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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 20, 2014

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Football Canada Rules Committee adopts measures to enhance player safety

Adopted by the Football Canada Rules Committee in March, this year's edition of the Amateur Tackle Football Rule Book will include a number of preemptive rule changes designed to make the game of football safer.

The changes include:

- Protecting quarterbacks through new roughing the passer rules
 - o Defenders are prohibited from forcibly hitting in the knee area or below a passer who has one or both feet planted on the ground, even if initial contact is above the knee.
 - o Defenders are prohibited from committing intimidating and punishing acts after the passer has thrown the ball.
 - o Defenders are prohibited from using the helmet/facemask to hit the passer or use hands, arms or other parts of body forcibly in the head or neck area.
- Penalizing a head leading block or tackle
 - o No player, including the ball carrier, shall use his helmet to butt or ram an opponent.
 - o No player shall strike the runner with the crown or top of their helmet.
- Protecting players in defenseless postures
 - o It is a foul if a player initiates unnecessary contact against a player who is in a defenseless posture.
 - o Defenseless postures include:
 - Player in the act or just after throwing a pass.
 - Receiver attempting to catch a pass or just completed a catch.
 - Runner or punt returner attempting to field a kick in the air.
 - Kicker/punter during kick or during return.
 - Quarterback any time after a change of possession.
 - o Prohibited contact against a player who is in a defenseless posture is:
 - Forcibly hitting the defenseless player's head or neck area with the helmet, facemask, forearm, or shoulder regardless of whether the defenseless player also uses his arms to tackle.
 - Lowering the head and making forcible contact with the top/crown or forehead/"hairline".
 - Illegally launching into a defenseless opponent.

Read the complete rule changes [here](#).

“Safety is the number one priority of Football Canada and the rule modifications we have enacted reflect a proactive approach to make the game of football safer across Canada,” said President, Richard MacLean.

“The changes also better align with the principles and techniques taught in Football Canada’s Safe Contact workshop and our model of Long Term Athlete Development.”

Longtime Canadian university head coach Brian Dobie, who led the Manitoba Bisons to a 2007 Vanier Cup victory was among the Football Canada Rules Committee members in attendance.

“I am extremely pleased and impressed that almost the entirety of the agenda of Football Canada's Rules Committee was dedicated to implementing rules and strategies that will have an immediate and lasting impact in protecting players of all age groups,” said University of Manitoba head coach, Brian Dobie.

“The impact of these rule changes and enhancements will significantly increase the safety of our young athletes as they challenge themselves and progress competitively in this great game that is Canadian Football.”

- 30 -

About Football Canada

Established in 1884, Football Canada is the national governing body of amateur football in Canada and a proud member of the International Federation of American Football (IFAF). Working closely with the provincial football associations, we develop programs and resources for players, coaches, officials in the three disciplines of Tackle, Flag and Touch Football. Football Canada’s vision statement is “from playground to stadium” where players can participate in the game of football throughout a lifetime recreationally, competitively and internationally.