



WHEELCHAIR

FOOTBALL

OFFICIAL AAASP INTERSCHOLASTIC
WHEELCHAIR FOOTBALL

2023-2024
RULEBOOK



**American Association
of Adapted Sports Programs, Inc.**

Official Youth Wheelchair Football Rules

Third Edition

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Introduction

Since its incorporation as a nonprofit in 1996, AAASP has developed one of the United States' most comprehensive and innovative athletic programs for students with physical disabilities or visual impairments. These adaptEDSPORTS® programs are school--based and often supported through community partnerships.

The sports featured in the adaptedSPORTS® Model have their origin in Paralympic and adult disability sports, however, they are innovative in that they are co-ed and cross-disability in nature. Participation in adaptedSPORTS® can begin when a child enters the first grade, and continues until high school graduation.

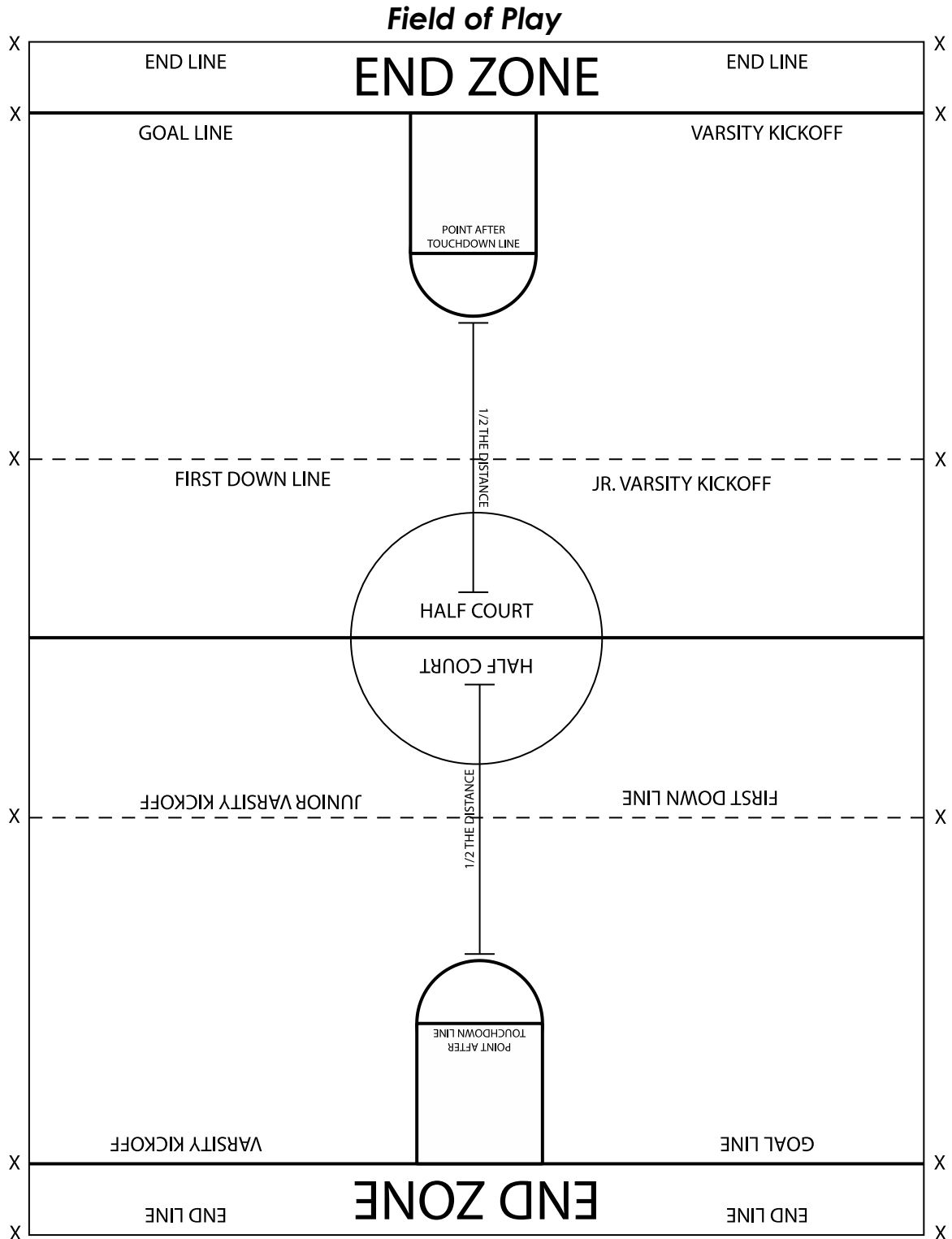
AAASP has adapted these sports for the student-athlete based on their functional ability. By providing standardized competition rules, it is possible for the widespread implementation of an interscholastic adapted athletic system. The rules are regularly reviewed by AAASP's Sport Tech Committee to ascertain when, and if, revisions are required. This process allows AAASP to maintain high standards and promotes the widespread adoption of interscholastic athletics for this student population.

Additionally, each sport has its own season. This makes it possible to schedule tournaments on regional and statewide levels within the each sport season, thus amplifying competitive opportunities for many more young athletes and perpetuating the national growth of each sport.

The adaptEDSPORTS® include:

| | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|
| Fall | Wheelchair Handball |
| Winter | Wheelchair Basketball |
| Spring | Track and Field, Wheelchair Football |

FlagHouse, a worldwide distributor of athletic equipment and products, has made adaptEDSPORTS® rule books and AAASP-approved equipment available through their catalogs and online. Information about purchasing these products or ordering the current FlagHouse catalog can be obtained by calling (800) 793-7900, or by going to <https://www.flaghouse.com/pages/aaasp/>.



X = ORANGE CONE PLACEMENT

OFFICIAL YOUTH WHEELCHAIR FOOTBALL

1.0 COMPETITORS

- 1.1 There are six players on a team. Eligible participants, whose primary disability must be physical, are boys and girls attending grades one through 12. They may walk unassisted, with devices, or be in manual or power wheelchairs. All participants must compete in wheelchairs.
- 1.2 Competitors must not raise both hips simultaneously off the seat of the chair to gain advantage during competition (catching a pass, tackling, etc.). Raising one hip as a result of reaching out (to catch a pass, make a tackle, etc.) is acceptable.

2.0 THE FIELD

- 2.1 The field will be a basketball court. The court should be a regulation high school court at the minimum (see *Field of Play* Diagram, Page 6).
- 2.2 Anytime the ball comes in contact with a building structure, the play is immediately over.
 - 2.2.1 If the ball hits a building structure during a kick-off or punt, the ball will be placed either one-foot before the first down line on the offensive (receiving) team's side of the field or at the spot where the ball hit the building structure. The receiving team has the right to choose where the ball will be placed.
 - 2.2.2 If the ball hits a building structure during a pass, the pass is ruled incomplete and play resumes at the line of scrimmage.
 - 2.2.3 If the ball hits a building structure other than the basket supports during a field goal attempt, or the Point After Touchdown (PAT), the kick is no good and the other team will take over possession of the ball at the line of scrimmage.
- 2.3 The ball will always be put into play in the center (right to left) of the field.
- 2.4 The PAT attempt will be initiated from either the top of the key or the free-throw line:
 - 2.4.1 1-point PAT conversion attempts will be initiated from the top of the key.
 - 2.4.2 2-point PAT conversion attempts will be initiated from the free-throw line. In cases where the playing surface has been altered due to the size of the court the end line may need to be adjusted to create a 10-foot deep end

zone. When this becomes necessary, the 2-point PAT line must be moved the same distance that the goal line was moved.

- 2.5 For Varsity teams, the kick off is made from behind the goal line. For Junior Varsity teams, the kick off is made from behind the first down marker on the kicking team's side of the field. The receiving team must have at least two players at the midfield line.
- 2.6 Coaches must stay on their side of the field. The players' bench will be within the coaches' area and as far from the sideline as possible. The coach's box will be delineated at 14 feet from the end line and then again at 28 feet from the end line. (NOTE: In venues where teams are on opposite sidelines, the coach's box will be centered at midfield.) The coaches can move anywhere along their half of the court, unless and until the officials feel the need to enforce the coach's box. PROCEDURE: First warning: all coaches must stay seated and in the coach's box. Second warning: 5-foot penalty. Third warning: 15-foot penalty. Fourth warning: 15-foot penalty and ejection of head coach.
- 2.7 It is the responsibility of the host team to make sure the field of play is ready a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the start of the game. This would include having all floor markings and cones in place, ensuring that the game clock is operational, etc.

3.0 THE WHEELCHAIR

- 3.1 Power, standard, and sport chairs are acceptable. Motorized scooters or carts and similar equipment are not allowed.
- 3.2 All modifications of wheelchairs will be subject to the review of the officials for safety, unfair advantage, or rule violations. If an official determines that there is a violation, alterations must be made before the player is allowed to play.
- 3.3 The height of the foot platform at its forward-most point, which would be the first point of contact with another wheelchair or player, can be no more than five inches from the floor.
- 3.4 All wheelchairs, except foot-propelled, must have a strap extending from one side of the chair to the other, behind the player's legs, and must be within six inches above the point where the player's feet make contact with the foot platform(s). This strap must be drawn taut enough to prevent the feet from falling off the platforms and being injured, or from being used as a brake. All Wheelchairs must also have a strap extending from one side of the chair to the other, over the player's upper thighs, as close to the hips as possible, or at the player's lap. This strap must be drawn taut enough to prevent the player from falling out of their chair. Bungee cords are not permitted.
 - 3.4.1 All players must keep their feet secured to their footplates. Strapping can be used to secure the player's foot/feet to their footplate.

- 3.5 Players are not allowed to wear jewelry of any kind during the game. This includes, but is not restricted to: watches, rings, earrings, necklaces, and bracelets. The only exception to this rule would be medically necessary items. Tape must be applied to cover and secure them.
- 3.6 Any chair equipped with either a horizontal bar behind the backrest or push handles extending to the rear, must have sufficient padding in these areas to prevent injury to players.

4.0 EQUIPMENT

- 4.1 The footballs to be used are youth sized. For current specifications, contact AAASP.
- 4.2 Helmets are strongly recommended by AAASP (especially for players with shunts or other medical conditions that might involve their head or neck). Any player who wishes to wear a helmet may do so.
- 4.3 It is the players' responsibility to supply their own helmet. The team is not required to supply the helmet, although some may.
- 4.4 Helmets should be ANSI-approved skateboard helmets (**not** football or bicycle helmets). Skateboard helmets are full, lightweight helmets without face guards.
- 4.5 Orange cones should be used to mark the end zone line at both ends of the court.
- 4.6 AAASP highly recommends that each team have a down marker and a volunteer to operate it.

5.0 THE GAME

- 5.1 The game will consist of two 30-minute halves with a running game clock (see 7.0 Game Clock).
- 5.2 Half-time will be 10 minutes long.
- 5.3 Varsity teams will use a 35 second play clock. Junior varsity teams will use a 45 second play clock. The head official will administer the ball either by placing it on the ground or handing it to the center (if the center is ready and waiting). Once the down marker is set, the officials will then step behind the offensive line and immediately start the play clock by blowing the "ready for play" whistle, regardless of whether the offense or defense is up to the line. (See also Rule 7.4)
- 5.4 In the Junior Varsity division, one coach will be allowed on the field of play to help players who may need assistance (offensively and defensively), but must be completely off the field of play along their own sideline when the ball is snapped. If a coach is on the field of play when the ball is snapped, they will receive a warning. On the

second such infraction, the officials will charge “illegal substitution” (too many players on the field) on the offending team, and assess a 10-foot penalty.

The defensive coach must be off the field of play by the time the offensive coach leaves the field, since the offense controls the 45-second play clock, and can conceivably, snap the ball before the full 45 seconds has elapsed.

- 5.5 Each team will be allowed three time-outs per half. Each time-out will last one minute. The time-outs will not carry over to the next half or overtime period(s). In the case of overtime play, each team will be allowed one time-out.
- 5.6 The offensive team has four downs to reach a first down or to score.
- 5.7 There will be two (2) first down markers, which will divide the court into three equal sections. If it is necessary to move the goal line (See Rule 2.4.2), the first down lines will be adjusted to ensure that the court is still divided into three equal sections. Each first down line should be marked with floor tape and a cone.
- 5.8 An open substitution policy will be used. However, **all** players should play in **both** halves. The coach is responsible for making sure that all members of the team play. If, for medical or disciplinary reasons, a player cannot play, the coach must notify the Area Coordinator, officials, and the opposing coach before the game. Coaches may have players that play only on offense or only on defense. They may also have players who play on both offense and defense.
- 5.9 **Extra Periods:** The NCAA tie-breaker system will be used when a game is tied after the end of regulation. Immediately after the conclusion of the game, officials will instruct both teams to retire to their respective team areas. The officials will assemble at the center of the court and review the tie-breaker procedures. The officials will call the captains to the center of the field for the coin toss. The official shall toss a coin at the center of the court in the presence of captains from each team and the other game official(s). The captain of the visiting team will call the coin toss. The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:
 - 5.9.1 Offense or defense, with the offense at the opponent’s three-point line to start the first series.
 - 5.9.2 Which end of the field shall be used for the overtime period.
- 5.10 Team series: Each team retains the ball for four plays during a series or until it scores, turns the ball over or fails to score. During the first two series, each team has the option of attempting a 1 or 2-point PAT conversion. Beginning with the third series, both teams must attempt a 2-point PAT conversion.

EXAMPLES:

- 5.10.1 After each team has put the ball in play by snap at the beginning of its series, the score is tied or there has been no score. RULING: Begin the second series for each team.
 - 5.10.2 If during an overtime series, Team A is intercepted, it will end their possession for the series. Interceptions may never be advanced in overtime play. RULING: Team B begins their possession for the series.
 - 5.10.3 If during an overtime series, Team B is intercepted, it will end the series. RULING: If Team A scored during their possession of the series, then the game is over and Team A is the winner. If Team A did not score, then you begin the next series.
- 5.11 **Scoring:** The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winner. There shall be an equal number of series, in the overtime period.

EXAMPLES:

- 5.11.1 On the first possession of a period, Team A scores a touchdown. On the PAT attempt, Team B intercepts the pass ending Team A's possession. RULING: Team B is awarded the ball at the three-point line to start its series of the period with the overtime score 6-0.
- 5.11.2. If a touchdown is scored that determines the winning team in an extra period, the PAT attempt is canceled.

6.0 KICK OFFS

- 6.1 Varsity teams will kick off from behind the goal line. Junior Varsity teams will kick off from behind the first down marker on the kicking team's side of the field. The receiving team must have at least two players at the midfield line.
- 6.2 If the kick off results in a touchback, the ball will be spotted at the free throw line or 18 feet from the front end zone line. If the kick off goes out of bounds over the sidelines, the ball will be spotted at the free throw line, plus 5 additional feet. The receiving team has the option to advance the ball out of the end zone.
- 6.3 Prior to kick off, the receiving team's coach or team captain can declare a fair catch. Once a player or coach verbally declares to the head official (a/k/a/ the "white hat") their desire for a fair catch, the ball will be placed 8-feet from the front end zone line or just above the first big block to begin scrimmage play.

A fair catch kick will be allowed from the 8-foot mark. Once declared, the decision cannot be changed unless the receiving team calls a time out. Once a time-out is called, the head coach must declare the change to the head official. The head official will notify the defensive coach during the time-out of the decision change.

- 6.4 The kick off may be caught either on the fly or off a bounce and **control and possession of the ball** maintained by any manual chair user on the receiving team. If, in an attempt to gain control of the ball, a manual chair user “muffs” the ball and it falls to the floor, then it will be ruled dead and the receiving team will take possession at that spot. If the manual chair user, in the act of trying to gain control or possession of the ball, were to cause the ball to come in contact with a power chair player or their chair without it touching the ground, then the ball is considered live when it hit the power chair, and that player now has possession of the ball and may advance it. If a manual chair player catches the ball cleanly and maintains control, they may also advance it.
- 6.5 If a player in a power wheelchair touches the ball with their body or their wheelchair while it is in-bounds, they are considered to have possession of the ball and may return it, without actually having physical possession of the ball.
- 6.6 If the kick off hits a building structure, the ball is dead.
- 6.7 The ball will be placed either one-foot before the first down line on the offensive (receiving) team’s side of the field or at the spot where the ball hit the building structure. The receiving team has the right to choose where the ball will be placed.
- 6.8 The kicking team may **not** gain possession of the ball on the kick off. If the ball is touched by a member of the receiving team and then recovered by a member of the kicking team, the ball will be considered down and the receiving team will take possession at that spot. A free ball **may** be picked up by the receiving team and advanced so long as the concessions in Rule 6.3 and 6.4 (above) have been met.
- 6.9 Teams must conduct a kick-off within the time frame allowed under each division’s play clock (45 seconds for JV, 35 seconds for varsity). Failure to do so will result in a “delay of game” penalty.

7.0 GAME CLOCK

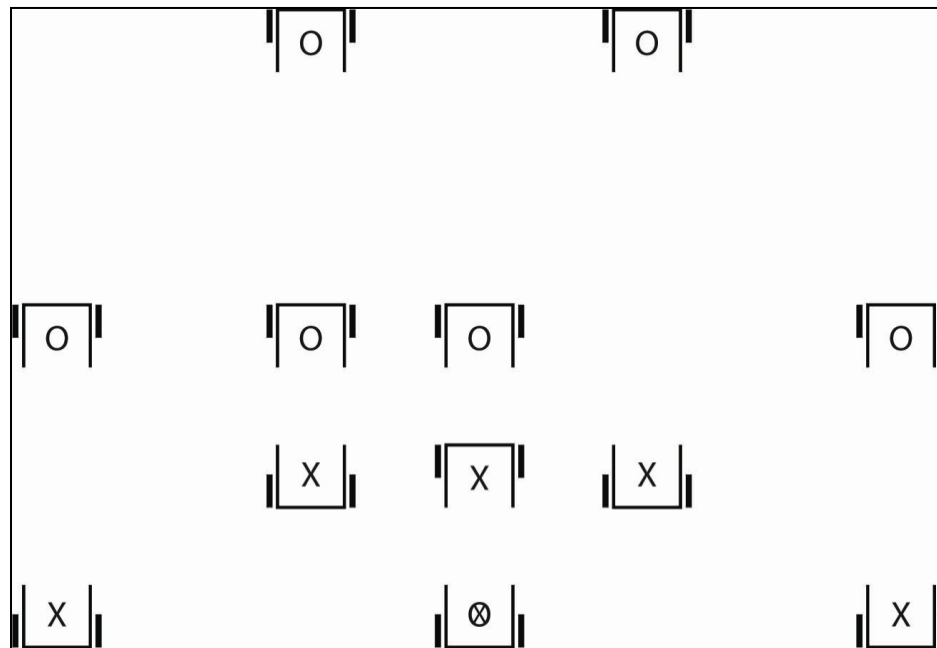
- 7.1 The game clock is a running clock and will not stop due to incomplete passes, etc.
- 7.2 The clock will stop for: time outs, injuries, or at the game officials’ discretion.
- 7.3 The clock will stop for penalties, restarting when the play clock is started by the official’s signal.
- 7.4 In the last two (2) minutes of each half, the referee can stop the game and play clock until the defensive team is ready. Once the defensive team is ready, the game and play clock will start. This is a judgment call by the official if they feel the defensive team is taking too long to get to the line of scrimmage.

8.0 SCORING

- 8.1 Touchdowns constitute six points. Players in manual wheelchairs have scored a touchdown when the ball is in their possession and has broken the plane of the end zone (goal line). Players in power wheelchairs have scored a touchdown when at least one wheel of their chair has touched or crossed the end-zone line.
- 8.2 One point will be awarded for the PAT when the ball is “kicked” (thrown) through the first two vertical uprights that support the hanging basket. If the ball hits an upright or any part of the structure and does not go through, the PAT is not good. The ball can hit part of the upright and count for a score if it goes through the upright. If there are no vertical supports, the ball must pass directly over the backboard, as if the upright supports were present.
- 8.3 The offense must declare a PAT “kick” attempt in the same manner they would a field goal and a punt (see Rule 15.0). The defensive team can rush upon the snap of the ball.
- 8.4 For Varsity and Junior Varsity teams: On “kick” attempts for the PAT (one-point conversions), the ball will be placed at the top of the free throw circle on the defensive side of the field.
- 8.5 Two points are awarded for successfully running or passing for the PAT.
- 8.6 The ball will be placed at the free throw line when either Varsity or Junior Varsity teams elect to try for a two-point conversion. Exception: If a goal line has been moved (as necessitated by a smaller gym), the 2-point conversion line must also be moved the same distance.
- 8.7 Three points will be awarded for a field goal when the ball is thrown through the first two vertical uprights that support the hanging basket. If the ball hits an upright or any part of the structure and does not go through, the field goal does not count. The ball can hit part of the upright and count for a score if it goes through the upright. If there are no vertical supports, the ball must pass directly over the backboard, as if the upright supports were present. The offense must declare a field goal attempt in the same manner they would a punt (see Rule 15.0). The defensive team can rush upon the snap of the ball.
- 8.8 If the field goal attempt is unsuccessful, the opposing team will be awarded the ball, on takeover of downs, at the original line of scrimmage. No matter the result of the attempted field goal, the ball is dead.
- 8.9 A safety constitutes two points.

9.0 OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS

- 9.1 Any formation may be employed as long as there is a minimum three-person line. The backfield players must be far enough behind the offensive line so that their wheelchairs do not become entangled with the start of play. (See Rule 9.5 for exception). See Diagram 9-1.



**DIAGRAM 9-1
LEGAL OFFENSIVE FORMATION**

- 9.2 The center may face forward, sideways or in a direct reverse position; i.e., facing the backfield.
- 9.2.1 The offensive center in forward position will take their position with their front casters behind the line of scrimmage.
- 9.2.2 The offensive center in reverse and sideways position will take their position with their large wheels behind the line of scrimmage.
- 9.3 Center may pick up the ball and center it from their lap. However, they must make one deliberate pass or hand-off, but no more than that. Any faking by hands of center, with or without the ball, constitutes putting the ball into play as a centered ball.
- 9.4 Offensive Linesmen cannot line up with any part of their wheelchair beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 9.5 Where the "I"-formation QB is employed, the QB may take position to the rear of the center in forward, sideways or reverse position, as long as his foot platform does not overlap, or is tangent to the rear most portion of the center's chair.
- 9.6 Players can be in lateral motion when the ball is snapped. No player can be in forward motion when the ball is snapped.

9.7 The player in motion can move forward to the line of scrimmage but must completely stop before the ball is snapped. Failure to do so will result in a penalty of illegal motion.

10.0 DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS

10.1 The defensive team can line up on or behind the line of scrimmage. As with able-bodied football, there is a neutral zone between the offensive and defensive lines that delineates the line of scrimmage. Neither team is allowed to line up in the neutral zone.

10.2 Any form of defensive formation may be employed as long as there is a minimum of two players on the line of scrimmage (see Diagram 9-2).

10.3 The defensive team can rush the quarterback as soon as the ball is snapped.

10.4 Defensive players cannot rush or push through an offensive player. The defender must go around the offensive player. Failure to do so will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

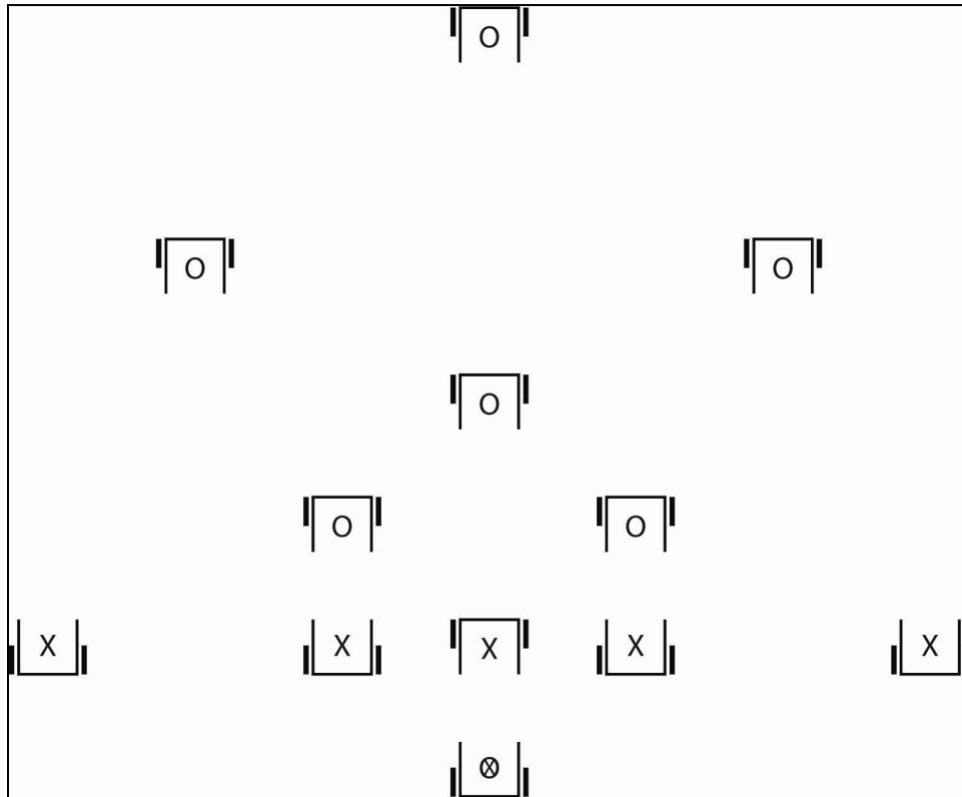


DIAGRAM 9-2
LEGAL DEFENSIVE FORMATION

11.0 TACKLING

- 11.1 An offensive player is tackled when **one hand** of a defensive player are simultaneously on him (above the knees), chair excluded. (See Rules 11.5 and 11.6 for exceptions.)
- 11.2 The tackler must be seated in his/her chair during the tackle, and cannot grab an opponent or their chair prior to the tackle. This would constitute a holding penalty. (Note: Grabbing an opponent or chair after the tackle to prevent spilling of either person is legal and encouraged.)
- 11.3 A ball carrier may shift position in the chair to ward off a defensive player's hand, but cannot use hands or arms in the manner of stiff-arming and/or hacking. This is illegal use of the hands.
- 11.4 Forcible extension of the arms upon tackling (shoving) is considered unnecessary roughness.
- 11.5 Individuals that are using a power wheelchair may tackle a player by placing one hand on the offensive ball carrier (above the knees) or the offensive ball carrier's wheelchair.
- 11.6 Individuals with functional use of one arm (hemiplegics, amputees, cerebral palsy, etc.) may tackle a player by placing one hand on the offensive ball carrier (above the knees) or the offensive ball carrier's wheelchair. These players will be identified by wearing a "football play wrist band" on the arm with which they tackle.
- 11.7 If an offensive player and a defensive player are pushing towards each other, it is their mutual responsibility to control their wheelchair so as to avoid excessive contact. Failure to do this could result in an unsportsmanlike conduct or unnecessary roughness penalty against either, or both, players.

12.0 BLOCKING

- 12.1 Blocking or colliding chairs for blocking from a front angle is legal. The contact from the offensive player's footplate must be completely in front of the defensive player's rear axle.
- 12.2 Any offensive player cannot continue to block or push a defender backwards or sideways. If the offensive player does this, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called. If the player continues to do this, they will be ejected from the game.
- 12.3 Players in power wheelchairs cannot run into manual or power wheelchairs to block at full force. The player must be in control of their power chair at all times. If the player is not in control of their wheelchair, it will be an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. If the player continues to play out of control, they will be ejected from the game.
- 12.4 Blocking from rear, into the large wheels, anti-tip casters or the fifth wheel constitutes "clipping". Interpretation: "into the large wheels" means that contact with the opponents' chair is made to the rear of the foremost part of the hand rim.

- 12.5 It is considered "holding" to maintain foot platforms in spokes or otherwise "lock" a chair even if such should inadvertently occur.
- 12.6 There is no "neutral zone" where clipping is overlooked.
- 12.7 All four wheels must be on the ground at all times for manual wheelchair users, or it is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. "Tilting" is not allowed. Tilting is defined as coming up onto two wheels, either two wheels on the same side in order to gain a longer reach or tilting forward so that the foot platform touches the playing surface. It is not referring to a player who pops a small wheelie due to the momentum of pushing, nor does it refer to power chairs that will sometimes pop a small wheelie when they are put quickly into forward motion.
- 12.8 When two chairs are locked dead ~ no motion ~ the two parties must mutually break and begin to play again. This is the only time a player may lay a hand on another player's chair.

13.0 PASSING

- 13.1 All six players of the offensive team are eligible pass receivers.
- 13.2 Only one forward pass towards the line of scrimmage is allowed. There is no limit to the number of passes that can be thrown backwards or laterally. It is illegal for the offensive team to throw a pass after the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. An illegal forward pass is defined as "any part of the players wheels" being over the line of scrimmage. The penalty is five feet behind the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- 13.3 Individuals that have decreased upper body functioning and use power wheelchairs will have "caught" a pass when the ball has struck them or their wheelchair prior to touching the ground. Once the ball has done this, it is considered "caught" by the user of the power wheelchair. The ball itself is now irrelevant. Therefore, if it bounces off the user of the power wheelchair or off the wheelchair itself and is caught by another player, it shall not constitute a completed or intercepted pass because it has already been "caught" by the first player in the power chair that it touched. If a defender is in a power wheelchair and the passed ball touches them *before touching the ground or the receiver*, it is considered an interception.
- 13.4 Offensive players cannot leave the field of play and come back onto the field to catch a pass.
- 13.4.1 If a player leaves the field of play and upon their return, participates in the play (i.e., catches a pass, makes a tackle, etc.) then the official will assess a 15-foot illegal participation penalty.

- 13.4.2 If a player leaves the field of play and returns inbounds without participating in the play, then the official will assess a 5-foot illegal substitution penalty.
- 13.4.3 If a player is forced out of bounds they may reenter without penalty so long as they reenter the field of play immediately and at the nearest possible point of entry.
- 13.5 A player must have all four wheels in-bounds in order for the pass to be complete.
- 13.6 If a ball is intercepted in the end zone, the player may either bring the ball out of the end zone to try and advance the ball or they may down the ball in the end zone. If they down the ball, it will be spotted at the top of the key just like a touch back on a kick off.
- 13.7 Interceptions:
 - 13.7.1 Interceptions made during a PAT attempt result in a dead ball (the interception may not be advanced).
 - 13.7.2 Interceptions made during regulation play (excluding PAT attempts) may be advanced.
 - 13.7.3 Interceptions made during all overtime play (regular series play or PAT attempts) result in a dead ball and ends the series for that team. No interception may ever be advanced during overtime play.

14.0 RUNNING

- 14.1 Rushing plays are legal.
- 14.2 A running play may start with a hand-off or a pitch out.
- 14.3 If the quarterback or the running back drops the hand off or pitch out, the play is over and the ball is spotted at the point the ball touched the floor.
- 14.4 If a hand off is made to a player in a power wheelchair, the quarterback must immediately drop the ball to the floor. If the quarterback does not immediately drop the ball to the floor, it is an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- 14.5 After the quarterback touches the player or the power wheelchair and immediately drops the ball to the floor, it is legal for the quarterback to pretend to have the ball.
- 14.6 If a pitch out is made to a player in a power wheelchair, the ball must either hit the player or the wheelchair. If the ball hits neither, the play is over and the ball is spotted where the ball hits the floor.

15.0 PUNTING

- 15.1 Punts are simulated by a forward pass upon declaration to the opponents through the official.
- 15.2 The offensive team must inform the official if they choose to punt in sufficient time to snap the ball before the 35-second or 45-second count would be completed.
- 15.3 The official will interrupt the 35-second or 45-second count and notify the defense by a kicking signal that the play will be a punting play. The center snap will not be permitted until the defense has had time to adjust. (Note: under game conditions, a team announcing the punt prior to breaking the huddle fulfills the spirit of the above regulations.)
- 15.4 The defensive team must have at least two players on the line of scrimmage in order for their formation to be legal.
- 15.5 If the punt is declared too late for proper notification, it will be considered "illegal procedure". If the punt is not declared properly at all, the play is treated as a forward pass.
- 15.6 The center snap will not be permitted until the defense has had time to adjust.
- 15.7 The receiving team can rush upon the snap of the ball.
- 15.8 The receiving team may catch the punt on the fly and return it or they can pick it up off the ground and return it. The player in a power wheelchair does not have to be physically in possession of the ball in order to return it; they simply have to touch the ball with their body or wheelchair.
- 15.9 If the punt hits a building structure, the ball is dead.
- 15.10 The ball will be placed either one foot before the first down line on the offensive (receiving) team's side of the field or at the spot where the ball hit the building structure. The receiving team has the right to choose where the ball will be placed.
- 15.11 If a punt goes out of bounds, the ball is spotted where it went out of bounds.
- 15.12 If a punt goes into the end zone, it is a touchback and the ball is spotted at the top of the key.

16.0 FUMBLE

- 16.1 When the ball is fumbled, it is dead. The last team that had possession of the ball maintains possession.
- 16.2 An opponent cannot steal the ball from a player's lap. This is considered an unsportsmanlike act.

- 16.3 A player who falls out of their chair with the ball in their possession when they fall will retain possession of the ball and play stops where they fell.

17.0 PLAYERS OUT OF CHAIR

- 17.1 When a player has fallen out of his chair, it will be up to the official's discretion whether the fallen player is in any danger (in front or behind the play). If any official determines that there is danger to the fallen player or any other player by the continuation of play, the official will blow the whistle twice and all play will immediately stop. It is the duty of all players to prevent and/or avoid fallen players.
- 17.2 If an official stops play because of a fallen player on the defensive team when the offense appeared to be in play for a gain, the ball will be placed at the furthest point advanced before the whistle and an additional down will be granted. Abuse of this rule may permit the official to grant an automatic touchdown and/or expulsion of the guilty player from the game.
- 17.3 If an offensive player falls and the official deems it necessary to blow the whistle, play is stopped and it is a loss of down. The ball is spotted wherever it was when the whistle was blown.
- 17.4 If an official stops play because of a fallen player on the offensive team when the defense appeared to be in play for a loss, the ball will be placed at the furthest point loss before the whistle, plus an additional five feet with a loss of down. Abuse of this rule may permit the official to grant an automatic loss of possession and/or expulsion of the guilty player from the game.

18.0 PENALTIES

All accepted penalties will result in a replay of that down except in the case of an illegal forward pass (see Rule 18.9) or a fallen player (see Rules 17.3 and 17.4).

- 18.1 Any five- or 10-foot defensive penalty within the defensive team's top of the key shall not exceed half the distance of the goal line. For the 15-foot penalties within the defensive team's top of the key and approaching the goal line, the ball will be placed on the bottom part of the free throw circle or half the distance to the goal line, whichever is further.
- 18.2 Off-sides - five feet. Note: Officials should notify players **no more than 3 times, per team, per game**, if they are taking an improper position before the ball is snapped without calling time, delaying the game or declaring a penalty. Offsides are dead-ball fouls. Any offside infraction results in an immediate whistle, ending the play. The officials will assess the 5-foot penalty and replay the down.
- 18.3 Holding (see rule 11.2 and 12.5)
- 18.3.1 Defensive - 10 feet from point of infraction.

- 18.3.2 Offensive - 10 feet from line of scrimmage, or from point of infraction if behind the line of scrimmage.
- 18.4 Clipping - (see rule 12.4) - 15 feet from point of infraction.
- 18.5 Illegal Use of Hands
- 18.5.1 Offensive - 10 feet from line of scrimmage.
- 18.5.2 Defensive - 10 feet from either the point of infraction or line of scrimmage, whichever is further. There is no legal use of hands in this game, offensively or defensively, except in tackling (see Rule 11.0).
- 18.6 Unsportsmanlike Conduct - Penalty shall be 15 feet from either the point of infraction or the line of scrimmage, whichever is further. (Note: A recurrence of the same act or misdemeanor will justify the player's expulsion from the game).
- 18.6.1 Flagrant misconduct warrants no warning as the rules of sportsmanship and fair play are inherent.
- 18.6.2 Any deliberate attempt at bodily harm to a player or official will warrant immediate dismissal from the game.
- 18.6.3 Vulgarity will not be tolerated.
- 18.6.4 It is illegal to intentionally fall out of chair or to be dragged out when such is avoidable.
- 18.6.5 An opponent cannot steal the ball from a player's lap. This is considered an unsportsmanlike act.
- 18.6.6 All players are expected to control their wheelchairs and avoid excessive contact so as to avoid damage to wheelchairs or injury to players.
- 18.7 Pass Interference - Defensive pass interference, if accepted: the ball is placed at the spot of the penalty and the down is replayed. Offensive pass interference, if accepted: the ball is placed five feet behind the line of scrimmage and the down is replayed.
- 18.7.1 It is legal for the defensive player to make contact with the offensive player within five feet of the line of scrimmage.
- 18.7.2 If any contact that gives an advantage occurs past five feet from the line of scrimmage, and the ball is catchable (or not catchable), it is pass interference.
- 18.7.3 Examples of illegal contact (but not limited to) are:
- From the side (perpendicular)

- Side by side
- Straight on

18.7.4 Contact that gives an advantage beyond five feet of the line of scrimmage and is away from the ball is not pass interference. It is holding.

18.7.5 A defender who is covering a receiver may not put their arms up blocking the receiving player's view of the incoming pass without looking back to play the ball. This is a form of pass interference.

18.8 Illegal Motion - five feet from the line of scrimmage.

18.8.1 It is illegal for any offensive player to be moving forward prior to the snap of the ball. The exception to this rule is when the offensive player that was in motion and they move up to the line of scrimmage and completely stop before the ball is snapped (see Rule 9.7).

18.9 Illegal Forward Pass

It is illegal for the offensive team to throw a pass after the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. The penalty is five feet behind the line of scrimmage and a loss of down. An illegal forward pass is defined as "any part of the players wheels" being over the line of scrimmage.

18.10 Leaving the Field of Play

18.10.1 If a player leaves the field of play and upon their return, participates in the play (i.e., catches a pass, makes a tackle, etc.) then the official will assess a 15-foot illegal participation penalty.

18.10.2 If a player leaves the field of play and returns inbounds without participating in the play, then the official will assess a 5-foot illegal substitution penalty.

18.10.3 If a player is forced out of bounds they may reenter without penalty so long as they reenter the field of play immediately and at the nearest possible point of entry.

18.11 Illegal Procedure – five feet from the line of scrimmage.

18.11.1 Illegal procedure, as it relates to able-bodied (AB) players would include, but is not limited to, players rushing the QB, rushing over the line of scrimmage to make a tackle on any offensive player with the ball, etc. (for full explanation of the role of AB players in wheelchair football see "AB RULES CLARIFICATION FOR WF", as well as Section 7 = Team Eligibility, of AAASP Policies & Procedures). The penalty is as follows: First time: warning, plus 5-foot penalty; second and subsequent times: 15-foot penalty.

- 18.12 Delay of Game – five feet from the line of scrimmage.
- 18.13 Intentional Grounding - 5 feet from where the player was when the ball was released, plus loss of down. Intentional grounding is defined as an offensive player making a forward pass when there is no receiver in the area, in order to avoid a play for loss.
- 18.14 Coach's Box - Coaches must stay on their side of the field. The players' bench will be within the coaches' area and as far from the sideline as possible. The coach's box will be delineated at 14 feet from the end line and then again at 28 feet from the end line. (NOTE: In venues where teams are on opposite sidelines, the box should be 14 feet long and centered at midfield). The coaches can move anywhere along their half of the court, unless and until the officials feel the need to enforce the coach's box. PROCEDURE: First warning: all coaches must stay seated and in the coach's box. Second warning: 5-foot penalty. Third warning: 15-foot penalty. Fourth warning: 15-foot penalty and ejection of head coach.

19.0 OFFICIALS

- 19.1 Games will be officiated by a team of three: a line judge, a head official and a back judge.
- 19.2 The line judge will stand opposite the table on the line of scrimmage. They will mark the line of scrimmage with a beanbag and will assist the teams with lining up correctly. They will be responsible for calling penalties committed on the line of scrimmage (offsides, holding, illegal use of the hands, personal fouls, etc.).
- 19.3 The head official (a/k/a, referee or “white hat”) will stand behind the offensive line. They will administer the ball, start the play clock and watch for penalties on the line of scrimmage and in the offensive side of the court (holding, pass interference, personal fouls, etc.).
- 19.4 The back judge will stand behind the defensive line. They will be responsible for keeping the downs and the play clock, and for calling any penalties on the defensive side of the court (holding, personal fouls, illegal use of the hands, etc.).
- 19.5 The head official will administer the ball either by placing it on the ground or handing it to the center (if the center is ready and waiting). They will then step behind the offensive line and immediately start the play clock. They should start the play clock immediately – regardless of whether or not the offense or defense is up to the line.