

MOTYFCL
Flag football Freshman Division
(ages 8-9)



Official playing guidelines-

Updated 2/3/2025

Ages: 8-9 Freshman

- The game is played having a maximum of: seven (7) offensive and seven (7) defensive players or a minimum of five (5) offensive and five (5) defensive players.
- If one team only has 5 players and the opposing team has 7 or more players, they may play with 6 on the field making the game 5 v 6.
- All players must play equal minutes.

● I. Game

- At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball.
- The winner of the coin toss may choose to take the ball or defer.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield (20 yard line) for a first down. Once a team crosses midfield it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on the 40-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from the 40-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions returned for a TD, start on the 40-yard line.

● II. Terminology

- **Boundary lines** – the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and the rear end-zone lines.
- **Line Of Scrimmage** – the offensive line of scrimmage is an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field. The line of scrimmage for the defense is an imaginary line five (5) yards in advance of the offensive line of scrimmage.
- **Line-To-Gain** – the line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
- **Offense** – the team with possession of the ball.
- **Defense** – the team opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
- **Quarterback** – the offensive player that calls the signals to start the play.
- **Passer** – the offensive player that lines up behind the center.
- **Downs (1-2-3-4)** – the offensive squad has four attempts or “Downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the Mid-Field Line to get another set of downs or to score.
- **Live Ball** – the period of time that the play is in action. Live Ball Penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
- **Dead Ball** – the period of time immediately before or after a play.
- **Whistle** – the sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for timeout, half time, or the end of the

game.

- **Inadvertent whistle** – an official’s whistle that is performed in error.
- **Charging** – the movement of the ball carrier 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, resulting in a penalty.
- **Flag Guarding** – the deliberate guarding of the flags by the ball carrier to inhibit the defense from making a grab. Typically, a lowered and swinging, slapping arm motion, resulting in a penalty.
- **Shovel Pass** – a legal pass made by throwing the ball behind or beyond the line of scrimmage, underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot put type manner.
- **Lateral or Pitch**– a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the QB or ball carrier-behind the scrimmage only.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language- applies to players, coaches and spectators. This results in a penalty.

- **III. Eligibility**

- All players must be registered through MOTYFCL and fall within the specified age or (grade range) assigned. Players may play up in age/grade, not down in age/ grade level.

- **IV. Equipment**

- Mouth Guard. Every player must wear a mouth-guard to each practice and each game. Kids will not be able to play without a mouth piece.
- The League provides each player with a flag belt that is returned each week to the coach.
- Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed, however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves.
- Players must remove all watches, necklaces, earrings, jewelry and any jewelry around the neck.
- Official MOT FLAG jerseys/shorts must be worn during games.
- Player’s jerseys must be tucked into the pants. Players must un bunch their flags at all times.

- **V. Field**

- The recommended field size is 40 yards by 50 yards with a 10-yard end zone and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Running Zone precede the goal line by 5 yards.
- A no Run Zone is in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays with short yards to gain situations. While in the No Run Zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before the end-zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion for positive yardage. All plays, including those that begin with a handoff, must end up as a pass play and will still use the pass clock.
- Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

- **VI. Rosters**
 - All players must be registered and approved to play by MOTYFCL and conform to age-group or grade level requirements.
 - Teams must field a minimum of five (5) players at all times.

- **VII. Timing and Overtime**
 - Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock, two 20 minute halves. The clock stops only for timeouts and a four (4) minute warning per half.
 - During the last two (2) minutes of each half, the clock will be operated pursuant to NFHS
 - rules stopping in situations conforming to when it would under NFHS rules. It is no longer a “running clock”.
 - Halftime is 5 minutes long.
 - Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 35 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
 - Each team has two (2) 30-second timeouts per half in tp/lp/freshman
 - Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
 - In the event of an injury, the clock will stop and restart after the injured player is removed from the field of play.
 - If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game will be determined a tie.

- **VIII. Scoring**
 - Touchdown: 6 points
 - PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)
.Note: 1 point PAT is pass only, 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
 - A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether they wish to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. The PAT decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

- **IX. Coaches**
 - All coaches must complete a criminal background and Child Abuse Registry background to coach-No exceptions.
 - Only 1 offense or 1 defense coach is allowed on the field to direct players for their squad. TinyPro/LittlePro may have two (2) coaches on the field. Coaches are expected to adhere to MOT Flag Football philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.
 - Only two coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines.

- **X. Live Ball/Dead Ball**
 - The play is live when the QB pulls the ball in upward motion. Dropped snaps are a dead ball and loss of down. (Jv and Varsity will follow separate rule book)
 - The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on 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 beyond the line.

- The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Any official can whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - b. The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown **or** PAT is scored.
 - e. The ball carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The ball carrier’s flag falls out and the runner is touched by the opposing player.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one flag.
 - h. **The 7 second or 4 second pass clock expires.**
 - i. An inadvertent whistle is performed (at the spot where the ball was whistled dead).
 - In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - Take the ball where the whistle blown made the play dead.
 - Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- *Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.*

- **XI. Running**

- The ball is spotted where the runner’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
 - a. For Line-To-Gain and Goal Lines, the ball and one foot must cross the line.
- The quarterback can rollout, but must pass, pitch, handoff or lateral while in the backfield. The QB CANNOT ADVANCE the ball for positive yards
- QB can pitch the ball or hand-off behind the line of scrimmage to a running back. There is no limit to the number of times the ball may be pitched, either lateral to or behind the ball carrier both behind and beyond the offensive line of scrimmage.
- “No-Run Zone,” located 5 yards before the end zone is designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. The QB can hand off or pitch the ball BEHIND the scrimmage line. BUT the FINAL allowable play is a forward PASS ONLY from the last player in possession of the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only ONE No Run Zone in each drive - one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD). When in the NO RUN ZONE the pass clock will remain 7 seconds.
- The player who takes the handoff or pitch can throw the ball from behind the

line of scrimmage.

- Once the ball has been handed off or pitched all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping is considered flag guarding.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Ball carrier cannot flag-guard.
- Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- Blocking or “screening” is NOT allowed at any time.
- Offensive players not with the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier as a shield.
- 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**

- All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward or behind the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed, and received behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a seven (7) second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown, handed-off, lateral, or pitched within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, pitched, or lateralled, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect. While in the no run zone the QB will still have a 7 second play clock.

- **XIII. Receiving**

- All players are eligible to receive passes.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- Interceptions on an extra point either (1) or (2) points that are run back for a touchdown count towards the opposing team’s score in the same amount as the points attempted.

- **XIV. Rushing the Passer (not allowed in Freshman)**

- **XV. Flag Pulling**

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders cannot tackle or hold or interfere with the ball carrier in the pursuit

of pulling a flag.

- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- Any player whose flag or flags fall off can still be considered down when touched with at least one hand by the defender.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of players who are not in possession of the ball.
- Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm, or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.

- **XVI. Formations**

- An offensive team must have a minimum of four (4) players on the line of scrimmage.. NO WILD-CAT.
- Only one player at a time may go in motion and must be positioned one yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- Freshman cannot be in the shotgun and must be at the LOS.
- Movement by a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.

- **XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

- If the field-monitor or referee 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 referee's discretion. No appeals will be permitted! FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. 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, players, coach, or fan will be ejected from the playing field.
- Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent or official.
- Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship:
 - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

- **XVIII. Penalties**

- **Offensive** All penalties are assessed for 5 Yards.
 - Illegal Equipment
 - Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)
 - Offensive-pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
 - Screening, Blocking or Running (along with the ball carrier)

- Delay of game (after the ball is spotted, exceeding the 30 second limit)
 - Flag guarding (hindering the pull of a flag by the ball carrier)
 - Charging (not attempting to avoid the defense)
 - **Defense** All penalties are assessed for 5 Yards.
 - Off-sides
 - Interference
 - Illegal contact (Holding, blocking, etc)
 - Defense Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)
 - Defense Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 10-yard marker)
 - Roughing the passer shall be a 10 yard penalty
 - Stripping the ball (attempting to cause a fumble)
 - **Team** – Below penalties are assessed as automatic first down (if against defense) or loss of down (if against offense) and carry an individual warning to the player committing the penalty (one warning to the player and team before ejection).
 - Unnecessary Roughness
 - Taunting
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct
- All other rules not listed above or in our MOT flag rule book will follow the NFHS RULES FOR HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL.