

# RCSSC TOUCH FOOTBALL RULEBOOK

These rules were last updated on January 31, 2019.

## **RULE 1: TEAMS AND PLAYERS**

### **Section 1. Team Formation**

- 1. Leagues Offered.** The RCSSC offers three football leagues.
  - **SOCIAL** is designed for teams and individuals who love to socialize and have **GOOD** athletic skills.
  - **SUPER SOCIAL** is designed for teams and individuals who love to socialize and have **LIMITED** athletic skills. Super Social is divided into two subdivisions: "Bud," which is for teams with a winning record in the last season, and "Bud Light," which is for teams with a losing record the prior season and for Extreme Social teams with winning records.
  - **EXTREME SOCIAL** is all about socializing and having fun! **NO PLAYOFFS**
- 2. Seasons.** Football is offered in the spring, fall, and summer.
  - **Spring and Fall:** Games are played on Sundays starting at 10:00 AM at Canoe Run Park (FLDS 1-3), 600 W 22<sup>nd</sup> St., Richmond, VA 23225, at Gillies Creek Park (FLDS 4, 6-9), 4425 Williamsburg Ave., Richmond, VA 23223, and at Montrose Heights Playground (FLDS 10-11), 2022 Fenton St., Richmond, VA 23223.
  - **Summer:** Games are played on Sundays starting between 4:00 & 5:00 PM at Gillies Creek Park, 4425 Williamsburg Ave., Richmond, VA 23223.
- 3. Number of Players.** All teams must have at least 12 players, but there is no maximum. All players must be listed on the team roster and sign the RCSSC waiver to participate.
- 4. Adding Players.** Players may be added at any time until the final tee shirt order date. After that time, until the third week of play, a team must **drop** a player before it may add a player. The dropped player must provide his or her tee shirt to the added player. After the third week of play, team rosters are frozen. Teams must have their current roster online by the end of the third week. See the Commissioner for additional information.
- 5. Players on the Field.** A team can field no more than eight players at a time. At least three of the players on the field must be women. A team must have at least six players, and at least two women, present at game time to avoid a forfeit.
- 6. Playing Short.** A team may play with a full team of eight if its opponent is short players.
- 7. 3-PEAT -- aka DYNASTY RULE.** Everyone loves a little competition, but one team dominating a league season after season can spoil the fun for everybody.

If a team retaining more than four(4) to six(6) players (based on the sport's minimum roster size 6, 10 or 12) has won three championships in consecutive seasons for which they have been registered, that team will have to form two or more separate teams to promote balance in the league or withdraw their registration (no refund will be issued, league credit will be issued). The River City Sports & Social Club will have the option to, in its discretion, request that team to form two or more separate teams to promote parity in the league or withdraw their registration. The team will then have the opportunity to divide their roster (with no more than four to six retaining players) to form two or more separate teams with each subsequent roster approved by the River City Sports & Social Club.

## Section 2. Player Restrictions

1. **Age.** Players must be 21 years old at the start of the season. The Commissioner may request confirmation of age from players throughout the season.
2. **Professional or Division I Athletes.** Players who have played professional or Division I collegiate football in the last five years may not participate in the RCSSC.
3. **League Membership.** Players may only play for one football team, regardless of league.
4. **Violations.** Teams that violate the rules in this section will forfeit the entire season's games and must pay a fine.

## Section 3. Uniforms

1. **Tee Shirts.** The RCSSC will provide each team with tee shirts for its roster. All players must wear the RCSSC tee shirt for each game.
2. **Permitted Alterations.** Players may add their names, numbers, and other similar personal information to their tee shirts. Players may also add depictions of the American flag. Players' additions may not cover the RCSSC or sponsor logo.
3. **Excluded Alterations.** Players may not add any corporate information to their tee shirts, including website addresses and company names. Players may not include any offensive material on their tee shirts. The Commissioner has the exclusive right to determine whether additions are offensive.
4. **Penalty.** Players who do not wear the official RCSSC tee shirt will be sidelined for that game. Players who are caught exchanging shirts will also be sidelined, and if the players are not listed on the team roster, the team will forfeit the game and must pay a fine. Teams with players who violate alteration guidelines must purchase new RCSSC shirts (\$20/shirt), and the team will forfeit all games until it has paid for the new shirts.
5. **Metal Cleats Prohibited.** Players may not wear metal cleats. Players who wear metal cleats will be ejected.
6. **Sunglasses Prohibited.** No sunglasses can be worn unless they are prescription sunglasses.

## Section 4. Neutral Zone for Players

1. **Border Rule.** There is a five-yard neutral "free and clear" zone around all red zones and end zones. All players, coolers, strollers, equipment bags, spectators, etc. MUST stay OUTSIDE this area for their safety.

## RULE 2: FORFEITS AND SCHEDULING

1. **Minimum Players.** If a team does not have the minimum number of players (six, two of which are female) by game time, a **\$50** forfeit fine will be assessed.
2. **Avoiding Forfeit.** If the forfeiting team contacts the RCSSC no later than 24 hours before the game, no forfeit fine will be assessed, since it will allow time for the opposing coach to notify his or her team of the impending forfeit. E-mail the forfeit notice to [rivercityssc@aol.com](mailto:rivercityssc@aol.com). If a called-in forfeit game is rained out, the game WILL BE made up at a later date. This DOES NOT include games where a forfeit was called at game time.

3. **Fine.** The forfeit fine will be contributed to the forfeiting team's opponent's bar tab the following week. The fine recipient must use the tab the following week: the fine will not be carried over.
4. **Time of Payment.** All fines must be paid before the team's next scheduled game.
5. **Failure to Pay.** Teams that fail to pay an assessed fine before the subsequent week's game will have two points subtracted from their win total. After the second week, the fine will double.
6. **Ejection.** After three weeks of nonpayment, the Commissioner may eject the team from the league.
7. **NO GLASS CONTAINERS OR BOTTLES.** Teams will forfeit their game for that day if they are in possession of glass. Use plastic and aluminum containers only!
8. **Inclement Weather Policy.** In case of inclement weather, check the RCSSC weather hotline (804) 307-7294 and your e-mail for updates. If you do not receive a cancellation e-mail and there is no cancellation message on the RCSSC voicemail, all games are on.
9. **Regular/Post-Season Schedule Deviations.** The RCSSC's priority is to ensure that all teams play their full regular season schedule; post-season games are not guaranteed. Make-up games for both regular season and post-season games may be scheduled on days of the week outside of regularly scheduled game days and without regard to a team's day preference. When games are rescheduled, the Commissioner will e-mail the affected teams to allow sufficient time to adjust their schedules.
10. **No Refunds.** The RCSSC will not issue full or prorated refunds if the regular season or post-season is shortened due to inclement weather or for other unforeseeable reasons.

## **RULE 3: THE GAME**

### **Section 1. The Game**

1. **Teams.** The game shall be played between two teams of eight players each, with five males and three females.
2. **Ball.** Each team must provide its own ball. Any size will do.
3. **Team Captains.** Each team shall designate a captain to the head referee. If more than one player is selected, then the team should designate a speaking captain to make all decisions. The captain's first choice of any penalty is irrevocable.
4. **Referee's Authority.** The head referee has authority to rule promptly in the spirit of good sportsmanship, regardless of whether the situation is covered in the rules.
5. **Puck Toss.** The head referee will have the home team captain call the puck toss. The captain who wins the puck toss will have a choice of options for the first half: whether the team will start on offense or defense or which goal his or her team will defend. This choice cannot be deferred to the second half. The other captain will exercise the remaining option. Teams will switch directions and possession in the second half.
6. **Ball Position.** The ball will be placed on the two-point conversion line, which is the second hash mark from the chosen end zone.

### **Section 2. The Clock**

1. **Halves.** Each half will last 20 minutes. RCSSC staff will provide remaining time updates of 15-10-5-2

minutes throughout both halves. Halftime is five minutes.

2. **Running Clock.** The clock will run during both halves but will stop for time-outs or a serious injury. If an injury occurs, the player must leave the field for one down. The RCSSC referee will maintain the clock.
3. **First Half.** The first 19 minutes of the first half of the game will be a running clock. An official time-out will be called for the two-minute warning. The RCSSC official will communicate the current score and remaining time-outs for each team. After this information has been relayed to both teams, the official will indicate ready for play, and the game clock will start.
4. **First Half—Last Minute of Play.** With one minute or less remaining in the first half, the game clock will ONLY stop for a touchdown (untimed extra point), time out, penalty (see rule 7), or a change of possession.
  - The official will allow one minute after an attempted conversion/change of possession for teams to substitute players in the last minute of the first half.
  - The clock will begin, and the offense may snap the ball only after the official has given the ready for play signal. If a foul by the defense has occurred and time has run out, the offensive team may choose to extend the period by one down (enforcement as usual).
  - If time expires at the end of either half and the ball is in play, then time will not be called until the completion of the play.
  - If a touchdown occurs during a play in which the time expires, the touchdown will count, and an untimed extra point conversion will be allowed.
5. **Second Half.** In the second half of the game, the clock will be a running clock for the first 18 minutes.
6. **Second Half—Last Two Minutes of Play.** A 30-second official time-out will be called for the two-minute warning, after the completion of the previous play from scrimmage.

**Example:** Play starts with 2:05 on the clock and continues until 1:50 is left on the clock. The two-minute warning will be given with 1:50 remaining on the clock). The official will communicate the current score and remaining time-outs for each team. The game clock will start on the next snap by the offense.

- The game clock is stopped for the two-minute warning, touchdowns, dead balls, out of bounds, incomplete passes, change of possession, penalties (see rule 7), injuries, and time-outs. The game clock will start on the next snap by the offense.
- After a touchdown, the extra point attempt will be untimed. The clock will begin on the next snap, after the change of possession and the official has given the ready for play signal.
- The official will allow one minute after the change of possession for teams to substitute players.

**NOTE:** If a team is ahead by 19 points or more, the clock will continue to run. If the team that is behind scores after the two-minute warning to go down less than 19 points, the clock will still continue to run. No time-outs can be called during the above running-clock situation.

5. **Clock Enforcement—Last Minute of First Half/Last Two Minutes of Second Half.**
  - **Offensive Penalty.** If the offense commits a penalty in the last minute of the first half OR the last two minutes of the second half, 15 seconds will be removed from the clock. The offense CANNOT call a time-out to avoid the 15-second runoff. The RCSSC official will stop the clock, mark off the penalty, and get into ready for play position while removing 15 seconds from the clock. Within that time frame, the offense must be on the line of scrimmage and snap the ball on the official's ready-for-play whistle. (No huddle is allowed.) The game clock can expire during the runoff.  
**NOTE:** The defense has the option to decline the 15-second penalty.
  - **Defensive Penalty.** If the defense commits a penalty in the last minute of the first half or the last two minutes of the second half, the game clock will stop for the penalty mark off. The game clock will begin

on the next snap of the ball.

**NOTE:** If the defense commits a foul when it has no time-outs left in the final 30 seconds of the first or second half, the offense can decline the penalty and have the game clock expire.

If a foul by the defense has occurred and time has run out, the offense may choose to extend the period by one down (enforcement as usual) OR decline the penalty.

- **Intentional Foul.** In the final minute of the first half or the last two minutes of the second half, should the official decide that a player has intentionally committed a penalty, the player will automatically be ejected and an additional 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be assessed. The opposing team will also have the option to elect to enforce a 30-second runoff on the clock (in addition to the 15-second runoff for the penalty if the foul was on the offense).

6. **Time-Outs.** Each team will have two one-minute time-outs per game.

## **RULE 4: REFEREEING**

1. **Responsibilities.** There are two referees per game. BOTH will be provided by the RCSSC.

## **RULE 5: PLAY OF GAME; GENDER PLAY**

### **Section 1. Start of Play**

1. **Referee Declaration.** No player shall put the ball in play until the referee declares it is ready for play.
2. **Time.**
  - **Extreme Social:** The offense has 30 seconds to put the ball in play after it is declared ready.
  - **Social and Super Social:** The offense has 20 seconds to do the same.
3. **Rushing.** The defense may cross the line of scrimmage only after the five-second count or if the quarterback hands off the ball to another player once the ball has been snapped. If the defense crosses the line of scrimmage before either of these two situations occur, an offsides penalty will be assessed.

### **Section 2. First Downs**

1. **Midfield.** The field will be divided into two halves by cones placed at midfield. After the offense crosses midfield, the quarterback may no longer run the ball unless he is being rushed.
2. **Social and Super Social Divisions.** The offense is permitted to gain one first down by completing two forward passes beyond the line of scrimmage. A first down can be gained on either side of the field.
  - **Example 1:** The offense used four plays to acquire two completions on its half of the field. The down and distance will now be first and midfield. Once the offense crosses midfield, the down and distance will now be first and goal with NO chance to earn another first down by completions.
  - **Example 2:** On first down of its possession, the offense crosses midfield. The down and distance will now be first and two, with a chance to earn another first down by completions and then four downs to score.
  - **Example 3:** On first down of its possession, the offense completes a pass and is tagged short of midfield. On second down of their possession, the offense completes a pass over midfield. The down and distance will now be first and two, with a chance to earn another first down by completions and then four downs to score.

3. **Extreme Social Division.** The offense team has a limit of one first down and four additional plays to cross midfield. An automatic first down is awarded once the ball crosses midfield. The offense then has a limit of one first down and four additional plays to score a touchdown. If the defense commits a penalty that carries with it an automatic first down and the offense has not gotten a first down by completions on that half of the field, then the offense will still have the opportunity to gain a first down by completions on that half of the field.
  - **Example 1:** On 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2, the defense commits pass interference. The down and distance reset to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2.
  - **Example 2:** A penalty on 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 resets to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2.
  - **Example 3:** A penalty on 3<sup>rd</sup> and midfield resets to 1<sup>st</sup> and midfield.
  - **Example 4:** A penalty on 4<sup>th</sup> and goal resets to 1<sup>st</sup> and goal.
4. **Automatic First Down.** Once the ball crosses midfield, the offense receives an automatic first down.
5. **Touchdown.** After the ball crosses midfield, the offense must score a touchdown within four to eight attempts based on the division rules noted above.
6. **Earning a First Down.** Teams must complete two passes beyond the line of scrimmage to earn a first down.
7. **Losing Possession.** A team that fails to convert a first down by crossing midfield or scoring loses possession to the opposing team.
8. **Punting.** The offense may punt on fourth down.
9. **Carryover.** First downs cannot be carried over from one half to the other.

### Section 3. Open Play

The official will announce an “open play” and the ball may be thrown to EITHER a male or female receiver on the next play from scrimmage.

**EXAMPLE OF OFFICIAL’S ANNOUNCEMENT:** “First down and two, open.” (First down, and two completions are needed to get a first down. Any gender may catch the ball.) Alternatively, “Third down and mid, open.” (Third down, ball must cross midfield to get a first down, and any gender may catch the ball.)

### Section 4. Forced Gender Play

1. **Three Down Rule (All Divisions Except Extreme Social).** An offense must employ a female as the **operative player** within three consecutive downs. **THIS INCLUDES EXTRA POINT ATTEMPTS. Gender play does not reset after touchdown.**
  - An operative player is one who:
    - (1) is the intended receiver in the eyes of the official;
    - (2) is the primary runner (a gain is **not** required, and the runner does **not** have to cross the line of scrimmage); or
    - (3) is a quarterback who attempts a pass (a gain is not required).
  - If a male quarterback is sacked or fumbles the snap on a forced gender play, the next play must be another gender play.

2. **Examples of Acceptable Gender Plays.** The following are examples of allowed plays.
  - A female player lines up as the quarterback and is sacked.
  - A female player lines up as the quarterback and attempts a forward pass.
  - A female player lines up as the quarterback and runs the ball over the line of scrimmage.
  - A female player receives a lateral or handoff and runs the ball.
  - A female player receives a lateral or handoff and attempts a forward pass.
  - A pass intended for a female player is deflected by a female player and is caught by a male player.
  - Plays using a female player and resulting in loss of down will still be considered a female play (e.g., the female quarterback crosses the line of scrimmage then throws the ball).
  - A pass caught *behind the line of scrimmage* by a female player who does *not* successfully gain positive yards counts as a gender play but **not** as a completion.
  
3. **Examples of Unacceptable Gender Plays.** The following are examples of plays that will not satisfy the forced gender play rule.
  - A male player deflects a pass that a female player catches.
  - A male quarterback intentionally throws the ball at a female player's feet.
  - A female quarterback grounds the ball to stop the clock or to continue to the next down (applies on a required gender play; does not apply if regular quarterback is a female.)
  - A female player lines up as the quarterback and laterals or hands the ball off to a male player.
  - A female player hikes the ball into play.
  
4. **Defense Coverage for a Forced Gender Play.** On a forced gender play, the male defensive team must play man-to-man. You must be within 10 feet of your man during man-to-man when guarding and in the line of play.

**EXAMPLE:** *If the male player you are guarding runs a pattern down the field but is not involved in the gender play and it does not cause you to be near the gender play by not following, no penalty will be assessed (i.e., you stay on the line of scrimmage and out of the play at hand.)* Male defensive players can only leave their man-to-man assignment after the ball is in the air to tag the female player. **Interceptions by a man may not occur unless the woman has touched the ball first.**

**EXCEPTION:** During any gender play in which the ball is thrown into the end zone, any male defender may knock the ball down or catch it, but it will not be considered an interception. There is no change of possession or running the ball back for a touchdown. **The ball MUST cross the goal line for this to take place.**

Men may not cover women on a forced gender play but may guard women on open plays. (See exceptions below.) Defenders may not knock a thrown ball down at the line of scrimmage. **ONLY the rusher of the quarterback may knock the ball down at any time.** If a female is the quarterback on a forced gender play, the defense may use a zone defense.

Only the first three women are involved in the TRUE “forced gender play.” If the offense plays more than three women on the field for a forced gender play, men may cover the additional women over the original three. You are allowed to knock the ball down and/or intercept defending the fourth, fifth, etc. women only. The coverage acts as true man-to-man/person-to-person. An offense playing with more than three females on a forced gender play **does NOT have to designate which three females are participating in the forced gender play.**

If more than four females are played and only three offensive females, the additional women must be guarded by the unmarked men on the field. A penalty will be called for not playing man-to-man/person-to-person.

5. **Exceptions to Forced Gender Rule When Team Is Down a Female Player.**

- **Offense.** If the offense is down a female player, the defense may use its three women to play zone but cannot double team.
- **Defense.** If the defense is down a female player (including injury), it may cover the offense's additional female player with a male player on a gender play. The offense **must** designate to the referee which female player is to be covered by a male before the snap. Then, the defense must designate to the referee which male player is going to cover the female player on the forced gender play. The defense must rotate its male players to cover the offense's extra female player. Once the rotation is complete, the defense must restart its rotation of coverage.

\*\*\*The male defender can ONLY knock the ball down. The ball may be caught, but the catch is **NOT** an interception and counts as a down that satisfies gender with no penalty (i.e., there is NO change of possession OR running the ball back for a touchdown).

6. **Female Defensive Coverage:** On any forced gender play, females will have these defensive options:

- (1) female to female,
- (2) 10-yard cushion from the line of scrimmage,
- (3) zone, or
- (4) a free safety.

7. **Intercepting a Thrown Ball on Gender.** (Spot foul/gender is good OR can replay gender.)

When a male defender intercepts or catches a ball on a gender play without the ball deflecting off a woman first, the ball will be placed where it was intercepted or caught.

**EXCEPTION:** ONLY the defender marking the quarterback may "intercept" in the means of blocking a pass. Possession DOES NOT CHANGE. The same applies when the ball is thrown into the end zone: any male defender may block or intercept. The ball may be caught, but there is no interception (i.e., there is no change of possession OR running the ball back for a touchdown).

8. **Exclusions.** The slate is clean for extra points and punts.

## Section 5. Scoring/Downs

1. **Touchdown.** A touchdown is worth six points. A female-to-female touchdown is worth seven or eight points. To score, **BOTH** the football and player's entire body must break the plane of the opponent's goal line. The carrier must have one foot (or body part) planted across the end zone along with the ball.

- **NO SHOVING** players to keep them out of the end zone.
- If a player does not have complete possession and the ball travels outside of the end zone, the ball will be spotted where possession was gained.

**EXAMPLE:** If a player extends the ball with his or her arm into the end zone, but his or her body is tagged on the one-yard line, the ball will be placed on the one-yard line.

2. **Extra Points.** Extra points are worth two points for a 10-yard conversion and one point for a five-yard conversion. To score, the carrier must cross the end zone. The **gender rule applies**. An intercepted extra point **cannot** be run back.

3. **Gender Exceptions—Touchdown.**

- On an **OPEN PLAY** with the line of scrimmage outside the one-point conversion line (five yards), if a woman-to-woman pass results in a touchdown, that team will receive eight points (instead of six). Inside the one-point conversion line, the team will receive seven points. Teams still have the option of a one- or two-point conversion.
- On a **FORCED GENDER** play, the touchdown will result in six points. Teams still have the option of a one- or two-point conversion.

- **ON EITHER AN OPEN OR FORCED GENDER PLAY**, if you execute a hook and ladder play with the line of scrimmage outside of the one-point conversion line (five yards) with females being BOTH the hook and the ladder that results in a touchdown, then eight points will be awarded. Teams still have the option for a one- or two-point conversion.

4. **Gender Exceptions—Extra Point.**

- On an **OPEN play**, a woman-to-woman pass from the two-point conversion line will result in three points.
- On a **FORCED GENDER** play, a woman-to-woman pass from the two-point conversion line will result in two points.
- On an **OPEN play**, a woman-to-woman pass from the one-point conversion line will result in two points.
- On a **FORCED GENDER** play, a woman-to-woman pass from the one-point conversion line will result in one point.

5. **Safety.** A safety is worth two points. A safety occurs when:

- any offensive penalty occurs in the end zone,
- the ball carrier or quarterback is tagged in the end zone (not on a punt or intercepted pass),
- the ball carrier or quarterback runs out of bounds in his or her own end zone,
- the center snaps the ball out of the end zone, or
- a player fumbles in his or her own end zone.

**NOTE:** After a safety, the offense will punt a free kick from the two-point conversion line.

6. **Reception at Midfield.** The official will signal a first down when the player's entire body and ball have broken the plane of the midfield line at the completion of a play.

**EXAMPLE:** On second and mid, the ball carrier crosses midfield with the ball then returns behind the midfield line and is tagged. The next down will be third and mid.

**Section 6. Punts.**

1. **Declaration.** The offense must declare punts on fourth down. Fake punts are not allowed.
2. **Kicking.** All punts must be kicked. The kicking team must stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. Five players from the kicking team AND three receiving team players must be on the line of scrimmage.
3. **Safety.** If a safety is called, the opposing team receives two points, and the downed team must punt.
4. **Receiving Team.** The receiving team may fair catch the ball or advance it. If the ball hits the ground or is muffed (an unsuccessful attempt to catch the ball where the ball is touched in the attempt), it becomes a dead ball. If the ball travels or is downed in the end zone, it comes out to the one-point hash mark.
5. **Blocking.** No blocking is allowed on punts.

**Section 7. Continuance of Play**

1. **Touch.** To stop the play, the opponent must touch the ball carrier or the ball in his or her possession with two hands simultaneously. The carrier must catch the ball before becoming eligible for downed contact.
2. **Out of Bounds.** If the ball carrier leaves the field, the play stops.
3. **Scoring.** Play stops when the ball carrier scores.
4. **Dead Ball.** Play stops when the ball touches the ground because of a fumble, punt, or incomplete pass or when the ball carrier slips or falls while any part of his or her body (except feet or hands) touches the

ground.

5. **Pushed Player.** A player who has ball control and is pushed out of the end zone or sideline will be considered inbounds or considered to have scored. *A penalty can be assessed for pushing in the judgment of the referee.*
6. **Center/Hiker/Snapper as a Receiver.** When in the red zone (inside the 10-yard hash mark while on offense), this person is not eligible to receive the ball until after the three-second count from the line judge's five-second rush count. Penalty: Loss of down.

## 7. **Hook and Ladder.**

- **FORCED GENDER** with male involved: The ball is dead at the point of release by the female (the hook) to the male (ladder). The official will call "gender is good" for the completed pass to a female, and no penalty will be assessed. On a forced gender play, a male cannot be the "hook."
- **OPEN PLAY:** If you execute the hook and ladder (female is either one) on an "open play," the play is legal; however, it does not satisfy the gender requirement.
- **ANY PLAY:** If you execute this play with females being BOTH the hook and the ladder, the play will be allowed to continue without interruption. It will be a completed pass, the ball will NOT be called dead at the spot of the lateral, and it will count as a gender play. If a touchdown is scored as a result of this play with the line of scrimmage outside of the one-point conversion line (five yards), then eight points will be awarded.

8. **Ineligible Receiver.** An eligible receiver becomes ineligible if he or she steps out of bounds (before or during a pass), and he or she remains ineligible until an eligible receiver or any defensive player touches the pass. Penalty: Loss of down.  
**Exception:** If the eligible receiver is forced out of bounds, he or she may legally touch the pass as soon as he or she legally returns inbounds.

9. **Unabated Runner.** Once a player running unabated has crossed the opposing team's two-point conversion line, he or she has five seconds to perform one of the following three options:
- score a touchdown,
  - take a knee, or
  - run out of bounds.

If the runner has not scored a touchdown, taken a knee, or gone out of bounds within the five-second limit or stops before the two-point conversion line, the official will blow the play dead and the clock will stop. The runner may be ejected from the game, and a 15-yard dead ball unsportsmanlike penalty will be called. The penalty will be enforced from the spot that the player stopped running.

## Section 8. Turnovers

1. **Possession.** A possession change occurs only due to downs or an interception on a forward pass.
2. **Fumble.** A fumble that touches the ground is **NOT** a turnover (dead ball at spot of fumble).
3. **Lateral.** A lateral is an underhand or overhand pitch of the ball to a teammate next to you or behind you. A lateral cannot be advanced if the ball hits the ground. It is then ruled a fumble. A lateral is live as soon as it is received.
4. **Interception.** An interception occurs when a player catches an opponent's pass or fumble before it hits the ground. The player must have control of the ball inbounds if he or she catches the football in the air. The ball is live and can be advanced. **No stripping of the ball is allowed.**

## Section 9. Inadvertent Whistle

1. **During Play.** If an official inadvertently sounds his whistle during a play, the ball becomes dead immediately.
2. **During a Run.** If an official inadvertently sounds his whistle during a run, the offense maintains possession of the ball at the ball's location at the time of the whistle.
3. **Ball in Flight.** If the ball is in flight during a legal pass, snap, or punt, the down will be replayed.

## Section 10. Scrimmage

1. **Adjusting Ball.** The center may adjust the ball, including picking it up to reposition it, before each play so as long as he or she does not do it in a manner to intentionally draw the defense off sides.
2. **Position of Offense.** All offensive players must be within 15 yards of the ball (three yards from the sideline) at the snap. The offense must be set for one full second after the referee declares the ball in play and before the ball is snapped.
3. **Motion.** A player in motion may move initially toward the line of scrimmage, but he or she must be continuing in a parallel motion or backward motion to the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
4. **Line of Scrimmage.** At least five offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage. All remaining players must be on the line or behind their backfield line.
5. **Quarterback Run From Scrimmage.** This rule applies if the line of scrimmage is in the opposing team's half. The quarterback cannot run for positive yards unless rushed after the five-second count.

## Section 11. Passing

1. **Completion.** A forward pass is completed when caught by any offensive player with at least one foot in bounds and **a foot** in front of the line of scrimmage.
2. **Simultaneous Reception.** If both an offensive and defensive player catch the pass simultaneously, the ball is dead and belongs to the offense at the spot of the catch.
3. **Incomplete Pass.** If a player was out of bounds but is inbounds at the time of the catch, the pass is incomplete.
4. **Fourth Down.** On fourth down, an incomplete pass goes back to previous spot.

## Section 12. Safety

1. **Definition.** A safety occurs when a player is tagged in his or her own end zone, runs out of bounds in his or her own end zone, snaps the ball out of the end zone, or fumbles in his or her own end zone. A safety cannot occur on a punt or an interception.
2. **Scoring.** The defense receives two points and the offensive team will punt a free kick from the two-point hash mark.

## Section 13. Blocking

1. **No Contact Allowed.** All players must try to avoid contact. **No Picks.** No blocking is allowed. Blocking is considered any movement, whether deliberate or unintentional, that impedes a defensive player's pursuit of the ball carrier, unless to avoid personal injury. This includes deliberate or unintentional movement by a stationary player.
2. **Shielding.** Shielding is not allowed.
3. **Face Guarding.** When a legal forward pass is in the air, a defensive player may not use his or her hands or arms to screen the offensive player from catching the ball while his or her back is to the ball. This includes waving hands in the face of the receiver.

## RULE 6: PENALTIES

### Section 1. Five-Yard Penalties.

- **Not using a female player on a forced gender play.** The penalty will be reassessed until a gender play is used. If the penalty occurs on fourth down, a turnover will occur. The penalty will be assessed from the line and **results in the loss of a down.**
- **Double teaming a female on a forced gender play,** unless the female player is the quarterback or if the offense is down one female player. The offense may either reset the gender count or repeat the gender play. The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Not rotating a defensive male player on a forced gender play** when the defense is short a female player. The offense will have the option to reset the gender count or repeat the gender play. The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Playing zone defense on a forced gender play** except when a female player is quarterback. The offense may either reset the gender count or repeat the gender play. The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Delay of game.** The penalty will be assessed from the line, and the ball is dead.
- **Illegal cadence.** If the player calling the cadence does not receive the snap, the play will not stand and the down must be repeated. The penalty will be assessed from the line, and the ball is dead.
- **Illegal participation.** A team cannot have more than eight players on the field or have more than five male players on the field. The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Offensive offsides.** An offensive player is offsides when his or her body is beyond the scrimmage line before the snap. The penalty will be assessed from the line, and the ball is dead.
- **Defensive offsides.** A defensive player is offsides when any part of his or her body is beyond the line of scrimmage before the snap or before the five-second count is over. The offense may accept or decline the penalty and accept the succeeding spot (the spot where the ball would next be put in play if no distance penalty were to be enforced). The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Defensive encroachment.** Encroachment occurs when any part of a defensive player's body is in the neutral zone and contacts an offensive player before the snap. The official must blow his whistle immediately. The penalty will be assessed from the line, and the ball is dead.
- **Illegal shift.** After a shift or huddle, all offensive players must remain stationary for at least one second before the snap. The penalty will be assessed from the line, and the ball is dead.
- **Illegal motion.** No player is permitted to be moving forward toward his opponent's goal line at the snap. The penalty will be assessed from the line, and the ball is dead.
- **Illegal forward pass.** There is only one forward pass per play. The offense may make one forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage provided the ball does not cross the line and return behind the line before the pass. When an offensive player catches the illegal pass, the ball is dead immediately, the pass will be ruled incomplete, and the penalty will be assessed from the line. A penalty will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- **Quarterback illegal forward pass.** If the quarterback crosses the line of scrimmage and throws a

forward pass, the pass is incomplete and will be assessed from the line. The penalty **results in the loss of a down**.

- **Intentional grounding.** A passer, facing an imminent loss of yardage because of defensive pressure, throws a forward pass without a realistic chance of completion. **Exception:** A passer, except on a gender play, may stop the clock legally to save time if immediately upon receiving the snap he begins a continuous throwing motion and throws the ball directly forward into the ground. The penalty will be assessed from the line and **results in the loss of a down**.
- **Illegal diving/leaping.** No player may leave his or her feet to gain positive yards. If the dive or leap is an attempt to score, the penalty will be assessed from the original line of scrimmage. The penalty will be assessed at the spot of the foul.
- **Sleeper/sideline play:** All players must be within 15 yards of the ball (three yards from the sideline) when the referee declares ready for play. A substitution must report to the huddle or in no-huddle situations must report to the referee. The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Illegal block of ball during forced gender.** (Five-yard penalty on the line of scrimmage OR spot foul). No male player (not including quarterback defender) can block a thrown ball by the quarterback before a female touches the ball. The quarterback CANNOT throw the ball purposely at a male player to get the penalty, or an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be assessed (see section 3 below).
- **Delay of game in the final two minutes of the first half.** The clock will stop ONLY IF the scoring team delays the game during the extra point to run down the clock. A five-yard penalty will be assessed, and the clock will stop. The clock will start up again on the change of possession with the snap.

## Section 2. Ten-Yard Penalties

- **Extended arm.** The ball carrier may not extend an arm to prevent a defensive player from touching him or her and may not charge into a defensive player. The penalty will be assessed at the spot of the foul.
- **Reckless play. Players must avoid contact at all costs,** including leaping into the crowd at the sidelines to catch the ball or to tag a player. A reckless player will sit for one series. If the referee determines that the play is unsportsmanlike, the player will be ejected from the game. The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Blocking.** No player may use his or her hands to block an opponent or run down the field to become a blocker. **No picks.** No shadow blocking (shielding). The penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul.
- **Illegal contact/holding on the defense.** A defensive player may not make original contact with a receiver, use his or her hands or arms to hang onto or encircle a receiver, extend his or her arms to cut off or hook a receiver causing contact that impedes and restricts the receiver as the play develops, or maintain contact with the receiver. If the penalty was on a gender play, then the gender count is reset. The penalty will be assessed from the line and **will result in a first down**.
- **Defensive face guarding.** When a legal forward pass is in the air, the defender may not use his or her hands or arms to screen the offensive player from catching the ball while his or her back is to the ball. This includes waving hands in the face of the receiver who is attempting to receive the ball. If the penalty was on a gender play, then the gender count is reset. The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Offensive picking.** The offense may not initiate a pick or block while in motion. A pick is defined as any

action, *regardless of whether contact occurs*, that delays or prevents an opponent from reaching a desired position. If a catch is made after a clear pick, it will be ruled no catch. The penalty will be assessed from the line.

- **Defensive pass interference.** Defensive pass interference occurs when any player movement beyond the offensive line significantly hinders an eligible player's progress or opportunity to catch the ball during a forward pass. When players are competing for position to make a play on the ball, any contact shall be considered incidental unless prohibited. Prohibited conduct occurs when a player physically restricts or impedes the opponent in a manner that is visually evident and that materially affects the opponent's opportunity to gain or retain position to catch the ball. If a player has gained position, he or she shall not be considered to have impeded or restricted his or her opponent in a prohibited manner if all of his or her actions are a bona fide effort to catch the ball. The penalty will be enforced as follows: first down at spot of the foul; if the interference occurs in the end zone, the ball will be spotted at the one-yard line. If the penalty occurs on a forced gender play, the gender count will be reset.
- **Offensive pass interference.** See defensive pass interference. The penalty will be assessed from the line.
- **Intercepting a thrown ball on gender.** (Spot foul/gender is good OR can replay gender.) When there are three or fewer women on the field and a male defensive player intercepts a ball on a gender play without the ball deflecting off a woman first, the ball will be placed where it was intercepted.

### Section 3. Fifteen-Yard Penalties

- **Intentional foul/penalty.** The penalty will be assessed from the line, the player will be ejected from the game, and the gender count will be reset.
- **Unsportsmanlike conduct** (as defined above). The penalty will be assessed from the line. If the penalty is on the defense, the offense will have an automatic first down and its gender count will be reset. If penalty is on the offense, the offense will be assessed a **15-yard** penalty. After a touchdown, 10 yards will be added to the extra point conversion.

In addition, the unsportsmanlike player may be ejected from the game and suspended from the next game if the referee finds his or her actions flagrant. If a suspended player plays the following week, his or her team will forfeit that game.

If the Commissioner determines that the unsportsmanlike conduct is severe, the player will be permanently ejected from all RCSSC sports.

**Any player who does not shake any of its opponent's hands at the game's conclusion will be suspended for the next game; a team that fails to do so will forfeit its next game, and the forfeit fine will apply.**

### Section 4. Ejections

Players can be ejected for the following conduct:

- wearing metal cleats,
- engaging in unsportsmanlike conduct, or
- arguing with the referees.

## RULE 7: TEAM STANDINGS

1. **Points Awarded.** Points will be awarded to teams as follows:
  - Win: 3 points
  - Tie: 1 point
  - Loss: 0 points
2. **Ties.** During the regular season, there will be no overtime to break ties. If a tie occurs in a playoff game, the following format will apply: four downs and out from the two-point conversion line.
3. **Playoffs.** The Commissioner will determine the number of teams making the playoffs in each division. The computerized playoff wizard will break regular season record ties. Playoff games may be scheduled on days other than Sundays.
4. **Overtime (Playoffs Only).** The captains will again toss the puck, and the winning team will choose whether to possess the ball first or second. Teams will attempt to score in the same end zone. No first downs will be awarded except in the case of a penalty. If a team starts on offense, then it will start on defense if a second round is needed.

### ROUND 1:

- Each team will have FOUR downs to score from the two-point conversion line using the same end zone.
- If a team scores, it will have the opportunity to go for one or two on the extra point. The female-to-female rule will still be in effect.
- Teams must use a female as an operative player within three consecutive downs. A female may be used at any time during the offensive possession.
- Interceptions will result in a turnover and may not be returned for any points.

### ROUND 2: If a tie occurs after round 1, then teams will begin round 2.

- Each team will have THREE downs to score from the two-point conversion line using the same end zone.
- If a team scores, it MUST go for two on the extra point. The female-to-female rule will still be in effect.
- Teams must use a female as an operative player within three consecutive downs. A female may be used at any time during the offensive possession.
- Interceptions will result in a turnover and may not be returned for any points.

### ROUND 3: If a tie occurs after round 2, then teams will begin round 3.

- Each team will have TWO downs to score from the two-point conversion line using the same end zone.
- If a team scores, it MUST go for two on the extra point.
- Teams must use a female as an operative player within two consecutive downs. A female may be used at any time during the offensive possession.
- Interceptions will result in a turnover and may not be returned for any points.

### ROUND 4 (and all subsequent rounds): If a tie occurs after round 3, then teams will begin round 4.

- Each team will have ONE down to score from the two-point conversion line using the same end zone.
- If a team scores, it MUST go for two on the extra point. The female-to-female rule will still be in effect.
- Teams must use a female as an operative player within two consecutive downs. A female may be used at any time during the offensive possession.
- Interceptions will result in a turnover and may not be returned for any points.

## RULE 8: SPORTSMANSHIP

1. **Social Aspect of League.** Teams should patronize the sponsor bar after its game. The league's focus is on being social, not winning or losing.
2. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct.** Any RCSSC member who does not conduct himself or herself, whether on or off the field, in a manner that demonstrates courtesy and respect for his or her teammates and other teams will be removed from the league. RCSSC staff referees will keep a record of all players and/or teams who engage in unsportsmanlike conduct.
3. **Types of Illegal Conduct.** Unsportsmanlike conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - illegal tags and contact, such as grabbing tee shirts, unnecessarily rough tags, tackling, and pushing;
  - contact with the quarterback before or after he or she releases the ball;
  - abusive or insulting language to a player or referee;
  - continuous use of the sideline play by placing a player(s) near the sideline more than 15 yards away from the ball;
  - spiking the ball; and
  - taunting the opposing team or engaging in excessive celebration before or after a score.
4. **Player Penalties.** Players who engage in two offenses will be suspended from the league and be ineligible to participate in any RCSSC sports for one year.
5. **Team Penalties.** Teams who engage in two offenses will be ineligible to participate in any RCSSC sports for one year.
6. **Fighting.** Fighting will result in a player's or a team's permanent suspension from participation in the RCSSC.

## REMINDERS

- RCSSC officials will have the final call on all game rules.
- NO glass containers.
- NO alcohol.
- NO parking on the field.
- Please police yourself.
- Coaches are responsible for controlling their teams. We are all adults. Enough said.

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