

U16 Spring Rulebook (players 14-15 years old before December 31)

Updated April 2023

Unless otherwise specified, games will be conducted in accordance with the Canadian Rulebook for Amateur Tackle Football.

U16 Age Eligibility:

- (1) Players cannot be older than 15 on December 31 in the year of play.
- (2) Any U16 age player who dresses for a High School Varsity game after September 30 in the year of play, will be no longer eligible to play U16 minor league football again that year.

Converts: A kicked convert is worth 2 points and will be kicked from the 5-yard line; a pass or run convert is worth 1 point and will be scrimmaged from the 5-yard line.

Field Goals, Converts and Punts: Shall be uncontested, the defense will still line up but cannot send any pressure.

Number of Downs: Teams will play 4-down football with a 1-yard neutral zone.

Overhand Forward Pass requirement: The offence must throw a legal OVERHAND forward pass on at least 1 of the first 3 downs in each series of downs. Failure to do so will result in an "Illegal Procedure" penalty. Officials will not stop play until the ball is dead. A five (5) yard penalty will be applied and the down repeated. The offensive team will still be obligated to pass the ball again after the penalty has been applied.

- (1) Attempting to pass and getting sacked or being forced to run will not satisfy this rule. The ball must be thrown as a legal forward pass and must cross the line of scrimmage.
 - a. This does not apply to a set screen pass.
- (2) A lateral pass will not satisfy this rule. Officials should point this out to a team that has just thrown a lateral pass.

The defensive team has the option to decline the penalty, let the play stand and bring up fourth down. The offensive team can run the ball on fourth down. To avoid this penalty teams are strongly advised to pass on either first or second down. ***The offence is not required to pass the ball in any set of downs that starts inside their own 15-yard line.***

High Tackle: Definition: Any tackle by a player that is initiated above the shoulder pads - specifically the neck area. *It is important to recognize that there will be situations when a tackle

is initiated around the shoulder pad area, and because of player size differentials, or the ball carrier going down, the tackle could end up being around the neck area. In that case, it would be a judgment call by the Official. It will be important for Coaches to understand that this is separate from the "Facemask" penalty, and the new "Horse collar" rule."

Penalty: Unnecessary Roughness - 15 yards applied as per the rulebook.

Head Out of the Game /Unnecessary Roughness Rule: For the purpose of this rule, INTENT is NOT a factor when considering if it is a foul or not. The responsibility lies solely with the player initiating the hit or tackle to avoid the contact to the head and neck area.

- (1) Any SIGNIFICANT contact delivered TO THE HEAD OR NECK AREA of an opponent with the helmet, facemask, forearm, shoulder, or hands shall be ruled as unnecessary roughness.
- (2) Any SIGNIFICANT contact by a player with their HELMET to an opponent either in attempting a tackle or a block shall be ruled as unnecessary roughness.

Penalties:

1st Offence: Team A 15 yards DR; Team B 15 yards, automatic first down for team A.

2nd Offence by SAME PLAYER: Team A 15 yards DR; Team B 15 yards, automatic first down for team A *Referee will tell head coach that next infraction by that player will result in a disqualification.

3rd Offence by SAME PLAYER: Team A 25 yards DR, player ejected from game; Team B 25 yards DR, automatic first down, player ejected from game.

Exceptions:

- (1) Straight arm by ball carrier; A ball carrier is permitted to make contact to the helmet, facemask, or neck area of an opponent attempting to make a tackle with their hand provided there is no thrusting motion of the arm involved in making the contact to the head or neck area. After the hand is in contact with the potential tackler a pushing action is permitted to ward of the tackler. The hand may be on the facemask but must not grasp the facemask.
- (2) Short yardage plunge; A ball carrier may plunge headfirst toward a gap when attempting to gain a first down or a play at the goal line, either attempting to score or get out of the end zone. An opponent attempting to stop the runner may make unavoidable contact to the head or neck area of the runner due to the position the runner has assumed to gain the required distance, this contact shall not be considered a foul unless it involves SIGNIFICANT helmet to helmet contact. A short yardage play of this nature does not permit the ball carrier to lower their helmet and target a potential tackler with their helmet.

Length and Timing of U16 Games: Games will consist of 4 quarters of 15 minutes each for a total of 60 minutes of playing time. Except for the last 3 minutes of each half, the timing of games will be "straight time".

The time clock will run continuously and only stop in the following situations:

- (1) A team time out. Each team will have 2 timeouts per half.
- (2) An officials' timeout.
- (3) A prolonged injury where a player is on the ground for more than 15 seconds.
- (4) A prolonged officials conference or delay of more than 15 seconds
- (5) Scoring and change of possessions.

During the last 3 minutes of each half the clock will stop after each play. It will start again in accordance with Rule 1 Section 5 Article 1 of the Canadian Rulebook for Amateur Tackle Football.

Mercy Rule: When a team has taken and maintained a lead of at least 30 points, the remainder of the game will be timed "straight time". The only events that stop the clock are items 1 through 4. Item 5 will not stop the clock when the mercy rule is in effect.

Taking a Knee: When a team advises the Referee that they are going to take a knee for the purpose of ending the half or a game, the Referee will advise both teams of what is going to take place so that there is no misunderstanding with either team on the field. After the Referee declares this, if during the next play a member of either team crosses the neutral zone in a threatening manner, even without physical contact being made, that player will be ejected from the game.

If the offense needs to take the knee more than once they are to declare that before each play and the Referee will advise both teams before each play. Score and field position are not factors, there is no play when the offense declares they are taking the knee.

Postponed Playoff Games: All playoff games cancelled due to inclement weather must be replayed at the earliest reasonable opportunity. If the hosting team does not have a lighted field satisfactory for the rescheduled game, it will lose home field advantage and therefore must travel to the other team's home field to complete the game.