



RULEBOOK

WINTER 2026

UNDER THE LIGHTS FLAG FOOTBALL RULEBOOK (CHANDLER, AZ)

USE THIS RULEBOOK – DO NOT USE THE RULES ON UAFLAG.COM, AS THE RULES MAY DIFFER

1. Eligibility & Roster

- a. Eligibility: Players in grades K–8 as of the current school year.
- b. The commissioner can make exceptions for grade/age requirements should they deem necessary for special circumstances.
- c. A team must begin the game with no less than four (4) players. Teams will not be penalized for having less than six players, but the opposing team is not required to reduce their number of players to match.
- d. If a team has fewer than four (4) players, the game will be considered a forfeit and may then be played as a scrimmage. Forfeits will be scored as 1–0. If a team has fewer than four (4) players, the game will be considered a forfeit and may then be played as a scrimmage.

2. Equipment

- a. Field is 25–30 yards wide and 50 yards long, including the 5-yard end zones (may be modified)
- b. The offensive team provides the ball.
 - i. Kindergarten–4th Grade & 3rd–5th All-Girls Divisions will use Pee-Wee football.
 - ii. 5th–6th Grade & 6th–8th girls divisions will use Junior football.
 - iii. 7th–8th Grades will use Youth football.
 - iv. Teams are not required to use the issued football if it is the same size and regulation as the issued ball. Teams also have the option to share the ball, if preferred.
- c. All players must wear a mouthguard.
- d. Teams are required to wear league-issued jerseys during regular league play; custom or non-league jerseys are not permitted, except in limited circumstances approved by the league, such as to distinguish team colors.
- e. Shorts worn by players may not have pockets or pockets must be securely taped.
- f. Officials may ban any equipment that they deem as unsafe or illegal.
- g. Shirts must be tucked in; no metal cleats are allowed.
- h. Shorts and flags should have distinguishing colors as not to confuse opposing teams (based on if the opposing team objects).

3. 6 v 6 Game Format

- a. Games are six (6) vs six (6). (Girls Divisions may be modified to 5v5 due to roster sizes but 6v6 is default)
- b. All players are eligible
- c. Two (2) 20-minute running clock halves, Two (2) minute break at halftime
- d. Each possession starts at the five (5) yard line after scores, turnover on downs and/or halftime.
- e. Thirty (30) second play clock (45-second play clock for K-2nd Grade Division)
- f. The offensive team has three (3) downs to get a first down at mid-field, then four (4) downs to score once they have crossed mid-field.
- g. The clock will only stop for timeouts and injuries (it does not stop for incomplete passes, out-of-bounds, change of possession). If a timeout is called after a touchdown, the clock will not start until the play after the conversion attempt.
- h. A coin flip will determine the initial choice. The winning team may choose to start on offense or defense. Teams will automatically alternate possessions at halftime. If the coin-toss winner defers their choice, the opposing team will make the first-half selection, and possession will still alternate at halftime
- i. One (1) 30-second timeout per half and teams switch sides at halftime.

- j. In the last one (1) minute of the game, The clock will on these actions: Incompletions, Out of bounds, QB sack count and kneel downs, Change of possession, Penalties - If it's an offensive penalty, the clock will start on the official's whistle unless it is a dead-ball foul, If a timeout is called after a touchdown, the clock will not start until the play after the conversion attempt
- k. In the case of inclement weather during a game, a score will be final if one half of a game has been played. If less than one half has been played the game will be rescheduled and played in its entirety with the score returning to 0-0.

4. Scoring

- a. touchdowns = 6 points.
- b. Extra Point (5-yard line) = 1 pt. - Extra Point (10-yard line) = 2 pts.
- c. Safety = 2 points and the defense gets the ball
- d. A turnover during an extra point attempt can be returned for a score by the defense and will result in the score of the point attempted by the offense. (1 point for 1-point attempts and 2 points for 2-point attempts).
- e. Catch-Up / Mercy Rule - If a team is up by 30 or more, they only have 2 downs to get a first down and 2 downs to score until that point difference is trimmed below 30 pts. Then regular game rules apply. The team that is behind by 30 or more points will start their offensive possession at the +10-yard line and get 4 downs to score. The clock will not stop in the final minute if the game is in mercy rule. If a team is ahead by more than 30 points and they intercept a pass, the ball will be marked down at the spot of the interception.

5. Divisional Basic Rules

- a. K-2nd Grade Division Rules
 - i. Unlimited runs (Can run on extra point and within the 5-yard line)
 - ii. 45-second play clock (shortened for playoffs)
 - iii. ONE coach on the field for both offense and defense, but since our focus is developmental in this division, we will allow additional coaches on the field to help direct players appropriately for the first 3 weeks, this can be modified by discretion of the league.
 - iv. In this division we want to get the players lined up properly and running in the right direction. We want to be flexible with the rules and teach the players the proper fundamentals of football. We want to be sure that we provide adequate time to get both offense and defensive players lined up before the ball snapped. If necessary, the referee will delay putting the ball down until both sides are ready. We expect the pace to become quicker as the season goes on.
 - v. Player must snap the ball (side snap is acceptable)
- b. 3rd-4th Grade Division Rules
 - i. 30 second play clock
 - ii. ONE run per offensive possession
 - iii. NO runs 5yds from the end zone
 - iv. NO runs on extra points (This means no runs on 2pt attempts)
 - v. ONE Coach is allowed on the field for both offense and defense. Coaches must be 10 yards behind the deepest player on defense. They will receive a warning, followed by a penalty if they interfere in the play.
 - vi. In this division, we want to start limiting the number of run plays and start encouraging the use of the pass play. Players should understand where to line up and how to apply basic football fundamentals.
- c. 5th-8th Grade Division Rules
 - i. 30 second play clock
 - ii. NO Runs

- iii. NO Coach allowed on the field.
- iv. In this division we make the transition into an every-down is a pass play or a scaled down version of HS 7v7 pass game. We want the players to start working on their skills as a QB, WR, and DB that they have learned from their coach and apply it in a fun, competitive format.
- d. 3rd-5th & 6th–8th Grade ALL GIRLS Division Rules
 - i. 30 second play clock
 - ii. Unlimited runs (Can run on extra point, but NO runs within the 5-yard line)
 - iii. ONE Coach is allowed on the field for both offense and defense.
 - iv. No defensive blitzing and QB can never run.
 - v. Side snapping is allowed

6. 6 v 6 Basic Game Rules

- a. Each possession starts at the 5-yard line after scores, turnover on downs and/or halftime.
- b. Interceptions can be returned for a touchdown, if intercepting team's flag is pulled before the end zone, then possession will begin where the defender is flagged. (Interceptions that occur between the 5-yard line and the end of the end zone and the defensive player either falls or is de-flagged in this area, the ball will be spotted at the 5-yard line (going out).
- c. If there is a bad snap, the ball is dead, placed at the LOS and a loss of down, but NO loss of yardage. A bad snap in the end zone will NOT result in a safety. Safeties will occur when the ball is fumbled in the end zone, or if a flag is pulled in the defensive teams end zone. Possession is the key element when determining a bad snap versus a fumble. In the last minute of the game, a bad snap does stop the game clock.
- d. Center cannot take a handoff from the QB and the snapped ball has to pass between the center's legs, except in K-2 and All-Girls Divisions
- e. The person who receives the snap from the center is deemed the QB regardless of where they line up.
- f. 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.
- g. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. A motion player does not need to stop prior to the snap of the ball.
- h. Three (3) players must be on or near the LOS or it is an illegal formation. The center counts as one (1) player on the LOS.
- i. A receiver must have one (1) foot in-bounds when making a reception (but cannot have the other foot planted out-of-bounds)
- j. Defensive players must start two (2) yards off the LOS, but the defender can defend the end zone goal line and the mid-field yard line, once ball is less than 2 yards from either mid or goal line.
- k. No tackling or blocking (stationary pick is allowed, but the player cannot move)
- l. The defensive player has the right to their position. If an offensive player runs into a stationary defensive player, it will be considered a personal foul or an unsportsmanlike penalty at the discretion of the referee.
- m. There is no rushing/blitzing the QB unless the Deception Rule has been activated. The QB is not eligible to run, even if the deception rule has been activated.
- n. **Deception Rule:** Defensive players can cross the line of scrimmage when a handoff, fake handoff or backward pass has occurred. This rule helps preserve the integrity of the LOS and the development of the passing game for both offense and defense. This rule applies to ALL Divisions.
 - i. Fake Handoff Definition: A fake handoff is determined solely by the quarterback's ball action, not by the presence or movement of another player. A fake handoff occurs when the quarterback extends the ball away from the body, clearly mimicking a handoff exchange, which activates the deception rule.

- ii. Clarification: Merely holding the ball against the chest, tucking the ball, or turning the body without extending the ball away from the body does not constitute a fake handoff and does not trigger the deception rule.
- o. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty.
- p. Instant replay is not used in any form. No photos or videos shall be used to contest or overturn an official's ruling during the game.

7. Pass Game Rules

- a. The offense must throw the ball within:
 - i. K-2nd Grade – 6 seconds.
 - ii. 3rd–6th Grade & All-Girls Divisions – 4 seconds.
 - iii. 7th-8th Grade – 3 seconds (e.g., “one one thousand, two one thousand, three one thousand,” then flag or whistle)
- b. The sack count starts on the snap of the ball no matter what the offensive play is attempted.
- c. If the QB does not release the ball before time expires, the result of the play is a sack and the ball stays at the LOS (similar to an incomplete pass)
- d. A forward pass may be underhand or overhand, but it must cross the LOS (a forward pass is any pass in forward motion).
- e. Forward passes behind the LOS are not allowed (Forward pass is any pass in forward motion). This is a 5-yard penalty and loss of down. The defense can elect to decline the penalty.
- f. If the QB's foot is over the line of scrimmage, the pass is illegal. If the QB's foot is on the line of scrimmage, there is no penalty (since there are very few lines on the field, this is a judgment call by the official).
- g. All grade levels have the option to throw a backward pass for a double pass play. This alerts the defense that they CAN cross the LOS to pull the flag of the player with the ball. (5th–8th grade can never take a hand off nor run the ball across the line of scrimmage on a backward pass).
- h. Push-offs are not allowed.
- i. In the case of simultaneous possession, possession is awarded to the offense (Note: if the defensive player has clear possession and control, this is not a simultaneous possession)
- j. There is no stripping of the ball.
- k. Once a ball carrier has established possession, any loss of control of the ball results in an immediate dead ball, regardless of whether the ball is caught in the air by the defense.
 - i. Possession is established when a player secures control of the ball with one or both hands and demonstrates control by tucking the ball, turning up field, taking steps, or making a clear football move as judged by the official. Once possession is established, the play is governed by the dead-ball rule for any loss of control.
- l. Laterals past the LOS are not allowed.
- m. If an eligible receiver goes out-of-bounds by their own volition (not by being illegally forced out) and then re-establishes themselves inbounds, they cannot be the first to touch the forward pass. This action is considered illegal touching. The penalty is loss of five (5) yards from the original spot and loss of down.

8. Run Game Rules

- a. Unlimited runs in the K–2nd Grade Division & All-Girls Divisions (NO direct QB runs).
- b. One (1) run per possession in the 3rd–4th Grade Division. (NO direct QB runs).
- c. No runs allowed in the 5th–8th Grade Division.
- d. The ball carrier can spin to avoid their flag being pulled but cannot flag guard. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
- e. Run plays do not have to get across the LOS within the allotted sack count time

- f. There are no live-ball fumbles (a fumble is dead and placed at the spot of the fumble with the offensive team retaining possession).
- g. Players who do not have a flag on, or who lose a flag during the play may participate but cannot advance the ball after a catch and will be down on a run play if they have the ball. If the person receiving the snap does not have a flag on, they may throw the ball, but only if Deception Rule has not been activated.
- h. The play is dead when flag is pulled, runner's knee or elbow touches ground, steps out of bounds, loses flags or dives, leaps, jumps (spotted where feet left).
- i. 3rd-4th Division Run Rules Clarification
 - i. If you are going to use a Run/Pass Option (RPO) play with your RB, see scenarios below.
 - ii. In all RPO offenses, when the QB gives the ball to the RB, this will alert the defense that they can cross the LOS to pull the ball carrier's flag.
 - 1. Game Scenarios
 - a. If you have not used your 1 run attempt:
 - i. If the QB gives the ball to the RB and the RB's flag is pulled before crossing the LOS, this will be considered as your 1 run attempt.
 - ii. If the QB gives the ball to the RB, the RB DOES NOT have to cross the LOS before the 4 second sack count. The RB can stay behind the LOS as long as they choose but cannot pass.
 - b. If you have used your 1 run attempt:
 - i. If the QB gives the ball to the RB, the RB must make a pass attempt before the 4 second sack count.
 - 2. A handoff that is fumbled between the QB and another player will not count as their run play (but can result in loss of down and yardage).

9. Inadvertent Whistle

- a. If there is an inadvertent whistle during a play, the offense has the choice of either the result of the play at the point the whistle was blown or replaying the down.
- b. If there is an inadvertent whistle during a passing play and the ball is in flight, the down is replayed.
- c. The half or game cannot end on an inadvertent whistle. It will be an untimed down.

10. OFFENSE PENALTIES:

- a. Sack Count (failure to pass within allotted time) - Loss of that down (no yardage loss)
- b. K-2nd Grade (6 seconds), 3rd-6th (4 seconds), 7-8th (3 seconds), All-Girls (4 seconds)
- c. Offensive Pass Interference (pushing off/away defender) – 10-yard penalty and replay the down.
- d. Offensive Illegal contact (holding/pushing/use of hands) – 5-yard penalty, replay the down.
- e. Illegal motion (2 men in motion) – 5-yard penalty and replay the down.
- f. illegal formation – 5-yard penalty and replay the down.
- g. Illegal Run – 5-yard penalty and loss of down.
- h. False Start – 5-yard penalty, replay the down.
- i. Illegal Forward Pass – 5-yard penalty and loss of down (QB steps over the LOS or QB throws a forward pass behind the LOS). Defense can elect to decline this penalty, This is not a stoppage of play
- j. Blocking/Leaping/Flag Guarding/Stiff Arms/Charges – ball is dead at the spot of the block/leap/flag guard.
- k. Unnecessary roughness/Unsportsmanlike conduct – 15-yard penalty, loss of down (possible ejection).
- l. Delay of Game – the clock is stopped, and a five (5) yard penalty is enforced; replay the down.
- m. No intentional grounding penalty

11. DEFENSIVE PENALTIES:

- a. Defensive Pass Interference - 10-yard penalty and replay the down unless it's an offensive catch; Offense decides. 1st down can occur depending on the yardage.
- b. Illegal Contact (holding, jams, etc.) – 5-yard penalty and replay the down over unless it's an offensive catch; Offense decides.
- c. Defensive Holding while pulling flag – 5-yard penalty added to the end of the play and replay the down.
- d. Illegal Flag Pull (before player has ball) – 5-yard penalty at end of the play and replay the down.
- e. Off-sides – 5-yard penalty and replay the down.
- f. Illegal Rushing (before a hand-off or fake hand-off has occurred) – 5-yard penalty and replay the down; offense decides.
- g. Inadvertent tackle – 5-yard penalty (added to the end of the play), replay the down.
- h. Inadvertent tackle From Behind with a clear path to end zone – Automatic touchdown.
- i. Unnecessary roughness/Unsportsmanlike conduct – 15-yard penalty and automatic first down (possible ejection).
- j. Defensive Penalties inside the 10-yard line will result in half the distance to the goal, if applicable.

12. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- a. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots,
- b. blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player may be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered.
- c. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game or penalized.
- d. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- e. Ball carriers must try to avoid defenders with an established position.
- f. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- g. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well.
- h. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
- i. Keep comments clean and profanity-free.
- j. Compliment all players, not just one child or team.

13. Sportsmanship

- a. Trash talking is not allowed. Trash talking is an offensive language used against opposing coaches, players, officials, league personnel or fans. Officials will give one and only one warning. If this trash-talking continues, the offender may be ejected from the game or given a penalty.
- b. After the game, teams are expected to form a line at midfield and congratulate the opposing team regardless of the outcome of the game.

14. PLAYOFFS (Subject to Modifications)

- a. League Seeding
- b. System standings will be used as the default based on Sport Engine system tie breakers. In case of a tie for award positions at the conclusion of the season, the following tie-breaker procedure will be used:
- c. Head-to-head results between teams tied.
 - i. Points against

- ii. In the case of multiple ties, intra divisional records between tied teams may be used to simplify seeding when appropriate.

15. **XI. Overtime Format --ONLY IN THE PLAYOFFS**

- a. Overtime period will take place with each team receiving a possession.
- b. Coin flip determines choice of 1st or 2nd possession.
- c. Possession begins 10 yards from the goal line. Each team will receive two downs (both teams, same direction).
- d. If a touchdown is scored, a team can elect to go for a 1- or 2-point conversion.
- e. If the Defense intercepts the ball, it's a change of possession starting at the 10-yard line unless the Defense returns it for a TD. The game will end if the intercepting team was ahead in points in OT prior to playing Defense or intercepting team returns it for a TD on its 1st Defensive possession per OT.
- f. If the game is still tied, overtime will be repeated until there is a winner.
- g. Teams alternate first possession each overtime.