



CANADA

**2026 NON-CONTACT RULE CHANGES
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The following rule changes, clarifications, and corrections, approved by the Non-Contact Rules and Safety Committee are for immediate distribution and implementation. *(The changes are in green font).*

Definitions

Fake Handoff - A fake hand-off is any movement of the runner with the hands towards a nearby teammate that simulates a transfer of possession. A faked pass (pump or simulated pitch) or the runner turning the body towards a teammate without movement of the hands is not a fake hand-off.

Reason for change: More clarification around what constitutes a fake handoff.

Rule 2, 2.2

The Ball

2.2 For youth leagues / recreational play it is recommended that appropriately sized footballs are used for both male and female players to accommodate the players abilities (**examples below outline the *minimum* ball size that should be used**).

Age	Dimensions	Wilson	Nike	Baden
U10 and below	Length: 9.5-10" Width: 6-6.5" Diameter: 17.5-18.5"	Pee Wee (K2)	Size 6	Pee Wee (Size 5)
U12 Female +U14 Female + U16 Female	Length: 9.5-10.5" Width: 6-6.5" Diameter: 18.5-19"	Junior (GST)	Size 7	Junior (Size 6)
U12 Male				
U18 Female + Sr Female	Length: 10.5-11" Width: 6.5-6.75" Diameter: 19.5"	Youth (GST)	Size 8	Youth (Size 7)
U14 Male + U16 Male				
U18 Male + Sr Male	Length: 11" Width: 7" Diameter: 21"	Official	Size 9	Official (Size 9)

For senior men's and women's leagues / recreational play they will typically use whatever ball they are comfortable with unless otherwise specified by the league.

For regional, national & international tournaments or championships the ball(s) to be used will be specified in the Technical Package for that event.

Reason for change: Adjustment to U14 Female and U16 Male. Their football sizes have moved down one size.

Rule 4, 8.1

Pro Clock

8.1 In the last two minutes of both halves, the clock will stop in the following circumstances:

- To award a first down, also after a change of team possession.
- To complete a penalty.
- When the ball carrier goes out of bounds.
- When a pass strikes the ground.
- **When a ball strikes the ground behind the line of scrimmage.**

- When a score is made and during and after the following PAT.
- When a charged timeout is granted.

Note: The clock will continue to run if a ball carrier loses possession of the football **and it strikes the ground beyond the line of scrimmage.**

Reason for change: Confusion on if a bad snap, handoff, or lateral stopped the clock within the pro clock.

Rule 5, 2.10

General Play

2.10 Once the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage or a forward pass has occurred, the ball cannot be handed off, **lateraled or passed forward.**

Reason for change: Editorial

Rule 10, 1.1 & 1.4

Running

1.1 The Center is the player who snaps the ball to the Quarterback. **The Center is prohibited from receiving a forward handoff immediately following the snap (Center Sneak).** The penalty for this is an Illegal Run Play penalty.

1.4 **The Quarterback may not advance the ball across the Line of Scrimmage as a ball carrier. This restriction ends if the ball is transferred to another player and then returned to the Quarterback.**

This restriction includes extending the ball beyond the Line of Scrimmage to gain yardage or score while the Quarterback's body remains behind the line. The penalty for this is an Illegal Run Play penalty.

Reason for change: Clarification around the Center Sneak and if a Quarterback can gain yards by extending the ball beyond the LOS.

Rule 21, 1.8

Penalties

1.8 If a dead ball foul occurs after a scoring play, the non-offending team will get the choice to apply the yardage to the convert or to the start of the next possession. **They will make this decision after the offense has declared if they are going for one or two points.**

Reason for change: Clarification on order of operations once a dead ball foul occurs after a score.

Rule 21, 1.9

Penalties

1.9 - **If the Ball Carrier legally crosses the Midfield Line and subsequently commits a foul that carries a Loss of Down penalty (e.g., Flag Guarding):**

- **The First Down is awarded.**
- **The penalty yardage is enforced from the appropriate spot.**
- **The Loss of Down is waived.**

The next play will be 1st Down, even if the penalty yardage enforcement places the ball back behind the Midfield Line.

Reason for change: This is how it has been called- but not specifically outlined properly.

Rule 21, 3.6

Offensive Penalties *(Add this to 3.6 and bump everything else down.)*

3.10 Illegal Flag Pull – Pulling a flag of a player before they have the ball. Spot of Catch if caught.

Reason for change: Offensive players can be penalized by pulling a defender's flag who is about to make an interception.

Rule 21, 3.10

Offensive Penalties

3.10 Illegal Running Play –A Quarterback running with the ball across the Line of Scrimmage *without a prior transfer of possession. This includes any instance where the Quarterback steps on or beyond the Line of Scrimmage while attempting a pass as well as a Quarterback extending the ball beyond the Line of Scrimmage to gain yards. Play whistled dead. (Next Down)*

Reason for change: Clarification of when a Quarterback is considered to have 'Illegally Run'

Rule 23, 1.3

No Run Zone

1.3 When a play starts in the No Run Zone, the end result of the play must be a forward pass **that is caught beyond the Line of Scrimmage.**

Reason for change: The intention of the No Run Zone is for teams to make a forward pass across the Line of Scrimmage. This clarifies that.