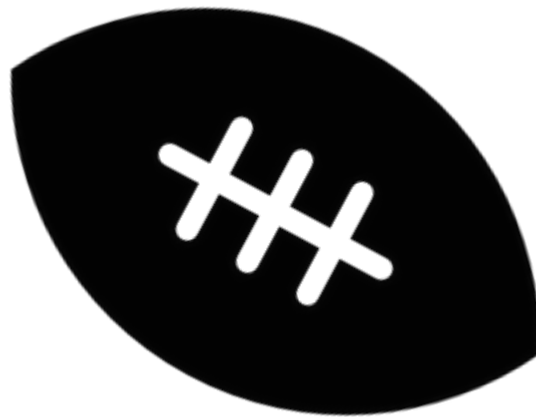


**DA VINCI SCHOOLS
FLAG FOOTBALL SEMINAR
FALL 2016
OFFICIAL HANDBOOK**



NAME: _____

GRADE: _____

DATE: _____

**COACH KALMA
& COACH JONES**



THE TERMS

Clipping: Clipping is the act of running/diving into the back or throwing/dropping the body across the back of the leg(s) of an opponent or pushing an opponent in the back and is considered illegal at all times.

Encroachment: Encroachment is a term to indicate a defensive player is illegally in the neutral zone. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions till he/she is on his/her team's side of the neutral zone.

Fair Catch: A signal made by the receiving person of a punt in which the receiver cannot run after catching the ball and the ball is immediately down when caught.

Foul: A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is assessed.

Fumble: A fumble is a loss of player possession other than by handling, passing, or kicking the ball.

Goal Line: Each goal line is a vertical plane separating the end zone from the field of play. The plane of goal extends beyond the sideline.

Hurdling: Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over a player who is on his/her feet.

Interception: A defensive catch of an opponent's pass or fumble in flight is an interception.

Live Ball: A pass or fumble which has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight and therefore can be caught and advanced by either team.

Neutral Zone: The neutral zone is the area between the offensive and defensive line of scrimmage that has been established by the spot cone markers and extends to each sideline. It is established when the ball is ready for play.

Pass (Forward and Backward): A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. A backward pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. A backward pass that hits the ground is ruled the same as a fumble.

Punting: A punt can be completed on the fourth down by a player who drops the ball and kicks it before it hits the ground to the opposing team.

Screen Blocking: Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without initiating contact with the him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body.

Tagging: Tagging is placing one hand anywhere between the shoulders and knees of an opponent with the ball. The tagger may leave his/her feet to make the tag. Pushing, striking, slapping, and holding are not permitted. If a player trips the runner in his/her attempt to make a diving tag, it will result in a penalty.



Tripping: Tripping is the use of the body to obstruct an opponent, including the runner, below the knee and is considered illegal at all times.

Safety: A play in which the offense downs the ball (by action of the defense or intentionally) in their own end zone and scores two points for the defense.

THE GENERAL RULES

1. The game should be played between two teams of seven players each and under the supervision of two to four officials/referees.
2. One speaking team captain must be selected to make all decisions and shall be the only one who addresses the officials during the game.
3. Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, and other persons affiliated with each team are all subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of the officials assigned to the game.

THE TEAM

1. A team shall consist of seven players.
2. The offensive team must have any four players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap (beginning of the play).
3. Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time outs.
4. All players must be recorded on the roster and waiver form (with parent/guardian signature) before they are allowed to participate.

THE FIELD

1. The field should be a minimum of forty yards in width and contain four 20-yard zones with a 10-yard end zone on each of the ends.
2. A one yard wide line should be marked at each end at the 3 and 10-yard lines in the center of the field. These lines shall be used for the extra point attempt when a team scores a touchdown.

THE EQUIPMENT

1. **Football:** The official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber covered and shall meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. The referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his/her discretion.
2. All players must wear appropriate attire.
3. **Flag Belt:** Each player must wear a one-piece belt at the waistline with two or three flags permanently attached depending on what is provided for your team. Both teams must have the same type of belts and number of flags. **Penalty:** Failure to have flag belt legally attached prior to the snap results in a 5-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.
4. Towels and/or anything may not hang from a player's waist or otherwise interfere with the removal of a flag
5. **PLAYERS MAY NOT BLOCK AND/OR COVER THEIR FLAGS.** **Penalty:** In the event of players covering their flags, a team will get one warning and then a 10-yard penalty will be given to each time thereafter from the line of scrimmage.



6. All flag belts must be free of knots. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct and ejection from the game and potentially future games.
7. When playing a game, equipment such as helmets, billed hats, pads/braces of hard material, casts, and all jewelry are strictly prohibited.
8. Teams must use flags provided. All team members must wear the same color shirt. Shirts must be tucked into the pants/shorts. Shirts may not have pockets and may not be tied into knots. Additionally, no hooded sweatshirts/jackets.

THE TIMING

1. Toss of the Coin: 3 minutes before the start of the game, the referee will conduct a captain's meeting in which he/she will designate which captain shall call the toss of the coin. [This is usually decided by which team is the home team, but it can be decided by rock paper scissors and/or the referee's decision.] The captain winning the toss will have the choice of options for either the first half or deferring to the second half while the other captain will then choose from the remaining option:
 - a. Choice 1: Deciding whether his/her team will start on offense or defense.
 - b. Choice 2: Deciding what goal his/her team will defend or what side of the field they will start on.
2. Two 1-minute time-outs a half are allowed per team and must be called in between plays before the ball is snapped.
3. The ball must be put into play no more than 25 seconds after the official has placed the ball down on the line of scrimmage and signals "ready to play."
4. Games will consist of two 15-minute halves with a 3-minute half time in between. Timing will be continuous for the first 13 minutes of each half. Only team and official time-outs can stop the clock.
5. 2-Minute Warning: Approximately two minutes before the end of each half, the referee shall stop the clock to inform both team captains and coaches of the time remaining on the clock. Each team will have a 30-second break before the clock restarts on the next snap. The back judge will announce to the captains the remaining time and status of the clock after every play during the final two minutes.
6. Stopped Clock: During the final one minute of each half, the clock will stop for the following and resume on the snap of the next play unless otherwise noted:
 - a. Incomplete pass
 - b. Out-of-Bounds
 - c. Score (touchdown or safety)
 - d. Team and Referee Time-Outs
 - e. Fair Catch
 - f. Penalty and Administration
 - g. Touchback
 - h. Change of Possession
 - i. Team attempting to conserve time legally
7. An injured or apparently injured player, who is discovered by an official while the ball is dead and the clock is stopped, shall be replaced for at least one down unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs. A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, and/or has blood on the uniform shall be considered injured.
8. Delay of Game: The ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or inaction by either team, which tends to prevent this, is a delay of game. This includes:
 - a. Failure to snap or free kick within 25 seconds after the ball is ready for play.
 - b. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.
 - c. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.



THE POSSESSIONS

1. Each team receives four downs to pass the zone-line-to-gain (20-yard markers) or endzone.
2. The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless the distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such cases, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.
3. A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball in the next zone on a play free from penalties, if a penalty against the opposing team moves the ball into the next zone, or either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, free kick, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.
4. If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated. Exception: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul was not prior to the final change of possession and it declines all penalties for its opponent's fouls, other than unsportsmanlike conduct.

THE PLAY

Before the Snap

1. Following the ready for play and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or in any other way interfere with them. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals, or shifting through the zone. After the snapper has placed his/her hands on the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball.
 - a. Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Encroachment, 5 yards from the previous spot.
2. The snapper, after assuming position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play until it is snapped. An infraction of this provision may be penalized, whether or not the ball is snapped, and the penalty for any resultant encroachment or contact foul by an opponent shall be cancelled.

During the Snap

1. The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
 - a. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot
2. All offensive players must be within 15 yards of the ball.
 - a. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot
3. One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line.
 - a. Penalty: Illegal Motion, 5 yards from previous spot
4. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage.
 - a. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot
5. In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, arms for at least one full second before the snap.
 - a. Penalty - Illegal Motion, 5 yards from previous spot

THE PASSING/RECEIVING



1. There is no diving while running with the ball. A receiver may dive to catch a ball. A defensive player may dive to try to remove a flag.
2. A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at anytime except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or to avoid being deflagged/tagged.
3. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the last team in possession unless lost on downs.
4. A backward pass or fumble that goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out-of-bounds spot. If out-of-bounds is behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.
5. If an offensive player fumbles the ball prior to reaching the end zone and the ball lands in the end zone, the offensive team shall retain possession at the spot of the fumble.
6. All players are eligible to catch a pass.
7. A forward pass is illegal:
 - a. If the passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - b. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.
 - c. If there is more than one forward pass per down.
8. The line of scrimmage remains throughout the play. A team may advance the ball across the line of scrimmage by laterals or runs, and then lateral the ball behind the line for a forward pass attempt.
9. If a player attempts a catch or intercept while in the air, the player must contact the ground inbounds with the ball in his/her possession prior to touching out-of-bounds, unless an opponent's contact causes him/her to first touch out-of-bounds.
10. If one foot first lands in-bounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception although a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.
11. A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception.
12. A player may, while jumping in the air to attempt a catch, may pass (tip) the ball forward provided he/she has not touched the ground yet.
13. Pass Interference - Contact that interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the line of scrimmage is pass interference unless it occurs when 2 or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged/tagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Offensive Pass Interference - after the ball is snapped, and until a receiver has touched it, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - i. Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from previous spot, loss of down
 - b. Defensive Pass Interference - after the pass is thrown, and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the line of scrimmage while the ball is in flight.
 - i. Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from previous spot, automatic first down
14. Roughing the passer - Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into the passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown, also there should be no attempts to hit the player's arm during a throwing motion.
 - a. Penalty: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards, automatic first down

THE RUNNING & FLAG REMOVING

1. Flag Belt Removal - When the flag or flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag or belt from the runner should immediately hold it above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.
2. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged.



3. When a runner loses his/her flags or belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees.
4. In circumstances where a flag or belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play.
5. A defensive player intentionally pulling a flag or belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. The official shall warn the team, and any further penalty will result in unsportsmanlike conduct.
6. Tampering with the flag or belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal.
7. A player may leave his/her feet when trying to remove the flag.
8. Contact - In an attempt to remove the flag or belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag or belt.
 - a. Penalty: Defensive Holding, 10 yards from spot
9. Flag Guarding - A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. A player may use a spin move; however, he/she must keep their arms away from their flag to avoid flag guarding.
 - a. Penalty: Flag guarding, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty.
10. Face Guarding - A defensive player may not use their arms and hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver's view of the ball.
 - a. Penalty: Face guarding, 10 yards, automatic first down
11. Stiff Arm - A runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with an extended hand or arm which includes the use of a "stiff arm" to flag guard
 - a. Penalty: Stiff Arm, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty
12. Helping the runner - A player shall not grasp, pull, push or aid any teammate runner.
 - a. Penalty: Helping the Runner, 5 yards from spot of the penalty.

THE PUNTING

Protected Punt

1. Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the referee must ask the offense if he/she wants a protected kick (punt). The referee must communicate this decision to the defensive captain and the other officials.
2. The offense must have all field players (all 6) except the punter on the line of scrimmage. The defense must have at least 5 players within 1 yard of their scrimmage line. All players on the line of scrimmages must remain motionless until the kick is made. A line player may not raise his/her arms to distract the kicker or block the kick.
 - a. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.
3. The kicker must be at least 5 yards behind the scrimmage line when receiving the snap. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion.
4. Any kick caught by the kicking team behind the line of scrimmage cannot be advanced.

Fair Catch

1. Any receiver may signal for a fair catch while any kick is in flight and is beyond the kicker's free kick line.
2. If any receiver gives a valid signal for a fair catch and catches the kick beyond the kicker's line and between the goal lines, it is a fair catch and the ball becomes dead.



3. After a valid fair catch signal by any member of the receiving team, no receiver may advance the ball. When receiving a protected kick the receiver may call for a fair catch. The player must signal intention by extending one arm above his/her head and waving laterally from side to side more than once.
4. An invalid fair catch signal is any signal by a receiver before the kick is caught or recovered that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal or after the kick has touched a receiver or the ground.

THE BLOCKING

1. **Offense Blocking** - The offensive blocking shall take place without contact. The blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive block is illegal.
 - a. **Penalty:** Personal Foul, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty
2. **Interlock Blocking** - Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.
3. **Defensive Rush and Use of Hands** - Defensive players must attempt to go around the offensive blocker. Defensive players must not use any part of his/her arms, hands, elbows, or any part of the body to contact the offensive player.
 - a. **Penalty:** Personal Foul, 10 yards from previous spot

THE SCORING

1. **Mercy Rule**
 - a. If a team is 40 or more points ahead at halftime or 19 or more points ahead with 5 minutes to go in the second half, the game shall be officially called.
 - b. If a team scores during the last 5 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more the game shall end at that point.
 - c. The team can still play if they want. (Service to participate.)
2. **Touchdown**
 - a. All touchdowns are 6 points
 - b. A touchdown shall be scored when a legal forward pass is completed or a fumble or backward pass is caught behind the opponent's goal line or when a player is legally in possession of the ball and penetrates the vertical plane of the opponent's goal line
3. **Extra Point Attempt = 1, 2, or 3 Points**
 - a. An opportunity to score 1 point from the 3-yard line or 2 points from the 10 yard line, or 3 points from the 20 yard line shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown. While time is out there shall be one scrimmage play, unless changed by penalty.
 - b. The Referee must speak to the team captain, asking him/her whether the try shall be from the 3, 10, or 20-yard line. Once the scoring team makes the choice, he/she may change the decision only by taking a charged team time out.
 - c. If a double foul occurs during the down, the down shall be replayed. When a distance penalty is incurred by the offense during a successful try, the down will be repeated, if accepted. However, if the offense penalty carries a loss of down, the try has ended and will not be repeated.
4. **Safety = 2 points**
 - a. It is a safety when a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his/her team's possession. Exception: Momentum Rule



- b. A safety is also when an offensive player commits a foul for which the penalty is accepted and the measurement is from the spot of the foul that is in the end zone.
- c. When a safety is scored, the ball belongs to the defending team, and they shall put the ball in play from the 20-yard line.

THE CONDUCT

1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
 - a. No player shall commit non-contact acts during a period or intermission. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Any acts of unfair play.
 - ii. Using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offense's signals or movements.
 - iii. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player.
 - iv. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player.
 - v. Spiking the ball and/or excessive celebration of any kind.
2. Dead Ball Player Fouls
 - a. Intentionally kicking the ball.
 - b. Spike the ball into the ground.
 - c. Throw the ball high into the air.
3. Prohibited Acts - There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches or others subject to the Rules. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.
 - b. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
 - c. Indicating objections to an official's decision.
 - d. Holding an unauthorized conference, or being on the field illegally.
 - e. Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
 - f. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game by persons subject to the rules.
4. Personal Fouls
 - a. No player shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. No player shall:
 - i. Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
 - ii. Trip an opponent.
 - iii. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
 - iv. Throw the runner to the ground.
 - v. Hurdle any other player.
 - vi. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
 - vii. Make any contact with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary of any nature including using fists, locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to Flag Rules.
 - viii. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
 - ix. Clip an opponent.
 - x. Tackling the runner.

THE PENALTIES



1. **Captain's Choice** - When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both team captains. The referee shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him/her the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. A captain's choice of options may not be revoked.
2. **Live Ball Fouls** - Any live ball foul is penalized according to the all-but one enforcement principle, except:
 - a. A foul that occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick is penalized from the previous spot.
 - b. A non-player foul, unsportsmanlike foul, or dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.
3. **Dead Ball Fouls** - When a foul occurs during a dead ball either between downs or before a snap or free kick, the officials shall not permit the ball to become live.
4. **Establish Zone line-to-gain** - On a live ball foul mark off the penalty yardage first, then establish the zone line to gain. However, with a dead ball foul, establish the zone line to gain first, and then mark off the penalty yardage.
5. **All-But-One Principle** - Enforcement philosophy is based on the fact that a team is given the advantage of the distance that is gained without assistance of a foul. It is assumed that the only foul that would give this aid is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot. Therefore, all fouls but this one, that is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot, are penalized from the basic spot. This one foul is penalized from the spot of the foul.
6. **Loose Ball Play** - If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot either the spot of the snap or the free kick.
7. **Running Play** - If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends.
8. **Half the Distance** - A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.
9. **Safety / Goal Line** - If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from or behind its goal line which is now the basic spot, it is a safety. For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot that is now the basic spot is on or behind the offended team's goal line any measurement is from the goal line.
10. **Foul on a Score** - If there is a player foul by the offensive team other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a player foul by the defensive team, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try, the penalty is automatically declined.
11. **Foul Prior to a Try** - When a foul occurs after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play for the try, the enforcement is at the succeeding spot where the ball will be next snapped for the try, usually the 3 or 10 yard line.
12. **Double Foul** - It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer, during the same live ball period in which:
 - a. There is no change of possession.
 - b. There is a change of possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession.
 - c. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.
 - d. In all three the penalties cancel and the down is replayed.
 - e. **EXCEPTION:** If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's' foul(s), other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer.



13. **Multiple Live Ball Fouls** - When 2 or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team, only one penalty may be chosen except when a foul(s) for unsportsmanlike or nonplayer conduct occurs. In such cases, the penalty/penalties for the unsportsmanlike conduct or nonplayer fouls are administered from the succeeding spot as a dead ball foul.
14. **Multiple Dead Ball Fouls** - Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. Dead ball fouls are not coupled with live ball fouls or other dead ball fouls to create double or multiple fouls. Penalize all unsportsmanlike and nonplayer fouls separately.