



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS  
2026 HOWARD COUNTY CO-REC FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES

[www.hcrpsports.org/adultfootball](http://www.hcrpsports.org/adultfootball)

*The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, through the League Commissioner, reserves the right to amend the rules and schedules as conditions may warrant.*

## 1. ROSTERS

- 1.1. Each team shall be limited to **20 players** at any one time.
- 1.2. Failure to turn in a roster before the first game will result in forfeiture of every game until the roster is on file with the League. Officials will not be assigned to any game in which a team does not have a roster on file with the League office.
- 1.3. Rosters are to be submitted on the official roster form through SportsEngine. Players listed without electronic signature and age are ineligible.
- 1.4. A player can only be on the roster of one team. Players cannot change to a different team at any point during the season. Teams cannot add players after the **fifth game of the season**.
- 1.5. Any additions or deletions must be put in writing and submitted to the League office before the player is eligible to play. Additions must include the player's full name, signature, address, and home and/or work phone numbers.
- 1.6. Teams using ineligible players shall forfeit each game in which the individual played. Further infractions will be subject to disciplinary actions as deemed necessary by the League Commissioner.

## 2. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1. Players cannot play for more than one team during the season. Only players listed on the official roster (at League Office) are eligible to play.
- 2.2. All players must be at least 18 years of age. Age determination date is the first scheduled game of the current season.
- 2.3. If a player's eligibility is challenged during a game, the challenged player must produce a state or federal issued ID. (driver's license, passport, military ID). If the player is unable or unwilling to produce the ID, then they are not eligible to participate in that game. The League Commissioner shall be notified, and further disciplinary actions will be taken if necessary.

## 3. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 3.1. Players ejected will serve a minimum of a one-game suspension (not including the game they were suspended from), further disciplinary action will be taken as needed by the League Commissioner.
- 3.2. League suspensions and disciplinary actions will be filed with the Department.
- 3.3. Refer to the "Standard Rules for Adult Sports" for further disciplinary actions.

## 4. SCORE REPORTING & STANDINGS

- 4.1. It is both teams' responsibility **to call or email** in the final score the next day following the game. Please report scores by emailing Krista Billingsley at [kbillingsley@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:kbillingsley@howardcountymd.gov). **Any score not reported within 24 hours will be ruled a double-forfeit.** Official standings will be kept on file at the Department. General standings can be viewed at [www.hcrpsports.org/adultfootball](http://www.hcrpsports.org/adultfootball). The purpose of score reporting is to ensure proper divisional play and to determine playoffs seeding. The website will display un-official standings. Official standings are kept on file at the league office.
- 4.2. Standings will be calculated as follows:
  - 4.2.1. Scoring Point system: 2pts for a Win, 1pt. for a Tie, 0 pts for a Loss
  - 4.2.2. Win percentage:  $(\text{Total recorded wins} + (.5 \times \text{number of ties}) / \text{Total Games})$
  - 4.2.3. Forfeits: A win will be assessed to the non-forfeiting team. A score of 28-0 will be entered. Forfeits will also result in a loss of your forfeit bond - See Rule 5.3.
- 4.3. Tie breakers will be:

4.3.1. Head to Head (always goes back to H2H)	4.3.3. Point Differential of overall record
4.3.2. Point Differential teams within the tie	4.3.4. Official Tie

## 5. OFFICIALS

- 5.1. Officials are using their best judgement. They are not required to explain judgement calls but may explain some calls if approached by a player or team manager in a respectful manner.
- 5.2. Officials are on the field to be the only unbiased arbiters of the game. Officials are not concerned with who wins or loses, but only fairness and safety. Players commit fouls and violations; officials view those infractions, judge the action, and then apply the rules of the game to what they had viewed. The rules then determine the penalty.
- 5.3. Officials have been instructed to pull flags for profanity, unsporting acts and excessive complaints or verbal abuse.
- 5.4. Officials have the power to remove any player(s) or spectator(s) from the game or the field if they are in violation of the League Rules, Adult Sports League Standard Rules, Park Rules or County Policy.

## 6. OFFICIAL PAYMENT

- 6.1. At or prior to the start of the game, each team manager is responsible for the \$40 (cash) official fee per game (on-site). The official fee **MUST** be paid prior to the start of the game otherwise it is considered a forfeit and the game will be canceled.
- 6.2. Once the game has started, the official fees are non-refundable regardless of how many minutes have been played.
- 6.3. The Department covers the officials' payment during the playoff tournament.

## 7. FORFEITS

- 7.1. Games rescheduled by the Department must be played as rescheduled or forfeited.
- 7.2. A forfeit is considered a game. Forfeited games will not be rescheduled. A 28-0 win will be given to the team that did not forfeit.
- 7.3. Teams that forfeit are responsible for all officials' fees for the forfeited game. Forfeiting teams will not receive a refund. The fee will be based on the per game fee the game officials are paid. Two forfeits in a given season may result in being ineligible for playoffs and/or being dropped from the league without the possibility of a refund. Forfeit Penalty is \$80 per game forfeited. Forfeiting teams must call 410-313-7275 to pay the \$80 forfeit fee by the following Friday at Noon (Office hours Monday-Friday 8AM-4:30PM) before their next scheduled game. If you fail to do so you will be removed from the league without refund and will not be eligible for the playoffs. A forfeit invoice will then be mailed to the team manager for payment. If payment is not remitted, further action will be taken.
- 7.4. Forfeit with notice – if a team knows that it will not have enough players for a future game, the team manager shall contact the League Commissioner (kbillingsley@howardcountymd.gov) at least 48 hours prior to the said game to be forfeited. In doing so, the game will still result in a 28-0 forfeit loss, but your team will not be charged the \$80 forfeit fee as the League Commissioner will have time to notify the opposing team and officials.

## 8. MISCELLANEOUS

- 8.1. The Department will provide cones to be used during games.
- 8.2. Games rescheduled by the Department must be played as rescheduled or forfeited.
- 8.3. When rescheduling a make-up game, the League Commissioner will make every effort to first schedule games extending beyond the last game on the same playing day. If that is not possible, then the League Commissioner **reserves the right to reschedule games on any day in order to complete league play.**
- 8.4. In case of rain/inclement weather on the day of the game, teams and referees should call the Inclement Weather line of the Park in which their game is scheduled after 4pm on game day. Telephone numbers are listed on the league schedule.
- 8.5. Should there be an unplayable field due to inclement weather occurring after 4pm, the decision of field playability will be left to the discretion of the referee.
- 8.6. Playoff awards will be given to a maximum of 18 rostered players.

## PLAYING RULES -

### 1 - PLAYING RULE      **GAME AND FIELD**

- 1.1. Touch Football as played in this League differs in several respects from that played in many areas. Our rules attempt to eliminate the heavy contact that results from unrestricted blocking and charging. No blocking is permitted on the line of scrimmage or down field (**blocking or screening is a 15-yard penalty**). The passer has five seconds to find a receiver before the defensive team can rush. There are no field goals. Games will consist of two equal halves of 20 minutes each. The clock shall be stopped only in the following situations: during a timeout; during a serious injury; or during the last two (2) minutes of each half – for incomplete passes or out of bounds plays.
- 1.2. The playing field shall be 80 yards long and 40 yards wide. There will be 12-yard end zone at each end of the field. This field shall be divided into four zones of 20 yards each.
- 1.3. Team boxes are between the 20-yard lines.
- 1.4. Teams need to be on opposite sidelines for the duration of the game.

### 2 - PLAYING RULE      **PLAYERS**

- 2.1. The offensive team shall consist of eight players (quarterback and seven receivers.) The defensive team shall consist of eight players.
- 2.2. Teams can play man-to-man or zone defense. On forced gender plays when a male player is QB, female players can play man-to-man or zone defense, male players must play man-to-man defense (and stay within 5-yards of their opponent until a female player has made a play on the ball). See Rule 11.
- 2.3. Each team shall designate a field captain for its offense and its defense. Only the captains may communicate with the officials on rule interpretations.
- 2.4. A player or coach/manager who is bleeding or who has blood on his uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. An athlete shall not continue competition unless the bleeding is controlled, and the wound is covered.

### 3 - PLAYING RULE      **UNIFORMS AND PLAYING EQUIPMENT**

- 3.1. Players shall wear a color-coordinated shirt and athletic shoes without metal cleats. Each team should have an alternative color coordinated shirt for each player in the event both teams have the same color shirts. It is the home team's responsibility to change to their alternate shirt if both teams are wearing the same color. The home team is listed first on the league schedule.
- 3.2. NFL and College-sized footballs are the only approved balls for this league. The referee has the right to determine if a ball is illegal and require a legal ball to be used. If a team cannot provide a legal ball, they will forfeit the game. Each team shall provide their ball when on offense.
- 3.3. The referee has the final say on the legality of equipment.
- 3.4. All forms of jewelry are prohibited.

#### 4 - PLAYING RULE **PENALTIES (Also see Disciplinary Action in the Standard Rules for all Adult Sports Leagues)**

- 4.1. Distance penalties shall be 5, 10, and 15 yards, but no single enforcement shall exceed one-half the distance towards the goal line (Exception: Defensive Pass Interference).
- 4.2. Yardage Penalties: The offended team has a choice of play or penalty. If the penalty is chosen, then the opponents will run the down over.
- 4.3. Anyone who strikes, shoves, pushes, bumps or otherwise physically or verbally threatens an official, a member of his/her team or any other team, spectator or county employee shall automatically be suspended from all Department-sponsored activities for at least 1-year from the date of the incident.
- 4.4. The use of vulgar or profane language may result in ejection of that player from the game.
- 4.5. Offside (snap infraction, illegal motion, encroachment, false start) - 5 yards.
- 4.6. Defensive Holding – 5 yards.
- 4.7. No contact downfield - the offensive player has the right of way; however, the offensive player cannot initiate contact and must make a reasonable attempt to avoid contact if a defender has an established position.
- 4.8. Illegal forward pass - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down if the passer crosses over the scrimmage line to make a pass, 5 yards from the point of the pass if a down-field forward pass (forward lateral).
- 4.9. Illegal procedure of the ball – 5 yards.
- 4.10. Delay of game by the defensive team - 5 yards and the clock stops until the offensive team is ready.
- 4.11. Delay of game by the offensive team – 5 yards and loss of down.
- 4.12. Too many players on the field – 5 yards.
- 4.13. Intentionally grounded ball to avoid a loss of yardage- loss of down and 5 yards from the line of scrimmage (on a forced gender play the gender play must be repeated). Within 2 minutes of either half, the clock continues to run.
- 4.14. Illegal gender play when a male player is quarterback - If any male offensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before a female has made a play on the ball (or a male player who is legally within 5 yards of the offensive player he is covering) will be ruled a 5-yard penalty and loss of down. In this instance, the forced gender play must be replayed. The play is a live-ball play and option to enforce the penalty or keep the play will go to the defense. If the infraction is within 2 minutes of either half and the referee deems it intentional, then a 15-yard penalty would be assessed with potential adjustment to time on the clock as well.
- 4.15. Not using an operative player - The penalty for running three (3) consecutive plays without a female as an operative player will be loss of down and the female must still be the operative player on the next play. The penalty will keep being enforced until a female player is used. If the penalty occurs on 4<sup>th</sup> down, the ball will be turned over to the opposing team. On a bad snap, ball is dead, loss of down and next play must be a gender play.
- 4.16. Illegal cadence - If the player calling the cadence does not receive the snap, the play will not stand, and the down will be repeated. One person must call the cadence and receive the snap.
- 4.17. Offense not stationary for one (1) full second – all offensive players must be stationary for one (1) second before the snap of the ball, except for the one man in motion – 5-yard penalty.
- 4.18. Illegal forward pass – The offensive team may make one forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage during each play from scrimmage provided the ball does not cross the line and return behind the line before the pass – 5-yard penalty from the spot of the pass and loss of down.
- 4.19. Diving – diving for forward progress is not allowed.
- 4.20. Unnecessary roughness - 15 yards from the point of the foul or scrimmage line whichever is to the best advantage of the offended team.
- 4.21. The practice of chucking and bump and run techniques is prohibited. If either the offensive or defensive player puts his/her hands on their opponent when coming off the line of scrimmage, the official will call an unnecessary roughness penalty – 15-yard penalty.
- 4.22. Offensive pass interference - 15 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- 4.23. Defensive pass interference - first down for the offensive team at the point of infraction. If it is unsportsmanlike or intentional, it is an additional 15 yards from the point of infraction. Defensive pass interference committed in the defensive team's end-zone shall result in the ball placed at the one-yard line and an automatic first down.
- 4.24. Face guarding an opponent is pass interference - 15-yard penalty.
- 4.25. Illegal screening/picks - 15 yards from the point of foul.
- 4.26. Defensive charging - 15 yards from the point of foul.
- 4.27. Unsportsmanlike conduct - 15 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- 4.28. Additional Loss of Down Penalties:
  - 4.28.1. On a forced gender play, a male QB is sacked (ball is potted at the location of the sack, loss of down and gender play is still enforced).

#### 5 - PLAYING RULE **THE TOUCH**

- 5.1. It is a touch when an opponent:
  - 5.1.1. Touches a runner with **one hand** and with minimal force below the shoulders.
  - 5.1.2. Touches a player's clothing or the football (when the football is clearly in the possession of the opposing team), as the football is considered to be part of the ball carrier.
  - 5.1.3. Makes contact with a player while said player is making contact with a pass (forward or lateral.)
  - 5.1.4. It is a touch whenever a ball carrier's knee touches the ground.
- 5.2. It is considered a sack if the quarterback has the ball in his possession and is touched by a defensive player. The ball is then placed at the spot where the sack occurred.
- 5.3. No player shall make an unsportsmanlike touch of an opponent. An unsportsmanlike touch is one that is INTENTIONALLY

made:

- 5.3.1. with excessive force, or with a clenched fist.
- 5.3.2. In any manner judged unsportsmanlike by an official.

## 6 - PLAYING RULE PERIODS AND TIMING

- 6.1. Games are two (2) twenty (20) minute halves. Rest periods between halves shall be five (5) minutes. Each team's captain can call two (2) time-outs (30 seconds each), each game. The game clock will be stopped during called time-outs and when it becomes apparent that play will be interrupted because of injuries or unusual circumstances.
- 6.2. The game clock shall start when the ball is snapped.
- 6.3. The game clock will be stopped for all incomplete passes, out of bounds play, penalties, touchdowns, injuries and Referee and Team time-outs during the last two minutes of each half.
- 6.4. The game clock shall start when a punt is legally touched or the ball is snapped to start a period, restart after a charged time-out, or to restart after an out of bounds play / incomplete pass during the last two minutes of each half and for touchdowns.
- 6.5. Game clock does not run on PAT's with less than 2 minutes in either half.
- 6.6. If a time-out is called immediately following a touchdown, the clock will not run during the PAT and will not start again until the hike of the ball to start the next offensive drive.
- 6.7. If the game clock expires on a touchdown, the offense may still attempt the PAT.
- 6.8. If the game clock expires on a play in which the defense commits a penalty, the offense may choose to run an additional play if the penalty is accepted.
- 6.9. If the offense scores a TD on the additional play, they may also attempt the PAT.
- 6.10. If either team is ahead by 17 points or more, the clock will not stop during the last 2 minutes of the second half.

## 7 - PLAYING RULE STARTING THE GAME

- 7.1. At least five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled game time, the referee shall meet with the representatives of both teams for a coin toss. The team winning the toss may elect offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss will choose which side of the field they will start the game on.
- 7.2. The team that receives the ball first will start their offense series on their own 10 yd line (same spot as the two-point conversion).
- 7.3. At the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, the teams will switch sides and the team who was on defense to start the game will now be on offense.
- 7.4. Game time is forfeit time. No grace period.
- 7.5. A team must field a maximum of eight (8) players on the field at all times (typically 5 men and 3 women).
- 7.6. If a team cannot field eight (8) players, they can play with a minimum of six (6) players.
- 7.7. A maximum of five (5) men per team is allowed.
- 7.8. A minimum of one (1) woman per team is required during play
- 7.9. Possible combinations: 5M-3W 5M-2W 5M-1W 4M-4W 4M-3W 4M-2W 3M-5W 3M-4W 3M-3W  
2M-6W 2M-5W 2M-4W 1M-7W 1M-6W 1M-5W 0M-8W 0M-7W 0M-6W

## 8 - PLAYING RULE KICKS AND PUNTS

- 8.1. **There will be no kickoffs. The offense puts the ball into play at their own 10-yard line.**
- 8.2. Any punt into the end-zone will be brought out to the 10-yard line.
- 8.3. Punts are not free balls. They belong to the receiving team at the point where either the receiving team takes possession of the ball; the ball is downed by the kicking team, or at the point where the ball crosses out of bounds.
- 8.4. There are no punt returns.
- 8.5. The offensive team does not have to hike the ball to the punter.
- 8.6. The punter can stand anywhere behind the line of scrimmage and may not cross it when kicking the ball.
- 8.7. The offense cannot recover their own punt.
- 8.8. All punts must be declared. No Quick Kicks! Once declared, the choice is irrevocable. Attempts to block the punt or distract the punter shall not be allowed. No player from either team may cross the scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. Once the ball is kicked, players may move from the line of scrimmage.

## 9 - PLAYING RULE PLAY FROM SCRIMMAGE

- 9.1. **The offensive team has 25 seconds to get off their play once the ball is spotted.** The offensive team can use any alignment. The quarterback may NOT be his own snapper. **A snap from center may be tossed back to the quarterback or snapped between the legs, however if the snap makes contact with the ground, it will be considered a dead ball and loss of down.** If the player who is lined up behind the snapper (and calling the cadence) does not receive the snap the play will not stand, and the down will be repeated. One person only can call the cadence and receive the snap. See Rule 4.
- 9.2. The offense must have at least five (5) players at the line of scrimmage before the ball is hiked.
- 9.3. All offensive players must be set for at least one (1) second before the ball is hiked, except for a man in motion.
- 9.4. Only one (1) man in motion is allowed for each play. When the ball is hiked, he/she can only move parallel with the line of scrimmage or backwards.
- 9.5. All offensive players must be at least 5 yards from the sideline before the ball is hiked.
- 9.6. Beginning with the snap, the line judge shall count 6 seconds out loud (1-one thousand, 2-two one thousand, 3- three one thousand, 4- four one thousand, 5-five one thousand, GO!). There is no designated rusher. After 'Go', teams do not have to

rush a player.

- 9.6.1. Defense can rush as many players as they want except on a gender play. Only one can rush on a gender play.
- 9.7. The defense may not cross the line of scrimmage before the line judge finishes his rush count and says "GO".
- 9.8. The defense may however cross the line of scrimmage before the line judge finishes his rush count once the ball leaves the QB's hands, in this example, the QB must release the ball before the defense can rush.

## 10 - PLAYING RULE **SERIES OF DOWN/FORWARD PASSING ADVANCEMENT OF THE BALL**

- 10.1. When a team starts their offensive drive (start of game, after a turnover, after a score etc) they have four (4) downs to EARN a 1<sup>st</sup> down by either: advancing the ball across mid-field or by completing two (2) passes beyond the line of scrimmage. Only one mid-field 1<sup>st</sup> down can be earned per offensive drive.
- 10.2. The mid-field first down occurs when a team advances the ball across mid-field line within 4 downs (one foot must also cross the line).
- 10.3. The QB can run the ball on the offense's side of the field at any time, prior to advancing the ball across mid-field. Once the offense starts a new play on the defense's side of the field (past the mid-field line), the QB cannot run the ball until a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage in an attempt to rush the QB.
- 10.4. If the QB hands off or pitches the ball to another offensive player behind the line of scrimmage the rush count is then eliminated.
- 10.5. All forward passes must be thrown from a point behind the line of scrimmage.
  - 10.5.1. No forward passes from beyond the line of scrimmage (penalty- 5 yards from spot, loss of down.)
- 10.6. For a legal catch, a player must have possession and control of the ball and come down inbounds with at least **one foot**.
- 10.7. If an offensive player steps out of bounds during a play, he/she is ineligible to touch the ball until an eligible player has touched the ball (**penalty loss of down**).
- 10.8. If an offensive player is forced out of bounds by a defender, he/she is an eligible player as soon as he/she comes back in bounds.
- 10.9. If the defender causes the receiver to go out of bounds (in the eyes of the officials), prior to the receiver landing in bounds after a catch, the receiver will be credited with a reception where he/she went out of bounds. This includes a play in the end zone in which the official will rule the play a touchdown.
- 10.10. The practice of chucking, bump and run techniques is prohibited. If either the offensive or defensive player puts his hands on their opponent while coming off the line of scrimmage, illegal contact 5 yard, automatic first down.
- 10.11. Face guarding an opponent is pass interference.
- 10.12. Teams can earn a total of two (2) first downs per offensive drive (not including automatic first down penalties). These are the 2 completions for a first down (1) and crossing the mid-field line (2).
  - 10.12.1 If the defense commits a penalty in which the spot of the ball (after the penalty is assessed) would advance the ball across the mid-field line, the offense has the option to:
    - a) Receive the full penalty yardage, resulting in a mid-field first down for the offense.
    - b) Receive "half the distance to mid-field" penalty yardage and an automatic first down.

**Note: The above rule only applies when the offense has already earned their 2 completion/1<sup>st</sup> down prior to crossing mid-field.**

## 11. **GENDER PLAYS**

- 11.1. Teams must use a female player as an operative player within 3 consecutive plays or a penalty will be assessed.
- 11.2. The cycle using a female player within consecutive plays does not stop after a touchdown (for the conversion).
  - 11.2.1 If a team runs two male plays in a row and scores a touchdown on the second male play, the female must be used as an operative player for the PAT. The gender cycle resets when there is a change of possession.
- 11.3. During a forced gender play in which the offense lines up with a male as the QB, the other offensive male players **MUST** stay behind the line of scrimmage until a female either touches the ball or has an opportunity to make a play on the ball. Once a play is made by a female, the offensive male players may break off of the line of scrimmage and break out of man-to-man coverage.
- 11.4. If a female lines up as the QB on a forced gender play, the receivers may break off the line of scrimmage once the female QB receives the snap. For females on forced gender plays, any type of defense is allowed. For males when there is a male QB on forced gender plays, the male players must play a man-to-man defense. For males when there is a female QB on forced gender plays any type of defense is allowed.
- 11.5. The gender count resets after each change of possession or for specific penalties as defined by the officials.
- 11.6. If the offense has fewer players on the field than the defense, the male defenders may only double or triple-cover the male QB on a forced gender play.
- 11.7. If the ball comes within the 5-yard coverage zone of the player, you are covering (during a forced gender play) you may legally make a play on the ball as long as you do not leave the 5-yard coverage zone (of the offensive player you are covering). On forced gender plays only one player can rush the quarterback.
- 11.8. Male players may not cover female players or play back in the defensive zone on a forced gender play unless the offense has more female players (only when the offense has more than 3 female players) than the defense. In this case, **ALL** the females on the defense must play against the females and any number of extra females on the offense is how many male players may play in the zone coverage against them.
- 11.9. Teams must declare if they are using a female quarterback on gender plays.
- 11.10. **Definition of an operative player:**
  - Attempts a forward pass behind the line of scrimmage.
  - Receives a hand-off or lateral behind the line of scrimmage and is the primary runner.

Is the intended receiver in the eyes of the officials.

**11.11. Acceptable gender plays:**

A female lines up as the QB and is sacked by the defense (unless the officials rule it as intentional).

A female lines up as the QB and attempts a forward pass that crosses the line of scrimmage.

A female lines up as the QB and runs the ball across the line of scrimmage.

A female receives a lateral or hand-off and runs the ball.

A female receives a lateral or hand-off and attempts a forward pass to anyone.

A female is the intended receiver in the eyes of the officials.

A female catches a forward pass or any deflected pass.

**11.12. Unacceptable gender plays:**

A female lines up as QB and laterals, hands the ball off or completes a pass to a male behind the line of scrimmage.

A female hikes the ball into play.

A female QB intentionally grounds or spikes the ball.

A female QB takes a knee.

A female QB passes the ball to a male, which is completed behind the line of scrimmage.

A male QB intentionally (ruled by officials) throws the ball at a female receiver's feet.

A male QB is sacked (ball is spotted at the location of the sack, loss of down and gender play is still enforced).

A male QB laterals, pitches, or hands the ball off to a female who then lateral, pitches or hands the ball off to a male behind the line of scrimmage.

**12. CHANGE OF POSSESSION**

**12.1 The offense can turn the ball over to the other team in the following ways:**

After the offense attempts a PAT, the opposing team gets the ball on their own 10-yard line.

If the offense fails to score or earn a 1<sup>st</sup> down with four (4) plays.

If the offense punts the ball to the other team on 4<sup>th</sup> down.

The defense intercepts a pass or lateral.

**A fumble that touches the ground is a dead ball, not a turnover.**

**13. SCORING**

a. Touchdown: 6 points

b. Extra point conversion from 10-yard line: 2 points

c. Extra point conversion from 5-yard line: 1 point

d. Safety: 2 points

**e. Return of conversion attempt by defense for a Touchdown: 1 point if offensive team was attempting a 1-point conversion, 2 points if offensive team was attempting a 2-point conversion.**

**14. LOOSE BALL**

a. All fumbles and muffs are a dead ball the moment they touch the ground. The team that committed the muff or fumble automatically regains possession.

**15. DEAD BALL**

The ball becomes dead when:

a. A player in possession of the ball is legally touched or downed.

b. Following an incomplete forward pass.

c. When a ball is carried out of bounds.

d. On all muffs and fumbles.

e. Referee blows this whistle (including an inadvertent whistle). On an inadvertent whistle after a reception or running play, the ball will be spotted where the ball carrier was when the whistle was blown. On an inadvertent whistle after the ball is snapped and before the QB releases the ball, the ball will be spotted at the original line of scrimmage and the down will be replayed.

**16. SUBSTITUTION**

Unlimited substitution is permitted under the following conditions:

a. Defensive team - Substitution is permitted any time the ball is dead.

b. Offensive team - Substitution must be made before the team breaks the huddle, all incoming substitutes must participate in the huddle.

c. **NO SLEEPER PLAYS!**

**17. OVERTIME – In the regular season there will be no overtime, games will remain a tie. For the playoffs, overtime rules are as follows:**

a. If after regulation time a game is tied, each team will get one possession from the 10-yard line (70 yards from the end zone). The team who moves the ball the farthest during four (4) plays will win. There are no first downs in overtime.

b. The team who scored last in regulation will be on offense first in overtime.

c. An interception shall result in a change of possession; you cannot run back an interception. The offense's previous line of scrimmage will be the distance the other team must beat. The defensive team would then take possession on their own 10-yard line and has four (4) plays to advance the ball.

- d. If there is a defensive penalty, the offensive team keeps the yardage of the penalty and the down is replayed.
- e. If both teams score, the team who used the least number of plays to score shall be declared the winner.
- f. If a team scores a touchdown, teams can opt to go for a 1pt or 2pt conversion. If both teams used the same number of plays to score the team with the highest points wins (touchdown plus extra point score). If the total points scored are the same, the game goes to double overtime.
- g. The above rules will be used until a winner is determined.

## 18. PROTESTS

- a. There will be no rule protests. If you have a rule concern, please call the League Commissioner. The league wants its rules interpreted properly. While we cannot prevent wrong interpretations in all cases, we can take steps to prevent any repeat problems with rule interpretations.
- b. If you have a protest regarding a team or a player that protest must be received by the League Commissioner within 24 hours of the game.

## Adult Sports League Standard Rules

### Player Eligibility

Rosters are to be submitted on the official online roster form through SportsEngine by the league deadline. Players listed without electronic signature and age are ineligible.

Managers of adult teams submitting rosters have the freedom to include any eligible 18 or older male or female adult that they have determined has the skills, knowledge and abilities to play at the level of their assigned division. Some sports leagues have age exceptions. Please check the league specific rules for details.

Any individual who has been subject to disciplinary action(s) by the Department may be placed on the Suspension List maintained by the Department of Recreation and Parks. The list shall include the name of the individual suspended and the release date. The League Commissioner will notify team managers if any of their rostered players are on the Suspension List. Any individual on this list will be ineligible to play.

Any team using an ineligible player shall automatically forfeit each game in which the player participated. If a team uses a suspended player or a player under an assumed name, that team shall automatically be dropped from the league without refund and/or be subject to disciplinary actions as deemed necessary by the Department. Each game played with that player and all scheduled games not played shall be forfeited to the opponents.

Protests as to the use of an ineligible player must be made within 48 hours of game time and no protest fee is required. The protest must be submitted in writing to the Department by the team manager.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The Department has the authority to impose sanctions on a team, team members or spectators for inappropriate and/or unsportsmanlike behavior and/or non-compliance with Department policies/guidelines, code of conduct, league rules and standard adult sports leagues rules.

When deemed necessary, the Department will ascertain the pertinent facts and take suitable disciplinary action regarding incidents of unsportsmanlike behavior or violations of Department policies/guidelines, code of conduct, league rules or standard adult sports leagues rules.

Game officials and Department staff shall penalize players, coaches or spectators for unsportsmanlike conduct and/or non-compliance with Department policies/guidelines, code of conduct, league rules or standard adult sports leagues rules.

Game officials and Department staff may suspend play or forfeit a game when, in their judgment, conditions justify such actions. Flagrant or repeated misconduct may result in permanent suspension. Team suspensions can be imposed.

In the event that an incident may require more serious disciplinary action, a Disciplinary Committee of persons will be appointed by the Adult Leagues Manager to determine the length of suspension. Serious disciplinary actions include, but not limited to physical altercations, verbal threats, intimidating behavior towards the other team, fellow team member, officials, or Department staff, etc. Extended suspensions or disciplinary sanctions should be determined within five (5) business days.

A team member who is ejected from a game by an official shall be suspended from any participation for at least 1 game (not including the game from which they were ejected). Any further ejections during the current season shall be dealt with more severely by the League Commissioner.

Anyone who strikes, shoves, pushes, bumps or otherwise physically or verbally threatens an official, a member of their team, any other team, Department staff, or spectators shall automatically be suspended from all Department-sponsored activities for at least 1 year from the date of the incident.

A team member found conducting unsportsmanlike behavior before, during or after the game could result in suspension or other disciplinary sanctions (listed below).

Any misconduct or inappropriate behavior on Howard County property could result in suspension or other disciplinary sanctions (listed below).

Suspensions carry over into the next season.

The use of vulgar or profane language may result in the ejection of that team member from the game.

The team manager is responsible for the conduct of their team and spectators.

A team member and/or spectator may be removed from the immediate field/court area when deemed necessary by the game official or Department staff. Failure to leave the area when requested may result in immediate forfeiture of the game.

The Howard County Employee Manual requires the Department to take action against anyone who harasses any Department of Recreation and Parks staff.

Substance abuse by a team member during the game shall be subject to ejection by game officials and/or disciplinary action to be taken by the League Commissioner.

Any team member suspended from play from another program shall also be suspended from participation in any program operated by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks.

Team or team member probation may be used as a disciplinary sanction if multiple violations have occurred during the league season or if reoccurring violations happen from previous seasons.

Team members who receive disciplinary action from the Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks may request a review of the decision for appealable disciplinary sanctions (listed below). All requests for reviews must be made within 48 hours of the decision. Any such request should be made in writing to the League Commissioner. Individual player protest can only be received through the team manager. All team or individual disciplinary actions are communicated to the team manager. It is the team manager's responsibility to notify their team/player of disciplinary action taken by the Department.

### **Miscellaneous**

Alcoholic beverages, marijuana usage, smoking, and vaping ARE **PROHIBITED** IN THE PARKS. Action will be taken against any individual or team in violation of this policy.

No music is allowed during game play. Officials and players need to be able to hear the game calls.

No dogs are allowed on the field.

A player who is bleeding or who has blood on his/her uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. An athlete shall not continue competition unless the bleeding is controlled, and the wound covered.