



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.
- 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 offenses 5 yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned
- Teams change sides after halftime. Possession changes to loser of coin toss..
- For divisions K, 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th Grade....1 Coach is allowed on field per team.

PLAYERS/GAMES

Teams must field a minimum of 5 players at all times. Most Teams consist of a maximum of 8 players – 6 on the field, with 2 substitutes.

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

PLAY ADVANTAGE RULE (8 vs. 7 only)

If one team has 8 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 other coach who then has the OPTION to identify which of the 7 players MUST sit one quarter. The 7 player teams 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 player teams coach can still identify the player that must sit. It is both the Referee and 7 player Coach's responsibility to recognize and identify this prior to the start of the game.

PLAYING WITH 9 PLAYERS

A team with 9 players will play all 9 in the first quarter, 3 playing offense only, 3 playing defense only and 3 playing both ways. 2nd-4th quarters will be normal substitutions with 3 players sitting entire quarter.

TIMING/OVERTIME

Games are played with 10 minute running quarters (40 minutes), 1 minute water break between quarters and a 5 minute halftime. 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**).

The following tie-breaker system will be used for all overtime games.

- Coin flip determines possession
- Ball is placed at Midfield
- After 3 plays, the referee will mark where the ball ended up (cone, flag, etc)
- Opposing team will now take over at Midfield run their 3 plays going in the same direction.
- Whichever team gains the most yards on 3 plays wins the game
- If both teams are tied after 3 plays, we do it again until there is a winner.
- Negative net yards on offense will count against you. Other team must still run their 3 plays.
- **If ball is intercepted and returned for a touchdown, game is over. If runner's flag is pulled before they reach the end zone the ball is spotted at midfield and the team only needs to gain one yard to win.**

Mercy Rule: If there is a 30 or more point difference at the start of the fourth quarter or at any time during the fourth quarter, the game is officially over. The referees will bring both coaches together and let them know the game is over. From there the referees will let the coaches know how much time is on the official clock. Both teams will continue to play. The coach and team that have lost the game will get to decide they want to run offense or defense. They will then practice and work on the needs of the team until time expires.

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 2nd half if unused.

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.
- Handoffs, 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 referees will announce "No Run Zone". All passes in this zone must be forward and made with a forward throwing motion. The ball does not need to cross the line of scrimmage. Underhand tossing of the ball up in the air is not considered a pass and is not allowed.**
- The player who takes the handoff, lateral or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, lateraled or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed and Players **CAN LEAVE THEIR FEET (NEW)**
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are 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 out **(at any time if the flag falls off, the ball carrier is down at that point. If they catch the ball and only have one flag, they are down at the point of catch.)**
- **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 ref to determine the severity of the issue. Warnings MAY be given instead of dead ball. It is Coach & Players responsibility to check this throughout the game. **NEW****
- **If the flags move out of the approved position, then the defender needs to only touch the runner. This is subjective to the view of the referee. Coach your kids to continue to attempt to pull the flags.**

****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 QB hands. **If the rusher leaves early, they must either return to the rush line and then continue their rush, or they must abandon their rush and defend until the ball is handed off.**

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 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 illegal. 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's and fans 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 ref will forfeit the game immediately and award the Win to the opposing team.

Anyone ejected from a game (player, coach, fans), 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:

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 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:

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 PCT (All games are included)
- 2) Head to Head
- 3) Avg Pts. Allowed per game
- 4) Coin Flip

*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 1 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