

Rules

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1. Intro

Flag football is a five on five game filled with fun and action. In this game, the offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone. Running and passing plays are allowed, although there are "no-running zones" at midfield and near each goal line. The defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer, and grabs flags to make "tackles."

2. Game Rules & Procedures

a. Basics

- i. At the start of each game, captains and coaches from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine first possession.
- ii. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield it has three plays to score a touchdown.
- iii. If the offense fails to cross midfield or score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- iv. All possession changes, except interceptions & kickoffs (MS division only), start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- v. Teams change sides after the first half and possession changes to the loser of the coin toss.
- vi. Teams must field a minimum of four players at all times.

b. Equipment

- i. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
- ii. Jerseys are to be tucked under flag belt if they hang below the waist.
- iii. Flag belt needs to be repositioned with buckle at player's front before each play.
- iv. Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes.
- v. Shorts color may vary but needs to be different than your team flag color.
- vi. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry.
- vii. Inspections of all players are made by referees prior to the start of each game.

c. Field

- i. Field measures 30x70 yards including two 10-yard end zones.
- ii. Five yard wide No-Run Zones precede each end zone and surround the midfield line.
- iii. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. Teams may not run the ball while in the no-run zones. All plays, including those that begin with handoffs, must be pass plays.
- iv. Stepping on sideline is considered out of bounds.

field diagram

d. Timing/Scoring

- i. Games are played to 40 minutes running time.
 - ii. Halftime is taken after 20 minutes and is three minutes long.
 - iii. Clock only stops for timeouts and on each change of possession in the last two minutes of each half.
 - iv. 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.
 - v. Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second timeout per half.
 - vi. Officials may stop the clock at their discretion for injuries, etc.
 - vii. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes a tie is recorded.
 - viii. Touchdown are worth 6 points
 - ix. Point after Touchdown, 1 point from 5-yard line (pass only) or 2 points from 12-yard line (pass or run).
 - x. Safety is worth 2 points
1. 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 off, they step out of bounds, or they hit the ground with their knee or arm.
 2. A safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
 3. If the player is declared down while attempting to leave his/her own end zone on a kickoff a safety is awarded to the kicking team.

e. Live Ball/Dead Ball

- i. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- ii. Officials establish the line of scrimmage and 7-yard rushing point before each play (No rushing point needed for K-1 division). No rushing allowed in K-1 division.
- iii. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
- iv. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- v. The ball must be snapped cleanly from the ground between the legs to start play.
- vi. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 1. Ball hits the ground (there are no fumbles, ball is spotted where it hit the ground)
 2. Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 3. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 4. A touchdown, extra point, or safety is scored
 5. Ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground
 6. Ball carrier's flag falls off
 7. A receiver with no flags on catches the ball

8. The 7 second pass clock expires
9. An inadvertent whistle is performed (at the spot where the ball was whistled dead)
 - vii. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 1. Take the ball where the whistle blew.
 2. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
 - f. Running
 - i. The quarterback cannot run with the ball
 - ii. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - iii. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - iv. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
 - v. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping is considered flag guarding. Spinning is allowed.
 - vi. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
 - vii. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind are allowed, the ball must pass the line of scrimmage when thrown.
 - viii. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
 - ix. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
 - x. 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.
 - g. Passing/Receiving
 - i. All passes must be thrown from behind and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. Underhand or shovel passes are allowed, the ball must still pass the line of scrimmage.
 - iii. The quarterback has a 7 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.
 - iv. 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 (PAT's).
 - v. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage)
 - vi. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time, parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - vii. A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception.
 - viii. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
 - h. Rushing the Passer (Applies to 2-3, 4-5 and MS divisions only)
 - i. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is

snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.

- ii. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- iii. A special marker placed by the official will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
- iv. Players rushing the quarterback may use their hands/arms to attempt blocking a pass. However, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way.
- v. Offense cannot impede the rusher in any way, interference will be considered screening.
- vi. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback's feet are when the flag is pulled.
- vii. Rushing the passer in the K-1 division is not allowed.

i. Flag Pulling

- i. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- ii. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through ball carrier.
- iii. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- iv. Defense may not intentionally pull the flag off of a player who doesn't have the ball.
- v. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.

j. Kickoffs

- i. Kickoffs are only taken in the Middle School age group.
 - ii. Kickoffs are taken at the start of the game, after each score, and at start of second half.
 - iii. Kicks are taken from midfield no run zone line nearest to kicking team's end zone.
 - iv. Receiving team must possess the ball after the kick.
 - v. If ball is kicked out of bounds it is spotted where it went out of play.
 - vi. A touchback at the 5-yard line results if the receiving team possesses and kneels with ball in the end zone.
 - vii. If the player is declared down while attempting to leave his/her own end zone on a kickoff a safety is awarded to the kicking team.
 - viii. The kick must travel at least 10 yards forward, once the ball goes 10 yards it is a live ball.
- ix. Onside kicks are not allowed.
- x. If the ball does not travel 10 yards then the receiving team chooses whether to take the ball where it stops or have the kick retaken 10 yards back.

3. League Rules & Procedures

a. Playing Time/Positions

- i. Our league is instructional, it is important that all players play a similar amount of time at a variety of positions. Amount of playing time should not be based on playing ability, size, or age.
- ii. Each player must play at least ½ of the game.
- iii. Players should practice and play at different positions in order to learn and improve in the different facets of the

game.

- iv. The quarterback position should be shared equally between at least two players during each game.
- v. Protests: There is no protest and all game scores reported are final. However, coaches may bring any issue to the league's attention so that it can be addressed and where applicable corrected prior to the following weeks games.
- b. Age Divisions
 - i. There are four age divisions: Kindergarten-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, 4th-5th grade and Middle School
 - ii. Age division placement is determined by the player's grade on the starting date of the season.
 - iii. All age divisions are co-ed.
- c. Cancellations/Make-ups
 - i. All game and practice cancellations and make-ups will be determined by the league.
 - ii. The primary method of communication in situations of inclement weather will be the league website calendar and if possible an email sent by the league to players and coaches.
 - iii. The 703-444-8805x112 office phone line will also be updated with field closings.
 - iv. If practice is cancelled during the week, weather permitting it will be made up on that Friday, if two practice days are cancelled during the week Friday make-ups will be reduced to 1 hr.
 - v. If games are cancelled, weather permitting they will be made up with the same time schedule on that Sunday.
- d. Practices
 - i. Each team has one 1 ½ hour practice each week throughout the season.
 - ii. If players do not consistently make practices it is up to the coach's discretion as to how much the player will play. Coaches should have a discussion with the league and the player's family before reducing playing time.
 - iii. The ½ game rules will be void if players do not make several practices throughout the season.
- e. Coaching Equipment/Ball Sizes
 - i. Coaches are provided with 2 footballs, cones, flag belts, pump, play calling armband (MS only), tee (MS only), and bag at the beginning of the season. Equipment needs to be returned to the league at the end of the season.
 - ii. The K-1st, 2nd-3rd, & 4th-5th grade divisions use the Pee Wee sized ball.
 - iii. The Middle School division uses the Junior sized ball for practices and games
- f. Game Procedures
 - i. All parents, coaches & players must settle behind the marked line 3 feet behind the field's sideline.
 - ii. In K-1st and 2nd-3rd grade divisions parents should be seated on one side of the field while teams are gathered on the opposite sideline.
 - iii. In 4th-5th grade and Middle School division each team and their parents should take a side of the field.
- g. Coach Positioning During Games
 - i. K-1st grade division: Two coaches per team on both offense and defense.
 - ii. 2nd-3rd grade division: One coach per team on both offense and defense.
 - iii. 4th-5th grade division: One coach per team on both offense and defense.
 - iv. Middle School division: No coaches on the field for either offense or defense.

- v. Offensive coaches must be at least 7 yards behind the play when the ball is snapped.
 - vi. Defensive coaches must make their way toward the sideline before the ball is snapped.
 - h. Playoff Seeding Tie-Breaker
 - i. In the case of equal records at the end of the season, the playoff seeds will be determined by the team's head to head results. Total point differential for the season will be used if the two teams didn't play each other in the regular season or the two teams tied during the regular season game. However, the maximum point differential that a team can accumulate for one game is 10 points. Meaning if a team beats its opponent by 20, then the winning team will only get a positive 10 point differential.
 - ii. Forfeited games result in a win and +1 point differential for the winning team.
 - i. Sportsmanship/Conduct
 - i. If a referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player, parent, or coach will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals! FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
 - ii. Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.)
 - iii. If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the referee may penalize the offending team's coach and the player or players will be ejected from the game.
 - iv. Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
 - j. Draft
 - i. In the 2nd-3rd grade, 4th-5th grade, and Middle School divisions team rosters are determined by coaches after a one hour player skill assessment of all registered players. Coaches observe players while a league official leads players through a variety of drills and scrimmage play. Coaches receive a list with limited information about each player prior to the skills assessment to assist in the evaluation
 - ii. Following the skills assessment period, a league official will lead a draft. Coach's and assistant coach's children are automatically assigned to their parent's team (2 coaches max). Coaches' children are limited to actual children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews.
 - iii. In the case of siblings, all brothers and sisters will be placed on the same team unless otherwise requested. Siblings by league definition are brothers or sisters (by birth or marriage) living in the same residence.
 - iv. Players that are not present at the skills assessment will still be included in the draft. Draft leader and coaches will discuss known players and share knowledge of the player's skill and experience.
 - v. Team formation in the Kindergarten-1st grade division is made by the league; there is no player assessment for this age group.
- #### 4. Penalties
- a. General
 - i. The referee will call all penalties and determine incidental contact.
 - ii. All penalties will be assessed from line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
 - iii. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretation. Players or coaches cannot question judgment calls.
 - iv. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
 - v. Penalties are assessed Live Ball then Dead Ball. Live Ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered completed.

- vi. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- vii. A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official's rule interpretation (not judgement calls). Both coaches and referees will meet in the center of the field to discuss the situation in a calm, productive manner. If the rules are interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call. If the ruling is correct the team will be charged a time out.
- vii. Referees may penalize coaches if their conduct is not appropriate.
- b. 5 yd penalties
 - i. Illegal equipment
 - ii. Offside
 - iii. Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc)
 - iv. Illegal forward pass (pass received behind LOS or thrown from beyond LOS)
 - v. Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away from defender)
 - vi. Screening, blocking or running with ball carrier
 - vii. Delay of game
 - viii. Defense illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc)
 - ix. Defense illegal flag pull (before receiver has the ball)
 - x. Defense illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)
- c. 10 yd penalties
 - i. Roughing the passer
 - ii. Taunting
 - iii. Unsportsmanlike conduct
- d. Spot fouls
 - i. Flag guarding………10 yards
 - ii. Charging…………10 yards
 - iii. Defensive pass interference………first down
 - iv. Stripping………10 yards & first down
 - v. Screening, blocking, or running with ball carrier….5 yards
 - vi. Unnecessary roughness……10 yards
- e. Defense
 - i. Offside………5 yards & first down
 - ii. Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc)………5 yards & first down
 - iii. Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)……5 yards & first down
 - iv. Illegal rushing (from inside 7 yard marker)…5 yards & first down

- v. Roughing the passer…………10 yards & first down
- vi. Taunting…………………10 yards & first down
- f. Offense
 - i. Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start)..5 yards & loss of down
 - ii. Illegal forward pass (received behind LOS or thrown from beyond LOS)...5 yards & loss of down
 - iii. Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off the defender)…5 yards & loss of down
 - iv. Delay of game……5 yards & clock stops
 - v. Offside……………5 yards & loss of down