DRFL MEN'S TACKLE FOOTBALL GAME RULES

7v7 & 8v8 | 2026 RULES FOR REVIEW

Important: Proposed soft protective headgear and padding are under qualified safety and insurance review. This document does not authorize full-contact tackle practices or games.

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DRFL-only rules. SEDFL has a separate rulebook. Sections 24 and 29 have been revised to clarify DRFL authority and the Head Referee's limited rulemaking role. Other proposed game options remain subject to final approval.

01 PLAYERS ON THE FIELD

- 7v7: each team may have no more than 7 players participating in a live play.
- 8v8: each team may have no more than 8 players participating in a live play.
- A team must have at least 6 eligible players for 7v7 or 7 eligible players for 8v8 to begin or continue, unless DRFL approves an emergency exception.
- Substitutions are allowed between plays and must be completed before the ready-for-play signal.

02 TEAM ROSTERS AND ELIGIBILITY

- Recommended active roster: 15-21 players. DRFL may set a higher administrative roster limit before the season.
- Every player must be properly registered, eligible, and listed on the official roster before participating.
- Players must use an assigned jersey number and may not represent more than one team in the same division unless DRFL grants written approval.
- Team owners and coaches are responsible for verifying eligibility before kickoff.

03 FIELD DIMENSIONS AND MARKINGS

- Recommended field of play: 100 yards long between goal lines, with 10-yard end zones when the facility allows.
- Recommended width: approximately 40 yards. DRFL may widen or narrow the field for safety and facility limitations.
- First-down reference lines may be marked every 20 yards, or standard chains may be used.
- DRFL may shorten the field when necessary, but both teams must play under the same announced dimensions.

04 GAME LENGTH AND CLOCK

- Regulation consists of four 15-minute quarters with a 10-minute halftime.
- The standard clock is a running clock except for scores, accepted penalties requiring administration, official timeouts, injuries, changes of possession, and other stoppages ordered by officials.
- During the final 2 minutes of each half, DRFL may use normal stop-clock procedures for incomplete passes, out-of-bounds plays, first downs, and other standard timing situations.
- The referee is the final authority on the official game clock.

05 PLAY CLOCK AND TIMEOUTS

- The offense has 30 seconds to start the next play after the ball is declared ready for play.
- Each team receives 3 charged timeouts per game.
- Unused regulation timeouts do not carry into overtime.
- Delay of game is a 5-yard penalty unless officials announce a different enforcement for unusual field conditions.

06 STARTING POSSESSION AND RESTARTS

- A coin toss determines the opening choice of possession or direction. The choice reverses to begin the second half.
- DRFL may use a conventional kickoff, a controlled safety kickoff, or place the ball at a designated yard line. The selected method must be announced before the game.
- After a safety, DRFL will use the same approved restart procedure unless officials announce a safety-specific spot.

07 OFFENSIVE FORMATION - 7V7

- The offense must use a center to snap the ball.
- At least 3 offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- At least 2 of the line-of-scrimmage players must be interior blockers unless DRFL announces a special formation rule.
- Only one offensive player may be in motion at the snap, and that player may not be moving toward the opponent's goal line.

08 OFFENSIVE FORMATION - 8V8

- The offense must use a center to snap the ball.
- At least 4 offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- At least 3 line-of-scrimmage players must be interior blockers unless DRFL announces a special formation rule.
- Only one offensive player may be in motion at the snap, and that player may not be moving toward the opponent's goal line.

09 RUNNING, PASSING, AND BALL HANDLING

- Any eligible offensive player may run the football.
- One legal forward pass is permitted per play and must be released from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Backward passes and laterals are permitted and remain live when they hit the ground.
- A runner is down when legally tackled, when any body part other than a hand or foot contacts the ground after defensive contact, when the runner goes out of bounds, or when an official declares forward progress stopped.
- An untouched player who slips or falls may get up and continue unless the league announces a different down-by-contact rule before the season.

10 BLOCKING

- Blocking must be controlled and directed at the opponent's legal blocking area.
- Holding, clipping, chop blocks, blocks below the waist, and dangerous blindside blocks are prohibited.

- Blocking in the back is prohibited except for incidental contact that officials determine did not create an advantage.
- Hands to the face or neck area are prohibited.

11 LEGAL TACKLING AND PLAYER SAFETY

- Defenders must make a genuine attempt to wrap or control the ball carrier on tackles in the field of play.
- Targeting the head or neck, leading with the crown or top of the head, launching, clothesline tackles, horse-collar tackles, tripping, and intentional blows to the head are prohibited.
- A defender may force a runner out of bounds using legal body contact, but unnecessary contact after the runner is clearly out is prohibited.
- Officials must stop the play when forward progress is clearly stopped or when continued contact creates an unnecessary safety risk.
- Pile-on contact after the runner is down may result in a 15-yard penalty and ejection.

12 EQUIPMENT

- Every participant must wear a properly fitted mouthguard and equipment meeting the final DRFL specifications.
- DRFL is considering soft protective headgear and padding for its 7v7 and 8v8 divisions. This is a proposed equipment approach only, not a finding that soft equipment is sufficient for full-contact tackling.
- No full-contact tackle practices or games may proceed under the proposed soft-equipment format unless the precise contact rules, equipment, emergency plan, venue requirements, and insurance coverage have been reviewed and expressly authorized by DRFL following qualified safety and insurer review.
- If full-contact tackling cannot be approved under the proposed equipment standard, DRFL must change its contact rules, equipment requirements, or competition format before operation.
- Jewelry, hard exposed objects, damaged equipment, and other items officials judge unsafe are prohibited.

13 FUMBLES AND INTERCEPTIONS

- A fumble remains live unless an official rules the play dead.
- Either team may recover and advance a live fumble unless a specific conversion or overtime rule prohibits advancement.
- Interceptions may be returned until the runner is down, out of bounds, scores, or the play is otherwise ended.

14 SCORING

- Touchdown: 6 points.
- One-point try: one play from the DRFL-designated short conversion line.
- Two-point try: one play from the DRFL-designated longer conversion line.
- Safety: 2 points.

- Field goal: 3 points only when goalposts, approved kicking procedures, and game conditions support field-goal play. DRFL may operate games with no field goals.

15 FIRST DOWNS

- DRFL may award first downs through standard yardage using chains or by reaching fixed first-down zones.
- When fixed zones are used, the recommended interval is 20 yards.
- The first-down method must be announced before the game and used consistently.

16 PUNTS AND KICKING

- Punting is permitted when DRFL has announced a punt procedure for that game.
- DRFL may use a protected punt with restrictions on rushing until the ball is kicked.
- Fake punts are allowed only when the pregame punt procedure permits them.
- Kickoffs and field goals are governed by the game-day kicking format announced by DRFL.

17 OVERTIME

- If regulation ends tied, each team receives at least one possession.
- Overtime possessions begin at a designated yard line announced by DRFL, recommended at the opponent's 25-yard line.
- Teams alternate possessions. After both teams have had an equal number of possessions, the team ahead wins.
- Beginning with the third overtime, DRFL may require two-point conversion attempts after touchdowns.
- Each team receives 1 timeout per overtime period.

18 MERCY RULE

- If a team leads by 35 or more points during the second half, officials may use a continuous running clock.
- If a team leads by 49 or more points at the start of the fourth quarter, DRFL may end the game unless both teams and the head official agree to continue under a running clock.
- Safety conditions and sportsmanship may justify ending a game earlier.

19 COMMON PENALTIES

- 5 yards: false start, offside, encroachment, illegal motion, illegal formation, delay of game, illegal substitution.
- 10 yards: holding, certain illegal blocks, intentional grounding when enforced by DRFL as a yardage foul.
- 15 yards: facemask or illegal head/neck contact, horse-collar tackle, unnecessary roughness, dangerous blindside block, roughing the passer, targeting, unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Pass interference may be enforced as a spot foul or by fixed yardage according to the enforcement chart published by DRFL before the season.

- Officials may add an automatic first down, loss of down, ejection, or other enforcement when specifically authorized by these rules.

20 PASS PROTECTION AND ROUGHING THE PASSER

- Defenders may rush from any legal position unless DRFL announces a special rush restriction.
- Late contact on the passer is prohibited.
- Contact to the passer's head, neck, or knees, or forceful contact after the ball is clearly released, may be ruled roughing the passer.
- A passer outside the normal pocket may throw the ball away only if the pass satisfies DRFL's intentional-grounding standard.

21 RECEIVERS AND DEFENSIVE COVERAGE

- A receiver must secure control of the ball and establish at least one foot in bounds for a completed catch, unless DRFL announces a two-foot catch standard.
- A receiver who voluntarily leaves the field may not be the first player to touch a forward pass after returning, unless re- established under a rule exception.
- Defensive holding and illegal contact beyond the permitted contact area are prohibited.
- Defenders must play the ball and receiver legally and may not launch into a defenseless receiver.

22 SPORTSMANSHIP AND CONDUCT

- Players, coaches, owners, and team staff must show respect to opponents, officials, spectators, and facility personnel.
- Threats, discriminatory or abusive conduct, excessive taunting, intentional dangerous contact, entering the field to join an altercation, and refusal to obey a lawful official instruction are prohibited.
- Bench personnel must remain in the designated team area unless permitted onto the field.

23 FIGHTING AND EJECTIONS

- Fighting is prohibited.
- A player or coach who throws a punch, kick, or other deliberate strike, or who actively joins a fight, may be immediately ejected.
- Serious or repeated unnecessary roughness, targeting, threats, or deliberate contact with an official may also result in ejection.
- DRFL administration may impose additional suspension or discipline after review.

24 OFFICIALS AND HEAD REFEREE AUTHORITY

- Officials enforce DRFL-approved football game rules and manage penalties, timing, substitutions, and on-field safety.

- The Head Referee makes on-field judgment decisions under the approved rules, subject to any formally adopted review procedure.
- The Head Referee may explain and interpret existing rules, but may not independently create, remove, or change official DRFL game rules.
- The Head Referee may recommend changes to DRFL administration after a game.
- Officials may immediately stop, delay, or suspend play when there is an immediate safety risk. Such decisions do not permanently amend the rules.
- Serious incidents and safety concerns must be reported to DRFL administration.
- Only the designated Head Coach or Team Captain may respectfully request an explanation of a ruling. Threats or harassment toward officials are prohibited.

25 SIDELINE CONTROL

- Coaches, substitutes, and approved staff must remain within their designated team area.
- Spectators are not permitted on team sidelines unless DRFL and the facility have approved access.
- Teams must keep sidelines clear of bags, chairs, trash, and other hazards.
- Repeated sideline violations may result in a team penalty.

26 WEATHER, MEDICAL, AND FIELD SAFETY

- Officials and DRFL administration may delay, suspend, relocate, or cancel a game because of lightning, extreme weather, unsafe field conditions, medical emergencies, or other safety concerns.
- Player safety takes priority over completing a game.
- Any player suspected of concussion or serious injury must be removed from participation; return is governed by a written protocol approved for the season and applicable medical guidance.
- Before contact activity, DRFL must establish written emergency-action, injury-reporting, concussion, suspected spine-injury, heat, weather, and return-to-play procedures, with qualified safety and insurer review.
- The event must have a documented plan for calling emergency services, medical coverage, participant communication, and access to emergency equipment.

27 FORFEITS AND TEAM READINESS

- A team that cannot meet the minimum player requirement, refuses to continue without an approved safety reason, or fails to appear may be declared to have forfeited.
- Administrative forfeit fees, if any, are governed by the DRFL bylaws or season fee policy rather than these gameplay rules.
- Officials should document the reason for any forfeit.

28 RULE ADMINISTRATION FOR 7V7 VS 8V8

- Unless a section specifically distinguishes 7v7 from 8v8, the same gameplay rule applies to both formats.

- Where player-count differences require an adjustment, 8v8 generally adds one interior line player or one additional eligible skill player while preserving the same safety and timing standards.
- DRFL may publish a one-page game-day variation sheet for a specific event, but it may not reduce core safety protections.

29 DRFL LEAGUE AUTHORITY AND RULE CHANGES

- The DRFL Commissioner has final administrative authority over DRFL football game rules and approves changes before they take effect.
- The DRFL Rules Committee, if appointed, may study existing rules and recommend improvements, but may not independently change rules without written delegation.
- The Head Referee applies the official DRFL rulebook during competition and makes on-field officiating decisions; the Head Referee does not independently amend the rulebook.
- Official rule changes require written approval by the DRFL Commissioner and must be recorded in a revised rulebook or written rule bulletin.
- DRFL must communicate approved changes to affected team owners, coaches, players, and officials before they take effect.
- Immediate game-day safety decisions are permitted, but permanent rule changes require the established approval process.
- Situations not specifically addressed in the rulebook must be referred to DRFL administration when practical; an official may make necessary immediate on-field safety and procedural decisions without creating a permanent rule.

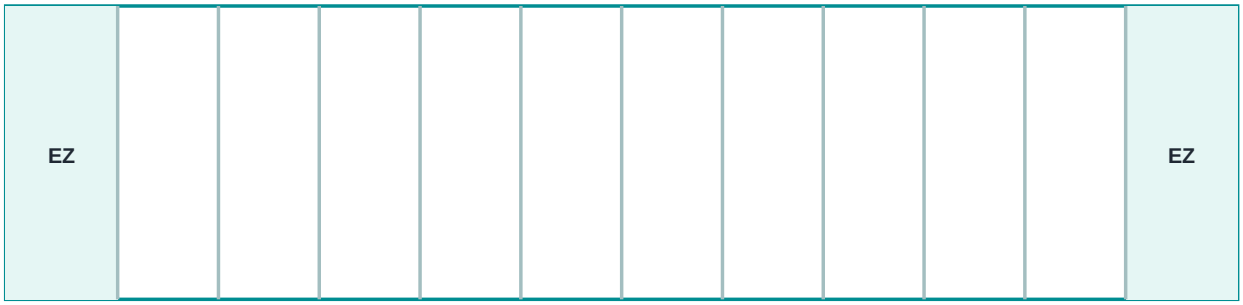
30 COPYRIGHT AND INDEPENDENCE

- DRFL may protect original DRFL wording, graphics, and branding to the extent permitted by law.
- Common football concepts, game methods, and standard terminology are not claimed as exclusive DRFL property.
- Permissions and ownership for any adapted source material or externally supplied artwork must be confirmed before public release.

FIELD LAYOUT REFERENCE

The following is a schematic of the proposed field in Section 3. DRFL must confirm actual measurements, markings, and venue suitability before adoption.

Proposed: 100-yard playing area, 10-yard end zones, ~40-yard width



Schematic only - field dimensions and venue configuration require confirmation.

Publication notice: This is a proposed rulebook for public information only. It is not an official adopted rulebook and does not approve tackle activity.

Source: DRFL_Mens_7v7_8v8_Tackle_Rules_Lawyer_Review(3).pdf. Gameplay sections retained in substance; Sections 24 and 29 revised as requested. This document is not legal or medical approval.