

**IF IN DOUBT**

The "If in Doubts" have been developed to provide guidance on the desired course of action when an official may be unsure. Generally, these guidelines recommend not calling a foul in questionable situations, allowing play to continue instead of blowing the play dead, and giving the team the benefit of more favorable field position when it is difficult to determine where the ball is to be spotted. Please take some time to learn and understand how to apply each of the "If in Doubts" in game situations when it becomes necessary. Their importance is stressed by being placed in the front of the NIRSA Rules Book.

1. If in doubt, continue the game. (Rule 1)
2. If in doubt, consider the safety of all participants to be paramount to the game. (Rule 1, 3)
3. If in doubt, it is a catch. (Rule 2)
4. If in doubt, it is not a foul. (Rule 2)
5. If in doubt, apply conserving/consuming time. (Rule 3)
6. If in doubt, a snap close to the ground remains live. (Rule 4)
7. If in doubt, the flag belt has been pulled. (Rule 4)
8. If in doubt, the ball is released. (Rule 4)
9. If in doubt, the out-of-bounds punt is short of the zone line-to-gain. (Rule 5)
10. If in doubt, the A player 1st touched the snap 2 yards behind A's scrimmage line. (Rule 7)
11. If in doubt, the pass is backward. (Rule 7)
12. If in doubt, the passer is behind the A scrimmage line. (Rule 7)
13. If in doubt, the pass is legal. (Rule 7)
14. If in doubt, it is a touchback. (Rule 8)
15. If in doubt, the out-of-bounds punt near the goal line is a touchback. (Rule 8)

**RULE 1. THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT****Section 1. General Provisions****Article 1. Object of the Game.**

It is the object of the game for 1 team to carry or pass the ball across the opponent's goal line. The game is won by the team that accumulates the most points.

**Article 2. Men's or Women's Games.**

The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each. Four players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game may be continued with fewer than 4 players as long as the team has a chance to win. NOTE: If in doubt, continue the game. *Penalty:* Illegal Participation, 10 yards (S28).

**Article 3. Co-Rec Games.**

The co-rec game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men. Teams with 6 players shall be 3 men and 3 women, 4 men and 2 women, or 4 women and 2 men. Teams with 5 players, 3 men and 2 women or 2 men and 3 women, are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game may be continued with fewer than 5 players as long as the team has a chance to win. NOTE: If in doubt, continue the game. *Penalty:* Illegal Participation, 10 yards (S28).

NOTE: Member institutions are encouraged to adopt and use the NIRSA Transgender Athlete Participation Policy for their events (see [play.nirsa.net/nirsa-championship-series/player-eligibility-requirements](http://play.nirsa.net/nirsa-championship-series/player-eligibility-requirements)). This policy is mandatory for NIRSA Championship Series events.

**Article 4. Supervision.**

The game shall be played under the supervision of 2 to 4 officials. The officials are Referee, Line Judge, Back Judge, and Field Judge. It is recommended strongly that a minimum of 3 officials be used. Positions and responsibilities are found in the *Officials' Manual*.

**Article 5. Captains.**

Each coach or player-coach shall designate to the Referee the captain(s). If more than 1 player is designated, a speaking captain must be selected to make all decisions.

**Article 6. Persons Subject to the Rules.**

Players, nonplayers, and spectators affiliated with the team are subject to the Rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

**Article 7. Referee's Authority.**

The Referee shall have authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sporting behavior, on any situation not specifically covered in the Rules. The Referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

**Article 8. Officials' Authority.**

The officials shall assume authority for the contest 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time, or as soon as they arrive. The officials' jurisdiction extends through the Referee's declaration of the end of the 4th period or overtime.