SBMSA Football Program Rules and By-Laws



Amended as of August 2024

Table of Contents

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION 4

I. Football Board 4

II. Head Coaches 5

III. Publicity 6

IV. Parent and Auxiliary Organizations 6

V. Qualifications and Eligibility 8

VI. Football Sizes 11

SPORTMANSHIP AND CONDUCT 12

I. No Smoking 12

II. Coaches 12

III. All Persons 13

IV. Teams 13

V. Crowds 13

VI. Penalties 13

VII. Field Access 13

VIII. Scouting or Filming of Practices 14

IX. SBMSA Suspension Rule 14

X. Sportsmanship Committee: 14

XI. SBMSA Football Code of Conduct 15

XII. Texas Criminal Statutes 16

TACKLE PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS 18

I. Player Weights – Tackle Program 18

II. Weekly Activities (Games and Practices) 20

III. Game Rules and Conduct 21

IV. Tie-Break Procedures for Games 26

V. Rules concerning designated down-linemen; 27

VI. Rules concerning Kickoffs and Free Kicks 28

VII. Other Rules 28

VIII. Mercy Rule: 31

IX. Game Cancellation 31

X. Equipment and Fields 32

FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM 34
I. THE GAME, COACHES, FIELD, UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT 34
II. APPROVED RULINGS AND PROTESTS 37
III. POSSESSION, PERIODS OF PLAY, MOVING THE BALL, AND SCORING 37
IV. THE BALL: LIVE, DEAD, LOOSE 40
V. LINE OF SCRIMMAGE AND NEUTRAL ZONE 41
VI. POSITIONING, MOTION, SHIFT, SUBSTITUTION 42
VII. CENTER SNAP 44
VIII. SCREENING AND RUSHING 44
IX. PASSING REGULATIONS 45
X. RUNNING WITH THE BALL 47
XI. PENALTY ENFORCEMENT 49
7on7 PROGRAM 52
I. THE GAME, COACHES, FIELD, UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT 52
II. APPROVED RULINGS AND PROTESTS 54
III. POSSESSION, PERIODS OF PLAY, MOVING THE BALL, AND SCORING 55
IV. THE BALL: LIVE, DEAD, LOOSE 58
V. LINE OF SCRIMMAGE AND NEUTRAL ZONE 59
VI. POSITIONING, MOTION, SHIFT, SUBSTITUTION 60
VII. SCREENING AND RUSHING 61
VIII. PASSING REGULATIONS 62
IX. RUNNING WITH THE BALL 64
X. PENALTY ENFORCEMENT 64
REGULAR SEASON AND DIVISIONAL BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP 67
I. Division Format and Regular Season Schedule 67
II. Regular Season Champion and Bowl Format 68
Appendix A – Playoff Brackets 71
I. Examples 71
Appendix B -- SBMSA PENALTY CHARTS 73

SPRING BRANCH-MEMORIAL SPORTS ASSOCIATION
FOOTBALL PROGRAM

The Board of Directors of the Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association ("SBMSA") empowers the Board of Football Commissioners (the "Football Board") to administer all phases of this football program (the "League"), which are not specifically reserved for the SBMSA Board of Directors and are not in direct violation of SBMSA's by-laws, as outlined in these rules. Within these limits, any majority decision of the Football Board will be official, final, and non-appealable. No meeting of the Football Board is official unless there are at least three (3) members present, one of which must be the Program Director.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

I. Football Board

A. No fewer than five (5) members shall administer the Football Board.

B. The Football Board shall consist of a Program Director appointed by the President of the SBMSA and approved by the SBMSA Board of Directors with the balance of the Football Board to be selected by the Program Director subject to the approval of the SBMSA Board of Directors.

C. Football Board Organization: (Example – may vary by season)

Program Director
Directors
Commissioners
Advisors

D. Responsibilities of the above listed officers:

1. Program Director

a. Answer to the SBMSA Board of Directors.

b. Administer all functions of the Football Board in managing, supervising and delegating authority within the proper guidelines as directed by the SBMSA Board of Directors.

c. Assures that all Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches have agreed to allow SBMSA to conduct a criminal background check on them.

2. Directors
    a. Administer respective programs.
    b. Direct the operations of the Commissioners.

3. Division Commissioners
    a. Answer to the Directors.
    b. Recruit Head Coaches.
    c. Direct the operations of their Division.
    d. Review all proposals and/or complaints from coaches and parents.
    e. Instruct all Head Coaches in the administration of those functions designated by the Football Board.
    f. Assume responsibility for the playing fields.

II. Head Coaches

A. Responsible for the proper operation of the teams according to the Rules and Regulations as set forth by the Football Board and the SBMSA.

B. Must submit to a criminal background check using procedures proscribed by SBMSA and must register according to process required by SBMSA.

C. Answers directly to their Division Commissioner.

D. Assumes the responsibility for appointing assistant coaches and submitting a list of these assistants to their Division Commissioner for approval prior to the first practice. Note: The Football Board and/or the SBMSA reserve the right to approve or disapprove any appointments.

E. Responsible for promoting Sportsmanship including being responsible for the behavior of assistant coaches, parents and fans of their respective teams.

F. Responsible for the financing of their team thru fund raising, donations or other approved means, which shall be approved by the Program Director. A coach may not assess a player's family for the cost of uniforms.

G. Responsible for conveying to players and parents all SBMSA rules regarding minimum playing requirements, number of coaches on the sidelines, persons authorized to be on the sidelines, persons authorized to be in the film tower, and rules related to working on the chain crew / operating the scoreboard.

H. Responsible for all assistant coaches registering with the League for the purpose of submitting to a criminal background check.

I. Head Coaches must report scores of all games within 24 hours after the game.

III. Publicity - The Program Director or his appointed representatives must approve all public relations programs regarding football activities.

IV. League Chain of Communications - The league chain of communications should be followed for all issues requiring resolution. The chain is as follows:

Step	Football Players	Cheerleaders
Step 1	Parents	Parents
Step 2	Coaches	Coaches
Step 3	Head Coach	Head Coach
Step 4	Division Commissioner	Division Commissioner
Step 5	Director (Tackle, Flag, 7on7)	Cheer Director
Step 6	Football Program Director	Football Program Director
Step 7	SBMSA President	SBMSA President

Football Board Member contact information can be found on the Football Page of the SBMSA Website.

V. Parent and Auxiliary Organizations

A. Fundraising activities – Parents are encouraged to support their child's team through fundraising efforts which can help offset expenses incurred by the team. Parents may raise funds through any appropriate endeavor that is not in competition or conflict with the League's fundraising efforts.

B. Cheerleaders – Tackle teams will have Cheer Squads. Tackle Divisions that will have Cheer Squads will be determined every year based on Cheer Registration numbers. Cheerleaders will only be permitted on the playing fields during their Halftime performance. During the game they will be positioned on the sidelines according to the Cheer Rulebook. There will not be any competition between groups of cheerleaders. See the Cheer Rulebook for detailed information and rules.

C. Photographing Games

1. It is the League's policy to allow one adult per team inside the playing field to film or photograph the game being played. In the event that there is a League provided filming/scorekeeping tower, one additional adult from each team may be placed in the tower for filming purposes only. Under no circumstances should the towers be utilized for coaching or observation purposes. In addition, only participants of the current game are allowed inside the playing field for filming purposes. (i.e. no scouting inside the fences). The Football Board and the Game Officials are authorized to remove violators from the film towers or from inside the fences.

2. If a game is already being filmed for the benefit of both teams (whether paid or not) no additional personnel will be allowed in the filming/scorekeeper tower.

3. The cameraperson not utilizing the film tower will position himself between the end of the end zone and the team gathering area (either end) on the team side of the field only. The cameraperson may "roam" the sideline opposite the teams, but at no time enter the field of play.

4. The Head Coach of each team is responsible for designating the cameraperson and/or film person. These people can be a different person for each game.

5. Teams may have as many additional filmers/photographers as they desire for their own games as long as they are outside of the fence, remain on the ground/bleachers (e.g. no towers/ladders), AND have the direct electronic devise in their hands (e.g. no remotes/extenders).

6. If a paid film person or photographer is used, or if the film person or photographer intends to offer the game films or photographs for sale to the team members, the film person or photographer must be pre-approved by the League. A list of already approved photographers and film persons is available from the Program Director.

    a. **Flag Rule:** The only league approved method of scouting your opponent is by taking notes. Filming of any game other than your own is prohibited.

    b. **Tackle & 7on7:** The only league approved method of digital scouting your opponent is through the league provided film service.

D. Chain Crew / Scoreboard Operator

1. Chain crews / Scoreboard Operators consist of volunteer adults acceptable to both Head Coaches and the Officials. An Adult is defined as someone over the age of 17. A minor may operate the chains, with specific approval from Head Coaches, Game Officials, and the Football Board Member on duty.

    a. Home Team provides Down Marker Operator(s) (Flag & 7on7)

    b. Visiting Team provides Scoreboard Operator (Flag & 7on7)

2. Three (3), and only three (3), people may operate chains and down markers at one time for tackle games. One (1), and only one (1), person may operate the down maker at a time for flag and 7on7 games.

    a. **Note:** Football Board Members or Field Crew Members will operate the chains & down marker for Tackle Games.

3. One (1), and only one (1), person may operate the scoreboard at a time for flag and 7on7 games.
    a. **Note:** Football Board Members or Field Crew Members will operate the scoreboard for Tackle Games.

4. There will be no smoking by the chain crew or scoreboard operator.

5. There will be no using any type of electronic device by the chain crew. The only electronic device the scoreboard operator can use is the scoreboard controller.
    a. Please stay off of your cellular phones!

6. There will be no coaching from the chain crew or scoreboard operator. If at the determination of the Football Board this rule is consistently being violated by a particular chain crew member that person could be suspended from acting as a member of the chain crew for future games. This suspension may not be appealed.
    a. The chain crew and the scoreboard operator are not allowed to communicate to the coaching staff at any time during the game or join the team or have discussions with the coaches at Halftime.
    b. The chain crew and the scoreboard operator are not allowed to communicate to any players on the field or on the sideline.

7. Chain gang members are Officials of the game. They must not question a referee's call, hinder or harass referees, players, or fans, and/or coach any player on his or the opposing team.

VI. Qualifications and Eligibility

A. Player Eligibility

1. In order for the League to accurately and fairly assign players to their proper Division and proper team or draft pool, all players who register for the League shall be required to provide the League with a valid birth certificate and an accurate address for the player's place of residence. A player's family shall comply with any reasonable requests from the League regarding production of a valid birth certificate and any documents necessary to prove residency or verification of school enrollment.

2. The official playing age of any player is his/her age as of April 30th of the current year. Based on that date, players age 5 through 12 are eligible to participate in the League. Any player in 7th or 8th Grade must play in the Middle School Tackle Division (pending they meet all eligibility requirements)

Note: for the Middle School Tackle Divisions (7th & 8th Grade), players are placed in a Division based on their Grade.

B. Division Classification

1. TACKLE

a. Freshman (8 man):	Age 8
b. Sophomore (8 man):	Age 9
c. Junior Varsity (11 man):	Age 10
d. Varsity (11 man):	Age 11*
e. Middle School – 7th Grade (11 man):	7th Grade
f. Middle School – 8th Grade (11 man):	8th Grade

2. FLAG

a. Freshman (8 man):	Age 5
b. Junior Varsity (8 man):	Age 6
c. Varsity (8 man):	Age 7

3. 7on7

a. Junior Varsity:	Ages 8 and 9
b. Varsity:	Ages 10 and 11*

*A player that is 12 years of age AND in 6th grade may be eligible to play in a varsity tackle or 7on7 division.

C. All division classifications are subject to change each season based on participation and the Football Board's decisions on how to best serve the community.

D. Exception to Player Eligibility – Excerpt from SBMSA By-Laws: Section 4. Player Eligibility

1. Upon written request of a parent or guardian, the director of a program ***MAY*** permit a player to **play up** one age level above the one determined by the player's age if (1) such request is made at registration and prior to the draft, (2) in the judgment of the director the player has acquired the abilities to compete at that level and (3) there is a coach or coaches willing to accept such a player.

2. Upon written request of a parent or guardian, the director of a program ***MAY*** permit a player to **play down** one level below the one determined by the player's official age if:

a. Such child is enrolled in a special education program because of a physical disability (as a result of placement by an ARD committee). The student's IEP must indicate his/her disability or enrollment in an Adaptive Physical Education class, and a copy of the IEP must accompany the participant's registration, and

b. Such request is made at registration and prior to the draft or team assignment, and

c. In the judgment of the program director the player does not have the ability to compete in his or her proper age group, and

d. There is a coach or coaches in the lower level willing to accept such a player.

E. Team Formation

1. Players in all but Junior Varsity Tackle, Varsity Tackle, & Varsity 7on7 will be placed on teams according to the geographic area in which they reside (to the best of the league's ability). Players in Junior Varsity Tackle, Varsity Tackle, & Varsity 7on7 will be placed on teams via a draft. The Football Directors and respective Commissioners will determine the draft pools, skills evaluation and draft process, and the number of teams in each pool after registration is completed.
Note: players in the Middle School (7th & 8th Grade) Divisions will be placed on Teams / Draft Pools according to the SBISD High School they are Zone to.

2. Exceptions:

a. A Head Coach coaching a team outside his own geographic area, as designated by the Football Director, may at his own option, and with the approval of the Football Board, play his child(s) on the team he coaches. The child(s) must be otherwise eligible to play in the League. With the approval of the Football Board, the same privilege may be given to an Assistant.

b. Players from area pools with too few players to field a team but having the desire to play, will be assigned to the nearest elementary or middle school for draft pool assignment by the Director and Division Commissioner. Any deviation from this rule must have the approval of the Football Board.

3. No player may be registered on any team after that team plays its first official game, or after a date set by the Football Board.

F. Illegal and Ineligible Players

1. An illegal player is one who plays on a team for which he could not have become eligible within the current year under any circumstances. Among the issues which make a player illegal are:

    a. Being 13 years of age or older as of April 30th of the current year (for all non-Middle School Divisions)

    b. Knowingly providing the League with an invalid or falsified birth certificate;

    c. Knowingly providing the League with an inaccurate residential address or other information with the intent to manipulate which team or draft pool to which the player will be assigned.

2. **Use of an illegal player may result in sanctions including but not limited to game forfeitures, disqualification of the player, and suspension of the Coach.**

3. An ineligible player is one who fails to meet certain correctable criteria for participation in a Division or game. Among the issues which may make a player ineligible are:

    a. failure to submit player registration or parent consent forms;

    b. failure to pay the registration fee or obtain a waiver of the fee;

    c. failure to submit a valid birth certificate;

    d. failure to be properly listed on the team roster;

    e. lacking an official weight;

4. **Use of an ineligible player in a game before the eligibility issue has been corrected may result in sanctions including but not limited to forfeiture of the game. Upon finding an issue regarding the eligibility of a player, the League may temporarily suspend the player until such time as the eligibility issue is corrected.**

5. A protest regarding the eligibility of a player will be considered valid only if proper notification of such protest is made during the course of a subject game to the head game Official and/or to the opposing Coach and if a full written protest is presented to the Division Commissioner within twenty- four (24) hours of the game completion. If a protested game is played on a Saturday, the time limit for presentation will be extended to forty-eight (48) hours from game completion. No protest will be considered involving judgment calls of game Officials.

VII. Football Sizes

A. Each team is responsible for providing a game ball that is in good playing condition.

1. **Tackle** - Game balls must be 100% leather. No composite or hybrid type game balls will be allowed.
    a. Freshman – Peewee Size (K2)
    b. Sophomore – Peewee Size (K2)
    c. Junior Varsity – Junior Size (TDJ)
    d. Varsity – Junior Size (TDJ)
    e. Middle School (7th & 8th Grade) – Youth Size (TDY)

2. **Flag** - Game balls can be leather or hybrid / composite type game balls.
    a. Freshman – Peewee Size (K2)
    b. Junior Varsity – Peewee Size (K2)
    c. Varsity - Peewee Size (K2)

3. **7on7** - Game balls must be 100% leather. No composite or hybrid type game balls will be allowed.
    a. Junior Varsity – Peewee Size (K2)
    b. Varsity – Junior Size (TDJ)

B. The ball may not be altered. This includes the use of any ball-drying substance or substance used to enhance a player's grip on the ball (e.g. "stick'em").

1. Teams found to be using an illegal ball for their Division will suffer the following consequence: ten (10) yard Unsportsmanlike foul on the Head Coach. This penalty is MANDATORY not discretionary. Head coach MUST ensure their Team does not put an unapproved ball in play.

SPORTMANSHIP AND CONDUCT

I. No Smoking – There will be no smoking inside the playing area or on SBISD property.

II. Coaches

A. No persons other than approved coaches (maximum of five (5) tackle coaches and three (3) flag and 7on7 coaches per team) may appear on the sideline with the team. **Note:** Freshman Flag is allowed four (4) coaches per team on the sideline.
Note: High School Players are encouraged to attend 7th & 8th Grade games and

help coach. They will be provided "sideline passes". There is no limit to the number of High School Players allowed on the sidelines.

B. The game official, or a representative of the Football Board, may assess a penalty of five (5) yards for not following this rule. This same penalty shall apply to the unauthorized use of photographers or film persons. Any variations of this must be approved by the Football Board.

C. Only the Head Coach of a Team is allowed to discuss a play or call with the game official.

1. The Head Coach will be identified by their Coaching Card.
2. A Warning will be given the first time a "non-head Coach" is addressing an official.
3. Each Team will receive (1) warning and then will receive a 5-yard penalty each additional infraction.

III. All Persons

A. Profanity, fighting, abuse of players, unsportsmanlike-like conduct, and use of alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs, or violation of any SBMSA rules will not be tolerated and each such violation reported to or discovered by the Football Board may result in game forfeiture or suspension depending on the circumstances.

B. Texas law prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages or any controlled substance by anyone on school property. All SBMSA facilities, including Reggie Grob and Darryl Tully Stadium parking lots, are considered school property. Any violation of this rule may result in the suspension of participation (including a parent of player) in the Football Program.

IV. Teams – The Head Coach and his staff shall maintain order and discipline among his players. Unsportsmanlike-like conduct on the part of the players or Assistant Coaches shall reflect directly on the coaching staff.

V. Crowds – The conduct of spectators supporting his team is the direct responsibility of the Head Coach of the team. Fans shall abide by UIL rules with respect to behavior, including the UIL prohibitions regarding artificial noisemakers.

VI. Penalties – On continued violation of any of the above conduct responsibilities, the Officials will assess a 10-yard penalty on the offending team. Subsequently, a full report should be made to the Division Commissioner detailing the circumstances leading to such disciplinary action. Such penalty may also be assessed by a Football Board Member witnessing the violation.

VII. Field Access - No one will be allowed to enter the playing area (designated by the

field fence) unless he/she is a Football Board Member, Division Commissioner, approved coach or cameraperson. Exception: a parent(s) of an injured player may enter. After one warning a team will be assessed a five (5) yard penalty if the Referee or a League Official notes a violation of the above.

VIII. Scouting or Filming of Practices - The scouting or filming of other team's practices is prohibited.

IX. SBMSA Suspension Rule

A. One of the primary goals of the SBMSA is to teach Good Sportsmanship to our area youth. Displays of poor sportsmanship by players, coaches, and / or fans will not be tolerated. As a discouragement of ***such*** displays, the SBMSA Executive Board has adopted a policy which mandates a one-half game suspension for any football player or coach ejected from a game by a game official based on poor sportsmanship.

B. Any suspension ***shall*** be administered by the Program Director and the Football Board during the next scheduled game, including any make-up game or playoff game.

C. Upon clear official video evidence that the incident did not warrant ejection, the Program Director and Football Board may waive or reduce the suspension.

D. Upon evidence of particularly outrageous behavior or recurring incidents, the Program Director and Football Board may levy suspensions of additional games up to and including the remainder of a season or future seasons.

E. The decision of the Program Director and the Football Board to impose or waive any suspension shall be final and not subject to an appeal to the SBMSA Executive Board.

X. Sportsmanship Committee:

A. SBMSA Board of Directors has created a formal Sportsmanship Committee to assist each sport Program Director/Board on serious or recurrent sportsmanship violations by any coach, parent, player or fan.

1. The Sportsmanship committee is charged to formalize and mandate, through consistent and reportable actions, that Sportsmanship is a core value of SBMSA. That includes better tracking of individuals who display repeated lapses of good sportsmanship and/or conduct across multiple SBMSA program venues. This committee will be led by the Sportsmanship Director and each sport will appoint a representative to serve on this committee. At his/her sole discretion, the Sportsmanship Director may appoint additional individuals to serve of this committee.

2. This committee brings consistency and accountability to the coach selection process between the sport programs and provides a mechanism to permanently remove coaches for repeat lapses in sportsmanship and/or indifference in providing positive coaching and mentoring leadership to our youth athletes. This committee can also be engaged to address issues outside of actions by game officials where a coach/parent/athlete/fan merits disciplinary discussion for repetitive or very serious sportsmanship violations and/or has been previously suspended for conduct detrimental to league core values. Program Directors can request any serious sportsmanship violation by a coach, player, parent or fan etc. be referred to the Sportsmanship Committee. Any recommendations by the Sportsmanship Committee will be handed to the sports Program Director/Board for final action and are not subject to an appeal.

3. Unless otherwise communicated by Program Director, any matter forwarded to the Sportsmanship Committee will be considered an immediate and indefinite suspension until Sportsmanship Committee hands final recommendation to sports Program Director/Board for final action.

XI. SBMSA Football Code of Conduct

A. PLAYERS

1. Players will be accountable for their actions.

2. PLAYERS will strive to play by the rules.

3. PLAYERS will treat other players, coaches, and officials with respect.

4. PLAYERS will maintain their schoolwork and understand that Football is secondary to academics.

B. PARENTS

1. PARENTS will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials.

2. PARENTS will never scorn or yell at their child or other children for making a mistake on the field.

3. PARENTS will respect the coaches' time and ability and will not interfere with practices or games.

C. COACHES

1. COACHES will support the other coaches, Board members, and others

working with the team, and strive to make this a positive experience for everyone.

2. COACHES will educate themselves on the rules of the game and will teach these rules to their team.

3. COACHES will encourage effort and development and will realize that mistakes are part of the learning process.

4. COACHES will ask their team to treat the opposing players, coaches, football officials, and all others with respect.

5. COACHES will support and respect contest officials and refrain from public criticism or embarrassment.

D. Any individual who threatens an official, coach, parent, spectator, or any member of a team during any SBMSA tackle football game will be suspended from participating in any SBMSA football events (including but not limited coaching teams and attending any practices or games) for the remainder of the season, in the determination of the Football Board. The Sportsmanship Committee will determine if any additional punishment is warranted.

XII. Texas Criminal Statutes regarding interaction on the field or court of play with an Umpire or Referee

§ 22.01**. ASSAULT**.

(a) A person commits an offense if the person:

(1) intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causes bodily injury to another, including the person's spouse; (2) intentionally or knowingly threatens another with imminent bodily injury, including the person's spouse; or (3) **intentionally or knowingly causes physical contact with another when the person knows or should reasonably believe that the other will regard the contact as offensive or provocative.**

* * *

(c) **An offense under Subsection (a) (2) or (3) is a Class C misdemeanor,** except that the offense is:

* * *

(2) a Class B misdemeanor if the offense is committed by a person who is not a sports participant against a person the actor knows is a sports participant either:

(A) while the participant is performing duties or responsibilities in

the participant's capacity as a sports participant; or

(B) in retaliation for or on account of the participant's performance of a duty or responsibility within the participant's capacity as a sports participant.

(3) "Sports participant" means a person who participates in any official capacity with respect to an interscholastic, intercollegiate, or other organized amateur or professional athletic competition and includes an athlete, referee, umpire, linesman, coach, instructor, administrator, or staff member.

§ 42.01. **DISORDERLY CONDUCT.**

(a) A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly:

(1) uses abusive, indecent, profane, or vulgar language in a public place, and the language by its very utterance tends to incite an immediate breach of the peace; or

(2) makes an offensive gesture or display in a public place, and the gesture or display tends to incite an immediate breach of the peace;

TACKLE PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

I. Player Weights – Tackle Program

A. Maximum Player weights by Division are:

1. Freshman	130 pounds
2. Sophomore	155 pounds
3. Junior Varsity	175 pounds
4. Varsity	195 pounds
5. 7th Grade	N/A
6. 8th Grade	N/A

B. Players who exceed these maximum weights will be required to compete in the next higher Division. A player exceeding 195 pounds will not be allowed to participate in the Varsity Division.

C. Players who exceed the following weights are required to compete as a ***designated down-lineman***:

1. Freshman	85 pounds
2. Sophomore	95 pounds
3. Junior Varsity	105 pounds
4. Varsity	125 pounds
5. 7th Grade	N/A
6. 8th Grade	N/A

D. There are no minimum weights in any Division.

E. A Varsity Division player who is 11 years old and weighs less than 65 pounds ***may*** petition the Program Director to allow the player to play down in the Junior Varsity Division.

F. The League will conduct a formal weigh-in to establish each player's official playing weight for the entire season (including playoffs). For the drafted Divisions, the formal and official weigh-in will occur at the Skills Assessment associated with team formation. For the non-drafted Divisions, the formal and official weigh-in will occur at a date set by the League (most likely the same day as the drafted Divisions).

1. Each player must have an official weight prior to playing in his first game. A member of the Football Board must be present at any weigh-in. If a player is not going to be present at his team's assigned official weigh-in time or player does not attend the Skills Assessment, he must obtain permission from the Program Director to weigh-in at a different time.

2. **Re-Weigh to Make Ball Carrying Weight -** Each player in the drafted Divisions AND non-drafted Divisions will be weighed officially at Skills Assessment. Any player who is five (5) pounds or less over the prescribed ball carrying weight for his division will be allowed an opportunity to re-weigh at a date set by the League if the player would like to reach the ball carrying weight.

3. **Re-Weigh to Make Maximum Weight -** Any player who qualifies to play in a sub-varsity Division based on age but weighs ten (10) pounds or less over the maximum weight for his Division at the Skills Assessment will be allowed an opportunity to re-weigh at a date set by the League in an attempt to reach the maximum weight for his Division. All sub-varsity players who weigh more than ten (10) pounds over the maximum weight for his Division at the Skills Assessment will be required to play in the next higher Division for which he qualifies in terms of weight. If a player elects to attempt to reach the maximum weight for his Division, but does not, he will likely not be able to play Football in any Division (because teams will have been formed) and no refund will be offered.

4. All players weighing more than 195 pounds at Skills Assessment will be afforded the opportunity to re-weigh at the re-weigh in date set by the League in an attempt to reach the maximum weight for the Varsity Division. Any player who does not make weight on such day will not be allowed to play and will be offered a refund.

G. **Health and Safety**

1. **The SBMSA Football Board is concerned for the health and safety of the players. To that end, the Football Board has set the above parameters for making weight and strongly discourages inappropriate and unhealthy weight loss techniques by players to make a specific weight. While a desire to make a certain weight is admirable, it should be undertaken by the player (with his parents' consent) in a controlled and healthful manner, over a long period of time; players should not crash diet, or use diuretics or similar substances.**

2. **Additionally, coaches are prohibited from "sweating" players to make a certain weight. The Football Board reserves the right to discipline coaches found to be in violation of this directive. Discipline options shall include banishment from coaching. The Football Board also reserves the right to disallow a player's official weight, if it is determined that the weight was achieved through improper means.**

3. **As a precaution, SBMSA has partnered with a service to provide qualified trainers at Tackle Games. These trainers are at games to assist injured players and aid in player safety. Any decisions made by a trainer**

regarding a player's ability to safely return to participate in a game shall be final.

H. Designated Down-lineman

1. 11 Man Tackle

a. A designated down-linemen (a player whose weight exceeds the above limits for his Division) is defined as any player required to play from a three- or four-point stance on the line of scrimmage, except on kicking teams (kickoff, kickoff receiving, punt, extra-point, and field goal teams; does not include the punt return team). Designated down- linemen may be the punter, kicker, or the holder for extra points and field goals, but may not advance or pass the ball. If a designated down-lineman is the punter, kicker, or holder, he need not be in a three- or four- point stance or on the line. If a designated down-lineman is on the punt, extra-point, or field goal team and is not the punter, kicker, or holder, he must play on the line of scrimmage from a three- or four-point, or from a two- point stance with his elbows on his knees.

2. 8 Man Tackle

a. Offense
- A designated down-linemen (a player whose weight exceeds the above limits for his Division) is defined as any player required to play from a three- or four-point stance on the line of scrimmage except on punts. Designated down-linemen may be the punter but may not advance or pass the ball. If a designated down-lineman is the punter he need not be in a three- or four-point stance or on the line. If a designated down-lineman is on the punt team and is not the punter he must play on the line of scrimmage from a three- or four-point or from a two-point stance with his elbow on his knees.

b. Defense
- There is no position or stance restrictions on any players while on defense related to his weight. However, a player whose weight exceeds the above limits for his Division may not advance the ball in the case of a turnover.

II. Weekly Activities (Games and Practices)

A. There is no limitation on the number of times a team may have a team event per week, provided however, that a team shall have no more than three (3) contact

sessions per week, total time each week does not exceed eight (8) hours, and each team event does not exceed two (2) hours. A game is considered two (2) hours. A "team event" is defined as three (3) or more players with one (1) or more coaches. A "contact session" is defined as a practice in full pads where there is player-to-player contact, a scrimmage, or a game; practices where there is player-to-sled or player-to-dummy contact are not considered "contact sessions." A week constitutes the seven (7) day period from Sunday through Saturday. Each game played during the week counts as one (1) of the three contact sessions. **Any violation may result in appropriate disciplinary actions or possible game forfeiture as determined by the Football Board.** The Football Board may authorize more than three contact sessions per week for some or all teams to accommodate special situations which may include preseason practices, playoffs schedules, and/or schedule changes due to weather or other League-wide concerns. **All teams must have, and all players must participate in, at least (2) non-contact practices prior to conducting or participating in a contact practice.**

NOTE Regarding 7th & 8th Grade Division Players: During the SBISD Football Season, 7th & 8th Grade Teams are only allowed to practice one (1) time per week, it must be "non-contact", and will be on Sunday. Post SBISD season, 7th & 8th Grade teams must abide by the team event and contact limits set forth above in Section A.

B. Scrimmage games may be scheduled any time after the first week of practice. No scrimmage games may be held between teams of different age classifications. Scrimmages with teams of other programs or school teams are not allowed without the consent of the Program Director and/or the Football Board. A scrimmage counts as a "contact session."

III. Game Rules and Conduct

A. Both teams shall be located on the same side of the field opposite the spectators (exceptions may be allowed in playoff games or due to weather conditions). Players and coaches shall remain at least two (2) yards from the sideline and within a designated area.

NOTE Regarding 7th & 8th Grade Games: Depending on the game venue, teams during these games may be allowed to occupy opposing sidelines.

B. Officials – While the association's policy is to supply two SFOA Officials, at least one (1) Official must be used in all League games. In the event that only one TASO Official is present, an additional Official may be appointed from the field. If that appointed Official is not a member of the Football Board, the appointee is subject to the approval of both coaches and the Official present. However, the TASO Official shall be fully responsible for all decisions made throughout the game. If a Football Board Member is present, at his discretion, he may start the game with no TASO Official being present. If no Official or Football Board

Member is present for the game, and both coaches agree that two parents/fans can officiate, the game may be played and it shall be considered an official game and will not be rescheduled. **It is the responsibilities of each coach to inform the officials of our specific rules which conflict with or are different from UIL/NCAA rules.**

C. The use of cellular phones, hand held radios, "walkie talkies", or any other personal, portable communications devices to communicate with coaches or individuals either on the field, on the sidelines, in the film tower, or in the stands is prohibited.

D. On-Field Coaching (**Freshman Division only**) – One coach per team will be allowed on the field during play for the first 2 games in the Freshman Division. Pre-Season Games (if played) would count as one of these games.

1. The on-field coach is considered one of the 5 total adults allowed on the team's sideline.
2. The Offensive Coach on the field will not talk to, make gestures to, or touch any player after the offensive huddle has broken.
3. The Defensive Coach may only help move defenders into the correct Defensive Alignment after the Offense has lined up and their initial Offensive Formation is Established. Examples are:
    a. Making sure LB's are on the Line of Scrimmage or 4 Yards off the line of scrimmage as dictated by the Offensive Formation.
    b. Making sure the DT's are not in the "A" Gap.
    c. CB, MLB, & Safety Alignment can only be adjusted prior to the Offense breaking the huddle.
4. The on-field coaches are considered part of the field of play, like an official, but must make every attempt to avoid the ball carrier, passes, punts, other players and officials.
5. The on-field coaches are not permitted to address the officials (unless they are the Head Coach of their Team).
6. The on-field coaches are allowed to hold water bottles in their hands while on the field of play and provide water to players but must cease once the offensive huddle is broken and must observe the play clock. On-field coaches must hold water bottles while play is in progress.
7. The intent of the rule is for the Offensive on-field coach to assist in calling the play while in the huddle and the Defensive Coach assisting players to line up in their correct Defensive alignment based on the Offenses Formation. Instructions to players may not be given during "play." Likewise, on-field coaches may not move players through signals or otherwise during "play." For purposes of this rule, "play" begins when the Offensive huddle is broken (for Defense it begins shortly after the Offense has lined up in their formation)

and ends upon the whistle stopping the play.

a. Upon the first violation of this rule by a team, the official shall stop play, stop the clock, and issue a warning to the offending coach. The penalty for subsequent violations shall be a 5-yard penalty and loss of down for an offensive violation, or a 5-yard penalty and automatic first down for a defensive violation.

8. In the event the Offense is running a no huddle Offense, the Board recognizes the need for some coaching between plays, but it shall be at the official's discretion if excessive coaching is occurring during "play".

E. Basic playing rules are in accordance with now-current NCAA/UIL Rules, except where modified by these SBMSA Rules.

F. Game Time – Tackle Program

1. Freshman & Sophomore – eight (8) minute quarters with a five (5) minute half time.

2. Junior Varsity & Varsity - ten (10) minute quarters with a five (5) minute half time.

3. 7th & 8th Grade - ten (10) minute quarters with a five (5) minute half time.

4. In playoff games, the half-time break may be lengthened to allow ample time for ceremonies.

5. Game Clocks – the field clock shall be considered official time when available; otherwise, the time shall be kept by one of the Officials, and it shall be considered official time. **UIL rules govern the running of the clock.**

6. Time Keeper – The SBMSA will supply timekeepers to operate available field clocks. They shall take given signals from the referees to cause the starting and stopping of the clock. Coaches should be aware that the Timekeepers are Officials of the game and should be given the same respect as the Officials on the playing surface. Excessive verbal abuse used towards the timekeepers may subject you to disciplinary actions from the Football Board. Such disciplinary actions could include ejection from the game being played and/or further game/practice suspensions.

G. Player Participation

1. Free substitutions rules will apply, and **maximum use of all players is encouraged.**

2. Each player must participate in at least fifteen (15) plays during each game.

A play which is nullified by a penalty after the snap of the ball (*i.e.*, Holding, Pass Interference, etc.) is considered to be a play.

NOTE Regarding 7th & 8th Grade Divisions: The intention of this Division is to provide players with additional playing time / game experience and it is expected that coaches will maximize all players playing time.

3. The only exceptions to the rule are cases of illness, injury, or disciplinary action by the Head Coach (in the case of disciplinary action, such actions must be applied consistently for all team members). In such cases the opposing Head Coach **must** be notified prior to the start of the game.

4. It is the responsibility of each Head Coach to assign an Assistant Coach to monitor its teams' players' participation, utilizing the "Game Monitor Sheet" provided by the League. It is recommended that each Head Coach review his player participation form at half time. The Assistant shall be one of the five (5) coaches allowed per team on the sideline. Each team's "Game Monitor Sheet" must be signed by both Monitors after the completion of the game and returned to the Division Commissioner for verification of player participation within 48 hours or the end of the game played. The Game Monitor Sheets are signed only to verify what was recorded on the monitor sheet, not to attest to the accuracy of what was recorded.

5. **Note: The participation rule is a matter between a Head Coach, his players, their parents/guardian, and the League; it does not involve the opposing team.**

    a. Concerns by the opposing team regarding playing time, must be brought by only the **HEAD COACH** while the game is still in progress to a commissioner or official. Once made aware, a board member will monitor the remainder of the game and if consequences are warranted, they will be communicated to both coaches within 24 hours of the game's completion.

6. **Consequences of violations: If a team is found to have violated the participation rule, the Football Board may impose, the following, but not limited to, consequences; Allowing the players who did not fully participate to make up the lost plays in the next scheduled game, a formal warning to the head coach, suspension of the head coach for up to the remainder of the season, etc. The consequence for clearly violating the participation rule in a playoff or championship game is forfeiture pursuant to section 5(a) of this rule. NOTE: Not completing and returning a "Game Monitor Sheet" to the Division Commissioner will be treated as a violation.**

H. Jersey numbering

1. Designated down-linemen must wear jerseys numbered 90 through 00. If

there are more than ten (10) designated down-linemen on a particular team, the team shall issue jerseys numbered 01, 02, 03, etc. to the designated down- linemen who are not issued jerseys numbered 90 through 00.

2. Receivers and eligible ball carriers – The nature of the League with regard to frequent positions changes and player-supplied game jerseys prevents enforcement of rigid eligible receiver numbering rules. It is recommended that the TASO officials be advised of the fact in the pre-game conference.

3. No two players on the same team may have the same jersey number.

I. Penalties – Penalties shall be 5 yards for UIL/NCAA 5-yard penalties and 10 yards for UIL/NCAA 10-yard and 15-yard penalties, except in the Varsity Tackle Division where UIL/NCAA Rules shall govern all penalties (5-, 10- or 15-yard penalties).

J. Game scoring – UIL/NCAA football scoring rules shall apply to all games with the following exceptions:

1. Extra Points

   a. In sub- varsity Tackle Divisions, extra points shall be attempted from the 2-yard line. A successful run shall score one (1) point, and a successful forward pass completed in the end zone shall score two (2) points.

   b. In the Varsity, 7th Grade, & 8th Grade Tackle Divisions, extra points shall be attempted from the 3-yard line. A successful run or forward pass shall score one (1) point and a successful kicked extra point shall score two (2) points.

2. In the Varsity, 7th Grade, & 8th Grade Tackle Divisions, Field Goals are scored as three (3) points.

3. In all Tackles Divisions, in the event that the defense returns a botched or blocked extra point, it will be scored as the following:

   a. The defense will receive the same number of points as the offense was attempting. The League provided official will prevail on any disagreements as to the point value given for a successful extra point.

   b. ***Examples****: 1. The offense throws a pass in the end zone and it is intercepted – defense would receive two (2) points if returned. 2. The offense throws a pass and it is intercepted on the 2-yard line – defense will receive two (2) points if returned. 3. Offense runs the ball and fumbles on the 2- yard line – defense will receive one (1) point if returned. 4. Offense sets up for a extra point kick –*

defense will receive two (2) points in all situations (meaning fumbled snap, fumbled fake or intercepted pass on fake or blocked extra point) Please also note that if an extra point kick does not go threw the uprights, it may be returned by the defensive team for two (2) points, but the offensive team will receive no points if recovered in the end zone.

IV. Tie-Break Procedures for Games

A. Regular Season Game;

1. Coin-flip for possession (winner chooses offense or defense; loser chooses the end-zone of play, which shall remain the same throughout all overtime sessions).
    a. **Note:** The team that is on the sideline furthest from the end-zone that is selected for overtime, is allowed to move their team to the sideline opposite of their opponent. This will allow both teams to be near the endzone where overtime will be played.

2. Each team has one (1) time-out in each overtime session.

3. The ball will be placed on the 10-yard line during the first overtime possession. **No chance for a first down, unless by rule violation.**

4. Each team has one (1) possession going into the same end-zone.

5. In case of a tie after the first possession, the ball will be placed on the 5-yard line and each team will get one (1) additional possession. The team that had possession of the ball first in the first overtime will be on defense first in the second overtime.

6. In the case of a tie after the second overtime, the game will result in a tie.

B. Playoff Game – Play will continue after the second overtime at the 5-yard line, rotating possession, until a winner is decided.

C. 7th & 8th Grade Games

1. Coin-flip for possession (winner chooses offense or defense; loser chooses the end-zone of play, which shall remain the same throughout all overtime sessions).
2. Each team has one (1) time-out in each overtime session.
3. The ball will be placed on the 10-yard line during the first overtime possession. **No chance for a first down, unless by rule violation.**
4. Each team has one (1) possession going into the same end-zone.
5. Each team must "go for it" on 4th Down (no Field Goals).

6. Each team must go for the 1 point conversion (run or throw into the endzone) after every touchdown.

7. In the event of a tie after the end of the first overtime period, the same process will be repeated.

8. In the case of a tie after the third overtime, the game will result in a tie.

V. Rules concerning designated down-linemen;

A. A designated down-linemen will wear a jersey number from 90-00, which shall be referred to as a "90-series" number.

B. Must be in a three- or four- point stance when the ball is snapped, except as where otherwise permitted on kicking teams and on defense in 8 Man as described.

C. On offense, he must be the center, a guard, a tackle, or a tight-end which is a non-eligible receiver, and aligned as an interior lineman. An "interior linemen" shall be defined as a center, guard, tackle, or end within arms-length of another offensive lineman. All non-eligible receivers must be within arms-length another non-eligible receiver.

D. Defense

1. 11 Man - He must play noseguard, tackle, or defensive end (not a stand-up end).

2. 8 Man - There is no position or stance restrictions on any players while on defense related to his weight. However, a player whose weight exceeds the above limits for his Division may not advance the ball in the case of a turnover.

E. On kickoff receiving team, he must play on the front line, but does not have to be in a three- or four- point stance.

F. On kickoff team, he may play anywhere including kicker, but does not have to be in a three- or four-point stance.

G. On punt team, he may punt, but cannot advance the ball by running or throwing. It is the Officials' decision if on a muffed snap from the center whether he is attempting to advance the ball. If so, the ball is dead where fielded.

H. On the extra-point and field goal teams, he may be the kicker or holder in extra point or field goal attempts but may not advance the ball by running or throwing, but he may participate in as a blocker following a muffed snap.

I. A designated down-lineman may not advance the football under any

circumstances.
Note: this does not apply to the 7th & 8th Grade Divisions.

VI. Rules concerning Kickoffs and Free Kicks

A. Varsity

1. On all kickoffs and free kicks following a safety, the kicking team must have at least four (4) players (not counting the kicker) on either side of the ball and must have at least three (3) players outside each hash mark.

2. Free kicks following a safety shall be from the kicking team's 20-yard line unless moved by penalty.

3. Kickoffs shall be from the kicking team's 40-yard line unless moved by penalty.

B. Junior Varsity

1. There are no kick-offs in the Junior Varsity division. After a score, the ball is placed at the 40-yard line. After a safety the ball is placed at the 50-yard line.

C. Freshman & Sophomore

1. There are no kick-offs in Freshman & Sophomore divisions. After a score, the ball is placed at the 30-yard line. After a safety the ball is placed at the 40-yard line.

D. 7th & 8th Grade

1. There are no kick-offs in the 7th or 8th Grade Division. After a score, the ball is placed at the 40-yard line. After a safety the ball is placed at the 50-yard line.

VII. Punting

A. There is no "default punt". If a team wishes to punt, the team must actually punt the football.

1. **Exception: 7th or 8th Grade Divisions** - If the offensive team decides to forgo a run or pass play to achieve a first down, they can signal to the ref and notify the other team they would like to "PUNT" and move the ball forward **from the current spot** **35 yards**. Possession will change to the other team. **This can only be done when the offense is on their side of the 50 yard line.**

B. No one on defense is allowed to line up over the Center. The long-snapper cannot be hit until after the ball is kicked away.

C. Fake Punts ARE allowed. If during a fake punt an offensive player lines up under the center, the defense can then adjust into any defensive alignment permitted by the rules of their Division.

D. Rushing on a Punt is allowed.

E. Quick kicks are allowed.

Other Rules

A. 11 Man

1. No blocking below the waist. Penalty is 10 yards from the previous spot and replay down.

B. 8 Man

1. Offense
    a. Three non-eligible offensive linemen (center and two "guards"). Guards may be on each side of center or on the same side but must be no wider than arms-length apart from another player on the line of scrimmage AND there must be at least one player on the line of scrimmage within arm-length on each side of the center. NOTE, see previous rules on designated down-linemen (i.e. all designated down-linemen are non-eligible and must be within arms-length of another lineman). Penalty is illegal formation and 5 yards and replay down.
    b. Five players (and no more) must be on the line of scrimmage. All players on the line of scrimmage within arms-length of each other must have at least one hand on the ground. Penalty is illegal formation and 5 yards and replay down.
    c. No "trips" formation (i.e. three players outside of the guards – players in the backfield aligned outside of the guard would be included). Penalty is illegal formation and 5 yards and replay down.
    d. No player receiving a direct "under center" snap may run between the guards (i.e. no quarterback sneaks). Penalty is 5 yards and replay down.
    e. No blocking below the waist. Penalty is 10 yards from the previous spot and replay down.
    f. **Required Passing** – A forward pass play must be attempted at least every seven (7) offensive plays per possession.

- If it is a required passing play (i.e. the 7th play since the previous pass attempt) the officials will announce that it is a required passing play and no offensive player is eligible to advance the ball past the line of scrimmage previous to a forward pass. The penalty is a loss of down and 10 yards and the next play will also be a required passing play.
- The ball must leave the quarterbacks hand in a forward motion for the play to count as a passing play (e.g. a quarterback sack on an attempted passing play will not count as a passing play). If this occurs on a required passing play the following play will also be a required passing play.
- A half or game may not end on a failed required passing play unless the defending team elects to not require the offense to run an additional play.

2. Defense
    a. Defensive Linemen
        - May only have up to one less defensive lineman than offensive down-linemen (3 offensive linemen = 2 defensive linemen, 4 offensive linemen = 3 defensive linemen, etc.) **AND** may only have up to a matching number of defensive linemen as there are offensive lineman on either side of the center.
        - Must have at least two (2) defensive linemen no further out than heads up on the last down offensive lineman (guard or tight-end)
        - Defensive linemen from heads up on the last down offensive lineman (guard or tight-end) in must have at least one hand on the ground prior to the snap.
        - No defensive player may line up on the line of scrimmage wider than two yards outside the last down offensive lineman to their side.
        - No defensive lineman may align closer to the center than heads up on the offensive guards.
        - All defensive lineman MUST be on the line of scrimmage.
        - Penalty is illegal formation and 5 yards and replay down.

    b. Safety
        - Must play with at least one safety that is at least 10 yards off the line of scrimmage prior to and at the time of the snap but do not have to line up deeper than 5 yards into the end zone. Penalty is illegal formation and 5 yards and replay down.

    c. Remaining Defenders (e.g. linebackers and cornerbacks)
        - Must align at least 4 yards off the line of scrimmage prior to and at the time of the snap but do not have to line up in

the end zone (**Exception:** at no time can a defensive player be within 2 Yards directly across the line of scrimmage from the center). Penalty is illegal formation and 5 yards and replay down.

Note: The Defense is required to align to Offense's initial setup. If after lining up, the Offense adjusts its formation, the Defense is not required to adjust its alignment.

Mercy Rule:

A. At any time in the 2nd half, with the approval of both Head Coaches**,** the Officials may institute a running clock. If both coaches do not agree**,** normal play will be in force no matter the score.

B. In the event the Mercy Rule has been enacted, the timekeeper will be instructed by the game officials not to stop the clock unless a timeout is called or at the change of quarter. Once the Mercy Rule has been invoked it will remain in play for the remainder of that game. **At no time will the minimum play rules be relaxed for either team. It is recommended that the Mercy Rule not be enacted by either head coach until all players have reached their minimum play requirements.** The Program Directors or Division Commissioners may overrule any determination to enact the Mercy Rule at his/her discretion if there is reason to believe it was enacted without proper cause. The Program Directors or Division Commissioners decision will be final in all cases.

C. **Note: The Football Board S T R O N G L Y encourages each coach to be mindful of those situations where there is a mismatch on the field and the score is lopsided. There is no prescribed way to keep the score down in these situations, however the Board recommends that at a minimum the leading team's starting backfield be replaced. Please be mindful of not putting any player in danger due to lack of practice time at a particular position.**

Game Cancellation

A. In the event of severe rain, extreme cold, or lighting, a game may be cancelled, delayed, or postponed to later in the day. (**NOTE: Lightning will cause immediate suspension of activities for a minimum of 20 minutes, no exceptions.**). A game may be delayed or postponed to later in the day by Game Officials, the Division Commissioner, or the SBMSA Football Board members on duty, or in their absence, by both coaches. A game may be cancelled (subject to replay on a later date) by only the SBMSA Football Board members on duty. The Division Commissioner must be notified as soon as possible of any such cancellations, postponements, or delays.

B. In the event any game is halted because of inclement weather, it shall be called

a game if one half (two quarters) of the game has been completed AND both Head Coaches agree; otherwise, the game will be rescheduled and be played at a later date, continued from the point at which the game was halted, at a site & time to be designated by the Division Commissioner. It is the Head Coaches responsibility to document the status of the at the point of when it was halted. However, both Head Coaches may petition the Division Commissioner to consider the game to be a complete game. **Any decisions regarding scheduling of make up games or resumptions of games shall be made by the Football Board.**

C. Any team not appearing for a game, failing to field eleven (11) players for 11-Man or eight (8) for 8-Man, or otherwise not ready for play within 15 minutes after the scheduled game time, will forfeit the game. "Fill-in" players are not allowed for official games (Only players currently on the roster may play on their current team.) **In the event that the Football Board determines that a team intentionally forfeited a game to improperly alter its seeding or playoff status, or that of another team, or to provide the team with additional days off, the Football Board may take action against the Head Coach and/or the team, including a maximum penalty of suspension of the Head Coach and disqualification of the team from the playoffs.**

Equipment and Fields

A. Uniforms – All teams must be completely uniformed. Division Commissioners must approve team names and uniform color schemes. The uniform shall include: regulation football pants; protective hip, tail, thigh and knee pads; shoulder pads; NOC-SAE approved helmet with approved face mask; mouth piece attached to face mask and single or double chin strap; socks; shoes with molded, non-detachable cleats (waffle-sole shoes are permitted) or non-metallic, rubber, detachable cleats not more than ¾" in length; and game jersey. Tinted visors may not be worn. In the event that a League supplied uniform is provided to a team it must be worn for all games (pre-season, regular and playoffs). The SBMSA Football Board reserves the right to ban any equipment that is deemed unsafe by the Board or the Officials involved in a specific game.

NOTE: It is League policy that coaches comply with all recommendations from the manufacturer when painting helmets.

B. Fields

1. **Freshman & Sophomore Tackle:** Playing field shall measure at least forty (40) yards by eighty (80) yards except when playing on regulation fields, in which case the lateral dimensions shall become the existing width while retaining the eighty (80) yard length.

2. **Junior Varsity, Varsity, 7th Grade, & 8th Grade Tackle:** Regulation NCAA

Football Field

3. Care and maintenance of fields;

    a. All teams, home and visitors will be responsible for cleaning the fields immediately area after each game.
    b. The teams will perform all maintenance to the fields.

FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM

I. THE GAME, COACHES, FIELD, UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT

A. TEAMS, GAME CANCELLATION, AND WEEKLY ACTIVITY

1. Teams will have from 10-14 players on their rosters as determined by SBMSA.

2. In the event of severe rain, extreme cold, or lighting, a game may be cancelled, delayed, or postponed to later in the day. (**NOTE: Lightning will cause immediate suspension of activities for a minimum of 20 minutes, no exceptions.**). A game may be delayed or postponed to later in the day by Game Officials, the Division Commissioner, or the SBMSA Football Board members on duty, or in their absence, by both coaches. A game may be cancelled (subject to replay on a later date) by only the SBMSA Football Board members on duty. The Division Commissioner must be notified as soon as possible of any such cancellations, postponements, or delays.

3. In the event any game is halted because of inclement weather, it shall be called a game if one half (two quarters) of the game has been completed AND both Head Coaches agree; otherwise, the game will be rescheduled and be played at a later date, continued from the point at which the game was halted, at a site & time to be designated by the Division Commissioner. It is the Head Coaches responsibility to document the status of the at the point of when it was halted. However, both Head Coaches may petition the Division Commissioner to consider the game to be a complete game. **Any decisions regarding scheduling of make up games or resumptions of games shall be made by the Football Board.**

4. Any team not appearing for a game, failing to field six (6) players, or otherwise not ready for play within 15 minutes after the scheduled game time, will forfeit the game. "Fill-in" players are not allowed for official games (Only players currently on the roster may play on their current team.) **In the event that the Football Board determines that a team intentionally forfeited a game to improperly alter its seeding or playoff status, or that of another team, or to provide the team with additional days off, the Football Board may take action against the Head Coach and/or the team, including a maximum penalty of suspension of the Head Coach and disqualification of the team from the playoffs**.

5. There is no limitation on the number of times a team may have a team event per week, provided however, the total time each week does not exceed four (4) hours and each team event does not exceed two (2) hours. A game is considered one (1) hour. A "team event" is defined as three (3) or more players with one (1) or more coaches. A week constitutes the seven (7) day

period from Sunday through Saturday. **Any violation may result in appropriate disciplinary actions or possible game forfeiture as determined by the Football Board.**

6. Scrimmage games may be scheduled any time after the first week of practice. No scrimmage games may be held between teams of different age classifications. Scrimmages with teams of other programs or school teams are not allowed without the consent of the Program Director and/or the Football Board.

B. COACHES

1. Freshman: Two coaches from each team may be in the offensive and defensive huddle. The offensive and defensive coaches on the field may not communicate with the players (whether verbal or non-verbal communications) once the ball is snapped. Additionally, Coaches may not intentionally use language to deceive or influence the opposing team in any way.

    a. First instance a warning will be issued. Each team will individually receive a warning. Warnings may be bypassed for intentional deceit by a coach.

    b. Subsequent instance(s), the Official may issue a 5-yard penalty.

    c. If the Official determines that a coach is consistently violating this rule during a game, the offending coach will no longer be allowed to coach on the field for the remainder of the game (may still coach from the sideline).

2. Junior Varsity: One coach from each team may be in the offensive and defensive huddle. The offensive and defensive coach on the field may not communicate with the players (whether verbal or non-verbal communications) once the ball is snapped. Additionally, Coaches may not intentionally use language to deceive or influence the opposing team in any way.

    a. First instance a warning will be issued. Each team will individually receive a warning. Warnings may be bypassed for intentional deceit.

    a. Subsequent instance(s), the Official may issue a 5-yard penalty.

    b. If the Official determines that a coach is consistently violating this rule during a game, the offending coach will no longer be allowed to coach on the field for the remainder of the game (may still coach from the sideline).

C. THE FIELD

1. The field shall be 40 yards long with an end zone of 10 yards and a 10 yard "huddle" zone next to the 40-yard line.

2. The field shall be a minimum of 40 yards wide and a maximum of 53-1/3 yards wide.

3. The field may have markings at the three (3) yard line for use during the point after touchdown.

4. When teams and players are in the team area, adequate room along the sideline must be made available in order for officials to work the sideline and to properly officiate the contest.

5. Only players and coaches are allowed in the bench areas.

D. UNIFORMS

1. All uniforms shall be League approved.

2. Players may wear no jewelry of any kind.

3. All members of the same team must wear the game jersey provided by SBMSA. Jerseys must be tucked in. No article of clothing may cover any portion of a player's flag. Officials should warn violators of this between plays. If a jersey becomes untucked during a play, it must be re-tucked before the next play.

4. Any shorts or pants worn during flag football League play must not have pockets. This is to reduce the risk of injury when pulling flags. If discovered during a game or a pocket becomes ripped during a play (an attempt at deflagging a player), if successful, player will be ruled down as if he were legally deflagged from a flag belt. All shorts or pants must be white. In the event that white pants are worn (i.e. sweatpants) that have pockets the player must put white shorts with no pockets on over the long pants.

5. Any flat soled or completely molded cleat shoes are acceptable. Removable cleats, baseball or track spikes or any shoes that have steel or metal tips are prohibited. All players must wear shoes.

6. Hard shell helmets, shoulder pads, thigh pads are prohibited. The official of that game shall decide any questions as to the legality of players' equipment. The use of any unyielding hard substance cannot be used to protect an injury, no matter how well covered or padded. Therapeutic or prevention braces can be used if covered from direct external exposure.

7. The type of flags supplied by the League must be used during the game.

No substitutes or alterations will be allowed. Each player on the field (8 offensive and 8 defensive) will wear 2 flags at the waist, one on each side. Flags must be attached to a belt and the belt will be worn snug around the waist to eliminate being turned partially around the waist during an attempted deflagging.

8. Mouthpieces are not required but are strongly encouraged!

E. ENFORCEMENT OF UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT RULES

1. If, in the discretion of the officials, a player's non-conforming uniform will not result in confusion to the other team or give the player wearing the non-conforming uniform or the player's team an unfair advantage, there will be no penalty and the player will be allowed to participate in the game. If the official determines that the non-conforming uniform will result in confusion or provide an unfair advantage to the player or the player's team, the player may not play until the situation is rectified to the satisfaction of the officials.

2. Illegal alteration, securing or substitution of flags or belts will result in removal of a player or players from the game and a 10-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage of last snap if offense and if defense from the point of infraction. Any player with less than two (2) flags in the proper position at the snap shall be ruled deflagged immediately at the point where he gains possession of the football where the flags are no longer in the proper position.

II. APPROVED RULINGS AND PROTESTS

A. APPROVED RULINGS

1. An approved ruling is an official decision on a given statement of facts made by the flag Commissioner, the flag coordinator or the SBMSA Football Board. This is to illustrate the spirit and application of rules. If there is a conflict between an approved ruling and the official rule, the official rule takes precedence.

2. Judgment calls/interpretation of rules cannot be protested. Enforcement of penalties may be questioned and confirmed at the time of enforcement, but not protested.

III. POSSESSION, PERIODS OF PLAY, MOVING THE BALL, AND SCORING

A. POSSESSION

1. Visiting team will get ball to start the first half. Home team will get ball to start the second half.

2. All possessions start on the right hash mark of the 40-yard line. All possessions will go in the same direction.

B. GAME TIMES AND PERIODS

1. Periods of play include Regulation, Point after Touchdown (PAT), and Tiebreaker.

2. The game clock will be continuous and will start when the official puts the ball in play.

3. The official's whistle or signal makes the ball ready for play and starts the play clock prior to each down throughout the games.

4. Each team is allowed 1 (one) time-out per half of 1 (one) minute in length. The game clock will stop during a team time-out.
    a. Each Field will have their own Game Clock / Scoreboard

5. Because the game clock is continuous, it does not stop during point after touchdown attempts.

6. The clock will only stop for official time-outs or team timeouts.
    a. If more than one game is being played on one field, both games will start at the same time and begin every quarter at the same time.

7. The play clock is thirty-five (35) seconds and starts once the official marks the ball ready for play. A Delay of Game penalty will result if the play clock is exceeded.
    a. Two delay of game penalties in the same possession results in a turnover.
    b. A delay of game penalty during a point after attempt will result in a failed point after attempt.

8. Half-time will be 5 minutes. The time between quarters, if applicable, will be approximately 2 minutes.

9. The game shall be played in 4 quarters. In all games the clock will be running continuously. NOTE: If the League determines prior to the first game that a division will be "double header" format the quarters and/or halves will be adjusted such that each game is approximately half the length included below.
    a. Freshman: Each quarter will be 10 minutes.

b. Junior Varsity: Each quarter will be 13 minutes.

c. Varsity: Each quarter will be 13 minutes.

C. MOVING THE BALL

1. Possessions always begins at the 40-yard line at the right hash mark. Once the ball has been advanced, hash mark placement of the ball must be enforced by officials, in accordance with NCAA rules.

2. Offenses always move in the same direction.

3. No penalty will be assessed in excess of the 40-yard line. On an unsuccessful or successful offensive play from the 40-yard line resulting in an offensive penalty the ball will be returned to the 40-yard line and 1st down will become 2nd down, 2nd down will come 3rd down, etc.

4. A ball carrier will be considered out of bounds if they go out of the 10 yard "huddle" zone.

5. The line to gain is the established line designating ten-yard zones. The zone shall be considered reached when the hips (flags) are on or in advance of the line marking the next zone or in this case "line to gain" when the play is declared dead.

6. A team will be allowed four downs to advance the ball from one zone to the next. If after four (4) consecutive downs, a team has failed to advance the ball into the next zone, possession shall go to the defense.

D. TIEBREAKER

In the event of a tie game at the end of the second half, the following method will be used:

1. After an official's time out of two (2) minutes, during which time officials and team captains will have a coin toss, the winner will have the choice of playing offense or defense first.

2. Ball will be placed on the right hash of the 40-yard line and each team will have 4 consecutive plays unless terminated by an interception (including a lateral or fumble which is caught in the air by the defense), in which to score the most points or gain the most yards. If no team scores, the team that gains the most yardage shall be the winner in the opinion of the officials. If after 4 consecutive downs each, the two teams remain tied in all of the above combinations, additional downs will be played, one down at a time, alternating, until a winner is decided. Determination of the amount of yardage gained will be in the discretion of the officials.

3. If a team scores a touchdown, it will be allowed to use its remaining downs, beginning again at the 40-yard line. Point after touchdown attempts after each touchdown will not be counted as a down.

An interception terminates the offensive team chances. The offensive team is credited with positive yardage gained to point of the last snap or any score prior to the interception. The defense may advance the ball and if returned past the 40, will score a touchdown that if results in a lead will end the game.

4. **Freshman Flag**: during the overtime period, each player is allowed a maximum of two (2) carries, regardless of the amount of carries they had in regulation.
5. No minimum play time requirements will exist in the overtime/tiebreaker period.

E. SCORING

1. A Touchdown counts as 6 points (Hips in which flags are attached must be on or in advance of the goal line before any points can be awarded.).

2. A Point After Touchdown begins at the 3-yard line and counts as 1 point for a run and 2 points for a pass. Passes must be caught in the end zone to count as 2 points.

3. An interception on a point after attempt may be returned and if returned beyond the 40-yard line will result in the intercepting team receiving 2 points.

4. Interceptions may be returned. If an interception is returned beyond the 40-yard line (the offensive origination point) it is a touchdown and point after attempt should ensue.

5. Forfeited Game. – Score is 7 – 0.

6. Winner of Tie Breaker – 1 point.

IV. THE BALL: LIVE, DEAD, LOOSE

A. LIVE BALL. A live ball is a ball in play. A pass, lateral or a fumble that has not touched the ground is a live ball in flight.

B. DEAD BALL. A dead ball is a ball not in play (i.e., any time a ball touches the ground it is a dead ball).

C. WHEN A BALL IS MARKED READY FOR PLAY

1. A dead ball becomes ready for play once the referee:

    a. If time is in, sounds his whistle and/or signals ready for the play. The play clock begins on that whistle. A Delay of Game penalty is enforced if exceeds time to put ball in play.

    b. If time is out, sounds his whistle and either signals "start the clock" or "ready for play."

D. CATCH OR INTERCEPTION

1. A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight.

2. A catch of an opponent's pass, lateral or fumble (prior to touching the ground) is an interception.

3. Simultaneously catch or a double reception of an offensive pass or lateral always goes to the offense.

E. FUMBLE

1. When a backward pass hits the ground not in the end zone or a fumble occurs, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team last in possession at the spot where the ball hits the ground or at the spot where the ball goes out of bounds (if in the air).

    a. **EXCEPTION:** FRESHMAN, if the ball hits the ground behind the line of scrimmage the spot is the original line of scrimmage. This includes snaps from the center to quarterback.

2. When a forward fumble occurs and hits the ground, it is considered dead. The end of the run in this case would return to the point and which control was lost or from where the fumble originated (unless the ball hits the ground behind the line of scrimmage in which case the spot is the original line of scrimmage). If the offensive fumbles forward and crossed or hits the ground beyond the next line-to-gain or goal line, the result will bring the ball back to where the fumble occurred, and next down will be played.

V. LINE OF SCRIMMAGE AND NEUTRAL ZONE

A. LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

1. Is the plane of the ball that extends from sideline to sideline and ninety (90) degrees from the plane face of the field, once an official places his ball marker and signal the ball "ready for play." Once the ball marker is set, the neutral zone becomes established.

B. NEUTRAL ZONE

C. The neutral zone is the space between the ends of the ball when in a normal resting position on its long axis while parallel to the sidelines. This zone extends from sideline to sideline and is established once the ball is marked ready for play.

VI. POSITIONING, MOTION, SHIFT, SUBSTITUTION

A. HUDDLE/LINING UP ON OFFENSE OR DEFENSE

1. Teams may choose to huddle prior to a play. It is not necessary to huddle after a play if a team wishes to use predetermined plays or audible signals.

2. A minimum of 3 players must be on the offensive line of scrimmage at the snap.

B. SUBSTITUTION AND MINIMUM PLAYING TIME

1. Each player must play a minimum of two full quarters. There are ONLY two acceptable methods of meeting this minimum playing time rule: (1) The player must play the entirety of two full quarters as a starter on offense AND defense, or (2) The player must play the ENTIRE game as a starter on offense OR defense. The continued application of the minimum play approach is not required, but encouraged, during overtime play. **If a team is found to have violated the minimum playing time rule, the Football Board may impose the following, but not limited to, consequences; Allowing the players who did not fully participate to make up the lost plays in the next scheduled game, a formal warning to the head coach, suspension of the head coach for up to the remainder of the season, etc. <u>The consequence for clearly violating the minimum playing time rule in a playoff or championship game is forfeiture, pursuant to section (a) of this rule</u>**

    a. Concerns by the opposing team regarding playing time, must be brought by only the **HEAD COACH** while the game is still in progress to a commissioner or official. Once made aware, a board member will monitor the remainder of the game and if consequences are warranted, they will be communicated to both coaches within 24 hours of the game's completion.

2. There will be no free substitutions during games. Injuries or other extenuating circumstances will allow for substitutions.

3. **Freshman: No one player may carry the ball more than five (5) times per game.** Each Team is required to have (1) of their Coaches (who is physically on the sideline with the Team, tracking the number of times each player has carried the ball. At the end of each Quarter, the coaches will

compare & confirm the number of times each player has carried the ball with the opposing coach who is tracking carries. Once a player has reached their (5) carry limit, the Official and both Coaching Staffs will be notified. Any carry by a player after reaching the (5) carry limit will result in a 5-yard penalty from the original Line of Scrimmage and loss of down.

a. **A Carry is defined as:**

- any time a ball carrier is deflagged during a play **AND** that play is not mitigated by a penalty.
- An incomplete pass does not count as a carry.
- Extra Point attempts count as a carry.
- A fumbled or muffed snap does not count as a carry.
- A fumbled handoff does not count as a carry.
- A fumble counts as a carry as long as the ball carrier previously had control and possession of the football.
- In the event a defensive player is flagged for a Major Tackling Infraction, that carry shall not be counted for the ball carrier.

4. "Sleepers" on substitutions will not be allowed on any play. No player may line up closer than 5 yards from the sideline unless he came out of the huddle or unless he was on the field of play during the previous play and did not leave the field of play.

C. SHIFT

1. Freshman: No shifting is allowed.

2. Junior Varsity & Varsity: One or more offensive players may be shifting their position at the same time prior to the snap. Their movement may be in any direction but they must become set for one full count before the ball is snapped or before another player can go in motion prior to the snap.

D. MOTION

1. Freshman: No motion is allowed.

2. Junior Varsity & Varsity: Only one player is allowed to be in motion at the snap and his movement must be parallel or away from the line of scrimmage and must be continuous.

E. STANCE

1. No three or four point stances are permitted except for the center.

F. ENCROACHMENT/OFF-SIDES

1. Encroachment shall be called if either the offense or the defense passes over the plane of their line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. A false movement of the football by the center shall constitute offensive encroachment. These are dead ball fouls, and the play shall be immediately whistled dead before play begins and penalty yardage automatically marked off against the encroaching team. (Exception: Defensive encroachment resulting in an offensive first down will become an offense's choice penalty).

2. If a player on either side lines up offsides, the official will point toward that player's team side. If that player does not get back on-sides before the ball is snapped, he will be considered as having been offsides at the moment of snap. If an official has not "offsides warned" a team for lining up off-sides, by pointing at them, he should not call off-sides on them at the snap of the ball. Play continues in this instance and following the play, this becomes a captain's choice penalty.

VII. CENTER SNAP

A. All center snaps must be made between the center's legs. A false movement of the football by the center after he is set shall constitute encroachment.

VIII. SCREENING AND RUSHING

A. SCREENING

1. Only screen blocking is permitted. "Screen blocking" is defined as obstructing the rusher's path to the quarterback or ball carrier, with any part of the body except head, hips, hands, elbows, and legs.

2. A screener may not leave his feet to screen.

3. The screener may not step into the rusher.

4. The screener shall take and maintain a position with elbows at his/her side. No independent movement, "flaring", or contact with the elbows will be permitted.

5. The screener shall not take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/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 his/her stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 or 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.

6. A penalty will automatically be called if a screener does not comply with the

types of permitted screens. THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY OF AVOIDING CONTACT RESTS WITH THE RUSHER.

B. RUSHING

1. The rusher may not run over the screener. The rusher may not pull the screener toward him or push the screener away from him. The rusher must make an effort to go around the screener at all times.

2. A penalty will be automatically called if the rusher touches the screener's head as long as the screener is screening upright.

3. Roughing the passer when the pass is incomplete will be marked off 10 yards from the line of scrimmage; when the pass is complete the penalty will be 10 yards marked off from the end of the run and automatic first down in either case.

4. If the rusher touches the quarterback in the head in his attempt to block the pass, a penalty will be called. This will also go for striking the passer's arm when in a forward motion while attempting to block a pass. Roughing the passer will be called when the rusher, if while attempting to de-flag the quarterback or block a pass, lets his momentum carry him into the passer. Defensive player may not have any contact with the passer when he is passing. The defensive may rush as many players as it wishes. NOTE: OFFICIALS SHOULD BE AWARE IF PASSER STEPPING UP OR MOVING INTO RUSHER CAUSES CONTACT.

C. ***IT IS ASKED THAT BOTH THE SCREENER AND THE RUSHER STRIVE FOR NON-CONTACT AT ALL TIMES.***

IX. PASSING REGULATIONS

A. PASSING

1. There can only be one forward pass per play. A "**forward pass**" is defined as:
    a. as a live ball thrown toward the opponent's goal line.

2. A completed direct handoff, even if bobbled, shall not be considered an exchange of the football in the air.

3. If the passer has crossed the line of scrimmage when the football is released, an illegal forward pass has occurred. Illegal forward passes will be marked from the point of infraction.

4. Once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage, in the air or in possession of a player, it cannot be passed forward, even if the ball is first returned

back across the line of scrimmage.

5. Intentional grounding shall also constitute an illegal forward pass.

6. A lateral will be any pass thrown overhand or underhand perpendicular or away from the direction of advancement of team in possession. Forward laterals are treated as an illegal forward pass if beyond the line of scrimmage.

7. Push or Shovel Passes thrown in any direction is legal if initiated behind the line of scrimmage. Once a player crosses the line of scrimmage, push or shovel passes are legal if thrown parallel or behind the ball carrier.

B. RECEIVING

1. All players of both teams are eligible pass receivers. Each player is eligible, even if he steps out of bounds or out of end zone, as long as he catches the ball in bounds or comes down first in bounds with at least one foot. If a receiver comes down with one foot in bounds and one foot out of bounds simultaneously, the pass is incomplete. The lines marking the sidelines and the extreme end of the end zone shall be considered out of bounds if stepped on to any degree.

2. Two or more offensive receivers or defensive players may touch a pass in succession, resulting in a completion. After a pass is thrown, it is too much to expect of the officials to keep track of exactly who touched the ball and in what order, if receivers and defenders are battling for possession. Therefore, the only things that will be judged will be (1) did pass interference occur, (2) who caught the ball and (3) was receiver in bounds with at least one foot a moment of possession.

C. PASS INTERFERENCE

1. Pass Interference Rules shall apply to any pass made from behind the line of scrimmage, whether it is a forward pass or a lateral pass and applies to both offensive and defensive players. After the pass is in the air, neither the pass receiver nor the defender may touch the other player until one of them touches the ball, or else offensive or defensive pass interference may be called. If contact occurs after one of them touches the ball, then pass interference cannot be called.

D. PASS INTERFERENCE ENFORCEMENT

1. Any contact that occurs after the pass is touched and is either complete or incomplete, must be judged by the officials as either non-intentional contact caused by both players "playing the ball" or intentional contact/pass interference which shall be a 10-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage or

the point of infraction, whichever is shorter. The penalty will result in an automatic first down.

a. All pass interference plays, offensive or defensive, will be team's choice penalties. If the team refuses the penalty the play will stand.

2. All offensive pass interference plays, "Tie Breaker Period", or the "Point After Touchdown Try Period" which are accepted by the defensive captain shall be marked off from the line of scrimmage with a loss of down.

3. Defensive pass interference plays, which occur on the playing field, and are accepted, shall be marked 10 yards from the line of scrimmage or the point of infraction, whichever is shortest, automatic first down (except in Tie Breaker), and play number will be run again.

4. Defensive pass interference that occurs in the end zone during the "Regulation Play Period" and accepted: ball will be placed on one (1) yard line and 1st down.

5. Defensive pass interference that occurs during the "Point After Touchdown Try Period", and accepted: ball will be placed on one (1) yard line – P.A.T. try will be rerun.

6. Defensive pass interference, which occurs in the end zone during the "Tie Breaker Period" and accepted: ball will be placed on the one (1) yard line and same play will be run again.

7. Shielding/screening a receiver's eyes by a defender without playing the football is pass interference and shall be penalized as such.

8. Bump and Run or checking an offensive receiver during a passing play will be a penalty from point of infraction and team's choice.

X. RUNNING WITH THE BALL

A. Ball Carrier

1. The responsibility of avoiding contact rests with the ball carrier. He must show the officials he made an effort to avoid contact. The ball carrier will not deliberately run or drive into a defensive player. The "Stiff Arm" is illegal. Penalty will be made from the point of infraction and will result in loss of down.

2. The ball carrier shall not protect his flags by blocking with his hand, arm or head, the opportunity to pull his flags. "Flag Guarding" is illegal. Penalty will be made from the point of infraction.

3. If any of the above acts are judged to have caused excessive contact, 5 yards and loss of down.

4. The center is not an eligible ball carrier unless the ball is received by a forward pass to the center.

B. Deflagging the Runner

1. The ball carrier is down, and the ball is dead when either flag is detached from his belt or when the ball or either knee touches the ground. A defensive player may leave his feet to pull the offensive player's flag but may not make contact while doing so. When a defensive player pulls the ball carrier's flag he should stop and hold it above his head for officials to see. If the act of deflagging a player is simulated or faked, the infraction will be treated as a delay of game penalty.

2. Tackling is prohibited. Tackling is grasping or encircling the body of the ball carrier with a hand or arm. Grabbing the ball carrier's clothing shall be penalized as tackling. If the defensive player reaches across the body of a ball carrier to pull his flag, and contact occurs, the responsibility of the contact lies with the defensive player. The penalty will be assessed from the point of infraction or the line of scrimmage.

3. Illegal deflagging is prematurely pulling an opponent's flag with the intent of making the offensive player ineligible to become a ball carrier. It is considered illegal deflagging if the center position is deflagged while in the process of exchanging the ball to another player as deflagging him would cause him to be ineligible to receive a pass. Runner Stripping occurs when a defender attempts to strip or take the ball from the grasp of a player in possession. This is a form of Illegal Deflagging.

    a. **Fumblerooski Note:** In the event that the center snaps the ball and no offensive player takes the ball from the centers hands within 3-4 seconds of the ball being snapped (play is not progressing) the Official will signal Play is dead

4. The intended receiver of either a pass or lateral may be deflagged only after first touching the ball – even whole fumbling or bobbling the ball and before possession is established. That receiver will be considered downed at the point he was deflagged.

5. If the quarterback's arm was in forward motion when his flag was pulled, the pass is allowed. If the passer is legally deflagged as he is passing the football, and later in that play receives the ball back, he shall be downed at that spot. If he is deflagged after he has released the football and he then receives the ball back, illegal deflagging should be called.

6. A defender may not push or knock a ball carrier out of bounds.

7. A defender may not strip the ball from the runner. This is a form of illegal deflagging. The defender must attempt to pull the ball carrier's flags.

XI. PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

A. PENALTY INFORMATION

1. All live ball fouls (fouls which occur while play is in progress) are a team's choice. All dead ball fouls (fouls which occur prior to snap or after ball is blown dead) will automatically be marked off. This means if a foul occurs during a down and is a live ball foul and then a dead ball foul occurs, both fouls will be enforced. They do not offset, even if against different teams.

2. Penalties which would otherwise be marked off past the 45-yard line shall be placed on the 45-yard line.

3. Offsetting Penalties – If offsetting fouls occur during a down or which the ball is ready-for-play, that down shall be played over. If offsetting fouls occur between successive downs, the next down shall be the same as if no fouls occurred.

4. If there is a change of team possession during a down, the team last gaining possession may decline the offsetting fouls and retain possession after the penalty for its own infraction providing that the infraction occurs after the change of possession. If offsetting fouls occur prior to change of possession, play shall be repeated.

B. SBMSA FLAG and 7on7 FOOTBALL PENALTY CHART See ***Appendix B***

1. All "minor" penalties will be marked 5 yards. All "major" penalties will be 10 yards. If in the opinion of the officials the foul is flagrant or excessive contact, the player (or players) may be ejected.

2. In order to establish a simple philosophy in assessing penalties, these general rules hold true with only a few exceptions:

    a. All Accepted Penalties: are marked from the end of the run, line of scrimmage or point of infraction, whichever hurts the infracting team the most and the down may or may not be replayed.

    b. All Refused Penalties: the ball stays where blown dead and down is not replayed.

    c. All Live Ball Fouls: are team's choice.

    d. All Dead Ball Fouls: are not team's choices and will be marked

off.

3. "Little-To-Lose" Penalties: If the full penalty cannot be marked off due to the field position relative to the goal line, the ball will be marked off to the one-yard line.

    a. Defensive penalties on teams backed up within 1 yard from their goal will result in play being run again from line of scrimmage.

    b. Offensive penalties on team backed up to within 1 yard from the 45-yard line will result in Loss of Down unless there is a change of possession during a play.

4. Penalty Enforcement During Tie Breaker Periods: When infractions occur during, if the penalty is accepted, the down number may or may not be lost, depending on the penalty (see Penalty Chart). In turn, that same infraction may or may not also lose the play number, depending on the penalty. Officials must enforce the combination that hurts the infracting team most. Exception: Only the offensive pass interference penalty during the tiebreaker period, if accepted, will cause that play number not to be repeated.

5. Penalties on the playing field during the tiebreaker period shall be marked the same as during regulation time.

6. Penalties Enforcement and Line-To-Gain

    a. Enforcement of any penalty which leaves the ball across the line-to-gain will result in a new line-to-gain (1st down).

    b. After enforcement of any live ball foul that leaves the ball short of the line-to-gain will result in the first down line remaining the same.

7. All defensive dead ball fouls after a touchdown but before the ball is put into play after change of possession will be penalized by a loss of down. All live ball fouls during this period are coaches' choice penalties.

C. DEFENSIVE FOULS DURING/AFTER TOUCHDOWNS AND PAT ATTEMPT

1. Touchdowns

    a. **Penalty A:** **Live Ball Fouls** – Coaches' Choice Penalties (can take points & have loss of down after PAT attempt.)

    b. **Penalty B:** **Dead Ball Fouls** – Penalty is Loss of Down After Change of Possession

2. PAT Attempt

    a. **Penalty C:**

(1) Coaches' Choice Penalties Which if Accepted:

- Ball Marked to 1 Yard Line and PAT run again (same point value)
- **(2) Live Ball Fouls:** Coaches' Choice Penalties (can take points and have loss of down penalty).

b. **<u>Penalty D:</u>** **Dead Ball Fouls** – Loss of down penalty after change of possession.

7on7 PROGRAM

I. THE GAME, COACHES, FIELD, UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT

A. TEAMS, GAME CANCELLATION, AND WEEKLY ACTIVITY

1. Teams will have from 10-14 players on their rosters as determined by SBMSA.

2. In the event of severe rain, extreme cold, or lighting, a game may be cancelled, delayed, or postponed to later in the day. (**NOTE: Lightning will cause immediate suspension of activities for a minimum of 20 minutes, no exceptions.**). A game may be delayed or postponed to later in the day by Game Officials, the Division Commissioner, or the SBMSA Football Board members on duty, or in their absence, by both coaches. A game may be cancelled (subject to replay on a later date) by only the SBMSA Football Board members on duty. The Division Commissioner must be notified as soon as possible of any such cancellations, postponements, or delays.

3. In the event any game is halted because of inclement weather, it shall be called a game if one half (two quarters) of the game has been completed AND both Head Coaches agree; otherwise, the game will be rescheduled and be played at a later date, continued from the point at which the game was halted, at a site & time to be designated by the Division Commissioner. It is the Head Coaches responsibility to document the status of the at the point of when it was halted. However, both Head Coaches may petition the Division Commissioner to consider the game to be a complete game. **Any decisions regarding scheduling of make up games or resumptions of games shall be made by the Football Board.**

4. Any team not appearing for a game, failing to field six (6) players, or otherwise not ready for play within 15 minutes after the scheduled game time, will forfeit the game. "Fill-in" players are not allowed for official games (Only players currently on the roster may play on their current team.) **In the event that the Football Board determines that a team intentionally forfeited a game to improperly alter its seeding or playoff status, or that of another team, or to provide the team with additional days off, the Football Board may take action against the Head Coach and/or the team, including a maximum penalty of suspension of the Head Coach and disqualification of the team from the playoffs**.

5. There is no limitation on the number of times a team may have a team event per week, provided however, the total time each week does not exceed eight (8) hours and each team event does not exceed two (2) hours.

A game is considered two (2) hours. A "team event" is defined as three (3) or more players with one (1) or more coaches. A week constitutes the seven (7) day period from Sunday through Saturday. **Any violation may result in appropriate disciplinary actions or possible game forfeiture as determined by the Football Board.**

6. Scrimmage games may be scheduled any time after the first week of practice. No scrimmage games may be held between teams of different age classifications. Scrimmages with teams of other programs or school teams are not allowed without the consent of the Program Director and/or the Football Board.

B. COACHES

1. One coach from each team may be in the offensive huddle. The offensive coach on the field may not communicate with the players (whether verbal or non-verbal communications) once the offense breaks its huddle.

   a. No Huddle or Sugar Huddle will be treated the same for purposes of coaches communicating once the huddle is broken

   b. The huddle is considered broken once ALL players have left the area immediately surrounding the coach.

   c. First instance a warning will be issued. Each team will individually receive a warning.

   d. Subsequent instance(s), the Official may issue a 5-yard penalty.

   e. If the Official determines a coach is consistently violating this rule during a game, the offending coach will no longer be allowed to coach on the field for the remainder of the game (may still coach from the sideline).

2. No defensive coach is allowed to coach on the field.

C. THE FIELD

1. The field shall be 45 yards long with an end zone of 10 yards and a 10 yard "huddle" zone next to the 45-yard line.

2. The field shall be a minimum of 40 yards wide and a maximum of 53-1/3 yards wide.

3. The field may have markings at the three (3) yard line for use during the point after touchdown.

4. When teams and players are in the team area, adequate room along the sideline must be made available in order for officials to work the sideline and to properly officiate the contest.

5. Only players and coaches are allowed in the bench areas.

D. UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT

1. All uniforms shall be League approved.
2. Players may wear no jewelry of any kind.
3. All members of the same team must wear the game jersey provided by SBMSA. Jerseys must be tucked in. Officials should warn violators of this between plays. If a jersey becomes untucked during a play, it must be re-tucked before the next play.
4. If the league does not supply the game shorts, any shorts or pants worn during play must not have pockets. This is to reduce the risk of injury. All shorts or pants must be black. In the event that long pants are worn (i.e. sweatpants) that have pockets the player must put black shorts with no pockets on over the long pants.
5. Any flat soled or completely molded cleat shoes are acceptable. Removable cleats, baseball or track spikes or any shoes that have steel or metal tips are prohibited. All players must wear shoes.
6. Hard shell helmets, shoulder pads, thigh pads are prohibited. The official of that game shall decide any questions as to the legality of players' equipment. The use of any unyielding hard substance cannot be used to protect an injury, no matter how well covered or padded. Therapeutic or prevention braces can be used if covered from direct external exposure.
7. **Mouthpieces are required!**
8. **Soft shell helmets are required!**

E. Enforcement of Uniforms and Equipment Rules

1. If, in the discretion of the officials, a player's non-conforming uniform will not result in confusion to the other team or give the player wearing the non-conforming uniform or the player's team an unfair advantage, there will be no penalty and the player will be allowed to participate in the game. If the official determines that the non-conforming uniform will result in confusion or provide an unfair advantage to the player or the player's team, the player may not play until the situation is rectified to the satisfaction of the officials.

II. APPROVED RULINGS AND PROTESTS

A. APPROVED RULINGS

1. An approved ruling is an official decision on a given statement of facts made by the Commissioner or the SBMSA Football Board. This is to illustrate the spirit and application of rules. If there is a conflict between an approved ruling and the official rule, the official rule takes

precedence.

2. Judgment calls/interpretation of rules cannot be protested. Enforcement of penalties may be questioned and confirmed at the time of enforcement, but not protested.

III. POSSESSION, PERIODS OF PLAY, MOVING THE BALL, AND SCORING

A. POSSESSION

1. Visiting team will get ball to start the first half. Home team will get ball to start the second half.
2. All possessions start on the right hash mark of the 45-yard line. All possessions will go in the same direction.

B. GAME TIMES AND PERIODS

1. Periods of play include Regulation, Point after Touchdown (PAT), and Tiebreaker.
2. The game clock will be continuous and will start when the official puts the ball in play.
3. The official's whistle or signal makes the ball ready for play and starts the play clock prior to each down throughout the games.
4. Each team is allowed 1(one) time-out per half of 1 (one) minute in length. The game clock will stop during a team time-out.
    a. Each Field will have their own Game Clock / Scoreboard
5. Because the game clock is continuous, it does not stop during point after touchdown attempts.
6. The game clock will only stop for official time-outs or team timeouts.
    a. If more than one game is being played on one field, both games will begin every quarter at the same time.
7. The play clock is thirty-five (35) seconds and starts once the official marks the ball ready for play. A Delay of Game penalty will result if the play clock is exceeded.
    a. Two delay of game penalties in the same possession results in a turnover.
    b. A delay of game penalty during a point after attempt will result in a failed point after attempt.

8. Half-time will be 5 minutes. The time between quarters, if applicable, will be approximately 2 minutes.

9. The game shall be played in 4 quarters of 15 minutes in length. In all games the clock will be running continuously. NOTE: If the League determines prior to the first game that a division will be "double header" format the quarters and/or halves will be adjusted such that each game is approximately half the length included here.

C. MOVING THE BALL

1. Possessions always begins at the 45-yard line at the right hash mark. Once the ball has been advanced, hash mark placement of the ball must be enforced by officials, in accordance with NCAA rules.

2. Offenses always move in the same direction.

3. A ball carrier will be considered out of bounds if they go out of the 10 yard "huddle" zone.

   a. All offensive plays must be a forward pass. The initial pass must be a forward pass AND cross the line of scrimmage (receivers hips must be across the line of scrimmage). Passes thrown and completed behind the line of scrimmage will be considered an illegal forward pass and flagged as a loss of down at the spot of the release of the pass.

4. Once a forward pass has been thrown a backward pass (lateral) is allowed.

   a. There can only be one forward pass per play. A "forward pass" is defined as a live ball thrown toward the opponent's goal line.

      i. A forward pass can be underhanded.

      ii. The ball cannot be handed off.

5. The quarterback is allowed 5.0 seconds to throw the ball. The official timekeeper starts a stopwatch on the snap of the ball from the center and stops the watch as soon as the quarterback releases the ball.

   a. If the release is under the second count, the play stands.

   b. After the play is complete, the timekeeper will see if the clock exceeded the second count. If the clock exceeded the second count the ball will be brought back to the original line of scrimmage with a loss of down UNLESS the defending team declines the infraction (e.g. there was an interception)

   c. The offense shall not attempt to stall beyond the allocated time for

a forward pass attempt. The official with the pass clock shall blow the play dead if in their opinion the offense is attempting to delay and the clock is past 5 seconds upon checking. A play stopped by the official for an intentional delay shall also stop the game clock as an officials' time out.

6. No penalty will be assessed in excess of the 45-yard line. On an unsuccessful or successful offensive play from the 45-yard line resulting in an offensive penalty the ball will be returned to the 45-yard line and 1st down will become 2nd down, 2nd down will come 3rd down, etc.

7. The line to gain is the established line designating fifteen-yard zones. The zone shall be considered reached when the hips are on or in advance of the line marking the next zone or in this case "line to gain" when the play is declared dead.

8. A team will be allowed three downs to advance the ball from one zone to the next (a zone is 15 yards). However, a team will be allowed four downs when they proceed to or inside the 15-yard line (i.e. the last zone).

9. The center is responsible for setting or re-position the Official's bag at the line of scrimmage. The center must snap the ball between legs.

D. TIEBREAKER

In the event of a tie game at the end of the second half, the following method will be used:

1. After an official's time out of two (2) minutes, during which time officials and team captains will have a coin toss, the winner will have the choice of playing offense or defense first.

2. Ball will be placed on the right hash of the 45-yard line and each team will have 4 consecutive plays unless terminated by an interception (including a lateral or fumble which is caught in the air by the defense), in which to score the most points or gain the most yards. If no team scores, the team that gains the most yardage shall be the winner in the opinion of the officials. If after 4 consecutive downs each, the two teams remain tied in all of the above combinations, additional downs will be played, one down at a time, alternating, until a winner is decided. Determination of the amount of yardage gained will be in the discretion of the officials.

3. If a team scores a touchdown, it will be allowed to use its remaining downs, beginning again at the 45-yard line. Point after touchdown attempts after each touchdown will not be counted as a down.

An interception terminates the offensive team chances. The offensive team is credited with positive yardage gained to point of the last snap or any score prior to the interception. The defense may advance the ball and if returned past the 45, will score a touchdown that if results in a lead will end the game.

E. SCORING

1. A Touchdown counts as 6 points (Hips must be on or in advance of the goal line before any points can be awarded.).

2. A Point After Touchdown at the 3-yard line is work 1 point and a Point After Touchdown at the 10-yard line is worth 2 points.

3. An interception on a point after attempt may be returned and if returned beyond the 45-yard line will result in the intercepting team receiving the points of which the offense was attempting to obtain.

4. Interception may be returned. If an interception is returned beyond the 45-yard line (the offensive origination point) it is a touchdown and point after attempt should ensue.

5. Forfeited Game. – Score is 7 – 0.

6. Winner of Tie Breaker – 1 point.

IV. THE BALL: LIVE, DEAD, LOOSE

A. LIVE BALL

A live ball is a ball in play that has not touched the ground unless it was between the center and quarterback exchange.

B. DEAD BALL

A dead ball is a ball not in play (i.e., any time a ball touches the ground it is a dead ball unless it is on the center and quarterback exchange).

C. WHEN A BALL IS MARKED READY FOR PLAY

A dead ball becomes ready for play once the Official:

1. If time is in, sounds his whistle and/or signals ready for the play. The play clock begins on that whistle. A Delay of Game penalty is enforced if exceeds time to put ball in play.

2. If time is out, sounds his whistle and either signals “start the clock”

or “ready for play.”

D. CATCH OR INTERCEPTION

1. A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight.

2. A catch of an opponent’s pass, lateral or fumble (prior to touching the
ground) is an interception.

3. Simultaneously catch or a double reception of an offensive pass or lateral always goes to the offense.

E. FUMBLE

1. When a backward pass (lateral) hits the ground not in the end zone or a fumble occurs, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team last in possession at the spot where the ball hits the ground or at the spot where the ball goes out of bounds (if in the air).

2. When a forward fumble occurs and hits the ground, it is considered dead. The end of the run in this case would return to the point and which control was lost or from where the fumble originated. If the offensive fumbles forward and crossed or hits the ground beyond the next line-to-gain or goal line, the result will bring the ball back to where the fumble occurred, and next down will be played.

3. A muffed snap is not a fumble/dead ball. The second count remains in effect on snaps.

V. LINE OF SCRIMMAGE AND NEUTRAL ZONE

A. LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

Is the plane of the ball that extends from sideline to sideline and ninety (90) degrees from the plane face of the field, once an official places his ball marker and signal the ball “ready for play.” Once the ball marker is set, the neutral zone becomes established.

B. NEUTRAL ZONE

The neutral zone is the space between the ends of the ball when in a normal resting position on its long axis while parallel to the sidelines. This zone extends from sideline to sideline and is established once the ball is marked ready for play.

VI. POSITIONING, MOTION, SHIFT, SUBSTITUTION

A. HUDDLE/LINING UP ON OFFENSE OR DEFENSE

1. Teams may choose to huddle prior to a play. It is not necessary to huddle after a play if a team wishes to use predetermined plays or audible signals.

2. The center is an eligible receiver. One receiver on each side of the center must be on the line of scrimmage. All other receivers must be off the line of scrimmage to be considered eligible. Multiple receivers lining up on the line of scrimmage will result in "covered" receivers being considered ineligible.

B. SUBSTITUTION AND MINIMUM PLAYING TIME

1. Each player must play a minimum of two full quarters. There are ONLY two acceptable methods of meeting this minimum playing time rule: (1) The player must play the entirety of two full quarters as a starter on offense AND defense, or (2) The player must play the ENTIRE game as a starter on offense OR defense. The continued application of the minimum play approach is not required, but encouraged, during overtime play. **If a team is found to have violated the minimum playing time rule, the Football Board may impose the following, but not limited to, consequences; Allowing the players who did not fully participate to make up the lost plays in the next scheduled game, a formal warning to the head coach, suspension of the head coach for up to the remainder of the season, etc. <u>The consequence for clearly violating the minimum playing time rule in a playoff or championship game is forfeiture, pursuant to section (a) of this rule</u>**

    a. Concerns by the opposing team regarding playing time, must be brought by only the **HEAD COACH** while the game is still in progress to a commissioner or official. Once made aware, a board member will monitor the remainder of the game and if consequences are warranted, they will be communicated to both coaches within 24 hours of the game's completion.

2. There will be no free substitutions during games. Injuries or other extenuating circumstances will allow for substitutions.

3. "Sleepers" on substitutions will not be allowed on any play. No player may line up closer than 5 yards from the sideline unless he came out of the huddle or unless he was on the field of play during the previous play and did not leave the field of play.

C. SHIFT

One or more offensive players may be shifting their position at the same

time prior to the snap. Their movement may be in any direction, but they must become set for one full count before the ball is snapped or before another player can go in motion prior to the snap.

D. MOTION

Only one player is allowed to be in motion at the snap and his movement must be parallel or away from the line of scrimmage and must be continuous.

E. STANCE

No three or four point stances are permitted except for the center.

F. ENCROACHMENT/OFF-SIDES

1. Encroachment shall be called if either the offense or the defense passes over the plane of their line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. A false movement of the football by the center shall constitute offensive encroachment. These are dead ball fouls and the play shall be immediately whistled dead before play begins and penalty yardage automatically marked off against the encroaching team. (Exception: Defensive encroachment resulting in an offensive first down will become an offense's choice penalty).

2. If a player on either side lines up offsides, the official will point toward that player's team side. If that player does not get back on-sides before the ball is snapped, he will be considered as having been offsides at the moment of snap. If an official has not "offsides warned" a team for lining up off-sides, by pointing at them, he should not call off-sides on them at the snap of the ball. Play continues in this instance and following the play, this becomes a captain's choice penalty.

VII. SCREENING AND RUSHING

A. SCREENING

1. No blocking or moving screens are allowed.

2. Players standing still may be used by a ball carrier to divert an opposing team member from touching the ball carrier.

3. Offensive blocking will result in a spot foul and ball will be placed at the spot of the foul. If there is blocking or moving screens on an interception by an original defensive player the play will be blown dead, and the defense takes over the ball on the 45 yard line due to the interception

B. RUSHING

No rushing of the quarterback is allowed.

VIII. PASSING REGULATIONS

A. PASSING

1. There can only be one forward pass per play. A "**forward pass**" is defined as a live ball thrown toward the opponent's goal line.

2. If the passer has crossed the line of scrimmage when the football is released, an illegal forward pass has occurred. Illegal forward passes will be marked from the point of infraction.

3. Once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage, in the air or in possession of a player, it cannot be passed forward, even if the ball is first returned back across the line of scrimmage.

4. A lateral will be any pass thrown overhand or underhand perpendicular or away from the direction of advancement of team in possession. Forward laterals are treated as an illegal forward pass if beyond the line of scrimmage.

5. Push or Shovel Passes thrown in any direction is legal if initiated behind the line of scrimmage. Once a player crosses the line of scrimmage, push or shovel passes are legal if thrown parallel or behind the ball carrier.

B. RECEIVING

1. All players of both teams are eligible pass receivers. Each player is eligible, even if he steps out of bounds or out of end zone, as long as he catches the ball in bounds or comes down first in bounds with at least one (1) foot. If a receiver comes down with one foot in bounds and one foot out of bounds simultaneously, the pass is incomplete. The lines marking the sidelines and the extreme end of the end zone shall be considered out of bounds if stepped on to any degree.

2. Two or more offensive receivers or defensive players may touch a pass in succession, resulting in a completion. After a pass is thrown, it is too much to expect of the officials to keep track of exactly who touched the ball and in what order, if receivers and defenders are battling for possession. Therefore, the only things that will be judged will be (1) did pass interference occur, (2) who caught the ball and (3) was receiver in bounds with at least one foot a moment of possession.

C. PASS INTERFERENCE

Pass Interference Rules shall apply to any pass made from behind the line of scrimmage and applies to both offensive and defensive players. After the pass is in the air, neither the pass receiver nor the defender may touch the other player until one of them touches the ball, or else offensive or defensive pass interference may be called. If contact occurs after one of them touches the ball, then pass interference cannot be called.

D. PASS INTERFERENCE ENFORCEMENT

1. Any contact that occurs after the pass is touched and is either complete or incomplete, must be judged by the officials as either non-intentional contact caused by both players "playing the ball" or intentional contact/pass interference which shall be a 10-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage or the point of infraction, whichever is shorter. The penalty will result in an automatic first down.

   All pass interference plays, offensive or defensive, will be team's choice penalties. If the team refuses the penalty the play will stand.

2. All offensive pass interference plays, "Tie Breaker Period", or the "Point After Touchdown Try Period" which are accepted by the defensive captain shall be marked off from the line of scrimmage with a loss of down.

3. Defensive pass interference plays, which occur on the playing field, and are accepted, shall be marked 10 yards from the line of scrimmage or the point of infraction, whichever is shortest, automatic first down (except in Tie Breaker), and play number will be run again.

4. Defensive pass interference that occurs in the end zone during the "Regulation Play Period" and accepted: ball will be placed on one (1) yard line and 1st down.

5. Defensive pass interference that occurs during the "Point After Touchdown Try Period" and accepted: ball will be placed on one (1) yard line – P.A.T. try will be rerun.

6. Defensive pass interference, which occurs in the end zone during the "Tie Breaker Period" and accepted: ball will be placed on the one (1) yard line and same play will be run again.

7. Shielding/screening a receiver's eyes by a defender without playing the football is pass interference and shall be penalized as such.

8. Bump and Run, or checking an offensive receiver during a passing play

will be a penalty from point of infraction and team's choice.

IX. RUNNING WITH THE BALL

A. Ball Carrier

1. The responsibility of avoiding contact rests with the ball carrier. He must show the officials he made an effort to avoid contact. The ball carrier will not deliberately run or drive into a defensive player. The "Stiff Arm" is illegal. Penalty will be made from the point of infraction and will result in loss of down.

    a. If any of the above acts are judged to have caused excessive contact, 5 yards and loss of down.

2. The ball carrier is down and the ball is dead when touched below the neck with at least one hand by an opposing team's player or when the ball or either knee touches the ground. A defensive player may leave his feet to touch an offensive player but may not make contact while doing so.

3. Tackling is prohibited. Tackling is grasping or encircling the body of the ball carrier with a hand or arm. Grabbing the ball carrier's clothing shall be penalized as tackling. The penalty will be assessed from the point of infraction or the line of scrimmage.

X. PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

A. PENALTY INFORMATION

1. All live ball fouls (fouls which occur while play is in progress) are a team's choice. All dead ball fouls (fouls which occur prior to snap or after ball is blown dead) will automatically be marked off. This means if a foul occurs during a down and is a live ball foul and then a dead ball foul occurs, both fouls will be enforced. They do not offset, even if against different teams.

2. Penalties which would otherwise be marked off past the 45-yard line shall be placed on the 45-yard line.

3. Offsetting Penalties – If offsetting fouls occur during a down or which the ball is ready-for-play, that down shall be played over. If offsetting fouls occur between successive downs, the next down shall be the same as if no fouls occurred.

4. If there is a change of team possession during a down, the team last gaining possession may decline the offsetting fouls and retain possession after the

penalty for its own infraction providing that the infraction occurs after the change of possession. If offsetting fouls occur prior to change of possession, play shall be repeated.

B. SBMSA 7on7 AND FLAG FOOTBALL PENALTY CHART See ***Appendix B***

1. All "minor" penalties will be marked 5 yards. All "major" penalties will be 10 yards. If in the opinion of the officials the foul is flagrant or excessive contact, the player (or players) may be ejected.

2. In order to establish a simple philosophy in assessing penalties, these general rules hold true with only a few exceptions:

   a. All Accepted Penalties: are marked from the end of the run, line of scrimmage or point of infraction, whichever hurts the infracting team the most and the down may or may not be replayed.

   b. All Refused Penalties: the ball stays where blown dead and down is not replayed.

   c. All Live Ball Fouls: are team's choice.

   d. All Dead Ball Fouls: are not team's choices and will be marked off.

3. "Little-To-Lose" Penalties: If the full penalty cannot be marked off due to the field position relative to the goal line, the ball will be marked off to the one-yard line.

   a. Defensive penalties on teams backed up within 1 yard from their goal will result in play being run again from line of scrimmage.

   b. Offensive penalties on team backed up to within 1 yard from the 45-yard line will result in Loss of Down unless there is a change of possession during a play.

4. Penalty Enforcement During Tie Breaker Periods: When infractions occur during, if the penalty is accepted, the down number may or may not be lost, depending on the penalty (see Penalty Chart). In turn, that same infraction may or may not also lose the play number, depending on the penalty. Officials must enforce the combination that hurts the infracting team most. Exception: Only the offensive pass interference penalty during the tiebreaker period, if accepted, will cause that play number not to be repeated.

5. Penalties on the playing field during the tiebreaker period shall be marked the same as during regulation time.

6. Penalties Enforcement and Line-To-Gain

   a. Enforcement of any penalty which leaves the ball across the line-to-gain will result in a new line-to-gain (1st down).

   b. After enforcement of any live ball foul that leaves the ball short of the line-to-gain will result in the first down line remaining the same.

7. All defensive dead ball fouls after a touchdown but before the ball is put into play after change of possession will be penalized by a loss of down. All live ball fouls during this period are coaches' choice penalties.

C. DEFENSIVE FOULS DURING/AFTER TOUCHDOWNS AND PAT ATTEMPT

1. Touchdowns

   a. Penalty A: Live Ball Fouls – Coaches' Choice Penalties (can take points & have loss of down after PAT attempt.)

   b. Penalty B: Dead Ball Fouls – Penalty is Loss of Down After Change of Possession

2. PAT Attempt

   a. Penalty C: (1) Coaches' Choice Penalties Which if Accepted: Ball Marked to 1 Yard Line and PAT run again (same point value) (2) Live Ball Fouls: Coaches' Choice Penalties (can take points and have loss of down penalty).

   b. Penalty D: Dead Ball Fouls – Loss of down penalty after change of possession.

REGULAR SEASON AND DIVISIONAL BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP

The information in this section contains highly recommended guidelines. However, the Program Director and each Division Commissioner have the ability to adjust the below if they determine it is in the best interest of the league. Any variances to the below will be communicated in writing prior to the first game of the regular season.

I. Division Format and Regular Season Schedule

A. The regular season schedule cannot be decided until after registration is closed.

B. It will be the Program Directors' and each Division Commissioner's responsibility to determine the number of teams within each Division or Conference and the regular season game schedule for such Division or Conferences.

1. Division with nine (9) or fewer teams;

a. All Teams compete in one (1) Division.

b. All Teams will play each other at least once during the regular season to determine the Regular Season Division Champion and to determine the play-off seeding.

c. The number of teams advancing to the play-offs may be as follows:

Number of Teams	Playoff Qualifiers
4 Teams	All 4 Teams Advance
5 Teams	Top 4 Teams Advance
6 Teams	All 6 Teams Advance
7 Teams	Top 6 Teams Advance
8 Teams	All 8 Teams Advance
9 Teams	Top 8 Teams Advance
10 Teams	Top 8 Teams Advance

2. Divisions with ten (10) or more teams:

a. The Program Director and related Directors and/or Commissioners have the option to divide into at least two (2) separate Conferences. The Program Director and the Division Commissioner serving that season will establish the Conferences.

b. The Division Commissioner should make every effort to create these Conferences equally.

c. Any balance of the regular season games will be played against some of the teams from the other Conference(s).

d. All teams will play a minimum of a seven (7) game regular season

schedule.

e. Conference Regular Season Champions will be decided based on their record against teams with-in their conference only.

f. Written criteria set forth by the Division Commissioner prior to the season will dictate how many teams and, if applicable, how many from each Conference advance to the Play-offs.

II. Regular Season Champion and Bowl Format

A. Playoff Brackets can be found in Appendix A.

B. Conference Champions and Conference Standings;

1. To determine the Conference Champions and Conference standings the win/loss decimal will be used for each team within Conference play only, where ties count as a ½ win and a ½ loss. See below for example:

Wins	Losses	Ties	Ratio	Decimal
5	3	0	5/8	.625
4	2	2	5/8	.625

2. Based on the win/loss decimal, if there is a tie for a Conference Champion, each will declare Conference Co-Champions, regardless of head-to-head results. This does not create more than one 1st place team within Conference for playoff seeding.

3. To determine the play-off seeding within each Conference, each team's in-conference win/loss decimal will be used. In the case of a tie, the following tie break procedures will be used:

a. Two-way tie:

(1) Head-to-head (excluding "pre-season" games) (The Program Director and the Division Commissioner will determine prior to the first game, which game(s) is/are considered "pre-season".)

(2) Record vs highest ranked Common opponent (This includes common opponents that were played within Conference and out of Conference. This does not include "pre-season" games.). If there are two or more sets of ties that are dependent on each other regarding highest ranked Common opponent, then this step will not be utilized.

(3) Coin toss facilitated by Football Board Member(s)

b. Three or more-way tie *(Note that if the three or more way tie is broken prior to a coin flip and teams are still left tied, a three way or two-way tie breaker is then used, depending on the number of teams left tied. For example, Team A, Team B, and Team C have a three-way tie. Each beat each other so the tie is not broken by head-to-head. However, Team C is removed from the tie because they have a worse record against teams with opponents with highest win/loss decimal while Team A and Team B are still left tied. Then the remaining two-way tie would be broken by head-to-head of Team A and Team B*):

(1) Head-to-head (excluding "pre-season" games) – if one team beat the other two it gets the highest seed, if one team lost to the other two it gets the lowest seed and possibly eliminated. All tied teams must have played each other for Head-to-Head to be applied.

(2) Record vs highest ranked Common opponent (This includes common opponents that were played within Conference and out of Conference. This does not include "pre-season" games.). If there are two or more sets of ties that are dependent on each other regarding highest ranked Common opponent, then this step will not be utilized.

(3) A three or more-way tie coin toss facilitated by Football Board Member(s), where odd man gets highest seed, and the remaining teams continue to toss (NOTE: Once you are in a coin toss the coin toss is the only method further utilized to break ties).

C. Play-off seeding between teams from difference Conferences;

1. To determine the play-off seeding between teams from **different Conferences**, each team's win/loss decimal will be used for in Conference and out of Conference games (excluding "pre-season" games). Additionally, the teams shall be grouped for seeding purposes based on their finish within their Conference (*e.g.,* in a three conference Division, a Division winner cannot be seeded lower than 3, and a runner-up cannot be seeded lower than 6, regardless of record). In the case of a tie, the following tie break procedures will be used:

a. Head-to-Head results (excluding "pre-season" games). All tied teams must have played each other for Head-to-Head to be applied.

b. Record vs. highest ranked Common opponent (This includes

common opponents that were played within Conference and out of Conference. This does not include "pre-season" games). If there are two or more sets of ties that are dependent on each other regarding highest ranked Common opponent, then this step will not be utilized.

c. Conference Record

d. Match up that avoids playing a team from team's own Conference (note that the League will attempt to avoid first round match-ups between teams from the same Conference. So, for example, if Team A is the 5 seed and from the Red Conference and Teams B (Red) and C (White) are tied for 11 and 12 with same Conference record and no head-to-head (or a head-to-head tie), team C would play team A to avoid a Conference opponent in the first round.

e. Coin toss facilitated by Football Board Member(s)

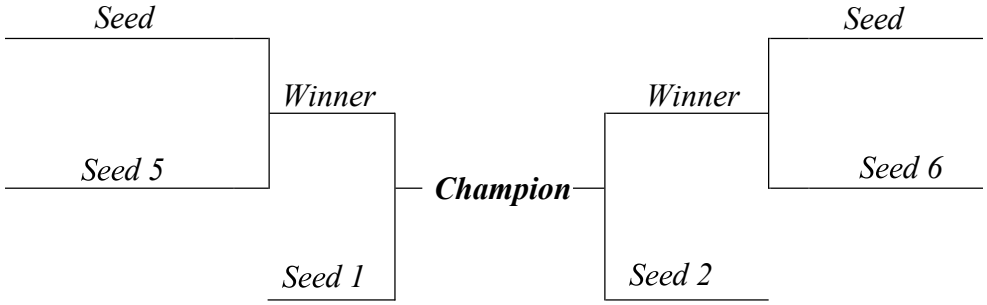
Appendix A – Playoff Brackets

I. Examples

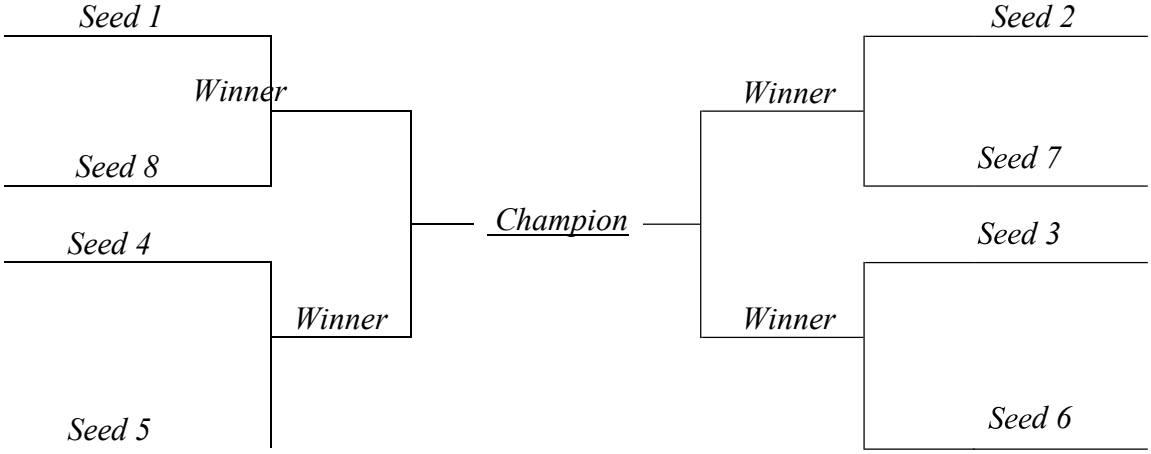
A. Four (4) Team Play-off Pairings



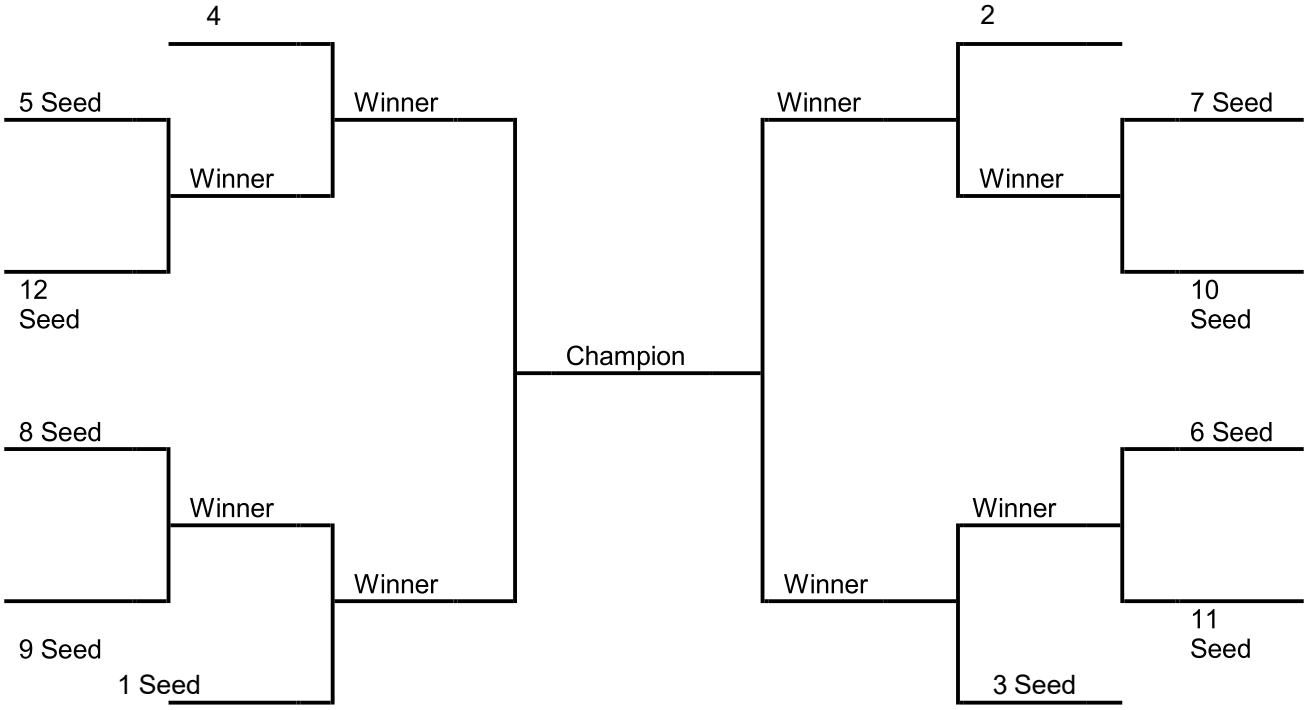
B. Six (6) Team Play-off Pairings



C. Eight (8) Team Play-off Pairings



D. Twelve (12) Team Play-off Pairings



Appendix B -- SBMSA PENALTY CHARTS

General Infractions	Rule Number (Section/Article)	Type of Penalty/Marked From	Coaches' Choice	Loss of Down (If Accepted)
Clothing Covering Flag		MINOR/LOS	NO	NO
Improper Equipment		MINOR LOS/EOR	NO	NO
Flag or Belt Improperly Positioned at Possession		MINOR POI/LOS	YES	NO
Flag Improperly Altered or Attached		MAJOR LOS/POI	NO	NO
Delay of Game: Time Outs		MINOR/EOR	NO	NO
Illegal Substitution		MINOR/LOS	YES	NO
Illegal Participation		MINOR/LOS	YES	NO
Unsportsmanlike Conduct		MAJOR LOS/EOR	YES/NO	NO
Faking Excessive Contact		MAJOR/EOR	NO	NO
Begging A Call		MINOR/EOR	NO	NO
Encroachment		MINOR/LOS	NO	NO
Offsides		MINOR/LOS	YES	NO
Illegal Advancement		MINOR/POI	YES	NO

LOS = Line of Scrimmage
EOR = End of Run
POI = Point of Infraction

Offensive Infractions	Rule Number (Section/Article)	Penalty/Marked From	Coaches' Choice	Loss of Down (If Accepted)
Too Small Football: Prior to Snap After Snap		 MAJOR/LOS Possession Reversed at Previous LOS	 NO NO	 NO NO
Delay of Game:		MINOR/LOS	NO	NO
Illegal Shift or Motion		MINOR/LOS	YES	NO
Illegal Screening (Behind LOS)		MINOR/LOS	YES	NO
Illegal Downfield Screening **IF EXCESSIVE**		MINOR/POI/EOR MAJOR/POI/EOR	YES YES	NO YES
Illegal Screening (Punt)		MINOR/EOR/POI	YES	NO
If Flagrant		MAJOR/LOS/EOR	YES/NO	NO
Illegal Forward Pass		MINOR/POI	YES	YES
Intentional Grounding		MINOR/POI	YES	YES
Forward Lateral (Beyond LOS)		MINOR/POI	YES	YES
Pass Interference in: (Playing Field & End Zone)				
Regulation Time Period		MAJOR/LOS OR POI, whichever is shorter	,	YES
Tie Breaker		MAJOR/LOS OR POI, whichever is shorter	YES	YES & LOSS OF PLAY #
P.A.T.			YES	YES
Stiff Arm		MAJOR/POI/LOS	YES	YES
Protecting Flags		MAJOR/POI/LOS	YES	YES
Charging Into Defense		MAJOR/POI/LOS	YES	NO
IF EXCESSIVE		MAJOR/POI/LOS	YES	YES
Illegal Snap		MINOR/LOS	YES	NO
Delay of Game: Declare Punt		MINOR/LOS	NO	NO
Illegal Touching Punt In Air		MINOR/POI	NO	NO
Quick Kick		MINOR/LOS	YES	YES
Sideline Interference		MAJOR/LOS	YES	YES

Defensive Infraction	Rule Number (Section/Article)	Penalty/Marked From	Coaches' Choice	First Down (If Accepted)
Illegal Line Play		MINOR/LOS	YES	NO
Illegal Rushing		MAJOR/LOS	YES	NO

Defensive Infraction	Rule Number (Section/Article)	Penalty/Marked From	Coaches' Choice	First Down (If Accepted)
Contact w/Passer ("Roughing)		MAJOR/LOS/EOR	YES	YES
Contact w/Receiver ("Bump & Run" – See Below – Pass Interference)				
Pass Interference in: (Playing Field)				
Regulation Time		MAJOR/POI or LOS (whichever is shortest) Automatic 1st Down	YES	YES
Tie-Breaker		MINOR/POI OR LOS (whichever is shorter) Automatic 1st Down	YES	NO & PLAY # OVER
PAT		BALL ON 1 YARD LINE	YES	PLAY OVER PLUS 1 FREE IF NEEDED
(End Zone) Regulation Time		BALL ON 1 YARD LINE	YES	YES
All Others		BALL ON 1 YARD LINE	YES	PLAY OVER
Stripping		SAME AS PASS INTERFERENCE		
Screening Receiver's Eyes		SAME AS PASS INTERFERENCE		
Bump & Run		MINOR/POI	YES	NO
Tackling: Impeding Encircling		MINOR/POI/LOS MAJOR/POI/LOS	YES	YES
Impeding T.D.		BALL ON 1 YARD LINE	YES	YES
Impeding T.D. in Tie Breaker		BALL ON 1 YARD LINE	YES	PLAY OVER
Illegal Deflagging		MINOR/LOS/EOR	YES	NO
Runner Stripping		MINOR/POI/LOS	YES	NO
Pushing Ball Carrier out of bounds		MAJOR/POI/LOS	YES	NO
IF EXCESSIVE		MAJOR/POI/LOS	YES	NO
Faking Deflagging		MINOR/POI/LOS	YES	NO
Sideline Interference*		MAJOR/EOR/POI	YES	YES