

Official League Rules

1. Beginning a Game

- 1.1 To begin the game, the winner of the coin toss has the choice of either receiving the kickoff in the first or second half of the game; or selecting an end of the field to defend. The starting situation will be reversed for the second half.
- 1.2 One member of each team will be responsible for keeping time, either with a stopwatch or wristwatch. To ensure no discrepancies arise, they are encouraged to verify the time remaining periodically during the game. The game clock will continue uninterrupted except in the case of a major injury.
- 1.3 Teams can use their choice of men's regulation size footballs provided by themselves. A marker ball, to indicate the line of scrimmage at all times should also be provided by either team.

2. Length of Game

- 2.1 Each game consists of two 30-minute halves, with a maximum of a 10-minute break in between halves.
- 2.2 Teams will switch ends at halftime and reverse the kicking / receiving situation from the beginning of the game.
- 2.3 Each possession will consist of a maximum of eight plays. When a team starts their possession on their own side of mid-field, they have four downs to cross mid-field and earn the offensive team a new set of four downs.
 - 2.3.1 To obtain a new set of downs, the offensive team must make the football "break the plane" of mid-field (*previously body and ball had to cross the mid-field line*).
- 2.4 The time from the completion of one offensive play, to the commencement of the next offensive play shall not exceed sixty (60) seconds. The time from the completion of a play that results in the change of a possession (including a convert), to the commencement of the next play shall not exceed ninety (90) seconds.
 - 2.4.1 Completion of a Play – occurs when a player / ball is downed.
 - 2.4.2 Should the team with possession violate the sixty or ninety second time limit, they shall be penalized 15 yards, and have only 30 seconds to re-spot the ball and commence a play.
 - 2.4.3 Should the team with possession violate the 30 second interval, they shall be penalized an additional 15 yards, and lose the current down they are on (even if it is 4th down – in which case the 15-yard penalty shall be assessed, and then a change in possession will occur).
 - 2.4.4 Rule 2.4.3 shall be repeated as long as the offensive team continues to violate the 30 second interval(s), and as long as the offensive team has downs remaining.
 - 2.4.5 Before any penalty is to be assessed, the defending team must announce to the offending team when they are about to breach the "15 second warning" where only 15 seconds remain before the penalty for a delay of game can be assessed.

- 2.4.6 Rule 2.4 does not apply in the event of an injury where both the “play clock” as well as the “game clock” will be stopped until the injured player can resume play or leaves the field.
- 2.4.7 Rule 2.4 does not apply in the event of a disputed call, where both the “play clock” as well as the “game clock” will be stopped until the issue is resolved.
- 2.4.8 Rule 2.4 does not apply in the final three minutes of a half (5 plays).
- 2.5 Five plays must be run in the final three minutes of each half (including Overtimehalves).
 - 2.5.1 A Punt is a valid play.
 - 2.5.2 Converts / Kick-offs are not considered plays.

3. Scoring Points

3.1 Touchdown – 6 points.

- 3.1.1 To score a touchdown, a player must have care and control of the football while still in-bounds when the football breaks the plane of the goal line (*previously body and ball had to be in the end zone*).

3.2 Convert – 1 or 2 points:

- 3.2.1 1 point – one play from the 10-yard line after a touchdown is scored.
- 3.2.2 2 points – one play from the 20-yard line after a touchdown is scored.

3.3 Rouge – 1 point:

- 3.3.1 Following the scoring of a Rouge, the ball shall change possession to be put in play on the new offensive team’s 20-yard line.
- 3.3.2 Awarded on a kickoff / punt that travels into the end zone and the ball carrier is touched while still the football is still in in the end zone.
- 3.3.3 Awarded on a kickoff / punt that travels into the end zone and the ball carrier runs out of play before the football exits the end zone.
- 3.3.4 Awarded on a kickoff / punt that travels into the end zone and the ball touches the ground in play (within the end zone), and subsequently travels out of play.

3.4 Touchback – 0 points:

- 3.4.1 Following a Touchback, the ball shall change possession to be put in play on the new offensive team’s 20-yard line.
- 3.4.2 Awarded on a kickoff / punt that strikes the goal post while entering the receiving team’s end zone.
- 3.4.3 Awarded on a kickoff / punt that leaves the field of play in the air without striking the ground within the end zone prior to leaving the field of play.

3.4.4 Awarded on a punt that leaves the field of play after striking the ground before entering the end zone and going out of bounds in the air prior to striking the ground again within the end zone. (i.e., ball strikes the 2-yard line, flies into the end zone and out of bounds prior to touching the ground again within the endzone).

3.5 Safety – 2 points:

3.5.1 2 points awarded to the defensive team any time an offensive ball carrier enters his end-zone and is touched by a defensive player, or the player / ball exits the field of play prior to fully leaving the end-zone (football must break plane of goal line).

3.5.2 The offensive team must then kickoff or punt from their respective 20-yard line.

3.6 Games: Win = 2 points; Tie = 1 point; Loss = 0 points

4. Player Eligibility & Rosters

4.1 A maximum of seven players per team are allowed on the field at a time.

4.2 If a team has an offensive and a defensive squad, make changes quickly. Make any substitutions between play quickly as well.

4.3 Players must be eighteen years of age.

4.4 Team rosters should include a minimum of 10 players, with a maximum of 22 players.

4.5 Rosters are to be handed in with the league entry fee. Changes to this roster may be made at any time prior to the team's fourth regular season game. A fee of \$25 must be paid at the time of submission of the Roster Amendment Form. Any new / added players may not participate until this fee, and this form have been submitted to the league.

4.6 The rosters of all teams will then be made available to all teams and no other changes may be made.

4.7 If a team is playing with a player not on its roster, or the player is listed on another team's roster, the opposing team may appeal the outcome of the game to the league President.

4.8 All players on a team's roster are eligible for the Playoffs.

4.9 Present CFL players are ineligible.

4.10 A team may only have three current Sault Steelers on the field at a given time.

4.11 Any team found in violation of the rules in Section #4 during a game may have the actual game score erased and a forfeit win of 7-0 be awarded to the non-violating team.

5. Player Conduct

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the team captain to control and discipline his own teammates.
- 5.2 Any time during a game when there is a disagreement as to the outcome of a play, the outcome will be resolved by the two opposing team captains only. The play may stand as played, be nullified or be replayed. These discussions should be kept to a minimum and resolved quickly as the game clock continues, (however the play clock does not start until there is a resolution between the two team captains).
- 5.3 A player making a flagrant physical contact with an opposing player without any attempt made for the ball, or with the intent to injure will be immediately thrown out of the game. The player will not be eligible to participate in any further regular season / playoff game until the League Executive has reviewed the incident and determines the length of the player's suspension.
- 5.4 Expulsion from two games will result in the automatic expulsion from the league.

6. Player Equipment

- 6.1 Football or soccer cleats are allowed. No shoes with metal cleats / spikes / treads are permitted.
- 6.2 Team sweaters are optional but recommended.
- 6.3 Footballs are provided by the competing teams are their responsibility respectively and must be of men's regulation size. Junior or miniature footballs are not allowed in play.

7. Playing Regulations

- 7.1 The ball is dead and cannot be advanced when:
 - 7.1.1 A ball carrier is touched by a player of the defensive team by any part of the defensive player's body.
 - 7.1.2 A ball carrier intentionally kneels in the goal area.
 - 7.1.3 The kicking team touches the ball on a punt / kickoff (no on-side kicks) provided it does not interfere with a potential receiver (kicking team must give 3-yards). The receiving team will take possession where the ball was touched / downed by the kicking team.
 - 7.1.3.1 Any violation of Rule 7.1.3 will result in the receiving team having the option of forcing the kicking team to re-kick from 10 yards back from their original line of scrimmage.
 - 7.1.4 The ball rolls out of bounds.
- 7.2 Ball carriers in contact with the ground may get up and advance ball until touched.
- 7.3 Goal posts are out of play at all times (whether on a pass / lateral / kickoff / punt).
 - 7.3.1 When passing - play is dead (similar to an incomplete forward pass).
 - 7.3.2 On a lateral - a safety is awarded to the defensive team.

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- 7.3.3 On a kickoff - the ball is placed on the receiving team's 20-yard line, and NO point is awarded.
- 7.3.4 On a punt - the ball is placed at the receiving team's 20-yard line, and NO point is awarded.
- 7.3.5 On a punt from the kicking-team's end zone - a safety is awarded to the receiving team, and the kicking team must kickoff or punt from their respective 20-yardline.
- 7.4 One foot is required to remain in the field of play for a valid catch.
- 7.5 “Simultaneous Possession” occurs when a completed pass is caught simultaneously by two opposing players. The player whose team was in possession of the ball prior to the pass shall retain possession of the ball (“tie goes to the offensive player”).
- 7.6 A player must be a minimum of five yards from the sidelines within the field of play to be an eligible receiver at the commencement of a play.
- 7.7 For a score to be counted, only the ball must break the plane of the goal line prior to the ball carrier being touched.
- 7.8 A kickoff which travels out of bounds without an opposing player touching it is dead. The receiving team has the option of taking the ball at the point it went out of bounds or having the kicking team re-kick 10 yards back from the original kicking point.
- 7.9 A player cannot leave the field of play during a play and return to be an eligible receiver. Once a player leaves the field of play under his own power, he is ineligible.
- 7.10 A ball punted into the end zone may be punted out and no point awarded if:
 - 7.10.1 The ball has not been touched by the opposition.
 - 7.10.2 The player attempting to punt the ball out is not touched prior to punting the ball out.
 - 7.10.3 The ball travels out of the end zone prior to being touched by the original kicking team.
- 7.11 A lateral pass or pitch, either under or overhand is allowed provided the receiving player is behind the point of the original lateral when he receives the ball.
- 7.12 If a legal lateral or pitch is intercepted by an opposing player, it can be advanced by the intercepting team.
- 7.13 After an illegible lateral / pitch (forward pass), the ball is marked at the point of last possession.
- 7.14 When the defense commits pass interference in the end-zone on a convert attempt, the convert will be awarded to the offence.
- 7.15 On a bobbled pass, if the player is touched after tipping the ball, prior to catching it, the pass is considered completed and the player is considered touched.
- 7.16 Any offensive player who goes out of bounds to elude a defender is no longer eligible for that offensive play. Any pass caught by that receiver is considered incomplete.

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- 7.17 If at any time during a play, an offensive player makes contact with the goal posts intentionally / un-intentionally, the play is automatically dead and a loss of down is the result.
- 7.18 When a player is receiving a punt or kickoff, the kicking team must allow a minimum of 3 yards for a player to make a clear, uninterrupted catch.
- 7.19 Obstruction.
- 7.19.1 Players are not permitted to block or obstruct an opponent's direct path to the ball carrier. Contact does not have to occur for this penalty to be called. Players are permitted to take a stationary position in order to avoid being called for this penalty, providing it is taken in sufficient time to allow the opponent to adjust to it (i.e., cannot stop directly in the path of a defender thereby obstructing his path to the ball carrier).
- 7.19.2 This is not the case for the rusher, as all offensive players must provide for an unimpeded path for the Primary rusher, or they will be penalized for obstruction.
- 7.19.3 Defensive players may not line up in a manner close to the line of scrimmage where the initial path of an offensive player is impeded (no "bump and run"). Any defensive player intentionally obstructing the route of a receiver shall be called for pass interference. If any defensive player repeats this offense, the player shall be ejected from the game.
- 7.20 Once any ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, they may not retreat back to their own / initial side of the line of scrimmage to become "on side" to throw a pass. A ball carrier who has crossed the line of scrimmage may lateral the ball to another player who may be on the offensive team's side of the line of scrimmage (on side), but that receiving player may not throw a forward pass as the ball has already crossed the line of scrimmage.
- 7.21 Mercy Rule. If at any time a team is facing a deficit of 14 points or more, the team currently losing the game shall have the option to terminate the game at any time following the 14 point or more deficit.

8. Putting Ball in Play

- 8.1 All players are eligible receivers.
- 8.2 To commence any play, the ball must be snapped in a manner where the ball's starting position is touching the ground and/or below the knee of the player snapping the ball.
- 8.2.1 If the ball is snapped in an overhand / side-arm motion, the play is dead, and the down is lost.
- 8.3 Before the snap of the ball, the defensive player intending on rushing the quarterback ("the Rusher") must line up at least 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and at least one yard away from the offensive player snapping the ball prior to the start of any offensive play.
- 8.3.1 No offensive player may line up in front of the Rusher either on or behind the line of scrimmage.
- 8.3.2 All offensive receivers must be at least one yard away from the Rusher on either side and may not run a route across the Rusher's path. If an offensive player runs a route in front of the Rusher at any time – the play is dead, and the down is lost.

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- 8.3.3 If the ball is placed 5 yards (or less) from the defensive team's goal or mid-field line, the rusher must still line up at least 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is not eligible to advance the ball on the ground without first passing it (forward or laterally) or handing off to another player. The quarterback is deemed the first player to touch the ball after it is snapped, regardless of where that player lines up.
- 8.4 Rule 8.2 with regards to the line-up of offensive players with respect to the Rusher applies in punting situations as well.
- 8.5 If the offensive team wishes to kick, they must inform their opponents at all times prior to kicking.
- 8.6 Start of game: winner of coin toss has choice of either end of field to defend, or when to receive the kickoff. The starting situation is reversed at the beginning of the second half.
- 8.7 Kickoff is from the 30-yard line. Kicking team members must line up five yards behind the ball, and not run past the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. The ball may be:
- 8.7.1.1 Kicked from a tee.
 - 8.7.1.2 Kicked by a person holding the ball on the ground.
 - 8.7.1.3 Drop Kicked - ball must come in contact with the ground.
- 8.8 The ball is considered "live" to the offense / return team only when the ball hits the ground:
- 8.8.1 If returning a kick / punt and the receiving player drops the ball or has it deflected off his body within his immediate reach, or the ball is deflected laterally or behind the receiving player.
 - 8.8.1.1 If the ball deflects forward out of the immediate reach of a receiving player, the play is considered dead as the ball may not be advanced forward by a receiving team/player as a result of a deflection.
 - 8.8.2 If the quarterback misses a snap.
 - 8.8.3 The defense may down the ball by touching it but may not gain possession of a ball on the ground at any time.
 - 8.8.4 Rule 8.8 applies even when the returning team blocks a punt. The rusher(s) who may have made contact with the ball in the blocking of a punt are NOT eligible to pick up the ball and advance it. After a rusher blocks a punt, the play is ruled dead once the ball hits the ground and the new line of scrimmage shall be the location where the punter was attempting to kick from at the time of the block.
 - 8.8.4.1 If the ball is in the air after being blocked, a rusher may catch the ball in the air and advance it.
 - 8.8.4.2 If the ball is in the air after being blocked, the kicker may catch the ball and proceed to attempt to kick the ball again if the kicker has not been touched while in possession of the ball.
 - 8.8.5 ANY contact with a punter below the punter's waist shall result in the down being replayed, and the ball being advanced 10 yards.

- 8.8.5.1 If the 10-yard advancement results in a team crossing mid-field, the punting team shall be awarded a first down.
- 8.8.5.2 If the 10-yard advancement results in a team crossing the defending team's goal line, the kicking team shall have the option to advance the ball to the goal line and replay the down or replay the down from the previous line of scrimmage.

9. Change of Possession

9.1 Possession of the football can be turned over by:

9.1.1 Punting.

- 9.1.1.1 For a ball to be considered a "legal" punt, it must be deliberately dropped from a player's possession, and then kicked with the foot or leg before the ball touches the ground.
- 9.1.1.2 If a player accidentally or deliberately kicks the ball with his foot or leg without having possession / control of the ball in hand, the ball in motion is to be considered an onside (lateral) or offside (illegal forward) pass depending on its direction and shall remain live until the ball strikes the ground.
- 9.1.1.3 A "quick-kick" is considered a valid punt play – and occurs when the receiving team decides to kick the ball upon catching the initial punt (often to avoid having a Rouge scored against them near the end of a half). If a receiving team chooses to perform a "quick-kick", giving up possession of the ball back to the original kicking team, who will have a new set of downs with time permitting.
- NOTE: The receiving team performing the "quick-kick" must kick the ball out of their end zone and into the playable area to give the originally punting team an opportunity to field the ball.
 - If the quick-kick travels out of the end zone before landing in the field of play – a Rouge is deemed to be scored.
 - If the quick-kick travels out of the defensive end zone and out of play (i.e., at the 15-yard line) – a Rouge is deemed to be scored.

9.1.2 An interception as the result of a forward or lateral pass.

- 9.1.2.1 An interception made in the defensive end-zone by a defender does NOT result in a point scored if the intercepting player is tagged or leaves the area of play before exiting his / her own end-zone.
- 9.1.2.2 Interception in the defending team's end zone: if ball carrier is touched, the ball will be put into play from the 20-yard line. NO point is scored.

9.1.3 Loss of downs.

10.Overtime

- 10.1 Overtime rules only take effect during the playoffs or when a definitive winner is required (tie- breaker game, tournament finals, etc.).
- 10.2 Overtime shall consist of **one** full possession by each team. Each team will start their possession on the defending team's **40-yard** line and have 4 plays to score with normal rules in effect.
- 10.2.1 A new coin toss will take place at the commencement of Overtime.
- 10.2.2 The winner of the coin toss shall have the option of being on offense / defense first. The loser of the coin toss will have the selection of which end zone to compete in.
- 10.2.3 After the first offensive series, the teams will switch offensive / defensive positions.
- 10.2.4 Both teams will defend the same end-zone through all of the Overtime to avoid any environmental advantage.
- 10.2.5 An interception or valid form of a turnover ends that team's offensive series immediately, no points can be scored on a change of possession.
- 10.2.6 Converts will be played after the scoring of a touchdown per normal rules with the offensive team having the option of attempting a 1-point or 2-point conversion.
- 10.2.7 Once both teams have had ONE full possession, the team with the most points is declared the winner.
- 10.2.8 **NOTE:** *If a team “quick kicks” a punt return instead of trying to advance the ball out of the end zone, as per normal play rules, that team gives up their forthcoming possession of the ball. (see Section 9.1.1.3 regarding the use of “quick-kicks”).*
- 10.2.8.1 ***Example 1:** The first team while defending prepares to return a punt from the offensive team, and quick-kicks the ball out of the end zone to avoid a Rouge being scored against them. The kicking team will receive a fresh set of downs on the 40-yard line.*
- 10.2.8.2 ***Example 2:** The second team while defending prepares to return a punt from the offensive team, and quick-kicks the ball out of the end zone to avoid a Rouge from being scored against them will also give up their next offensive possession (IF it is needed).*
- SCENARIO:** *Team A starts the Overtime on offense and on 4th down elects to punt to attempt to score a Rouge and is successful (Team A = 1pt. Team B = 0pts). Team B now becomes the offensive team and is not successful in scoring on their first 3 downs, and elects to punt to attempt to score a Rouge to tie the game and force a 2nd set of possessions. Team A is receiving the punt for the tying point and elects to quick-kick the ball out of the end zone and they are successful resulting in Team B scoring 0 points. Team B does **NOT** receive an additional possession and the game is over with Team A winning 1-0.*
- 10.3 If a winner has not been determined after each team has had one full possession each, teams will receive an additional possession each. Teams will continue this rotation until a winner is determined.

11. Defaults

- 11.1 A team is no longer permitted a 10-minute grace period from the scheduled start time of their game. If a minimum of five players cannot be fielded at the scheduled start-time of the game, the game must be forfeited in favour of the team that has five or more players.
- 11.2 Team captains are responsible for their teams. If a captain cannot field a team, the opposing captain is to be contacted prior to the commencement of the scheduled game, as soon as possible.
- 11.3 If any team should forfeit 3 regular season games, they will be ineligible to participate in the Playoffs.
- 11.4 A default win is recorded as a 14-0 win with the league statistician.

12. League Standings

- 12.1 Teams must call or email scores of all games to the league statistician to be recorded and published in local newspapers. It is the responsibility of the winning team to phone / email the score of the game to the league's designated statistician.
- 12.2 A tie in points among teams in the final league standings will be resolved by one of the following tie-breaking methods until the tie has been broken (following the order of precedence below):
 - 12.2.1 Number of overall wins throughout the season.
 - 12.2.2 Record between the teams in head-to-head games.
 - 12.2.3 Point spread (+ / -) in head-to-head games.
 - 12.2.4 Overall point spread (+ / -) of teams in total league games.

13. Other Notes / Code of Conduct:

- 13.1 This is a gentlemen's league for fun and enjoyment first, and competition second. These rules are in place to help regulate the game. They should be enforced with logic and common sense in mind.
- 13.2 While SSM Touch Football encourages that all participants support the official League sponsors, observing City bylaws and the Criminal Code of Canada with regards to the consumption of alcohol on or around the fields utilized by SSM Touch Football should be the paramount concern to all league participants.
 - 13.2.1 Any team confirmed by the league executive to be consuming alcohol against City bylaws and/or the Criminal Code in relation to a SSM Touch Football game / event, shall be fined \$100 to serve as a donation to the JumpStart program of Sault Ste. Marie.
 - 13.2.2 Any team confirmed guilty of a second infraction of this rule (13.2), shall be suspended indefinitely until a review is completed with the League Executive and the City of Sault Ste. Marie.