



# SOUTH BAY LEAGUE

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Football Rules



## EQUIPMENT

- I. **FOOTWEAR:** Rubber sole shoes or cleats. NO METAL CLEATS (15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and removal of shoes).
- II. **MOUTHPIECES:** Mandatory.
- III. **UNIFORMS:** Must be tucked in at all times.
  1. Non-ball carrier: First offense - Verbal warning. Second offense - 5 yard penalty.
  2. Ball-carrier: 5 yard penalty from the point of foul and loss of down.
- IV. **FLAGS**
  1. 3 flags on a removable belt.
  2. Contrasting color to uniform shorts/pants.
- V. **FOOTBALLS:** Each offense may use their own intermediate (within a centimeter) size ball.
- VI. **FIELD**
  1. As close to a 40 by 80 yard field not including 10 yard end zones.
  2. Cones at 20/40/20 yards for first downs.
  3. Mark in the middle of the field at each 30 yard line for kickoffs.
  4. Hash marks: After every down the ball will be placed within 7 yards of the middle of the field.

## TEAMS

1. Eight players from a team on the field at once.
2. Each member of a team is eligible to carry and/or receive a ball.

## RULES OF THE GAME

- I. **LENGTH OF GAME**
  1. Two 20-minute halves (running time) with stop time in last 2 minutes of the second half. 5 minute halftimes.
  2. Overtime: Each team gets possession of the ball at the 10 yard line with 4 downs to score. If a touchdown is scored, the team has the option of a 1-point (3 yard line) or 2-point (5 yard line) conversion. If score is tied after each team's possession, process is repeated.
- II. **TIMEOUTS:** 2 one-minute timeouts per game.
- III. **START OF GAME:** Team that wins the coin toss has one of the following 3 choices: 1) *receiving or kicking the ball*, 2) *which goal to defend*, 3) *deferring* to second half. If options 1 or 2 are picked, the other team has choice of whichever one was not chosen. If a team chooses to defer, then opposing team has option of first 2 choices (as if they won the toss) and toss-winning team has choice of whichever one of the first 2 options remains and their choice between the first 2 options to start the second half.
- IV. **SCORING:** Touchdowns: 6 points, Extra Point Conversions: 1-point (3 yard line) or 2-point (5 yard line)
- V. **SPECIAL TEAMS**
  1. **Punts:** Dead plays until the ball is kicked. The ball must be snapped (or handed) between the Center's legs and *kicked* by the Punter. NO FAKES. Coaches must let referees and opposing team know whether they are punting or going for it immediately after each unsuccessful third down. The punting team cannot move until the punter is moving forward in kicking motion. There must also be *at least 3 players* on the OFFENSE on the line of scrimmage within 5 yards of the football.
  2. **Punt Return:** At least 3 players on the DEFENSE must be within 5 yards from line of scrimmage. The ball can be returned after hitting ground first, although once the ball touches a player and hits the ground, it is a dead ball at that spot. Once the kicking team touches the ball it is dead and the return team gets the ball at that spot. The return team may move once the ball is snapped. There must be *at least 3 players* on the OFFENSE on the line of scrimmage within 5 yards of the football.
  3. **Kickoff:** All teams must kickoff with a kicking tee from their own 30-yard line after each touchdown or to start each half. No throwing. No onside kicks.
  4. **Kick Return:** At least 3 players on the RETURN TEAM must be between 10 and 15 yards from the ball. The ball can be returned after hitting ground first, although once the ball touches a player and hits the ground, it is a dead ball at that spot. Once the kicking team touches the ball it is dead and the return team gets the ball at that spot. Any ball that caught or lands in the endzone is touchback and taken at the 20 yard line by the receiving team. If the ball is kicked out-of-bounds, the returning team has an option of taking the ball where it went out or at the 30-yard line.

## VI. OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

1. **Quarterback Sneaks:** *Penalty:* No advance and loss of down
2. **Runs up the Middle** (5 yards on either side of the ball). *Penalty:* No advance and loss of down
3. **Straight Arms or Pushes** by the ball carrier. *Penalty:* 10 yards from the point of foul
4. **Flag Guarding** by the ball carrier with shirt or hands: *Penalty:* 10 yards from the point of foul
5. **Jumping to avoid a tackle** by the ball carrier: 10 yards from the point of foul.
6. **Delay of Game** (25 seconds is allowed from time of whistle and ball has been marked to play): *Penalty:* 5 yards
7. **Inadvertent Loss of Flag:**
  - a. Ball Carrier: *Penalty:* play is dead at that point.
  - b. Pass Receiver: *Penalty:* play is dead at point of completion.
8. **Charging** or running through a defensive player by the ball carrier. *Penalty:* 10 yards from point of foul, possible unsportsmanlike conduct if intentional
9. **Illegal Motion:** One person may be in motion parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage. *Penalty:* 5 yards, replay the down.
10. **Illegal Formation:** There must be *at least 3 players* on the OFFENSE on the line of scrimmage within 5 yards of the football. *Penalty:* 5 yards
11. **Illegal Procedure:** All offensive players must be set (in stance) behind the line of scrimmage when ball is snapped, unless in motion. *Penalty:* 5 yards
12. **Center moves the football off the ground** before the snap. *Penalty:* Warning on 1<sup>st</sup> offense, 5 yards on 2<sup>nd</sup> offense
13. **Illegal use of flags:** Less than 3 flags, belt tied, flags incorrectly positioned (hips & back). *Penalty:* 10 yards from line of scrimmage, loss of down.
14. **BLOCKING:** Arms, elbows, and forearms *cannot extend* at anytime while blocking. Blocks must be made with hands inside of opponent's body frame, never resting on the outside of body frame. All blocks must be above the waste without grabbing or shoving the opponent with hands. Players cannot intentionally run or knock over an opponent, especially when running at full speed. *Penalty:* 10 yards from the point of foul, replay the down, possible unsportsmanlike conduct if intentional.
15. **DEFENSIVE SAFETY** (An offensive player is stopped in his/her own endzone): *Penalty:* defensive team is awarded 2 points, offensive team must kick or punt the ball from their own 20 yard line with defensive team using same rules as a kick return.

## VII. DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

1. **Tackling or Pushing the Ball Carrier:**
  - a. **Last Defender:** (Attempt to stop a touchdown.) *Penalty:* Touchdown
  - b. **Not Last Defender:** *Penalty:* 10 yards from point of foul
2. **Holding or pulling the ball carrier's clothing** while taking a flag. *Penalty:* 10 yards from point of foul
3. **Charging or Pushing a Blocker:** No defender can intentionally run over, knock over, trip, or throw down an offensive player in order to get to the ball carrier. Defenders can use their hands to help take on blockers. *Penalty:* 10 yards from point of foul
4. **Making Contact with the Center** before he/she returns to an upright position. *Penalty:* 10 yards from L.O.S.
5. **Pass Interference:**
  - a. Before the last 2 minutes of each half the penalty is 15 yards from the line of scrimmage, automatic first down.
  - b. Inside the last 2 minutes of each half the ball is placed at the point of infraction.
6. **Roughing the Passer:** No contact may be made on the passer even if throw is deflected. Flag must be pulled, cannot go for the ball. *Penalty:* 10 yards from line of scrimmage.
7. **Offside:** No defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage, even if he/she resets before the ball is snapped. *Penalty:* 5 yards from L.O.S.
8. **Holding:** *Penalty:* 10 yards from line of scrimmage
9. **Illegal Formation:** There must be *at least 3 players* on the DEFENSE on the line of scrimmage within 5 yards of the football. *Penalty:* 5 yards
10. **Rushing the passer** with more than 4 players. *Penalty:* 10 yards, automatic first down.

## VIII. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:

- No **verbal abuse** of officials or players by any coaches or players.
  - No **intentional** attempts to cause **physical harm** to another player (clipping, pushing, tripping, chop-blocking, tackling, elbowing, kicking or punching).
  - **Excessive celebration** during or after a play such as spiking the ball or taunting the other team.
- Penalty:* 15 yards from the point of foul, if after play is dead then 15 yards from the L.O.S., if after a TD then 15 yards from 3 or 5 yards line, if after an extra point, then yards from kickoff (30 yard line). Player is removed from game for 5 plays, probable ejection from the game. Any player ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be suspended for at least the following game as well.