



# NIRSA Flag Football Rules

For Men's/Women's Games



Rule 1

The Game, Field, Players &  
Equipment

# Beginning the Game

## ■ Team Composition

- Maximum
  - Men & Women – 7
  - Corec – 8
    - 4 men & 4 women
- Minimum
  - Men & Women – 4
  - Corec – 5
    - 3 men & 2 women
    - 3 women & 2 men
- Game may continue with less than minimum players if team has a chance to win

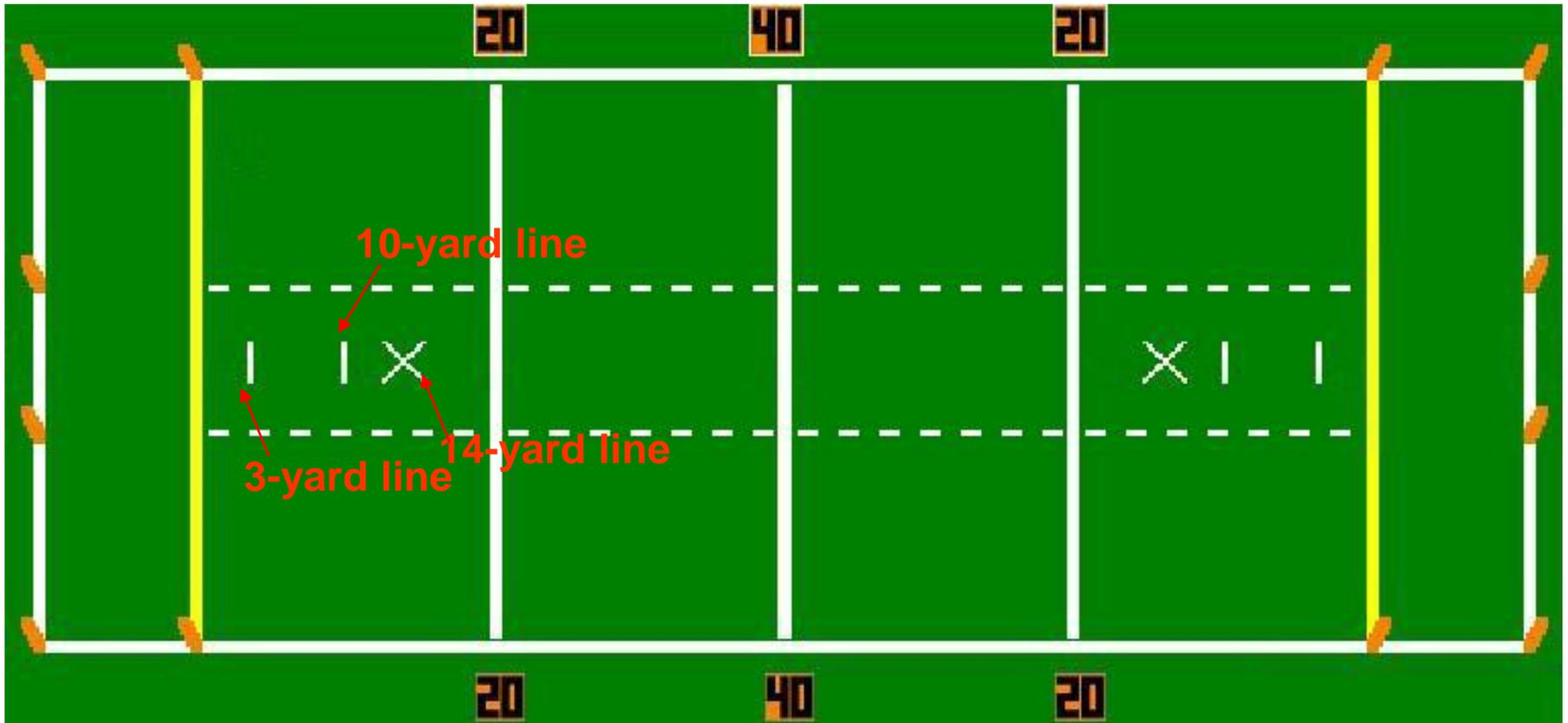
# Officials Authority

- Begins
  - 30 minutes before game (or as soon after that as you arrive)
- Ends
  - When Referee declares end of 4<sup>th</sup> period/overtime.
- Elastic Clause
  - Referees may rule on situations not covered in the rules



- Persons Subject to the Rules
  - Players
  - Nonplayers
  - Spectators

# [ Field Markings & Dimensions ]



# Game Equipment

- Teams may provide their own ball.
- The offense is responsible for the ball.
- Ball must meet size requirements:
  - Men's – must use regular size ball.
  - Women's and Corec may use following sizes:
    - Regular
    - Intermediate
    - Youth
    - Junior



# [ Game Equipment ]

- Ball Spotters



**Team B  
scrimmage line**

**Team A  
scrimmage line**

- Down Box



# [ Player Equipment ]

- Required player equipment:
  - Jersey with a number
  - Pants or shorts
  - Shoes
  - Flag belt

# Equipment

## Optional Player Equipment:

- Elastic bandage no more than two turns thick (anchored by tape no more than two turns thick).
- Gloves of a soft, pliable, and nonabrasive material
- Knit or stocking cap with no bill
- Headband no wider than 2"
- Face shield
- Soft, pliable pads on lower leg, knee, and/or ankle
- Soft, padded compression shorts/shirts
- Mouth pieces
- Playbooks kept inside clothing or a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band that contains plays
- Pliable, non-rigid sunglasses

# [ Equipment ]

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- A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play.
- If the equipment is dangerous or confusing, it is illegal.

# [ Equipment ]

- Examples of illegal equipment:
  - Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots
  - Jewelry
  - Pads or braces worn above the waist
  - Casts worn above or below the waist
  - Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats
  - Shirts or jerseys which do not stay tucked in unless they are more than 4" from the waist
  - Any hood which does not remain tucked in

# Equipment



Illegal jersey

- Jerseys which have an arm opening of more than 4" below the arm pit
- Pants or shorts with belts or belt loops, pockets or exposed drawstrings
- Hard or unyielding leg/knee braces covered illegally
- Any slippery or foreign substance on any equipment or exposed part of the body
- Exposed metal on clothes or person
- Towels attached at a players waist
- Flags that can be detached from the flag belt
- Hand warmers worn around the waist

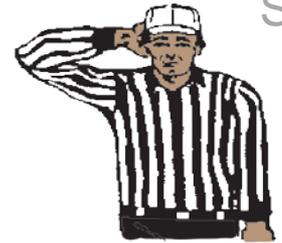
# [ Equipment ]

- When required equipment is missing or when illegal equipment is found on any incoming substitute or player, correction must be made before participation.
- An official's time-out shall be declared to permit repair of equipment that becomes illegal/defective through use.

# Fouls and Penalties

- **Failure to wear required equipment**

- Live or dead ball foul, 5 yards (S23)



S23

- **Illegal player equipment**

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards (S27)



S27



# Rule 3

Periods, Time Factors &  
Substitutions

# Coin Toss

- Both captains and all officials should be present
- Visiting team gets to call the toss
- Winning captain chooses:
  - Start on offense or defense
  - Defend a goal
  - Defer options to 2<sup>nd</sup> half
- The other team has the remaining option

# [ Starting Each Half ]

- Game time is forfeit time
- Unless moved by penalty, each half begins with a snap from the 14 yard line
  - Referee's should obtain ball location request from offensive captain
- Teams change goals between 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> quarters
  - Team possession, number of the next down, and zone line-to-gain remain unchanged.

# [ Game Time ]

- The game consists of four, 12-minute quarters
- Halftime shall be 5 minutes
- The clock runs continuously for the first 22 minutes of each half unless stopped for:
  - A charged team timeout (restarts on snap)
  - An official's timeout (restarts on ready for play)
  - The end of a period (restarts on snap)
- Each team receives three timeouts per half

# Last 2 Minutes

- The clock stops for a two-minute warning in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters (S3)
- During the last two minutes of each half, timing rules change
- Situations that stop the clock during this period may cause it to start on the snap or the ready for play



# [ Last 2 Minutes ]

- Clock stops after the play and next starts on the snap:
  - Incomplete legal or incomplete illegal forward pass
  - Play ends out of bounds
  - Safety
  - Team time-out
  - Touchdown (starts on the snap after the Try)
  - Touchback
  - B is awarded a new series
  - Either team awarded a new series following a legal punt
  - Team attempts to consume time illegally

# [ Last 2 Minutes ]

- Some situations may cause the clock to start on the ready for play whistle or at the Referee's discretion:
  - First down – depends on previous play
    - Example: Out of bounds play starts on snap
  - Penalty and administration – depends on previous play
    - Exception: Accepted delay of game foul starts on the snap
  - Referee's time-out – at Referee's discretion
  - A awarded a new series – depends on previous play
  - Team conserves time illegally – starts on ready for play
    - Example: intentionally grounding a pass or throwing a backward pass out of bounds
  - Inadvertent whistle – starts on the ready for play

# [ Last 2 Minutes ]

- A situation that causes the clock to restart on the snap takes priority over other timing rules
  - Example: Team A player gains a first down [situational] and runs out-of-bounds [snap]. The clock will start on the snap

# Extension of Periods

- A period is extended if, during a down in which time expires:
  - There was an accepted penalty for a live-ball foul
    - Exception: Unsportsmanlike/nonplayer fouls, loss of down fouls, or fouls for which enforcement results in a safety
  - There was a double foul
  - There was an inadvertent whistle
  - A touchdown was scored
    - Try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored on the last play of the 4<sup>th</sup> period and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game
    - The period is not extended if the defense fouls during a successful try and the offended team accepts the results of the play with enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot
- If any of the above scenarios occur during the untimed down, the period will be further extended

# Correcting Timing Errors

- The Referee may correct obvious timing errors if the error is discovered prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> live ball after the error
  - The window to correct a timing error is lost once the period has officially ended

# Ending a period

- Following the last play of the period, the Referee should allow a short delay to ensure:
  - No foul has occurred
  - No obvious timing error has occurred
  - No request for a coach-Referee conference has occurred
  - No other irregularity has occurred
- The Referee shall hold the ball in one hand overhead to signal the period has officially ended (S14)



S14

# [ Overtime ]

## ■ Coin Toss

- Visiting team calls the toss
- Winner chooses:
  - Offense
  - Defense
  - Direction
- All overtime periods are played to the same goal line
- If additional overtime periods are played, captains alternate offense-defense option.

# Overtime

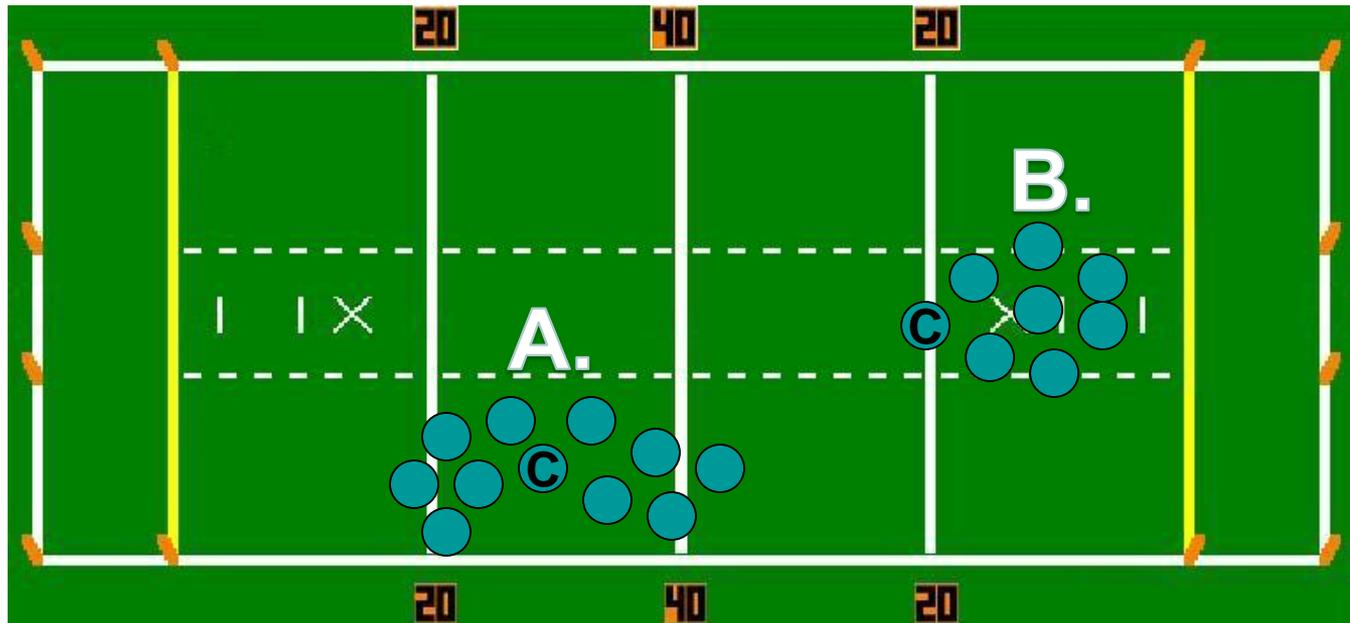
- Unless moved by penalty, teams start 1<sup>st</sup> and goal at B's 10 yard line.
  - Teams have a series of 4 downs to score
  - The goal line shall always be the line-to-gain
- If B gains possession, the ball is dead and A's series is over
- Fouls and penalty administration does not change
- Each team is given only 1 time-out for the entire overtime

# Coach-Referee Conference

- Teams that wish to discuss a misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule must request a time-out
  - The request must be made prior to the next live ball unless the half has officially ended
- The Referee and one other official will confer with the captain or coach
- Rulings
  - If the Referee changes the ruling, the time-out becomes an official's time-out
  - If the ruling is not changed, the team is charged a time-out
  - If the team has no time-outs remaining, a delay of game penalty is assessed

# Authorized Conferences

- Teams may use one of two types of authorized conferences during a time-out (depicted below):
  - A. One or more players, subs, and coaches may meet directly in front of the team box, within 5 yards of the sideline
  - B. One coach may enter the field between the hash marks to confer with not more than 7 players (Co-Rec Rule: 8 players)



# Injured Player

- An injured player (or apparently injured player) discovered by an official while the ball is dead and clock is stopped shall be replaced for at least one down
  - Unless halftime or overtime intermission occurs
- A bleeding player or player with blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player
- Concussions
  - A player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game and not allowed to return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional
  - Signifiers of a concussion include but are not limited to: loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, balance problems

# [ Delay of Game ]

- The ball must be put in play promptly and legally
- Action or inaction that prevents this is a delay of game; examples include:
  - Failure to snap within 25 seconds of the ball being declared ready for play
  - Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play
  - Deliberately advancing the ball after it is declared dead
  - A requested coach-Referee conference that does not change the officials' ruling after all team time-outs have been used

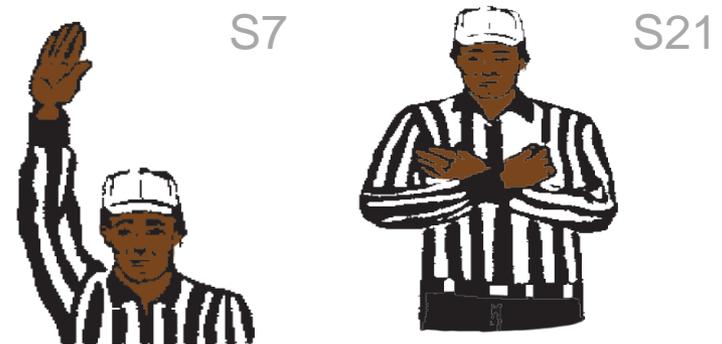
# [ Substitutions ]

- Between downs, a team may replace any number of players, as long as the substitution is legal
  - Replaced players must leave the field immediately
  - Replaced players must exit over the correct sideline
  - Entering substitutes shall be on their team's side of the neutral zone at the snap

# Fouls and Penalties

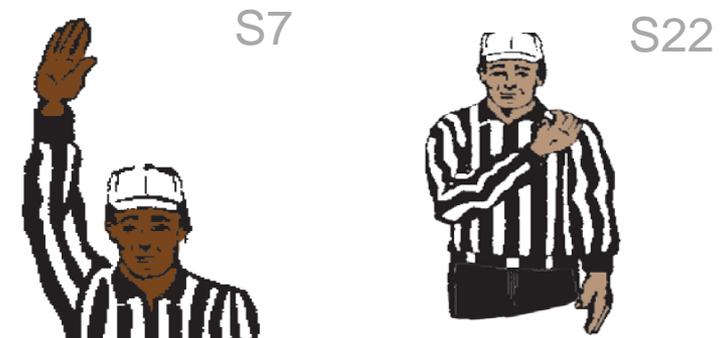
- **Delay of Game**

- Dead ball foul, 5 yards from succeeding spot (S7 and S21)



- **Illegal Substitution**

- If dead ball, 5 yards from succeeding spot (S7 and S22)





## Rule 4

Ball In Play, Dead Ball, and  
Out of Bounds

# [ Ball in Play: Dead Ball ]

- Ball becomes live
  - Ball becomes live when it is snapped legally
- Ball declared dead
  - Out of bounds, scores and Trys
    - Ball goes out of bounds
    - Any part of runner other than a hand(s) or foot (feet) touches the ground
    - A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful Try is made
    - B secures possession during a Try or overtime

# [ Ball in Play: Dead Ball ]

- Ball declared dead

- Passes

- A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
- A backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
- A snapped ball which hits the ground before or after getting to the intended receiver, is dead at the spot where it hits the ground
- A forward pass is legally completed or a loose ball is caught by a player on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line
- A passer is deflagged/tagged prior to releasing the ball.

# [ Ball in Play: Dead Ball ]

- Ball declared dead

- Punts

- The ball strikes the ground following 1st touching by K
- K catches a punt which is beyond the neutral zone
- Untouched punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it
- A muff of a punt strikes the ground
- K's punt breaks the plane of R's goal line

# Ball in Play: Dead Ball

- Ball declared dead
  - Runners
    - Runner's flag belt removed legally by an opponent
    - Runner is legally tagged with 1 hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, by an opponent once the flag belt is no longer attached
    - Prosthetic device becomes dislodged from a player in possession of the ball



# Inadvertent Whistle

- An official sounds a whistle inadvertently during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, when:
  - The ball is in player possession
    - Team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down
  - The ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass, illegal kick, or illegal forward pass
    - Team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down
  - During a legal forward pass or a punt
    - Ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed

# [ Succeeding Spot ]

- If the ball becomes dead:
  - Between the hash marks – ball shall be placed at the approximate spot
  - In a side zone – ball shall be placed at the nearest hash mark

# [ Succeeding Spot ]

- A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the hash marks for:
  - Start each half
  - For a Try
  - Following a:
    - Touchback
    - Safety
    - Try
    - Awarded catch after a punt
  - Start of each OT series

# [ Out of Bounds ]

- Player out of bounds
  - Anytime any part of the person is touching anything on or outside sideline or end line
    - Not including a player touching an official/another player
- Player in Possession
  - Anytime the runner or ball touches anything on or outside the sideline or end line
    - Not including a player touching an official/another player
- Loose Ball
  - Anytime it touches anything out of bounds
    - Does include the ball touching a player or an official



# Rule 5

Series of Downs, Number of  
Downs, and Team  
Possession After Penalty

# Downs and Series of Downs

- Down – a unit of the game
  - Starts with legal snap
  - Ends when ball becomes dead
  - Until a new series is awarded, the Referee may correct in error in the number of downs
- Series
  - 4 downs to advance to next zone
- Zone line-to-gain (ZLTG)
  - The zone in advance of the ball at start of series

# [ Awarding a New Series ]

- A new series of downs is awarded when:
  - A team moves ball into next zone – this can happen...
    - On a play free from penalty
    - If an opponent's penalty moves ball into next zone
    - On a play with a penalty by A that leaves the ball beyond the ZLTG
  - A team accepts a penalty carrying an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
  - Enforcement of an A penalty still leaves ball in next zone

# Awarding a New Series

- Either team is awarded a new series:
  - If they have obtained possession as a result of a...
    - Penalty
    - Punt
    - Touchback
    - Pass Interception
    - Failure to gain the ZLTG
- If in doubt...the out-of-bounds punt is “short” of the ZLTG

# Down & Possession After Penalty

- Penalty resulting in 1<sup>st</sup> down
  - Penalty leaves ball in possession beyond the ZLTG
  - If a penalty stipulates an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
- Declined
  - Number of next down is what it would have been had foul not occurred

# Down & Possession After Penalty

- Foul before change of possession
  - Down repeated unless the penalty involves a loss of down or leaves ball on or beyond ZLTG
- After change of possession
  - Ball belongs to team in possession when foul occurred
  - Down and distance are established after administration
- Rule Decisions Final
  - A decision may not be changed after ball is next legally snapped



# Rule 6

Kicking the Ball

# [ Punt ]

- Prior to the ready for play on 4<sup>th</sup> down:
  - Referee must ask A's captain if they will punt
  - A may punt on 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> but must inform Referee
- After A has decided to punt
  - Referee must announce decision to all players
  - Following the decision, the ball must be punted
    - Exception: A may change the decision 1) if a time-out is called, 2) the period ends, or 3) foul or inadvertent whistle during the down and the down is replayed

# Scrimmage Line and Punting



- Scrimmage line rules (e.g., legal position, encroachment, false start) apply on punt plays
- No players may enter neutral zone until ball is kicked
- After receiving the snap, the punter must punt the ball immediately and in a continuous motion

# After Being Punted

- R may:
  - Block the kick
    - If blocked kick hits the ground, it is dead
    - If blocked kick is caught by K behind K's LOS, K may advance by running/passing
  - Advance the kick anywhere on field
- K may not:
  - Punt the ball to another K player
  - Punt the ball more than one time per down

# [ Punt Crosses Scrimmage Line ]

- If a punt crosses K's scrimmage line and...
  - Touches any player before hitting the ground
    - It is dead and belongs to R
  - Hits an R player beyond R's LOS and is caught by K beyond R's LOS
    - It is dead and belongs to K (new series)

# [ First Touching ]

- If a K player touches a punt after crossing K's LOS...
  - Before it touches any R player it is 1<sup>st</sup> touching
    - R may take the ball at that spot
    - R may take the result of the play
  - R's loses right to use spot of 1<sup>st</sup> touching
    - If R commits a foul
    - If the penalty is accepted for any foul during the down

# Punts and the Boundary Lines

- The ball belongs to the receiving team if...
  - A punt goes out of bounds between goal lines
  - Comes to rest inbounds and nobody secures possession
- A punt breaks the plane of R's goal line...
  - Results in a touchback
  - Exception: R chooses spot of 1<sup>st</sup> touching

# After the Kick

- Kick Catch Interference
  - K may not touch the ball nor obstruct R
    - Exception: if R has touched the ball
  - K may touch the ball if no R player is attempting to catch the punt
- Signals
  - All signals by K or R should be ignored

# Fouls and Penalties

## ■ Illegal Procedure

- 5 yards from previous spot (S19)



S19

## ■ Illegal Kicking

- 10 yards (S31)



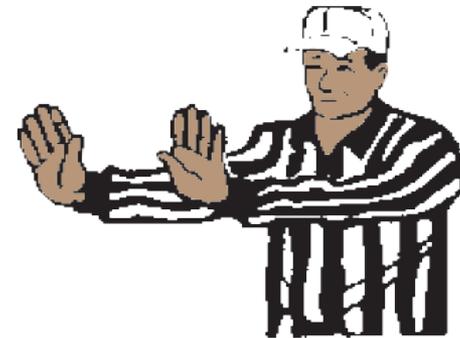
S31

Followed by pointing  
toward toe for kicking

# Fouls and Penalties

- **Kick Catching Interference**
  - 10 yards (S33)

S33



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# Rule 7

Snapping, Handing and  
Passing the Ball

# Presnap Requirements

- All plays start with a legal snap
- A players are responsible for the ball
  - A small towel may be placed under the ball in any weather conditions
- Players may use a 2, 3, & 4 point stance

# Presnap Requirements

- **Encroachment**
  - No B player may enter neutral zone after RFP
  - No player may enter neutral zone after snapper puts a hand on the ball
    - Exception: A snapper is allowed to be over the ball
- **False Start**
  - No A player may simulate the start of the play
  - May be penalized, even if ball is not snapped
  - May be penalized if it intends to cause encroachment by B
- **Illegal Snap**
  - Ball must be snapped in a quick, continuous motion

# [ At the Snap ]

- Formation Requirements
  - All A players must be 5 yds inbounds
    - Timeframe – after RFP and before snap
- Line requirement – only the snapper
- Motion
  - Only one A player may be in motion
    - May not be toward opponent's goal line
- Shift
  - All A players must be momentarily stationary prior to the snap

# [ At the Snap ]

- Direct Snap
  - Snap must be received 2 yards from LOS
  - Distance determined by where ball is first touched
- If in doubt, the A player first touched the snap 2 yards behind A's scrimmage line

# [ Handing the Ball ]



- Backward
  - Always legal
- Forward
  - Always legal

# Backward Pass & Fumble



- Almost always legal
  - Ball thrown OB to save time
- Simultaneous catch
  - Ball dead immediately
- Out of bounds
  - Belongs to offensive team
- Striking the ground
  - Ball dead, belongs to offense

# [ Forward Passes ]

- All players eligible to catch/touch a pass
- Only allowed one forward pass per down
  - Passer's feet must be behind A's LOS when thrown
  - If in doubt, the passer is behind the line

# [ Forward Passes ]

- A forward pass is illegal if...
  - Passer's foot is beyond A's scrimmage line when thrown
  - Thrown after a change of team possession
  - Intentionally thrown to ground to save loss of yardage/time
  - Passer catches an untouched forward pass (self pass)
  - More than one forward pass per down
- The QB may receive the snap and throw it directly to the ground to stop the clock
- If in doubt, the pass is legal

# Completed/Intercepted Passes

- Completion
  - Caught by a member of passing team inbounds
- Interception
  - Caught by an opponent inbounds
- Simultaneous Catch
  - Caught by opponents at same time inbounds
  - Ball declared dead and belongs to passing team
- Incomplete Pass
  - Pass touches ground or anything inbounds
  - Caught by a player who first contacts ground out of bounds

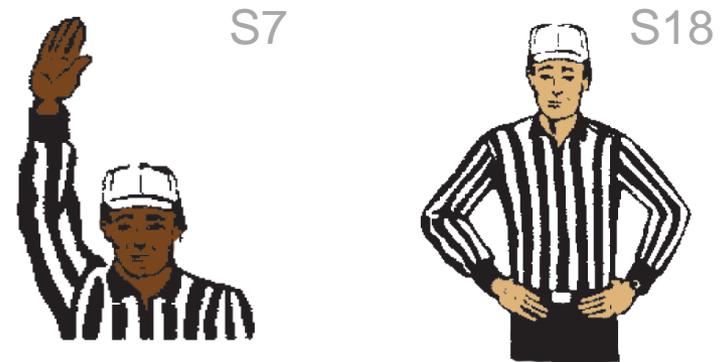
# Pass Interference

- **Offensive Pass Interference**
  - Timeframe – Begins at snap until pass touched by any player
- **Defensive Pass Interference**
  - Timeframe – When pass is thrown until pass touched by any player
- **Not Pass Interference**
  - Contact by B obviously away from the direction of pass
  - May still be a personal foul
- **Catchability**
  - Does not impact an official's ruling

# Fouls and Penalties

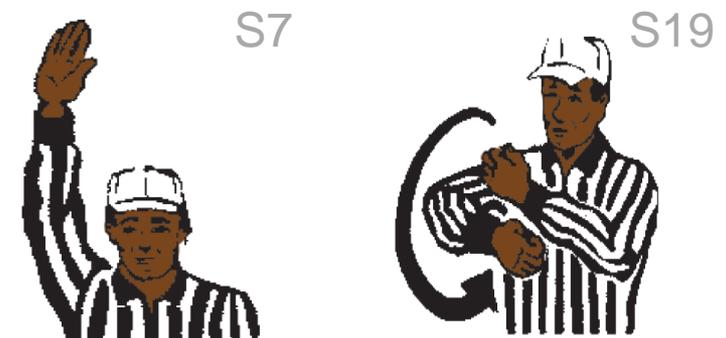
## ■ Encroachment

- Dead ball foul, 5 yards from succeeding spot (S7 and S18)



## ■ False Start

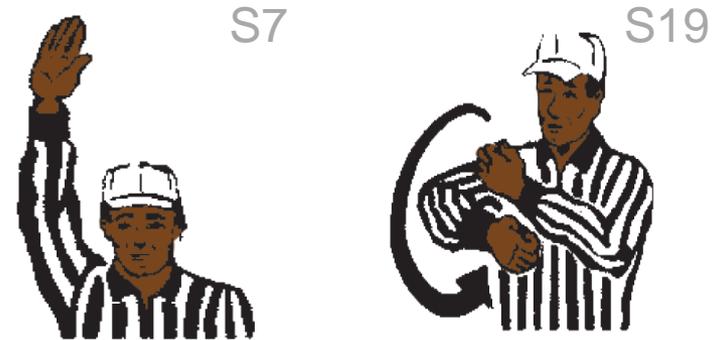
- Dead ball, 5 yards from succeeding spot (S7 and S19)



# Fouls and Penalties

## ■ Illegal Snap

- Dead ball foul, 5 yards from succeeding spot (S7 and S19)



## ■ Illegal Formation

- 5 yards (S19)

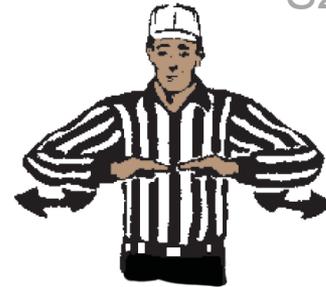


# Fouls and Penalties

- **Illegal Motion**

- 5 yards, (S20)

S20

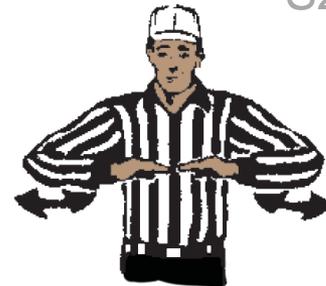


Illegal Motion – 1 hand

- **Illegal Shift**

- 5 yards, (S20)

S20



Illegal Shift – 2 hands

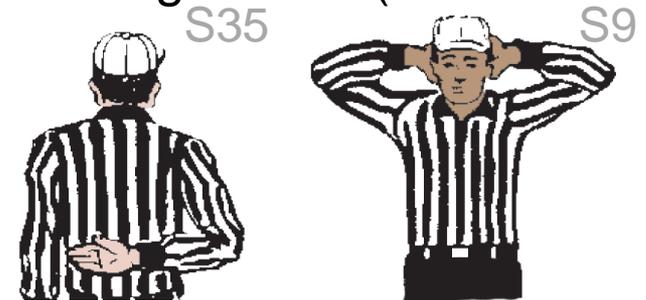
# Fouls and Penalties

- **Illegal Formation (snap not received 2 yards back)**
  - 5 yards, (S19)



- **Illegal Pass**

- 5 yards from spot of pass; loss of down if by A before possession changes during a scrimmage down (S35 and S9)



# Fouls and Penalties

## ■ Intentional Grounding

- 5 yards from spot of the pass; loss of down if by A before possession changes during a scrimmage down (S36 and S9)



## ■ Pass Interference

- 10 yards from previous spot (S33)





# Rule 8

## Scoring Plays and Touchback

# [ Mercy Rule ]

- If a team is 19+ points ahead at or after the 2 minute warning in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the game is over.
  - Prior to applying the Mercy Rule:
    - The Referee shall apply the Extension of Period Rule
    - There should be a play free of any accepted live ball fouls

# Scoring – Touchdown

- How scored
  - Runner advances from field so ball breaks plane of opponent's goal line
  - Loose ball is caught by a player while ball is on/behind opponent's goal line
- When enforcing an unfair act, the referee may award a touchdown to the offended team
- All touchdowns are worth 6 points

# Scoring – Trys

- After a touchdown, the scoring team may try for:
  - 1 point from the 3-yard line
  - 2 points from the 10-yard line
  - 3 points from the 20-yard line
  - Note: the Try is not attempted if scored on last play of 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and will not affect the outcome of the game
- The Referee should ask the scoring team captain
  - What they would like to try for
  - Where they would like the ball positioned
- If the defense gains possession during the Try the ball is dead and the Try is over.
- Following a Try, the opponents of the scoring team get the ball at their 14-yard line (unless moved by penalty or to begin OT)

# [ Force ]

- Force – the team responsible for the ball in the end zone is the one that last provided the force
- Initial force is provided by a player who punts, passes, snaps, or fumbles the ball
  - This force continues, even if its direction changes when it touches a player or strikes the ground
  - Initial force is lost if a player illegally bats/kicks the ball or if it is contacted again after coming to rest
  - A legal bat or muff of a pass, kick, or fumble in flight does not provide a new force

# [ Responsibility ]

- The team is responsible for the ball being in the end zone if:
  - A player carries the ball across the goal line
  - A player of that team creates the force that moves it across the goal line
  - A team fouls and the penalty laves the ball on or behind the goal line

# Scoring – Safety

- A safety counts for 2 points
- A safety occurs if:
  - A team is responsible for the ball being in their own end zone and it becomes dead there
    - Exception: Momentum Rule
  - A penalty against the offense is accepted and the enforcement spot is from their own end zone
- The team which scored a safety will get the ball at their 14-yard line

# Scoring – Touchback

- A touchback results if:
  - A team is responsible for the ball being in their opponent's end zone, where it becomes dead
  - K's punt breaks the plane of R's goal line
- No points are awarded for a touchback
- The team which was awarded a touchback will get the ball at their 14-yard line
- If in doubt, it is a touchback
- If in doubt, the OB punt near the goal line is a touchback

# [ Point Values ]

TOUCHDOWN	Men's or women's game	6 points
SAFETY	Points awarded to opponent	2 points
SUCCESSFUL TRY a.From the 3 yard line b.From the 10 yard line c.From the 20 yard line		1 point 2 points 3 points
FORFEITED GAME:	Game score is: Offended Team 1, Opponent 0 *If offended team is ahead, the score stands	

# Referee's Mechanics

- The Referee will communicate the current score to the A and B captains and all officials after each touchdown, Try and safety.
- If there is a disagreement regarding the score, the Referee will make the final decision after consulting with the other officials and, if available, the scorekeeper.

# Fouls and Penalties

- Touchdown / Point(s) after touchdown (S5)



S5

- Safety (S6)



S6

# Fouls and Penalties

- **Touchback (S7)**



S7

Touchback – Move side to side



# Rule 9

Conduct of Players and  
Others

# Unsportsmanlike Conduct

## ■ Noncontact Acts

- Refusal to comply with an official's request
- Participate wearing illegal equipment

## ■ Dead Ball Fouls

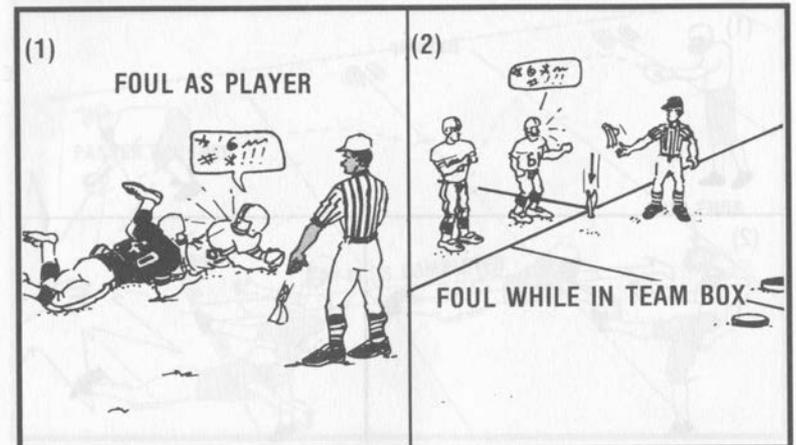
- Intentionally kicking the ball
- Spiking the ball into the ground
- Throwing the ball high into the air

## ■ Prohibited Acts

- Disrespectfully addressing an official
- Using profanity or taunting, insulting, vulgar language or gestures

# Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Unsportsmanlike Foul – Player
  - Disqualification
- 4<sup>th</sup> Unsportsmanlike Foul – Team
  - Forfeiture of game



**9-5; 9-8 Penalty** No. 61 receives one unsportsmanlike foul as a player in (1) and a second as a non-player in (2). No. 61 is disqualified upon receiving the second unsportsmanlike foul which carries a 15-yard penalty. Officials must keep accurate records of unsportsmanlike fouls.

# [ Unfair Acts ]

- Refusal to Play
  - Refusal to follow directive of officials
- Halving the Distance
  - Team commits multiple half-distance fouls
- Unfair Acts
  - Using verbiage not in accordance of spirit of fair play or to confuse opponents

# [ Personal Fouls ]

- It is a personal foul if a player:
  - Strips or attempts to strip ball from runner
  - Throws the runner to the ground
  - Tackles a runner
  - Hurdles any other player

# [ Personal Fouls ]

- It is a personal foul if a player:
  - Roughs the passer
  - Drives or run into an opponent
  - Contacts an opponent before/after ball is dead
  - Contacts an opponent in an unnecessary manner

# [ Personal Fouls ]

- It is a personal foul if a player:
  - Positions self on the shoulders or body of a teammate to gain an advantage
  - Fights an opponent
  - Uses interlocked interference
  - Uses hands or arms (as a defender) to move an opponent

# Screen Blocking

- Any player may obstruct an opponent by getting in opponent's path
- A screen blocker may not:
  - Initiate illegal contact against an opponent
  - Cause a player to fall to the ground
- If contact occurs:
  - Player who initiates contact creates the foul (illegal contact)
  - If both players move legally and contact occurs, it is incidental contact and a foul should not be called

# Screen Blocking Fundamentals

- When screen blocking, a player may not:
  - Take a position closer than a normal step behind a stationary opponent
  - Initiate contact when blocking in front of a stationary opponent
  - Take a position in the path of a moving opponent that does not allow the opponent time to avoid contact (~1-2 steps)
  - Move unless moving and maintaining a legal position that adheres to the conditions above

# Runner – Flag Belt Removal



- A opponent may only deflag an opponent in possession of the ball
- If a runner loses the belt (not pulled by opponent), the ball is live and the runner must be tagged between the shoulders and knees (one hand)
- If a nonplayer may not interfere with a runner

# Runner – Illegal Acts

- Flag Guarding
  - A runner shall not
    - Guard the flag belt by using hands, arms, or ball...
    - That causes contact between runner/opponent...
    - And denies an opponent a chance to remove the belt
- Stiff arm an opponent
- Helping the Runner
- Obstructing the Runner
- Charging



Not legal if runner causes contact and opponent cannot pull the flag belt

# [ Runner – Illegal Acts ]

- Stiff arm
  - A runner may not contact an opponent with extended arm/hand
- Charge
  - A runner may not charge into an opponent
- Help the runner
  - A runner may not be aided by a teammate (pushing, pulling, grasping, etc.)
- Obstruct the runner
  - An opponent may not hold, grasp, or obstruct runner's progress

# [ Batting & Kicking ]

- Only passes or fumbles in flight may be legally batted, except for:
  - A backward pass may not be batted forward by the passing team
  - The kicking team may bat a grounded or airborne punt beyond the A scrimmage line toward their own goal line
- Kicking the ball is only legal if a punt is declared

# Illegal Participation

- It is illegal participation for a team:
  - To have 8 or more players participating at the snap (men's/women's)
  - To deceive opponents by using substitution tactics at/before the snap

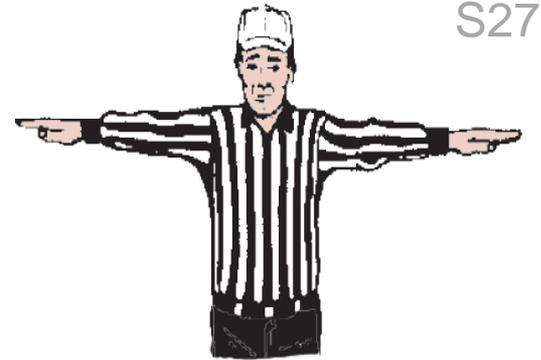
# Illegal Participation

- It is illegal participation for a person:
  - To not be replaced for at least one down following injury (unless halftime or overtime intermission occurs)
  - To lay on the ground to deceive opponents at/before the snap
  - To re-enter the game after being disqualified
  - To participate or influence the play if the individual is a replaced player or substitute
  - To enter during a down
  - To intentionally go out of bounds and return inbounds to intentionally touch the ball or influence the play by participation
  - To go out of bounds (A or K player) prior to a change of possession and return inbounds to participate during the play
    - It is not a foul if the player is blocked out of bounds by an opponent and immediately returns inbounds

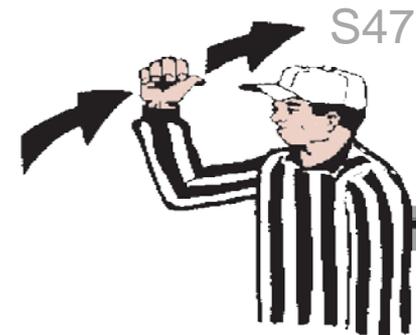
# Fouls and Penalties

- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

- 10 yards (S27)



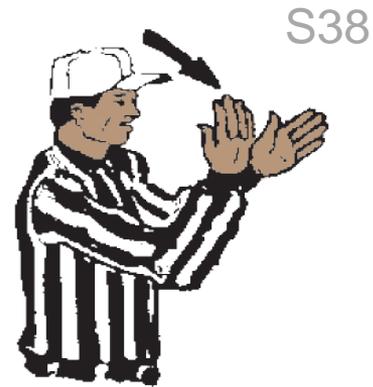
- **Player Disqualification (S47)**



# Fouls and Penalties

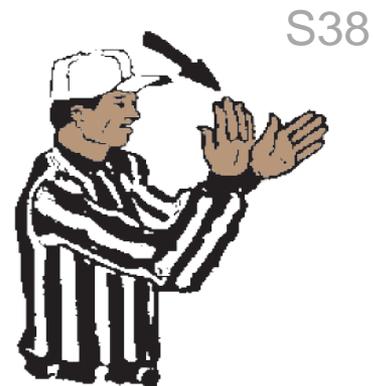
- **Unfair Act**

- 10 yards (S38)



- **Personal Foul**

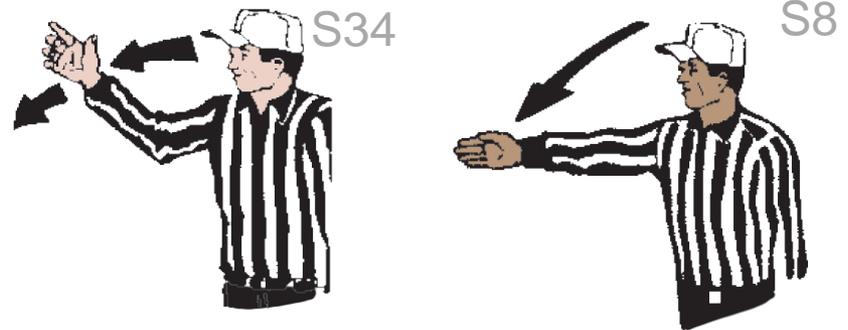
- 10 yards (S38)



# Fouls and Penalties

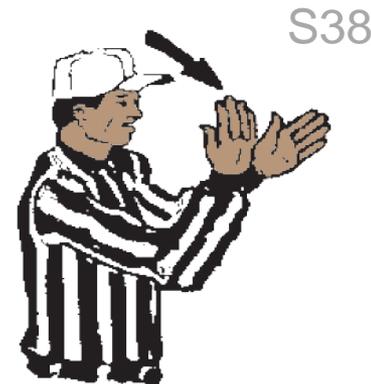
- **Roughing the Passer**

- 10 yards and automatic first down (S34 and S8)



- **Illegal Contact (e.g., screen block)**

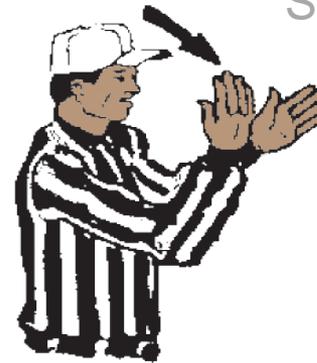
- 10 yards (S38)



# Fouls and Penalties

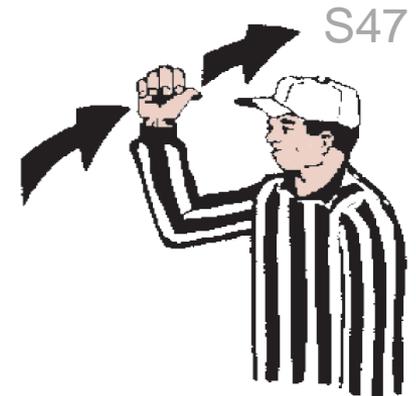
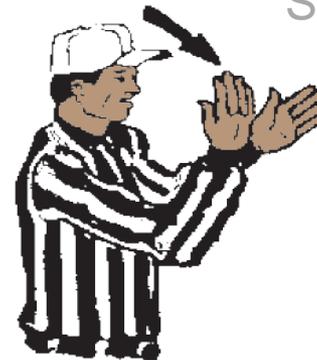
- **Illegal Flag Belt Removal**

- 10 yards (S38)



- **Nonplayer Interferes with Runner**

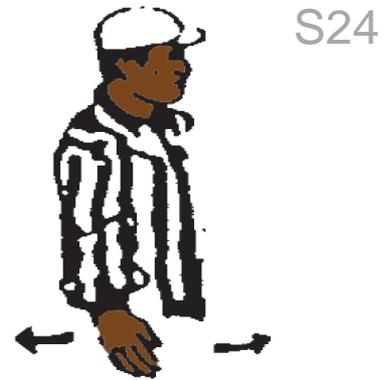
- 10 yards (S38 and S47)



# Fouls and Penalties

- **Flag Guarding**

- 10 yards (S24)



- **Stiff Arm**

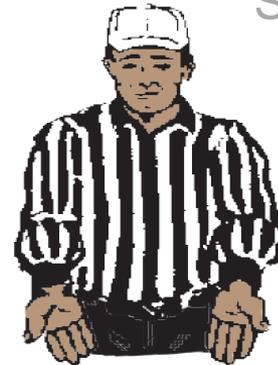
- 10 yards (S38)



# Fouls and Penalties

- **Help the Runner**

- 5 yards (S44)



S44

- **Obstruct the Runner**

- 10 yards (S42)



S42

# Fouls and Penalties

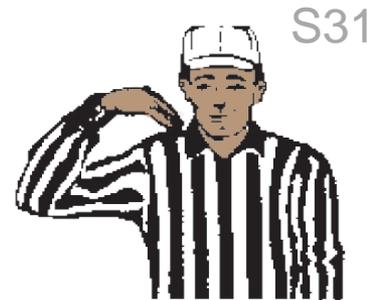
- **Charging**
  - 10 yards (S38)



# Fouls and Penalties

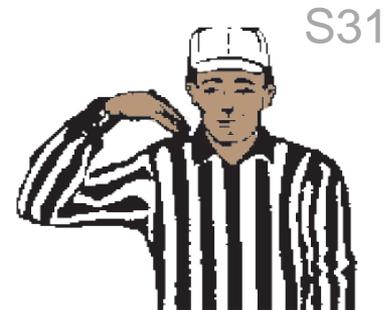
- **Illegal Batting**

- 10 yards (S31)



- **Illegal Kicking**

- 10 yards (S31)



Followed by pointing  
toward toe for kicking

# Fouls and Penalties

- **Illegal Participation**

- 10 yards (S28)



S28