City of Rio Rancho

FLAG FOOTBALL Rules - *revised 18-October-2012*

1. The Field and Equipment

1.1 - 40 yards wide and 100 yards long including end-zones

1.2 - A first down is obtained by crossing the next line to gain (20yd, 40yd, 20yd)

1.3 - All footballs are to be at least high school equivalent or better; at the judgment of the referee.

1.4 - Mouth protection is voluntary, though strongly recommended.

1.5 - Shorts, pants and the like may not be the same color as the player's flags

1.6 - Metal cleats are not allowed; sandals and other "open" footwear are not allowed.

1.7 - Shirts/Uniforms must be of "like" color

1.8 - Flags and Flag belts are supplied by the City of Rio Rancho and are the only Flags and Flag Belts permitted. (Flags must be a minimum of 12" long and may be longer). No player, coach, sponsor or fan may alter this equipment.

1.9 - Nothing deemed "offensive" may be worn or displayed as determined by the league and community standards

2. Blocking

2.1 - Blocking is defined as obstructing the path of an opposing player

2.2 - Blocking is permitted using open hands within the framework of the torso, between the shoulders and the waist. Any use of the elbows will be flagged. Blocking is permitted up to 5 yards downfield.

2.3 – Except as permitted in 2.2, no blocking or contact may be made. All players must avoid contact.

2.4 – There is no screening permitted

2.5 - Defense may not initiate contact with the Center while the Center remains in his position as a Center. (to clarify, merely standing up does not remove the Center from his position)

2.6 - Clipping, running or diving into the back, or throwing or dropping the body across that of the opponent is prohibited (all defined as clipping)

2.7 - Spearing (contacting opponent head first) is a personal foul and possible ejection.

3. The Game

3.1 – Each half will be 20 minutes in length. The first 18 minutes of each half will be a “running clock”…followed by the 2 minute warning. During the final 2 minutes of each half, the clock will stop on all dead balls, incomplete passes and touchdowns and safeties, as well as timeouts. After the 2 minute warning, and following the conclusion of a play resulting in a dead ball or on a time out; clock restarts on the snap of the next play. Otherwise, clock will run on plays not resulting in a dead ball.

3.1.a – Extra point attempts are made without running the clock during the last 2 minutes of each half. (Extra point attempts will not be permitted if the game clock has expired or if the Mercy Rule is in effect; except if the game is tied)

3.1.b – Clock will stop in last 2 minutes of each half for 1st downs. Clock will then restart upon the “ready”.

3.1.c – Clock will stop in last 2 minutes of each half for penalties. Clock will restart upon the snap or upon the “ready”, as determined by the previous down resulting in the penalty.

3.1.d – If in last 2 minutes of each half, and if the team that is behind in the score is charged with a penalty, and if the penalty is enforced, then 10 seconds is run-off of the remaining clock.

3.2 – Each team must have at least 6 players to begin or continue play. Each team may play with a maximum of 8 players on the field. Total roster size to be set by Parks and Recreation.

3.3 – No hard bill hats are allowed. Attire, or anything worn or displayed, that may be deemed "objectionable" by the league or community standards, is not permitted.

3.4 – Game time is forfeit time (except 1st game of the day may be offered a 5 minute grace period)

3.5 – Captains must be designated at the pre-game meeting with officials.

3.6 – Winner of the coin toss will have the option to: a:)RECEIVE or b:)DEFEND or c:)DEFER.

3.7 – Kicking team will decide as to which goal they will defend.

3.8 - Each half will be started with a "Kick-off". This "Kick-off" will be from the 20 yard line (this "Kick-off" is a "no tee" punt). If the result of the kick-off is a touchback, the receiving team takes possession on their own 20 yard line. If the result of the kick-off is out of bounds, then the receiving teams has the option of taking the ball at the spot that it went out of bounds, or on their own 30 yard line. This only applies to "Kick-offs" that begins each half of play.

3.9 – Ball is marked at the position of the ball at the time the runner was deflagged.

3.10 - Any "Kick-off" is a live ball and may be fielded at any time, except if it is a)-"muffed"; or b)-touched and subsequently hits the ground; or c)-hits or touches the side line; or d)- otherwise goes out of bounds, or e)-goes out of the end zone, or f)-settles and is not fielded.

4. Punts

4.1 – Punts are to be announced. Once announced, the punting team may only change the decision after a time out has been taken. (time out may be requested by either team)

4.2 – The punter must punt the ball immediately after receiving the snap (within 5 seconds).

4.3 – Defensive may jump to block the kick. If the punted ball is blocked, it will be blown dead upon contact with the ground. If punted ball is caught behind the line of scrimmage by the kicking team, the ball may be advanced to or beyond a 1st down marker or to a score. If the blocked kick is caught or touched by the kicking team beyond the line of scrimmage, then the ball is dead at that spot and is awarded to the receiving team. If the blocked punt is caught by the receiving team, it remains live and may be advanced.

4.4 – Return man must be given a 2 yard "halo" cushion when catching a punt.

4.5 – Any touchback will be spotted at the 20 yard line.

4.6 – Upon announcing a punt, receiving team shall only consist of 3 receivers. Punting team may have as many as 8 players.

4.7 - Any punt is a live ball and may be fielded at any time, except if it is "muffed", or touched and subsequently hits the ground, or hits the side line, or otherwise goes out of bounds, or goes out of the end zone, or settles and is not fielded.

5. The Snap

5.1 – Play shall not begin until the line judge has set the line of scrimmage. The offensive team must have at least 3 players on the line of scrimmage at all times. The defense is not required to have any player at the line of scrimmage.

5.2 – The center must snap the ball from between their legs and in a continuous motion.

5.3 – All offensive players shifting, must come set for at least 1 second prior to the snap.

5.4 – Only 1 player may be in motion at a time, and may not move towards the opponent's goal prior to the snap.

5.5 – Any ball that contacts the ground following a snap is down at that spot.
5.6 - There are no 3 or 4 point stances permitted.

6. Handing and Passing

6.1 – The position of the player's feet will determine if they have crossed the line of scrimmage.
6.2 – Once passed the line of scrimmage, forward hand-offs are not permitted.
6.3 – If a lateral or snapped ball is dropped, it will be marked down at that spot.
6.4 – All receptions require 1 foot inbounds at the time of possession; without 1st touching or simultaneously touching the line or area out of bounds with the other foot, or with any other part of the body. (1st foot down rule)
6.5 – Stripping or batting of the ball is not permitted.
6.6 – Simultaneous possession of a pass will remain in possession of the offense.
6.7 - Only 1 forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage is permitted per down played.

7. Players and Substitutions

7.1 – Rosters are maintained by the league. Changes may be made through the league director.
7.2 – Roster challenges may only be made prior to a player's participation, and up to 4 plays after that player has been on the field.
7.3 – No player shall step off the field and then become the first player to touch a live ball.
7.4 – No player shall force his opponent out of bounds (except within the 5 yard "chuck" zone rule 2.2)
7.5 – Any number of substitutes may switch, as long as switch is completed prior to the snap. No more than 8 players may break the huddle.
7.6 – The team bench is that area of the designated sideline, and between the 20 yard lines. No team member may be in the area between the 20 yard line to the end lines of either end-zone, nor behind the end zones, nor may a player voluntarily exit the playing field during a game on the opponent's sideline.

8. Ball Carrier

8.1 - Ball carriers are not to obstruct the path to their flags with any body part or the ball.
8.2 - Flags and flag belts are supplied by the City of Rio Rancho and are the only flags and belts that are to be used for our league.
8.3 – Flags are to be attached in a way that only requires 1 pull to deflag the ball carrier.
8.4 – Flag guarding is a judgment call by the official.
8.5 – Tampering with any flag or belt to gain an advantage and is illegal and penalties may include ejection and suspension.
8.6 – Intentional deflagging of a player other than the ball carrier will be called for unsportsmanlike conduct.
8.7 – After deflagging a ball carrier, anything besides handing the flag back to the player or one of their teammates may be considered as unsportsmanlike conduct.
8.8 – No defensive player may slow a receivers pattern by chucking, hand checking, or cutting off of his route unless making a play on a thrown ball (exception: 5 yard chuck permitted as in 2.2)
8.9 - No player shall hold a runner while attempting to deflag. If a player is held or restrained, tripped, pushed or tackled, the penalty may become more severe, up to awarding the offense a touchdown. (at the discretion of the officials)

8.10 - (Flag Missing) - A player with a flag missing, by whatever means, is considered down at the spot that the player touches the ball. Exception: - A center that has a flag missing at the snap is not penalized, and play continues, unless and until the center otherwise becomes the ball carrier or receiver.

9. Inadvertent Whistles

9.1 - The play is replayed if the ball was in the air at the time of the inadvertent whistle.

9.2 - If the ball was in the possession of the ball carrier at the time of the inadvertent whistle, then the offense will have the option of either replaying the down from the previous line of scrimmage, or taking the ball at the spot at the time of the inadvertent whistle.

9.3 - Possession cannot be forfeited on an inadvertent whistle.

9.4 - Clock cannot be reset for an inadvertent whistle.

10. Scoring

10.1 - Touchdown = 6 points

10.2 - Safety = 2 points

10.3 - Extra Point from 3 yard line = 1 point

10.4 - Extra Point from 10 yard line = 2 points

10.5 - Once spotted, the extra point attempt cannot be changed unless timeout has been granted (to either team)

10.6 - Forfeits are recorded as a 6-0 final score

10.7 - If there is a point differential of 17 or more at the 2 minute warning in the 2nd half of the game, then the game will end as a mercy rule.

10.8 - Extra point attempts that are intercepted, only ends the attempt. Interceptions of an extra point attempt cannot be returned.

10.9 - There are no kicks for extra points

11. Timeouts and Overtime

11.1 - Each team receives 2 time outs per half, not to be carried over. (approx 1 minute in length each)

11.2 - Successive timeouts may be granted during a dead ball period.

11.3 - Injury time outs will require the injured player miss at least one play.

11.4 - Overtime periods - teams are given 1 timeout per overtime. In league play, there is only 1 overtime period. Both teams will have a possession (similar to college rules) from the 20 yard line.

11.5 - Each team has 4 plays from the 20 yard line (20 yards to goal) to score. 1st down is possible on a penalty. After touchdown, team has choice of extra point (1 or 2). Game will end in tie if both teams do not score on their possession (again only 1 overtime period), or if they both score and are have equal extra point conversions (or failures to make extra points). Note, that an interception cannot be returned for points, but does ends the team's possession.

12. Conduct

12.1 - All participants, sponsors and fans are subject to the rules of conduct. Complete conduct guidelines are available from the City of Rio Rancho Adult Sports.

12.2 - No player, coach or fan shall act in a manner which is inappropriate to the league or community.

12.3 - The use of words or gestures to simulate the offenses cadence, snap counts or audibles will be flagged.

12.4 - Baiting, taunting or the use of vulgarity, profanity or vulgar gestures, throwing or kicking a ball other than during play, or the refusal to comply with an official's directive, are all deemed to be unsportsmanlike conduct and are subject to ejection and suspension.

12.5 - Any ejected player must leave the facility immediately. (out of sight, out of sound).

13. Penalties

13.1 - When a foul occurs during live ball play, the official shall, at the end of the play, notify both teams of the infraction. He will then inform the offend team's captain of his options and results of either accepting or declining the penalty. Any choice, once made, may not be changed or revoked. Any time outs will take place after the penalty has been resolved.

13.2 - The enforcement of the penalty cannot take the ball more than half of the distance to the offender's goal line.

13.3 - Live ball penalties shall become a part of the play. A play does not end until the penalty has been marked off.

13.4 - Summary of Penalties and yards assessed:

a. **Delay of Game** // not snapping the ball within the 25 second clock // 5 yards from previous spot // Replay Down // Dead Ball

b. **Illegally consuming or conserving time** // A player pitches the ball out of bounds attempting to stop the clock // 5 yards from the spot of the infraction. Clock restarts whenever it benefits the opponent.// Loss of down // Live Ball

c. **Encroachment** // 5 yards from previous spot (10 yards if done on 2 consecutive plays - unsportsmanlike) // Replay down// Dead Ball

d. **False Start** // 5 yards from previous spot.// Replay down// Dead Ball

e. **Illegal Formation** // Not having enough players on the line of scrimmage // or player going in to a 3 or 4 point stance // 5 yards from previous spot. // Replay down // Dead Ball

f. **Illegal Motion** // offensive player moving forward at the time of the snap // 5 yards from previous spot. // Replay Down // Dead Ball

g. **Illegal Forward Pass** // forward lateral; or a pass after the players feet have crossed the line of scrimmage; or more than one forward pass on a single down // 5 yards from the spot // Loss of Down // Live Ball

h. **Intentional Grounding** // throwing the ball into the ground to avoid as sack (flag pull) while not outside the tackle position // 5 yards from the spot // Loss of Down // Live Ball. (not to be confused with a QB spike which is intended to stop clock)

i. **Offensive Pass Interference** // Receiver pushing off for separation // 5 yards from previous spot // Loss of down // Live Ball

j. **Illegally Secured Flag Belt** // glued, heated or otherwise altered so as to be harder to deflag // 10 yards from previous spot // Loss of down if live // Live Ball or Dead Ball // (ejection and suspension possible)

k. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** // Failure to abide by the rules and code of conduct // 15 yards from the spot of the ball // Live Ball or Dead Ball // (ejection and suspension possible)

l. **Stripping or Batting of the Ball** // 10 yards from the spot of infraction // Live Ball

m. **Illegal Contact** // Any player not avoiding contact (except where contact is permitted) // 10 yards from Line of Scrimmage // Replay Down // Live Ball

n. **Holding** // Grabbing a player, person or clothing // Defensive-5 yards from the spot and automatic 1st down *OR* result of the play // Offensive Holding - 10 yards from the spot and replay the down(if not more than 10 yards downfield from the line of scrimmage; or if spot of foul is more than

10 yards downfield of the line of scrimmage, then 10 yard penalty and loss of down from the spot of foul.

o. **Impeding the Runner** // Holding or otherwise impeding the runner while attempting to deflag // 5 yards penalty from the spot, and automatic 1st down; *OR* result of the play

p. **Flag Guarding** // Attempt to deny opponent access to your flag // 10 yards from spot of the infraction and loss of down // Live Ball

q. **Illegal Block** // attempts to block other than in Rule 2 above // 10 yards from previous spot // Replay Down // Live Ball

r. **Illegal Participation** // Too many in the Huddle or too many on the field at the snap - 5 yards from previous spot and replay the down; or Player goes out of bounds and then is the 1st to touch a live ball - 10 yards from previous spot // Replay Down

s. **Assisting a Runner** // Picking up a runner to move him // 5 yards from spot of infraction // Loss of Down

t. **Players outside of the Team Box** // Players on sidelines between the 20 yard lines and the back line of the end-zone // 5 yards from the previous spot // Replay Down

u. **Roughing/Contacting the Passer** // Anything other than attempting to deflag the passer // 10 yards penalty from the previous spot and automatic 1st down if pass was incomplete; 10 yard penalty added to the end of the play if pass was completed and automatic 1st down. (NOTE: The roughing/contacting rule as written states that the defense may not make contact with the passer. The revised rule now states that the defense may not "initiate" contact with the passer. If passer is throwing and his arm follows through and subsequently contacts a defender, then the defender is not guilty of any infraction of this rule. Also, a defender may not be guilty of any infraction where that defender was blocked into the passer by a member of the offense. A defender will be flagged if that defender initiates the contact. Please also note that the official will use their judgment to determine whether the defender initiated the contact or not, and it is the intent of this rule to err on the side of the safety of the passer if it is unclear as to whom initiated the contact.)

14. Other

14.1 - All persons involved or affiliated with either team are subject to the rules of the game, and the rules of conduct, and shall be governed by the league and by the officials assigned to the game.

14.2 - The referee has the authority to rule promptly on any rule or situation not specifically covered in these rules. This decision is final in all matters pertaining to the game.

The City of Rio Rancho Adult Sports Department reserves the right to establish regulations at anytime deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the league.