



# Indiana Women's Flag Football League Rules

*Adopted April 1, 2018*

**Mission Statement:** *The mission of the Indiana Women's Flag Football League is to provide affordable opportunities to promote women in sport without regard to level of experience, skill level, race, national origin, sexual orientation, religion and socio-economic status.*

**Disclaimer:** *The Indiana Women's Flag Football League reserves the right to make changes to this document at any time. Participants will be notified of any changes made.*

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## **Section 1: Participation Requirements**

### **Article 1: Player Eligibility**

Any woman aged 21 years and older by the first game of the season may register to play with Indiana Women's Flag Football League (IWFFL).

### **Article 2: League Non-Discrimination Policy**

IWFFL does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, athletic ability, or experience. Participants are expected to adhere to this policy in their conduct.

### **Article 3: Insurance and Liability**

IWFFL maintains liability insurance. All players and officials are required to sign and submit both an IWFFL Liability Waiver and the CAMP Insurance Waiver prior to the start of the season. Failure to sign these waivers will prevent a player from participating in game play. IWFFL does not provide players with medical insurance coverage. Individual medical coverage is not required to play but is highly recommended.

## **Section 2: Equipment and Uniforms**

### **Article 1: Footballs**

IWFFL provides junior sized balls. Game balls will be clearly marked and brought to the coin toss by the Referee.

### **Article 2: Flag Belts**

All flags will be Triple Threat Flags provided by the IWFFL. All flags are to be returned to team game bags, which will be turned into league officials at the end of each game.

### **Article 3: Practice Equipment**

IWFFL will provide a practice bag complete with balls and flags to captains of each team. Practice bags will be turned in at the end of the season.

### **Article 4: Footwear**

Cleats are allowed and encouraged, but they must be hard plastic or rubber. No metal spikes are allowed. Running shoes are also allowed.

### **Article 5: Player Uniforms**

Current-season issued shirts are to be worn to the games. Alterations may only be done to the neck and the sleeves. No player or referee may intentionally alter the length of the shirt, the IWFFL Team Logo, or the sponsor logos on the back. Participants who alter their shirts in violation of these rules will be provided with a new shirt and billed \$20. (Exception: Team shirts torn during game play may be modified in length if necessary but must still be long enough to be tucked under flag belts. If damage is so severe this cannot be accomplished, a new shirt will be provided free of charge.)

### Article 6: Protective Gear

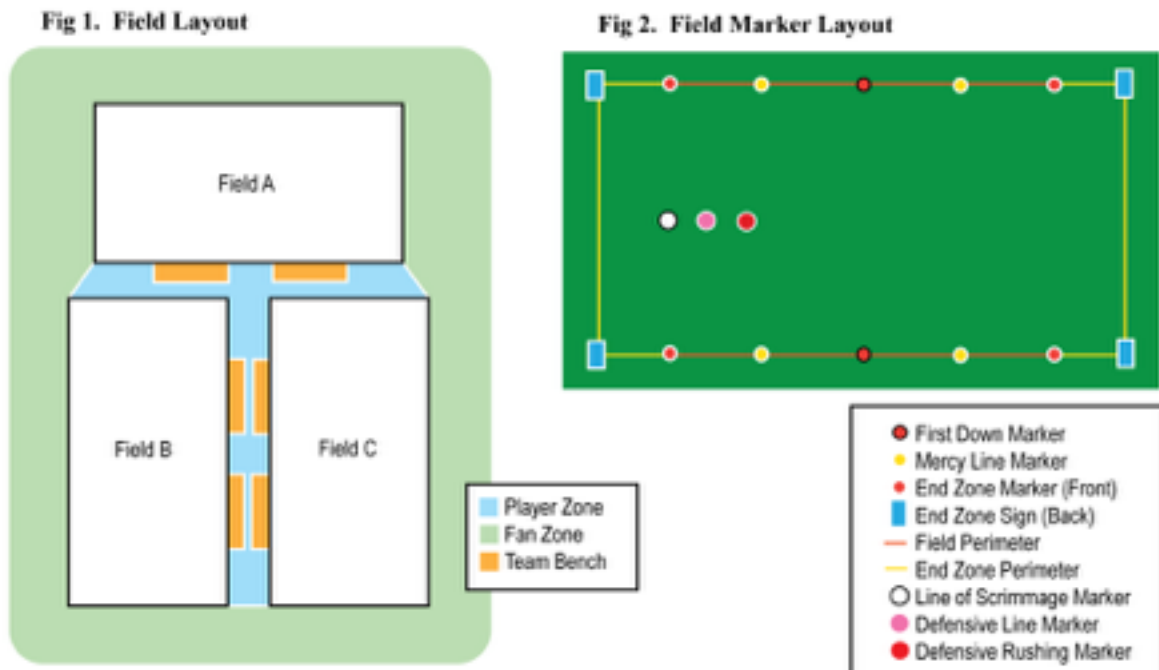
The following items are permitted but not required: protective mouthpieces, gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Players may also tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Any braces with exposed metal must be taped and reviewed by Referees before the start of game play.

### Article 7: Hazardous Clothing and Accessories

- A. Players should avoid wearing bottoms with large exposed pockets that can cause injury to defensive players reaching for flag belts. Be aware that loose pants or shorts may lead to possible embarrassing situations. Players are advised to wear well-fitting bottoms.
- B. Players must remove watches, any long or hoop earrings, large rings or any other jewelry that could cause injury. The Referees have final say on any item that needs to be removed.

## Section 3: Playing Field

### Article 1: Field Diagrams



### Article 2: Field Boundaries

Field boundaries are marked with flat orange and yellow cones. Stepping beyond the boundary line is considered out-of-bounds. (See Section 8, Article 3: Receiving)

### Article 3: First Down Markers

First down markers are orange upright pylons placed in the middle of the field perimeter (half-field).

#### **Article 4: Mercy Line Markers**

The Mercy line is clearly marked with a yellow upright pylons one-quarter down perimeter of the field. (See Section 11: Punting)

#### **Article 5: End Zone Markers**

The End Zone is clearly marked with orange upright pylons (front) and sponsor End Zone Signs (back). The end of the End Zone is marked with flat yellow cones.

#### **Article 6: Line of Scrimmage, Defensive Line, and Defensive Rushing Cones**

The Line of Scrimmage (LOS) is marked by the referee at the start of each possession using a flat white cone. Attached to this cone are (2) two additional cones, one pink, and one red. The pink cone indicates the Defensive Line. The red cone indicates the Defensive Rushing line (See Section 7: Article 6).

#### **Article 7: Player Zone**

Only current-season players, referees, time keeper, and press are permitted in the T-shaped area between the three fields during game play. Flat blue cones will be used to mark entrances to the Player Zone. Players may leave the zone to speak to spectators during half-time or if a personal issue needs to be addressed.

#### **Article 8: Team Bench**

Team Benches are located between the first down marker and the mercy line markers within the Player Zone, and identified by a team colored flag. Players not active on the field should stay in the team bench area to allow freedom of movement of Referees and ease of team conversations.

#### **Article 9: Fan Zone**

All spectators must remain on the perimeter of the three fields during game play (including half-time).

### **Section 4: Teams**

#### **Article 1: Captains**

Each team is designated two (2) captains. Their role is to: represent the team in the league, relay information to players on the team, conduct coin tosses, approach the referee about questions during the game, and foster a positive environment within the team. Team captains are not considered “coaches” and should allow their entire team to develop plays and game strategies.

#### **Article 2: Coaches**

IWFFL does not sanction the use of external team coaches during game play. Team players will make any and all decisions during game play. While IWFFL teams may choose to involve spouses, partners, or friends to advise during practices, those individuals will be considered

SPECTATORS during game play. Illegal communication during game play between spectators and players will be taken seriously by referees.

*\*\*Please remember that while YOU may feel your spouse, partner, or friend add valuable input and experience to the team, your teammates may not feel similarly. In order to foster a positive and equitable team environment, these non-league advisors should only be used after agreement from the entire team. Should an individual from your team bring any issues to the attention of league officials, an anonymous team vote will be taken on any further involvement of these non-league advisors.\*\**

### **Article 3: Size of Teams**

Each team has a roster of 14 players. A player may only appear on one team's roster, NO EXCEPTIONS, even both teams agree. If a player from another team plays for your team, your team will forfeit the game, and the opposing team will be awarded the win and one (1) point.

### **Article 4: Insufficient Players**

A team must have seven (7) players on the field at the start of the game. If a team does not have seven (7) players at the start of the game, the game is officially forfeited. (See Section 6, Article 3: Forfeiture Scoring)

## **Section 5: Game Time and Overtime**

### **Article 1: Game Day and Time**

Games are played on Thursday evenings. Games are scheduled to begin at 7:00pm and end at 8:05pm. Games consist of two 30-minute halves with a 5-minute half-time. A 2-minute time warning will be given prior to end of each half. All three games are played concurrently using the same clock (See Section 5, Article 4).

### **Article 2: Weather Cancellations**

Games will only be cancelled due to extreme or dangerous weather conditions (i.e, heavy rains, high winds, electrical storms). Cancellations will be decided by 5:30pm on the day of the game by majority vote of team captains. Make up games are played on Sunday of that week at 7:00pm.

### **Article 3: Huddle Clock**

Offensive teams may huddle for 15 seconds prior to the start of the play. 15 seconds will counted off by the Referee, teams will receive one warning to start the play before a 5 Yard Delay of Game Penalty will be enforced. Defensive Teams must also be in position by the snap.

### **Article 4: Injury Delay**

In the event of an injury, official game time will continue. The Referee of the affected game will keep track of the time it takes to move the injured player off the field. The time lost will be added at half time or the end of that game.

## **Article 5: Overtime**

In the event of a tie at the end of regulation play, the game will continue into overtime. Overtime is divided into two (2) phases: Overtime and Sudden Death Overtime. The team who won the original coin toss automatically receives first possession during Overtime play.

- A. Prior to the start of overtime play the referee will conduct a second coin toss, this toss relates to Sudden Death Overtime.
  - A. The team who won the first coin toss calls the coin.
  - B. The winner of the second coin toss will have first possession should the game move to sudden death.
- A. In the first phase of Overtime, each team will have one full possession.
  - A. If Team A scores, but Team B does not during their possession the game is over and Team A wins.
  - B. If both Team A and Team B score, or no team scores, the game moves to Sudden Death Overtime.
  - C. Interceptions may be returned for a touchdown. Interceptions end the offensive teams possession.
- B. Sudden Death Overtime:
  - A. The team that won the second coin toss has the first possession.
  - B. The first point scored wins the game.
  - C. In the event we lose light, and can no longer continue the game - a sudden death re-match will be organized at a later agreed upon date and time.

## **Section 6 - Scoring and Ranking**

### **Article 1: Scoring Values**

One (1) point will be awarded for every touchdown. There are no extra point options.

### **Article 2: Forfeiture Scoring**

In the event of a forfeiture the game will be considered a win but only (1) point is awarded to the winning team.

### **Article 3: Ranking**

Records will be kept and published by League Representatives of team wins, total points scored, and total points scored against. These will be used to determine season rankings. Teams with the most wins will be ranked highest. If two teams are tied for wins, the team with the most points scored will be given higher ranking. If two teams remain tied for both wins and points scored, the teams head to head record will be the next deciding factor; if the teams remain tied, the team with the lowest number of points scored against will be given higher ranking. Rankings are used to determine the post-season game match-ups.

## **Section 7: Possessions**



### **Article 1: Pre-Game Coin Toss**

Prior to each game, the Referee shall conduct a coin toss with team captains to determine possession. The winning captain shall choose to start the game on either offense or defense, and which End Zone they would like to defend. Whichever team started on Offense in the 1st Half will be on Defense starting the 2nd half.

### **Article 2: First Downs**

First Downs are achieved by reaching the down marker in the middle of the field. Teams have 4 downs to reach the first down marker, and another 4 downs to reach the end zone.

### **Article 3: Mercy Rule**

On the 4th down, if the offensive team has not advanced past the Mercy Line, the team has the option to punt the ball. (See Section 11: Punting)

### **Article 4: Interceptions**

- A. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions may be returned. The team will take possession of the ball where the intercepting defender's flag was pulled.
- B. If a penalty occurs on an interception return by the return team, the penalty will be assessed at the spot of the foul. (Exception: Overtime play)
- C. If a penalty occurs on an interception return by the defensive team, the penalty will be assessed at the end of the run.

### **Article 5: Dead Ball**

A ball is live at the snap and remains live until one of the following:

- A. A snap to the quarterback hits the ground.
- B. A fumble hits the ground (no fumble recoveries are allowed).
- C. A ball carrier's knee touches the ground.
- D. A ball carrier steps out-of-bounds.
- E. A ball carriers flags are legally removed.
- F. A ball carriers flags fall off inadvertently.
- G. A touchdown.
- H. An official whistles the play dead.

### **Article 6: Inadvertent Whistle**

In the case of an inadvertent whistle that has affected the outcome of the play, the team in possession of the ball has the option to repeat the down.

## **Section 7: Starting the Play**

### **Article 1: Flag Belts**

All players must start with her flag belt properly secured and fully accessible OVER her shirt. If a player starts the play without her flags properly attached her team, will be assessed a 5 yard penalty. (See Sec 10, Art 3: Flag Obstruction)

### **Article 2: Line of Scrimmage**

- A. The ball and Line of Scrimmage (LOS) cone will be placed by the referee to start the play.
- B. At the start of a half or after a touchdown the LOS will be on the End Zone line.
- C. During a possession, the LOS will be at the point of flag-pull.

### **Article 3: Players on the Line of Scrimmage**

- A. Offense must have a minimum of four (4) players and up to 6 players on the LOS at the snap. The Quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
- B. There is no minimum player requirement for defense with the exception of the punt option, where there must be 4 defenders also on the Defensive Line.

### **Article 4: Snaps**

- A. Ball must be snapped between the legs or from the side to start the play.
- B. Direct snaps or “hand-off” snaps are not legal. The snap must be received at least 2 yard behind the center.

### **Article 5: Movement before Snap**

- A. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for 1 second before the ball is snapped unless she is the only player in motion.
- B. One offensive player may go into motion at the snap behind and parallel to the LOS.
- C. No motion is allowed towards the LOS. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs towards the LOS while in motion is considered a false start. *Penalty: 5 yard loss, Replay down.*

### **Article 6: Rushing the Quarterback**

- A. Only one (1) defensive player may be designated to rush the quarterback.
- B. She must begin behind the Defensive Rushing Cone (See Sec 3, Art 3) and may not move until after the snap.

### **Article 7: Movement after Snap**

- A. After the ball is snapped, any and all offensive players may move freely behind or across the LOS.
- B. The defensive players may not cross the LOS until the Designated Rusher crossed the LOS or until the Quarterback no longer has possession of the ball.

## **Section 8: Running a Play**

### **Article 1: Hand-Offs**

- A. The Quarterback may hand-off to any offensive player behind the LOS.

- B. The offense may use multiple hand offs behind the line of scrimmage but be aware that all defensive players may cross the LOS as soon as the ball leaves the Quarterback's hand.
- C. No hand-offs are permitted past the LOS

### **Article 2: Passing**

- A. Only one (1) forward pass is permitted per down.
- B. If a passer crosses the line of scrimmage and comes back behind the line of scrimmage and throws a pass, it is an illegal forward pass.
- C. Backward passes and pitches ARE allowed anywhere on the field.
- D. Intentional Grounding - A passer may not intentionally throw the ball into the ground or out of bounds to avoid a loss of yardage. *Penalty: 5 yard loss from LOS, Loss of down.*

### **Article 3: Receiving**

- A. All Players are eligible to receive passes.
- B. A player must have at least 1 foot in-bounds to make a legal reception.
- C. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- D. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception.
- E. Defensive players must avoid illegal contact with the receivers, especially contact from behind or over the head of a receiver. *Penalty for Illegal Contact/Bodying Up Ball Carrier: 10 yards, Repeat Down.*

### **Article 4: Running**

- A. Ball carriers may not leave their feet to advance the ball (diving).
- B. Ball carriers may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull (see Sec 10, Art 2: Flag Guarding).
- C. Ball carriers may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- D. Spinning and lateral moves to the left or right are permitted.
- E. Absolutely no contact is permitted by the ball carrier with a defensive player. Efforts must be made to move around, not through opponents. It is the responsibility of the offensive players to avoid contact with defensive players. *Penalty for Illegal Contact with Defensive Player is 10 yards loss, Replay down.*

### **Article 5: Rushing**

- A. (See Sec 7, Art 6: Rushing the Quarterback)
- B. Defensive players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass, however, NO contact can be made with the Quarterback in any way. Players must go for a Quarterbacks flag, not her arm, hand, chest, or face. *Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a Roughing the Pass Penalty (10 yard penalty)*
- C. A sack occurs if the Quarterback's flags are pulled behind the LOS. The cone is placed where the ball is at when the flag is pulled.

## **Section 9: Offensive Blocking**

### **Article 1: Screen Blocking Fundamentals**

- A. Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without contacting her with any part of the screen blocker's body. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact.
- B. The screen blocker shall have her hands and arms at her side or behind her back. Any use of the arms, elbows or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.
- C. Screen blockers should maintain a distance of one (1) normal step from her opponent (from any angle, front, back, or side).

### **Article 2: Screen Blocking Violations**

- A. A blocker may use her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain her balance but otherwise must be on her feet before, during and after screen blocking (no jumping/diving).
- B. Screen blockers may not take a position so close to a moving opponent that her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take her stationary position. This position will vary and may be one or two normal steps or strides from the opponent.
- C. After assuming her legal screening position, she may not move to maintain it, unless she moves in the same direction and path as her opponent. If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, she has committed a personal foul.

### **Article 3: Blocking and Interlocking Interference**

Teammates of a runner or a passer may interfere for her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocking interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.

### **Article 4: Downfield Blocking**

Screen Blocking for the ball carrier is allowed downfield but must be a set block. Block must be "set" before the ball crosses the LOS.

### **Article 5: Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense**

Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. *Penalty: 10 yards, Automatic 1st down.*

## **Section 10: Flag Pulling**

### **Article 1: De-Flagging**

De-Flagging is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball.

- A. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- B. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- C. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession.
- D. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off the play is dead where the flag comes off.
- E. If the flag is removed illegally, play should continue with the opinion of the penalty or the play.

- F. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball. *Penalty: 5 yards from LOS or point of completed pass.*

### **Article 2: Flag Guarding**

- A. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flag with your shirt. *Penalty: 10 yards, Loss of Down*
- B. Tampering with the flag in any way to gain an advantage including tying the flag, cutting the flag, using foreign materials or other such acts are illegal. *Penalty: Disqualification*

### **Article 3: Flag Obstruction**

All t-shirts MUST be under the players flag belt, or tucked in to pants, before the play begins. The flags must be placed on the players hips and free from obstruction. The Referee will give one (1) warning to fix flags. After the warning, obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

## **Section 11: Punting**

### **Article 1: Punting**

- A. The offensive team may choose to punt on the 4th down if they are on or before the mercy line marker.
- B. Offensive teams must clearly announce punt attempt to referee prior setting punt.
- C. At least 4 players must be on the LOS at the time of the punt - Offense and Defense.
- D. Defense may raise their arms or jump to try to block the punt but cannot cross the LOS.
- E. If the punter drops the snap the ball is dead at that spot.
- F. Muffs and fumbled punts are dead at the spot.
- G. Punter must be at least 2 yards behind the center when receiving the snap.
- H. Punter must kick the ball in a continuous motion. The penalty for not kicking the ball immediately is a 5 Yard Delay of game.

### **Article 2: Punt Return**

The Defensive team may catch and return any in-bounds punt.

- A. After a punted ball is caught, ONLY the defensive ball carrier may move. All other defensive player must remain in place as set screens.
- B. All players on the punting team may pursue the ball carrier.
- C. If the punting team or the punt return team touches a punt and it hits the ground, the ball is dead at the spot.
- D. If the punted ball lands in the end zone, the ball is dead on the end zone line.
- E. If a punted ball lands out of bounds before the half-field/1st down marker, the ball is dead on the mercy line.
- F. If a punted ball lands out of bounds after the half-field/1st down marker, the ball is dead on the 1st down marker.
- G. If a punt returner catches a punt in the end zone and kneels down, it is considered a touchback and the ball is brought out to the mercy line marker.

## Section 12: Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- A. If a referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision will be made at the Referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. Foul Play Will Not Be Tolerated.
- B. Offensive and confrontational language is unacceptable. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the Referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player/players will be ejected from the game.
- C. Spectators must also adhere to good sportsmanship.
  - A. Cheering on your team is acceptable, harassing officials or other teams is not.
  - B. Keep comments clean and appropriate for all-ages.
  - C. Fans are required to adhere to Fan Zones for their safety and the players' safety. Only players, referees and approved media are allowed in the Player Zone.

*\*\*Please help the referees and league officials by reminding your fan club of this final rule. Our insurance company requires there be set boundaries, and it is awkward for everyone to be told they need to move, so let's avoid the awkward.\*\**

## Section 13: Penalties

### Article 1: General

- A. The Referee will call all penalties.
- B. Only Team Captains may ask the Referee questions about rule clarifications and interpretations. Players may not question judgment calls.
- C. Games may not end on a Defensive Penalty unless the Offense declines it.
- D. Penalties may not be assessed beyond the end zone line.
- E. Flagrant contact fouls will not be tolerated. Offending players will be ejected from that game, or sit out the next game.

### Article 2: Offensive Fouls

#### OFFENSE FOULS

Illegal Forward Pass	5 yards, Loss of Down	Sec. 8, Art. 2
Illegal Block Downfield	5 yards, Loss of Down	Sec. 9, Art 4
Flag Guarding	10 yards, Loss of Down	Sec 10, Art 2
Illegal Contact/Not Avoiding Defensive Player	10 yards, Replay Down	Sec 8, Art 4
Diving to Advance Ball	10 yards, Replay Down	Sec 8, Art 4
Intentional Grounding	5 yards, Loss of Down	Sec 8, Art 2

**OFFENSE FOULS**

Delay of Game	5 yards from LOS, Replay the Down	Sec 5, Art 3
Illegal Motion/False Start	5 yards from LOS, Replay the Down	Sec 7, Art 5
Illegal Formation	5 yards from LOS, Replay the Down	Sec 7, Art 3
Starting with no Flags	5 yards from LOS, Loss of Down	Sec 7, Art 1

**Article 3: Defensive Fouls****DEFENSIVE FOULS**

Unnecessary Roughness	10 yards, Automatic First Down	Sec 9, Art 5
Stripping	10 yards from End of Run, Replay Down	Sec 10, Art 1
Illegal Contact/Bodying Up the Ball Carrier	10 yards, Replay the Down	Sec 8, Art 3
Delay of Game	5 yards from LOS, Replay the Down	Sec 5, Art 3
Illegal Motion/False Start	5 yards from LOS, Replay the Down	Sec 7, Art 5
Illegal Formation	5 yards from LOS, Replay the Down	Sec 7, Art 3
Starting with no Flags	5 yards from LOS, Loss of Down	Sec 7, Art 1

**Article 4: Personal Fouls****PERSONAL FOULS**

Fighting	10 yards from LOS (2nd - Ejection)	Sec 12
Conduct Unbecoming	10 yards from LOS (2nd - Ejection)	Sec 12

***Personal Foul Disclaimer: Flagrant disregard for rules or referees by players and/or spectators will be taken seriously by league officials and may result in the removal from the field, game suspension, forced forfeiture, or removal from the league.***