



## Social Sports of Bethesda

### CO-ED FOOTBALL RULES – FALL 2008

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#### **GENERAL**

##### **1 WEATHER**

Games are rain or shine. SSB will cancel games if fields are unplayable. Check Website the day of or call the Weather Hotline: **301-565-3837**.

##### **2 SEASON**

8-week regular season w/ single elimination play-offs for top teams. The top 30% - 40% of teams will make playoffs. The number of teams in each division that make the play-offs and the seeding will be determined by the SSB.

##### **3 TEAM SIZE**

Eight versus eight format (typically 5 men & 3 women players). To prevent a FORFEIT, teams must have at least 6 players present at game time with a minimum of 2 females. There is no maximum number of female players allowed, but the minimum number of female players that must be on the field is as follows:

- If there are 8 players, minimum 3 must be female.
- If there are 7 players, minimum 2 must be female.
- If there are 6 players, minimum 2 must be female.

If a team has less than eight players, the opposing team has the right to still play with eight. A team that is short on players can recruit players from other teams in the league ONLY if they are given permission by the opposing team captain before the recruited player begins playing. No one from outside the league is allowed to play.

##### **4 PLAYER RESTRICTIONS**

No jewelry allowed. No metal cleats allowed. To be considered eligible, players must:

- Be at least 21 years old by the start of the season.
- Have a current, signed waiver.
- Be on the team roster.
- Play for only one SSB team.
- Be wearing their current SSB tee shirt.
- Not have participated in professional football.
- Not have participated in division I college football, unless at least 5 years out of college.

Using ineligible players will result in forfeit of all affected games.

##### **5 TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES AND SPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Team captains (or appointed captains) are responsible for their team's actions. Only the team captain may interact with a referee regarding a call during the game. Teams please clean up after your games and keep the park clean.

This is a social league and unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated. Players are obligated to act appropriately at the fields during game days. The referees will call unsportsmanlike conduct for:

- Excessively rough playing.
- Tackling or pushing.
- Taunting the other team in any manner.
- Abusive or insulting language to anyone.
- Aggressively challenging the ref.
- Any other inappropriate behavior.

If a player is called for unsportsmanlike conduct, the whole team will be given one warning followed by individual player ejections from the game. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct (e.g., fighting) will result in the offending player(s) being disqualified for the remainder of the season. Refunds will not be given.

Referees will rate both teams each game with sportsmanship points on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the best. Sportsmanship points will be used to determine playoff tiebreakers. Teams with consistently low sportsmanship ratings will not be permitted to return for future seasons.

## **6 FORFEITS**

Any team that cannot meet the Number of Players requirements listed above at the scheduled game time will forfeit the game. Advance notice of forfeit must be given to SSB 24-hour before game day to avoid a forfeit fine. This allows SSB to notify the other team and the refs of the forfeit. If the SSB is not notified in advance, a \$50 forfeit fine will be assessed. Fines must be paid before the beginning of the following weeks game for the team to remain eligible to play. Unannounced forfeits will result in 0 sportsmanship points. Forfeits in advance will result in 3 sportsmanship points. The opponent will receive 5 sportsmanship points.

*Suggestion:* We suggest that team captains make a team announcement at the beginning of the season to make players accountable for showing up to games. State that any players who no-show without telling the captain two days in advance and your team has to forfeit, then the no-show players will be the ones responsible to pay the fine.

## **7 BALL TYPE**

Offensive teams use their own ball. Game balls must be regular, intermediate, junior or youth size footballs made of leather or synthetic leather. Referees/commissioners reserve the right to prohibit using any questionable ball types.

# **RULES OF THE GAME**

## **8 CAPTAINS MEETING AND COIN TOSS**

Team captains will meet with the refs on the field to get started. The Home team captain will call the coin toss. The winner of the toss chooses to receive the ball or to defend their selected side to start the game. The team that receives the ball first will start at their own 10 yard line. At the start of the 2nd half, the teams will switch sides and the team who was on defense to start the game will now start on offense. There are no kick-offs. The ball starts at the 10 yard line.

## **9 START OF GAME**

The clock starts at the official game time. At game time, teams must have the minimum required number of players present and ready to play unless both captains agree on a delayed start time/shortened game. Also see Forfeit rules/Fines section.

## **10 GAME CLOCK**

Games will last approximately 1 hour total including two 20-minute halves and a 5-minute halftime. When the clock is running, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball after the ball has been spotted. Both teams have two 30-sec time-outs per half (use or lose). The clock runs continuously except for:

- Team time-outs.
- Referee time-outs. If a player is injured resulting in a referee time-out, the player must sub out for at least one play.
- Two-minute warning period of the second half. Once the game clock reaches the two-minute warning in the second half only), the clock will also stop for:
  - Incomplete pass
  - Out of bounds
  - Change of possession
  - Penalties
  - Extra point (extra point are un-timed only during two-minute warning in second half or if clock runs out in the first half following a touchdown)
  - Touchdown

## 11 SCORING

Scoring is as follows:

1. Touchdowns = 6 points
2. Extra Point – 5 yard conversion = 1 point
3. Extra Point – 10 yard conversion = 2 points
4. Extra point attempts can be intercepted and run back to the opposite end zone for 2 points.
5. Safeties = 2 points
6. Touchback = 0 points

To score, the ball must cross the goal-line plane AND the ball carrier must have at least one foot in the end- zone. No field goals.

A SAFETY is a down ended with the ball in possession of the offensive team behind their own goal line or out of bounds behind the goal line which has been caused to go there by the offensive team. EXAMPLES: dropped ball, incomplete backward pass, or ball carrier gets tagged in the end zone. The opponent gets the ball on their 10-yard line.

A TOUCHBACK is a ball in possession of the defensive team behind their goal line or out of bounds which has been caused there by the offensive team. Examples: fumble and kick downed in end zone, intercepted pass downed in end zone. The opponent gets the ball on their 10-yard line.

## 12 GENDER RULES

### Offense on Forced Gender Plays

Women can be used at any point during any play, but must be used a minimum of once every three downs. Regardless of what down it is, if two consecutive plays during a possession exclude females, then the following play must involve a female. This is referred to as a forced gender play (or 'closed' play). The forced-gender count is reset after each change of possession.

The following plays count as Gender Plays:

- A female is the intended receiver. (A completed pass is not required.)
- A female catches a deflected pass (to a male or female).
- A female receives a lateral or hand-off and runs the ball in an attempt for positive yards. (Note: Defenders can rush in and tag the player immediately after the handoff occurs.)
- A female receives a lateral or hand-off and attempts a forward pass to anyone (pass must be over the line of scrimmage).
- A female lines up as the QB and attempts a forward pass to anyone (completed pass not required).
- A female lines up as the QB and runs the ball across the line of scrimmage.  
In any case with a female QB, she must be *attempting* positive yards.

Even if the female is unintentionally sacked, throws an incomplete pass, loses yards or does not catch the ball the down is still considered a gender play. On a forced gender play, a male quarterback can not run for positive yards even if he is rushed. If a male quarterback is sacked on a forced gender play, the down is lost and the forced gender play carries over to the next down.

Examples that do not count as Gender Plays (see penalty for Failure to use a female player during a forced gender play):

- A female laterals or hands the ball off to a male behind the line of scrimmage.
- A female snaps the ball into play.
- A female QB grounds the balls to stop the clock.
- A female QB allows an intentional sack.
- A male QB intentionally throws the ball at a female receiver's feet or grounds the ball.

### Defense on Forced Gender Plays:

The golden rule is that a female player (or the person defending her) **MUST** have first attempt at making a play on the ball. Man-to-man coverage is required on forced gender plays. All defenders must attempt to stay within 5 yards of the player they are covering. Males are not permitted to drop back and play safety. Females on the defense must cover females. If the offense has more than 3 female players, males may cover any extra females on the offense. Players not covering the intended female receiver must attempt to stay at least 5 yards away from the intended female receiver so that she is able to make a play on the ball. After receiving the ball, she can be tagged by any defensive player. Double coverage is not allowed on any player during a forced gender play. This includes no double teaming the QB.

### **13 PLAYING DEFENSE**

Teams may play man-to-man or zone defense, except during *forced* gender plays at which time man-to-man is required.

There is no immediate rush. The defense cannot rush the quarterback until:

- A five-one-thousand count followed by word "GO!" by the Line Judge.
- The quarterback does a hand-off, lateral, or pass.

The ref's are responsible for the rush count after the ball is snapped. They will count by shouting: "one thousand 1, one thousand 2, one thousand 3, one thousand 4, one thousand 5...GO!" The defense may not cross the line of scrimmage until the Line Judge says "GO!"

### **14 BLOCKING AND CONTACT**

For safety purposes, blocking is not allowed at the line of scrimmage, in the backfield, downfield, or elsewhere. Aggressive contact is not allowed. Bump and run is not allowed. It is recognized that some contact cannot be avoided, but all players must attempt to avoid contact with other players. Moving picks are regarded as illegal blocking. A player standing still for at least two seconds is not considered blocking/picking.

### **15 FIRST DOWNS**

The offense has four downs to gain another first down or a touchdown. First downs are gained by:

- Two completed passes beyond the line of scrimmage (passes/laterals behind the line of scrimmage don't count).
- Ball crosses the mid-field line.

Only one additional first down can be gained per each half of the field. Therefore, a maximum of three additional first downs is possible per offensive drive. Example:

The team starts their offensive drive with a first down at their own 10-yard line.

They get a first down on their side of the field after two complete passes.

Then they cross mid-field to get another first down.

Then they get another first down for two complete passes on the opponents' side of the field.

### **16 RECEIVERS**

All players are eligible receivers. If a player runs out of bounds (endzone or sideline) prior to a pass, he/she becomes ineligible unless a defensive player forced him/her out of bounds. If a receiver is in midair and catches the ball and is forced out of bounds by a defender prior to landing, the pass will be considered complete.

### **17 QUARTERBACK RUNS**

The quarterback can run the ball:

- At anytime if the offense is on their half of the field (i.e., more than half the field to go).
- If the defense rushes in following the 5 second count (i.e., can run if rushed).
- During a one or two-point conversion anytime.

### **18 DEAD BALLS**

Play will continue until:

- A defensive player tags the ball carrier with 2 hands.
- The ball carrier goes out of bounds.
- The ball carrier scores a touchdown or extra point.
- The ball carrier's knee or elbow touches the ground.
- The defense scores a safety, touchdown or intercepted extra point run back.
- The ball touches the ground (incomplete pass, fumble, or dropped punt).
- Referee sounds a whistle.

If the referee inadvertently blows a whistle after the receiver has caught the ball or is running, the ball is dead at that point. If an inadvertent whistle is blown before the quarterback has thrown or passed the ball, or the ball is in mid-air, then the play will be redone.

### **19 LINE OF SCRIMMAGE**

The line of scrimmage at the beginning of the game and after scores is at the 10-yard line. The line of scrimmage is then established at the location the ball carrier is tagged or runs out of bounds. The offense must have at least five players at the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. Only one man in motion is allowed for each play. He/she may move in any direction before the snap. At the time of the snap, he/she must not be moving in the forward direction. Offensive players must line up within 15 yards from the ball. No sideline sneak play (or similar). All offensive players must be set for at least one second before the ball is hiked, except for a man in motion.

## 20 CHANGE OF POSSESSION

Change of ball possession occurs for the following reasons:

- Scores.
- Interceptions.
- Offense fails to score or earn another first down.
- Offense punts the ball on fourth down.

After a fourth down incomplete pass, the opposing team gets the ball at the previous line of scrimmage. After a score, the opposing team gets the ball on their own 10-yard line. Fumbles cannot be turned over unless the fumble is caught in mid-air. If the fumbled ball touches the ground it is dead at that point and the line of scrimmage is moved there.

## 21 PUNTING

The offense team can punt on fourth down, but must declare it to the referee and the opposing team. Punting cannot be faked. The offensive team does not have to snap the ball to the punter. The punter must kick the ball to the opposing team (no throwing). The punter can stand anywhere behind the line of scrimmage, but can not cross it before kicking the ball. All offensive players must stay behind the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. The offense cannot recover their own punt. If the offense touches the ball before the receiving team, it is a dead ball and is spotted where it was touched. Once a punted ball touches the ground, it is a dead ball. The receiving team can advance a punted ball as long as it caught without touching the ground. If a punted ball is caught in the end zone, the ball carrier can either take a knee (fair catch) or advance the ball. If the runner takes a knee the ball is spotted at the 10-yard line. The punting team does not have to use a female if the punt falls on a forced gender play. The receiving team players can run up the field but cannot block. An offensive player standing still will not be called for illegal blocking.

## 22 PENALTIES

The head referee and line judge will assess penalties (see Referee section below). Only the head referee has the authority to overturn decisions. Penalties include:

5-yard penalty (down is replayed):

- Offensive false start (examples: lining up in front of the line of scrimmage or starting before the ball is hiked)
- Defensive off-sides (example: defensive rush prior to 5 second count). Offense may decline.
- Delay of game (more than 30 seconds in the huddle).
- Offense lined-up more than 15 yards from ball.
- Illegal number of players on the field.
- Illegal motion before snap (offense not set or illegal man in motion).
- Improper defending of female during forced gender play. See "Gender Rules" above.

5-yards penalty, plus loss of down:

- Illegal forward pass (pass occurs across the line of scrimmage).
- Intentional grounding.
- Failure to use a female player during a forced gender play. Forced gender rules carry over to the next down.

10-yard penalty (down is replayed):

- Blocking. Picking. Holding.
- Offensive player charging a defensive player.
- Defensive pass interference (or ball spotted at point of foul, whichever is greater. NO automatic 1st down).
- Unsportsmanlike conduct.

10-yard penalty, plus loss of down;

- Offensive pass interference.

## 23 FOLLOWING THE GAMES

All participants must shake hands with the other team. Players refusing to shake hands will be called for unsportsmanlike conduct, and will be ineligible to play in the following game. Team Captains (or appointed captains) are invited to bring their teams to the sponsor bars on game days.

## 24 TEAM STANDINGS

Each team is awarded two points for a win, one point for a tie and zero points for a loss. Overtime will not be played in the event of a tie during the regular season.

The teams with the top point totals during the eight week regular season will advance to the play-offs. In the event of a tie, strength of schedule will govern. If there is still a tie, sportsmanship points be the determining factor. The top 30% - 40% of teams will make playoffs. The number of teams in each division that make the play-offs and the seeding will be determined by the SSB.

## **25 PLAYOFFS**

Teams that make the play-offs will be seeded according to their regular season standings. The highest seed will face the lowest seed. Teams with tied records will be seeded by head-to-head outcome. If head-to-head is tied, sportsmanship points will be used to rank tied teams. If sportsmanship points are tied, a coin toss will be used.

Play-offs are single elimination. Winners during the playoffs will advance to the next round. Regular season rules will apply except for the following:

### **Playoff tie-breaker:**

In the event of a tie during a play-off game, each team gets one possession (four downs) to score an extra point (or two extra points). The higher seeded team chooses whether they want to play offense first or second. The offensive team will decide whether to attempt 1 or 2 extra points. For 1 extra point, the offensive has 4 downs to score from the 5-yard line. For 2 extra points, the offensive has 4 downs to score from the 10-yard line. The ball can be advanced toward the goal line each down. The quarterback cannot run unless rushed. Penalties will be applied per regular season rules. An intercepted lateral or pass may be returned to the opposite end zone by the defensive team for two points. Once the team either scores, turns the ball over, or fails to score after 4 downs, the other team will then have the same opportunity to score either 1 or 2 extra points. If the score is still tied after the first round, a second round is played. In the second round, teams will have only 3 downs to score. The team that was on offense at the end of the first round will remain on offense for the start of the second round. This format will continue until one of the teams is ahead after an entire round. During the third round, teams will have only 2 downs to score. During the fourth round teams have only one down to score. Starting at the third round, the gender count carries over from possession to possession.