illegal Participation**

**4.1** Once the ball is snapped a player cannot leave the bench area to enter the field and play the ball, pursue a ball carrier, pursue an intended receiver or obstruct a player; this rule also applies to fans and team members in or out of the team bench area. Violation of this rule is a game interference penalty.

**Replace with:**

**Illegal Participation**

**3.1** A player who steps out of bounds during the play cannot re-enter the field to play the ball, pursue a ball carrier or pursue an intended receiver. A player who is pushed out of bounds by an opponent or goes out of bounds as a result of a slippery field is not considered to have gone out of bounds unless that player **does not make an** immediate effort to get back in bounds.

**3.2** **Players, coaches, team members, and fans who leave the team/spectator area or enter the playing field which interferes with the ball, officials, or players during play.**

**Illegal Substitution**

**4.1** **Any offensive player substitution after the center is prepared to snap the ball and any defensive player substitution during the play.**

**Reason for change:** Editorial and clarification around these rules

**Rule 21, 1.2**  
**Penalties**

All penalties may be declined except dead ball fouls and penalties that stop the current play (flag guarding, delay of pass, etc.)

**Replace with:**

All penalties may be declined except dead ball fouls, **Major fouls**, and penalties that stop the current play (flag guarding, delay of pass, etc.)

**Reason for change:** Catching the rules up to the application standard.

### Rule 21, 1.3

#### Penalties

Penalties will not exceed half the distance to the opposing team's goal line from the line of scrimmage unless it is a spot foul. The ball can never be placed closer than the 1-yard line.

#### Replace with:

**Yardage on penalties, except Major fouls**, will not exceed half the distance to the opposing team's goal line from the line of scrimmage. **The yardage on a Spot Foul is assessed from where the infraction took place.** The ball can never be placed closer than the 1-yard line.

Reason for change: Clarification around spot and major fouls in relation to going half the distance towards the goal line.

### Rule 21, 1.7

#### Penalties

#### ADD:

**1.7 – Defensive spot of fouls penalties that occur behind the line of scrimmage will be applied at the line of scrimmage instead of the spot.**

Reason for change: Catching rulebook up to application. Now properly punishes the defense for infractions behind the LOS.

### Rule 21, 1.8

#### Penalties

#### ADD:

**1.8 – If a dead ball foul occurs after a scoring play, the non-offending team will get the choice to apply the yardage to the convert or to the start of the next possession.**

Reason for change: Allows teams to take the option of *when* they want to apply a penalty that will help them out best.

### Rule 21, 3.7

#### Offensive Penalties

**Player Out of Bounds** – Player goes out of bounds by themselves, returns inbounds & then touches the ball inbounds

#### Replace with:

**Illegal Participation** – Player goes out of bounds by themselves, returns inbounds & then touches the ball inbounds

Reason for change: Aligned with earlier rule change

**Rule 21, 4.5/4.6**  
**General / Major Penalties**

4.5 Personal Foul – any act of roughness or unfair play by players, coaches, teams or spectators that is not considered by the officials to be a major foul is a personal foul and will result in a 15-yard penalty being assessed against their team as well as LOD or AFD.

4.6 Major Foul / Unsportsmanlike Conduct – players, coaches, teams or spectators striking an opponent or an official with the deliberate intent to cause bodily harm as well as any acts of roughness or unfair play considered by officials to threaten the safety of participants will result in ejection from the game, a 15- yard penalty being assessed against their team & LOD or AFD.

**Replace with:**

4.5 – **Major Foul** – Any obscene act of roughness or unfair play by players, coaches, teams, or spectators will result in a 15-yard penalty being assessed against their team as well as LOD or AFD. If the intent of the infraction was to cause bodily harm, or unfair play has made a mockery of the game, the penalty can result in a game ejection. Major fouls cannot be declined and must always apply their yardage in full.

Reason for change: Editorial. Simplifying these two rules into one since they both have same application.

**Rule 21, 5 – 5.3**

**ADD:**

**5 - Multiple Penalties**

5.1 - In a situation where only one team commits multiple live-ball penalties that have the option of being accepted, the non-offending team will accept only one of the penalties to be applied.

5.2 – When both teams commit one or more penalties in the same play, the down shall be replayed from the previous line of scrimmage- regardless of yardage or point of application (LOS vs spot). The only exception to this is Major Fouls which must be accepted and their yardage applied in full. NOTE: Dead ball fouls will be applied after live ball penalties are assessed.

Reason for change: Adding what to do in the case of multiple penalties

**5v5 Rule 3, 1 – 1.1**

**ADD:**

**1 – Game Start**

1.1 – Time will start at the beginning of each half when the ball is snapped from the first play of scrimmage.

Reason for change: Editorial- clarification.

### **5v5 Rule 2, 1.3**

#### **Obtaining Points**

Extra point: 2-points (Played from the midpoint of 12-yard line only)

#### **Replace with:**

Extra point: 2-points (Played from the midpoint of 10-yard line only)

**Reason for change:** Replicate the IFAF and American rulebooks for international competition.

### **5v5 Rule 3, 1.2-1.3**

#### **Overtime**

Each team will get 1 play to score 1 Extra Point from the 5-yard "No Run Zone" line at 1 end zone that is chosen by the officials. If the game is still tied after each team has completed their play then the situation will continue until a winner is declared when 1 team scores and the other does not

#### **Replace with:**

**1.2 - Overtime is split into two periods. The first period shall consist of 2 series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap at the middle line for one series of downs (no first down at middle). Should the defense score during the first series, other than on the try, then the extra period is over.**

If teams are still tied after the first period, teams will get 1 play to score 1 Extra Point from the 5-yard "No Run Zone" line at 1 end zone that is chosen by the officials. If the game is still tied after each team has completed their play, then **the teams will repeat period 2** until a winner is declared when 1 team scores and the other does not

**Reason for change:** Making overtime feel more like an extension of the game rather than a 'shootout'.