

The SSAL league will follow the NIRSA rules guideline. We have a condensed rules below. Please make sure all Athletic Directors and Coaches read. NIRSA is a premier association of leaders and is used across the board in all recreation and helps to establish a safe and healthy community with guidelines to use.

#### Condensed NIRSA Rules for SSAL League:

- 1) Four 10 min quarters of play. Teams switch sides of field after each quarter. At the two(2) minute mark per half ( at end of 2nd and 4th quarter) the clock stops on all incomplete passes, out of bounds plays, scoring plays, penalty enforcements, and time outs. NO overtime in regular season. Playoffs and Championship game only.
- 2) For all age groups, each team receives two (2) timeouts per half with no carryover.
- 3) "Triple threat" flags are required. There are three(3) flags on the belt and when runner is deflagged, the entire belt comes off the runner. No "pop" belts are permitted.
- 4) Players are NOT to wear any shorts with pockets, belt loops, or anything else that might compromise player safety. Cleats are permitted.
- 5) 7 players for each team. A team MAY start with 6 players, but no team can play with only 5 players or less at any time.
- 6) Line to gains are every 20 yards. Four (4) downs to achieve a new first down.
- 7) For each half and after any scoring play or touchback except moved by penalty, the ball is placed at the 14-yard line (first down and 6 yards to go to the 20-yard line).
- 8) After a touchdown, the scoring team may elect to go for one (1) point from the three (3) yard line OR two (2) from the ten (10) yard line. If there is a turnover on the extra point, the ball is dead. No points for the defensive team.
- 9) If a defensive penalty occurs during the scoring play, the offense has the option of accepting the penalty during the extra point OR accepting the penalty on the ensuing play. If they choose to accept the penalty on the ensuing play, since it is obviously a major penalty, the enforcement will be half the distance from the 14-yard line and first down at the 20.
- 10) Only one (1) player is needed on the line of scrimmage (LOS), which is the center. The center may or may not snap the ball between their legs. Side snaps are LEGAL.
- 11) The quarterback MUST be AT LEAST two (2) yards behind the center. No direct snaps are permitted. Penalty: illegal procedure and 5 yards from the LOS and repeat of down if penalty accepted.
- 12) All offensive players are eligible to catch a pass, run with the ball, and throw a pass on any down.
- 13) Only one (1) forward pass BEHIND the LOS is permitted. A player may lateral the ball backwards behind the LOS an unlimited amount of times, but only one (1) pass considered forward is permitted. Whether that forward pass ever goes past the LOS is inconsequential. Illegal forward pass: 5 yards from the POI and loss of down.
- 14) False start; illegal shift; snap infraction – all 5-yard DEAD BALL penalties and repeat of down and enforcement is automatic.

- 15) Down Field Block – Arms in, NO contact initiated, NO holding, NO moving otherwise illegal. NO MOVING!! Like a pick in basketball. Any movement by the blocker to repeatedly interfere with a rusher will be called a blocking foul.
- 16) Flag guarding – flag guarding is now a CONTACT FOUL. This means unless the runner makes actual contact with the opponent attempting to deflag the runner, no penalty exists. This decision whether a penalty occurs is totally based on IF the official sees the contact initiated by the runner.
- 17) A runner IS PERMITTED to EXTEND the football to achieve a first down or touchdown. No defensive player can bat, strip, or otherwise intentionally cause the runner to lose possession of the football.
- 18) If a runner is close to the goal line and loses possession and the ball rolls into the end zone or out of the end zone, it is a TOUCHBACK. It is NOT where the ball first touches the ground, but whether the ball breaks the plane of the end zone.
- 19) An offensive player MAY NOT spike the ball to avoid being deflagged in the backfield. However, if at a minute or less in the half, a player may spike the ball to stop the clock. Intentional grounding: 5 yards from the POI and loss of down.
- 20) It is LEGAL for the runner to SPIN.
- 21) Offensive charging – this is when the runner illegally contacts the defender within their body frame and otherwise displaces them. If the defender has established legal position prior to the runner and provides one (1) step of time and distance to avoid contact, then the responsibility of the contact is of the runner. This is a ten (10) yard penalty from the point of infraction (POI) and a REPEAT of down, if the penalty is accepted.
- 22) If the runner drops the ball and it hits the ground, the play is DEAD. However, if the defensive team secures possession of the ball PRIOR to it touching the ground, it is a turnover.
- 23) Encroachment – neither team may enter the neutral zone prior to the snap when the ball becomes alive. This is a DEAD BALL penalty on EITHER team. After a 5-yard assessment, the down is repeated.
- 24) A defensive player MAY NOT deflag a receiver prior to receiving the pass. Penalty – pass interference; ten (10) yards enforced from the LOS.
- 25) Defensive line – 5-yard rush line, except when the line to gain is within 5 yards. However, there MUST be a minimum of one (1) yard separation between the offense and defensive LOS. This means if the ball is placed at the half yard line, the defense will line up a half yard into the end zone.
- 26) Any punt that breaks the plane of the goal line is an automatic touchback. All punts must be declared, and the defensive team MAY NOT rush the punter. A regular snap is required. Please keep in mind the above rules are the most basic of NIRSA. A complete list of the rules is available upon request.