

2007 & 2008

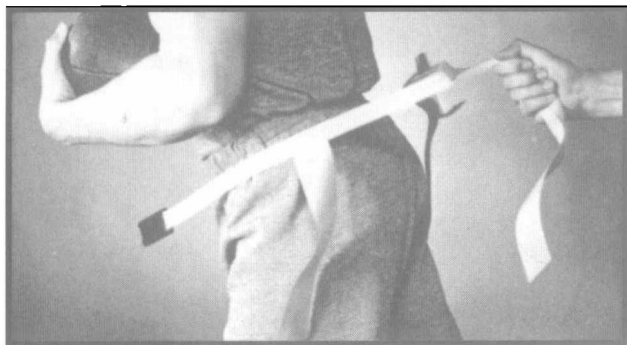
NIRSA FLAG & TOUCH FOOTBALL RULES BOOK & OFFICIALS' MANUAL

13th
Edition



NIRSA
National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association

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Thirteenth Edition

2007 & 2008 NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book & Officials' Manual

Bruce L. Maurer, PhD, Editor

NATIONAL INTRAMURAL-RECREATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATION



Human Kinetics

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Thanks to Collegiate Pacific for flag belts used in cover photo. Contact Chris Hutton at 800-881-6536, x9046 to purchase flag belts.

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*Any rule and play interpretation not discussed in this Rules Book will be covered by the National Federation of State High School Associations' Football Rules Book and Case Book.

NATIONAL INTRAMURAL-RECREATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATION

The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to the establishment and development of quality recreational sports programs and services. Founded in 1950, the Association's membership has grown remarkably to form what is now a comprehensive organization representing a worldwide network of highly-trained professionals in the recreational sports field.

Representing thousands of individuals and organizations, the NIRSA serves as the leading advocate for excellence in recreational sports. The Association's membership is largely composed of recreational sports professionals from colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada. In addition, a growing number of members are employed in the military, private industry, community and elementary/secondary school sectors. The major professional responsibilities of the NIRSA membership include programming in the areas of intramural sports, informal recreation, fitness, and instructional sports, as well as the management of recreation facility operations, fiscal planning, sport club coordination and outdoor recreation activities.

NIRSA provides access to educational resource materials as well as a professional support network. Insuring that those involved in recreational sports remain current and up-to-date is a prime concern for NIRSA. Through professional support materials and sponsored projects, the quality of campus and community recreation is greatly enhanced. NIRSA publications, certification programs, career opportunities services, the NIRSA Sports Officials' Development Program and sponsored national and regional conferences and workshops contribute to the overall quality of recreational sports programs, services, and personnel.

The eleven small college intramural directors who originally met as the founding members of the association could not have imagined the rapid and extensive growth of the recreational sports field. As the field has evolved, so has NIRSA. Today, the challenges of meeting the recreational sports programming needs of over 2,200 colleges, universities, military installations and local communities are met by highly trained and caring professionals supported through the efforts of NIRSA.

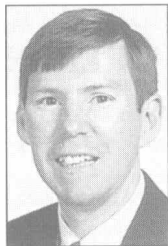
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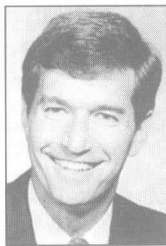
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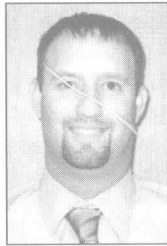
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DEDICATION: UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW ORLEANS

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In 1987, the Flag & Touch Football Rules Committee started the tradition of dedicating each edition of the NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book & Officials' Manual to individuals who had made significant contributions to the growth and development of flag and touch football. The committee has selected the University of New Orleans, a long-time NIRSA Institutional Member, as the recipient of this honor for this thirteenth edition.

Many NIRSA Members would say that the NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book & Officials' Manual had its auspicious beginning on the second floor in the Health and Physical Education building on the campus of UNO.

The University of New Orleans served as the host institution for the Flag Football National Championships for 26 consecutive years, until the destruction of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 forced them to temporarily relocate the tournament to another campus. The championships began in 1979 with 29 participating men's teams and recorded an all-time high of 203 men's, women's and corec teams in 1998. Throughout the tournament's history, the University has graciously welcomed 219 NIRSA Professional Members, 1,074 student officials, 3,262 teams and 48,930 participants to the Flag Football Championships.

The popularity of the sport, coupled with the implementation of this tournament, created a need for the development of premier training applications. Thanks to the desire of the University of New Orleans, NIRSA and Professional Members from around the country, several training tools have been developed to aid in standardizing flag and touch football officiating mechanics.

Due to James L. "Jet" Smith, director of Recreation and Intramurals at the University of New Orleans, and his dedicated recreational sports staff, the University was instrumental in developing the rules book and securing funding for publishing the first edition in 1983. Additionally, the University worked with NIRSA and the Flag & Touch Football Rules Committee in developing, producing and serving as the host location for the filming of numerous flag football official's training videos, which are utilized each year during the officials' training at the national tournament.

Through the years the tournament has provided a rich learning environment for officials and Professional Members to further develop their teaching and officiating skills. Beginning with the training clinic the day

prior to the tournament, NIRSA training aids are utilized by the staff to teach a uniformed approach to officiating the game. Officials working the tournament advance through championship play by their ability to process the information learned and apply it on the field. The student officials who worked and benefited from this tournament have been exposed to one of the most intense training programs ever developed.

The knowledge shared in this environment has not only benefited the tournament, but has directly benefited the game of flag and touch football as a whole. This influence can be seen in the types of training and evaluation that take place at each state and regional tournament, as well as on the campuses of the professional staff members and student officials that have attended the tournament.

The University of New Orleans has provided a remarkable opportunity for this event to become so much more than a football tournament. Because of the student development and leadership opportunities, networking and mentoring afforded to young sports officials at the national tournament, many of them chose to pursue recreational sports as a career. As a result, these individuals share a common bond and true desire to advance officiating through the sport of flag and touch football.

Thanks to the vision of James L. "Jet" Smith (UNO Director, 1970 to 1989) and the dedication of his successors: Al Kohorst (UNO Director, 1989 to 1998) and Margaret Vinti Royerre (UNO Director, 1998 to the present), the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association proudly recognizes the University of New Orleans and the numerous recreational sports professionals who have served the University for their tireless efforts in the advancement of flag and touch football, by dedicating this publication in the University's honor.

PAST DEDICATION RECIPIENTS

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1987 & 1988 | Dr. Rodney J. Grambeau , University of Michigan |
| 1989 & 1990 | Dr. Louis M. Marciari , East Stroudsburg University
James L. "Jet" Smith , University of New Orleans |
| 1991 & 1992 | Stephen Rey , University of Southern Mississippi |
| 1993 & 1994 | Jim Potter , Trinity University |
| 1995 & 1996 | Earl Birdy , Carnegie-Mellon University |
| 1997 & 1998 | Will M. Holsberry , NIRSA |
| 1999 & 2000 | Dr. Bruce L. Maurer , The Ohio State University |
| 2001 & 2002 | Bob Gildersleeve , Grand Valley State University |
| 2003 & 2004 | Gary E. Albright , Arkansas State University |
| 2005 & 2006 | David Gaskins , East Carolina University |

MOVING CLOSER TOWARD A STANDARDIZED FOOTBALL CODE

The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association Flag & Touch Football Rules Committee was created 28 years ago and charged with the responsibility of developing a standardized code of Rules, interpretations and officials mechanics. Unlike most other intramural team, dual and individual sports, there was no nationally recognized set of flag and touch football Rules.

Prior to developing rule proposals in 1982 the Committee reviewed all flag and touch football related literature. After examining this information it was decided to conduct several national research¹ projects concerning injury frequencies as related to the Rules. In addition, surveys of the nation's colleges and universities were initiated to determine which Rules and interpretations were being administered. The results of these massive research projects played an integral role during those early decision-making processes.

The twelve editions of the NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book have been very successful. Thousands of colleges, universities, recreation departments, high schools, correctional institutions, military installations, YMCA/YWCAs, Department of Army-Europe, and the Department of the Navy have adopted these Rules. Amazingly, almost all twelve editions – over 82,000 copies – were sold out.

Several major projects were undertaken by the Rules Committee to make this thirteenth edition an even better book. These include:

1. *NIRSA Flag Football Officials' Training DVD: Rules, Penalty Enforcement, and Mechanics* is an outstanding 65-minute DVD, covering the Playing Rules, Penalty Enforcement, and Officiating Mechanics.
2. A Revised Guide to Conducting Officials Training Clinics was added to the Clinicians' Kit which outlines a prototype training agenda. Also the approved and certified exams were eliminated and replaced with a computer disk which contains over 300 updated test questions. This will aid the clinician with the development of specialized exams.
3. Ten Touch and Flag Football Teaching Stations were refined by the Rules Committee to help recreational sports professionals "break down" this game into teachable units. Similar to players practicing fundamentals before going to "team" drills, the stations enable officials to practice mechanics before officiating actual games. They will improve your officials dramatically.
4. Rules Committee members spent a great deal of time reviewing the Rules Book and Officials' Manual during the past two years. It is easier to read and understand than any previous edition.

¹ Participating colleges and universities included Georgia Institute of Technology, Illinois State University, Indiana University, The Ohio State University, Trinity University, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Illinois, University of Maryland, University of New Orleans, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Tennessee, and Washington State University.

5. The most commonly asked question of Rules Committee members is: How do I convert from contact to screen blocking flag football? "A Conversion Prospectus" has been refined for that purpose. The Prospectus contains related sportsmanship, participation and injury research studies, institutions which play NIRSA Rules, rationale for the change and a detailed checklist to effect the switch.

The thirteenth edition of the NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book and Officials' Manual is a culmination of this effort. It is a continuing effort by the NIRSA membership to standardize the Rules and mechanics for this great game.

The NIRSA Rules Book and Officials' Manual is revised biannually. The Rules Committee will conduct an open forum at the NIRSA Annual Conference to discuss them and make recommendations for subsequent editions. We seek and need input. After all, these are *your* Rules and mechanics.

Valuable Programming Tools for the Flag and Touch Football Administrator

The NIRSA Rules Book and Officials' Manual is an excellent start for the sports administrator placed in charge of a flag or touch football program at a college, university, military installation, high school, community recreation agency, correctional institution, or YMCA/YWCA. However, it is not enough. The NIRSA Football Rules Committee, with the enthusiastic support of the NIRSA Board of Directors, has developed several significant tools to aid in the administration of an excellent flag or touch football program.

1. "First and Twenty": A VHS tape covering flag and touch football team strategy and plays. Utilizing game footage from the National Invitational Flag Football Championships in New Orleans, the tape includes offensive and defensive strategy and sets, alignments and positions, special drills and philosophy of the game.
2. NIRSA Clinicians' Kit: The perfect tool for the administrator, the Kit includes the recently released NIRSA Flag Football Officials' Training DVD, a copy of this Rules Book and Officials' Manual, 8½" x 11" overhead transparencies illustrating officials mechanics and coverage, and a computer disk of over 300 up-to-date test questions for specialized exams, and a prototype training agenda which includes general information, entrance competencies, exit competencies, a rules presentation outline, rule coverage, human relations, teaching stations, and six different prototype clinic outlines.

Copies of the Rules, tapes, film and Clinicians' Kit may be obtained by visiting the NIRSA Education Center's Web Site at <http://Nirsa.HumanKinetics.com>.

Over the years some groups have written and published the game Rules. However, the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association is the first organization dedicated to developing a total programming package for the administrator. Give us a try — you will enjoy our "Pursuit of Excellence."

Acknowledgments

The following individuals are acknowledged for their outstanding contributions to making the NIRSA Rules Book and Officials' Manual possible.

Department of Army - Europe, US AREUR Support and Officials
Department of the Navy, Management, officials and players
Jim Potter, Trinity University, past editor of the Officials' Manual
National, Regional, and State Flag Football Championships
Florida High School Athletic Association
Players, Officials, and Contributors

CHANGES FOR 2007 AND 2008

The NIRSA Rules Book and Officials' Manual takes priority over materials listed below.

RULES BOOK

- 1-1-5 Persons Subject to the Rules.** Players, nonplayers and spectators affiliated with the team are subject to the rules.
- 1-2-3 Field Markings.** There shall be 2 inbounds lines (hash marks). They shall run parallel with each sideline and be located 15 yards "in" from each sideline.
- 1-2-4 Facility Limitations.** NOTE: When zones are shortened, the 3 and 10 yard Try lines remain the same. The "14 yard lines" must be located 6 yards from the nearest zone line-to-gain.
- 1-2-7 Pylons.** 12 soft, flexible pylons shall be placed at the inside corner of each of the intersections of the sideline with the goal lines and the end lines, and at the intersections of the end lines and inbound lines extended.
- Field Diagram.** 2 inbounds lines (hash marks), as well as the term "side zone" have been added to this diagram.
- 1-4-3 Flag Belt.** "Quick Release" has been added to the description of the belt.
- 1-5-6B Play Books.** Players may wear a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band that contains plays.
- 1-6-1C Illegal Equipment.** Casts are illegal equipment.
- 1-6-1L Illegal Equipment.** Flags that can be detached from the flag belt are illegal equipment.
- 2-7-2 Foul and Flagrant Foul.** A flagrant foul is so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.
- 2-25-4 Player and Nonplayer.** A nonplayer is a coach, trainer, other attendant, a substitute or a replaced player who does not participate by touching the ball, hindering an opponent or influencing the play.
- 3-4-3 Charged Time-Outs.** Each team is entitled to 3 charged time-outs during each half.
- 3-4-3 Charged Time-Outs.** NOTE: Number of time-outs may be modified due to institutional program needs.
- 3-4-7B Authorized Conferences.** One coach may enter the field at his/her team's huddle between the inbounds lines (hash marks) to confer with no more than 7 players (Corec Rule - 8 players).
- 3-7-2 Eligible Substitutions.** A replaced player must leave the field immediately.
- 3-7-1/2 Substitutions.** The name of the penalty has been changed from substitution infraction to Illegal Substitution.
- 3-7-2 Legal Substitutions.** This penalty is now a dead ball foul.
- 4-1-2E Ball Declared Dead.** A new case book play has been added here.
- 4-2-1 Inbounds Spot.** Before the ready for play signal, Team A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the inbounds lines (hash marks): Start each half; for a Try; following a touchback, safety, Try, and awarded catch after a punt; and for the start of each series using an overtime procedure.
- 4-3-1 Player Out-of-Bounds.** A player or other person is out-of-bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official who is on or outside the sideline or end line.

- 4-3 Out-of-Bounds.** This section has been changed from Section 2 to Section 3.
- 6-1-2 Punt.** A new case book play has been added here.
- 7-1-1 The Start.** All plays must be started by a legal snap from a spot on or between the inbounds lines (hash marks).
- 7-1-2 Ball Responsibility.** A towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.
- 7-2-2 False Start.** The name of this penalty has been changed from illegal procedure to False Start.
- 7-2-3 Snap.** The name of this penalty has been changed from illegal procedure to Illegal Snap.
- 7-3-1 Legal Position.** The name of this penalty has been changed from illegal procedure to Illegal Formation.
- 7-3-4 Direct Snap.** The name of this penalty has been changed from illegal snap to Illegal Formation.
- 7-5-1 Male Runner.** The name of this penalty has been changed from illegal procedure to Illegal Advancement.
- 7-5-1A Male Runner.** During a run by a male runner once the ball has been touched beyond the Team A or K scrimmage line.
- 7-7-1 Legal Forward Pass.** A new case book play has been added here.
- 7-7-2G Illegal Forward Pass.** A new case book play has been added here.
- 8-2-1 Two Minute Warning.** Prior to applying the Mercy Rule, there must be a down free of any accepted live ball fouls.
- 8-2-1 Two Minute Warning.** A new case book play has been added here.
- 8-4-1 Referee's Responsibility and Team's Choice.** However, this decision cannot be changed once either team commits a foul.
- 8-4-1 Referee's Responsibility and Team's Choice.** The Referee will ask the scoring team captain where he/she would like the ball placed on or between the inbounds lines (hash marks).
- 9-1 Unsportsmanlike Conduct.** The word nonplayer was added here.
- 9-2 Unfair Acts.** The word nonplayer was added here.
- 9-3 Personal Fouls.** The word nonplayer was added here.
- 9-6-1C Illegal Participation.** If an injured player is not replaced for at least one down; unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs.
- 10-2-4 Loose Ball Play.** Exception 1: The penalty for roughing the passer on a completed forward pass will be enforced from the end of the last run when the run ends beyond Team A's scrimmage line and no change of possession has occurred.
- 10-3-6 Foul During a Touchdown.** If there is a foul by the defensive team during a down that results in a successful touchdown, the scoring team may choose to have the foul enforced at the succeeding spot or the 14 yard line.
- 11-1-2 Complete the Game.** All games must be completed unless the Referee and the opposing captains mutually agree to terminate the game.
- 11-2-4 Home and Visiting Teams.** Item A. Pool Play – the first team listed is the home team. The second team listed is the visitor. Item B. Single/Double Elimination – the top team listed is the home team, and the bottom team listed is the visitor.
- 11-5 Sportsmanship Code of Conduct.** The word nonplayer was added here.
- Youth Field Diagram.** Added 2 inbounds lines (hash marks) to the diagram.

OFFICIALS' MANUAL

- 12 **Charged Time-Out.** Changed the title of this section.
- 17 **Hurry-Up Offense.** The Referee will increase the tempo when the offensive team is in "hurry-up." Backpedal and jog quickly, keeping your eyes on the players and the ball. Check with the other officials to make sure they are ready as you move back.
- 17 **Hurry-Up Offense.** Mark the ball ready for play, then announce down and zone line-to-gain, if time allows. Do not delay Team A snapping the ball in order to announce down and distance. Simply signal the down with your hand.
- I-19 **Enforcement of Fouls.** The FJ stands where the penalty will be enforced. The LJ stands at the succeeding spot. Both the LJ and FJ should "walk off" the penalty yardage independent of the R. Upon reaching the succeeding spot, turn and look at the spot that the R has walked off. If different, communicate to the R. The BJ needs to communicate "half the distance, automatic first down, loss of down," etc. to the R.
- I-19 **Enforcement of Fouls.** The R notifies the Coach and escorts the player to the sideline on all disqualifying foul(s).
- I-21 **Forward Progress.** If forward progress is located between the inbounds lines (hash marks), hustle to the approximate dead ball spot with the ball spotters. If the dead ball spot is located between the sideline and inbounds lines (hash marks), hustle to the nearest inbounds lines.
- I-23 **Officiating Uniform.** Added black sweatpants to the uniform. Eliminated the R wearing a solid white baseball cap. Added that the gold penalty flag should be of a soft material, and that all penalty flags should be virtually hidden from view.
- I-23 **Officiating Uniform.** If all officials have the necessary equipment, the NFHS Football Officiating Uniform can be worn.
- II-1-2A **R Responsibilities Before the Ball is Snapped.** The R will set the ball spotters on or inside the inbounds lines (hash marks). Back pedal to your position quickly (during the hurry-up offense).
- III-1-2A **R Responsibilities Before the Ball is Snapped.** The R will set the ball spotters on or inside the inbounds lines (hash marks). Back pedal to your position quickly (during the hurry-up offense).
- III-2-2 **Responsibilities - Goal to Go.** These responsibilities among the R/LJ/BJ have been subdivided into 2 articles: Goal to Go and Reverse Goal Line Mechanics.
- III-3-3D **LJ/BJ Responsibilities After the Ball is Snapped.** If punted out-of-bounds on the ground, mark the spot. If punted out-of-bounds in the air, jog to the "approximate" area, and then begin walking slowly until the R chops his/her arm (S1) to mark the spot. By walking slowly, you are indicating to the R this is where "I think the punt went out-of-bounds."
- III-3-3D **LJ/BJ Responsibilities After the Ball is Snapped.** NOTE: If in doubt, the out-of-bounds punt is "short" of the zone line-to-gain. NOTE: If in doubt, the out-of-bounds punt near the goal line is a touchback.
- IV-1-1C **FJ Positions.** Line up at a 45 degree angle to the sideline for a better look. The initial position will vary dependent upon down, distance and team tendencies.
- IV-3-3D **LJ/FJ Responsibilities After the Ball is Snapped.** If punted out-of-bounds on the ground, mark the spot. If punted out-of-bounds in the air, jog to the "approximate" area, then begin walking slowly until the R chops his/her arm (S1) to mark the spot. By walking slowly, you are indicating to the R this is where "I think the punt went out-of-bounds."
- V **Code of Official Football Signals.** (S7) - This signal now indicates dead ball foul.
- V **Code of Official Football Signals.** (S19) - Now includes illegal advancement/formation/snap; false start.
- V **Code of Official Football Signals.** (S22) - This signal has been changed to Illegal Substitution.

OFFICIAL NIRSA RULES BOOK AND INTERPRETATIONS FOR FLAG AND TOUCH FOOTBALL

The Corec, Men's and Women's Flag & Touch Football Interpretations are integrated into the NIRSA National Rules. Specialized flag and corec rules have been printed utilizing bold type.



Furthermore, the flag rules are identified by utilizing the illustrated flag belt.

An official's signal (S) refers to the Code of Official Football Signals 1-47 located on pages 101-102.

The Rule Interpretations are dedicated to the hundreds of thousands of intramural football officials who have given so unselfishly to the great game of flag and touch football over the years. Their enthusiasm, insight, rules knowledge, courage and sense of purpose have helped make this book possible.

If there is a conflict between the Official Rules and the Rule Interpretations, the Official Rules take precedence.

Please write, call, fax or email the Editor for any interpretations of Rules or play situations:

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RULE 1. THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT

SECTION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1. The Game – Men, Women.

The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each. Five players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game may be continued with less than 5 players as long as the team has a chance to win. NOTE: If in doubt, continue the game. Penalty: Illegal Participation, 10 yards (S28).

Article 2. The Game – Corec

The Corec game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men. Six players, 3 men and 3 women, 4 men and 2 women, or 4 women and 2 men, are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game may be continued with less than 6 players as long as the team has a chance to win. NOTE: If in doubt, continue the game. Penalty: Illegal Participation, 10 yards (S28).

Article 3. Supervision.

The game shall be played under the supervision of 2 to 4 officials. The officials are: Referee, Line Judge, Back Judge and Field Judge. It is recommended strongly that a minimum of 3 officials be used. Positions and responsibilities for each official are found in the Official's Manual.

Article 4. Team Captains.

Each coach shall designate to the Referee the team captain(s). If more than one player is designated, a speaking captain must be selected to make all decisions.

Article 5. Persons Subject to the Rules.

Players, nonplayers, and spectators affiliated with the team are subject to the Rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

Article 6. Referee's Authority.

The Referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the Rules. The Referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

Article 7. Game Official's Authority.

The game officials shall assume authority for the contest, including penalizing unsportsmanlike acts, 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time, or as soon thereafter as they are able to be present. The official's jurisdiction extends through the Referee's declaration of the end of the fourth period or overtime.

SECTION 2. THE FIELD

Article 1. Safety Margin.

Too hard and unyielding rigid fixtures (i.e., trees, poles, fences) shall be located within 5 yards of the sidelines or 10 yards of the endlines, unless covered with at least 1/2" of closed cell, slow recovery rubber or other material of the same minimum thickness and having similar physical properties. NOTE: If in doubt, consider the safety of all paramount to the game.

Article 2. Adjacent Fields.

When fields are located in close proximity, there must be a minimum of 5 yards between "side by side" fields and 10 yards between "end on end" fields.