



Revised 03/08/06

SUMMARY

- Format 8-on-8. 5 men and 3 women on the field
- Two 23-minute halves with 3-5 minute half times. Running time for first half, 21 minute running second half with 2 minute stop time if game within 16 points
- 6 points for a touchdown. Choice of 1 or 2 point conversions. No field goals
- Non-contact (NO BLOCKING), co-ed 2-hand touch football
- No picks allowed
- Teams must use a female player as an operative player within 3 consecutive downs
- First downs for 2 completed passes or crossing mid-field (limit 4 first downs/possession)
- Five Mississippi rush count
- Teams provide 1 (one) assistant referee for the game that precedes/follows your game (in some cases may have to provide 2 (two)). That referee must also know the rules. Teams failing to provide referees or those who provide referees who do not know the rules will incur penalties
- Game time is forfeit time
- All games are RAIN or SHINE (unless dangerous conditions)
- Any unsportsmanlike behavior will result in that player/team being suspended/removed from participating in all ZogSportsNJ leagues for one year

CHECK IN

Every captain and volunteer referee must check-in at the ZogSportsNJ registration table at the field at least 15 minutes before your scheduled game. The ZogSportsNJ staffers running the location will assist with waivers, field location, etc. at the registration table.

FORFEITS – REQUIRED PLAYERS

Please don't forfeit. Your teammates and opponents count on you to have a full team and competitive game.

At check-in, inform ZSNJ staff at registration table if you **a)** know that your team will be short players for your game or **b)** expect to field a full team, but are currently short players. ZSNJ staff and head referee will help make sure that a game is played (official or scrimmage) on every field.

- Must have at least 5 (five) players including 1 (one) woman to start a game (including picked up players)
- Game time is forfeit time. There is no grace period
- No one may play without signing the waiver

FORFEIT PENALTIES AND NOTIFICATION

Penalties

First Offense: Loss of game and warning issued

Second Offense: Loss of game and removal from the playoffs

Third Offense: Removal from the rest of the schedule

Notification

If you know in advance that your team is going to forfeit a game, you **MUST contact us by 3pm on Wednesday** at info@zogsportsnj.org. It is not considered notification unless you receive a reply. If your decision is not made until after 3pm, you should still try to reach ZogSportsNJ, and we will make efforts to contact the other team. If we can reach them in time to keep them from showing up, no extra penalty. If you do not do this, your team will be eliminated from the rest of the schedule.



There is no additional penalty if you show up short-handed (and need to add other ZogSportsNJ players to field a full team) and have to forfeit the game, since you did make an effort to get a team to play.

Once ZogSportsNJ is notified you are forfeiting, it is official (you cannot change your mind), and the other team will be notified.

REFEREEING

ZSNJ will provide a head referee for each field. Each team is responsible to provide 1 (one) referee (very occasionally 2) for the game that precedes/follows your game. Referee schedules are included on your season schedule. This rule has been used successfully in numerous leagues across the country and is a great way to break the ice and meet people from other teams. Since the referees are so important to having good and fun games, **THIS RULE WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.**

If you are providing a referee for the game after yours, please choose the referee before your game and inform the ZogSportsNJ Head Ref on your field. This will greatly improve efficiency in between games and means more playing time for everyone.

ZogSportsNJ Head Referee – Line of Scrimmage	Referee # 2 – Opposite Side	Referee #3 – Downfield
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positioning – line of scrimmage 2. Positioning in the red zone (close to end zone) – on the line of scrimmage 3. Primary responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downs* • Completions* • Number of 1st downs* • Gender plays* • Making sure the rush count is fair • Spotting the ball • Making calls at or near line of scrimmage (e.g., completed pass, in/out of bounds, two-hand touch, etc.) and calling penalties (e.g., offsides, blocking, etc.) • Running the game – including rule clarification, etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positioning – diagonally across the field from Head ref, 5-10 yards downfield from line of scrimmage on the sideline 2. Positioning in the red zone (close to end zone) – on the goal line (and sideline) 3. Primary responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score (on sideline scoreboards) • 25-second play clock • Calling touchdowns • Making all calls 5-15 yards downfield (e.g., completed pass, in/out of bounds, two-hand touch, etc.) and calling penalties (e.g., delay of game, pass interference, picks, blocking, etc.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positioning – same side as head ref, 15+ yards downfield 2. Positioning in the red zone (close to end zone) – at back of end zone (and sideline) 3. Primary responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game clock • Timeouts • Making all calls downfield (e.g., completed pass, in/out of bounds, two-hand touch, etc.) and calling penalties (e.g., pass interference, picks, blocking, etc.)

* ZogSportsNJ will provide a clicker with 4 dials to keep track.



Questions for the referee – only the team captain is allowed to ask the head referee for rule clarification. If it is a judgment call, the referees can confer with each other and the team captains for discussion, but players and/or captains are not allowed to question judgment calls.

NO REFEREEING PENALTIES

Teams failing to provide a referee will incur the following penalties:

- First Time: Team will start next game down 9-0.
- Second Time: Team automatically gets a loss added to their record.
- Third Time: Team is removed from playoffs.
- Playoffs: Team will start their game down 14-0.

If Referee Late* For Prior Game (e.g., Team has 8:00PM game and was supposed to ref 7:00PM game): Team starts next game down 3-0. If ref arrives after 1st half complete, team starts next game down 6-0.

**Late is defined as more than 10 minutes after game time*

START OF THE GAME

- Referee will have two captains shoot rock/paper/scissors or odds/evens or flip a coin.
- If there are more than two players not wearing their ZogSportsNJ team shirts, the team with more shirts automatically wins the coin toss. This is designed to encourage all players to wear their team shirts (which makes it easier to tell people apart on the field).
- Winning captain selects Offense/Defense or direction in the first half (In the second half, teams change directions and possession).
- Game starts with the "receiving" team in possession on its own 10-yard line.

CLOCK/TIME

- Two 23-minute halves with 3-5 minute half time.
- Running time for all 23 minutes of first half, 21 of 23 minutes running time second half (see below for explanation).
- Final two minutes of second half - clock stops for:
 - Official's time-outs (injuries and called time-outs)
 - An incomplete pass
 - An offensive player goes out-of-bounds
 - A touchdown
 - The clock starts again for the extra point and then stops after this play is completed. The clock cannot run for more than 10 seconds on extra points (to prevent teams from trying to run out the clock on a conversion)
 - Any turnover (interception, fumble, change of possession on downs or after a punt)
 - If a team is up by 17 or more points, the clock will continue to run for the last 2 minutes

The clock will not stop for a 2 minute warning. Clock is always restarted when the offense snaps the ball.

TIMEOUTS

Each team receives two time-outs per game.

TEAM SIZE

- Each team shall field no more than 8 players



- No more than 5 men at any one time. A team may use up to 8 women if they choose, but maximum 5 men
- Teams may play with 6 or 7 players as long as they do not play with more than 5 men or less than 1 woman
- Each team shall field no less than 5 players (minimum of 4 men, 1 woman)
 - Forfeit will be awarded for having less than 5 players
- Teams must start at game time if the minimum numbers of players are present
- Rosters are not limited in size, but no additional players will be added to the roster after the 3rd week. Waivers must be completed and signed online at www.zogsportsnj.org.
PLAYERS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY GAME WITHOUT SIGNING WAIVER.

PICKING UP PLAYERS

You should be able to field a team with only roster players. There are penalties for picking up non-roster, ZogSportsNJ players. They include the following:

- 6 points per player - team is never allowed to pick up more than two players. Teams can never pick-up non-ZogSportsNJ players.
 - Teams picking up players can never have an equal number of players as their opponent on the field (e.g. if Team A has 8 players and Team B has 6 players, Team B will only be allowed to pick up 1 player and must play 1 person down)
 - Should roster players show up, team may play as normal with 8 players
- If a roster player arrives at the field after the game has started, the non-roster player must be replaced by the roster player. The non-roster player may not re-enter the game and any penalty points awarded will stand
- Non-roster players both male and female may not play QB.
- DURING THE PLAYOFFS, ONLY PLAYERS ON YOUR ROSTER ARE ALLOWED TO PLAY.
- A forfeit will be given to any team who picks up players and does not inform the referee. Protests in regards to non-roster players must be made before leaving the field.

UNIFORMS/FOOTWEAR

Shirts

- Team Shirts provided by ZogSportsNJ
 - If players don't have team shirts with them, ZogSportsNJ suggests wearing similar colors to rest of team

Footwear

- At The Meadowlands - turf shoes (indoor soccer shoes) or flat-bottomed sneakers (tennis or basketball) are required. Cross-trainers are discouraged.

CO-ED RULES

Teams must use a female as an operative player within 3 consecutive downs

- An operative player is defined as follows:
 - Is the **intended receiver** in the eyes of the official
 - Runs the ball as the **primary runner** (does not have to get positive yards)
 - Attempts a pass as **quarterback** (does not have to get positive yards)
- An operative player is **NOT** defined as a player who:
 - Hands the ball off to a male player
 - Snaps the ball into play
 - Receives a hand-off only to give it back to a male before crossing the line of scrimmage



Examples of Common Situations

Female Plays ARE:

- A pass deflected by a male and caught by a female
- A pass intended for a female (in the eyes of the referee) that is deflected by a woman, and is caught by a male
- A pass caught by a female behind the line of scrimmage who tries, but does not successfully gain positive yards – **this is NOT a completion however**
- A female QB sacked
- Plays not utilizing a female and resulting in loss of down will still be considered a female play IF AND ONLY IF that play is a mandatory female play.
 - Male QB crosses line of scrimmage then throws ball
 - Male QB is sacked on a play designated as a female play, it is counted as a female play

On Extra points everyone is eligible, even if it supposed to be a female play.

SCORING

- Touchdowns are awarded 6 points.
- Extra points are 1 point for a 3-yard conversion, 2 points for 10-yard conversion.
- Safeties are 2 points

POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN (PAT)/EXTRA POINTS

- The offense can decide whether to "go for 1" or "2"
 - 1 Point - 2 paces/yards off the goal line
 - 2 Points - 10 paces/yards off the goal line (marked by cone)*

**2-point conversion attempts may be intercepted and returned for 2 points with the defense retaining possession at their 10-pace/yard line. 1-point conversions CANNOT be intercepted and returned*

SAFETIES

A safety will be scored when a player is:

- Tagged down in their own end zone (not on a punt or intercepted pass)
- Runs out of bounds in their own end zone
- Snaps the ball out of the end zone
- Fumbles in their own end zone

The defensive team receives 2 points and then takes possession of the ball at their own 10-yard line.

FIRST DOWNS

Each team will have 4 downs to either score or earn another first down. First downs are earned by:

- Completing 2 passes caught beyond the line of scrimmage
- Crossing the mid field line.

If a team fails to score or earn a first down, possession goes to the other team. Offensive team may elect to punt on any down. **There is a limit to 4 earned first downs. Teams are only allowed to earn 4 first downs per offensive drive, or a total of 5 sets of downs per possession.**



SCRIMMAGE/SNAPPING THE BALL INTO PLAY

- Ball must always be snapped from the ground by the center to the quarterback.
- No player shall put the ball in play until it is declared ready-for-play by the head referee.
- The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after it is declared ready.
- Centers may adjust the ball, including picking it up to reposition it, before each play so as long as he/she does not do it in a manner to intentionally draw defense off sides.
- All offensive players must be within 15 yards of the ball when it is snapped and be set for one full second before ball is snapped and after referee puts ball in play.
- Only 3 players are permitted in the backfield, the rest (5 players if 8 on the field) must be lined up anywhere on the line of scrimmage.

If the ball hits the ground after the snap and before the quarterback has possession, the ball is treated like a fumble and is dead immediately at the spot where it hit the ground.

BLOCKING

Definition: *Blocking is considered the movement, whether deliberate or unintentional, that impedes a defensive player's pursuit of the ball carrier, unless movement is to avoid personal injury (as interpreted by the referee). This also includes the deliberate or unintentional movement of limbs by a stationary player (i.e., shoving or clothes-lining your friends on the other team).* More leeway may be given to players moving at the time of a reception, but this is up to the referee's discretion.

No active "blocking" on the field is allowed in ZogSportsNJ touch football. A player may use his body to shield another player by having their arms by their sides or behind their back, if that player is not moving or is giving ground. In this instance, the player must not initiate contact. There is also no contact permitted at the line or downfield by any defensive player guarding a receiver (bump and run). All players must try to avoid contact with any player on the football field. **THIS IS A CO-ED SOCIAL LEAGUE – PLEASE KEEP CONTACT TO A MINIMUM.**

OFFENSIVE PICKS

An offensive pick is when the receiver purposely runs into/blocks the progress of/or stops in front of a defender allowing the other receiver to get open. **You cannot do this.** The referees will be watching this very closely. The penalty is 10 yards and loss of down.

NO CONTACT AT LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

- Player acting as offensive lineman must have hands behind his/her back when protecting their quarterback from pursuing defensive rushers,
 - They MAY MOVE SIDE-TO-SIDE DURING THE FIRST 4 SECONDS OF THE 5-SECOND COUNT, BUT THEN MUST STAY IN PLACE
- Offensive lineman can position their body at any particular angle in an attempt to direct the rushers to a particular area, but they may not physically direct them
- There is no contact at or behind the line of scrimmage
- **EACH TEAM MUST KEEP AT LEAST 1 PLAYER ON THE LINE. THE OFFENSIVE LINEMAN IS NOT AN ELIGIBLE RECEIVER.**

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- Defense may not pursue the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage until completing a 5 MISSISSIPPI count at normal speaking cadence, as determined by the referee (players must use Mississippi count; 1-One Thousand, 2-One Thousand...etc. count is not allowed.
 - If in the eyes or ears of the referee, the count is made too quickly, or not loud enough, 1 warning will be issued to the defense. If this occurs again, the



defense will be penalized 5 yards, with the replay of the down. This will happen each subsequent time, if the offense decides to accept the penalty.

- 5-yard penalty if the defender crosses the line of scrimmage before 5-Mississippi is fully uttered.
 - After the five-second count is completed, any number of defensive players may rush behind the line of scrimmage. If the defense rushes prematurely, the offense may either play the down over or decline the penalty.
- If the ball changes possession in the backfield (i.e., is handed off), the defense may rush in immediately. If the offense fakes a change of possession and the defense advances across the line of scrimmage, no foul will be called if the defense returns back to in front of the line of scrimmage immediately, and continues the five-second count.
- The quarterback (offense) may not rush (run with the ball) even after the defense completes the five-second count until the defense chooses to rush the quarterback by crossing the line of scrimmage.
- If a team is short 1 player, they can choose not to play anyone at the line of scrimmage. If they choose this option, nobody is permitted to rush the quarterback on that play.

PLAY SHALL CONTINUE UNTIL

- Ball carrier is touched simultaneously by **two** hands belonging to an opponent (yes, the same person)
- Ball carrier touches the out of bounds line with any part of his/her body
- Ball carrier scores. Ball must break goal plane for touchdown or conversion
- Ball touches the ground as a result of a fumble, punt or incomplete pass or even while in a player's hand
- Ball carrier's knee touches the ground
- Ball carrier slips or falls, or any part of his/her body (except feet or hands) touches the ground, the ball becomes dead

COMPLETE/INCOMPLETE PASS

A forward (overhand or underhand) pass is complete when

- Caught by any player of the passing team (who has at least one foot in bounds) beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Caught in bounds simultaneously by opponents – ball becomes dead and is awarded to passing team at spot of catch.
- Player that has ball control and is pushed out of the end zone/sideline will be considered inbounds/TD/extra point.

A completion is **NOT**:

- A ball caught behind the line of scrimmage and run for positive yardage.
- A running play for positive yardage.
- A ball caught by a player who was out of bounds and comes back in to catch the ball.
 - If the receiver was forced out of bounds by an opposing player, he/she will still be eligible upon returning inbounds

After a fourth down incomplete pass, the ball goes back to previous spot.

HANDOFFS

Handoffs are permitted. When this change of possession occurs, the defense may cross the line of scrimmage immediately (does not need to complete the 5-second count). Remember though – NO BLOCKING



KICKOFFS

There are no kickoffs. At the start of the game and after every score, the team taking possession of the ball will start at their own ten-yard line (two-point conversion line).

PUNTS

- The offensive team must declare a punt. All punts are "free" punts meaning a team does not need to snap during a punt. A dropped snap during a punt is not a fumble
- **Punts must be kicked**, they cannot be thrown
- Punts are "open" plays meaning, there are no Male/Female rules
- The instant that a member of the receiving team has taken possession of the ball, all other members of the receiving team **must hold their current positions on the field.** Any deliberate movements away from his/her set spot, other than to avoid personal injury, will be considered blocking
- There is no minimum number of players on the line of scrimmage during a punt
- **NO DOWNFIELD BLOCKING** or **BLOCKING AT THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE**
- The kicking team may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked
- The receiving team may not raise hands or jump to block a punt
- If a punt is "shanked" and caught it is a live ball and is returnable
- If the ball comes into contact with the ground after it has been punted it is a dead ball, spotted at the point where it hit the ground, and may not be returned
- Ball is spotted at 10-yard line if
 - Ball is punted out of the end zone
 - Player drops the ball in the end zone

FUMBLES/INTERCEPTIONS/TURNOVERS

Fumbles

- A fumble is not a turnover; it is a dead ball (at the spot of the fumble).
- If a player on either team takes possession of the ball, prior to the ball hitting the ground, possession goes to that team and that player may attempt to advance the ball towards his/her own end zone.
- A fumbled lateral **DOES NOT CHANGE POSSESSION.**
- An intercepted lateral **DOES CHANGE** possession.
- There is no stripping of the ball.

Interceptions

- Interceptions of forward passes may be advanced by the defense. If a defensive and offensive player appear to both have possession or are struggling for possession, the reception is granted to the offense.

Turnovers

- If a turnover occurs during a 1-point PAT, the play will be called dead.
- 2-point conversion attempts may be intercepted and returned for 2 points.

LATERALS

A lateral is an underhand pitch of the ball to a fellow team member **next** to you or **behind** you. If the lateral is behind the line of scrimmage, the player who formerly had possession of the ball may go downfield and be considered a receiver.

PLAYERS IN MOTION

One player may go in motion before the snap, but must be set for 1 full second prior to the snap.



SUBSTITUTIONS/IN THE HUDDLE

A team is permitted to substitute players before each play. They must do so from the same sideline/endline for the entire game. Players must be set on the field for one full second before the snap. If you do not have your full amount of players on the field at the time the ball is snapped, players will not be permitted to enter the field of play until the current play is blown dead by the referee.

Teams may not have more than 8 players in the huddle.

PENALTIES

Not using a female operative player - The penalty for running 3 consecutive plays w/o a female as an operative player will be loss of down (e.g., if it was first down during the penalty, it is now second down.) The female must now be the operative player on the next play. The penalty will be enforced until a female is used. If a QB sack or bad snap occurs on a mandatory female play, the play stands as a female play – **0 yards, loss of down**

Delay of game - The offensive team must put the ball into play 25 seconds after referee has signaled ready for play. Referees will give a count from 5 down to zero before calling this penalty – **5 yards; play is blown dead at zero on the play clock**

Too Many People/Men on the field - No more than 8 players on the field at one time or no more than 5 men on the field at one time. Penalty will be assessed after discovery. Only called if a play is run with illegal participation – **5 yards; replay down**

Offensive offside - When any part of the offensive player's body is beyond the scrimmage line before the ball is snapped – **5 yards; play is blown dead after the snap**

Defensive offside or encroachment - A player is offside when any part of his/her body is beyond the line of scrimmage or in the neutral zone when the ball is snapped, or when crossing the line of scrimmage before the five second count is over. **5 yards; replay down – offense may decline penalty if positive yardage was gained**

Illegal Motion - After a shift or huddle all offensive players, after assuming a set position, must come to an absolute stop. They also must remain stationary in their position without any movement of their feet, heads or arms, or swing of their body for a period of at least one second before snap – **5 yards; play is blown dead after the snap**

QB illegal forward pass - the QB crosses the line of scrimmage and then throws a forward pass. **5 yards; loss of down – defense may decline penalty or have it assessed from scrimmage**

Intentional grounding - A QB may throw the ball away, however the ball must cross the line of scrimmage or it is a penalty – **5 yards; loss of down**

Blocking - No player may use his hands to block opponent. A player may only use his body to shield another player by having arms by his side, and do so either by not moving or by giving up ground – **10 yards; replay down**

Illegal contact/holding (defense) - Defender may not make original contact with a receiver, nor may he use his hands or arms to hang onto or encircle a receiver. The defender cannot extend his arms to cut off or hook a receiver causing contact that impedes and restricts the receiver as the play develops, nor may he maintain contact with the receiver – **10 yards; replay down**



Offensive picking - The offensive team may not initiate a pick/block while in motion. If a catch is made after a clear pick, it will be ruled no catch – **10 yards; loss of down**

Defensive pass interference - It is pass interference by either team when any player movement beyond the line of scrimmage significantly hinders the progress of an eligible player (e.g., grabbing player while running) or their chance to catch a pass, gain position, or retain position to catch the ball. If both offensive and defensive players are clearly going for the ball, any contact will be considered incidental unless prohibited as stated.

- The ball must be considered catchable by the referees for a pass interference call
1st down at the spot of foul, if in the end zone ball is spotted at the one yd. line - may be declined

Offensive pass interference - See Defensive pass interference – **10 yards; loss of down**

Diving To Gain Extra Yardage – a player with possession of the ball may not dive to gain extra yardage (e.g., into the end zone in an attempt to score a touchdown or past midfield to get a first down). **0 yards; loss of down from – ball placed at original line of scrimmage**

Unsportsmanlike conduct - including an illegal tag, grabbing, excessively rough two-hand touch, tackling or pushing, abusive or insulting language to another player or referee, taunting opponent or similar theatrics before or after the touchdown.

- **15 yard penalty**
 - **If after touchdown, will be assessed on conversion**

2 unsportsmanlike penalties to 1 player in 1 game – player automatically ejected from the game and has a one-week suspension.

- **Any player fighting or abusing the referee will automatically be ejected from the game without a warning.**

INADVERTENT WHISTLE

If a referee inadvertently sounds his/her whistle during a play, the play is immediately dead. If during a run, it is the offensive team's ball at the spot of the ball at the time of the whistle. If a legal pass or snap is in flight, or during a punt, the down will be replayed.

STANDINGS

Wins, Losses and Ties

- Win – 3 points
- Loss- 0 points
- Tie - 1 point

TIE BREAKERS FOR PLAYOFFS/SEEDINGS

1. Head-to-head competition (among all tied teams)
2. Record against other teams in or tied for playoffs (winning percentage – i.e., 0-1 is same as 0-2, but 1-3 is better than 0-1)
3. Number of wins
4. Record against next best common opponent
5. If team forfeited or did not send of referee, loses tie breaker if others don't resolve seeding
6. If none of the above tie breakers resolve seeding, ZogSportsNJ will execute a coin toss



OVERTIME (PLAYOFFS)

- During regular season play, all ties will be scored as a tie
- Playoffs – Four-Downs and Out format applies from 10 paces/yards from goal line
- A coin toss, rock/paper/scissors, odds/evens with the winning team deciding on first or second possession
- Teams will attempt to score in the same end zone
- If a team scores, they will have the opportunity to go for 1 or 2 on the PAT
- All gender rules apply in overtime games
- An interception will result in a team losing its possession – they may not be returned for any points.
- The game will be decided when one team scores more points in the rotation
- No 1st downs will be awarded except in the case of a penalty

HAPPY HOURS

- Go to ZogSportsNJ designated bar
- Have fun!