



Adult League Rule Book

2009 - 2018

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Preface

Overview

This rule book will serve to provide the Pittsburgh Flag Football League (PFFL) with guiding principles to create a fun and safe environment for adult flag football. Prior versions and or statements regarding the rules and there interpretations are no longer valid. The rules set forth in this book and future versions of it will be considered binding.

Recent Changes

- Approved Rulings (AR) are itemized throughout this rule book and the complete list is located in the Interpretations section. An Approved Ruling (AR) is an official decision on a given statement of facts. It serves to illustrate the spirit and application of the rule.
- Forfeit and Participation Policy
 - All players are required to participate in at least four (4) of the ten (10) regular season games.
- A twenty eight (28) point differential will automatically end the game

Rule 1 – Game, Field and Equipment

ARTICLE 1. The Game

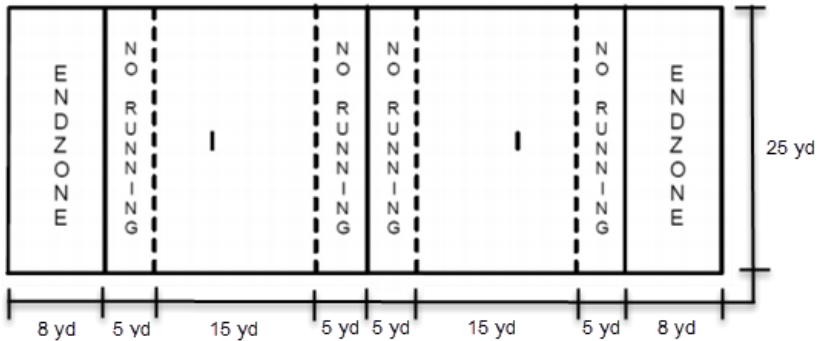
The Pittsburgh Flag Football League competes in the game of flag football under the current format of 4 on 4 non-contact. The term non-contact contemplates that players will not perform the act of blocking, tackling, picking, or pushing another player during the active game.

A team must start the game with no less than three (3) players and a minimum of three (3) players must be in the field of play at all times. Team rosters consist of a maximum of eight (8) players and a minimum of six (6) players throughout the entire season. When necessary, each team is required to designate one (1) captain to serve as the primary team spokesperson and point of contact for the referee.

ARTICLE 2. Supervision

The game shall be played under the supervision of two (2) or more officials. In all circumstances the two (2) officials will be represented by at least one (1) stat keeper and one (1) referee.

ARTICLE 3. Field Dimensions



- End Zones may range in depth between eight (8) – ten (10) yds based upon playing field.

ARTICLE 4. Equipment

- Shirts or jerseys must be worn and tucked in at all times during the game.
- Shirts or jerseys must be of exact or similar color with at least one visible number placed on the front or back of the shirt.
- Shorts worn by a player must be the opposite color of the flag belt worn.
- Players are recommended to wear a protective mouthpiece at all times during a game.
- Every effort must be made to keep one flag on each hip by every player.
- Flags must be clearly visible and not be covered by the players uniform.
- Flag-a-tag Sonic Belts are the required flag for game play and will be provided by the Pittsburgh Flag Football League.

Rule 2 – Definitions

SECTION 1. Areas and Lines

ARTICLE 1. The Field

The field is the area within the safety area and the space above.

ARTICLE 2. Field of Play

The field of play is the area within the boundary lines (side lines and end lines) other than the end zones.

ARTICLE 3. End Zones

The end zones are the eight (8) – ten (10) yard areas at both ends of the field between the end lines and the goal lines.

ARTICLE 4. No-Running Zones

The No-Running Zones are the five (5) yard areas at both ends of the field in front of the goal lines.

ARTICLE 5. Goal Lines

Goal lines, one for each team, shall be established at opposite ends of the field of play. The goal lines and goal line pylons are in the end zone. Each goal line is part of a vertical plane separating an end zone from the field of play when the ball is touched or is in player possession, the plane extends beyond the side lines. A team's goal line is the one it is defending.

ARTICLE 6. First Down

In the middle of the field between the goal lines is the first down line. A first down gained by a team crossing the middle of the field can only be obtained once per possession.

ARTICLE 7. In Bounds, Out of Bounds

The area enclosed by the side lines and end lines is in bounds and the area surrounding and including the side lines and end lines is out of bounds.

SECTION 2. Team and Player Designations

ARTICLE 1. Offense and Defense

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

ARTICLE 2. Center

The center is the offensive player who snaps the ball between their legs.

ARTICLE 3. Quarterback

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

ARTICLE 4. Passer

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

ARTICLE 5. Runner

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

ARTICLE 6. Rusher

The rusher is a defensive player who crosses the scrimmage line while the ball is live and before the quarterback has released the ball.

SECTION 3. Foul and Penalty

ARTICLE 1. Foul

A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. A flagrant foul is a rule infraction that places an opponent in danger of injury.

ARTICLE 2. Penalty

A penalty is a result imposed by rule against a team that has committed a foul and may include one or more of the following: loss of yardage, loss of down, automatic first down or disqualification. If the penalty involves loss of a down, the down shall count as 1 of the 4 in that series.

ARTICLE 3. Loss of a down

“LOD” is an abbreviation meaning “loss of the right to repeat a down”

ARTICLE 4. Automatic first down

“AFD” is an abbreviation meaning a first down is awarded immediately during a possession.

SECTION 4. The Ball – Live or Dead

ARTICLE 1. Live Ball

A live ball is a ball in play. A pass that has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight.

ARTICLE 2. Dead Ball

A dead ball is a ball not in play. Likewise a play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- A ball carrier's flag is pulled
- A ball carrier's flag falls off
- A ball carrier steps out of bounds
- A ball carrier's knee touches the ground
- A ball carrier lets the ball hit the ground
- A ball carrier fumbles the ball
- After a touchdown or extra point is scored
- There are no fumbles, and if one occurs the ball is spotted where the player lost control of the ball.

ARTICLE 3. When Ball Is Ready for Play

A dead ball is ready for play when the ball is placed on the ground and the referee blows his whistle.

SECTION 5. Holding, Blocking, and Contact

ARTICLE 1. Holding

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

ARTICLE 2. Blocking

Blocking is obstructing an opponent with or without contact by moving into his way. An offense player moving in the line between a defense player 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

ARTICLE 3. Contact

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

ARTICLE 4. Flag Pull

Flag pull is taking away one or more flags of an opponent with hand(s).

ARTICLE 5. 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.

ARTICLE 6. Charging

Charging is the movement of the runner directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.

ARTICLE 7. Roughing the Passer

When a rusher comes in contact with a passers upper body in an attempt to knock the ball away from the intended receiver. If the rusher hits the ball while the ball is still in the hand of the passer, that would be considered roughing the passer as well.

ARTICLE 8. Impeding the Rusher

The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, as long as they are a minimum of seven (7) yards away from the line of scrimmage and one (1) yard on the outside of the placement of the ball. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.

SECTION 6. Jumping, Diving and Spinning

ARTICLE 1. Jumping

Jumping is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by gaining extra height compared to regular running.

ARTICLE 2. Diving

Diving is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by leaning his upper body forward with or without jumping.

ARTICLE 3. Spinning

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

SECTION 7. Shift and Motion

ARTICLE 1. Shift

A shift is a simultaneous change of position by 2 or more offensive players after the ball is ready and before the snap.

ARTICLE 2. Motion

A motion is a change of position by one offensive player after the ball is ready and before the snap

SECTION 8. Right of Place (RoP), Right of Way (RoW)

ARTICLE 1. Right of Place

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 catching a pass at this spot does not give up the right of place.

ARTICLE 2. Right of Way

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

Rule 3 – Playing Half's and Time

SECTION 1. Start of Each Half

ARTICLE 1. First Half

Before the scheduled starting time, the referee shall toss a coin at midfield in presence of the field captains from each team. The team that wins the coin toss has the option to take the ball first, defend the goal, or defer the choice to the second half. The team that loses the coin toss has first choice at the start of the second half

ARTICLE 2. Second Half

Between the first and second half, the teams shall defend opposite goal lines (flip sides). The loser of the toss will put the ball in play at its own five (5) yard line.

ARTICLE 3. Overtime

If the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams go directly into overtime game play. The team that does not call the opening coin toss will be given the right to call the overtime coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss has the option to possess the ball first or defend the goal. Both teams will then have the right to possess the ball and begin play with the offense facing the end-zone on the twelve (12) yard line. Each team has two (2) plays to score and each team may attempt the extra point after the touchdown is scored.

ARTICLE 4. Double Overtime

If the score is still tied after the first overtime, the team that defended first starts the second overtime on offense and then follows the first overtime procedure.

ARTICLE 5. Triple Overtime

If the score is tied at the end of the second overtime, the team that called the overtime coin toss will be given the right to call the triple overtime coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss has the option to possess the ball first or defend the goal. Both teams will then have the right to possess the ball and begin play with the offense on their own five (5) yard line. Each team has four (4) plays to reach mid-field and four (4) plays to score. Each team may attempt the extra point after the touchdown is scored

- Regular Season – If the score is still tied after the third overtime the game will end in a tied score.

- Post Season - If the score is still tied after the third overtime, the team that defended first starts the fourth overtime on offense and then follows the first overtime procedure.

SECTION 2. Playing Time

ARTICLE 1. Length of Play

Games are divided into two (2) thirteen (13) minute halves with a one (1) minute halftime. There is a twenty five (25) second huddle clock, and the huddle clock starts once the line of scrimmage is marked and official(s) are set outside of the widest offensive player.

ARTICLE 2. When the Clock Starts

The thirteen (13) minute game clock is continuous and the twenty five (25) second huddle clock begins when the ball is near or placed at the spot of possession.

ARTICLE 3. When the Clock Stops

- The game clock shall be stopped when each half ends.
- For a charged team timeout or for an injury timeout.
- At the officials discretion.
- The clock stops for the one (1) minute warning in the second half only if the score differential is sixteen (16) points or less. If the score differential is seventeen (17) points or more, the clock is not stopped.
- If there is less than one (1) minute in the game and the offense achieves a first down, the clock is stopped. The clock restarts when the offense snaps the ball on the first down of the new series of downs.
- The play clock stops under one (1) minute in the game under the following circumstances:
 - Incompletion
 - Penalty
 - Change of possession
 - Out of bounds
 - Extra point attempt

ARTICLE 4. Timeouts

Each team has two (2) sixty (60) second timeouts per game equaling one per half. A timeout can carry over to the second half if not used during the first half by either team.

Rule 4 – Series of Downs and Scoring

SECTION 1. Downs and Possession

ARTICLE 1. Downs

The team on offense has four (4) downs to cross midfield for a first down and then, has four (4) downs to score a touchdown. The first down can only be awarded when the ball and one (1) flag on the ball carrier's belt cross the midfield. All possessions, except interceptions start at the five (5) yard line.

ARTICLE 2. Possessions

A series of four (4) consecutive downs will start at the beginning of each period and after a score, safety, touchback or change of team possession. Officials must be set in a position that is outside of the widest offensive player before the ball is snapped.

- A new series shall be awarded to the offense if:
 - If a penalty brings the ball back behind the middle, no first down will be awarded again.
 - If an accepted penalty mandates a first down.
- A new series shall be awarded to the defense if:
 - After 4th down, the offense has failed to earn a first down.
 - If an accepted penalty mandates a first down.
 - The ball is intercepted then the ball will be marked where the interceptor's flag if pulled.

ARTICLE 3. Possessions after a Penalty

- Penalty Declined - If a penalty is declined, the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.
- Foul Between Downs - After a penalty incurred between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as that established before the foul occurred, unless enforcement for a foul leaves the ball beyond the middle or a penalty mandates a first down.
- Fouls by Both Teams - If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated.

SECTION 2. Scoring

ARTICLE 1. Points

- A touchdown is worth six (6) points and awarded when the ball and one (1) flag on the ball carriers belt cross the goal line.
- Extra point options:
 - A successful try five (5) yards away from the goal line is worth one (1) point
 - A successful try twelve (12) yards away from the goal line is worth two (2) points
- A safety is worth two (2) points.
- If the defense intercepts a pass on an extra point attempt and returns it to the end zone, the team is rewarded one (1) or two (2) points based on the extra point option the offensive team was attempting.
- A twenty eight (28) point differential will automatically end the game.

Rule 5 – Passing, Receiving and Running the Ball

SECTION 1. Passing

ARTICLE 1. Legal Forward Pass

All pass attempts must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage. Shovel passes are legal, but must also travel beyond the line of scrimmage. Players that receive a handoff behind the line of scrimmage are permitted to throw the ball, providing it travels beyond the line of scrimmage.

ARTICLE 2. Illegal Forward Pass

A forward pass is illegal:

- If thrown by an offense player who is beyond the scrimmage line when he releases the ball. All pass attempts (including shovel passes) must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage. If thrown after a runner has gone beyond the scrimmage line.
- If it is the second forward pass by the offense during the same down. Only one (1) forward pass is permitted per down.
- If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
- If the ball is not thrown before seven (7) seconds.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven (7) second rule is no longer in effect. Intentional grounding is not a penalty; however, all grounded balls must travel beyond the line of scrimmage unless the ball is spiked after the snap when the quarterback is under center.
- Shotgun spikes are illegal.

PENALTY – Loss of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down (LOD)

ARTICLE 3. 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 during a down shall touch a pass inbounds or while airborne.

PENALTY – Loss of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down (LOD)

ARTICLE 4. 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 two (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.

PENALTY – Offensive Pass Interference is ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down (LOD) and Defensive Pass Interference is a gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD).

SECTION 2. Receiving

ARTICLE 1. Complete Pass

- Any pass caught by an eligible player touching the ground inbounds with at least one (1) foot is considered complete.
- All players are eligible to receive passes, including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- A receiver is down where his flag belt is pulled. Exceptions include:
 - In order to achieve a first down or a touchdown, at least one (1) flag and the ball must cross the plane of the first down line or goal line.
- If a receiver's flag falls off without being pulled off by a defender, he is down where the reception is marked complete.
- A player may tip the football to a teammate as long as the initial receiver does not show possession of the ball.
- If a receiver catches a pass and is pushed out of bounds by a defender while in the air, the referee has the right to rule the catch complete if he judges that the receiver would have come down in bounds had he not been pushed.
- Players that run out of bounds during a play are not eligible to come back in and make a reception.

ARTICLE 2. 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.

SECTION 3. Running the Ball

ARTICLE 1. Legal Rushing Attempt

- The quarterback can only run the ball when the ensuing rusher crosses the line of scrimmage.
- If the line of scrimmage is marked within the “No Run Zones” and the defense still rushes, the quarterback has the right to run.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are considered a legal handoff.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal, and any player other than the Center can receive a handoff first.
- “No Running Zones” are located five (5) yards from each end zone and on either side of mid-field.
- “No Running Zones” come into effect only when the offensive team is approaching a first down or the end zone. Exceptions include:
 - If the offensive team has already achieved a first down but has been pushed back into a “No Running Zone,” the “No Running Zone” is no longer in effect.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Once the ball has been handed off, the seven-second pass rule is no longer in effect.
- Defensive players cannot pass the line of scrimmage during a direct handoff play until the ball is handed off.
- Spinning to avoid a flag being pulled is permitted.
- Jumping over a defender or diving to advance the ball is not allowed.
- The ball is spotted where the flag was pulled.

ARTICLE 2. Illegal Rushing Attempt

- Tapping the ball or simply touching a player with the ball is not considered a legal handoff.
- No laterals or pitches of any kind, anywhere on the field are permitted.

- No player is permitted to make a direct handoff to the Center

PENALTY – Loss of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down (LOD)

Rule 6 – Defense

SECTION 1. Rushing the Quarterback

ARTICLE 1. Legal Rush

- All players that rush the passer must be a minimum of seven (7) yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- The rusher is allowed a direct line to the quarterback as long as he does not rush up the “middle.”
- The “middle” is considered one (1) yard on both sides of the placement of the ball.
- The “middle” is a judgment call made by the referee.
- The offense must avoid impeding the rusher as the rusher in all instances is given the RoW.
- If the line of scrimmage is marked within the “No Run Zones” and the defense still rushes, the quarterback has the right to run.
- Any player may rush beyond the line of scrimmage from any position on the field once the ball has been handed off.

ARTICLE 2. Illegal Rush

Any rushing attempt by the defense where the rusher is not at least seven (7) yards away from the line of scrimmage and/or the rush occurs directly up the “middle”.

PENALTY – Gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD)

ARTICLE 3. Roughing the Passer

During a rushing attempt a rusher comes in contact with a passers upper body in an attempt to knock the ball away from the intended receiver. If the rusher hits the ball while the ball is still in the hand of the passer, that would be considered roughing the passer as well.

PENALTY – Gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD)

SECTION 2. Defending the Receiver

ARTICLE 1. Legal Defense

- All defensive players must line up at least one (1) yard off of the line of scrimmage
- Interceptions can be returned, and the ball is then spotted based on where the defenders flag belt is pulled.

- If a penalty occurs on an interception return by the offense, the penalty is assessed from the spot of the interception.
- If a penalty occurs on an interception return by the defense, the penalty is assessed from the end of the run.

ARTICLE 2. Illegal Defense

- Illegal contact (i.e., pressing, bump and run, blocking, etc.), which the referee determines was not incidental contact that may result from normal run of a play.
- Alignment of a defensive player less than one (1) yard away from the offensive player.

PENALTY – Gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD)

ARTICLE 3. Pass Interference

Physical contact is required to establish interference during a play where there is a legal forward pass. Pass interference is contact that interferes with an opposing 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 two 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.

PENALTY – Offensive Pass Interference is ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down (LOD) and Defensive Pass Interference is a gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD).

Rule 7 – Penalty Enforcement

SECTION 1. Penalties Completed

ARTICLE 1. How and When Completed

A penalty is completed when it is accepted, declined or cancelled. When a foul is committed, the penalty shall be completed before the ball is declared ready for play. Only team captains may ask the game official questions about rule clarification.

ARTICLE 2. Simultaneous With Snap

A foul that occurs simultaneously with a snap is considered as occurring during that down, the spot of foul is the scrimmage line.

ARTICLE 3. Live Ball Fouls by the Same Team

When two (2) or more live ball fouls by the same team are reported to the referee, the referee shall explain the alternative penalties to the field captain of the offended team, who then may elect only one of these penalties.

ARTICLE 4. Offsetting Fouls

If live ball fouls by both teams are reported to the referee, the fouls offset and the down is replayed.

Exceptions:

- When there is a change of team possession during a down, and the team last gaining possession had not fouled before last gaining possession, it may decline offsetting fouls and thereby retain possession after completion of the penalty for its foul.
- When a live ball foul is administered as a dead ball foul, it does not offset and is enforced in order of occurrence.

ARTICLE 5. Dead ball Fouls

Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in order of occurrence.

ARTICLE 6. Interval Fouls

Penalties for fouls that occur between the periods are enforced from the spot of the next series.

SECTION 2. Enforcement Procedures

ARTICLE 1. Basic Spot (line of scrimmage)

The basic spot is the line of scrimmage.

ARTICLE 2. Procedures

- The enforcement spot for live ball fouls is the previous line of scrimmage if not otherwise mentioned in the penalty.
- The enforcement spot for dead ball fouls is the next line of scrimmage.
- A protest on a rule interpretation must take place before the next play is started.
- If a team protests a rule interpretation and is proven wrong, the team is penalized for delay of game.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty.

ARTICLE 3. Half-Distance Enforcement

- No distance penalty, including tries, shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.

Rule 8 – Summary of Penalties

SECTION 1. Live Ball & Dead Ball

ARTICLE 1. Live Ball foul

- *Defensive penalties - Gain of ten (10) yards & automatic first down (AFD)*
 - Illegal rush
 - Pass interference
 - Illegal contact (i.e. bump and run, blocking, etc.), which the referee determines incidental contact that may result from normal run of a play
 - Roughing the passer

- *Offensive penalties - Loss of ten (10) yards & loss of a down (LOD)*
 - Pass interference (i.e., illegal pick, pushing off, etc.)
 - Impeding the rusher
 - Flag guarding
 - Charging (i.e., Offensive player must avoid the defender if he is set.)
 - Illegal contact

ARTICLE 2. Dead Ball foul (Penalty assessed from the line of scrimmage)

- *Defensive penalties - Gain of ten (10) yards & automatic first down (AFD)*
 - Encroachment - Refers to when before the snap, a defensive player illegally crosses into the one (1) yard neutral zone. All defensive players must line up at least one (1) yard off of the line of scrimmage
 - Illegal start – Refers to beginning a play without both flags in the belt. If this foul is not penalized before the ball is snap and the offensive player whose flag(s) is missing receives the ball, that player will be ruled dead at the spot of the reception. This also includes snapping the ball before the official(s) are set outside of the widest offensive player.

- *Offensive penalties - Loss of ten (10) yards & loss of a down (LOD)*
 - Delay of game
 - Illegal motion/false start - Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
 - Illegal snap - The ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start a play.
 - Illegal start – Refers to beginning a play without both flags in the belt. If this foul is not penalized before the ball is snap and the offensive player whose flag(s) is missing receives the ball, that player will be ruled dead at the spot of the reception.

SECTION 2. Contact Foul

ARTICLE 1. Initiating Contact

- No player is permitted to contact an official at any point during the game.
- The runner is in charge to avoid contact with defensive players.
- No player is permitted to strip or attack a ball in possession by another player.
- All players have the RoP and opponents must avoid contact.
- If the referee witnesses any act of cheap shots, or any other unsportsmanlike act, the game is stopped, and the player is subject to ejection from the game.
- Alignment of a defensive player less than one (1) yard away from the offensive player.

PENALTY– Offensive Contact Foul loss of 10 yards and a loss of down (LOD) and Defensive Contact Foul is a gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD)

ARTICLE 2. Targeting an Opponent

- Even with the RoW, no player shall target an opponent and contact them.
- No player is permitted to attack a ball in possession by the runner in order to create a fumble.
- When the ball is in the air all players have the right to play the ball, but not by targeting (playing through) the opponent.

PENALTY– Offensive Targeting is a loss of 10 yards and a loss of down (LOD). Defensive Targeting is a gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD)

ARTICLE 3. Spot foul (Penalty assessed from the spot of the foul)

- *Defensive penalties*
 - Holding/tackling
 - Last Man Rule (i.e., If there is no one between the player and the end zone, and it is clear to the referee that the player would have scored if he was not held or tackled, a touchdown is awarded.)
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct and unnecessary roughness penalties are ten (10) yards added on to the end of the play.

- *Offensive penalties*
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct and unnecessary roughness penalties are ten (10) yards added on to the end of the play.
 - Any offensive penalty that occurs while the quarterback is in the end zone results in a safety, which is worth two (2) points.

SECTION 3. Noncontact Foul

ARTICLE 1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Trash talking is not tolerated (i.e., language that may be considered offensive to the referee, opposing team, or spectators)
- The referee has the right to determine language that is offensive.

PENALTY– Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct is a loss of ten (10) yards and a loss of down (LOD). Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct is a gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD)

ARTICLE 2. Unfair Acts

- The ball carrier is not permitted to jump or dive at any point while in possession of the ball.
- The ball carrier cannot flag guard.
- No player is permitted to block or pick the opposing teams players.

- No player shall pull a flag from an opponent other than the ball carrier or the player who fakes to be the ball carrier.

PENALTY– Offensive Unfair Act is a loss of ten (10) yards and a loss of down (LOD).Defensive Unfair Act is a gain of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down (AFD)

Rule 9 – Player Conduct Policy

Summary

All active and inactive players associated with the Pittsburgh Flag Football League (PFFL) are at all times strongly encouraged to maintain a high degree of mutual respect for one another and for PFFL Staff. For the preservation of the integrity of the game of flag football and maintaining a safe playing environment for all involved, it is vital that all players adhere to the following regulations in order to maintain the expected organizational standard.

Infraction & Fine Schedule

To further reinforce the importance of preserving the integrity of the PFFL and its safe, fun environment, the following infractions and preceding fine (donation) schedule are effective for every PFFL season and tournament.

| Infraction | First Offense | Second Offense |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Physical contact with an official</i> | Expulsion | N/A |
| <i>Fighting (i.e., taking part in a violent struggle and/or with the exchange of physical blows)</i> | \$50 | Expulsion |
| <i>Excessive unsportsmanlike conduct towards an opponent</i> | \$25 | \$75 |
| <i>Excessive unsportsmanlike conduct towards an official</i> | \$25 | \$75 |
| <i>Excessive use of abusive or threatening language towards an opponent or official</i> | \$25 | \$100 |

All infractions carry an automatic ejection from the current game in which the player is participating in addition to the enforcement of the subsequent fine (donation) schedule and game suspensions. Fines and suspensions are non-negotiable nor can they be appealed by any player. All fines (donations) are donated to the designated charity of the calendar year.

Infraction Procedure

- After the infraction, a player shall sit out for the remainder of the current game and any games scheduled for that day.
- PFFL Officials meet within the first forty eight (48) hours of the incident to assess the details of the infraction (s).
- The PFFL Commissioner issues written notification to all players at fault and identifies the specific regulations violated, fines (donations) owed, and game suspensions.
- All fines (donations) must be paid prior to the start of the player's next eligible game. If game suspensions are enforced, they must be served immediately following the infraction.

Rule 10 – Forfeit and Participation Policy

Summary

It is the intent of the Pittsburgh Flag Football League (PFFL) to provide a safe and fun environment for all players each season. It is up to each player and team however to provide the actual competition in each game. It is imperative that each team attend their scheduled games to ensure that each player receive the full value of the entire season. In the instances where teams have to forfeit games the following Fine schedule below will be imposed.

Infraction & Fine Schedule

- In the event that a team forfeits one (1) or more games, the team must pay a fine of \$5 per player, per game to the team(s) they were scheduled to play.
- Failure to pay the fine results in additional automatic forfeits until the fine is paid to the respective team(s).
 - EXAMPLE: Team A, who has six (6) members, forfeits Week 1 of the season, and they miss two games against Team B and Team C. Each of the six (6) members must pay a total of \$10 (i.e., \$5 to Team B and \$5 to Team C) before they commence playing during Week 2 of the season. Therefore, both Team B and Team C should receive \$30 each, which is collected and distributed amongst the players of each team.
- Four forfeits results in automatic exclusion from the playoffs.
- All players are required to participate in at least four (4) of the ten (10) regular season games.

Miscellaneous

- The PFFL reserves the right to reduce or shorten games or the season due to inclement weather or any unforeseen force.
- There are no refunds for any money paid to the PFFL.

Interpretations

Summary

A rule interpretation, or approved ruling (AR), is an official decision on a given statement of facts and serves to illustrate the intent, application or amplification of a rule.

AR 3-2-3 Playing Time

I. When the game clock is less than one (1) minute in the game, the clock will be stopped when the offense achieves a first down. The clock restarts when the offense snaps the ball on the first down of the new series of downs.

- RULING: Clock will start on the snap.

AR 5-2-1 Complete pass

I. Two opposing players are in possession of a pass while both are off the ground, and both players return to the ground inbounds.

- RULING: Simultaneous catch, the ball is awarded to the offense.

II. An airborne player receives a pass. He grasps the ball firmly in his hands and any part of his body touches the ground inbounds.

Immediately upon hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and in a second effort the receiver still being inbounds regains control of the ball.

- RULING: Complete pass.

III. An airborne player receives a pass. He grasps the ball firmly in his hands and the ball or any part of his body touches the ground inbounds. Immediately upon hitting the ground, the ball comes loose and touches the ground.

- RULING: Incomplete pass. An airborne receiver must maintain control of the ball if going to the ground in the process of completing a catch.

IV. An offense player catches the ball in the air and before he returns to the ground a defense player contacts him and he loses control of the ball and the ball falls to the ground.

- RULING: Incomplete pass and defense pass interference. The pass was not completed and the foul occurred while the ball was in the air.

VI. An offense player on the right side of the field gets contacted by a defender before the ball has been thrown from the quarterback. The pass falls incomplete at the left side of the field.

- RULING: Illegal contact from defense. It is a foul to contact an opponent whether the ball is thrown towards him or not.

.AR 5-1-1 Legal Forward pass

I. 3rd down at the 5 yd line. The quarterback throws a forward pass from his end zone past the line of scrimmage to the ground to avoid a sack.

- RULING: No penalty, there is no intentional grounding.

II. 2nd down at the 5 yd line. The quarterback throws a forward pass from behind the scrimmage line, the ball gets deflected by another player (defense or offense) and returns to the quarterback's hands.

- RULING: No penalty for illegal touch, the quarterback can advance the ball.

AR 5-1-2 Illegal Forward pass

I. 1st down past midfield. The quarterback throws a high forward pass from behind the scrimmage line and catches his own pass beyond the line of scrimmage for a 10 yd completion.

- RULING: Penalty for illegal touch, the quarterback can catch his own pass only after another player has touched it

II. 2nd down before midfield. The quarterback scrambles to avoid the rusher, runs over the line of scrimmage and throws a complete pass to the receiver.

- RULING: Penalty for illegal forward pass

AR 5-3-1 Running the Ball

I. 4th down 2 yd before midfield. The quarterback drops back to pass and the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage while blitzing. The quarterback then runs with the ball for the first down.

- RULING: No penalty for illegal run because the rusher crossed the line of scrimmage.

II. 1st down past midfield. The quarterback is in a shotgun position and hands the ball to the running back. The quarterback then runs down field to become a receiver while the running back prepares to throw the ball. The running back then scrambles for more than 15 seconds before throwing the ball down field.

- RULING: No penalty for illegal run because the seven-second pass rule was no longer in effect. .

AR 5-3-2 Running the Ball

III. 2nd down before midfield. The center snaps the ball to the quarter back and then places the ball in the centers hands in order to run with the ball.

- RULING: Penalty for illegal rushing attempt because a direct handoff was made to the center.

AR 6-1-1 Rushing the Quarterback

I. A defensive player, positioned seven (7) yd away from the line of scrimmage directly in-line with the ball. The rusher then runs to sack the quarterback and collides and/or touches the center.

- RULING: Penalty for illegal rush because he was not aligned one (1) yd outside of the ball pre-snap.

II. A defensive player, positioned seven (7) yd away from the line of scrimmage and one (1) yd outside of the ball. The rusher then runs to sack the quarterback and collides and/or touches the center.

- RULING: The center is charged with the penalty of impeding the rusher because he was aligned one (1) yd outside of the ball pre-snap.

III. After the snap a rusher, who is running towards the quarterback and a receiver on an in route has to run around the receiver.

- RULING: No penalty. A receiver has to give the rusher the RoW.

AR 6-1-3 Rushing the Quarterback

I. The rusher jumps forward to deflect the ball as the quarterback starts to release the ball and touches the ball before it left the hand of the quarterback or touches the arm of the quarterback after the ball left his hand.

- RULING: Penalty for roughing the passer

II. The rusher stops as the quarterback releases the ball and the natural throwing movement with a step forward brings the quarterback in contact with the rusher.

- RULING: No penalties for the contact, both players are standing and have the RoP.

III. The rusher stops in front of the quarterback after the ball is released and pushes him with his hands at the hip and the quarterback either falls to the ground or is forced to take steps to regain their balance. .

- RULING: Penalty for roughing the passer.

AR 6-2-2 Defending the Receiver

I. A rusher is running towards the quarterback and as the quarterback starts to roll out the rusher changes his direction. While the rusher changes his initial direction he then comes in contact with a receiver while running there route.

- RULING: Penalty for illegal contact by the rusher. The rusher loses there RoW after they changed their initial direction.

II. 2nd down before midfield. The quarterback completes a pass to the receiver and the defensive back pushes the receiver out of bounds instead of playing the flag.

- RULING: Penalty for illegal contact by the defender. Assuming the Last Man Rule does not apply here, the penalty will be assessed from the line of scrimmage resulting in a gain of ten (10) yards and an automatic first down.

AR 8-1-1 Live Ball Foul

I. 2nd & middle at the 7 yd line. The quarterback in the end zone holds the ball in front of the flag as the defender tries to pull it. The defender misses the flag and then the quarterback throws a complete pass.

- RULING: The penalty for flag guarding will be enforced from the line of scrimmage.

II. 2nd & middle at the 7 yd line. A rusher grabs the pants of the quarterback in the end zone and the quarterback throws an incomplete forward pass.

- RULING: Penalty for illegal contact (holding) enforced from the line of scrimmage (7 yd line) even though this is traditionally considered a spot foul.

III. A runner is waving his hands near his hips as a close defender tries a flag pull. There is no contact but the defender misses the flag

- RULING: Penalty for flag guarding.

AR 8-2-2 Contact Foul

I. 4th A rusher who is seven (7) yd away from the line of scrimmage and one (1) yd outside of the ball rushes into the still standing center.

- RULING: Penalty for targeting against the defense. The RoP is more worth than the RoW.

AR 8-2-3 Spot Foul

I. 2nd & middle at the 7 yd line. A quarterback completes a pass and the receiver is tackled to the ground by the defender.

- RULING: Penalty for unnecessary roughness by the defender. Assuming the Last Man Rule does not apply here, the penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul resulting in a gain of ten (10) yards and an automatic first down.