

2018 Safety Rules

The following rule changes, have been identified as rules for the safety of the athlete and can not be changed modified or deleted without written authorization from Football Canada. Failure to comply to these rules will results in sanctions being leaved to those members

Rule 1 Section 1 Article 9

Article 9 – Goal Post Assembly

The goal post assembly shall consist of 2 vertical goal posts, 18 feet 6 inches (5.64 metres) apart, centred on the goal line, the mandatory padding specified in paragraph 2 and the crossbar joining them, whose upper edge is 10 feet (3.05 metres) above the ground. The goal posts shall be at least 20 feet (6.1 metres) above the ground level. For new installations, the goal posts should measure 30 ft (9.1 metres) above ground level. A wishbone type or single shaft goal post may be used if the height and length of the crossbar meet the above standards, and the base of the goal post can be up to 110 in. (279.4 cm) behind the goal line.

For safety reasons, all goal posts must be properly padded with goal post pads meeting manufacturer's specifications.

It is the responsibility of the home team to provide the padding. In the case of a neutral field, the participating teams shall decide which team shall be responsible for padding the goal posts.

Note: Goal posts on the goal line are considered to be part of the end zone.

Rule 1 Section 3 Article 1

Article 1 – Length of Game

The game shall consist of 60 minutes of actual playing time, divided into 4 periods of 15 minutes each. For players at the High School level or equivalent and below, the game shall consist of 48 minutes of actual playing time, divided into 4 periods of 12 minutes each.

Note the mercy rule does not apply for U Sport, CJFL and CEGEP levels.

Rule 1 Section 5 Article 5

Article 5 – Mercy Rule

Any time after the first half, if the difference in score between the two teams becomes 35 points or more, the clock will be running time for the remainder of the game, except for injuries, scores, timeouts or any reason the Referee deems necessary to stop the clock. When the clock has been stopped, it will re-start based on rule 1-5-1

Note the mercy rule does not apply for U Sport, CJFL and CEGEP levels.

Rule 1 Section 11 Article 1

Section 11: Uniform & Equipment (CB10)

Article 1 – General

- a) No player shall wear equipment of any kind which may injure the opponent. The Referee may have removed from the game any player who is wearing equipment which in his opinion endangers a participant.
- b) No team shall wear uniforms that blend closely with the color of the ball.
- c) The following equipment is mandatory and shall be worn by all players. The equipment shall be designed and manufactured by a professional manufacturer, and shall not be altered in any way which will decrease the protection of the player.
 - 1) soft knee pads at least 1/2 inch (1.27 cm) thick, worn covering the knees, and covered by the pants.
 - 2) thigh guards.
 - 3) hip pads, with tailbone protector.
 - 4) shoulder pads.
 - 5) mouth guard covering all the upper jaw teeth, as specified in Article 3 of this Section 11.



- 6) shoes which meet the specifications as in Article 4 of this Section 11, or which may provide less fixation to the ground, such as ripple soles, or broomball type shoes, where no «cleats» are provided. No player shall participate in the game without being properly equipped and wearing shoes as specified.
- 7) The prime responsibility to ensure the above rests on the Head Coach or his designate.
- 8) Items 1, 2, 3, 4 and including all Back Plates and Rib Protectors must be covered by the pants or jersey, exception being for players who are wearing a snap in soft foam hip and tail pad system.
- 9) Helmet and face guard as per rule 1-11-2

Penalty c) Loss of 5 yards from point where the ball would have been put into play, if no other foul had occurred, or added to the penalty for any other foul. The offending player shall be removed from the game until the illegal equipment is replaced. Immediate substitution will be made, but the game shall not be delayed. If more than 1 player offends on the same play, only 1 penalty L5 will be applied for that play. Fouls on subsequent plays will be penalized in the same way – L5 on each play where 1 or more players offend

d) Adhesive material, grease or any other slippery substance, applied on a player's person or clothing, that affects the ball or an opponent, is illegal.

e) Any gloves which have any type of webbing between the digits are illegal.

f) All players' numbers must conform to those listed on the score sheet. Players shall retain the same numbers throughout the game, except when permission to change is given by the Referee. Where a sweater is torn, the Referee shall allow reasonable time for a substitution, but any change in number must be reported to the scorer.

Penalty (a) (b) (f): the offending player shall be removed from the game until the illegal equipment is replaced or the score sheet is corrected.

Penalty (d) (e): Team A 1,2D-L 10 DR, 3rd0 DG- L 10, DNG-LB PBD; Team B L 10 PLS

The offending player shall be removed from the game until the illegal material, substance or gloves have been removed. Immediate substitution will be made but the game shall not be delayed. If more than one player offends on the same play, only 1 penalty L 10 will be applied for that play. Fouls on subsequent plays will be penalized in the same way-L 10 on each play where 1 or more players offend.

Rule 1 Section 11 Article 2

Article 2 – Helmets

- a) Only helmets and facemasks approved by the National Operating Committee on Safety in Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) be worn by players.
- b) All visors must be clear, not tinted - No medical exceptions are allowed.
- c) A player shall be required to wear his helmet while in bounds, and shall not voluntarily remove it while the play is in progress. The use of the helmet or other objects to deceive opponents as to the location of the ball is illegal.
- d) If a player's helmet involuntarily comes off during the play, except as a result of a foul, he shall be required to leave the game for 3 plays.



Rule 1 Section 11 Article 3**Article 3 – Mouth guard**

A player shall wear an intra-oral (within the mouth) mouth and tooth protector, which includes an occlusal (protecting and separating the biting surfaces) and an optional labial (protecting the lips) portion.

It is also recommended that the protector be either (a) constructed from a model made from an impression of the individual's teeth, or (b) constructed and fitted to the individual by impressing his teeth into the mouth and tooth protector itself.

It shall be illegal for a player to participate in the game unless the mouth guard is being worn in the proper position by the player.

Penalty: 1st Infraction – the Referee only shall clearly warn the offending player that the mouth guard must be in the proper position while participating.

2nd & subsequent infractions by any player previously warned as above by the Referee – L5 from the point where the ball would have been put in play if no foul had occurred. The player shall be removed until properly equipped. Immediate substitution shall be allowed.

Note 1: Subsequent infractions, if deemed deliberate, will be ruled and penalized as objectionable conduct.

Note 2: A penalty card, or similar card should be used to record the number of the player warned, in order to ensure accuracy.

Rule 1 Section 11 Article 4**Article 4 – Footwear**

For all playing surfaces, a cleated shoe with the following specifications will be accepted. Turf or running shoes are also acceptable.

- i. Minimum of 7 cleats per sole, with a minimum cleat tip diameter of 3/16 inch (4.8 mm).
- ii. Additional cleats may be of lesser tip diameter, provided the maximum length is 1/2 inch (12.7mm).
- iii. Maximum cleat length of 1/2 inch (12.7 mm).
- iv. A cleat made of metal or with a metal tip is illegal.

Note 1: Illegal cleats include those made of metal, or with a metal tip, or made of any material that burrs, chips, or fractures.

Penalty: L5 from point where the ball would have been put into play if no other foul had occurred or added to the penalty for any other foul. If more than 1 player offends on the same play, only 1 penalty L5 will be applied on that play. The offending player shall be removed from the game until the illegal equipment is replaced. Immediate substitution will be made, but the game shall not be delayed.

Rule 1 Section 11 Article 5**Article 5 – Coaches Certification**

The head coach, or his designated representative, shall certify to the umpire before the game that all players:

- a) have been informed of the mandatory equipment as specified in the rules, and what equipment is illegal
- b) have been provided with the mandatory equipment as specified in the rules
- c) have been instructed to wear the mandatory equipment, and how to wear it during the game
- d) have been instructed to notify the coaching staff when equipment becomes illegal for any reason during the game.

Rule 4 section 5 article 2(d)

- d) On any play, blocking at or below the knee is illegal except in the close line play area by a player who is occupying a position in this area at the snap of the ball.

Note: Only applies to U18 levels of football.



Rule 5 Section 4 Article 1

Article 1 – Offside beyond Line of Scrimmage (Restraining Zone Foul)

This article does not apply to a dribbled ball, or to a kick which does not cross the LS. When on a kick from scrimmage (ball crosses the line of scrimmage), return kick or on an open-field kick, a player is offside in relation to the kicker, such player:

- a) shall not touch or be touched by the ball.
Penalty: – in field of play – L15 from PBT (point ball touched)
– in goal area – L15, penalty applied at 10-yard line
- b) shall allow 5 yards to an opponent attempting to gain possession of the kicked ball. The five yard zone is determined by a circle with a five-yard radius, with the centre point being the ball at the instant it is first touched. If the ball strikes the ground before being touched by the receiving team:
Penalty: – in field of play – L5 PBT or PBD
– in goal area – L5 penalty applied at 10-yard line or PBD..
- c) If the kicking team player is making no effort to withdraw from the 5 yard zone, and is hovering over the ball or the receiving team player about to take possession of the ball:
Penalty: – L15 will apply at normal point of application regardless whether the ball bounced.
- d) If the kicking team player interferes with a receiving team player attempting to gain possession of the kicked ball, with or without contact:
Penalty: – L15 from the normal point of application

A player of the kicking team who invades the five-yard zone, and contacts a receiving team player, who is attempting to play the ball in an unnecessarily rough manner, will be subject to an additional 15 or 25 yard penalty, regardless of whether the ball had struck the ground.

Note: For players at levels of football lower than college or junior, league executives may wish to reduce the severity of the above penalty to 10 yards (10 metres). A penalty in the opponents' end zone may be awarded at the 10-yard (10 metre) line. Field officials should be notified in writing of any such variations in order to maintain consistency for the teams.

Rule 5 Section 4 Article 2(a)

- a) A scrimmage kick which travels only a short distance across the line of scrimmage, or a return kick (not including a dribbled ball) which is short, and thereby prevents players of the kicker's team from giving the required distance, shall be whistled dead as soon as the ball touches a player or the ground, with possession awarded to the receiving team. In obvious situations where the kick will clearly fall short into a group of players, the play may be whistled dead as soon as the ball begins to descend. No distance penalty will be assessed, but if the ball is whistled dead in this manner on the final play of a half, the receiving team shall be entitled to 1 play from scrimmage if they so elect.

Rule 7 Section 2 Article (all)

Section 2: Rough Play (CB30)

The following acts are defined and classified as Rough Play, and are illegal:

Article 1 – Kicker, Passer, Receiver

The deliberate charging of a kicker, passer, or receiver of a kick or pass in such a way as to cause calculated injury.

Article 2 – Striking, Kicking or Kneeing

The striking of an opponent with the fist, heel of the hand, knee or elbow, or kicking an opponent.

Article 3 – Head Leading Blocking, Head Leading Tackling or Spearing

Head leading blocking, head leading tackling or spearing, if done deliberately in such a way as to cause calculated injury may be penalized under this section

Article 4 – Face Mask / Helmet

Grasping the helmet as covered in Section 3, Article 5, may be penalized under this section, if in the opinion of the Official it was a deliberate attempt to injure an opponent.

Article 5 – Other Acts

Any other act of roughness or unfair play considered by the Referee to warrant disqualification may be penalized under this section.

Penalty: Articles 1 to 5. Disqualification of the offending player, and L25 from the appropriate point as covered in Rule 8, Section 5. If the official is unable to identify the offender, the distance penalty only shall be applied. Automatic 1D to Team A for Team B Rough Play. If both teams offend, the players involved shall be disqualified but no distance penalty shall be applied. Play shall be resumed at the appropriate point as outlined in Dual Penalties. Rule 8, Section 6.

Article 7– Disqualification

A player shall be disqualified from further participation in the game, with substitution permitted, if:

- a) He has been called for Rough play
- b) He has been called for physical abuse of an official

The disqualification penalty cannot be declined by the non-offending team

Note Article 6 Targeting is not included in the safety section at this time.

Rule 7 Section 3 Article (all)**Section 3: Unnecessary Roughness (CB30)**

Any act of unnecessary roughness or unfair play that is not considered serious enough to disqualify, shall be penalized under this section. The following acts are defined, and classified as Unnecessary Roughness, and are illegal.

Article 1 – Piling on, Tackling Out of Bounds

Piling on occurs when a player runs into, throws his body against, or falls upon a ball carrier, after the play has been terminated by the official's whistle, or even before the whistle, where the ball is clearly dead (Rule 1, Section 8, Article 1h). Tackling a player when he is clearly out of bounds, or throwing the ball carrier to the ground after the ball is dead, is illegal. These fouls are considered to be committed after the ball is dead (Rule 8, Section 5, Article 11).

Article 2 – Passer

Because the act of passing puts the passer in a particularly vulnerable position to injury, special rules against roughing the passer apply. A player shall be penalized for any act of Unnecessary Roughness to the passer, including but not limited to:

- a) A defender is prohibited from forcibly hitting in the knee area or below a passer who has one or both feet planted on the ground, even if the initial contact is above the knee. It is not a foul if the defender is blocked (or fouled) into the passer and has no opportunity to avoid him;

Note 1: A defender cannot initiate a roll or lunge and forcibly hit the passer in the knee area or below, even if he is being contacted by another player.

Note 2: It is not a foul if the defender swipes, wraps, or grabs a passer in the knee area or below in an attempt to tackle him

- b) A defender is prohibited from committing such intimidating and punishing acts as stuffing a passer to the ground or unnecessarily wrestling or driving him down after the passer has thrown the ball, even if the rusher makes his initial contact with the passer, a defensive player must not unnecessarily or violently throw him down and land on top of him with all or most of the defender's weight. Instead, the defensive player must strive to wrap up the passer with the defensive player's arms.
- c) A defender is prohibited from use the helmet and and/or facemask to hit the passer, or use hands, arms, or other parts of the body forcibly in the head or neck area.

Article 3 – Kicker

Unnecessary roughness against a punter, or field goal kicker is illegal.

Article 4 – Place Kick Holder

The holder of a place kick for a field goal or convert attempt shall be given the same protection as a kicker.



Article 5 – Face Mask / Helmet

It shall be illegal to grasp the helmet of an opponent by closing the fingers on the face mask, chin strap and other helmet opening (ear holes).

Article 6 – Head Tackling, Clotheslining

It shall be illegal to tackle around the head, in the open field, or straight arm tackle to the head, commonly referred to as «clotheslining».

Article 7 – Spearing

Spearing is driving of the helmet into a player who is down, or is held so that he is going down, or whose forward progress has been stopped, or who is in a position unable to protect himself. A player shall be called for Spearing even if he commits himself before the ball is dead, if he uses the head and helmet as the primary or main point of force.

Article 8 – Head Leading Block or Tackle

- a) Head Leading Block – no player, including the ball carrier, shall use his helmet to butt or ram an opponent.
- b) Head Leading Tackle – no player shall strike the runner with the crown or top of his helmet.

Article 9 – Use of Hands and Arms

The illegal use of hands and arms shall be ruled as unnecessary roughness if contact is made with the fist, heel of the hand, or elbow, if the blocking arm is cocked by swinging back of the body line prior to contact, or if the blocking arm is driven upward and forward in the manner commonly known as an «elbow smash,» or if the blocker turns his body at the waist or pivots in a manner to add force to the blow, or if contact is made with clasped hands, or if the opponent is struck above the shoulder with the hand or arm in an unnecessarily rough manner including the striking of the head, commonly called a «head slap.»

Article 10 – Crack-Back Blocking

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

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

OR

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

OR

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

AND

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

Article 11 – Delayed Knee Blocking

It shall be illegal for a player to block an opponent, at or below the knees, at the time that the opponent is already being engaged by a team mate of the blocker, with or without physical contact.

Penalty for Unnecessary Roughness:

Team A – L15 from the appropriate spot, as per Rule 8, Section 5.

Team B – L15 from the appropriate spot, and 1D to Team A.



Article 12 – Protection of Centre

On all kick plays from scrimmage (punts, field goal attempts, and converts) it is illegal to contact the centre on, or within one yard either side of the line of scrimmage.

Penalty: L15, PLS, PBD – AFD

Note: Hurdling the center in an attempt to avoid contact is not permissible and is to be penalized the same as if there was contact.

Exception the centre has no protection on a quick kick

Article 13 – Horse Collar

Grasping an opponent by the inside of the shoulder pads, by the inside collar of the jersey or the outside of the jersey above the numbers and using this as the primary means of causing a sudden change in the ball carrier's direction shall be ruled as Unnecessary Roughness.

Article 14 – Illegal Block, Hands to Face

No player of either team may thrust his hands forward above the frame to contact the opponent on the neck, face head or facemask. This does not apply to a ball carrier using a "stiff arm" tactic where there is no grasping of the face mask.

Article 15 – Blocking from the Rear

Blocking from the rear is blocking an opponent, other than the ball carrier, from the rear, by charging into the opponent's back with the body, or throwing the body across the back of his legs.

The application of penalty is determined by the point of initial contact, and the official who rules on the play must see the play in its entirety. It is illegal except as follows:

- 1) it occurs in the Close Line Play area (between offensive tackles within 2 yards (2 metres) on either side of the Line of Scrimmage) and it is made by a player who was positioned in this area when the ball was snapped. OR
- 2) the initial point of contact is on the side or front of the opponent. OR
- 3) the initial point of contact is from the rear, due to the action of the opponent, such as turning his back on the blocker after the blocker has committed himself to the block.

Note 1: The position of the head of the blocker in front of, or behind, the opponent does not determine whether the block is legal or not. The point of contact is the determining factor, modified by (1), (2) and (3) of this article.

Article 16 – Player in defenseless posture

It is a foul if a player initiates unnecessary contact against a player who is in a defenseless posture.

- a) Players in a defenseless posture are:
 - 1) A player in the act of or just after throwing a pass;
 - 2) A receiver attempting to catch a pass; or who has completed a catch and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a runner. If the receiver/runner is capable of avoiding or warding off the impending contact of an opponent, he is no longer a defenseless player;
 - 3) A runner already in the grasp of a tackler and whose forward progress has been stopped;
 - 4) A player attempting to field a kick in the air;
 - 5) A player on the ground;
 - 6) A kicker/punter during the kick or during the return
 - 7) A quarterback at any time after a change of possession
 - 8) A player who receives a "blindside" block when the blocker is moving toward or parallel to his own end line and approaches the opponent from behind or from the side, and
 - 9) A player who is protected from an illegal crack block
- b) Prohibited contact against a player who is in a defenseless posture is:
 - 1) Forcibly hitting the defenseless player's head or neck area with the helmet, facemask, forearm, or shoulder regardless of whether the defensive player also uses his arms to tackle the defenseless player by encircling or grasping him; or
 - 2) Lowering the head and making forcible contact with the top/crown or forehead/"hairline" parts of the helmet against any part of the defenseless player's body; or



- 3) Illegally launching into a defenseless opponent. It is an illegal launch if a player (1) leaves both feet prior to contact to spring forward and upward into his opponent, and (2) uses any part of his helmet (including the top/crown or forehead parts) to initiate forcible contact against any part of his opponent's body. Note: This does not apply to contact against a runner, unless the runner is still considered to be a defenseless players.

Note 1: The provision of (2) do not prohibit incidental contact by the mask or helmet in the course of a conventional tackle or block on an opponent.

Note 2: A player who initiates contact against a defenseless opponent is responsible for avoiding an illegal act. This includes illegal contact that may occur during the process of attempting to dislodge the ball from an opponent. A standard of strict liability applies for any contact against a defenseless opponent, even if the opponent is an airborne player who is returning to the ground or whose body position is otherwise in motion, and irrespective of any acts by the defenseless opponent, such as ducking his head or curling up his body in anticipation on contact.

Penalty: For unnecessary roughness: Loss of 15 yards and an automatic first down. The player may be disqualified if the action is judged by the official(s) to be flagrant

Article 17 – Blindside Block

For a "blindside" block to be legal, an opponent MUST lead with his hands, and initiate contact with his hands, which are to be extended in front of him.

Note Article 17 does not apply for U Sport, CJFL and CEGEP levels.