



## 2020 TACKLE RULE CHANGES FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The following rule changes, clarifications and corrections, approved by the Tackle Rules Committee, are for immediate distribution and implementation. ***(The changes are italicized and in bold type)***. They will be added to the next printed edition of the Rule Book due in May 2020.

### CHANGES

#### Rule 1 Section 6 article 4 page 6

##### **Article 4 – Change of Possession**

Change of Possession occurs as follows:

- a) Scrimmage Play – Team A is in possession until it loses possession. Team B is in possession when a B player gains possession. Between these times, the ball is in neither team's possession and is a «loose ball.»
- b) Forward Pass – Team A is in possession until the pass is ruled incomplete, or the ball is intercepted by Team B. Team B is in possession when a B player intercepts the pass.
- c) Scrimmage Kick – Team A is in possession until the ball is kicked. Team B is in possession when a B player gains possession. Between these times, the ball is in neither team's possession and is a ball «in flight.»
- d) Return Kick – Team B is in possession until the B player has kicked the ball, which is then «in flight» until either Team A or Team B regains possession.
- e) Kick Off – Neither team is in possession prior to the kickoff. Team B is in possession when a B player gains possession. Until Team B or Team A gains possession, the ball is in neither team's possession and is a ball «in flight. »

Note: These definitions will apply when penalty applications are involved with before change of possession, loose ball, ball in flight, or after change of possession.

Replace with

##### **Article 4 – Change of Possession**

Change of Possession occurs as follows:

- a) Scrimmage Play – Team A is in possession until it loses possession ***(ie: fumble, blocked kick)***. Team B is in possession when a B player gains possession. ***Until Team A or Team B gains possession***, the ball is in neither team's possession ***and is defined as a*** «loose ball. »
- b) Forward Pass – Team A is in possession until the pass is ruled incomplete, or the ball is intercepted by Team B. Team B is in possession when a B player intercepts the pass.
- c) Scrimmage Kick – Team A is in possession until the ball is kicked. Team B is in possession when a B player gains possession. ***Until Team B or Team A gains possession***, the ball is in neither team's possession and is a ball «in flight. »
- d) Return Kick – Team B is in possession until the B player has kicked the ball, which is then «in flight» until either Team A or Team B regains possession.
- e) Kick Off – Neither team is in possession prior to the kickoff. Team B is in possession when a B player gains possession. Until Team B or Team A gains possession, the ball is in neither team's possession and is a ball «in flight. »

Note: These definitions will apply when penalty applications are involved with before change of possession, loose ball, ball in flight, or after change of possession.

Reason for change: Clarity.

### **Rule 1 section 10 article 8 page 10**

#### **Article 8 – Player Out of Bounds**

A player who goes out of bounds either by intent or misjudgement, or in order to use the out-of-bounds area to his advantage, must not participate further in that play. A player who goes out of bounds as a result of contact with an opponent, a missed block or tackle, or who slides out of bounds on slippery field or a player of the receiving team who is playing a kicked ball in flight may legally return to the field and participate in the play. The point of the foul (PF) is the point where the illegal participation occurs.

Note: This article does not apply to a ball carrier who goes out of bounds, which makes the ball automatically dead.

Penalty: Team A 1.2D L10 PLS PP PF or PBH-DR

3D DG L10 PLS PP PF or PBH-DR

3D DNG LB-PBD

Team B L10 PP PF PBH or PLS

If such a player reaches back into or re-enters the field of play and touches or recovers a loose ball.

Penalty: LB PF

Replace with

#### **Article 8 – Player Out of Bounds**

A player who goes out of bounds either by intent or misjudgment, or in order to use the out-of-bounds area to his advantage, must not participate further in that play. A player who goes out of bounds as a result of contact with an opponent, a missed block or tackle, or who slides out of bounds on slippery field or a player of the receiving team who is playing a kicked ball in **the air on its original trajectory** may legally return to the field and participate in the play. The point of the foul (PF) is the point where the illegal participation occurs.

Note: This article does not apply to a ball carrier who goes out of bounds, which makes the ball automatically dead.

Penalty: Team A 1.2D L10 PLS PP PF or PBH-DR

3D DG L10 PLS PP PF or PBH-DR

3D DNG LB-PBD

Team B L10 PP PF PBH or PLS

If such a player reaches back into or re-enters the field of play and touches or recovers **a "loose ball" (as per rule 1-6-4).**

Penalty: LB PF

Reason for change: Provide clarity and logic to the rule.

### **Rule 1 section 11 article 1c1 page 10**

c) The following equipment is mandatory and shall be worn by all players. The equipment shall be designed and manufactured by a professional manufacturer and shall not be altered in any way which will decrease the protection of the player.

1) soft knee pads at least 1/2 inch (1.27 cm) thick, worn over the knees, and covered by the pants.

Replace with

c) The following equipment is mandatory and shall be worn by all players. The equipment shall be designed and manufactured by a professional manufacturer and shall not be altered in any way which will decrease the protection of the player.

**1) soft knee pads, worn over the knees, and covered by the pants.**

Reason for changes: Provide a clear definition

### **Rule 3 section 2 article 5 page 20**

b) 2 points – by scoring a touchdown by means of a ball carrying or passing play. A punt or onside kick is prohibited. If B gains possession, the ball is dead immediately.

Replace with

**b) 2 points – by scoring a touchdown. A punt or onside kick is prohibited. If B gains possession, the ball is dead immediately.**

Reason for change: Allow for a legal fumble recovery

#### **Rule 4 section 1 article 6 page 21**

Add new

##### ***Article 6- Blocking below the waist zone***

***Blocking below the waist zone is defined as an area between the tight ends or tight end position, within 2 yards of the defensive side of the line of scrimmage extending back to the initial position of the quarterback or kicker.***

Reason for change: Clarification

#### **Rule 4 section 5 article 2 page 24**

##### **Article 2 – Team A**

- a) On any play from scrimmage, except when the ball is kicked across the line of scrimmage, all Team A players may interfere with opponents from deadline to dead line.
- b) On a kick play, Team A players may interfere with the opponents in and behind the neutral zone, until the ball is kicked, and then as covered in Rule 5.
- c) Interference on a Forward Pass Play – Rule 6, Section 4, Article 9.
- d) On any play, it shall be illegal for a player of either team to block an opponent below the waist except when the block occurs in an area between the tight ends or tight end position, within 2 yards of the defensive side of the line of scrimmage extending back to the initial position of the quarterback or kicker. A player initiating a block below the waist in this area must be positioned in this zone at the snap of the ball for the block to be legal.

Replace with

##### **Article 2 – Team A**

- a) On any play from scrimmage, except when the ball is kicked across the line of scrimmage, all Team A players may interfere with opponents from deadline to deadline.
- b) On a kick play, Team A players may interfere with the opponents in and behind the neutral zone, until the ball is kicked, and then as covered in Rule 5.
- c) Interference on a Forward Pass Play – Rule 6, Section 4, Article 9.
- d) On any play from scrimmage, it shall be illegal for a player to block an opponent below the waist except as per – Rule 7 Section 3 Article 19***

Reason for change: Player safety - blocking below the waist happening outside the blocking below the waist zone becomes less safe as it is not expected. Therefore, this rule has been moved to the Unnecessary Roughing section of the rule book.

#### **Rule 4 section 5 article 3 page 24**

##### **Article 3 – Team B**

- a) On any play from scrimmage, B players may use their hands and arms to reach the ball carrier but shall not hold or encircle any A player other than the ball carrier.
- b) Interference on a Forward Pass Play – Rule 6, Section 4, Article 9.
- c) Interference on a Kicking Play – Rule 5.

Replace with

##### **Article 3 – Team B**

- a) On any play from scrimmage, B players may use their hands and arms to reach the ball carrier but shall not hold or encircle any A player other than the ball carrier.
- b) Interference on a Forward Pass Play – Rule 6, Section 4, Article 9.
- c) Interference on a Kicking Play – Rule 5.
- d) On any play from scrimmage, it shall be illegal for a player to block an opponent below the waist except as per – Rule 7 Section 3 Article 19***

Reason for change: Player safety - blocking below the waist happening outside the blocking below the waist zone becomes less safe as it is not expected. Therefore, this rule has been moved to the Unnecessary Roughing section of the rule book.

## **Rule 5 section 2 article 5 page 28**

### **Article 5 – Interference**

a) On a kickoff, Team B players may interfere with any opponent within bounds, after the ball is kicked, until it is declared dead, provided that the initial contact is made at or above the waist.

b) On a kickoff, if Team A legally recovers the ball, or a Team B fumble, Team A players may interfere with any opponent anywhere within bounds, provided that the initial contact is made at or above the waist.

Penalty: 1. Ball in possession of either Team

Holding, Blocking below the waist – L10 PBH or option.

Blocking from the rear – L15 PBH or option.

UR or RP – L15 or 25 PBH or PBD.

2. Ball in flight.

Holding, Blocking below the waist, Illegal block. – L10 point where possession is gained or option.

Blocking from the rear– L15 point where possession is gained or option.

UR or RP– L15 or 25 point where possession gained or PBD.

Note: If, after the infraction, possession is gained in the end zone by B, the appropriate penalty distance shall be applied from the B 10-yard (10m) line or option.

c) On a kickoff, Team A players may use their hands and arms to ward off blockers and may use their bodies in blocking against players protecting the ball carrier, provided that the initial contact is made at or above the waist. Any other form of blocking by Team A players is illegal interference.

Penalty: Ball in flight:

1. Foul in area of PP, or which affects the gaining of possession by B – Possession to Team B at PF.

2. Foul in area remote from PP, where the A player is not attempting to prevent possession from being obtained – L10 PP.

Note: If, after the foul, possession is gained in the end zone by B, the penalty shall be applied from the B 10 yard (10 metre) line, or option.

Ball in possession – L10 PBH.

Replace with

### **Article 5 – Interference**

a) On a kickoff, Team B players may interfere with any opponent within bounds, after the ball is kicked, until it is declared dead, provided that the initial contact is made at or above the waist.

b) On a kickoff, if Team A legally recovers the ball, or a Team B fumble, Team A players may interfere with any opponent anywhere within bounds, provided that the initial contact is made at or above the waist.

Penalty: 1. Ball in possession of either Team

**Holding, Illegal block– L10 PBH or option.**

**UR – L15 PBH or PBD.**

**RP – L25 PBH or PBD.**

2. Ball in flight.

**Holding, Illegal block. – L10 point where possession is gained or option.**

**UR– L15 point where possession is gained or PBD.**

**RP– L 25 point where possession gained or PBD.**

Note: If, after the infraction, possession is gained in the end zone by B, the appropriate penalty distance shall be applied from the B 10-yard (10m) line or option.

c) On a kickoff, Team A players may use their hands and arms to ward off blockers and may use their bodies in blocking against players protecting the ball carrier, provided that the initial contact is made at or above the waist. Any other form of blocking by Team A players is illegal interference.

Penalty: Ball in flight:

1. Foul in area of PP, or which affects the gaining of possession by B – Possession to Team B at PF.

2. Foul in area remote from PP, where the A player is not attempting to prevent possession from being obtained – L10 PP.

Note: If, after the foul, possession is gained in the end zone by B, the penalty shall be applied from the B 10-yard (10 metre) line, or option.

Ball in possession – L10 PBH.

Reason for change: Player safety - blocking below the waist happening outside the blocking below the waist zone becomes less safe as it is not expected. Therefore, this rule has been moved to the Unnecessary Roughing section of the rule book.

## **Rule 5 section 2 article 5 page 28**

Add new

***d) On any kick play, it shall be illegal for 3 or more players to align shoulder to shoulder within 2 yards of each other and move forward in an attempt to block for a ball carrier. (Wedge Block)***

### **Penalty L10 PBH or PP**

Reason for change: Player safety. A wedge places many players close together thus providing the opportunity for the opponent to be hit multi times in a short period by different players

## **Rule 7 section 3 article 10 page 44**

### **Article 10 – Crack-Back Blocking**

It shall be illegal for any Team A player to block an opponent below the waist in an area from 5 yards ahead of the line of scrimmage, from sideline to sideline, extending back to the Team A dead line, if:

1. The A player is stationed, or in motion, 3 or more yards (metres) outside of the Close Line Play Area, at the snap of ball.

OR

2. The A player is stationed initially 3 or more yards (metres) outside of the Close Line Play Area and moves toward the ball so that he is less than 3 yards (metres) from the Close Line Play Area at the snap of ball.

OR

3. The A player is stationed initially less than 3 yards (metres) from the Close Line Play Area, and either before or after the snap of the ball, moves more than 3 yards (meters) from the Close Line Play Area, and then returns to less than 3 yards (metres) from the Close Line Play Area.

AND

4. Moves in the direction of the ball to make the block. (The direction of the ball is toward the position of the ball when it was snapped.)

Replace with

### **Article 10 – Crack-Back Blocking**

It shall be illegal for any Team A player to block an opponent below the waist, ***or deliver a forcible block***, in an area from 5 yards ahead of the line of scrimmage, from sideline to sideline, extending back to the Team A deadline, if:

1. The A player is stationed, or in motion, 3 or more yards (metres) outside of the Close Line Play Area, at the snap of ball.

OR

2. The A player is stationed initially 3 or more yards (metres) outside of the Close Line Play Area and moves toward the ball so that he is less than 3 yards (metres) from the Close Line Play Area at the snap of ball.

OR

3. The A player is stationed initially less than 3 yards (metres) from the Close Line Play Area, and either before or after the snap of the ball, moves more than 3 yards (meters) from the Close Line Play Area, and then returns to less than 3 yards (metres) from the Close Line Play Area.

AND

4. Moves in the direction of the ball to make the block. (The direction of the ball is toward the position of the ball when it was snapped.)

Reason for change: Player safety. With last year's change to blind side block we made it possible for an offensive wide out to clean out a defensive end from the blind side.

Add new

**Article 19 – Blocking below the waist**

***It shall be illegal to block an opponent below the waist in the following circumstances:***

***a) On any play from scrimmage, except when the block occurs in an area between the tight ends or tight end position, within 2 yards of the defensive side of the line of scrimmage extending back to the initial position of the quarterback or kicker. A player initiating a block below the waist in this area must be positioned in this zone at the snap of the ball for the block to be legal.***

***Note: A player coming from outside this zone, must come to a complete stop in the zone, prior to the snap of the ball to be considered positioned in the zone.***

***b) After an interception or fumble recovery.***

***c) On open field kick after the ball is kicked.***

***d) On a kick-off commencing the moment the ball is kicked***

Reason for change: Player safety - blocking below the waist happening outside the blocking below the waist zone becomes less safe as it is not expected. Therefore, this rule has been moved to the Unnecessary Roughing section of the rule book.

**Signals page 67**

Add new

***Blind Side Block: Two closed fists coming together chest high***

***Targeting: Closed fist to the temple***

**Editorial**

Wording in book is being updated to become gender neutral. These editorial changes have no impact to the interpretation of the rule.