



OFFICIAL CSSC FOOTBALL RULES

Revision Date 8/17/21

(new/updated rules highlighted)

(recent rules highlighted)

RULE 1: TEAM FORMATION

Section 1 Roster:

1. Number of Players. There is no maximum number of players allowed on a team roster. All players must be listed on the roster and sign the CSSC waiver to participate.

2. Adding Players. Players may be added at any time until the final tee shirt order date. After that time, until the third week of play, a team may add players by purchasing an individual late addition shirt (\$35 per shirt for teams of 10 or more players) or drop a player before it may add a player. The dropped player must provide his/her tee shirt to the added player. After the third week of play, team rosters are frozen. Teams must provide an updated roster to the league at the end of the third week. See the website for additional roster forms.

3. Players on the Field. A team can field no more than 8 players at a time. At least 3 of the players on the field must be women. A team must have at least 5 players, and at least 1 female, present at game time to avoid a forfeit.

4. Playing Short. A team may play with a full team of 8 if its

opponent is short players. At game time, a team must start if they meet the minimum player requirements.

Section 2. Player Restrictions

1. **Age.** Players must be 21 years old at the start of the season.

2. **League Membership.** There are two divisions:
Competitive league “A” and non-competitive league “B”.

- **Players may play for multiple teams in the same division during the regular season but must choose one team to play on during playoffs.**
- **“B” league teams can have no more than 3 “A” league players on the roster.**

3. **Subs.** A team cannot pickup subs if they have a full team of 5 males and 3 females. If a team is down players they may pick up a sub to in order to have a full team.

Section 3. Uniforms

1. **Tee shirts.** CSSC will provide each team with tee shirts for its roster. All players must wear the CSSC tee shirt for each game.

2. **Permitted Alterations.** Players may add their names, numbers, and other similar personal information to their tee shirts. Players may also add depictions of the American flag. Players’ additions may not cover the CSSC or sponsor logo.

3. **Excluded Alterations.** Players may not add any corporate information to their tee shirts, including website addresses and company names. Players may not include any offensive material on their tee shirts. Commissioner has the exclusive right to determine whether additions are offensive.

4. **Penalty.** Players who do not wear the official CSSC tee shirt will be sidelined for that game. Players who are caught exchanging shirts will also be sidelined, and if the players are not listed on the team roster, the team will forfeit the game and must pay a fine. Teams with player who violate alteration guidelines must purchase new CSSC shirts (\$35/shirt), and the team will forfeit all games until it has paid for the new shirts.

5. **Metal cleats prohibited.** Players may not wear metal cleats. Players who wear metal cleats will be ejected.

6. Shorts/Pants with pockets are prohibited. Players may not wear shorts, pants or any other leg attire with pockets. If a player has pockets they will either have to turn the garment inside out or change into non pocketed attire. The pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags being worn. Players may utilize their own flags as long as they are the triple threat style (i.e. must have three flags).

RULE 2: THE GAME AND FORFEITS

Section 1. The Game

1. Game Time. The game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players each, with 5 males and 3 females. Game time is defined as the scheduled start time.

2. Ball. Each team must provide its own ball.

3. Team Coaches. Each team shall designate a coach to the Head Referee. If more than one player is selected, then the team should designate a speaking coach to make all decisions. The coach's first choice of any penalty is irrevocable.

4. Referee's Authority. The Head Referee has authority to rule promptly in the spirit of good sportsmanship, regardless of whether the situation is covered in the rules.

5. Coin Toss. The away team is the team that calls the coin toss. The coach who wins the coin toss will have a choice of options for the first half: whether the team will start on offense or defense or which goal his/her team will defend. The other coach will exercise the remaining option. Teams will switch directions and possession in the second half.

6. Ball position. After a touchdown, teams have the option to go for 1 point from the 1 point line or 2 points from the 2 point line.

Section 2. The Clock

1. Length of the game. There are two 25 minute halves with a five minute halftime. If the game starts late, either the halves or halftime will be shortened.

2. Running clock. The clock will run during both halves but will stop for a serious injury or other special circumstances if deemed necessary by the referee. If an injury occurs, the player must

leave the field for one down. The Head Referee will maintain the clock. The Head Referee will notify teams when there are two minutes remaining in each half.

3. Time Expiration. If time expires while the ball is in play, the referee may not call time until the down is complete. If a touchdown occurs after time has expired, the team shall be allowed to attempt an extra point conversion. If an accepted foul by the defense occurs, the offense may choose to extend the period by one down.

4. Time Outs. Each team will have one 30 second timeout per half. This stops the clock. If leading by 30 or more points with 5 or less minutes remaining in the second half, the leading team may not call timeout.

Section 3. Forfeits

1. Avoiding Forfeit. If a team contacts the Commissioner by 5:00 p.m. Friday, a forfeit fine will not be assessed, since the Commissioner will have sufficient time to notify the opposing team of the forfeit.

2. Minimum Players. If a team does not have the minimum number of players (5) by game time, a \$50 forfeit fine will be assessed unless the other team's captain or representative allows otherwise.

Fine. The forfeit fine will be contributed to the forfeiting team's opponent's bar tab the following week. The fine recipient must use the tab the following week: the fine will not be carried over.

REFEREEING

1. Head Referee. The CSSC head referee is responsible for keeping the game clock, recording time outs, looking for out of bounds, calling dead balls, determining the spot of the ball, and calling and assessing penalties.

FORFEITS AND FINES

1. Time of Payment. All fines must be paid before the team's next scheduled game.

2. Failure to Pay. Teams that fail to pay an assessed fine

before the subsequent week's game will have two points subtracted from their win total. After the second week, the fine will double.

3. Ejection. After three weeks of nonpayment, the Commissioner may eject the team from the league.

SPORTSMANSHIP

1. Social Aspect of League. Teams should patronize the sponsor bar after its game. The league's focus is on being social, not winning or losing.

2. Unsportsmanlike Conduct. Any CSSC member that does not conduct himself or herself, whether on or off the field, in a manner that demonstrates courtesy and respect for his/her own teammates and other teams will be removed from the league. CSSC staff referees will keep a record of all players and/or teams who engage in unsportsmanlike conduct.

3. Types of Illegal Conduct. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Illegal tags and contact, such as grabbing tee shirts, unnecessarily rough tags, tackling, and pushing.
- b. Contact with the quarterback before or after he/she releases the ball.
- c. Abusive or insulting language to a player or referee.
- d. Spiking the ball.
- e. Taunting the opposing team or engaging in excessive celebration before or after a score.

4. Player Penalties. Players who engage in two offenses will be suspended from the league and be ineligible to participate in any CSSC sports for one year.

5. Team Penalties. Teams who engage in two offenses will be ineligible to participate in any CSSC sports for one year.

6. Fighting. Fighting will result in a player's or a team's permanent suspension from participation in the CSSC.

PLAY OF GAME; GENDER PLAY

Section 1. Start of Play

- 1. Referee Declaration.** No player shall put the ball in play until

the referee declares it is ready for play.

2. Time: The offense has 30 seconds to put the ball in play after it is declared ready.

Section 2. First Downs

1. Midfield. The field will be divided into two halves by cones placed at midfield

2. Earning a First Down. Teams must complete 2 passes beyond the line of scrimmage to earn a first down. Teams can earn 1 new set downs on each side of midfield. This does not include automatic first downs due to penalty.

3. Automatic First Down. Once the ball crosses midfield, the offense receives an automatic first down.

4. Losing Possession. A team that fails to convert a first down either by completions or by crossing midfield or scoring loses possession to the opposing team.

5. Punting. The offense may punt on fourth down.

6. Carryover. First downs cannot be carried over from one half to the other.

Section 3. Forced Gender Play

1. Three Down Rule. An offense must employ a female as the operative player within 3 consecutive downs. On a forced gender play, the offense must declare when using a female to throw the football and also allow the defense a couple seconds to align their defense accordingly.

An operative player is one who:

- (1) is the intended receiver in the eyes of the official,
- (2) is the primary runner (a gain is not required and the runner does not have to cross the line of scrimmage), or
- (3) is a quarterback who attempts a pass (a gain is not required).

a. Examples of Acceptable Gender Plays:

- i. A female player lines up as the quarterback and is sacked.
- ii. A female player lines up as the quarterback and attempts a forward pass.
- iii. A female player lines up as the quarterback and runs the ball over the line of scrimmage.
- iv. A female player receives a lateral or hand-off and runs the

ball.

v. A female player receives a lateral or hand-off and attempts a forward pass.

vi. A pass intended for a female player is deflected by a female player and is caught by a male player.

vii. Plays using a female player and resulting in loss of down will still be considered a female play, e.g., female quarterback crosses line of scrimmage then throws ball.

viii. A pass caught by a female player behind the line of scrimmage who does not successfully gain positive yards counts as a female play but not a completion.

ix. A male player who is sacked. The loss of yardage and down counts for the gender play.

b.Examples of Unacceptable Gender Plays:

i. A male player deflects a pass that a female player catches.

ii. A male quarterback intentionally throws the ball at a female player's feet.

iii. A female quarterback grounds the ball.

iv. A female player lines up as the quarterback and laterals or hands the ball off to a male player.

v. A female player hikes the ball into play.

2. Defense. On a forced gender play, the defense cannot use a zone defense and must play man-to-man. Defensive players may only leave their man-to-man assignments after the ball is in the air. Men may guard women, except for gender plays. (See exceptions below.)

On a gender play, the defense can designate one safety, male or female. This player cannot interfere with a pass that is less than 15 yards from the line of scrimmage. A pass that is longer than 15 yards, this safety can make a play on the ball.

3. Exceptions When Team is Down A Female Player

a. Defense. If the defense is down a female player, it may not cover the offense's female player with a male player on a gender play.

The defense would have to leave one female receiver unguarded until the safety was allowed to defend her.

b. Offense. If the offense is down a female player, the defense may double team using its third female player on a gender play. In a situation where a defense has more than 3 girls they may not use the additional girls to double cover receivers unless the offense has lined

up with more than 3 girls in which case they can cover 1 for 1. In other words no using more than 3 girls to double team.

4.Exclusions. The slate is clean for extra points and punts.

Section 4. Scoring

1. Touchdown. A touchdown is worth 6 points. A female to female touchdown is worth 7 points. To score, the ball must break the plane of the goal line.

2. Extra Points. Extra points are worth 2 points for a 10-yard conversion and 1 point for 5-yard conversion. To score, only the ball must cross the end zone. The ball carrier is still not permitted to jump or dive into the end zone. These actions will result in the extra point being called “no good.” An intercepted extra point can be returned by the defense for 2 points.

3. Safety. A safety is worth 2 points.

Section 5. Punts/Kickoffs.

1. Declaration. The offense must declare punts on fourth down. Faking punts is not allowed.

2. Kicking. All punts must be kicked. The kicking team must stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. Three players from the receiving team must be on the line of scrimmage.

3. Receiving Team. The receiving team may fair catch the ball or advance it from anywhere on the field if the ball is caught in the air. If the ball hits the ground or is muffed (an unsuccessful attempt to catch the ball where the ball is touched in the attempt) it becomes a dead ball. If the ball is downed in the end zone, it comes out to the 20 yard line.

4. Blocking. No blocking is allowed on punts.

5. Kickoffs. The team kicking off does so from the 35 yard point line, distinguished by the bigger cones on the sidelines. Kickoffs can be placekicked or punted. All other players on the team kicking off must stay even with or behind the kicker until the ball is kicked. If the ball lands in the field of play on the kickoff, it is down where it first touches. The receiving team maintains possession of the ball if it bounces off a receiver (i.e.

onside kicks are not a thing). If the ball carries out of bounds, the receiving team may choose to either have the team re-kick or take possession where the ref estimates it went out of play. If the receiving team request the kicking team to re-kick, the second kickoff must be kicked by the kicking team. If that kick is also out of play, the ball will be spotted at the kickoff cones on the receiving team's side of the line unless it travels out of play prior to the kickoff cone.

Section 6. Continuance of Play

1. Touch. To stop the play, the opponent must remove a flag. If a player has lost a flag during that play and then catches the ball, he/she is down as soon as the ball is caught. If the player's flag falls off on its own, the ball carrier is down at that stop. If the defender pulls the receiver's flags before the reception, the receiver can continue to advance the ball until they are two-hand touched by a defender.

2. Out of Bounds. If the ball carrier leaves the field, the play stops.

3. Scoring. Play stops when the ball carrier scores.

4. Dead ball. Play stops when the ball touches the ground because of a fumble, punt, or incomplete pass or when the ball carrier slips or falls while any part of his/her body (except feet or hands) is touching the ground.

5. Pushed Player. A player who has ball control and is pushed out of the end zone or sideline will be considered inbounds or considered to have scored.

6. Ineligible Receiver. An eligible receiver becomes ineligible if he steps out of bounds (before or during a pass), and he/she remains ineligible until an eligible receiver or any defensive player touches the pass.

Exception: If the eligible receiver is forced out of bounds he may legally touch the pass as soon as he legally returns inbounds.

Section 7. Turnovers

1. Possession. A possession change occurs only due to downs or an interception on a forward pass.

2. Fumble. There are no fumbles except in the case of a lateral being intercepted. (dead ball at spot of fumble)

3. Lateral. A lateral is a pitch of the ball to a teammate next to you or behind you. A lateral cannot be advanced if intercepted (dead ball at spot of occurrence given to the intercepting team).

4. Interception. A player who catches an opponent's pass or fumble before the football hits the ground is an interception. The player must have control of the ball inbounds when he/she catches the football in the air.

5. Blatant cheating. If a player purposely ties his flags in order to prevent a defender from making a flag pull it is an immediate turnover.

Section 8. Inadvertent Whistle

1. During Play. If an official inadvertently sounds his whistle during a play, the ball becomes dead immediately.

2. During a Run. If an official inadvertently sounds his whistle during a run, the offense maintains possession of the ball at the ball's location at the time of the whistle.

3. Ball in Flight. If the ball is in flight during a legal pass, snap, or punt, the down will be replayed.

Section 9. Scrimmage

1. Adjusting Ball. The center may adjust the ball, including picking it up to reposition it, before each play so as long as he/she does not do it in a manner to intentionally draw defense off sides.

2. Position of Offense. All offensive players must be within 15 yards of the ball at the snap. The offense must be set for one full second after the referee declares the ball in play and before the ball is snapped.

3. Motion. A player in motion may move initially towards the line of scrimmage, but he/she must be continuing in a parallel motion or backward motion to the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.

4. Line of Scrimmage. At least 5 offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage. All remaining players must be on the line

or behind their backfield line.

5. Quarterback Run from Scrimmage. This rule applies if the line of scrimmage is in the opposing team's half. The quarterback cannot run for positive yards unless rushed after the 5 second count.

Section 10. Passing

1. Completion. A forward pass is completed when caught by any offensive player with at least one foot in bounds.

2. Simultaneous Reception. If both an offensive and defensive player catch the pass simultaneously, the ball is dead and belongs to the offense at the spot of the catch.

3. Incomplete Pass. If a player was out of bounds but is inbounds at the time of the catch, the pass is incomplete.

4. Fourth Down. On fourth down, an incomplete pass goes back to previous spot.

Section 11. Safety

1. Definition. A safety occurs when a player is tagged in his/her own end zone, runs out of bounds in his/her own end zone, snaps the ball out of the end zone, or fumbles in his/her own end zone. A safety cannot occur on a punt or an interception.

2. Scoring. The defense receives 2 points and the offensive team will punt a free kick from the 20.

Section 12. Blocking

1. No Contact Allowed. All players must try to avoid contact. No blocking is allowed. Blocking is considered any movement, whether deliberate or unintentional, that impedes a defensive player's pursuit of the ball carrier, unless to avoid personal injury. This includes deliberate or unintentional movement by a stationary player. **The only type of blocking allowed is screen blocking. Arms must be kept down and or hands behind the back. Rushers must go around blockers and may not use their hands to push blockers out of the way. Blockers may not stick their legs out to trip-up rushers.**

2. Shielding. A player may use his/her body to shield another player, but only if his/her arms do not leave his/her sides.

3. Face Guarding. When a legal forward pass is in the air, a defensive player may not use his/her hands or arms to screen the offensive player from catching the ball while his/her back is to the ball. This includes waving hands in the face of the receiver.

PENALTIES

Section 1. Five Yard Penalties.

1. Not using a female player on a forced gender play. The penalty will be reassessed until a gender play is used. If the penalty occurs on fourth down, a turnover will occur. The penalty will be assessed from the line and results in a loss of down.

2. Double teaming a female on a forced gender play, unless the female player is the quarterback or if the offense is down one female player. The offense may either reset the gender count or repeat the gender play. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

3. Not rotating a defensive male player on a forced gender play when the defense is short a female player. The offense will have the option to reset the gender count or repeat the gender play. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

4. Playing zone defense on a forced gender play except when a female player is quarterback. The offense may either reset the gender count or repeat the gender play. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

5. Delay of game. The penalty will be assessed from the line and the ball is dead.

6. Illegal cadence: If the player calling the cadence does not receive the snap, the play will not stand and the down must be repeated. The penalty will be assessed from the line and the ball is dead.

7. Illegal participation: A team cannot have more than 8 players on the field or have more than 5 male players on the field. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

8. Offensive offsides: An offensive player is offsides when his/her body is beyond the scrimmage line before the snap. The penalty will be assessed from the line and the ball is dead.

9. Defensive offsides: A defensive player is offsides when any part of his/her body is beyond his line of scrimmage before the snap or before the five second count is over. The offense may accept or decline the penalty and accept the succeeding spot (the spot where the ball would next be put in play if no distance penalty were to be enforced). The penalty will be assessed from the line.

10. Defensive encroachment: Encroachment occurs when any part of a defensive player's body is in the neutral zone and contacts an offensive player before the snap. The official must blow his whistle immediately. The penalty will be assessed from the line and the ball is dead.

11. Illegal shift: After a shift or huddle all offensive players must remain stationary for at least one second before the snap. The penalty will be assessed from the line and the ball is dead.

12. Illegal motion: No player is permitted to be moving forward towards his opponent's goal line at the snap. The penalty will be assessed from the line and the ball is dead.

13. Illegal forward pass: There is only one forward pass per play. A player may not lateral back to another player behind the line of scrimmage and have that player throw a forward pass. A player cannot step over the line of scrimmage, go back behind it, and then throw a pass. If an offensive player catches an illegal pass, the ball is dead immediately, and the pass is incomplete. A penalty will be assessed from the line of scrimmage. The offense may make one forward pass from behind the line during each play from scrimmage provided the ball does not cross the line and return behind the line before the pass. When an offensive player catches the illegal pass, the ball is dead immediately, the pass will be ruled incomplete, and the penalty will be assessed from the line.

14. Quarterback illegal forward pass: If the quarterback crosses the line of scrimmage and throws a forward pass, the defense may decline the penalty or it will be assessed from the line. The penalty also will result in a loss of down.

15. Intentional grounding: A passer, facing an imminent loss of yardage because of defensive pressure, throws a forward

pass without a realistic chance of completion. The penalty will be assessed from the line and results in a loss of down. **If this occurs on a gender play the gender play must be repeated.**

16. Illegal Diving: No player may leave his/her feet to gain positive yards. If the dive is an attempt to score, the penalty will be assessed from the original line of scrimmage. The penalty will be assessed at the spot of the foul. This is not the same as juking.

17. Sleeper/Sideline Play: All players must be within 15 yards of the ball when the referee declares ready for play. A substitution must report to the huddle or in no huddle situations must report to the referee. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

Section 2. Ten and Fifteen Yard Penalties

1. Extended Arm: The ball carrier may not extend an arm or flag guard (ref's discretion) to prevent a defensive player from touching him and may not charge into a defensive player. The penalty will be assessed at the spot of the foul.

2. Reckless Play: Players must avoid contact at all cost, including leaping into the crowd at the sidelines to catch the ball or to tag a player. A reckless player will sit for one series. If the referee determines that the play is unsportsmanlike, the player will be ejected from the game. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

3. Blocking: No player may use his hands to block his/her opponent or run down the field to become a blocker. Only shielding another player using the player's body is permitted. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

4. Illegal Contact/Holding on the Defense: A defensive player may not make original contact with a receiver, use his/her hands or arms to hang onto or encircle a receiver, extend his/her arms to cut off or hook a receiver causing contact that impedes and restricts the receiver as the play develops, or maintain contact with the receiver. If the penalty was on a gender play, then the gender count is reset. The penalty will be assessed from the line and will result in a first down.

5. Defensive Face Guarding: When a legal forward pass is in the air, the defender may not use his/her hands or arms to screen the offensive player from catching the ball while his/her

back is to the ball. This includes waving hands in the face of the receiver who is attempting to receive the ball. If the penalty was on a gender play, then the gender count is reset. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

6. Offensive Picking: The offense may not initiate a pick/block while in motion. A pick is defined as any action, regardless of whether contact occurs, that delays or prevents an opponent from reaching a desired position. If a catch is made after a clear pick, it will be ruled no catch. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

7. Offensive Pass Interference: See Defensive Pass Interference. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

8. Defensive Pass Interference: Occurs when any player movement beyond the offensive line significantly hinders an eligible player's progress or opportunity to catch the ball during a forward pass. When players are competing for position to make a play on the ball, any contact shall be considered incidental unless prohibited. Prohibited conduct occurs when a player physically restricts or impedes the opponent in a manner that is visually evident and materially affects the opponent's opportunity to gain or retain position to catch the ball. If a player has gained position, he/she shall not be considered to have impeded or restricted his/her opponent in a prohibited manner if all of his/her actions are a bona fide effort to catch the ball. The penalty will be enforced as follows: if the play is 15 yards or less, the next play should be spotted at the spot of that infraction. If the play is more than 15 yards, the next play should be spotted 15 yards from last play's line of scrimmage. Defensive pass interference counts as a completion for the offense, but not necessarily a first down unless it allows the offense to cross the 50 yard line for the first time or is the offense's second completion for a first down.

9. Intentional foul/penalty. The penalty will be assessed from the line, the player will be ejected from the game, and the gender count will be reset.

10. Unsportsmanlike conduct as defined above. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

a. If the penalty is on the defense, the offense will have an automatic first down and its gender count will be reset.

b. If penalty is on the offense, the offense will be assessed a

fifteen yard penalty. After a touchdown, 10 yards will be added to the extra point conversion.

In addition, the unsportsmanlike player may be ejected from the game and suspended from the next game if the referee finds his/her actions flagrant. If a suspended player plays the following week, his/her team will forfeit that game. If the Commissioner determines that the unsportsmanlike conduct is severe, the player will be permanently ejected from all CSSC sports.

Any player who does not shake the its opponent's hand at the game's conclusion will be suspended for the next game; a team that fails to do so will forfeit its next game and the forfeit fine will apply.

Section 3. Ejections

- 1. Metal Cleats.**
- 2. Unsportsmanlike conduct.**
- 3. Arguing with the referees.**

TEAM STANDINGS

- Seeding is determined by points earned.**
- If multiple teams have the same point total, the tie will be broken by the head to head regular season game result if possible. If not, the team with the highest combined Strength of Schedule per game average score (total points of all opponents played divided by total number of games) + Quality of Win average score (total points of all opponents defeated divided by total number of wins) will be used to break the tie.**

PLAYOFFS

The Commissioner will determine the number of Teams making the playoffs in each division and the format of the tournament.

- If overtime is needed to break a tie game in the playoffs, the referee will flip a coin to determine which team gets to choose to play offense, defense, or choose which end zone they are playing towards, similar to the start of the game.**

- Each team will get four downs to score a touchdown, starting from the kickoff markers, heading towards the end zone. Each team may choose to go for one extra point or two extra points after each touchdown. This process will be repeated until the tie is broken

Please remember to support the sponsor bar.

Charleston Sports and Social Club