



FCF CORE RULEBOOK

SEASON v1.0

REVISED 1.24.21

Fan Controlled Football Rules

Rev. 01.24.21

OPEN Fan Rule Votes

Rule #1- Periods, Timing, and Substitutions

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Summary of Penalties

Summary of Timing Rules

Fan Engagement Rules (DRAFT)

OPEN Fan Rule Votes (as of 1-24-21)

Initial Possession

Vote Language: How do we determine who makes the call on possession?

1. Classic Coin Flip - Fans will vote on which player from that week's roster will make the call on the field
2. Rock Paper Scissors - Fans will vote on which player from that week's roster will make the call on the field

Overtime Format

Vote Language: Which format option do you want to run with if you're headed to OT? ("format option" to link out to blog, further describing what the choices are)

1. 1v1: WRs vs. DBs
 1. Fans of each team will choose 3 WRs and 3 DBs to represent their team. This will be a red zone challenge. Each team's QB & WRs will get a chance at 1v1.
 2. If teams are tied up after each WR has had a try, repeat possession determination (see previous vote) in order to determine which team gets to choose WR vs. DB for tiebreaker
2. College Style: 7v7
 1. Each team gets at least 1 possession from the 10-yard line.
3. One Play FTW: 7v7 from the 5-yard line
 1. Choice of Offense or Defense is determined by the same method as "Initial Possession" (hopefully Rock, Paper, Scissors).
 2. The fans of the team that win Rock, Paper, Scissors vote on whether they want to have their Offense or Defense on the field.

What Is A Catch?

1. Player must have clear control of the ball as they touch down on the ground with at least 1 foot. **If it looks like a catch, it is a catch.**
2. Player must have clear control of the ball as they touch the ground with any body part. **If it looks like a catch, it is a catch.**
3. Player must have clear control of the ball as they touch down on the ground with at least 1 foot AND maintain that control of the ball long enough to perform a common action (advance it, ward off opponent, etc.) similar to the NFL.

Defensive Pass Interference Penalty

Vote Language: Which penalty should be enforced on the defense when one of their players commits Defensive Pass Interference?

1. 10 Yard Penalty + Automatic First Down
2. Ball placed at the spot of the foul + Automatic First Down

Rivalry Matchup (1)

Vote Language: After talking trash for the past several weeks, which rivalries do you want to see go head-to-head in Week 4?

1. Glacier Boyz v. Wild Aces, Beasts v. Zappers
2. Glacier Boyz v. Beasts, Wild Aces v. Zappers
3. Glacier Boyz v. Zappers, Beasts v. Wild Aces

Penalty Accumulation - Individual Player (1)

Vote Language: If an individual player accumulates two penalties in a half, what should happen?

1. Nothing
1. The player can't play for the rest of the half
2. The player can't play for the rest of the game

Penalty Accumulation - Individual Player (2)

Vote Language: If an individual player accumulates three penalties in a single game, what should happen?

3. Nothing
4. The player can't play for the rest of the game
5. The player can't play for the rest of the game AND his team must play a man down for the rest of the series that the penalty happened
6. The player can't play for the rest of the game AND he cannot play for the first half of the next game

Penalty Accumulation - Team

Vote Language: If a team accumulates four or more penalties in a half, what should happen?

1. Nothing
2. The team must play a man down for the rest of the series where the penalty occurred, and for every series in that half that another penalty occurs.

Comeback Rules

Vote Language: When should a team be allowed to try an "onside kick" to try and retain possession of the ball after they score?

1. Anytime
2. Only in the second half while trailing
3. Only in the last 10 minutes of the second half while trailing

FCF "Onside Kick"

Vote Language: There is no kicking in the FCF, making a traditional onside kick impossible. What should the FCF's version of an onside kick be? If a team scores a

touchdown and elects to try and retain possession of the ball:

1. They shall receive the ball on their own 10 yard line with a 4th and 10-yards to go. If they convert the 4th down they retain possession and continue on offense as normal. If they fail to convert, the other team takes over on downs at the spot of the ball.
2. They shall try a 2-pt conversion from the 10-yard line with full offensive and defensive units on the field for the attempt (7v7). If the attempt is successful, the team on offense receives the ball 1st and 10 at their own 10 and begins a new possession. If the attempt was not successful, the other team takes possession at midfield.

Rule #1 - Periods, Timing, Substitutions

SECTION 1 – REGULATION TIMING RULES

A) General (complete the game in under 1 hours time)

- 1) A game shall consist of two halves, each 20 minutes in length.
- 2) Halftime shall be six minutes in length.
- 3) Team timeouts shall be 30 seconds in length. Teams will receive 2 timeouts per game with the opportunity for fans to earn an additional timeout
- 4) The final minute of the first and second halves are played under special one minute timing rules.
- 5) Following a conversion attempt a 45 second play clock will begin for the ball to be spotted and put into play for the change of possession.

B) Start of the Game

- 1) The game shall start promptly at the scheduled time.
- 2) Possession to begin the game will be determined via a weekly Fan Engagement contest between the two fan bases. Possession will be announced prior to the game, and the game shall commence with the first offensive snap for the team possessing the ball to begin the game.

The fans of the winning team will have the following two options:

- a) Take Possession of the Ball on Offense in the first half
- b) Defer and take Possession of the Ball on Offense in the second half

The other team shall receive the ball in the half that the winning team did not select.

C) Playing and Rest Periods

- 1) The length of a game shall be 40 minutes of actual playing time, divided into two halves of 20 minutes each. The scoreboard clock is the official time kept for the game, and shall be operated by the timekeeper under the direction and control of the Referee. If the scoreboard clock is not functional, the Back Judge shall keep official time on a stopwatch or similar item.
- 2.) The start of the second half shall take place no later than six (6) minutes after the conclusion of the first half. A team shall be penalized (unsportsmanlike conduct) if the players are not lined up on the field ready to start the second half.

D) Clock Stoppage

Time shall start when the ball is snapped at the start of a half and shall continue until the ball is ruled dead and an official signals to the timekeeper. Time shall stop for any of the following reasons:

- 1.) Penalties
- 2.) Player injury
- 3.) Team timeout
- 4.) Following a touchdown
- 5.) The conversion attempt is untimed. A 10-second play clock will start after fans have voted for 1-point or 2-point conversion and the route that will be run. The ball must be snapped before the 10-second play clock expires or the attempt will be forfeited. Following the attempt the game clock will remain stopped as the offense's fan base makes their play selection for the start of the next drive. The ball will be spotted on the 10 yard line and the clock will start on the snap.
- 6.) On incomplete passes after the one-minute warning in each half.
- 7.) A runner is out of bounds after the one-minute warning has been given in any half.
- 8.) When the offense is awarded a first down after the one-minute warning. The official will start the game clock and 10-second play clock once the ball has been signaled ready for play. The clock does not stop for first downs at any other point during the half.
- 9.) On a team change of possession (not resulting from a score) the ball will be moved to the same spot on the opposite end of the field and the other team's offense will begin play. For example, if Team A does not convert 4th and 1 from their opponents 15-yard line, the ball will be moved to the opposite 15-yard line and Team B's offense will take over on downs. The clock will start on the snap.
- 10.) When the quarterback immediately spikes the ball to stop the clock after the one-minute warning has been given in any half.

Note that no "positive yardage" rule exists in the final minute of a half in Fan Controlled Football, this allows a team which has the ball and the lead to "take a knee" to run out the clock.

E) Expiration of Time and Penalty Occurs

If in any half, time expires during a play in which a foul occurs, the offended team may:

- 1) Decline the penalty and accept the play which has ended the half.
- 2) Accept the penalty, in which case the team entitled to possession shall be required to put the ball into play.

F) Starting the Clock

After the clock has been stopped:

- 1) The clock will start on the “ready for play” signal. With the exception of a game stoppage, the Referee will start the game clock following:
 - the enforcement of any penalty.
 - any penalty on either team that is intentional for the purpose of stopping the clock will be enforced with a charged time out or ten second runoff if no timeouts are available.
- 2) The time will start on the snap:
 - A team timeout or a media timeout.
 - After the one-minute warning has been given.
 - A play during which possession changed after the one-minute warning has been given.
 - An incomplete legal forward pass after the one-minute warning has been given.
 - An out-of-bounds play after the one-minute warning has been given.
 - After a first down after the one-minute warning has been given.

G) Delay of Game

The on-field action shall not be delayed except with permission of the Referee. There will be no formal delay of game penalty in Fan Controlled Football. As soon as a team’s Fan Base has made their selection of the offensive play call, a 10 second play clock will begin. If the ball is not snapped at the expiration of the 10 second play clock, the game clock will pause until the ball is snapped and put into play at which point the game clock will resume. There will be NO penalty flag thrown and no stoppage of play. The game clock will be stopped by the time keeper and will not stop or interfere with the on-field game play in any manner.

- 1) If the Referee finds it necessary to suspend play while a player in the game has repair

done to his equipment, that player shall be required to leave the game for a minimum of one play. If the player does not leave the field of play, the team is charged with a timeout.

- 2) If the Referee finds it necessary to suspend play while an injured player receives medical attention on the field, that player shall be required to leave the game for a minimum of one play. If the player does not leave the game, the team is charged with a timeout.

SECTION 2 – FIRST AND SECOND HALVES

The team that had the first possession in the first half will always begin on defense for the first possession of the second half. Both teams will be defending the same end zone the entire game, with possessions starting at the opposite 10-yard line at the beginning of each half.

SECTION 3 – TIMEOUTS

A) Team

During a game, a team shall be permitted to call two timeouts, subject to the following:

- 1) Team timeouts may be requested when the ball is dead by any player or coach and may be directed to any official on the field.
- 2) Team timeouts shall be 30 seconds in duration.
- 3) The game clock will start on the snap.

A team may have access to a third timeout if one has been awarded to them as a result of winning that week's Fan Engagement Competition. This third timeout will also be 30 seconds in duration and subject to the same rules as standard timeouts. Teams may not take consecutive timeouts.

SECTION 4 – SUBSTITUTION

- A) A substitute may enter the field of play at any time the ball is dead. A substitute may not enter the field at any time the ball is not dead, even if a team has less than seven players on the field at that time.
- B) If the substitute enters the game to the extent that he can communicate with a teammate on the field, he must remain in the game for at least one play. The officials are the sole interpreters of this rule.
- C) The Offensive Coordinator of the team possessing the ball shall be responsible for ensuring that the proper personnel to execute each play called by the Fans are substituted into the

game when necessary prior to the snap of each play.

- D) A player leaving the game shall proceed directly to the sideline on which his bench is located and exit the field of play to his bench as quickly as possible.
- E) A team is not permitted to use player substitution as a means of deceiving an opponent.
- F) Any offensive substitution can be matched by the defense, and the Umpire shall prevent the Offense from snapping the ball until the defensive substitute(s) are on the field and reasonably positioned to execute their assignment and adjust to offensive pre-snap motion
- G) If a team has more than seven players on the field at the snap of the ball, it is an Illegal Participate foul. **Penalty: Illegal Participation – 5 yards.**

SECTION 5 – OVERTIME

Overtime shall be defined as play after regulation time has expired. Overtime is played if the score is tied at the end of a regulation game.

FAN VOTE - Fans will determine the overtime format in a vote during the preseason. The three options fans will choose from will be:

- Traditional college format
- One play from the 5 yard line. If the team on offense scores, they win. If the defense holds, they win.
- 1v1 "Shootout" with each team having three WRs try to score from the 5 yard line

Rule #2 - Live Ball/Dead Ball

SECTION 1 – BALL IN PLAY

- A) The ball is considered in play from when the ball is snapped until it is dead by rule or an official stops the action by sounding a whistle.

SECTION 2 – DEAD BALL

The live ball becomes dead:

- A. When an official sounds the whistle. If an official sounds the whistle inadvertently or otherwise signals the ball dead during a down:
- When the ball is in player possession, then the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
 - When the ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass or illegal pass, then the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
 - During a legal forward pass the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.
- B. When a touchdown, conversion, or safety occurs.
- C. When the ball goes out-of-bounds.
- D. When a forward pass is declared incomplete.
- E. When the ball carrier is tackled and his forward progress has been halted. Tackling is defined as the act of grasping or encircling a ball carrier with hands and arms such that the ball carrier is either not standing or has had his forward progress stopped.
- F. When the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage is firmly in the grasp and control of a tackler to the extent that he cannot throw the ball.
- G. When the ball carrier is contacted by an opponent and loses his balance such that a portion of his body, other than his hands or feet, touches the ground, the ball shall be dead at the point where it was held when the ball carrier touched the ground. A player is

not down if he falls and is not contacted by the defense. He must be contacted by the defense to cause a dead ball.

- H. When the quarterback or any other player in possession of the ball intentionally kneels on the ground.
- I. When the quarterback, in possession of the ball, dives in a feet-first sliding motion, the ball shall be declared dead at the point where the quarterback begins his slide.
- J. When a player in possession of the ball is down and makes no attempt to regain his feet, particularly if the player is vulnerable to a hit by a defensive player, the official shall immediately declare the ball dead.

SECTION 3 – OUT OF BOUNDS

A) Fumble Out of Bounds

When the ball is fumbled out of bounds or touches a player in the field of play and then goes out of bounds between the goal lines, it shall belong to the team that last had possession of the ball in the field of play. If the ball is fumbled backwards, the ball is spotted at the point where the ball went out of bounds. If the ball is fumbled forward, the ball belongs to the fumbling team at the spot of the fumble.

B) Fumble Out of Bounds in Opponent's End Zone

- 1) When a player fumbles the ball from the field of play into his opponent's end zone and it goes out of bounds, the following will occur:
 - If it is 4th down it is a touchback and the ball is awarded to the opposing team at its own 10-yard line;
 - If it is any down but 4th down the fumbling team will maintain possession of the ball. If the ball was fumbled inside the 5-yard line, the ball will be spotted at the 5. If the ball was fumbled outside the 5-yard line, the ball will be spotted at the spot it was fumbled.
- 2) If the defense recovers a fumble or intercepts a pass in the end zone and does not advance the ball out of the end zone before the ball is declared dead, the defensive team is awarded a touchback and shall have possession at its own 10-yard line.

C) Lost Possession Into Own End Zone

When a player fumbles or directs the ball from the field of play into his own end zone and the

ball goes out of bounds without possession being gained by either team, a safety shall be awarded.

Rule #3 - Series Of Downs and Line To Gain

SECTION 1 – SERIES OF DOWNS

A) Downs

The offensive team shall have a series of four downs to reach the line to gain. A down shall be repeated following the application of a penalty, unless the penalty requires a loss of down or automatic first down. If in a series of four downs the offensive team has not gained the line to gain, the ball shall be awarded to the opponent at the point where the ball became dead on fourth down.

Possession begins with a 1st down and 10 yards to go from the 10 yard line. Once the offense gains at least ten yards, a first down and new set of downs is awarded to the offense. If a play advances the ball past the line to gain, the ball shall be placed on the closest yard line past the line to gain which was cleared by the ball when the runner was ruled down or where the runner went out of bounds. For example, if a play resulted in crossing the initial line to gain (the offense's own 20 yard line) with the ball between the offense's 22 and 23 yard lines when the runner was ruled down, the ball would be spotted at the 22 yard line. The offense would receive a new set of downs with the new line to gain as the opponent's 18 yard line.

There will be no measurements or stick crews on the field. A first down is gained when the football crosses or touches the line to gain.

On a change of possession occurring inside the ten yard line, the ball will be placed at the ten yard line. The offensive team will be able to gain its first first down by crossing their own 20 yard line.

Rule #4 - No Kicking

SECTION 1 – DEFINITIONS

A) There will be no place kicking or free kicks in Fan Controlled Football

- 1) All Drives to start a half or following a touchdown will begin on the possessing team's 10 yard line.
- 2) Following a successful touchdown, teams will attempt a conversion via a 1v1 play between a WR and a DB. The quarterback will receive the snap from center and will have X seconds to throw the ball. Only the Center, QB, WR, and DB will be on the field. The Center will not be permitted to block or affect the play in any way.
- 3) Following a safety the ball will belong to the scoring team on their own 10 yard line
- 4) If the line to gain is not achieved on fourth down, the ball will be turned over on downs to the defense at the dead ball spot.

SECTION 2 – FIELD POSITION FLIP

Each team shall have the option to utilize a Field Position Flip once per game. If the line to gain is not achieved on third down and a team has not yet utilized its Field Position Flip, the offensive team's Coach shall have the option to either attempt a fourth down or utilize the Flip. If the Flip is chosen, the ball shall be spotted at the opponent's ten yard line with possession going over to the opponent. If the Coach elects to attempt fourth down and the offense does not reach the line to gain, it will be a turnover on downs to the opposing team.

A team's Fan Base may win an additional Field Position Flip through that week's Fan Engagement Contest.

SECTION 3 – RETAINING POSSESSION AFTER A SCORE

There will be no "traditional" Onside Kick option in the FCF as there are no special teams or free kicking in the League. Inside the last ten minutes of the second half after a score, a team may choose to retain the ball and:

FAN VOTE:

1. After the Conversion Attempt, the team's fan base may elect to attempt a fourth down play from their own 10 yard line, with one play to cross their own 20 yard line. Attaining the line to gain would allow the offense to retain possession and continue that drive. If the offense fails to convert, it will be a turnover on downs at the yard line where the ball became dead.

OR

2. Prior to the Conversion Attempt, the team's fan base may elect to attempt a 2-point conversion with the full offense and defense on the field. A successful conversion would allow the offense to retain possession and begin a new drive from their 10-yard line. If the offense fails to convert, the ball will go to the opposing team.

Rule #5 - The Offense

SECTION 1 – LINES OF SCRIMMAGE AND SCRIMMAGE ZONE

The lines of scrimmage are imaginary lines that extend from sideline to sideline, parallel to the goal lines and passing through the foremost and rearmost points of the football. The area between the lines of scrimmage (the length of the football) is the neutral zone. The offensive line of scrimmage is on the offensive team's side of the football, while the defensive line of scrimmage is on the defensive team's side of the football. **There will be a one yard extended neutral zone** that will separate the tip of the football from any defender. There may not be any defender aligned at any time prior to the snap in this one yard extended neutral zone.

SECTION 2 – OFFENSIVE ALIGNMENTS AND MOTION

A) Offensive Box

- 1) The Offensive Box shall extend five yards behind the line of scrimmage and to the outside shoulders of either offensive guard or tight end aligned in a legal set.
- 2) Only the Quarterback may be allowed to be in a set alignment in the offensive box prior to the snap whether he is under center or in a Pistol alignment. A Superback must align five or more yards behind the line of scrimmage behind the Offensive Box prior to the snap.
- 3) An offensive skill player may enter the Offensive Box in motion as described in Section 2B below and may be in motion at the snap without incurring a penalty. However, a skill player may not motion into the offensive box and then take a stationary alignment within the offensive box prior to the snap of the football.

B) Offensive Motion

After the "ready for play" signal from the official and just prior to the snap, all offensive players are either on the line of scrimmage or in the backfield. Unlimited offensive formations and motions are allowed provided:

1. Two offensive players (guards) must line up within two yards directly to the left and right of the snapper and must be set at the snap (can not be in motion). These players are ineligible to receive a forward pass unless they are wearing eligible numbers as detailed in Section 7D below, but in any event they must be set at the snap of the football.
2. One offensive player may be in motion prior to the snap. This motion can not be in a

forward motion towards the line of scrimmage. The player's motion must be lateral.

3. Motion is not used in an attempt to draw the defense into the neutral zone or simulate the snap.
4. No Offensive Skill player aside from the QB is illegally aligned in the Offensive Box at the snap.

SECTION 3 – SCRIMMAGE PLAY

A) Ready for Scrimmage Play

The offensive team has **10 seconds** in which to put the ball in play by means of a scrimmage snap as soon as the team's Fan Base has completed their play selection for the upcoming play. This rule applies to all scrimmage plays, including the first play of a drive following a conversion attempt. If there is a commercial timeout following a conversion attempt, the teams will be notified so as to understand how quickly the next possession will begin.

NOTE: There is no delay of game penalty. If the offense has not snapped the ball when the play clock expires- the game clock is then stopped by the clock operator and then re-started once the ball has been snapped. This will not create any stoppage of play from the officials. Offensive units which consistently fail to snap the ball prior to the expiration of the play clock will be subject to disciplinary measures from the FCF League Office.

B) Snap

The offensive team may put the football into scrimmage play by means of a snap once the Referee has given the ready for scrimmage play signal. A snap is initiated by the snapper taking his position over the football, facing his opponent's goal line. He shall put the ball in play by snapping it back between his legs in one continuous motion to another offensive player who is behind the line of scrimmage in the backfield. The ball must leave the snapper's hands, and he shall not touch the ball again until it has been in the possession of another player. **Penalty: Illegal Snap – 5 yards, Dead Ball Foul.**

C) Illegal Movements

- 1) The snapper shall not fake a snap or, having assumed his stance over the ball, bob his head, move his shoulders, flex his knees, or make any other movement simulating a snap in an effort to draw the defense across its line of scrimmage. **Penalty: False Start – 5 yards, Dead Ball Foul.**

2) After the line of scrimmage is set, no player of the offense may be in the neutral zone prior to the snap. **Penalty: Offside – 5 yards, Dead Ball Foul.**

3) No offensive player on the line of scrimmage may make any movement that simulates the start of the play prior to the snap. All offensive players on the line of scrimmage must remain motionless for at least one second immediately prior to the snap. **Penalty: False Start – 5 yards, Dead Ball Foul.**

4) No offensive player in the backfield shall simulate the start of the play prior to the snap. This includes the quarterback, having assumed his position under the center (or in a shotgun-type formation), bobbing his head, moving his shoulder or flexing his knees, making any quick movement, or any movement or signal which is an attempt to simulate the start of the play. **Penalty: False Start – 5 yards, Dead Ball Foul.**

5) An offensive player at the snap may block only above the waist. **Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards.**

SECTION 4 – POSSESSION OF THE FOOTBALL

A) Possession shall be defined as having the ball firmly in hand or hands, in arm or arms, or under the body.

B) When players of opposing teams both have possession of the ball, it shall belong to the player who first gained possession and who has not lost possession.

C) If players of both teams legally gain possession of the ball simultaneously, it shall belong to the team that previously had possession. A ball not in the possession of a player is still in play. A ball will be considered a fumble if the last player in possession of the ball has lost control of it.

SECTION 5 – HANDOFF

A) A handoff is made on a scrimmage play when the ball is handed backwards by one offensive player to another. There is no restriction on the number of handoffs that can be made during any one scrimmage play.

B) The snapper is the only offensive player not eligible to receive a handoff. The offensive guards and all other players are eligible to receive handoffs on a given play.

SECTION 6 – BACKWARD PASS

A) Definition: A backward pass is one thrown, batted, or fumbled by a player parallel to or in the

direction of his own end line.

B) Determinants of a Backward Pass: The initial direction and the point at which the ball is caught, strikes another player, an official, the ground or goes out of bounds is the factor which determines whether a pass is forward or backward, regardless of the direction the ball goes afterwards.

C) Pass Striking the Ground: A backward pass striking the ground remains alive and may be recovered and advanced by either team.

D) Pass Out of Bounds: When a backward pass goes out of bounds in the field of play, the ball shall be put in play by snap at the nearest hash mark from the point where the ball went out of bounds.

SECTION 7 – FORWARD PASS

A) Definition

A forward pass is one thrown by any offensive player from a point behind the defensive line of scrimmage, towards the opponent's end line, to any eligible receiver or receivers. The location of the passer's forward foot touching the ground determines whether or not the player passing the ball is behind or beyond the defensive line of scrimmage.

B) Legal Forward Pass

The offense shall make only one forward pass during a scrimmage down, and it must be thrown from behind the defensive line of scrimmage. **Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards from previous spot, loss of down.**

C) Eligible Receivers

- 1) All offensive players who are non-lineman (center and both guards aligned to each side of the center) are eligible to receive a forward pass.
- 2) The offense may substitute one or two eligible tight ends in place of one or both offensive guards. These tight ends shall be identified by eligible numbers as detailed in 7E below and shall be called out by the Umpire upon entry to the field to alert the defense. Tight ends may release from the line of scrimmage after the snap and are eligible to receive a forward pass. However, they may not engage in pre-snap motion or align any wider than two full yards separation from the offensive center.

3) If a forward pass is touched by or touches a defensive player, all offensive players become eligible receivers.

E) Player Eligibility Numbering

1) Offensive players shall be eligible to receive a forward pass if they are wearing the following numbers:

Wide Receivers: 0-29; 80-89

Superbacks: 30-39

Tight Ends: 40-49

F) Restrictions for Ineligible Players

1) No ineligible player shall deliberately touch or catch a legal forward pass until it has touched an opponent. **Penalty: Illegal touching or catching a forward pass – 5 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.**

2) On any pass play in which the pass crosses the line of scrimmage, no ineligible player may be more than three yards downfield before the pass is released. Such restrictions end if the pass is touched by a defensive player. **Penalty: Ineligible Player Downfield – 5 yards from the previous spot.**

G) Intentional Grounding

There is no intentional grounding provided the ball reaches the line of scrimmage. If the ball does not cross the line of scrimmage and it is determined by the officials that it was a deliberate attempt to ground the ball a penalty will be enforced. **Penalty: Intentional Grounding – 5 yards from the previous spot and loss of down unless in his own end zone, in which case the play results in a safety.**

H) Pass Interference

1) Pass interference restrictions for the offense begin at the snap. Offensive pass interference occurs when contact by an offensive team player interferes with a defensive team player after the scrimmage snap. Offensive pass interference cannot occur if the pass does not cross the line of scrimmage. **Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference – 10 yards from the previous spot.**

Rule #6 - THE DEFENSE

SECTION 1 – DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENTS

A) Neutral Zone

- 1) The neutral zone will be defined as a one yard space between the front tip of the football and any portion of a defensive player's body. Provided that the defense is aligned behind this one-yard extended neutral zone prior to the snap, they may align and deploy themselves in any defensive formation.
- 2) The defense will always have the right to defend the goal line. In the event the ball is placed on the one yard line the defense may align on the goal line provided that their hand or lead foot does not cross the front of the goal line prior to the snap.
- 3) After the ball has been snapped, the neutral zone ceases to exist for that play.

B) Defensive Belt

- 1) The Defensive Belt shall extend five yards past the nose of the ball/line of scrimmage and from sideline to sideline.
- 2) Any defender who is aligned in the Defensive Belt at the snap of the football must be aligned over a corresponding offensive player with no more than an outside shade over that player.
- 3) Any defender who follows or reacts to motion by an offensive skill player will not be subject to a penalty inside the Defensive Belt so long as he makes a reasonable effort to:
 - a) Rotate out of the Defensive Belt if rotating to replace another player outside the Defensive Belt
 - b) Trail/match the offensive skill player if following him in motion
 - c) Align with/match the offensive skill player in motion if rotating down to match that player's motion
- 4) Any defender aligned behind the Defensive Belt may align freely and does not need to be head-up over any offensive player

C) Defensive Box

- 1) The Defensive Box shall extend five yards past the nose of the ball/line of scrimmage and to the outside shoulders of either offensive guard/tight end aligned in a legal set.
- 2) Only the three down defensive linemen may be aligned in the Defensive Box at the snap of the football.

- 3) If the offense motions a player from outside the Offensive Box into the Offensive Box prior to the snap, the Defense shall be allowed to move an extra player into the Defensive Box with no alignment restrictions in order to match the offensive motion.
 - a) If the offensive motion player moves entirely through the Offensive Box or reverses motion and exits the Offensive Box prior to the snap, as long as the matching defender is not stationary he will not be required to exit the Defensive Box prior to the snap.
- 4) The Defensive Box shall not extend into the End Zone.

Penalty: Illegal Box Alignment – 5 yards and an automatic first down. A defensive player committing an Illegal Alignment penalty may not participate in the remainder of that drive. A defensive player committing two Illegal Alignment penalties in a game may not participate for the remainder of the game, though in both instances the Defense will be allowed to substitute a player and still play with seven defenders.

D) Defensive Alignments and Pass Rush

- 1) The Defensive Nose Tackle must align head-up over the Offensive Center with no shade.
- 2) The Defensive Ends must align no wider than an “outside eye” alignment on the Offensive Guard or Tight End with at least half their body aligned over the offensive player.
- 3) All Defensive Linemen must engage in a straight rush when pursuing the quarterback - there will be no stunts, twists or games allowed between any two defensive linemen.
- 4) As noted in Section B above, any defensive player aligned inside the Defensive Belt must be head-up over an offensive player.

SECTION 2 – BLITZING AND B-BOX

A) The B-Box shall extend from five to ten yards behind the Defensive Box, bordered by the outside shoulders of legally aligned offensive guards or tight ends.

B) The Linebacker is the only defensive player allowed to blitz (aside from the legal pass rush allowed to the Defensive Linemen)

- 1) The Linebacker does not have to be aligned in the B-Box at the snap, but he must be aligned in the B-Box at the snap in order to become a legal blitzer.
- 2) A blitz must pass between two defensive linemen in order to be a legal blitz. The blitzing linebacker may not stunt or loop outside either of the Defensive Ends on his rush but must pass between a Defensive End and the Nose Tackle through one of the A Gaps.
- 3) In the event of a play action fake where there is a “clear mesh” between the Quarterback and a skill position player where the ball is placed into the ball carriers belly with the ability of the QB to had the ball off or pull the ball and execute a run pass option, if the

linebacker who has not started from the B-Box has crossed the line of scrimmage he may continue to pursue the quarterback without retreating.

C) No other defensive player shall be allowed to cross the line of scrimmage and rush the quarterback while the quarterback is in the box. Once the Quarterback exits the box, either by choice or in order to evade the rush, defenders in the secondary will be allowed to pursue the quarterback even if it means crossing the line of scrimmage.

SECTION 3 – ILLEGAL MOVEMENTS, ILLEGAL CONTACT AND CONTACT/DROP ZONE

A) No defensive player may be in the neutral zone at the time of the snap. **Penalty: Offside – 5 yards, Live Ball foul.**

B) After the one yard extended neutral zone is set, no defensive player may make contact with an offensive player prior to the snap, nor be in a pathway unabated to the quarterback. **Penalty: Encroachment – 5 yards, Dead Ball Foul.**

C) The one-yard extended Neutral Zone and two additional yards comprise the Contact/Drop Zone

- 1) Any defender executing a press/jam coverage on an offensive skill player must release the jam and stop contact with the offensive player once that player goes beyond the Contact/Drop Zone (3-yard contact rule)
- 2) Any Defensive Lineman who is not dropping into coverage in response to a tight end releasing into a pass route may not drop deeper than the Contact/Drop Zone until the ball is released by the quarterback (pass attempt or handoff).

SECTION 4 – PASS INTERFERENCE AND DEFENSIVE HOLDING

Pass interference restrictions for the defense begin when the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. Defensive pass interference is contact by a defensive player on an eligible offensive player after the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. Such interference must be ruled as intent by a defensive player to impede an eligible offensive player or prevent an eligible offensive player from receiving a catchable forward pass. When a pass crosses the defensive line of scrimmage, a defensive player shall not interfere with an eligible offensive player who is not threatening his defensive position. Also, a defensive player shall not interfere illegally with an eligible offensive player's attempt to catch the ball. **Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference – 10 yards and an automatic first down. If the penalty occurs in the end zone the offense will be awarded a first down at the two yard line.**

Exceptions to this rule include:

a) A defensive player may contact an offensive team player in an area up to three (3) yards beyond the line of scrimmage (the Contact/Drop Zone)

b) Prior to a pass being thrown beyond the defensive line of scrimmage, a defensive player occupying a position beyond the line may use his hands or arms to ward off an opponent who threatens his defensive position as a potential blocker.

c) Defensive pass interference cannot occur if the pass does not cross the line of scrimmage.

d) After a pass has been caught by the defense, any defensive player may contact an opponent, provided that contact is made legally above the waist of the opponent and from the front or side.

Pass interference shall not be penalized if in the judgment of the official:

a) During the pass, offensive or defensive players make contact in a simultaneous effort to catch the ball.

b) During the pass, the ball has previously been touched by an eligible player.

c) The pass is clearly uncatchable.

d) The pass does not cross the line of scrimmage.

DEFENSIVE ILLEGAL CONTACT

A defensive player may not **contact** an eligible receiver who is more than three (3) yards beyond the defensive line of scrimmage (the Contact/Drop Zone) and is no longer a potential blocker. Such action is subject to penalty. **Penalty: Defensive Illegal Contact – 5 yards.**

L) Interception in the End Zone

1) An intercepted ball that is downed in the defensive team's end zone is dead. It is a touchback, and the ball is awarded to the defensive team at its 10-yard line.

2) An intercepted ball that is fumbled in the defensive end zone may be legally recovered by the offense for a touchdown.

Rule #7- Scoring

SECTION 1 – TOUCHDOWN (TD) – 6 POINTS

A) A touchdown is scored when a player, with the ball in his possession:

- 1) Is in his opponent's end zone, or
- 2) Crosses or touches the plane of his opponent's goal line. It is a touchdown when the ball crosses or touches the plane of his opponent's goal line.

B) The ball becomes dead at the instant a touchdown is scored.

SECTION 2 – FIELD GOAL

A) There are no field goal attempts permitted in the Fan Controlled Football

SECTION 3 – SAFETY (S) – 2 POINTS

A safety is scored, and 2 points are awarded to the opponent, when:

A) A player causes the ball to be anywhere behind his team's goal line by his carry, fumble, bat, backward pass, or snap and subsequently the ball is declared dead there in his team's possession. **Following a safety the ball will change possession with the scoring team taking possession at their own 10 yard line. The team taking possession will have a 10 second play clock once their Fan Base has made the offensive play selection for the first play of the drive.**

B) An offensive penalty occurs inside a team's own end zone during a scrimmage play. Such penalties include holding and intentional grounding.

SECTION 4 – CONVERSION AFTER TOUCHDOWN

- A) After scoring a touchdown, the offense will have an opportunity to score again via a conversion. There are no extra point kick attempts in Fan Controlled Football.
- a) A successful conversion can be worth 1 or 2 additional points
 - b) The means of determining the value of a successful conversion attempt will be

subject to fan vote during the FCF's Test Week.

B) Timing Note - The game-clock will not run during a conversion attempt. The play clock will be set to three seconds and will begin on the snap of the ball. The game clock is stopped following a touchdown and will be restarted following the conversion attempt once the ball has been marked ready for play at the 10 yard line following the change of possession.

D) The Conversion attempt will take place as a "one on one" situation with one fan selected offensive player competing directly with one fan selected defensive player.

- 1) The ball will be put into play with a snap from the center to the quarterback from the designated yard line.
- 2) The offensive player may align anywhere on the field provided he has not crossed the line of scrimmage and may NOT be in motion prior to the snap. The defensive player can align anywhere on the field provided he has not crossed the defensive neutral zone.
- 3) There are no runs permitted on conversion attempts. All pass attempts must cross the line of scrimmage.
- 4) Any defensive penalty that occurs in the end zone will result in the conversion points being awarded to the offense. Any defensive penalty that occurs outside the end zone will result in the ball being advanced half the distance to the goal line and the conversion being attempted again.
- 5) Any offensive penalty during the conversion attempt will result in the conversion being ruled no good.
- 6) The center is permitted to snap the ball only on a conversion, he is not permitted to go downfield to block at any time during a conversion attempt.
- 7) There will be a (X) second play clock that will start at the snap of the football. If the ball has not left the quarterback's hands in X seconds the play will be stopped and ruled an unsuccessful conversion.
- 8) The Quarterback may not at any time cross the line of scrimmage on a conversion attempt. The quarterback is not an eligible runner or pass receiver on a conversion attempt.

C) If the defensive player gains possession of the ball either by fumble recovery or pass interception the play will be immediately declared dead and one (1) point awarded to the defensive player's team. There is no opportunity for the defense to advance a turnover on a conversion attempt.

Rule #8 - Penalties

SECTION 1 – ILLEGAL TACTICS

A) Holding

Holding occurs when a player uses the hands and/or arms to grasp, encircle, or hinder an opponent that is not the ball carrier. Holding hands or interlocking arms during any play is prohibited. **Penalty: Holding – 5 yards, automatic first down if by the defense.**

B) Clipping

Clipping occurs when a player blocks an opponent, other than the ball carrier, from the rear in such a manner that the player makes contact across the back of the opponent's legs. The application of a penalty is determined by the initial contact, which must be observed by the official. **Penalty: Clipping – 10 yards.**

C) Block in the Back

A block in the back occurs when a player is blocking an opponent that is not the ball carrier, from the rear in such a manner that the player contacts the opponent's back, above the waist. The application of a penalty is determined by the initial contact, which must be observed by the official. **Penalty: Block in the Back – 5 yards.** Exceptions to this rule include:

- 1) The block occurs in the area between the offensive guards, within two yards of either side of the line of scrimmage, and is executed by an offensive player who, at the scrimmage snap, was positioned within this area.
- 2) The initial contact is made on the side of the opponent.
- 3) The opponent could see the blocker approaching and deliberately turned his body in order to be contacted from behind.

D) Chop Blocking

A chop block is a block at the knees or below against an opponent who is already physically engaged above the waist with a teammate of the blocker. **Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards.**

E) Blocking Below the Waist

Blocking below the waist is making initial contact below the waist with an opponent, other than the runner, who has one or both feet on the ground. Players are prohibited at all times from blocking below the waist. **Penalty: Illegal Block – 10 yards.**

F) Facemask

Twisting, turning or pulling an opponent's face mask or helmet opening shall be a penalty. **Penalty: Facemask – 5 yards.**

G) Unnecessary Roughness, Unsportsmanlike Conduct

A player shall be penalized for any personal foul or act of unnecessary roughness against an opponent unless, in the opinion of the officials, the contact is caused by the movement of the opponent. Personal fouls/acts of unnecessary roughness may be either live or dead ball fouls and include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Piling on a player who falls or jumps on the ball carrier after the play has terminated.
- 2) Contacting an opponent out of bounds in any manner.
- 3) Contacting the passer unnecessarily.
- 4) Using the helmet to butt, ram, or spear an opponent. This includes, but is not limited to, action on a passer, a receiver in the act of catching a pass, and a ball carrier already down not attempting to advance.
- 5) Contacting an opponent above the shoulders.
- 6) Grabbing the inside back collar of the shoulder pads or jersey, or the inside collar of the side of the shoulder pads or jersey, and immediately pulling the runner down (horse collar tackle). This does not apply to a runner who is in the backfield or to a quarterback who is in the box.
- 7) Fighting
- 8) Conduct determined by the officials to be unsportsmanlike

Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct/Personal Foul – 10 yards. If by a defensive player, automatic first down. If the infraction is flagrant in the judgment of the official, the player may be ejected from the contest.

SECTION 2 – NON-PLAYER INTERFERENCE

When a ball in the field of play is touched by a non-player, the ball immediately becomes dead and is next put in play according to the following:

- 1) If a non-player interferes with a forward pass and in the judgment of the official the pass was catchable, the down will be replayed.
- 2) If a non-player interferes with a forward pass and in the judgment of the official the pass was either not catchable or could have been intercepted by the defense, it shall be ruled as an incomplete pass.
- 3) If there is interference by anyone from either team not competing at the time (in any of these scenarios), the down will be replayed.

Summary of Penalties

5 Yard Penalties

- block in the back
- illegal contact
- false start
- holding: + Auto 1st down if by defense
- Offsides Offense
- ineligible downfield
- illegal snap/ False Start Offense
- encroachment by defense
- illegal substitution or participation
- intentional grounding + loss of down
- illegal touching of pass +loss of down
- illegal forward pass + loss of down
- facemask

10-Yard Penalties

- illegal block (crack back, chop block, Clipping)
- offensive pass interference + loss of down
- defensive pass interference + 1st down
- personal foul + 1st down if on the defense
- roughing passer +1st down
- unsportsmanlike conduct +1st Down if on defense
- offensive pass interference: 10 yards, prev. spot

Automatic First Down

- personal/unsportsmanlike foul by defense
- roughing the passer
- defensive pass interference
- defensive holding: 5 yards
- illegal box alignment: 5 yards

Loss of Down

- illegal touching of pass: 5 yards, prev. spot
- illegal forward pass: 5 yards, prev. spot
- intentional grounding: 5 yards prev. spot+ loss of down

Summary of Timing Rules

General

1. A game consists of two halves 20 minutes in length.
2. Halftime is six Minutes in duration.

Timeouts

1. Team timeouts are 30 seconds in length
2. Teams will receive one designated timeout per half, with the chance to earn a third timeout

Starting a Drive/Change of Possession

1. The game clock will start once the ball is snapped following a change of possession.
2. The game clock will stop following a touchdown or safety. The game clock will not run during a conversion attempt at any time.

Plays From Scrimmage

1. The game clock continues to run following any play from scrimmage unless an official stops the clock for a penalty, timeout or injury. A first down, incomplete pass or play that ends out of bounds does not stop the clock.

One Minute Timing

1. The game clock stops following the first play that ends with one minute or less remaining in either half (one-minute warning).
2. After the one-minute warning, the game clock stops for incomplete passes, out of bounds plays, first downs, changes of possession, scoring plays.
3. After the game clock has been stopped, it starts on the snap. On first downs the clock will also be started on the snap (it *will not* be started once the official marks the ball ready for play). This is to allow additional time for the fan's to select the play.
4. The game clock does not run during a conversion attempt.

Summary

1. Game clock starts when the ball is snapped to start the game and should run constantly throughout the game with the following exceptions:
2. Game clock stops only for penalty, timeout, or injury, successful touchdown, or safety.
3. After the 1-minute warning, the game clock stops for incomplete passes, out of bounds plays, first downs, changes of possession, scoring plays.

Play Clock

1. The play clock shall be 10 seconds in duration. The play clock starts once the Fan Base's play selection is relayed to the offensive players on the field.
2. There is no delay of game penalty in the Fan Controlled Football. If the play clock should expire and the offense has not yet snapped the football, the game clock operator will stop the game clock until the ball is snapped. There is no penalty assessed for this and requires not stoppage or play from the officials.

Fan Play Calling

SECTION 1 – PLAY CALL DETERMINATION

The choice of offensive play calls for every down from scrimmage in Fan Controlled Football shall be determined by each team's Fan Base.

SECTION 2 – PLAY CALL APPARATUS AND PROCEDURE

Each week, a Team's Coaching Staff shall be responsible for inputting a Game Plan into the FCF Play Calling System. The Offensive Game Plan shall consist of offensive plays chosen for all Down/Distance/Field Position Situational Buckets within the Play Calling System.

Goal Line variants of those options shall be automatically presented when the ball is spotted five or fewer yards from the end zone.

Before each play, each Team's Fan Base shall be presented with eight specific Play Call options via the FCF Fan Play Calling Interface. Fans will have between 12 and 20 seconds (depending on their "time behind live" on Twitch, linear broadcast etc) to enter their selection, after which the weighted votes will be calculated. The play receiving the greatest weighted vote total shall be selected for that down.

Offensive plays shall be relayed directly to the offensive players on the field via in-helmet communication. Once the play is relayed, the 10 second play clock will commence. The quarterback shall communicate the play call to the rest of the offensive players who will then align and execute the play.

In Season v1.0 of the FCF, fans will not call defensive plays. The Defensive Coordinator will select a defensive call based on the offensive personnel, situation and alignment, and that play call shall be relayed to the Defensive Captain on the field via in-helmet communication.

SECTION 3 – PLAY EXECUTION

The players shall be responsible for executing the specific play call chosen by the Fan Base. In the event that players or units are consistently failing to execute the specific play calls

chosen by the Fan Base, they shall be subject to disciplinary action from the FCF League Office.

Fan Engagement Rules (DRAFT)

Fan Controlled Football will provide fans with a broad array of opportunities to impact the fortunes of their favorite teams, from helping shape the team's roster to calling plays on the field. Fans will also have opportunities to tilt things in their team's favor through robust participation and engagement both during the week and during each contest. Below is a draft list of areas in the game where a team's fans can "earn" extra advantages for their teams. Please include any elements where you believe that fan engagement could offer a good opportunity to influence play by awarding some kind of advantage to their team.

SECTION 1 – ADDITIONAL TEAM ADVANTAGE

A) Down and Distance

Through [participation means TBD] during the week leading up to the game, a team's fans may earn a fifth down opportunity for their team's offense to be used if their team's offense is stopped on fourth down. There is only one fifth down available per game, with each team's fan bases competing against each other to win the fifth down for their team. Once earned, the fifth down opportunity is placed "in the bank" for use by the team. The fifth down can be used by the coach at any time during the game.

B) Timeouts

Through [participation means TBD] during the week leading up to the game, a team's fans may earn one additional timeout for their team to utilize in order to stop the clock at any point during the game. Only one extra timeout may be won during the course of a contest, meaning that the two fan bases involved in the game will compete for the time out to be awarded to their squad.

C) "Fourth Down Showdown" Designation

The skill position player who wins that week's Wednesday Man vs Man Challenge carries the Fourth Down Showdown Badge for the Team who drafts him that week. Once per game, that team's Coach may activate the Fourth Down Showdown power when the team faces a fourth down situation. All offensive and defensive players besides the quarterback, the Fourth Down Showdown Player and a defender chosen by the Defensive Coordinator shall exit the field. The quarterback will start play in the same manner as a Point After Conversion, and will have three (3) seconds to deliver a pass to the Fourth Down Showdown Player. If that Player receives the pass and advances the ball past the fourth down line to gain, the offense will retain possession and begin a new set of downs from the line to gain. If the Player fails to secure the pass or does not advance beyond the line to gain before being tackled, the opposing team will take possession

at the dead ball spot.