

## 2015 LIFFL RULES

### RULES#:

1. 8-Man Div: 8 players per side on field. If one side has less than the above amount, the “full” team has “man advantage” (i.e. 8 on 7, 8 on 6). Anything less than 6 is a forfeit. (When playing with fewer men – the player comes off the line with a minimum of a center required,) 9-Man Div: 9 players per side (i.e. 9 on 8, 9 on 7). Anything less than 7 is a forfeit. After 2 forfeits, a team is removed from the league.
2. 8 Man DIVISIONS: 40x80 yard field with fixed 1st downs at 20-40-20 yard lines 8 man “A” and 9-MAN DIV: 100X50 yard field with fixed 1st downs at the 20-40-40-20 yard lines.
3. All “A” Div.: Automatic rush at snap. “B” Div.: “2 Mississippi Count” rush with one free, automatic blitz per set. “C & D” Div.: “3 Mississippi Count” rush with one free blitz per set. 8—MAN DIVISIONS: “Blitz” must be immediately at the snap, (otherwise delayed blitz penalty) no limit on # of rushers. Blitz is not “used on bad snaps when the ball hits ground without first touching the Quarterback – ball dead at spot.
4. **EQUIPMENT:** Matching – numbered jerseys, WILSON NFL game ball, or [Stripped high school ball, properly inflated. No composite football can be used. Any football with a “Barcode” will be considered a composite football.](#) TRIPLE THREAT Flag belts only (exception: in 9 man and “A” division) any headgear/hats must not extend outward (i.e. baseball cap brims), “cut-off jerseys” must not cover flag belt; [flag belt must be visible at all times. No hand warmers or towels can cover flag belt.](#) Flag belt cannot be tied or fastened thru the loop (automatic ejection), no football pads or hard knee braces/casts, no metal cleats, no foreign substances on football or hands. Receiver’s gloves are legal. Mouth guards are suggested [but there can be no extended plastic from that mouth guard outside of the mouth.](#)

Every coach must have a FIRST-AID kit. **8 man “A” division uses “POP” flags.**

[Note; A team can only change footballs on 1<sup>st</sup> down. \(Exception: if you have the “other” team’s ball.](#)

5. **ROSTERS:** Players must be present at minimum of 4 games to be eligible for post – season. Player must obtain release from previous coach before jumping teams during first 5 weeks and he cannot go to lower division. No player can play on more than one team regardless of division. Injured players receive attendance credit by printing their name on the weekly sign-in sheet and writing “IR” next to it. Weekly sign-in sheet MUST be filled out at field, not before. Late arriving players cannot play until they sign-in & time-out must be used. However, a player may sign in on the other team’s timeout, **an official’s timeout** or at the 2 minute warning. Players must show Driver’s License at all post season games. No former “A” division LIFFL players are allowed in the “D” Div.

6. **CONTACT:** “Open-hand” blocking only, thrust outward from chest, not “loaded up” from the sides. Hands must stay within the framework of the body. There are no fumble recoveries, **however, “a fumble recovered in the air before contact with the ground belongs to the recovering team and may be advanced.** The ball is dead whenever it is dropped to the ground. (Only exception is during a field goal or extra point kick. As long as the holder does not take his knee off the ground he may play the ball: in A & B div. with full rush on kicks, the referee may blow the play dead if it is deemed dangerous).

7. **SCORING:** TD – 6 pts., FG – 3 pts, PAT – 1 pt. kick/run/pass from the 3 yd. line or 2 pts. Run/pass from 10 yd. line. *Safety – 2pts. After a safety, the team that gave up the safety shall put the ball in play via a free kick from its own 20. All kick-off rules apply, regardless of whether the ball is punted or kicked off a tee or off the ground.* The team kicking can elect to punt the ball or kick it off a tee. Mercy rules apply under the following two circumstances: a team is leading by 30 or more points any time during the 2nd half. **If leading by 30 or more at halftime, always give the team down by 30 an offensive possession in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half before calling the game.** A team is leading by 18 points or more at the two minute warning of the 2nd half.

**8. INTERCEPTION ON EXTRA POINT ATTEMPT** – In all divisions, an interception on an extra point is dead. The defense can no longer return the ball during an extra point attempt for the score the offense was attempting (only exception is overtime games. MUST SEE overtime games in section 14)

**9. SIDELINES:** Players, coaches, fans etc. must stay within the 20 yard lines. This is referred to as the Players box. No one on the sidelines is permitted between the 20 yard line and the goal. Anytime a coach enters the playing field to question a call a time-out will be charged. ***When field layouts require both teams to be on the same sideline, the head referee has the option to extend team boxes from the goal to the 20 yard line. No one but the coach will be permitted to stand between the 20's.***

**10. PROTESTS:** If a “rule misinterpretation” directly affects the outcome of a game, a protest may be filed in the following manner: Coach informs Head Referee immediately of the Protest. Once a play is run, no protests pertaining to a prior play will be accepted. The Head Referee will contact whomever is on duty (League Head Referees) by phone for an on the spot decision. If no decision is rendered or there is a communication breakdown the Head Referee at the field will note all the specifics at the time of the protest. Time in game, score, yardage, possession, down, # of timeouts, etc. The Head Referee will notify the league via e-mail when he reports the scores for the day. Upheld protests – the game will be resumed from time/score/yardage etc. at time of protest. Remember, a judgment call cannot be protested – only a rule interpretation. No video will be viewed. All decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

**11. GAMECLOCK:** The game consists of two 30 minute halves. Each half will consist of 28 running minutes and a two-minute warning. The two- minute warning features a traditional NFL style stop clock. Prior to the two-minute warning, the clock only stops after scores (starts on kick-off) or during time-outs. During the Two Minute Warning, the clock stops for: 1) Incomplete passes – starts on snap; 2) out of bounds – starts on snap; 3) Time-outs/touchbacks – starts on snap; 4) 1st downs/penalties – starts on “ready” whistle (except “delay of game” – starts on snap; 5) scores – starts on kick-off; 6) Punts (if clock is dead) – starts when the ball hits the punters’ foot and stops at the end of play. (7) ***Injuries:*** the clock will restart on the snap. Clock doesn’t run during extra points & the game cannot end on ***an accepted penalty.***

**12. TIME OUTS:** Each team receives two (2) time outs per half and they cannot be carried over to next half. If a team has no timeouts left they can change a call (i.e. punt, field goal or run a play) on any penalty.

If a referee stops the game due to a team calling for a timeout and that team has no time outs left, “a **delay of game**” penalty should be assessed to that team and the game clock should start on the “ready whistle”.

**13. 30-SECOND CLOCK:** The defense has 30 seconds to retrieve the game ball back to the Line Referee from the whistle. Once the ball is set, the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball. The Line Referee will issue a loud verbal “10 Seconds” warning. The Line Ref will count down the last 10 seconds utilizing a hand signal. Delay of Game (5 yards) is the penalty for both. The QB may “spike” the ball (from center or shot-gun) to stop the clock. The Quarterback must have possession of the ball in order to “spike” it and he must spike the ball immediately after snap.

**14. OVER-TIME GAMES:** All tied games will be settled by the “shoot-out” method. The Captains are called out for a coin flip. The winner of the coin flip has choice of offense or defense. Stay in the same order during all of the overtimes. The offense begins on the 10 yard line and it is first and goal from the 10. There are no special rules for the four downs. An interception returned for a Touchdown ends the game. An interception that is flagged prior to the TD is returned to the 10 yard line. The team that intercepted the ball now has first and goal. There is one timeout per team in overtime. The following additional rules will apply in overtime.

- A. There will be 3 shoot-out rounds.
- B. If the game reaches a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shoot-out round, the offense must go for 2 points.
- C. The defense can run an interception out of the end zone, excluding extra points.
- D. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> shoot-out round, the longest yard will go into effect. The offense will start from the “**Farthest**” 10 yard line with their backs to the goal. Each team will get 1 play to determine the longest yard. If the offense jumps, they will be moved back half the distance to the goal line and will then run the play. The amount of yardage gained is started from the original line of scrimmage. If the defense jumps offside the additional yardage gained will count towards the longest yard.
- E. The team that wins per the longest yard will have 1 point added to their score.
- F. Negative yards count.
- G. In playoff games a team must win by points. The longest yard rule is not to be used. Shoot-out rounds continue until a winner is decided.

**15. FORFEIT TIME:** Teams have 15 minutes from scheduled start time to field a team or they forfeit. The clock starts at game time and any time wasted waiting for late players is deducted from the 1st half. A team must begin play if they have the minimum number of players. (8 man – 6 players, 9 man – 7 players). The “on-time” team wins the toss and a 15 yard penalty is assessed on kick-off.

**16. THE TOSS:** Captains bring their sign-in sheets and referee fees to the toss. The game does not begin without the sign-in sheet and fees. The team that wins the toss may elect to 1-Receive 2 -Kick 3-Chooses direction or 4 – Defer.

**17. 8 – MAN DIV:** The kicking team lines up on the 20 yard line while the receiving team lines up at the 40 yard line. (These are the restraining lines). Any ball that lands between the 20 & 40 yard lines (restraining lines) is dead at the spot. The offense takes over at that spot. Any ball that passes the 40 yard line (restraining line) on a fly and then goes out of bounds via the sidelines before entering the end zone is spotted at the 40 yard line (restraining line). **Teams are not allowed to “Fair Catch” the football in any division in flag football.** In all divisions a ball can be run out of the end zone on kick-offs. If a player is attempting to run the ball out of the end zone and is flagged before taking a knee or exiting the end zone - that is a safety. (2 points).

In all divisions on kickoffs, after the ball has traveled 20 yards in the air, the kicking team can gain possession (of the ball) by 1<sup>st</sup> touching the football; but only when that 1<sup>st</sup> touch is the end of the play.

**18. PUNTS:** All punts are declared and there are no fakes. The ball must be snapped “shot-gun” style from center to the punter. All bad snaps are dead at the spot. The receiving team must have 4 men on the line of scrimmage and no contact takes place until the ball hits the Punter’s foot. On the line of scrimmage the receiving team must have the interior men lined up head to head. The fourth person on the line of scrimmage can line up anywhere. **Punts can never be run out of the end zone in any division**

**19. FAKE FIELD GOALS:** In the 9 man, “A” & “B” divisions: Fake field goals are allowed. All muffs are dead at the spot. In the “C” & “D” divisions no fake field goals are permitted. Note – when fields have to be adjusted because of permanent goal posts, then there will be no fake field goals or returns. **Returns on missed field goals are permitted in divisions with full rush at the snap (not out of the end zone).**

20. **FIELD GOALS:** Upon announcing a FG attempt, the offense if need be must send 2 players out to hold up the portable goal post. If the offense has no extra players anyone from either sideline can hold the posts.

### "A" & "B" Divisions

- A. The holder must set up a minimum of 7 yards from center.
- B. The defense cannot rush through either lane next to the center, also known as the "A" gap. Unless the tackle vacates his position.
- C. The defense cannot dive to block the kick, (if you leave your feet, you must land on your feet) or come into contact with the Holder or the Kicker (only exception is if the Referee acknowledges that the defender was pushed into the holder or kicker by the offense).
- D. The defense needs to mark the TKL-CTR-TKL in a head to head position. The defender marking the center may jump up to block the kick, but may not rush.
- E. The kick will be ruled "GOOD" automatically or the offense can accept an "unsportsmanlike" Penalty (15 yards or half the distance to the goal, if the penalty occurred inside the 20 yard line) thereby giving the offense an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down to continue their drive If any of these Guidelines aren't met. Also if contact is made with the kicker or holder. The referee has the option of ejecting the player from the game.
- F. Kicking blocks are legal. Any unnatural substance or equipment is forbidden from the kicker's foot or shoe.
- G. Any missed FG that lands before the end zone may be returned in 9man, A, and B divisions only. If the receiving team chooses not to return a missed FG attempt that didn't reach the goal line, the ball comes out to the previous line of scrimmage.
- H. Any missed FG within the defensive 20 YL comes out to the 20 YL. Any missed FG Outside the defense 20 YL comes back to the previous spot.
- I. Fake field goals are only allowed in the 9 man, A, & B Divisions.
- J. During field goal attempts, snapped balls are live even if they hit the ground before reaching the holder, as long as the holder's knee doesn't leave the ground.

### "D" & "C" Divisions

- K. The holder must set up a minimum of 7 yards from center.
- L. In the "C"/"D" divisions there is no rush by the defense. The ball is snapped and the kicker has a "3 Mississippi count" to get the kick off.
- M. Item F above also applies.
- N. Any missed FG that lands before the end zone are dead balls and cannot be returned by the defense.

**21. KICKED EXTRA POINTS:** The ball is spotted on the 3 yard line (snap occurs) and the referee walks off 7 yards to mark the spot for the holder. The kicker may spot the ball further than the 7 yards. In the 9 man, A, & B divisions the defense may rush to block the kick. **If the defense rushes the “A” gap, the kick will be ruled “GOOD” automatically.** In the C & D divisions there is no rush and the same rules apply as in Field Goals. **During kicked extra point attempts and punts the offensive line must line up toe to toe.** (there can be no splits between Tackle-Center-Tackle ) As to clarify the “A” gap. On the failed extra point attempts in the B, C & D divisions, there is no kick off and the ball is spotted on the 20 YL of the team that was scored upon. In the 9 man and “A” division there is a kick off after missed extra point attempts. **Fake extra point attempts are not allowed at any level.**

**22. OFFENSIVE LINE:** A. Must be balanced Tackle-Center-Tackle, not more than 1 foot apart, and the ball must be snapped between the Center’s legs. Offensive linemen cannot catch passes unless they are tipped by the defense 1<sup>st</sup>. Contact must be “open-handed” – hands kept within the frame of the body – extended out from the chest. No “chop blocks” are permitted. The offensive Center must spot ball parallel to puck

**23. BALL CARRIER:** It is illegal to 1) flag shield; 2) run directly at a defender (charging); 3) crawl; 4) lower the shoulder, or 5) dive (defined as not landing on your feet). You may use a “stiff arm in A & B Divs. And only to the upper chest area. A ball carrier that falls while running may get back up as long as he wasn’t touched while on the ground and the ball did not come in contact with the ground.

**24. RECEIVERS:** Must have 2 feet in bounds – all divisions. A receiver that steps out of bounds on his own cannot re-enter play. A receiver pushed out of bounds by a defender may re-enter play.

**25. QB:** Only one forward pass per play. A forward pass is defined as a pass thrown overhand, under hand, pitched, etc. that travels forward. The ball need not cross the line of scrimmage to be considered a forward pass. Ball must be snapped to the QB or another back. Intentional Grounding is legal if the QB is outside the tackles and throws the ball towards the sidelines or out of bounds – the ball need not cross the line of scrimmage. Under 2 minutes, a quick spike to stop the clock is permitted from center or shot-gun. **All screen passes must be caught behind the line of scrimmage.**

**26. OFFENSIVE SCRIMMAGE:** At the snap, the offensive line must have a minimum of 5 men on the line of scrimmage and the tackle-center-tackle is ineligible. To be eligible, a player must have been in the previous huddle. **There are no “sleeper plays”.**

**27. TACKLE ELIGIBLE:** The tackle can become eligible if a Referee is made aware and a RB or TE attempts to fill the same space vacated by the tackle (you still must have 3 ineligible linemen). When the tackle vacates his spot the defense is allowed to immediately rush. (No blitz will be charged).

**Offensive Linemen can never touch or catch the ball during a play except:**

- A. If they run a “tackle eligible” play as described above**
- B. Until it’s touched by a player on the defense**

**In those two instances it is not an illegal touch of the football**

**28. INADVERTANT WHISTLE:** The offense has the choice of play over or the result of the play. If defense is in possession, the ball is dead at the spot.

**29. SPOT OF BALL:** The “spot” of the ball is always the torso of the ball carrier at the time of the flag pull. Please note – when going into the end zone – the torso must be in the end zone in order to award a touchdown. Breaking the plane with the football does not constitute a touchdown.

**30. DEFENSIVE LINE:** 9 man and “A” Division may choose any formation **but must have 3 men on the line at the snap**. B, C, and D divisions must line-up head-to-head. **The defensive player must allow a gap between himself and his offensive opponent (enough space so the line referee has a clear view of the opposite sideline)**. The defensive linemen cannot drop back into the secondary until the “Mississippi” count is over or the defense is blitzing. “A” division linemen have a full, automatic blitz at the snap. “B” division – linemen must wait for a 2 “Mississippi count before rushing. “C”/”D” divisions – linemen must wait for a 3 “Mississippi” count before rushing. If the QB rolls out past his tackles original spot, the defense may free blitz. The same applied, if the offensive line makes contact – free blitz. Any contact with the QB deemed non-incidentals may result in a roughing penalty and/or expulsion. **In all divisions, defensive linemen are allowed to drop back according to rules of their divisions but they must have at least one player going forward rushing the ball carrier.**

**31. SECONDARY: Only 1 “receiver chuck” allowed** (not one per defender) and it must be within 5 yards from line of scrimmage. The defense cannot push a ball carrier out of bounds. If the ball carrier loses his flag belt, one hand touch prevails. The defense cannot use contact to break up a pass play; you must be truly going for the ball. There is no ball – stripping or de-flagging a receiver before the reception. Standard pass – interference rules apply. You cannot hold the jersey to pull the flag, tackle a ball carrier (if it prevents a TD, the ref can award a TD), all tackles within the 10 yard line are ruled touchdowns. You can’t “stand-up” the ball carrier to get the flag belt. **In 9 man & the “A” division, interceptions can be run out of the end zone, as long as it’s not during a conversion (See rule # 8 on extra pt. attempt). In the B, C, and D divisions, all interceptions in the end zone come out to the 20 yard line.** (Except in overtime – refer to rule for Over Time Games).

**32. HEAD REFEREE:** Can reverse any other referee’s call. Can elevate any potentially hazardous play to the catch-all “UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS” (15 YARD PENALTY ADDED AND EXPULSION IF NECESSARY). Has the right to terminate the game at any point.

**33. SUSPENSIONS:** When a player is suspended he is not allowed on the sidelines or at the field in any manner. The Head Referee is notified of suspensions prior to the games.

**34. TEAM FIGHTS:** If a team crosses the sideline and comes onto the field during a fight, the game is over and the team receives a forfeit. If a team continues the fight after the game, off the field, in the parking lot, etc., the team is reported and may be ousted from the league.

**35. LINE OF GAIN:** During a play, once a ball carrier has obtained the line to gain, any offensive penalty (I.E. offensive holding) **AFTER** that line to gain are enforced from the spot of the foul and is to be 1<sup>st</sup> down **to the next line to gain.**

**36. OTHER CONDUCT:** Trash talk/shoving/verbal challenging may result in game suspension for that day. Cursing at fields adjacent to youth groups or private homes will result in permanent removal of your team from that field to another site. Cursing at a referee or leaving garbage on your sideline will result in a \$25 fine due before your next game.

## **PENALTIES**

### **A. Dead Ball – 5 yards from spot (no choice)**

1. Delay of game
2. Snap Infraction
3. False start
4. Offense offside (call play dead at snap of ball)

### **B. Live Ball – Choice of 5 yards from previous spot on result of play**

1. Illegal procedure
2. Defense offside (no contact is made)
3. Illegal motion or Illegal Shift
4. Illegal substitution
5. Defense holding (automatic 1st down)
6. Illegal defense (linemen not head-up at snap and through the Mississippi count B,C,D)
7. Illegal Blitz (blitz already used B,C,D)
8. Illegal chuck or contact with receiver
9. Delayed blitz

### **C. Spot foul 5 yards and repeat of down or result of play**

1. Helping the runner
2. Sideline interference

### **D. Spot foul 5 yards and loss of down**

1. Illegal forward pass
2. Intentional grounding
3. Illegal touching of football (offensive lineman)

### **E. Spot foul 10 yard loss and loss of down**

1. Flag shield
2. Charging
3. Diving
4. Stiff arm (C,D)

**F. Defensive foul 10 yards added to the end of the run**

1. Tackling (inside the 10 award a TD)
2. Holding a runner
3. Ball Stripping

**G. Spot Foul 15 yards and repeat of down or result of play**

1. Clipping
2. Unnecessary roughness

**H. Spot foul 15 yards and loss of down**

1. Other than open hand blocking

**I. Defensive foul 15 yards added to the end of the play**

1. Roughing the passer (automatic 1st down) (previous spot if not caught)
2. Illegal flag pull
3. **Shove hard, or tackle, of bounds (15 yards and automatic 1st down)**

**J. Special Enforcements**

1. Defensive pass interference – 1st down at the spot (face guarding)
2. Roughing the kicker or holder – points are good or (on attempted field goal) 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty & continue drive. Referee can eject player.
3. Teams arriving late shall automatically lose the toss & 15 yard penalty.
4. Illegal participation (from previous spot) 15 yards or result of play. **Only 5 yards, if they attempt to run off field**
5. **Two personal fouls in a game and that player is ejected.**
6. When a dead ball foul occurs on a touchdown – the penalty yardage is marked off after the extra point attempt. Either on the kickoff or from the twenty depending on the outcome of the extra point attempt.
7. Spot fouls committed by team A in the end zone will result in a safety for team B.
8. ***Kick Off or Punts – Players attempt to catch the ball near the end zone – ball bounces off him and goes into the end zone on a fly – result is a touchback and the ball is placed on the 20 yard line.***
9. ***After a safety, the team that gave up the safety shall put the ball in play via a free kick from its own 20 yard line. All kick off rules apply, regardless of whether the ball is punted or kicked off a tee or off the ground.***
10. ***(Note – 9 man or “A” div. player intercepts the ball in the end zone and while running in the end zone is flagged, this is a touchback – ball to the 20 yard line. However, a player runs out of the end zone and then back in, he is flagged in the end zone – this is a safety).***
11. **Note: Anything not covered in this rule book, the referee can defer to High school rule.**
12. **12. “A” Division changes: On Long Island only – not Tappan Zee League.**
  - Full 100 yard field
  - “POP” flags