



RULES & EQUIPMENT

“FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS” (FNL) Flag Football is a 6-on-6 game filled with fun and action. 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 pulls flags to make “tackles”. It is intended to be a **“non-contact”** sport.

THE BASICS

- A coin toss determines first possession. Winner of coin toss can choose offense or defense to start the game. Whichever team starts on offense in first half, will start on defense in the second half.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield for a 1st down. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 3 plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense’s 5-yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- Teams change sides after halftime. Possession changes to the loser of coin toss.
- For divisions K, 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th Grade....one coach is allowed on the field per team.

PLAYERS/GAMES

Teams must field a minimum of 5 players at all times. Registered players **MUST** play for their own team. No fill-in players. *Any team using a fill-in player is subject to forfeiting game(s) and/or being disqualified from post-season play.* Most teams consist of 8 players – 6 on the field, with 2 substitutes.

ALL PLAYERS MUST PLAY A MINIMUM 3 OUT OF THE 4 QUARTERS (EVERYONE SITS OUT ONE FULL QUARTER). SUBSTITUTIONS ARE ONLY ALLOWED AT THE QUARTER BREAKS UNLESS THERE IS AN INJURY.

PLAYER ADVANTAGE RULE (8/9 vs. 7 only)

If one team has 8/9 players and the other team has 7 players, the coach with 7 players must notify the referee prior to the start of game that he only has 7 players. The referee will then notify the 8/9-players team coach who then has the **OPTION to identify which of the 7 players **MUST** sit one quarter. The 7-players team’s coach will decide which quarter this player will sit. If this is not identified prior to the start of the game, for whatever reason, and later recognized during the game, the 8/9-players team’s coach can still identify the player that must sit. It is both the referee and 7-players team coach’s responsibility to recognize and identify this prior to the start of the game.**

9 Player Rule:

If a team has 9 players, they can substitute in the first quarter using the following pattern: Coach picks 3 players to play the whole first quarter. Coach picks 3 players to play offense only in first quarter. Coach picks 3 players to play defense only in first quarter. 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarters 3 players sit out each quarter. The net result is that each player gets to be involved in 3 out of 4 quarters in some way. Every player still sits out one quarter.

TIMING

Games are played with 10-minute running quarters (40 minutes total), 45 second water break between quarters and a 2-minute halftime.

Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams **may** receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.

2 timeouts per half and they do not carry over to the 2nd half if unused. Each timeout is 45 seconds.

If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime (**EXCEPT 1st/2nd Grade AND 3rd/4th Grade division which will remain a tie**).

OVERTIME

General Rules:

- Ball always starts at the 50-yard line.
- Teams do not get an additional timeout
- Coin toss determines who gets to choose to be on defense or offense. Most teams will pick defense so they can see what Team 2 does (i.e. how many plays it takes Team 2 to score, or how many yards they get).
- Team 1 gets 3 plays and then Team 2 gets 3 plays.
- Negative net yards on offense will count against you. Other team must still run their 3 plays.

Most common scenario:

Ball starts at the 50-yard line.

Team 1 gets 3 plays and advances 12 yards.

Referee uses cone to physically mark the 12 yards.

Team 2 gets the ball, and then uses 3 plays to try to gain more than 12 yards.

If they get 13 or more yards...they win. If they don't, they lose.

Another common scenario is when Team 1 scores a Touchdown.

Team 1 scores a TD in two plays.

Team 2 then gets the ball and scores a TD in ONE play. Team 2 wins.

Interception scenario 1:

Team 1 advances 12 yards in three plays

Team 2 throws an interception on any play...game over. Team 1 wins.

Interception scenario 2:

Team 1 throws an interception

Team 2 gets the ball and has to run as many plays as Team 1 had...and as long as they don't turn it over...Team 2 wins.

Interception scenario 3:

Team 1 throws an interception and it's returned by Team 2 for a TD. Game over...Team 2 wins.

The only way Overtime ever goes to a second overtime is if:

Both teams gain the same amount of yards (i.e. 12 yards) on their 3 plays, or if

Both teams score in the same # of plays (i.e. 2nd play)

*If a game goes into a 2nd overtime, the team that started with the ball in the 1st overtime starts on defense for the 2nd overtime.

SCORING

Touchdown = 6 points

Extra Point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line) or
2 points (played from 12-yard line)

RUNNING

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- Hand-offs, laterals and pitches are allowed as per NFL rules.
- **NO CENTER SNEAKS!!**
- No-Running zones, located approx. 5 yards from each end zone (as marked) and approx. 5 yards on either side of midfield (as marked), are designed to avoid short yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes the hand-off, lateral or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- The player who receives hand-off/lateral/pitch must throw the ball forward in the NO-RUN zone.
- Players could receive a forward pass in the backfield and then cross the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, lateraled or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, as is jumping.
- Runners with the football cannot dive forward to gain extra yards or get a TD.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- Player running with the ball must make an effort to avoid **INTENTIONALLY** running over or initiating aggressive contact on the defensive player. Penalty, if called, is unsportsmanlike conduct.

RECEIVING

All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB, if the ball has been handed off, lateraled or pitched behind the line of scrimmage as per NFL Rules). As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time. A player must have at least **one foot inbounds** when making a reception.

PASSING

- The QB has a seven-second "pass clock". If the QB does not get rid of the ball within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.
- Shovel passes are allowed.
- Interceptions may be returned.

DEAD BALLS

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Touchdown or safety is scored
 - Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground
 - Ball carrier’s flag falls off
 - **Ball carrier’s flags are not positioned on the side of the hips (slide to back side by tailbone). This is very subjective and up to the referee to determine the severity of the issue. Warnings MAY be given instead of dead ball call. It is the coach and players’ responsibility to check their flags throughout the game.**

****NOTE: THERE ARE NO FUMBLES (therefore, NO STRIPPING OF THE BALL).
THE BALL IS SPOTTED WHERE THE BALL HITS THE GROUND****

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

All players who rush the QB must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage (as marked by ref) when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the QB. Players not rushing the QB may defend on the line of scrimmage only until the ball leaves the QB’s hands.

Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. **Remember, NO BLOCKING, TACKLING, OR STRIPPING OF THE BALL IS ALLOWED.**

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

If the field official/referee or commissioner witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or **ANY** unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player/coach or fan may be ejected from the game. The penalty, if called, is a dead ball at point of infraction and an automatic 1st down. If penalty is against the offense, then 10yds + loss of down from original line of scrimmage. It will **ALWAYS** benefit the other team.

****FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED****

Trash talking is not permitted. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee **may** give one warning and if it continues, the player(s), coach(es) and/or fan(s) will be subject to ejection from the field and premises. The game will not continue until the ejected party has left the premises. If they do not leave, the referee will forfeit the game immediately and award the win to the opposing team.

Anyone ejected from a game (player, coach, fan), for any reason, will not be allowed on the premises for the next game. If they are ejected a 2nd time during the season, they will not be allowed on the premises for the next **TWO** games and are subject to dismissal from the league with **NO REFUND**.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT BY ANYONE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!!

PENALTIES (ALL PENALTIES CAN BE DECLINED)

All penalties will be called by the referee.

DEFENSE: All defensive penalties result in an automatic first down for the Offense.

Offsides

5 yards and automatic 1st down.

Interference

10 yards and automatic 1st down.

Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.)

10 yards and automatic 1st down.

Illegal flag pull (before receiver has the ball)

10 yards and automatic 1st down

Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)

10 yards and automatic 1st down.

“Last Man Standing” (last defender tackles ball carrier instead of pulling flag or intentionally pulls flag early to prevent a TD)

Automatic touchdown + potential unsportsmanlike penalty and ejection from game.

OFFENSE: All offensive penalties result in a loss of down.

Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)

5 yards and loss of down

Illegal forward pass (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)

5 yards and loss of down

Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)

10 yards and loss of down

Flag guarding

10 yards (from line of scrimmage and loss of down)

Charging (intentionally running over defender)

10 yards and loss of down

Delay of Game

Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.

All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage!!

Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.

Players cannot question judgment calls.

Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

STANDINGS

Official league standings and playoff seedings* are determined based on the following:

- 1) Win/Loss Winning Percentage (all games are included)
- 2) Head to Head
- 3) Average Points Allowed per game
- 4) Coin Toss

*NOTE – For playoffs, all 1st place teams get top seeds, then rule above is applied.

ATTIRE

Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections will be made.

All players must wear a protective mouthpiece--there are no exceptions!!

Official FNL team jerseys and FNL Flags must be worn during play. **Flags must be of a different color than the shorts.** Shorts must be of a solid color. **No stripes or pockets are allowed on the shorts.** FNL commissioners and/or referees will determine if there are any uniform violations. Any violation of the attire rule should be rectified ASAP. If violation continues, the head coach is subject to a one game suspension and game is subject to forfeit as determined by the FNL commissioners.

NOTE: THERE ARE NO KICKOFFS AND NO BLOCKING IS ALLOWED

COACHES COACH – PLAYERS PLAY – REFEREES REF – FANS CHEER