**RUSHING THE PASSER**

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage  
   when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not  
   rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may  
   go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of  
   scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on  
   every play.
   1. A legal rush is:
      1. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
      2. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the  
         quarterback.
   2. A penalty may be called if:
      1. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
      2. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped –  
         offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
      3. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage  
         before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of  
         scrimmage and first down).
      4. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball
   3. Special Circumstances:
      1. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
      2. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB,  
   unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
5. 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.
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage.  
   The ball will be spotted where possesion of the ball is once the flag is pulled.
   1. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone