



OFFICIAL RULES of the NORTH CAROLINA PASSING LEAGUE

(as of 12 MARCH 2012)

1. Field Dimensions

- 1.a - Field Length – 40 Yards
- 1.b - Field Width – 160 feet (60 to the hash mark) (40 feet between the hash marks)
- 1.c - End Zone – 10 yards deep
- 1.d - On a 100-yard field, with a 40-yard field of play, this enables two games to be played at once, between the 40s is a 20-yard buffer between games.
- 1.e - The field is marked at 20-yard intervals with cones.

2. Participants/Teams

2.a – NORTH CAROLINA PASSING LEAGUE (NCPL) must receive a signed ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT and PHYSICIAN RELEASE form from each participant. The release form must be signed by the participant's parent/legal guardian and on file with the NCPL, USPL, and TSF RADIO NETWORK. Without the signed release, participant will not be allowed to compete.

2.b - Participation is restricted to rising high school freshman through rising high school seniors. No middle school players and no players who have already graduated from their respective high school may participate in the NCPL. Participants must have at least one year of high school eligibility remaining. Teams must consist of members from the same school. Select teams are not eligible to participate in the NCPL.

2.b.1 – Teams with players participating in violation of Rule 2.b will be immediately disqualified from participation in the NCPL without possibility of appeal.

2.b.2 – Teams with players participating in violation of Rule 2.b and have already participated in PPL games will be immediately disqualified and will forfeit all contests.



2.b.2.a – In the event of team disqualification, wins will be awarded to any team that may have lost to team that was in violation of rules 2.b, 2.b.1, and 2.b.2 and will advance in the tournament following standard tournament procedures.

2.c - Participants are not to wear football jerseys during competition. Tee-shirts, form-fitting performance athletic apparel, and sleeveless shirts are acceptable forms of clothing.

2.c.1 – Shirts are to be worn at all times during competition. No shirtless participants.

2.c.2 – Teams are asked to bring white/gray/light colored tee shirts to be worn during competition when designated as the “visiting” team. Team (i.e. school) tee-shirts are recommended as long as they conform to the proper colors for the “visiting” team.

2.c.2.a – NCPL has the right to restrict any tee-shirt worn by the participant to exclude any tee-shirt that is determined to be offensive, indecent, or not conforming to the spirit of competition.

2.d - Participants must wear mouth pieces and helmets at all times during competition.

2.d.1 – First offense of not wearing mouthpiece or helmet will result in a verbal warning to player and team.

2.d.2 – Second offense of failure to wear mouthpiece or helmet during play is an automatic 1st-down, a 15-yard penalty.

2.d.3 – Third offense of failure to wear mouthpiece or helmet during play will result in immediate disqualification from competition.

2.d.4 – In the event of extreme heat, helmets may be optional if both teams agree that the conditions warrant not wearing helmets due to safety considerations.

2.e – Schools can enter multiple teams into the tournament.

2.e.1 – Schools with multiple teams will be designated as separate teams and will compete as separate teams with separate rosters.

2.f – Teams can have a maximum of 20 players.

2.f.1 – Seven players are on the field per team.

2.f.1.a - On each down, the offense has a center, quarterback, and five eligible receivers.

2.f.1.b – On each down, the defense has seven defenders.

3. Timing of Game

3.a – Each game will be 25 minutes long.

3.b – During competition, the clock runs continuously

3b.1 – Teams cannot call time outs.



3b.2 – If there is an injury, the games on that field will be halted and clock stopped until the injured player can be removed safely from field of play.

3.c – There will be 10-minute break between games.

3.d – PPL games start/end at the same time.

3.e – The clock will begin running at the designated start time for the game.

3.e.1 – If team(s) are late, play will begin with whatever time is remaining on the game clock, not to exceed 10 minutes.

3.e2 – Late team will forfeit game after 10 minutes have passed on the game clock.

3.g – If possible, the scoreboard at the site will be used to time all games in progress. If the scoreboard is not available for the keeping of the time, a time keeper will be designated for each game. The designated time keeper will announce the time remaining at the 10-minute, 5-minute, and 2-minute mark of each half.

3.h – The quarterback has four (4) seconds to release the football after he has gained possession of the ball. The penalty for a violation of the four (4) second release rule is detailed in Rule 5.f – 5.f.3.

3.i – Each team will have 25 seconds to snap the ball once it has been marked for play.

3.i.1 – Failure to snap the ball in the 25 seconds results in a 5-yard delay of game penalty.

3.i.2 – Two delay of game penalties on the same possession results in a turnover.

4. Starting the Game

4.a There will be a coin toss to determine which team will have the first possession of the game.

4.b The ball is placed in the middle of the field at the 40-yard-line to begin play. The offense always moves in the same direction.

5. Moving the Ball

5.a All offensive plays must be forward passes. No shovel passes or tailback screens.

5.b In the NCPL, a first-down is 20-yards and two (2) first-downs without a penalty would result in a touchdown for the offense.

5.c The team has four (4) downs to move the ball 20-yards for a first-down. If the offense team does not move the ball 20-yards in four downs, it is a turnover and possession will change to the defense. Teams will change possession and the next series will begin at the middle of the field on the 40-yard line.

5.d All passes must be forward. A pass can be caught behind the line-of-scrimmage, but the pass must be forward pass.

5.e After a pass is thrown forward, a lateral or a backward pass is allowed.



5.f Once the quarterback has possession of the ball, he has four (4) seconds to release the ball.

5.f.1 – If QB releases the football in less than four (4) seconds, play continues.

5.f.2 – If QB releases the football in more than four (4) seconds the play will be blown dead. Essentially, a violation of the four (4) second rule is treated as an incomplete pass.

5.f.3 – Unsportsmanlike or other dead ball fouls can be called after a violation of the four (4) second rule, but no other subsequent penalties may be called after a violation of the four (4) second rule. No pass interference or other penalty may be called after an offense violation of the four (4) second rule.

5.g – Offense is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the previous spot or the new line of scrimmage. Failure to do so will result in a delay of game penalty.

5.h – Each team must have an offensive center.

5.h.a – The offensive center must snap the ball from the ground between the center's legs.

5h.a.1 – Quarterback may be under center; or

5.h.a.2 – Quarterback may be in shotgun formation.

5.h.b – The offensive center is not an eligible receiver.

5.h.c – Offensive center is responsible for setting or re-positioning the referee's bean bag at the new line of scrimmage.

5.h.d – A three-yard tackle box extends to the right, left of the center and extends three yards deep into the back field. No eligible receiver may align inside the "center" box.

5.h.d.1 – Lining up inside the "center" box is an illegal procedure penalty and the offensive team is penalized five (5) yards.

6. Stopping the Ball Carrier

6.a – The receiver, ball carrier is legally down when touched with one or both hands.

6.a.1 – Excessive force by shoving, pushing, or striking a blow is a penalty, resulting in an automatic first-down at the spot of the foul.

6.a.2 – Excessive force that is flagrant and rises to the level of unsportsmanlike behavior will result in the ejection of the player from the game. Decision to eject a player is entire at the discretion of the game official and cannot be appealed.

6.a.2.a – Any player ejected from a game will be automatically suspended for the next game.

6.a.2.b – After any ejection, tournament directors, administrators, team coach, and officials will confer to determine if ejected player should be disqualified from further participation in the tournament.

7. Offensive, Defensive Pass Interference



7.a - Defensive pass interference will be an automatic first-down at the spot of the foul.

7.b - Offensive pass interference is a 5-yard penalty and a loss of down;

7.c – Intercepted passes may be returned by the defense

7.c.1 – NO blocking rule applies to intercepted passes.

7.c.1.a – After pass is intercepted, teammates may trail the ball carrier, but may not block for the runner.

7.c.1.b – Teammates trailing the ball carrier may receive a lateral from the ball carrier.

7.c.2 – If interception is returned to the 40-yard-line (offensive origination point), then the defense has scored a touchdown. After a defensive score, the possession of the football will change as is customary after a scoring play immediately after the extra-point attempt.

7.c.3 – If interception does not result in a touchdown, then the team will retain possession, with the team that intercepted the ball taking over on a change of possession with a first-down at the 40-yard-line.

8. Fumbles

8.a – Fumbles which hit the ground are dead balls at the spot of the fumble.

8.a.1 – Fumbles may only be recovered in the air before the ball hits the ground. Once the ball hits the ground, the play is dead.

8.a.1.a – If a fumble is recovered before it hits the ground, then the defense team can return the fumble. If fumble is returned to the 40-yard-line, then the defense has scored a touchdown. After a defensive score, the possession of the football will change as is customary after a scoring play immediately after the extra-point attempt.

8.a.1.b – If the fumble return does not result in a touchdown, then the team will retain possession, with the offense taking over at the 40-yard-line.

8.b – The last team in possession of the football **RETAINS** possession of the ball at the spot of the fumble or if it is a turnover for the defense, the ball will be spotted at the 40-yard line as a change of possession.

8.c – A muffed snap is a dead ball if the ball hits the ground. The play is ruled dead and there will be a loss of down with the offense taking the next snap at the previous line of scrimmage.

9. Scoring

9.a – Six (6) points are scored on a touchdown.

9.b – Point After Attempt is a **PASSING PLAY**, no kicking.



9.b.1 – One (1) point is scored on a PAT from the 5-yard-line.

9.b.2 – Two (2) points scored on a PAT from the 10-yard-line.

9.c – If a legal pass is completed to an eligible receiver and the defensive player tags the ball carrier behind the 40-yard line, it is a safety. Two points are awarded to the defensive team, and the defensive team will take possession at the 40-yard line.

9.d – Designated time/scorekeeper/game manager and will keep the “official” for the game will keep the “official” score of the game.

9.e – The score will be posted, announced before each offensive possession.

9.f – When score is tied at the end of regulation, an overtime period will be played to determine the winner.

9.f.1 – The team that wins a coin toss preceding the overtime period will have a choice to play offense or defense first during overtime.

9.f.1.a – If second overtime is necessary, then the team that did not win the coin toss will have the choice to play offense or defense.

9.f.2.b – Teams will alternate possession for each subsequent overtime.

9.f.2 – Football placed in the middle of the (15) yard line and has 3 downs to score.

9.f.3 – A winner is determined when one team scores during its possession and the other team does not score.

9.f.4 – Teams are required to go for two-points on all conversions in overtime.

10. Penalties/Fouls

10.a – Improper Equipment – See 2.c – 2.c.4

10.b – Mouthpieces – See 2.d – 2.d.3

10.c – Forfeiture of Game – See 3.f.2

10.d – Violation of Five-Second Rule – See 5.f – 5.f.3

10.e – Violation of 25-second clock – See 3.1 – 3.i.2

10.f – Illegal Procedure, “Center” Box Violation – See 5.h.d.1

10.g – Excessive Force when Tackling – See 6.a – 6.a.2b

10.h – Pass Interference – See 7.a – 7.c

10.i – Taunting or “trash talking” will not be tolerated.

10.i.1 – First taunting offense will result in a five (5) yard penalty;



10.i.2 – Second taunting penalty by the same team will result in an automatic first down, and a fifteen (15) yard penalty;

10.i.2.a – After the second taunting penalty by the same team, any subsequent penalty will result in an automatic first down and a fifteen (15) yard penalty.

10.i.3 – Third taunting penalty committed by the same individual results in immediate ejection.

10.j.3.a – Any player ejected from a game will be automatically suspended for the next game.

10.j.3.b – After any ejection, tournament directors, administrators, team coach, and officials will confer to determine if ejected player should be disqualified from further participation in the tournament.

10.j – Fighting will not be tolerated.

10.j.1 – All players involved in a fight will be immediately ejected from the game and further participation in the NCPL.

10.j.2 – In the event of a team fight, all players from both teams will be ejected and banned from further participation in the NCPL.

11. Officials

11.a – The NCPL officiating crew may consist of two (2) NCHSAA-certified officials.

11.b – A designated official will keep the clock for the 4-second rule.

11.c – Officials will keep the “official” score.

11.d – If scoreboard clock is not available, the NCPL site administrator will keep the official time and announced the time remaining in each half at the time intervals of 10-minutes remaining, 6-minutes remaining, and 2-minutes remaining.

12. Tournament Tiebreakers

12.a – Head to Head, Points Scored, Points Allowed will determine the pool winner or teams to advance to the championship round.

12.b – In a three-way tie, once a winner has been declared, the remaining two teams will revert back to head-to-head, points scored, points allowed to break the remaining tie.

12.c – A forfeit will be treated the same as a qualifying team in the bracket. A victory will be awarded to the teams who receive a forfeit.

12.c.1 – A forfeit will not be used to determine Head to Head, Points Scored, or Points Allowed.



12.c.2 – A bracket with a qualifying team or a forfeiting team become a three-team bracket. For example, if one team has qualified to advance and the remaining teams are tied to advance, then the results against the qualifying team are tossed out, then the remaining teams are matched up Head to Head, Points Scored, or Points Allowed to determine the team that advances.

