



## REGULAR SEASON RULE BOOK



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# RULES OF THE GAME

## I. Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
6. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

## II. Terminology

<b>Boundary Lines:</b>	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zones lines.
<b>Line of Scrimmage:</b>	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
<b>Line-to-Gain:</b>	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
<b>Rush Line:</b>	An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
<b>Offense:</b>	The team with possession of the ball.
<b>Defense:</b>	The team opposing the offense to prevent
<b>Passer:</b>	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
<b>Rusher:</b>	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
<b>Downs (1-2-3):</b>	The offensive team has three attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.
<b>Live Ball:</b>	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
<b>Dead Ball:</b>	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
<b>Whistle:</b>	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.
<b>Inadvertent Whistle:</b>	Official’s whistle that is performed in error.
<b>Charging:</b>	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field.

This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.

**Flag Guarding:**

An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carriers flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm.

**Shovel Pass:**

A legal pitch attempted beyond the line of scrimmage.

**Lateral:**

A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct:**

A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.



## III. Eligibility

1. All players' legal guardian must agree to the online waiver form as provided through sports engine, more namely "HEADS UP Concussion Waiver.

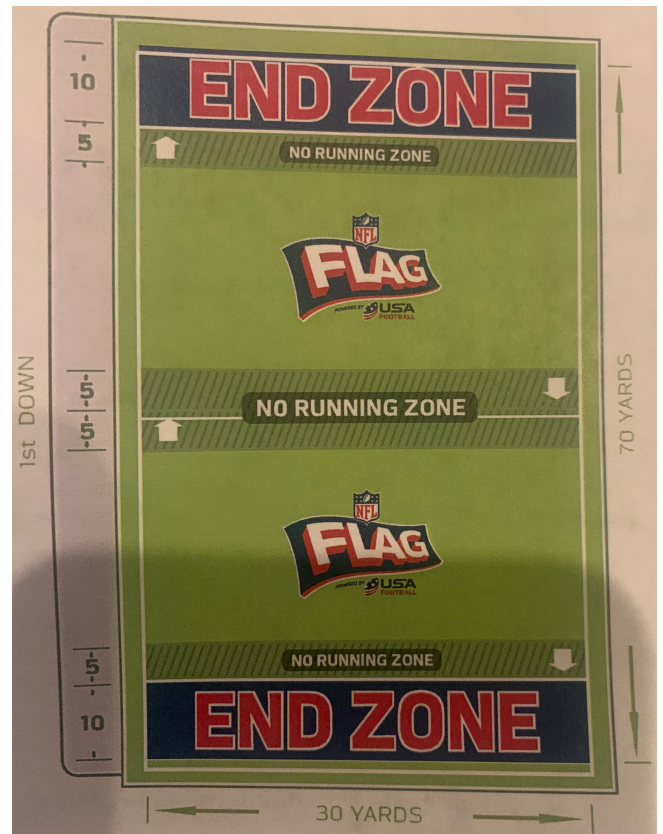
## IV. Equipment

1. The league provides each player with an official flag belt and NFL FLAG team jersey. Teams will use footballs provided by Lubbock NFL Flag Football League.
2. Players must wear shoes for participation. Football cleats are encouraged. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not permitted.
4. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any jewelry that the officials may deem hazardous.
5. Official NFL FLAG jerseys must be worn during play. Player's jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line. Pants with belt loops and/or pockets must be taped.
6. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece.



## V. Field

1. The field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards. However, some playing fields may adjust according to division.
2. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even a handoff.
3. Step-in on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).



## VI. Rosters

1. Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
2. Teams must consist of at least five players with a recommended max of 12 players. The game will be played as a 5v5.
3. Teams must start games with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four.



## VII. Timing and Overtime

1. Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock with two (2) 20-minute halves unless one team gains a 28-point advantage, which will then end the game. The clock stops only for timeouts.
2. Halftime is two minutes long.
3. Each time the 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.
4. Each team has two (2) 30-second timeouts per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. If the score is tied at the end of the 40 minutes, an overtime period will be used to determine the winner. **Overtime format** is as follows:
  - a. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
  - b. Each team will have at least one (1) possession: all regulation rules and penalties are in effect. Teams are assessed one (1) timeout.
  - c. Each team will start their respective drive on their own 5-yard line.
  - d. Interceptions can be advanced for a score. Should the opposing teams advance for a touchdown, the game will come to a conclusion.
  - e. Change of possession takes place when team scores or fails to gain a first down.
  - f. Teams will alternate possession for up to three (3) overtimes with normal regulation rules. Should the game advance to a 4th overtime, each team will have one (1) possession beginning at midfield with the “No Run Zones” NOT in effect. At the end of the 4th overtime each team will have one (1) play at their own 5-yard line. The team that gains the most yards on the play will be deemed the winner.

## VIII. Scoring

1. Touchdown: Six (6) Points
2. Point After Touchdown (PAT) 1-Point (5-yard line) or 2-points (10-yard line)
  - a. Note: One (1) point PAT is pass only; Two (2) point PAT can be run or pass.
  - b. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line.) Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charade timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions can be advanced for two (2) points.
3. Safety: Two (2) points
  - a. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone. A safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone. Furthermore, a safety will result in a change of possession.
4. After one team is winning by 28 points or more, the game is over. Once a 28 or more point advantage is gained, no PAT will be attempted. The game will continue in scrimmage mode for the remainder of the game. **\*During scrimmage mode, the defense on the winning team is prohibited from rushing the quarterback.**
5. Forfeits are scored 28-0 for the winning team.

## IX. Coaches

1. Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members assisting the players experience of the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all times in addition to the opposing team and/or fans.
  - a. Coaches are responsible for their respective fans as the Organization expects for fans to remain respectful of the officials and opponents. Should a player, coach or fan fail to comply with the Neighborhood Sports sportsmanship philosophies and code of

conduct, the Team will be assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for the first incident. The second incident will result in the fan/coach being required to leave the premise. Should the defendant not leave the premise, the team will be required to forfeit the game.

2. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to the need and division. Coaches are encouraged to move to the sidelines before the snap of the ball. One (1) Offensive and Defensive coach may remain on the field to guide the players. However, should a coach interfere with a player or play, the offense/defense will be penalized.
3. Teams are permitted a maximum of three (3) coaches on the sideline during the game. Only the head coach can interact with the Official or ask for clarification of rule.

## X. Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
  - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offense players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled "dead" when:
  - a. The ball hits the ground. **If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.**

- b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
- c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
- d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored
- e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
- f. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
- g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
- h. The seven (7) second pass clock expires.
- i. Inadvertent whistle.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.

- 8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
  - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- 9. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be shared 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.

## **XI. Running**

- 1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball-carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
- 2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.

3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
  - a. **“Center sneak” play is no longer allowed. The quarterback is no allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.**
4. After a quarterback takes a snap from the center (shotgun or direct snap) he now has the option to lateral the ball to a teammate, behind the line of scrimmage. The player receiving the lateral has the option to run or pass across the line of scrimmage or hand the ball off to a subsequent teammate behind the line of scrimmage. Defenders not rushing from the seven (7) yard marker is permitted to cross the line of scrimmage once the ball carrier has possession of the ball.
5. No-Run Zones are located five (5) yards before each end zone and five (5) yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams aren't allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive - one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a touchdown.)
6. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, (behind the line of scrimmage) all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
10. Runners must make every attempt to avoid collision with another player. Players may not charge into defenders and are expected to make lateral moves to avoid purposeful contact.
11. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time. Furthermore, offensive player is prohibited from running along side of the offensive ball carrier.

12. 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.

## XII: Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage with the exception of lateral passes.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a 7-second limit to release the ball. If a pass is not thrown within the seven (7) seconds, the play is dead, the down is forfeited and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handled off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
  - a. If the quarterback is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the defense is awarded a safety, two (2) points and possession of the ball.



## XIII: Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.)
2. Only one (1) player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Defensive players are allowed to advance the ball in the event of an interception. If the interception is not returned for a touchdown, then the

team who intercepted the ball must return to their own 5-yard line to begin the drive.

## XIV. Rushing the Passer

1. Rushing is prohibited within the “No Run Zones” at any point during regulation.
2. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. One defensive player is permitted to rush the quarterback per down. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
  - a. **A legal rush is:**
    - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
    - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
    - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
    - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the quarterback.
  - b. **A penalty may be called if:**
    - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass - illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay the down unless the gain results in a first down.)
    - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped - offsides (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay the down unless the gain results in a first down.)



- iii. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off - illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay the down unless the gain results in a first down.

**c. Special circumstances:**

- i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
  - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path of 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.**
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
- a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone. Two (2) points awarded and change of possession.



## **XV. Flag Pulling**

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run though the ball-carrier when pulling flags. It is to the officials discretion to determine if contact is incidental in nature or with intent. Holding will result in 5 yards from the spot of foul ad replay down. Tackling will result in a 10 yard penalty and automatic first down.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

## **XVI. Formations**

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
  - a. One player at any time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - b. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start resulting in a 5 yard penalty and replay the down unless the gain is sufficient for a first down.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

## XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor and/or Official witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referees's discretion No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the official will give one warning. If it continues the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run though the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
  - a. Yell to cheer on the players, not to harass officials or opponent.
  - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free
  - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are rehired to keep fields safe and kids above reproach.
  - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents off the field.
  - b. Please dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.
8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
  - a. Defense: 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
  - b. Offense: 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.



# XVIII. Penalties

## I. General

- The referee will call all penalties
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot Fouls)
- Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee for questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
- Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

## ii. Defensive Spot Fouls

Defensive Pass Interference	+5 yards, Automatic First Down
Holding	Replay Down
Stripping	+5 yards and Replay Down

## iii. Offensive Spot Fouls

Screening, blocking or running with the ball	-5 yards, Replay Down
Charging	-5 yards, Replay Down
Flag Guarding	-5 yards, Replay Down

## iv. Defensive Penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards, Automatic First Down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+10 yards, Automatic First Down
Offside	+5 yards, Replay Down
Illegal Rush	+5 yards, Replay Down
Illegal Flag Pull	+5 yards, Replay Down
Roughing the Passer	+10 yards, Automatic First Down
Taunting	+10 yards, Automatic First Down

## v. Offensive Penalties

Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards, Loss of Down
Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 yards, Loss of Down
Offside/False Start	-5 yards, Replay Down
Illegal Forward Pass	-5 yards, Replay Down
Offensive Pass Interference	-5 yards,, Loss of Down
Illegal Motion	-5 yards, Replay Down
Delay of Game	-5 yards, Replay Down
Impeding the Rusher	-5 yards, Replay Down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards, Replay Down