

# IMMANUEL BIBLE CHURCH 2007 MEN'S FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES

## RULE 1-TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

**Art. 1-IBC Membership:** All teams must be captained by a member or regular attendee of Immanuel Bible Church and must include at least three members or regular attendees of Immanuel Bible Church, with the exception that teams captained by a member or regular attendee of another church may participate, provided that the team is sponsored by a member or regular attendee of Immanuel Bible Church and includes at least three members or regular attendees of the other church.

**Art 2-Eligibility:** The only individuals eligible to participate in the league are those person identified on the team roster, which shall be submitted in final form to the Commissioner *by the third week of the regular season*.

### **Art. 3- Conduct and Sportsmanship:**

**A. Purpose of the League:** This league has been formed to provide an enjoyable and friendly opportunity to play football with our fellow Christians at Immanuel Bible Church and at other local churches, as well as to give church members an opportunity for outreach to friends and colleagues outside the church. Make every effort to avoid any disputes, controversy, hard feelings, and altercations. If it stops being friendly, it stops being fun, and stops being a good witness.

**B. Fighting:** Fighting is strictly forbidden. Any player that initiates physical contact or participates in any dispute or fight involving physical contact will be banned from participation in the league for the remainder of that game and one additional full game, regardless of the circumstances and without exception. The Commissioner, in his discretion, may impose more severe penalties, including a permanent ban on participation.

**C. Ejection:** The officials, in their judgment, may eject a player from any team for repeated instances of unnecessary roughness or for persistent or aggravated verbal abuse. Once ejected, the player must leave the vicinity of the playing field. The ejected player may not play in his team's next game even if it is a playoff game. If a player is ejected from a game twice in one season, he shall no longer be eligible for the remainder of his team's games, including the playoffs. Examples of actions constituting the basis for ejection include:

A. Abusive or insulting language directed at the officials or an opposing player, including **any** obscene language;

B. Any acts of unfair play;

C. Intentionally kicking at the ball (other than during a legal kick);

D. Spiking the ball into the ground;

E. Throwing the ball high into the air;

F. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player (**automatic ejection**);

G. Intentionally contacting a game official during the game; (**automatic ejection**);

H. Intentionally swinging and arm, hand, or fist at an opposing player (**automatic ejection**).

**PENALTY:** Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Dead Ball, 15 yards (and/or objection). The second unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or non player results in a disqualification. Referee's discretion: Three "flagrant" unsportsmanlike fouls in the season results in disqualification of a player for the remainder of the season.

**\*ANY TEAM THAT CLEARS THE SIDELINES WILL AUTOMATICALLY FORFEIT THE GAME AND MAY, AT THE COMMISSIONER'S DISCRETION, BE SUBJECT TO LEAGUE DISQUALIFICATION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SEASON AND/OR PLAYOFFS.**

**D. Littering:** Each team is responsible for clearing its sideline area of all trash and other items, such as water bottles, gym bags, clothing, etc., at the end of its game. The two teams that play the final game of the day are jointly responsible for clearing the field and sidelines of all litter and other items; however, this does not mean that teams with games earlier in the day are not responsible for cleaning up after their games.

## **RULE 2-THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT**

**Art. 1-The Game:** A team consists of 8 players. A team needs a minimum of 6 players to start or continue a game. (*see forfeits*).

**Art. 2-Team Captains:** Each team shall designate a team captain. The captain's first choice is irrevocable. Only the captain shall have the privilege to speak with the official(s) during the game.

**Art 3-Persons Subject to Rules:** Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, spectators, and other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of the officials assigned to the game.

**Art 4-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. The team captain may appeal a Referee's decision with the Commissioner by email or phone call within 24 hours of the game. If the Commissioner is party to the game, the Assistant Commissioner will make the ruling.

**Art. 5-The Field:** Length is divided into four 20 yard zones and two 10 yard end zones. The field width is 40 yards at all points. A team in possession of the ball shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone by scrimmage. The line to gain shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless the distance was lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such a case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the line to gain.

### **Art. 6-Player Equipment:**

**A-Pants/Shorts:** The pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags.

**B-Flag belt:** Each player must wear a one piece belt with two "pop" flags attached. The flag belt and flags must be free of any knots and the Referee must check all participants entering play to make sure that the player's flags are fully accessible.

**C-Shoes:** Metal Cleats are not allowed.

**D-Football:** The referee shall decide the legality of any ball. The game ball will be an official NFL or NCAA ball or one similar thereto. The teams are responsible for retrieving the ball and having it ready for each play. The offensive team may keep the ball in their huddle.

**E-Jersey:** Players may wear any Jersey as long as the Referee determines that the player's flags are clearly visible and accessible. If the referee determines that a player's jersey is impeding his opponent's ability to grab the flag, the referee will ask the player to fix the jersey. If the referee has to ask the player a second time, the player must leave the field for one play to fix the jersey. If the referee has to ask the player a third time, an Unsportsmanlike conduct foul will be called, see Rule 9, art. 5.

**Art. 7- Player Equipment-Illegal:** A player wearing jewelry, billed hats (unless the bill is facing backwards), using sticky or foreign substance on equipment or body shall not be permitted to play.

Players with leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material must have both sides and all edges covered with padding at least 1/4" thick.

## **RULE 3-DEFINITIONS**

**Art. 1-Line of Scrimmage:** The offensive line of scrimmage is the plane defined by the ball in relation to the side lines. The defensive line of scrimmage is a parallel plane to the offensive line of scrimmage located one yard towards the goal the defense is defending.

**Art. 2-Fumble:** is a loss of player possession other than by handing, passing or kicking the ball. A fumble that is recovered by another player before the ball touches the ground may be advanced by that player. If the fumble is recovered by an opposing player prior to touching the ground, the opposing team gains possession.

**Art. 3-Muff:** is an unsuccessful attempt to catch the ball, the ball being touched in the attempt.

**Art. 4-Removing the Flag:** When the flag is clearly removed from the runner's flag belt, the play shall end and the ball is declared dead. The ball is spotted where it was when the runner was deflagged. If a player's flag(s) inadvertently fall to the ground, the deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the ball carrier between the shoulders and knees. A player may leave his feet in order to remove a flag.

## **RULE 4-PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, FORFEITS**

**Art. 1-Forfeits:** If at the scheduled game time a team does not have the minimum of 6, they will be given 10 minutes to get the minimum number. If at anytime during the 10-minute forfeit period the minimum number of players arrive, they will be allowed to play, but the offending team will lose all options concerning the coin flip. If the 10 minute period lapses the team that does not have the minimum of 6 will be assessed a forfeit.

**Art. 2-Start of Each Period:** The game shall start at the center of the field for the coin toss. The captain winning the toss shall have the first choice of the following options: 1) choose whether his team will kick or receive; 2) choose the goal his team will defend; or 3) defer to the second half. If the winning captain chooses option (1) or (2), the second coach will then have the right to choose from the leftover option. If the winning captain defers to the second half, then the losing captain must choose either option (1) or (2) and the winning captain shall have the option of choosing option (1) or (2) at the beginning of the second half.

**Art. 3-Playing Time:** Shall be two 25 minute halves. The clock will run continuously for the 25 minutes until the two-minute warning unless stopped by a team or official time out. Inside the two minute warning, the clock will stop for incompletions, out-of-bounds plays, between scoring and the ensuing kick-off and for defensive penalties and delay-of game penalties.

**Art. 4- Ball in Play:** A team has 30 seconds to put the ball in play after the referee has signaled ready for play. **PENALTY: Delay of game 5 yards.**

**Art. 5-Tie Game:** In case of a game ending in a tie score, the field captains shall be brought together and a coin toss will be flipped to determine the options, as in the start of the game. There will be only one coin flip during the overtime period. Field captains will alternate choices, if additional overtime periods are played. The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense, or direction. The team will go in the same direction. Each team will be given four downs from the same ten yard line (ten yards for a touchdown). The object will be to score a touchdown. If the first team which is awarded the ball scores,

the second team will still have four downs to win or tie the game. Try-for-points must be attempted during overtime. If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game.

**Art. 6-Time-Outs:** Each team is entitled to 2 - 30 second charged time-outs during each half. One additional time out will be granted each team in each overtime period. **PENALTY:** If the offense calls a time out after using their allotted number, the penalty shall be loss of down and the clock will restart as soon as the ball has been placed by the referee. If the defense calls a time out after using their allotted number, the penalty shall be 5 yards and the clock will restart as soon as the ball has been placed by the referee.

**Art. 7-Game and Play Disputes:** In order to keep the games on schedule, the game **CLOCK** will roll unless stopped by the official, or with a charged time out, or at the two minute warning. If a team disagrees with a call, the *team captain* must tell the referees that he wishes to discuss the ruling with them before the next play. Similar to the NFL, a team will be automatically charged with a time out to ensure that the clock is controlled fairly for both teams. If the dispute is accepted by the referees, then the ruling will change and the team's time out will be returned; however, if the dispute is not upheld, the team's time out will not be returned and the game will continue. *Team captains are the only players who can challenge the ruling on the field.*

## **RULE 5-BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL**

**Art. 1-Ball Declared Dead:** A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound the whistle or declare it dead:

- a. When any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground. NOTE: the ball carrier may contact the ball to the ground and the ball will remain live as long as no other body parts other than the foot or hand are in contact with the ground. The ball is considered to be part of the hand.
- b. When a backward pass, fumble or muff touches the ground. A snap which hits the ground before or after reaching the intended receiver is at the spot where it hits the ground.
- c. When a runner has a flag removed legally by a defensive player.
- d. When a passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball.

**Art. 2-Inadvertent Whistle:** In flag football it is not uncommon for a play to be mistakenly blown dead. In these cases, the offensive team shall have the option of replaying the down from the previous spot, or accepting the ball at the spot where it was blown dead. On all loose balls such as a pass in flight, the down must be replayed from the previous spot. After a change in possession, the team in possession at the time the ball is blown dead shall have the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.

## **RULE 6-KICKING THE BALL**

**Art. 1-Free Kicks:**

- a. A free kick begins each half of a game and following a safety. After a touchdown and try the ball will be placed on the scored upon team's 15 yard line
- b. Unless relocated by penalty, the kicking team's free kick line on kickoffs shall be on its 20 yard line.
- c. Unless relocated by penalty, the receiving team's restraining line shall be the 40 yard line.
- e. The ball may be advanced out of the end zone.
- f. If, after the kick, the ball hits the ground before touching a player, the ball is considered live and can be advanced by the receiving team or recovered by the kicking team, if the ball has traveled 20 yards. If the ball touches a player and then hits the ground, the ball is dead at that spot. See Rule 5, Art. 1.

g. A free kick which goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines untouched by the receiving team is a foul. A teams options are: 1. Take the ball where it went out of bounds. 2. Place the ball at the 40 yard line, or 3. Rekick with 5 yard penalty.

### **Art. 2-Protected Scrimmage Kick:**

- a. The team captain may request a protected scrimmage kick on any down. The captain must declare to the referee if his team wants a protected scrimmage kick.
- b. The kicking team must maintain at least 4 players within one yard of their scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. Neither team can cross their scrimmage line until the ball is kicked.
- c. The kicker must kick the ball immediately
- d. A protected scrimmage kick which fails to cross the Kicker's scrimmage line is dead where it hits the ground or is touched.
- e. The ball may be advanced out of the end zone.
- f. If after the kick the ball hits the ground before touching a player, the ball is considered live and can be advanced by the receiving team only. If the ball touches a player and then hits the ground, the ball is dead at that spot. See Rule 5, Art. 1.

## **RULE 7-SNAPPING, PASSING AND HANDING THE BALL**

### **Art. 1-Scrimmage Play**

- a. At least 4 players must be on the offensive scrimmage line at the time of the snap. **Penalty: 5 yards, replay the down.**
- b. Players may use a three or four point stance.
- c. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal line is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the team last in possession of the ball unless lost on downs.
- d. Motion - Anyone who goes in motion must be only going parallel or backward at the snap. A player in motion is not considered to be one of the 4 players on the scrimmage line. Once the referee signals that 4 are on the line, the offensive team must maintain 4 on the line. **Penalty: 5 yards, replay the down.**
- e. Center may snap the ball between the legs or outside the legs. The ball must be snapped from the ground.
- f. The ball may be moved by approval of the Referee due to poor field conditions.

**Art. 2-Forward Pass:** All players of either team are eligible to touch or catch a pass. During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind his team's offensive scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer's hand. Only one forward pass may be thrown per down.

### **Art. 3-Forward Pass Interference**

- a. **Pass Interference by Defense:** After the ball has been snapped and until it is touched by a receiver, a defender shall not interfere with a receiver while the ball is in flight. Pass interference includes when an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage. **Penalty: 15 yards or automatic first down, whichever is further. If pass interference by the defense occurs in the end zone, the ball shall be placed on the one yard line.**

**b. Pass Interference by Offense:** After the ball is thrown and until it is touched, there shall be no pass interference by an offensive player while the ball is in flight. **Penalty: 15 yards from the previous spot, replay the down.**

**Art 4-Running the ball:** After the ball has been snapped, which can be to anyone other than the 5 individuals on the line of scrimmage, the person receiving the snap may at anytime attempt to run the ball. If the ball is dropped the play is whistled dead (See Rule 5. Art 1).

## **RULE 8-SCORING PLAYS**

### **Art. 1-Point Values**

- a. Touchdown (no Try-For-Point)-----6 points
- b. Try-For-Point (Running or passing from 5 yards)-----1 point
- c. Try-For-Point (Running or passing from 10 yards)-----2 points
- d. Try-For-Point (Defensive interception or aired fumble to the other end zone--2 points
- e. Safety-----2 points

**Art. 2-Player Responsibility After Touchdown:** The player scoring the touchdown must raise their arms so that the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one pull and the official determines the flag has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed, the player is disqualified and it is a foul. **PENALTY: 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.**

## **RULE 9-CONDUCT OF PLAYERS**

### **Art. 1-Blocking**

- a. Blocking on the line of scrimmage shall consist of "checking" with the body or hands above the belt and below the neck in crouching position or standing position. Defensive backs may "check" wide receivers or play "bump and run" coverage, but may not continue to check the receiver once the receiver is more than five yards downfield **PENALTY: 15 yards from line of scrimmage.**
- b. No three point stance may be used while blocking; only the blocker's feet may be in contact with the ground. The blocker may extend his arms forward but may not extend his arms laterally or hold his opponent while blocking. **PENALTY: 15 yards from line of scrimmage.**
- c. Open field blocking for kick-off and punt returns shall be governed by this rule. Players may set stationary picks which shall not constitute blocking under this section; provided, however, that a moving pick shall be considered blocking and subject to the restrictions of subsection i.
- d. The defense is restricted to use of hands above the waist and below the neck of an opponent; unnecessary roughness is not allowed. **PENALTY: - 15 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down.**
- e. A defensive player may use his hands to push his opponent aside but may not hold his opponent while doing so. **PENALTY - 5 yards and automatic first down.**
- f. Neither an offensive nor a defensive player may use a forearm shiver. **PENALTY: 15 yards from line of scrimmage, and automatic first down if against defense.**
- g. No player shall leave his feet to throw a block. **PENALTY: 15 yards from line of scrimmage.**
- h. All players on both offense and defense can use a three point stance.

i. There shall be no blocking beyond the line of scrimmage by any offensive or defensive player. There shall be no blocking by any defensive player on any return of an interception. **PENALTY: 15 yards from line of scrimmage.**

**Art 2-Charging:** A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his path nor attempt to run between two opponents or between an opponent and a sideline, unless the space is such as to provide a reasonable chance for him to go through without contact. If a runner in his progress has established a straight line path, he may not be crowded out of that path, but if an opponent is able to legally establish a defensive position in that path, the runner must avoid contact by changing direction. (This is the same principle as the block/charge principle in basketball). **Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down ( i.e. Last down counts).**

### **Art. 3-Ball Carrier**

a. The ball carrier shall not guard his flags by blocking, with arms or hands, the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag. If the ball carrier is deemed to have guarded his flag during play, the referee will penalize the offending team. **Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down.**

b. The ball carrier shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with an extended hand or arm. **Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down.**

### **Art. 4-Flag Removal**

a. Offensive players must have possession of the ball before they can be legally deflagged.

b. A flag which becomes detached inadvertently (not removed by grabbing and pulling) does not cause play to stop.

c. Defensive Player shall not charge into an offensive player and create unnecessary contact (*i.e.* Tackling, grabbing and hanging on) to remove the flag. **Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the foul.**

d. In all situations where a play is in progress and a ball carrier loses the flag either accidentally, inadvertently or on purpose, the deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the ball carrier between the shoulders and knees.

e. Tampering with the flag or belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials or other such acts. **PENALTY: 10 yards from the previous spot, loss of down.** If the Referee determines that the flag or belt was intentionally tampered with to gain an advantage, the player will also be disqualified.

**Art. 5-Unsportsmanlike Fouls:** The Referee has discretion to call unsportsmanlike conduct if one person is involved in multiple penalty infractions to include multiple same penalty infractions after warning the team coach. The first unsportsmanlike conduct will result in a warning to the captain of the team. The second unsportsmanlike conduct, regardless of the infraction, will result in immediate removal of the game. Unruly players may be instructed to leave the general playing area at the discretion of the Referee. Failure to comply will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct call by the Referee. **PENALTY: 15 yards from the spot of the ball at the end of the play.** All other penalties during the play will be assessed independent of the unsportsmanlike conduct foul.

### **Penalties and Yardage:**

1. Not enough players on the line of scrimmage - 5 yards, replay the down
2. Illegal Motion - 5 yards, replay the down

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| 3.  | Defensive pass interference (by receiver)    | - | 15 yards from the previous spot                                  |
| 4.  | Offensive pass interference (by defender)    | - | 15 yards from the previous spot, or to next 1 <sup>st</sup> down |
| 5.  | Illegal Blocking and Tripping                | - | 5 yards from the spot of the foul, replay the down               |
| 6.  | Illegal rush by defense (defensive charging) | - | 5 yards from the previous spot, replay the down                  |
| 7.  | Offensive Charging                           | - | 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down                 |
|     | Defensive Charging (on deflagging)           | - | 10 yards from the spot of the foul                               |
| 8.  | Flag guarding                                | - | 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down                 |
| 9.  | Flag removal                                 | - | 10 yards and loss of down  |
| 10. | False start                                  | - | 5 yards, replay the down   |
| 11. | Encroachment                                 | - | 5 yards, replay the down   |
| 12. | Delay of game (incl. too many on field)      | - | 5 yards, replay the down   |
| 13. | Phantom Time Out                             | - | Loss of down, restart game clock (offense)                       |
|     |  | - | 5 yards, restart game clock (defense)                            |

## **Rule 10 - Standings for Playoff Seeding**

**Art. 1-Determining the Standings:** To determine the standings, the following point system will apply:

- a. The teams will be ranked according to the best overall won/lost percentage record.
  
- b. In the event two teams have the same record at the end of the season, the winner of the game between the teams will be ranked higher. If more than two teams have the same won/lost percentage, then the team with the best win/lost percentage against the other teams will be ranked higher.
  
- c. If the teams tied in their game(s) or have the same record in (b), above, the team with the best record in its division will be ranked higher. If a tie still exists, the team with the highest average point differential (excluding forfeits) will be ranked higher. If a tie still remains, a coin toss, supervised by the commissioner, will determine the respective rankings.