



MANITOBA FLAG FOOTBALL OFFICIALS POLICY MANUAL

2020

Last Updated: February 14, 2020

Table of Contents

Section 1: General Information

Section 2: In Play Rules

Section 3: Penalties

➤ **Section 3A:** Defensive Penalties

➤ **Section 3B:** Offensive Penalties

Section 4: Officials Equipment & Mechanics

Section 5: Game Duties

Section 6: Field Placement

Section 7: Policies

Section 8: Conflict Management Skills

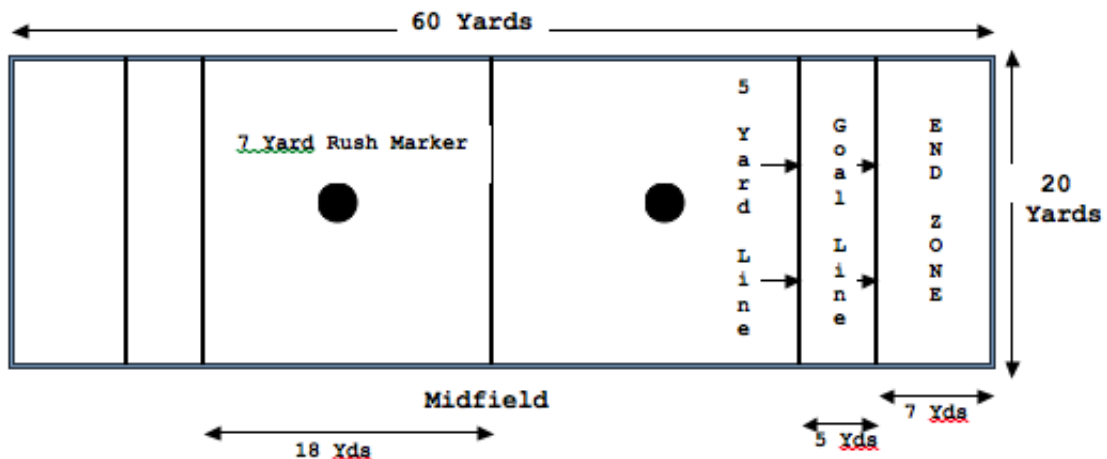
Section 9: Football Manitoba Code of Conduct

Section 10: Contact Information

Section 1: General Information

Field Dimensions

- Length: 60 yards
- Width: 20 yards
- End Zones: 7 yards deep
- No running zones: Marked 5 yards from each end-zone
- Coaches must stay on their half of the field designated to their team and cannot pass center. If a coach crosses center their team will be given a 5-yard penalty and a loss of down (on offense) or an automatic first down (on defense)
- Parents are designated the side of the field across from the players



Player Attire

- Cleats are allowed but must be rubber. Metal spikes of any kind are not permitted
- Mouth-guards are mandatory for all players
- Players must wear shorts or pants of a solid color i.e. entirely black – NO EXCEPTIONS
- Shorts or pants cannot be the same color as the players flags
- Shorts or pants cannot have open pockets – NO EXCEPTIONS
- Before the beginning of every play, players flags must be at the sides and be properly tucked into their bottoms with at least half an inch of white showing
- Baseball caps, sunglasses and jewelry of any kind are not permitted on the field of play
- All player shirts must be tucked in while on the field of play. Untucked shirts results in stoppage of play until shirt is tucked or the player is substituted by a player with a tucked shirt.
- If a player has a cast, he/she **MUST** cover it with soft padding to protect all players on the field, including themselves.
 - Any player with a cast must approach a Site Supervisor with his/her coach in order to get the approval to play with the cast. Site Supervisor will briefly

inspect cast to determine if it is properly covered in order to protect all players on the field, including the individual with the cast.

Team Members

- Each team will have 5 players on the field at any given time
- Teams can play with a minimum of 4 players
 - If there are less than 4 players, game is cancelled and the team without enough players forfeits
- Each team can have a MAXIMUM of 3 coaches on the sideline. All coaches MUST be registered with Football Manitoba
- A team is considered late if they fail to provide 4 team members by scheduled game time
- If a team is late, the opposing team will be granted first possession AND the choice of sides
- Should a team fail to provide a minimum of 4 players by 10 minutes after scheduled start time, they will forfeit
- Note: If a team forfeited their first game of the night, they can play the second game as normal
- **It is the discretion of the Referees and/or Site Supervisor whether a team is considered late or not**

Scoring

- Touchdown – 6 points
- Extra point(s) – 1 point (played from 5-yard line - **Must be a PASSING PLAY - a play-action fake or backwards toss is not allowed within 5 yards from the opponent's goal line and will result in a dead ball and a loss of down**)
- 2 points – (played from the 12-yard line/7-yard rushing marker; play actions fakes or backwards tosses are allowed)
- Safety – 2 points
- A win constitutes 2 points, a tie 1 point, a loss 0 points

Note: An interception return to opponent's end zone on any extra-point play by the defense will result in the defense scoring 2 points plus gaining possession for the next series at its own 5-yard line.

Timing & Overtime

TIMING:

- 2 halves in each game
 - Each half – 25 minutes
- Each team has 1 (one) – 60 second time out per half. The clock stops during a time out. Timeouts cannot be carried over to the second half or overtime.
- Officials may stop the clock at their discretion, i.e. during injuries
- Teams will be warned when there are two minutes left to play in both halves. The official will make two whistle blows to signal two minutes.
- Once the 2-minute whistle occurs, there will be only 3 plays remaining. Extra points do not count as one of the 3 plays
- There will be a halftime period of 2 minutes between the first and second half
- **IMPORTANT:** A game CANNOT end on a defensive penalty

OVERTIME:

- If the score remains tied at the end of regulation in regular season, a tie will be rewarded with each team receiving one point
- **Only in the playoffs** – If the score is tied at the end of regulation time, teams move directly into overtime. A coin toss determines first possession of overtime. The team that wins the coin toss starts with the ball on the opponents 12-yard line. The game is decided by alternating convert attempts from the 12-yard line (ala. CFL/NCAA Football Overtime). If the team with first possession scores, the second must match that score to continue the overtime period. If the first team does not score, the second team can win by scoring their convert. If both teams do not score, overtime will continue until one team scores and the other is unable to convert their attempt.

NOTE: There will be **no timeouts** granted during the overtime period.

Fair Play

- Flag football is a developmental and recreational sport and therefore all players must be given fair playing time.
- If complaints are registered by coaches, parents, or players about fair play, please ask them to contact Neil Hansen at Football Manitoba and then contact Neil yourself to advise him of the complaint. Football Manitoba will then investigate, evaluate and possibly discipline the coach in question.

Sportsmanship/Roughing/Ejections

- If the official witnesses any acts of flagrant contact, i.e. intentional/deliberate tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or other physical conduct, the team committing the foul will be penalized 15 yards, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. FOUL PLAY IS NOT TOLERATED
- Trash talking and taunting is illegal. If trash talking or taunting occurs, the team committing the foul will be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. Officials have the right to determine offensive language
- Discriminatory statements/offensive language, such as comments of race, sex and upbringing by players, coaches or spectators will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and an immediate ejection
- Deliberate questioning of official's calls will be penalized upon the official's discretion
- Any physical or verbal abuse against an official by a player, coach or spectator will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and an immediate ejection
- **In the case that parents are asked to leave the field of play, coaches are responsible to help officials enforce the decision if parents are unwilling to leave. If the parent does not leave, the team they are sided with will forfeit the game**
Note: If an official must call the first game of the night due to an inappropriate parent, the second game must still be played, unless the official fears for his or her safety. If the parent continues to be inappropriate during the second game, the team they represent will forfeit the game.
- Once a flag is pulled, the defensive player should drop the flag at their feet so the official can spot the location of the flag pull.

Section 2: In Play Rules

Pre-Game

- Every flag football game begins with a coin toss or rock/paper/scissors. This determines who has first possession at their own 5-yard line.
- Loser of the coin toss has choice of end zone to defend and the loser of the toss also gets possession of the ball at the beginning of the second half, starting at their own 5-yard line

Possession

- **There are no kickoffs or punts**
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line at the beginning of each series and has three plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or score a touchdown (once passed midfield) it will produce a turnover on downs, resulting in a change of possession
- An automatic first down penalty will overrule the other requirements regarding three plays to make either a first down or to score
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line
- If an offensive penalty occurs passed midfield, which causes the ball to be placed behind the midfield marker, the offensive team must still make a touchdown within three plays
- Teams change sides at halftime
- **One pass must be made for every three plays of possession**
 - If a quarterback is sacked behind the line of scrimmage, this is considered a run
 - A running play is defined as any action where a player on offense runs over the line of scrimmage as the ball carrier

Passing

- The quarterback has seven seconds to throw the ball. If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play will be blown dead, a loss of down will occur and the ball will be spotted at the previous line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off or tossed, or there is a play-action fake or toss, the seven second rule is no longer in effect
- The quarterback **MUST** play-action towards a teammate in order to negate the 7 seconds
- Any player can receive a toss or handoff and be allowed to throw the ball downfield behind the line of scrimmage

- Forward passes must cross the line of scrimmage. If a forward pass does not cross the line of scrimmage, the offense will be penalized with an illegal forward pass
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be beyond the line of scrimmage
- If the quarterback steps over the line of scrimmage while throwing the ball, the play will be blown dead (a player cannot advance the ball once he/she has passed the line of scrimmage)
- The quarterback must have his ENTIRE body behind the line of scrimmage in order to throw the ball

Running

- At the start of each play, the ball must be snapped between the legs of the snapper
- The center is the player who gives the ball to the quarterback via a snap. The center cannot take a direct handoff back from the quarterback (no center sneak play)
- The quarterback is the player who first receives the ball directly from the snap
- The quarterback cannot run the ball past the line of scrimmage
- An offence may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Only backward or lateral handoffs are allowed during a down
- Tosses or sweeps behind the line of scrimmage are allowed, as are running plays.
- Downfield tosses (once the ball passes the line of scrimmage) are not permitted. Once a player has possession of the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, any loss of possession (i.e. fumble) will be blown dead by the official
- “No running zones” are located 5 yards from each end zone. When the ball is on or inside the 5-yard line going towards the opponent’s end zone, the offense cannot use a running play to cross the line of scrimmage. A play-action fake or lateral/backwards toss is considered a hand-off within the 5-yard no run zones. If a run or play-action fake or lateral/backwards toss occurs within the five yard no run zone, the play will be blown dead, a loss of down will occur and the ball spotted at the original line of scrimmage
- Any player who takes a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage
- Spinning is allowed, but offensive players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player. If a player leaves their feet, the play will be blown dead by the official and the ball will be placed from the spot the player left his/her feet or will result in a turnover on downs (if on 3rd down)
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s hips are when the flag is pulled, not at the spot of the ball
- It is up to the ball carrier to avoid contact with the defender. Good defensive position will be rewarded to the defense by the officials
- If the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage and laterals the ball, or throws the ball forward, the play is blown dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the lateral or forward pass
- There are **no** fumbles in flag football. Any fumble will be considered a dead ball and will result in a the subsequent down or a turnover on downs
- Any fumble by the offensive team in their own end-zone will result in a safety

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage)
- Only one foot must be in bounds for a caught ball to be ruled a catch
- Players may catch the ball while on their knees, back or side, however, the play will be blown dead and the ball spotted where the catch was made
- Players are ineligible to catch a pass if their flag has fallen off
- If a player dives to catch a ball, the play is dead where the catch is made (i.e. where the players feet/body are at the time of the catch)
- If both an offensive and defensive player catch the ball simultaneously, the tie will always go to the offense

Dead Balls

- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - Official blows the whistle
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled or becomes illegal.
Note - Illegal meaning the flag is in a position unable for the defense to pull, i.e. falls off
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds, jumps or leaves feet
 - Touchdown or safety is scored
 - When any part of the ball carrier’s body, other than a hand or foot, touches the ground
 - When the ball is fumbled
Note: There are no fumbles. The ball will be spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were when the fumble was made. If a fumble occurs, it will result in a loss of down or a turnover on downs. If a fumble occurs in the end zone it will result in a safety
- If the ball carrier’s flag falls off, the play will be whistled dead and the ball will be spotted at the spot where the flag fell off

Defensive Rushing

- Only players starting from a minimum of 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage can rush the passer
- A bean bag designates the seven yards from the line of scrimmage
- Any number of players may rush the quarterback
- A rusher lined up **within** two yards (1 yard on either side of the bag) of the 7-yard marker is entitled to a free rush at the quarterback – the rusher may not be interfered. If interfered, it will result in an offensive rusher interference penalty
- A rusher cannot be directly over top of the bag. He/she must designate the side that they wish to rush from. Once they have chosen the side, they are NOT allowed to switch (players cannot switch last minute before the snap. The center is expected to

get out of the way, therefore the rusher must choose either side of the bag prior to snap)

- ONLY one rusher is entitled a free rush at the quarterback
- ONLY one rusher is allowed to be within two yards of the bean bag
- A rusher lined up **outside** the two yards (side to side) of the 7-yard marker is **not** entitled to a free rush to the quarterback and may be interfered (For example - a running back or receiver in motion or in a pattern who runs into the rusher)
- All defensive players are eligible to rush once the ball has been handed off or tossed, or there is a play-action fake or toss
- A rusher **may not** hit the quarterback's arm or any other part of their body while the quarterback is throwing
- **IMPORTANT** – Rushers must be UNDER CONTROL.
- A rusher must have his/her entire body behind the bean bag before the snap

Interceptions

- The defense can return interceptions
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball
- If an interception occurs in an end-zone, the ball will become dead and will result in the ball belonging to the intercepting team at its own 5-yard line.
- If an interception occurs in the end zone and the ball carrier leaves the end zone, the ball will belong to the intercepting team at the spot the ball becomes dead.
- If the ball carrier intercepts in the end zone, subsequently leaves the end zone, then returns to the end zone and is de-flagged, or the ball is ruled dead, the result will be a safety for the other team

Diving/Jumping Situations

- Rushing:
 - Rusher can jump to block pass (as long as it is straight up and down)
- Receiver:
 - Receiver can jump to catch the ball and land and continue to run
 - Receiver can lay out for ball ONLY if player is not going into a crowd
 - NO diving into a crowd to catch the ball
 - This play COULD result in roughing penalty
- Ball Carrier:
 - NO jumping
 - NO diving
 - Ball is spotted where the players hips are, not the ball. No need to dive
- Tackling:
 - Can lay out to make athletic move to pull the flag
 - Diving into a player is a roughing penalty
- ***The spirit of the rules for diving and jumping is to promote safety while not penalizing athletic play. Safety comes first***

Section 3: Penalties

Penalties

- All penalties may be declined - the official should check with the coach or captain after each penalty to determine if they accept or decline the penalty
- Officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage except for flag guarding and defensive diving
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty
- If the offense and defense are both penalized with two penalties that are of the same distance (i.e. 5 yard and 5 yards), the down will be repeated
- If the offense and defense are both penalized, but one side is penalized with a 15-yard penalty, the difference between the penalties will be assessed, and the down will be repeated

Section 3A: Defensive Penalties

5 Yards & Automatic 1st Down

- Coach crossing designated sideline area
- Quarterback release interference

5 Yards & Down Repeated

- Disconcerting Signals – signals to distract opponents are not allowed
- Interference with ball at the snap
- Illegal Substitution – Occurs when team has more than 5 players on the field during the snap of the ball
- Offside – Player crossed the line of scrimmage prior to snap of ball
- Illegal Rush – When rusher is passed the 7-yard marker before the ball is snapped
 - Note: The rusher must cross the line of scrimmage to be considered an illegal rush

15 Yards & Automatic 1st Down

- Pass interference – illegally preventing receiver from catching the ball
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct (or ejection)

Spotted Foul; 5 Yards & Automatic 1st Down – NEW 2016

- Illegal Contact/Roughing
- Illegal Flag Pull – Defending players cannot pull flag prior to receiver catching the ball
 - Note:
 - Illegal flag pull penalty will only be applicable if the ball is caught. Since the offensive player is unable to continue play without both flags, the point of foul will be where the offensive player caught the ball. Play will be marked 5 yards up from point of catch, and automatic first down. Should the pass be incomplete, there will be no infraction on the play, as the illegal flag pull did not affect the outcome of the play.

- If the same players continue to pull the flag early (i.e. Illegally), this player will be penalized with unsportsmanlike conduct as it is harming the nature of the game.

Section 3B: Offensive Penalties

Spotted Foul; 5 Yards & Loss of Down

- Flag Guarding – using hands, arms or elbows to intentionally block the defender from pulling the flag
 - Note: Stiff arming a defending is a form of flag guarding and may also result in roughing penalty

5 Yards & Loss of Down

- No cadence by quarterback
- Illegal Forwards Pass – Pass received behind the line of scrimmage
- Offensive pass interference
- Roughing – it is up to the ball carrier to avoid contact with the defender. Good defensive position will be rewarded to the defense by the officials
- Blocking/Illegal pick play – it is up to the offensive players without the ball to get out of the way. No blocking/pick plays allowed in flag football
- Coach crossing designated sideline area
- Rusher interference – it is illegal for a receiver, running back or center to run a pattern that interferes with the designated rusher who is at minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and who is two yards (side to side) of the 7-yard rushing marker

5 Yards & Down Repeated

- Illegal Substitution – Occurs when team has more than 5 players on the field during the snap of the ball
- Delay of game – inability to snap the ball before the 30 second play clock expires
- False Start
- Illegal snap – snap must occur between the legs of the snapper to the quarterback
- Player out of bounds – if a player goes out of bounds, without interference, the player may not return to the field or catch the ball
- Illegal contact – Holding/jamming

15 Yards & Loss of Down

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct (or ejection)

Section 4: Officials Equipment & Mechanics

Official's Attire

- Striped Officials shirt (Mandatory)
- Black/Dark Blue/White shorts or pants (Mandatory)
- ALL BALL CAPS MUST BE WORN FACING FRONTWARDS

Official's Gear

- Officiating Flag (To be provided)
- Whistle
- Stop Watch w/timer
- 26 Cones – yellow for end zones and centre markings, orange for others (To be provided)
- 2 Bean Bags (To be provided)
- A Pen and paper
- A coin

Be On Time

Parents, players, and coaches notice when officials are late!

Always arrive 30 minutes before your first scheduled game. Everyone participating will notice and thank you for your punctuality, and in turn, you'll be respected!!

Officiating Alone

Oh-no! You've shown up to your field and your partner doesn't show up, what do you do?

If you have a Head Referee, let them know! They will be able to assign you to a game with a partner and they'll take on the game you were supposed to be at.

In the event that there is no Head Referee, your positioning should be on the side of the parents, in between the 7 yard rushing marker and the line of scrimmage. Prior to the game, ask both coaches or ask a volunteering parent to watch for out of bounds on the team sideline.

Section 5: Game Duties

Pre Game Duties

- Set up field; check placement of cones and field markings
- Establish team and parent sides of the field
- Talk to Coaches/captains
- Check player equipment – ensure rubber cleats, mouth guards, flags at side
- Decide which field half each official will cover
- Decide which official will keep time; both will keep score and downs

Offensive Official Duties

- 1) Check for Proper placement of Flag at sides after each down
- 2) Establish the Line of Scrimmage
- 3) Watch for offensive Off-sides
- 4) Count 7 seconds for Quarterback to throw
- 5) Stay on boundary to watch “Out of Bounds” on your side
- 6) Watch Quarterback for:
 - Not to cross the line of scrimmage
 - Fake hand-off (negate 7 seconds; blow play dead if within the 5 yard no rushing zone)
 - Pass Behind the Line of Scrimmage
 - Flag Pull
 - Penalty
- 7) Keep Track of Downs
- 8) Retrieve Bean Bag after yards gained

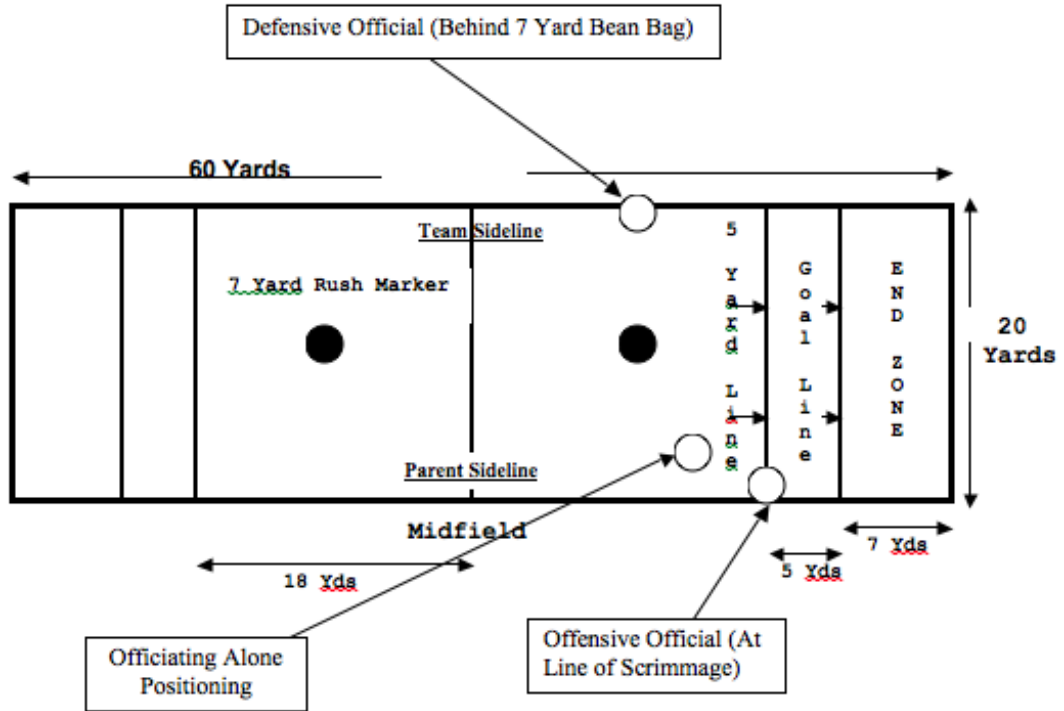
Defensive Official Duties

- 1) Check for Proper Placement of Flag on player sides
- 2) Behind, but in view of 7 yard rushing marker
- 3) Watch for early rush
- 4) Watch for illegal rush
- 5) Check for hand-off or fake
- 6) Cover “Out of Bounds” --- opposite of official #1
- 7) Watch for interference, flag guarding
- 8) Establish where feet are when flag is pulled
- 9) Inside 5 yard no rush zone, check for pass, not run
- 10) Rule on completion
- 11) Place forward bean bag

Post Game Duties

- 1) Verify Score with both teams
- 2) Return Ball(s) to team
- 3) Pick up cones
- 4) **Email score to within 12 hours of the completion of the games in order to be paid.**
*****If the scores are not submitted in the 12 hour time frame then the official will be deducted \$5 from their pay. Both officials must email in the score of the games.**
- 5) If there is any incidents (big or small) please email
- 6) If there is any incidents (big or small) please email
- 7) Email questions in regards to rules to

Section 6: Field Placement



Section 7: Policies

Lightning Policy

If you can count less than 30 seconds between the lightning strike and the thunder clap this means that the storm is 10km away and there is an 80% chance the next strike will happen within that 10 km zone. (Environment Canada)

If this is the situation Football Manitoba requires the following:

- Play will be suspended for 15 minutes, if there is no improvement in the weather the game will be called.
- If the game is called during the first half, the score will be a 1-1 tie.
- If the game is called after the first half, the score and statistics will remain as at the time the game is called
- If the second game is called before being played at 7:30 pm the score will be reported and record as a 1-1 tie.

Flag football officials, players, coaches and parents are required to adhere to the above stated policy.

All teams are to report to the field for the beginning of the first game. If a Head Referee is present at the field the Head Referee is responsible to call all games at that location.

If a Head Referee is not present the referee who's officiating will use his/her discretion on whether or not to play.

Games will NOT be re-scheduled.

NOTE: Referees will be paid for all first games whether they are called during the first or second half. However, if the first game is called and after waiting the mandatory 15 minutes the referee will only be paid if the time extends into the time scheduled for the second game.

Disciplinary Policies

Disciplinary Policy

Each official is responsible for carrying out their duties in a manner that will gain the respect they deserve. Any negligence in this regard shall be considered a serious offense.

Disciplinary action may be taken against a member who:

1. Repeatedly fails to appear for an officiating assignment they have accepted, having been duly warned.
2. Dresses in a slovenly, dirty or careless manner.
3. Argues with players and coaches, deemed to be unnecessary within the sphere of flag football.
4. Reports for an assignment under or suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.
5. Conducts themselves in a manner that is detrimental to the Association.

Disciplinary Process

1. The disciplinary process is a three-step system. This process is overseen by Football Manitoba;
 - i) Verbal warning
 - ii) Written warning (written warnings may include email)
 - iii) Referral to the Disciplinary Committee.

Disciplinary Committee

In each case a Football Manitoba Representative shall investigate, recommend and report the actions to be taken to a Disciplinary Committee. The disciplinary committee will be made up of representatives from Football Manitoba, may include board members, community members and staff. The judgment of the Disciplinary Committee as expressed by a majority vote shall be final. Punishment could range from a written citation to expulsion.

Section 11: Contacts

Football Manitoba

145 Pacific Ave - 506
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2Z6
Phone: (204) 925 – 5670
Fax: (204) 925 - 5772

If you have an incident to report, or are experiencing problems please contact:

Neil Hansen – technical@footballmanitoba.com

If you need to report/clarify scores or results please contact:

Jonathon Franklin – j.franklin@uwinnipeg.ca

If you have questions about referee assignments, please contact:

Jonathon Franklin – j.franklin@uwinnipeg.ca

If you have questions about rules or mechanics, please contact MFRA officials below:

**Don Van Achte – family5@mymts.net
Chris MacNeil - chris_macneil@mymts.net
Ron Alderson - alderson88@gmail.com**