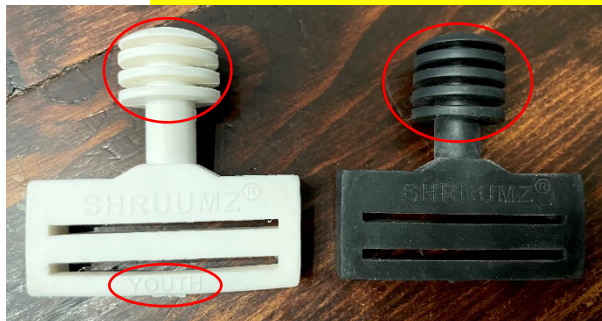


Game Play Rules (Page 3)

- **THERE ARE 2 TIMEOUTS PER GAME.**
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
 - If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
 - Offensive Teams **MUST** declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt", when asked by the referee and prior to the 'Ready for Play'.
 - Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
 - If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration.
 - If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line
 - Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
 - The ball must be hiked between the legs. No side hikes are allowed.
- **If a team is late to a field in pool play, there will be no coin flip. The team that was on-time gets to choose offense or defense.**

Equipment

- Appropriate flags and flag belts must be used. Teams must wear Youth Shruumz, NFL flags, Sonic Flag-a-Tag flags (if custom flags are worn, they must be of equal dimensions as Sonic flags) or similar, different brand allowed. Velcro flags are not allowed. Flags will not be allowed that have been altered (cut, taped, etc.). Mushroom Flags are not allowed for youth.
 - Flags cannot be the same color or pattern as the players shorts or belts.
 - **Adult Shruumz are not allowed**
 - Youth has 4 ridges where adult have 5 ridges
 - The word "YOUTH" is written on the youth Shruumz



- Participants must bring their own flags and flag belts.

- Flags must be at least 14 inches in length from the popper.
- Mouthguards and softshell helmets are recommended but not required.
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals and hard surfaces are not allowed.
- Players must remove all hanging jewelry. Soft brim bucket hats/beanies are allowed. Hard brim hats MUST be worn backwards. Players may wear protective eye wear as long as they are worn on eyes.
- Players must wear shorts or pants without pockets.
- All shirts must be and stay tucked into the players shorts or pants during game play.
- Players must wear footwear while on the field playing.
- Electronic communication between any player with their coach or spectator for their team is prohibited. If a team or individual is found to be using electronic communication with a player or coach at any time, that team will be disqualified from the tournament. This does not limit possible additional discipline at the sole discretion of Hard Count staff.

***Should you need to purchase flags, they will be for sale for \$20 or \$30 depending on which ones.**

Game Balls/Sizes

- Teams provide their own game balls.
- 6U-8U coed: NFL Flag blue ball or same size, different brand allowed.
- 9U-14U coed: NFL Flag brown ball or same size, different brand allowed.
- 10U Girls: NFL Flag blue ball or same size, different brand allowed.
- 11U-18U Girls: NFL Flag brown ball or same size, different brand allowed.

***Should you need to purchase a football, they will be for sale for \$40.**

No Run Zones (page 6)

- No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
- Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD)
- Once the ball is spotted, the Center may physically pick up and move the ball 5 yards to the right or left of the original spot before the snap.
- If you receive a penalty in the no run zone that pushes you out of the no run zone, you are not allowed to run. It is still pass only.
- 6U and 7U do not have “no run zones”. They are eliminated and teams may run anywhere on the field.

Game Times (page 7)

- Games are played on a 24 minute, continuous clock with two 12 minute halves.
- 25 second play clock
- Each team has two (2) :30 second timeouts per game
- In Hard Count Tournaments, there is a 1 min halftime, not a 5 min half time.

- The offense has 25 seconds to snap the ball after the ready to play whistle.
- In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart once the injured player is removed from the field.

Bracket Play

- Higher seed can choose to have the ball or defer.
- If a team is late for their game during pool play, to their first game in bracket play, or to a bracket play game that is not due to an overtime in the previous game, there will be no coin flip. The team that is on time gets to choose offense or defense.

Over-Time (page 7)

- *In Hard Count Tournaments, there is **NO OVER-TIME IN POOL PLAY**. Only overtime in bracket play.*
- **Over-Time Format**
 - Home team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime.
 - **1st OT** - Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team.
 - **2nd OT** - Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line.
 - **3rd OT** - Will be the final round. Each team will get one (1) play from the 5-yard line going out from the Endzone. The team with the most yards will be declared the winner.
- There are no timeouts during the OT. Interceptions are returnable in OT and are worth 2 points.

Scoring (page 8)

- Touchdown – 6 points
- PAT (point after touchdown)
 - Team must declare if they are going for 1 or 2 points.
 - 1 point – 5 yard line, pass only
 - 2 points – 10 yard line, run or pass
- Interception return for scores during regular game play are worth 6 points.
 - Conversions or overtime are worth 2 points
- Safety – 2 points
 - Ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or elbow touches the ground, a fumble occurs or if the snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
- Mercy Rule – Once point differential reaches or breaches 28 points.
- Forfeits are scored 28-0.
- Officials must get both coaches signatures on the score sheet.

Coaches

- 2 coaches per team, per sideline.
- **8U** – No offensive or defensive coach is allowed on the field at any time.
- **6U/7U** – 1 offensive coach is allowed on the field, 5 yards behind the QB. No defensive coaches are allowed on the field at any time.

Running (page 10)

- The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
- The QB cannot directly run the ball.
- Once the ball is handed off, the Seven (7) second passing clock is stopped.
- Runners are not permitted to dive or hurdle any player while advancing the ball.
- No blocking or screening is allowed at any time.
- Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the QB, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

Passing (page 11)

- Along with a direct handoff behind the LOS, a lateral behind the LOS is now legal.
 - **If you hand the ball off or lateral behind the LOS, you then may throw a forward pass or run, unless you are in a no run zone.**
 - **Laterals are not allowed beyond the LOS.**
 - No intentional grounding.
 - All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.
 - QB may throw the ball away to avoid a sack; Pass must go beyond the LOS.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the LOS.
- Any forward pass **MUST** go beyond the LOS.
- The center can never be the first person to touch the ball after the snap to the QB.
- QB's have seven-second 'pass clock' from the moment they receive the ball from the snap to throw the ball. Seven-second violations are returned to the LOS.

Rushing (page 12)

- No Rushing in 6U and 7U.
- 8U and Up – may rush the passer at the snap from 7 yards.
- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of Seven (7) yards from the (LOS). There's no limit to the number of players who can rush the passer.
- The rusher does not have to identify

- The rusher does not have to rush immediately at the snap. It can be delay.
- Once the ball is handed off, the Seven (7) yard rush rule is no longer in effect.
- A special marker or the referee will designate the rush line from the (LOS). The Defensive player should verify with the referee they are in the correct position.
- The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**
- A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.
- **If the defense jumps offside, it's a dead ball foul against the defense. The play should be blown dead the moment the Defensive player goes into the Neutral Zone. It's a 5-yard penalty and an automatic 1st down.**

6U/7U

- We will **NOT** be implementing the following rule that is “suggested” by NFL Flag in their new rulebook.
 - If the ball touches the ground during center snap to QB – it’s a “do over”. If it happens again – down is consumed.
 - *Defenders must line up at least 5 yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.*
- **The defenders line up 1 yard from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.**

Offensive Penalties	
Offsides/False Start	5 yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Offensive Pass Interference	5 yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Illegal Motion	5 yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Delay of Game	5 yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	5 yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Taunting	5 yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Unsportsmanlike	10 Yards & Loss of Down
Unnecessary Roughness	10 Yards & Loss of Down

Screening, Blocking	Spot foul-10 Yds & Loss of Down
Charging	Spot foul-10 Yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding/Jumping	Spot foul-10 Yards & Loss of Down

Defensive Penalties	
Offsides	5 yds from LOS & Automatic 1st Down
Illegal Rush	5 yds from LOS & Automatic 1st Down
Illegal Flag Pull	5 yds from LOS & Automatic 1st Down
Roughing the Passer	5 yds from LOS & Automatic 1st Down
Taunting	5 yds from LOS & Automatic 1st Down
Unsportsmanlike	10 Yards & Automatic 1st Down
Unnecessary Roughness	10 Yards & Automatic 1st Down
Defensive Pass Interference	Spot Foul & Automatic 1st Down
Holding	Spot Foul 5 Yards & Auto 1st Down
Stripping	Spot Foul + 10 Yards & Auto 1st Down

In Hard Count Tournaments

- There will be no challenges on referee calls, this includes wanting referees, field monitors and staff to watch video replays.
- To be eligible to play in bracket play, a player must be rostered with the team and play in at least one pool play game.
- A player cannot be rostered on two different teams within the same division.
 - If a player is found to be rostered on two different teams in the same division and does in fact play in games on two different teams, that player will default to the team he/she played with first and the second team will forfeit the game that the double rostered player played in.
- Hard Count reserves the right to combine divisions if three (3) or less teams are signed up in a division.
- Although unlikely, the date, time and location are subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control.
- A team at any time can request a roster check. Should they lose the roster check, then they forfeit any remaining timeouts for that game.
 - Should they win the roster check and an illegal player or a player who is not on that team's roster is found to be playing in that game, then the team with the illegal player forfeits that game and the remaining games of the tournament.
- To protect fair play and safety, girl's divisions are limited to biologically female athletes.

- Hard Count has a zero-tolerance policy regarding violence/fighting and vulgar language. Hard Count reserves the right to immediately remove individuals and/or teams from the tournament.
- After careful consideration and at Hard Counts discretion, Hard Count reserves the right to suspend or ban individual players, individual coaches, teams, organizations and parents from participating in future Hard Count tournaments. Decisions will be final and not subject to appeal.

MEDIA:

- Having media access to a team's sideline is a privilege granted at the sole discretion of Hard Count and may be revoked at any time. Hard Count reserves the absolute right to suspend, restrict, or permanently revoke the credentials, access, or privileges of any media representative for conduct deemed by Hard Count to be inappropriate, unprofessional, detrimental to operations, or inconsistent with the standards, values, or expectations of the organization. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, behavior, statements, actions, or social media activity that Hard Count determines may harm its reputation, relationships, business interests, participants, or public image. All determinations made by Hard Count regarding media conduct, credentialing, and access shall be final and made at its sole discretion.
- No tower cameras are allowed on the sidelines. Tower cameras can only be set up in each end zone, in the spectator area.