

Flag Football Rules

Revised As of 8/30/2023

Gameplay-

- Teams will be made up of 7 players on the field at a time.
- At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the -choice of direction. Teams may not choose to defer to the second half.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they have three (3) plays to score a touchdown. **Each team will receive 2 attempts to go for it on fourth down. These attempts may be used at any time during a game.** Under two minutes in the game, 4th down attempts will be unlimited.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock with two twenty minute halves. The clock stops only for timeouts.
- Halftime is 3 minutes long.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has **3 Timeouts per game.** These can be used at any time.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- Overtime periods shall see each team get 4 downs from the midfield. Each team will be forced to go for two. If both teams are tied after their attempts, they will then tie.

Equipment-

- Player must have **mouthpieces.**
- Game balls will be provided by the officials. The game ball will be a Junior size.
- Flags must be at least 14" in length.**
- Players must wear shoes. Football cleats are encouraged; however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
- Players must have shirts tucked in during gameplay.

Field-

- The field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Run Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards. However, field size may vary based on field availability for each league.
- 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. All pass plays must be made by the Quarterback. Running back/hand off passes will not be allowed in the no run zones. Teams CANNOT take a penalty to get out of the no run zone.**
- Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
- Each offensive squad 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).

Scoring-

- Touchdown:** 6 points
- PAT (Point After Touchdown)** 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line) - 1 point PAT is pass only, 2 point PAT can be run or pass. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 12-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.

-**Safety:** 2 points - A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.

Snapping-

-Snaps must be directly from the center to only the Quarterback. Snaps can be from under center or out of the shotgun, but must be a between-the-legs snap.

Running-

-The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.

-The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble if rushed by the defense. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.

-Pitches/Lateral passes will only be allowed behind the line of scrimmage.

-“No-Run Zones,” located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run Zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

-The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

-Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

-Center sneaks are allowed, but the exchange from quarterback to center must be a handoff in front or around the body, but behind the line of scrimmage. (The ball be not be hiked and then immediately given back to center between the legs while in a snapping stance).

-Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.

-Spinning is allowed, but players may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball, while attempting to avoid a flag pull, is not allowed. Lateral moves to the left or right are permitted.

-Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.

-No “screening” is allowed at any time.

-Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.

-Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

Passing-

-All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line scrimmage.

-Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

-The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.

Receiving-

-All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).

-Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.

-A player must have a least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

-In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

-Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

-Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

Rushing the Passer-

-Only 2 players may rush the Quarterback at a time.

-Rushers must be 5 yards back from the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped.

-Players must avoid excessive contact with all blockers. Aggressive or excessive contact will result in a penalty.

-Once the ball is handed off, the rushing rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

-Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.

-The offense can attempt to block on offense. This blocking can only be side to side with no forward or backward motion. The offensive must have their arms crossed at their chest. This blocking is used to slow down rushers, however excessive or aggressive contact will result in a penalty.

-A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback's feet are when flag is pulled. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone

Flag Pulling-

-A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.

-Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.

-It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.

-If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.

-A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

-Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

Formations-

-Offense must have a minimum of 3 players on the line of scrimmage and up to five players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

-Defense must have a minimum of 2 players on the line of scrimmage before a snap. **These players must start in the box.** The defense may have up to 5 players on the line of scrimmage at a time. The players in the box may not rush the quarterback.

-One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.

-Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct-

-If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game.

-Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

-Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.