

CFOA - NIAGARA
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GUARDIANS OF THE GAME

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Rule Book
Points of
Emphasis

It should be emphasized that player safety is our prime concern and should not be compromised. All other issues become secondary.

OPENING COMMENTS

- Injuries and negative publicity are hurting the game of football.
- Minor and high school enrolment for tackle football is down
- Collectively, we must do something to enhance the benefits of our game

Initiatives

- Province of Ontario
- Football Canada

Rowan's Law
Ontario
Bill 193
March 2018

- The law establishes removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols for players to ensure they are taken out of a game if they are suspected of having a concussion.
- Coaches and teachers will also be required to review online resources that help them identify and manage concussions in players.
- The bill also includes a concussion code of conduct that would set out rules of behaviour to minimize concussions while playing sports.

Football Canada

- Targeting has been put in the rule book and includes disqualification
- A complete section of rules defined as Safety Rules has been included near the front of the rule book immediately after the identified 2018 rule changes

Code of Ethics

“The protection and welfare of the players are paramount, and with this, there can be no compromise. Any official, who fails to promptly discharge his responsibility of penalizing for an infraction, is delinquent and unqualified to officiate.”

Rule 2 - Responsibility

“All field officials are equally responsible for the orderly conduct of the game, and the enforcement of the rules. No agreement shall be made that would prevent the calling of any foul by any official against either team.”

*Rule 2 –
Responsibility
cont'd*

“All field officials, upon recognizing any player who shows signs, symptoms, or behaviours consistent with a concussion (loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall report their concerns through the Referee to the head coach or appropriate health care professional”.

What Can We Do?

- Knowledge of rules, mechanics and standards
- Educate, Educate, Educate - other officials, players and coaches
- Become involved with organizations out of season (minor football associations etc.)

In Game Action

- Special emphasis on safety fouls – zero tolerance (including one-sided games)
- Be competent on the field – put yourself in the right position to make the call
- Stay with your keys – officiate your primary responsibility first
- Don't ball hawk – be a good dead ball official
- Exercise good judgement
- Be consistent

Calling Fouls

- We don't make the rules, we observe and call the fouls
- We do not determine the sentence
- Role is to ensure the game is played within the rules and to educate players and coaches
- We don't disqualify a player – the player disqualifies himself by the action

Safety Rules

- Goal Post Assembly
- Length of Game
- Mercy Rule
- Uniform and Equipment (Helmets, Mouthguards, Footwear)
- Coaches Certification of Equipment
- Blocking at or Below the Knee
- Restraining Zone Fouls
- Short Scrimmage Kicks
- Rough Play
- Unnecessary Roughness Fouls (all)

*Uniform &
Equipment
Rule 1 Section
11 Article 1*

GENERAL – IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF
THE RULE

- The prime responsibility to ensure the wearing of mandatory equipment is with the head coach.
- No player shall wear equipment of any kind which may injure the opponent. The Referee may have removed from the game any player who is wearing equipment which in his opinion endangers a participant.

Helmets
Rule 1 Section
11 Article 2

- Helmets and facemasks approved by the National Operating Committee on Safety in Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) be worn by players.
- Visors must be clear, not tinted - No medical exceptions are allowed.
- A player shall be required to wear his helmet while in bounds, and shall not voluntarily remove it while the play is in progress.

Helmets cont'd

- If a player's helmet involuntarily comes off during the play, except as a result of a foul, he shall be required to leave the game for 3 plays.
- If any player loses his helmet he must stop participating in the play. (Penalty: L10 PBD or PBH)
- Hitting a player who has lost his helmet is to be ruled Unnecessary Roughness

*Coaches
Certification
Rule 1 Section
11 Article 5*

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

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

Best Practices - Equipment

All knee or arm braces should be wrapped or covered to prevent injury

Casts need to be wrapped in foam and inspected by the Referee

During the field inspection by officials, those officials should also look for equipment issues as players are warming up

Blocking
Rule 4 section
5 article 2(d)

- On any play, blocking at or below the knee is illegal except in the close line play area by a player who is occupying a position in this area at the snap of the ball.
- Note: Only applies to U18 levels of football.

*Short
Scrimmage
Kick
Rule 5 Section
4 Article 2(a)*

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

*Roughing the
Passer
Article 2*

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

Roughing the Passer cont'd

- A defender is prohibited from forcibly hitting in the knee area or below, a passer who has one or both feet planted on the ground, even if the initial contact is above the knee. It is not a foul if the defender is blocked (or fouled) into the passer and has no opportunity to avoid him;
- Note 1: A defender cannot initiate a roll or lunge and forcibly hit the passer in the knee area or below, even if he is being contacted by another player.
- Note 2: It is not a foul if the defender swipes, wraps, or grabs a passer in the knee area or below in an attempt to tackle him

Roughing the Passer cont'd

- A defender is prohibited from committing such intimidating and punishing acts as stuffing a passer to the ground or unnecessarily wrestling or driving him down after the passer has thrown the ball, even if the rusher makes his initial contact with the passer, a defensive player must not unnecessarily or violently throw him down and land on top of him with all or most of the defender's weight. Instead, the defensive player must strive to wrap up the passer with the defensive player's arms.

*Roughing the
Passer
cont'd*

A defender is prohibited from using the helmet and and/or facemask to hit the passer, or use hands, arms, or other parts of the body forcibly in the head or neck area.

*Player in a
Defenseless
Posture
Article 16*

- Two part rule
- First part defines those players who are defenseless
- Second part defines the contact that is prohibited against those players who are defenseless

Defenseless Players

1. A player in the act of or just after throwing a pass;
2. A receiver attempting to catch a pass; or who has completed a catch and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a runner. If the receiver/runner is capable of avoiding or warding off the impending contact of an opponent, he is no longer a defenseless player;
3. A runner already in the grasp of a tackler and whose forward progress has been stopped;
4. A player attempting to field a kick in the air;
5. A player on the ground;
6. A kicker/punter during the kick or during the return
7. A quarterback at any time after a change of possession
8. A player who receives a “blindside” block when the blocker is moving toward or parallel to his own end line and approaches the opponent from behind or from the side
9. A player who is protected from an illegal crack block

Prohibited Contact on Defenseless Players

1. Forcibly hitting the defenseless player's head or neck area with the helmet, facemask, forearm, or shoulder regardless of whether the defensive player also uses his arms to tackle the defenseless player by encircling or grasping him; OR
2. Lowering the head and making forcible contact with the top/crown or forehead/"hairline" parts of the helmet against any part of the defenseless player's body; OR

*Prohibited
Contact on
Defenseless
Players cont'd*

3. Illegally launching into a defenseless opponent.

It is an illegal launch if a player (1) leaves both feet prior to contact to spring forward and upward into his opponent, AND

(2) uses any part of his helmet (including the top/crown or forehead parts) to initiate forcible contact against any part of his opponent's body.

Note: This does not apply to contact against a runner, unless the runner is still considered to be a defenseless player.

*Prohibited
Contact on
Defenseless
Players cont'd*

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

*Prohibited
Contact on
Defenseless
Players cont'd*

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

*Prohibited
Contact on
Defenseless
Players cont'd*

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

Blindside Block

Article 17

- A player receives a “blindside” block when the blocker is moving toward or parallel to his own end line and approaches the opponent from behind or from the side.
- For a “blindside” block to be legal, an opponent **MUST** lead with his hands, and initiate contact with his hands, which are to be extended in front of him.
- Note Article 17 does not apply for U Sport, CJFL and CEGEP levels.

Targeting
Rule 7
Section 2
Article 6

- No player shall target and make forcible contact to the head or neck area of an opponent with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulder. This foul requires that there be at least one indicator of targeting (See Note below).
- When in question, it is a foul.

*Targeting
cont'd*

“Targeting” means that a player takes aim at an opponent for purposes of attacking with forcible contact that goes beyond making a legal tackle or a legal block or playing the ball. Some indicators of targeting include but are not limited to:

Targeting cont'd

1. Launch—a player leaving his feet to attack an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body to make forcible contact in the head or neck area
2. A crouch followed by an upward and forward thrust to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area, even though one or both feet are still on the ground

*Targeting
cont'd*

3. Leading with helmet, shoulder, forearm, fist, hand or elbow to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area

4. Lowering the head before attacking by initiating forcible contact with the crown of the helmet.

Penalty: L25 Player Disqualified from game. Levels U14 and below the player will receive a warning for first offense.

*Targeting-
When Most
Will Occur*

- 'Blindside blocks'
- Plays that change direction
- Defensive Backs going for the 'big hit'
- Second defensive player coming in to assist or finish off on the tackle

If a defender leads with the head and makes contact with an opponent below the neck area – think Unnecessary Roughness

If a defender takes aim and forcibly hits an opponent in the neck area or above with anything – think Targeting

Questions??

