



5v5

Flag Football Rules

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EQUIPMENT

The Ball

The official football will be pebble-grained leather or rubber covered and will meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. The Referee will be the sole judge of any football offered for play and may change the football during play at their discretion. During the game each team must use a legal football of its choice when on Offense.

Uniforms

All uniforms/jerseys **MUST MATCH!** Players on opposing teams must wear contrasting-colored jerseys. Numbers on the front of the jersey are optional. Numbers must be approx. 2-5 inches wide and 10 inches tall. **Jersey numbers not required.**

Each player's pants must be a different color than the flags. The visiting team will make any changes required. No article of clothing may cover any portion of the player's flag (excludes belts) at the start of play. Jerseys must be tucked in at start of each new play.

Shorts, pants, or tights with open pockets are not allowed. No pockets are allowed, unless they are sewn or zipped shut. Tights/Leggings cannot be the primary outer garment. They must be covered with legal shorts, pants, etc.

Penalty for untucked jersey: 5 yards.

Shoes

Shoes must be of either a leather or man-made upper with a one-piece molded bottom, which may or may not have rubber cleats. Metal tipped cleats may not be worn, however, rubber cleats with a smooth, flat metal bottom are allowed. If a player is caught wearing illegal shoes during the game, that player may be ejected, and the team will be charged with a penalty.

***Penalty: Illegal Shoes: 15 yards and player may be ejected
(Referee discretion)***

Flags

Each player on the field must wear a one-piece belt with three (3) flags sewn onto the belt. The belt **MUST** have a Plastic Clip to secure the belt. **Flags must be worn with one flag in the back and one on each side at the start of every play.** The flags must be of contrasting color with the pants. Flags or Belt or Belt Clip Must not be altered or have anything added. Flags must be regulations which are 2 1/2 inches wide and 14 1/2 inches long.

***Penalty: Illegal or Altered Flags/Belt: 15 yards and player may be ejected
(Referee discretion)***

Illegal Equipment

The use of headgear (of any nature - including baseball caps) is not allowed unless approved by officials. Shoulder pads, body pads, or shoes with metal tipped cleats, regardless of material is prohibited. Additionally, any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. Players may use an ace bandage if needed. Knee braces must be covered by a soft, yielding material not to exceed 3/8" thickness. ***No loose jewelry of any kind will be worn (excluding stud earrings and necklaces under the jersey).***

MONEY: REFUNDS, CREDITS AND TRANSFERS

All registration and other fees are non-refundable after the schedule is released. Fees are non-transferable.

TEAM ROSTERS

Team Captains are fully responsible for maintaining an updated roster online. Players not rostered are considered illegal players. There is a limit of 21 players per roster for an 8v8 team and 12 players per team for 5v5 teams.

The last time to add new players to the roster is two weeks prior to the final week of league play.

Division Advancement

Champions and runners-up from the earlier year are expected to register in the next higher division in the next season. The exception is for those teams that are returning 4 or less players from last season's roster. If your team skipped a season but is returning a roster with 5 or more players from the last season played, you are still expected to play up one division.

FORFEIT TIMING

Game time is forfeit time. Teams must start games with **4 rostered players** on the field, but no less. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** A game will be forfeited if they are using an illegal player (player not on the roster at the moment that the game is being played) or an intoxicated player (Player Code of Conduct).

TEAM CAPTAINS

Each team will designate to the Referee their Team Captain(s). If more than one (1) player is designated as Team Captain, a Speaking Captain must be selected to make all decisions. The Captain's first choice of any option is irrevocable.

Team Captain's Meeting

Attending the Team Captains meeting is mandatory. Team Captains who do not attend or teams that do not provide a person of representation release their rights to vote on league matters that are discussed and voted on at these meetings.

EJECTED AND DISQUALIFIED PLAYERS

Any player who has been ejected must leave **the game and MUST physically leave the playing premises**; code of conduct will be enforced. A disqualified player must be removed for a portion (5 plays) of a game to cool off.

CHAMPIONSHIP PRIZES

The Playoffs Champions teams have 14 days from the day of contact by the athletics office that their championship shirts or trophy are available to pick up, or the prize will be considered forfeited, and they will be donated. The league administration will contact the team captain if they have indicated they want shirts. That team captain then has 72 hours to get team sizes if they were not already turned in. After 72 hours the league will default to ordering a trophy instead for that team.

THE GAME

The game will be played between two (2) teams of five (5) players on a field measuring from the 40yd line to the goal line x sideline to far hash mark.

The game will be played under the supervision of two (2) Game Officials. The Officials' positions/roles are:

- Referee
- Back Judge

Team representatives, including players, team managers, coaches, and group members are subject to the rules of the game and will be governed by the decisions of the Officials assigned to the game. The Referee's decision is final.

Length of Game

The game will consist of two halves, each made up of a 20-minute running clock. Teams will have two (2) timeouts per half. The game clock will stop with approximately one (1) minute remaining in the **second half only**. The clock will then start on the snap. In the last minute of the second half the clock will stop for: incomplete forward passes, out of bounds, time-outs, injuries, first downs, penalties, scores, inadvertent whistles, and change of possession only.

SCORING MERCY RULE: The Game will end when a team has a 25-point lead at the 1-Minute mark of the 2nd half.

Team And Player Designation

A. Offense and Defense

The Offense is the team which puts the ball in play by a snap; the Defense is the opposing team.

B. Snapper

The snapper is the offensive player who snaps the ball.

C. Quarterback

The quarterback is the offensive player who first gets possession of the ball after the snap.

D. Passer

The passer is the offensive player who throws a legal pass.

E. Runner

The runner is a player in possession of a live ball.

F. Blitzer

The blitzer is a defensive player who crosses the scrimmage line while the ball is live and before the quarterback has released the ball. Blitzers have the right of way, if they raise one hand clearly above the head before the snap **and the referee acknowledges them, they may lower their hand.**

The rush has to be immediately after the snap, quick and straight near to the point where the quarterback receives the snap. If a blitzer is giving an invalid signal, rushing slow, aiming another spot or changing the direction during the rush, they lose the right of way.

G. Player Out of Bounds

A player or ball is out of bounds when it touches anything out of bounds.

H. Disqualified Player

A disqualified player is one who is declared ineligible for further participation in the game.

I. Home Team

If both teams are away from home or at tournaments (more than 2 teams), first mentioned team will be the home team, second mentioned team will be the visiting team.

Down, Scrimmage and Play Classification

A. Down

A down is a unit of the game that starts with a legal snap after the ball is ready for play and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead. A play is the action between the 2 teams during a down.

B. Scrimmage Line

The scrimmage line for each team, when the ball is ready for play, is the yard line and its vertical plane that passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line and extends to the side lines. A player has crossed the scrimmage line if one part of his body has been beyond his scrimmage line.

C. Forward Pass Play

A legal forward pass play is the interval between the snap and when a legal forward pass beyond the scrimmage line is completed or intercepted. Also, any forward pass from behind the scrimmage line becoming incomplete or touched by the defense is considered as forward pass play.

D. Running Play

A running play is any live ball action other than that during a legal forward pass play. Passes completed behind the line of scrimmage are legal and are running plays.

Handling Of The Ball

A. Handoff

Handoff is successfully transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing.

B. Pass and Fumble

A pass is any intentional act to throw the ball in any direction. A pass continues to be a pass until it is completed by a player or the ball becomes dead. A fumble is any act other than passing or successful handing that result in loss of player possession. A pass (or fumble) can only occur after a player gains possession of a ball. For the status of the ball, it will be no difference, if the possession is lost intentional (pass or handoff) or unintentional (fumble), a live ball in flight will be considered as pass.

C. Possession

Possession means the firmly holding or controlling of a live ball. Once possession is established, the remaining offensive players must come to a stop.

D. Batting

Batting the ball is intentionally striking it or intentionally changing its direction with the hands or arms.

E. Kicking

Kicking the ball is intentionally striking the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot and is illegal.

Passes

A. Forward and Backward Pass

A forward pass is determined by the point where the ball first strikes anything beyond the spot of the pass. All other passes are backward passes, even if it is a lateral (parallel to the scrimmage line). A snap becomes a backward pass when the snapper releases the ball, even if it slips from the hand of the snapper.

B. Crosses Scrimmage Line

A legal forward pass has crossed the scrimmage line when it first strikes anything beyond the scrimmage line inbounds.

C. Catch/Interception

A catch is an act of firmly establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass is an interception. A player who leaves their feet to make a catch or interception must have the ball firmly in their possession when they first return to the ground inbounds with any part of their body to complete a pass.

Holding, Blocking, Contact And Tackling

A. Holding

Holding is grasping an opponent or his equipment and not releasing it immediately.

B. Blocking

Blocking is obstructing an opponent without contact by moving into his way. An offensive player moving in the line between a defensive player, and the runner or in the way of a blitzer is blocking. A player standing still (with the right of place) is not blocking, even if he is in between the runner and the opponent.

C. Contact

Contact is touching an opponent with impact. Touching without an effect is no contact.

D. Flag Pull

Flag pull is taking away one or more flags of an opponent with hand(s). Any flag pulled behind the 40yd line will be counted as a safety resulting 2 points for the pulling team and the ball on the 40yd line.

E. Flag Guarding

Flag guarding is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by covering the flag with any part of the body (hand, elbow or leg) or with the ball. Flag guarding is also leaning the upper body forward (diving) or stretching out a hand, with or without the ball, towards the opponent to make it more difficult for the defender to reach the flag.

Diving And Spinning

A. **No Diving**

B. Spinning

Spinning is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by turning his body at the vertical axis. Spinning is legal.

NOTE: The Runner cannot leave their feet to advance the ball FORWARD.

Right of Place and Right of Way

A. Right of Place (RoP)

Right of place is given to a standing player and opponents have to avoid contact. Standing means to remain at the spot and not moving in any direction, to make a move or jump for throwing or catching a pass at this spot does not give up the right of place.

B. Right of Way (RoW)

Right of way is given to a moving player and opponents have to avoid contact. The right of place has more worth than the right of way.

SNAPPING AND PASSING THE BALL

The Scrimmage

A. Ball Ready for Play

1. No player shall put the ball in play before it is ready for play.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.

2. The ball shall be put in play within 25 seconds after the referee has declared the ball ready for play.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.

B. Starting with a Snap

After the snapper touches the ball, the snapper may not lift the ball, move it forward or simulate the start. Before the snap, the long axis of the ball must be at right angles to the scrimmage line. A legal snap is passing it backward from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous backward motion of the hand or hands and actually leaving the hand or hands in this motion. The snap needs to be between the snapper's legs.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.

C. Offensive Team Requirements

There is no minimum number of players at the line of scrimmage.

Exception: The Center on the Line of Scrimmage.

1. After the snapper touches the ball and before the ball is snapped all players must be in bounds and behind their scrimmage line.
2. All players of the offensive team must come to an absolute stop and remain stationary in their positions for at least 1 full second before the ball is snapped or a motion starts.

3. No offensive player shall make a false start or make a movement that simulates the beginning of a play.
4. When the snap starts, one player may be in motion, but not in motion toward his opponent's goal line.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.

5. The quarterback can run with the ball past the line of scrimmage, once the defense has crossed LOS or the ball has exchanged hands.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.

6. The quarterback has 5 seconds to throw the ball after receiving the snap. If this limit is exceeded the ball becomes dead at the scrimmage line. Once defense crosses the line – count is off.

PENALTY - Loss of down at the scrimmage line.

D. Defensive Team Requirements

1. Before the ball is snapped all players must be in bounds and behind their scrimmage line.
2. No player shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play.

PENALTY - 5 yards.

3. At the snap, the blitzer has to be 7 or more yards away from the scrimmage line. All other defensive players have to stay behind their scrimmage line until the ball has exchanged hands.
4. Only 1 blitzer can raise their hand and ask for the right of way. Their hand must be kept raised until the referee acknowledges. If more players raise their hand simultaneously, all of them lose the right of way and it is an illegal signal.

Penalty: 5 yards from Line of Scrimmage.

There is no need for them to rush, it is only a request for the right of way.

5. A player who is less than 7 yards away from their scrimmage line cannot raise his hand to simulate being a blitzer.

PENALTY - 5 yards, from the scrimmage line.

E. Handing the Ball

1. An Offense may use multiple hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage.
2. No snapper may receive a forward hand-off.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

Passes

A. Backward Pass

A runner may pass the ball backward at any time.

B. Complete Pass

Any pass caught by an eligible player touching the ground in bounds is completed and the ball continues in play unless completed in the opponent's end zone.

C. Incomplete Pass

Any pass is incomplete if the ball touches the ground when not firmly controlled by a player. It also is incomplete when a player leaves his feet and receives the pass but first lands on or outside a boundary line. When a forward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the previous scrimmage line; this is the dead ball spot. When a backward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the spot of the ball hitting the ground; this is the dead ball spot.

D. Illegal Touch

All inbound players are eligible to touch, bat or catch a pass. The quarterback is only allowed to catch a pass if the ball has been touched by any other player before. No offensive player who goes out of bounds by himself during a down shall touch a pass in bounds or while airborne **unless touched by another player.** If an offensive player is forced out of bounds and immediately returns to the field of play, he is still eligible.

PENALTY - Loss of down at the scrimmage line.

Forward Pass

A. Legal Forward Pass

A player may make one forward pass during each scrimmage down provided the pass is thrown from a point behind the scrimmage line.

B. Illegal Forward Pass

A forward pass is illegal:

1. If thrown by an offense player who is beyond the scrimmage line when he releases the ball.
2. If thrown after a runner has gone beyond the scrimmage line.
3. If it is the second forward pass by the offense during the same down.

C. Pass Interference

Pass interference rules apply only during a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the scrimmage line. Physical contact is required to establish interference. Pass interference is contact that interferes with an opponent player when the ball is in the air. It is the responsibility of the defensive players to avoid the opponents. It is not pass interference when 2 or more eligible players are making a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to touch, bat or catch the pass. Eligible players of either team have equal rights to the ball. **Face guarding alone is not pass interference. Pass must be catchable.**

PENALTY - Offense pass interference: 10 yards from the previous scrimmage line and loss of down.

D. Defensive Pass Interference

Automatic first down at the spot of foul. If the spot of foul is in the end zone of the defense, the ball will be spotted at the 2-yard line.

Note: Contact on a pass play before the pass has been thrown or if the pass does not cross the scrimmage line, is a contact foul.

Intentional Grounding

Intentional grounding is when a passer throws a forward pass without a realistic chance of completion. The ball must be thrown in the vicinity of the receiver on or beyond the line of scrimmage.

PENALTY – LOD from the spot of the infraction

FOULS

Contact Fouls

A. Initiating Contact

1. No player or coach shall contact an opponent or official.
2. No player may step, jump or stand on another player.
3. No player may hold another player.
4. All players have the right of place. Opponents have to avoid contact.
5. The runner is in charge to avoid contact with the opponent players.
6. All offensive players have the right of way as long as the ball has been thrown or a runner crosses the scrimmage line. Defensive players have to avoid contact. When the ball is in the air all players have the right to play the ball, but not by targeting (playing through) the opponent.
7. The eligible blitzer, with legal signal, has the right of way and offensive players have to avoid contact. Note: If there is no contact, it still could be a block by the offensive player.

PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

B. Stripping the Ball

1. No player shall try to attack a player with ball in possession or take away the ball from the runner.

PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

C. Game Interference

1. No substitute or coach may interfere in any way with the ball, a player or an official while the ball is in play.

PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

Noncontact Fouls

A. Unsportsmanlike Acts

1. Use of abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning.
2. If a player is neither returning the ball to the next spot nor leaving it near the dead ball spot.

PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot

B. Unfair Acts

1. No player shall block an opponent.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

2. No runner shall jump or dive.

PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down if by offense before team possession changes enforced from the spot of foul.

3. No runner shall commit flag guarding.

PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down if by offense before team possession changes, enforced from the spot of foul.

4. No player shall pull a flag from an opponent other than the runner or an opponent who fakes to be the runner.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

5. No player shall kick a pass. This foul does not change the status of the pass.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.

6. Participation by 6 or more players is illegal participation.

PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line, enforced from the basic spot.

7. Coaches and substitutes may not be outside the team area during a down.

PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line.

8. No player wearing illegal equipment or missing mandatory equipment shall be permitted to play. A player with a bleeding wound must leave the field. Players have to leave the field immediately after ordered to do so by an official.

VIOLATION - Charged timeout. Penalty – 5 Yards, if no timeout left.

PENALTIES

A. Automatic First Down (AFD)

- Defensive pass interference (at the spot of foul)

B. Loss Of A Down (LOD)

- Delay of pass Illegal touch
- Illegal backward pass [also 5 yards] Illegal forward pass [also 5 yards]
- Jumping or Diving [also 5 yards] Flag guarding [also 5 yards]
- Offensive pass interference [also 10 yards]

C. Loss Of 5 Yards

- Illegal kick by runner SPOT
- Delay of game LOS
- Illegal snap LOS
- Encroachment LOS
- False start LOS
- Illegal motion LOS
- Illegal forward pass (also LOD) LOS
- Illegal run play LOS
- Offsides LOS
- Illegal blitz LOS
- Illegal blitz signal LOS
- Illegal handoff LOS
- Illegal backward pass (also LOD) SPOT
- Jumping or Diving (also LOD) SPOT
- Flag guarding (also LOD) SPOT
- Illegal Flag pull SPOT
- Illegal kicking a pass SPOT
- Illegal participation LOS
- Sideline Interference LOS
- Illegal Substitution LOS
- **Illegal Touch LOD**

D. 10 Yard Penalty

- Offense Pass interference [also LOD] Illegal contact LOS
- Stripping SPOT
- Game interference Unsportsmanlike LOS
- Intentional Grounding LOS

E. Charged Timeout

- Player with wearing illegal equipment not leaving field LOS
- Player with missing mandatory equipment not leaving field LOS
- Player with bleeding wound not leaving field LOS