

Flag Football Rules 2025

PLAYERS/TEAM: Age Divisions...1st -2nd grade-3rd-4th grade (4th grade athletes cannot play in both tackle football and flag football). Players may only play on ONE team in the league. Teams play with 6 players on the field. Players can be moved up to a higher division if needed. Teams must have at least 5 players to start the game. If a substitute A player is needed to fill the 5 spots due to player absences, this is allowed. If a team plays with less than 6 players, the opposing team can still play with 6.

EQUIPMENT: Flag Tag pop flags are required. Metal-tip spikes are not allowed. Each team is responsible for providing their own jerseys & flags. The football size for both leagues will be a peewee size ball. Referees should check the flags of all players before the game starts to ensure proper installation.

THE FIELD: 70 yards x 30 yards (10 yard end zones included in the 70 yard total) Fields have a midfield line-to-gain with no-run-zones preceding each line-to-gain by 5 yards. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run-zone, teams cannot run the ball in any fashion and all plays must be pass plays. Each offensive team approaches only two no-run-zones in each drive....**1st** is located 5 yards before midfield line-to-gain **2nd** is located 5 yards before end zone.

THE GAME: Games will consist of 2 20-minute halves. A continuous clock will be used except for timeouts, delay-of-game penalties, & injury timeouts. Teams will switch sides after half-time, with the other team receiving the ball to start the 2nd half. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 45 seconds to snap the ball. Each team will receive 1 warning per game before a Delay of Game penalty is called. Each team will receive 2 60-second time outs per half. Half-time is 5 minutes. Substitutions may be made at any time during dead ball play. No official scorekeeping will be kept during games.

PENALTIES:

- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal play•
- All penalties will be assessed from the LOS, except as noted
- Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about the rule clarification and interpretations. Players may NOT question calls.
 - Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete
 - Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal

OFFENSIVE RULES:

Prior to the game

- Captains will meet at midfield to determine who gets the ball

Start of the game

- The offensive team will take possession of the ball at its own 5-yard line and will have four (4) plays to cross midfield
- Once the team crosses midfield, they will have a fresh set of downs and will have 4 plays to score a touchdown
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line
- All possession changes (EXCEPT FOR INTERCEPTIONS) start on the offense's 5-yard line
- Teams will change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense

Live Ball/Dead Ball

- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead
- The official will indicate the neutral zone and the line of scrimmage
 - o It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone
 - o The official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage
- A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play
- The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball
- Play is ruled dead when:
 - o The ball hits the ground
 - If the ball hits the ground on the snap, the ball will be placed in the spot that it hit the ground
 - o The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls off
 - o The ball carrier steps out of bounds

- o A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored
- o The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground
- o The receiver catches the ball without a flag on
- o The seven (7) second pass clock expires
- o Inadvertent whistle

In the event of inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options

- a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed
- b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage

Running

- The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball-carrier has the ball

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- Ball carriers must make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position
- The quarterback may not directly run with the ball
 - o Quarterback is defined as the offensive player who receives the snap
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage.
 - o Offense may utilize multiple handoffs
 - o Center sneak play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to hand the ball to the center on the first handoff of the play.
- NO laterals past the line of scrimmage
- No-Run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones.
 - o If a penalty on the defense takes a team into the No-Run Zone, then they are allowed one (1) open play call
- Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. This includes diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag full
 - o Penalty is considered flag-guarding

- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to do so o Players spinning wildly out of control...penalty will be flag guarding• Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she is attempting to avoid collision
 - No blocking/screening is allowed at any time
 - o Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage
 - No running with the ball carrier
 - Flag obstruction
 - o All jerseys must be tucked in before the play begins.
 - o Flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction▪
- Penalty for obstructed flag will be considered flag- guarding

Passing

- ALL passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage
- Intentional Grounding
 - o Quarterback can throw the ball away to avoid a sack as long as ball crosses the line of scrimmage in the air
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of Scrimmage

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- The quarterback has a seven second pass clock. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead, and the down is consumed. o Ball will be placed at the original line of scrimmage.
- o Once ball is handed off, the 7 second clock is no longer in effect

Receiving

- All players are eligible receivers including the quarterback once he/she hands it off
 - Only one player is allowed in motion at a time
 - o All motion must be parallel with the line of scrimmage
 - A player must have at least one foot in bounds to receive a pass•
- Interceptions are returnable for touchdowns
- o Rule does not apply on PAT's

Formations

- Offenses must have a minimum of one (1) player up to maximum of (4) players on the Line of Scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the LOS. o

1 Player may go in motion

- Must be parallel with LOS

- No motion allowed toward the LOS

- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the LOS while in motion is considered a false start

- The center must snap the ball in a rapid, continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands

DEFENSIVE RULES:

Rushing the passer

- All players who rush the passes must be a minimum of seven (7) yards from the line of scrimmage on the snap

- o Any number of players can rush the quarterback

- o Players not rushing the QB can defend on the LOS

- Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage

- Referee will designate a rush line 7-yards from the LOS

- A legal rush is defined as:

- o Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive LOS

- o A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback

- An illegal rush is defined as:

- o The rusher leaves the rush line early before the snap and crosses the LOS before a handoff is made

- Penalty-ILLEGAL RUSH: 5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down

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- o Any defensive player crosses the LOS before the ball is snapped

- Penalty-OFFSIDES: 5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down

- o Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the LOS before the ball is passed or handed off

- Penalty-ILLEGAL RUSH: 5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down

- o Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass, however NO contact can be made with the QB in any way.

Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass & making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty

- o The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the QB, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. It is the OFFENSIVE PLAYERS responsibility to avoid contact.

- Exception being if the offensive player never moves after the snap, then it is the rushers responsibility to go around the offensive player to avoid contact
- o A sack occurs if the QB's flag is pulled behind the LOS. The ball is placed where the QB's feet are when the 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 are NOT allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags• Defenders can dive to pull flags, but not 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 possessions of the ball and the play ends
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off 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 intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey