

# TRI COUNTY FOOTBALL CLUB

## GAME RULES (5on5)

### I. Start Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for Rock, Paper, Scissors (RoShamBo) to determine who starts with the ball. (Best 2 out of 3!)
2. The winner of (RoShamBo) has the choice of offense or defense. The other team has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense. Teams change sides after the first half as well.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) downs to score a touchdown.
  - a. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
  - b. Offensive Teams MUST declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt", when asked by the referee and prior to the 'Ready for Play'.
  - c. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
  - d. If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with *NO* option to change the declaration.
  - e. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line if they are inside the 5-yard line. If they are outside of the 5-yard line then the balls changes possession at the spot.

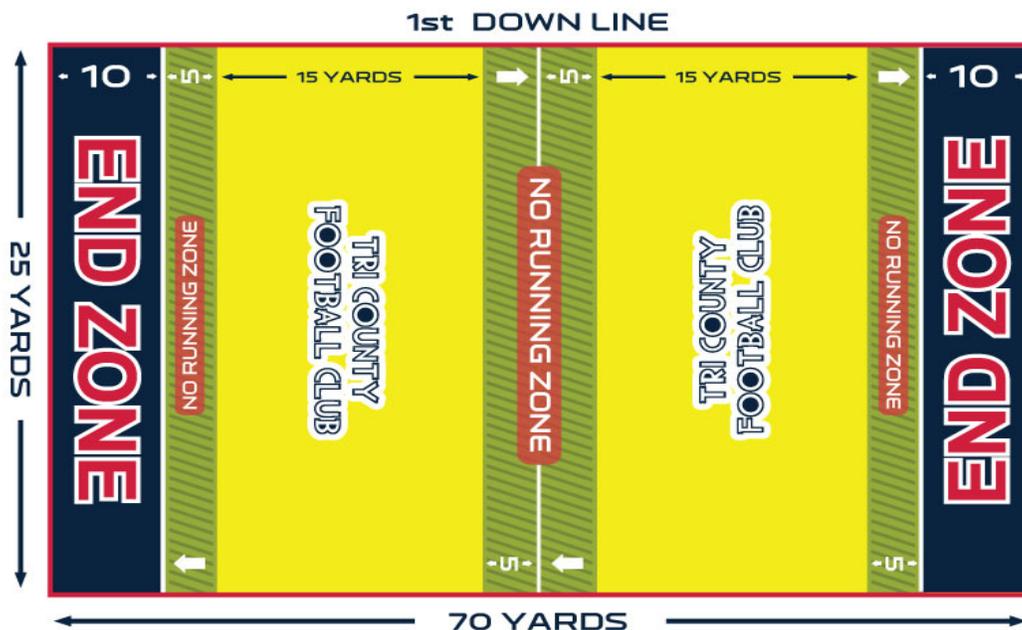
### II. Equipment

1. All players must wear Official Tri-County Jerseys, GrabIt Shorts and Flags. All players MUST wear mouth guards at all times while on the field. Game balls should be age specific.

2. Players must wear shoes or cleats. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
3. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
4. Players must remove all jewelry and hard billed hats. Winter beanies are allowed.
5. Players may wear soft shell helmets and sunglasses but they must be secured at ALL times while on the field.
6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts and flags cannot be same color as shorts.

### III. Field

1. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
2. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
3. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).



## IV. Timing & Field

1. Regular Season Games are 48-minute running clock with two 24-minute halves. 35-point advantage will end the game unless teams agree to continue without changing the score. The clock stops for halftime, injuries and the Officials' discretion. Halftime is 2-minutes.
2. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball.
3. Each team has one 60-second timeout per half. They do not carry over.
4. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. *Overtime Format*, when applicable, is as follows:
  - a. Rock, Paper, Scissors to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
  - b. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points.
  - c. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line.

## V. Scoring

1. *Touchdown*: 6 points / *Interception ran back for a TD*: 6 points
2. *PAT* (point after touchdown): 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line).
3. *Safety*: 2 points / *Interception ran back on a conversion*: 2 points

## VI. Coaches

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to the Tri-County Football Club philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
  - a. Coaches, it's your responsibility to keep your fans and any other team associated members in the designated areas which is 10 yards from the playing field.
2. One Offensive Coach is permitted on the field pre and post snap to help their players, but post snap at a safe distance behind the official until plays completion. If referee deems the coach is a distraction, interferes or is verbally abusive they will not be permitted to utilize this position on the field.

## VII. Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
  - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
4. Any official can whistle the play dead.

## VIII. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
  - a. *“Center sneak” play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.*
  - b. *Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.*
  - c. *Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the 7 second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.*
4. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB’s passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage.
5. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.

## IX. Passing

1. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.
  - b. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a 7 second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.

## X. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.

## XI. Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A defensive coach will designate a rush line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

## XII. Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
7. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

## XIII. Formations

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
  - a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.
  - b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

## XIV. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

2. Offensive or confrontational language is *NOT* allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

## XV. 24-Point Lead - No Rush Rule

If a team gains a 24-point lead or greater, the defense **may not rush the quarterback**.

- a. The defense must remain behind the line of scrimmage until the ball is thrown.
- b. Normal coverage rules (man or zone) still apply.
- c. This restriction remains in effect as long as the point differential is **24 or more**.

If at any point the score margin becomes **less than 24 points**, the defense regains the right to rush under normal rules.

### **Coach's Note**

This rule is designed to keep games competitive and fun for all players. By removing the rush in lopsided games, quarterbacks and receivers get more chances to execute plays, while teams that are behind can continue developing skills and building confidence. Our league values teaching fundamentals, keeping kids engaged, and creating an environment where every player wants to come back year after year.

## XVI. Fun Play

1. Hook & Ladder Exception - If a team has developed the skill to successfully execute a "hook & ladder" play — where a receiver catches the ball and, in one motion, immediately pitches it to a trailing teammate — this will be the only permitted pitch beyond the line of scrimmage. Any other form of pitching, lateraling, or handing off beyond the line of scrimmage is not allowed. Appeals or special circumstances may be considered by league officials.

## XVII. 1st & 2nd Modifications

1. 'No Run' zones are eliminated. Teams may run the ball anywhere on the field.

2. Defenders may *NOT* rush the passer unless there is a legal handoff executed in the backfield.
3. One Coach for each team is permitted on the field pre and post snap to help their players, but post snap at a safe distance to plays completion.
4. If the ball falls to, or touches the ground during the initial center to quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a 'Do Over' with no loss of down, once per down. On a second consecutive occurrence, the down is consumed.
5. Defenders *MUST* line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.

## XVIII. Penalties

### 1. General

Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic First Down
Holding	+5 yards & Automatic First Down
Stripping	+5 yards & Automatic First Down

### 2. Offensive Spot Fouls

Screening or Blocking	-5 yards & Loss of Down
Charging	-5 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	-5 yards & Loss of Down

### 3. Defensive Penalties

Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+10 yards & Automatic First Down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+10 yards & Automatic First Down
Offside / Illegal Substitution	+5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Rush <small>(Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)</small>	+5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Flag Pull <small>(Before the receiver has the ball)</small>	+5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Roughing the Passer	+5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down

Taunting	+5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
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#### 4. Offensive Penalties

Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Offside / False Start / Illegal Substitution	-5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Forward Pass	-5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Offensive Pass Interference	-5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Delay of Game	-5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Impeding the Rusher	-5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from Line of Scrimmage & Automatic First Down

## XVII. Terminology

Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
Line of Scrimmage	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-to-Gain	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
Rush Line	An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.

Defense	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties.
Dead Ball	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Whistle	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action.
Inadvertent Whistle	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field.
Flag Guarding	An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags.
Shovel Pass	A legal forward pass across the LOS underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward.
Lateral	A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.