

Molson's Lakehead Men's Touch Football League 2004 Rules

Touch Football Rules

1 Pre-Game

Teams must fill out **roster scorecards** and submit to referee following each game. Referees submit scorecards to league score keepers. Teams will be responsible for all white areas and referee's for all grey areas.

Each team must have a **minimum of 5 players** for an official game, otherwise a default will be declared. Teams will only be allowed **5 minutes** from the scheduled start of the game to field a minimum of 6 players. The non-defaulting team will be awarded a **14-0 victory**, and no stats will be tallied.

Each team must provide **1 line judge** one game per week. Teams, dates and times will be specified on the schedule.

Any combination of defaults or no line judges will result in the following penalties :

1st time - Team loses \$15 of bond

2nd time - Team loses \$15 of bond and loses 2 points in the standings

3rd time - Team loses \$30 of bond and is disqualified from playoffs (they can finish the regular season)

The referee will begin each game with a **coin toss**. The visiting team captain will call the toss and the winning team will decide to 1) Kick or receive, 2) Side of field, or 3) defer to other team. The losing side will have choice at the beginning of the 2nd half, unless the decision is deferred.

2 Re-scheduling

Teams will only be allowed to **re-scheduled only 1 game per season**. Teams must notify the league at least **3 days prior** to the regular scheduled game, and notify the league of the re-scheduled date as soon as one is agreed upon by both teams. Teams re-scheduling **must line judge other re-scheduled games** as the league stipulates, which are subject to regular league penalties for line judge omission.

3 Player/Equipment

Each team has **seven players** on the field. All players are eligible receivers. There is no blocking or tackling permitted. No protective equipment (helmets, pads, etc.) is permitted. Running shoes and cleats may be worn, but **steel baseball cleats** will not be permitted. For safety purposes, no one should play while wearing watches, rings or jewelry.

4 Timing

There are **four quarters of 20 minutes each** or 15 minutes in tournaments. The first and third quarters are running time. The second and fourth quarters are 17 minutes or 12 minutes in tournament play of running time then **5 plays**. Each team is permitted **one time out (60 seconds)** per half as well as **one 20-second time out** to be used anytime throughout the game. The offensive team has **20 seconds** to call the play in the huddle and snap the ball. This twenty-second count begins when the official whistles the play in.

5 Boundary Lines

All boundary lines are considered to be out of bounds. If a player steps on any part of the boundary line, the player is considered to be out of bounds. The goal line is considered to be part of the end zone. Thus, if any part of the ball touches the goal line, the ball is considered to be in the end zone. For catches to be considered in bounds, the receiver has to have possession of the ball, then at least one foot must touch the ground in

bounds prior to stepping on the line or going out of bounds.

6 Kickoff

The game begins with a kickoff from the kicking team's **45-yard line or 10 yards** back from center on non-regulation playing fields. The receiving team must be at least **20 yards back** from the point of kickoff. The kicking team does not have to give "yards" on the kick off, the players can simply down the ball to end the play. The kicking team cannot recover the ball on a kickoff except in the rare instance when the ball might strike a receiver and rebound to a member of the kicking team without touching the ground.

Once again, there is no blocking permitted on the kickoff. If the ball is **kicked out of bounds** on the kickoff, the receiving team has the option to take the ball where it went out of bounds or have the kicking team re-kick five yards back.

7 Scrimmage

The offensive team has three attempts or downs to advance the ball 10 yards. The play is stopped when an opponent touches the ball carrier.

The first down markers can be the traditional yardsticks on the sidelines or they can be "bean bags" that are placed on the field and moved by the officials.

The quarterback must stand at least **five yards** behind the line of scrimmage to receive the snap. The defensive player who pursues the quarterback (the rusher) must line up **five yards** from the line of scrimmage and cannot begin to rush until the ball is snapped by the offensive center. This rusher cannot be blocked or impeded by any member of the offensive team. The rusher must select a side to rush from prior to the snap (**maximum of 5 yds** , and **minimum of 1 yd** on either side of center) and can't change sides once the ball is set. The center can't obstruct the rusher's direct lane to the quarterback. If the rusher extends beyond the direct lane then obstruction will not be called. All receivers other than the center must line up a **minimum of 5 yds** from the center to allow the rusher a direct lane to the quarterback.

A team may decide to rush more than one player. In this case all rushers must have unimpeded path to the quarterback. However, the rusher or rushers must line up laterally, within 5 yards of the center. They cannot line up wider and still be given an unimpeded path to the quarterback.

All players on the offensive team, except the center, can be in motion prior to the snap. The quarterback can run or throw. The quarterback is also permitted to throw a lateral to a halfback who could then run, throw a forward pass or throw another lateral. There are no fumbles in touch football therefore when a ball carrier drops the ball and it touches the ground, the play is dead. However, on bad snaps when the quarterback cannot catch the ball, the play is still live.

8 Punts

A punt can occur anytime during the game. When a ball is punted, players on the punting team must remain **5 yards** from the punt receiver prior to the ball being touched. Players on the punting team cannot recover punts unless the ball hits the punt receiver and rebounds to a defender before the ball hits the ground.

If a ball is blocked on an attempted punt and the ball hits the ground, the play is whistled dead and the defending team gains possession of the ball at the point the ball was blocked. If the punted ball is simply deflected and continues toward the opponent's goal line, the punt is considered legal and all rules apply.

If the punt receiver muffs the punt and the ball hits the ground behind the receiver, the play is live. If the ball goes forward after being muffed, the play is dead.

9 The Touch

Players can use one or two hands to make a touch. The touch must be **deliberate** and must be made with the hand (not a leg or arm, etc) anywhere on the ball carrier or the ball itself. In incidents of **co-incidental contact** the referee will make the decision whether the touch was deliberate or not.

Players cannot bobble the ball to avoid the touch – the play will be whistled dead. Ball carriers can concede a touch by placing one knee on the ground and by making no attempt to advance the ball. If a defender attempts to avoid a collision by jumping over a fallen ball carrier, a touch is awarded as a safety precaution.

10 Scoring

A touchdown is worth six points. A convert may be attempted from the five-yard line for one point or from the ten-yard line for two points. There are no field goals permitted and the convert cannot be kicked.

A safety touch occurs when the offensive team causes the ball to enter its own end zone and the offensive player is touched there. This results in two points being awarded to the opposition team. Following a safety touch, the team that gave up the safety touch can kickoff or punt from its own **35-yard line** or **20 yds** from center.

Rouge occurs when a team is unable to legally bring the ball of its own end zone following a punt or a kickoff by the opposition. One point is awarded to the kicking team and the receiving team will scrimmage at its own **35-yard line** or **20 yds** from center. The ball may land out of bounds but must cross the goal line before going out of bounds.

11 Illegal Acts

The ball carrier is not permitted to extend a ball forward in an attempt to gain extra yards. The ball carrier is not allowed to dive forward into the path of the opposition players. These are safety precautions.

The following acts are considered to be objectionable conduct and will result in a ten yard penalty: use of profane language; intimidating acts; persistent arguments; deliberate delay of game and faking and injury.

The following acts are considered to be a personal foul and will result in a fifteen yard penalty: rough touch; contacting the passer, punter or receiver; tripping; piling on; charging and attempts to strike a player.

The **striking** of an opponent or an official with the deliberate intent to cause bodily harm of any act of roughness or unfair play considered by the Referee to threaten the safety of any participant, is a major foul and will result in a 25 yd penalty and an automatic **ejection** of the team member involved. A **suspension** will follow which will be decided among the league executives.

12 Pass Interference

Pass interference occurs when the player takes away an opponent's positional advantage. If the infraction occurs in the area where the ball was thrown (target area), the offensive team is given a first down at the point the infraction occurred or 10-yards ahead of the line of scrimmage, whichever is greater. If the infraction was a receiver not involved in the play or occurred before the ball was thrown (remote area), then the penalty is 10-yards from the previous line of scrimmage. If the defense commits target area pass interference in the end zone, the ball is awarded to the offense on the opponent's one yard line.

If a member of the offensive team commits pass interference, the defense is awarded possession of the ball at the point of the infraction.

13 Application of Penalties

The team that did not commit the penalty has the option to accept or refuse the penalty.

On scrimmage plays, if the foul occurred before a first down was gained, the penalty is applied from the line of scrimmage. If the foul occurred after a first down was gained, the penalty is applied from the point the ball was held when the foul occurred.

Objectionable conduct fouls and personal and major fouls are applied as dead ball fouls, that is, the yardage is simply tacked on from the point the ball becomes dead. The only exceptions are: roughing the passer or kicker and tripping the ball carrier. These three are applied as live ball fouls or regular fouls.

If a foul occurs during the last five plays of a half, the play will not count if the penalty is accepted. The only exceptions are if the penalty occurs after a first down is made or an offside pass is thrown. The play would count in these situations.

If the application of a penalty results in the goal line being reached, a first down is awarded at a point halfway between the goal line and the previous line of scrimmage.

14 Mercy-Rule

If a team is leading by **30 points** or more following **3 quarters**, then the game is declared over at the end of the 3rd quarter. This includes all games regular season games only and not playoffs. Tournaments will be handled separately. Teams can still continue to play until the next games but any points scored will not count in the official game result.

15 Ties following completion of a game

If a **regular season** game ends in a tie it remains a tie and each team will be awarded 1 point.

If a **playoff game** ends in a tie, an overtime will follow consisting of 2 10-minute halves. If the game remains tied then the alternating convert system will be applied.

Tournament games will have separate rules for handling tie games.

16 Tiebreakers

The following tie-breaker system will be followed in the event of a tie in the regular season standings :

- 1) Head to head win-loss record.
- 2) Head to head PF-PA versus top 2 teams in your division.
- 3) Least number of referee-less games.
- 4) Least number of defaulted games.
- 5) Coin Flip