



## 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 the first half, will start on defense in the second half. You **MUST** have the entire team next to the field **FIVE** minutes prior to game time. If your team is not there, the other team automatically wins the coin toss.
- There are no kickoffs.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield for a 1<sup>st</sup> 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 – including extra point(s) attempts.
- Teams change sides after halftime. Possession changes to loser of coin toss.
- For divisions K, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> 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.*

### Player Substitution Rules

**COACHES MUST GIVE THEIR COMPLETED LINEUP CARD TO THE OPPOSING COACH PRIOR TO THE GAME OR YOUR TEAM WILL START ON SECOND DOWN EVERY POSSESSION UNTIL IT IS DELIVERED.**

Except for injuries, teams with 7 or 8 players will substitute at quarter breaks only. This also applies to teams with 9 players after the first quarter.

**ALL PLAYERS MUST PLAY A MINIMUM 3 OUT OF THE 4 QUARTERS**

7 Player Teams: 6 play, 1 sits (a different player sits each quarter)

8 Player Teams: 6 play, 2 sit (different players sit each quarter)  
All eight players **MUST** play 3 full quarters and sit out one quarter.

9 Player Teams: 1ST QUARTER ONLY: 3 players play offensive downs, 3 players play defensive downs, 3 players play all downs. **EVERYONE PLAYS IN THE FIRST QUARTER.**  
Quarters 2-4: 6 play, 3 sit out (different players sit each quarter). Each player plays 2 full quarters and sits out 1 quarter.

10 Player Teams: Players must play in all quarters. **IN EACH QUARTER:** 4 players play offensive downs, 4 different players play defensive downs, 2 players play all downs. Players must rotate between Offensive, Defensive, and All downs. No player can play both ways in more than one quarter.

11 Player Teams: Players must play in all quarters. **IN EACH QUARTER:** 5 players play offensive downs, 5 different players play defensive downs, 1 player plays all downs. Players must rotate between Offensive, Defensive, and All downs. No player can play both ways in more than one quarter.

- See the League Roster forms for each player configuration.

### **PLAY ADVANTAGE RULE ( 8/9/10/11 vs. 7 players only)**

If one team has 8/9/10/11 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 8-9-10-11 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 8-9-10-11 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.

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Grade AND 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade division which will remain a tie**).

### **OVERTIME**

## General Rules:

- 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 three plays, and then Team 2 gets three plays, **unless there is a defensive penalty, which results in a new first down.**
  - Ball always starts at the 50-yard line, **first down and goal to go.**
  - **Both teams will play a full possession of downs regardless of yards gained or lost.**
  - **The winner is the team that gains the most yards, or scores in less downs, or maintains possession for more downs.**
- \*If your team wins by YARDS you will be awarded a 1 point victory**

### Most common scenario:

Ball starts at the 50-yard line.

Team 1 **possession** results in a gain of 12 yards.

Referee uses a cone to physically mark the 12 yards.

Team 2 gets the ball, **and then uses their full possession** to try to gain more than 12 yards.

**At the end of Team 2 possession, if they get more yards than Team 1 they win, if they get less yards they lose. The same yardage as Team 1 results in an additional overtime.**

### Another common scenario is when Team 1 scores a touchdown.

Team 1 scores a TD in two plays.

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

### Interception scenario 1:

Team 1 advances 12 yards **with their possession.**

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

### Interception scenario 2:

Team 1 throws an interception on their 2nd play.

Team 2 starts on the 50-yard line and maintains possession for 2 plays- 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 number of yards (i.e. 12 yards) **with their possession,** or if
- both teams score in the same number of plays (i.e. two plays)

**\*If 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)

**EXTRA POINT(S) ATTEMPTS CAN BE RETURNED for 1 or 2 points.**

## OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS

- **When each play starts, offensive players must be separated by the distance of both players arms extended or more, except QB/RB. Blocking is not allowed in FNL. This rule is intended to eliminate all plays where offensive players are bunched together, anywhere on the field. Bunching (3 or more players together) during the play can create situations where blocking takes place, even inadvertently, and will be penalized.**

## 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.
- **Ball carriers cannot hurdle a defender (safety concern)**
- 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 ten 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.

Rushers are NOT allowed to have hands up to deflect/knock down the pass (safety concern).

Once the ball is handed off, the ten-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 ten yards from the line of scrimmage.

After snapping the football, the center may NOT impede/block the rusher.

**10 yard penalty + loss of down for offense.**

**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, **plus 10 yards** and an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down. If penalty is against the offense, then 10 yards + 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**Roughing the Passer:**

Rushers may **ONLY** try to pull the flags when they rush the QB. Rushers are **NOT** allowed to have their hands up. Due to safety concerns, rushers must **ONLY** go for the QB's flags.

10 yard penalty and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

**Interference:**

10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

**Illegal contact:**

(holding, blocking, etc.)

10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

**Illegal flag pull:**

(before receiver has the ball)

10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

**Illegal rushing:**

(starting rush from inside 10-yard marker)

10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> 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 formation:**

(players on the line of scrimmage lined up too close together)  
5 yards and 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:**

A player will be marked down wherever the flag guarding happens. No 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.

**Hurdling a Defender:**

10 yards and loss of down.

**All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage (except flag guarding, unsportsmanlike conduct, and last man standing).**

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 determined based on the following:

- 1) Win/Loss winning percentage (all games are included)
- 2) Head-to-head competition
- 3) Average points allowed per game
- 4) Coin toss

\*NOTE – For playoffs rankings, Gold/Silver/Bronze divisions are subjective. FNL Commissioners determine placement.

## **ATTIRE**

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

**JEWELRY, IF WORN, MUST BE COVERED WITH BANDAIDS, MEDICAL TAPE, ETC. PLAYERS WITH VISIBLE JEWELRY WILL BE SENT OFF THE FIELD AND CAN RETURN ON THE FOLLOWING PLAY IF CORRECTED.**

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

"EFFECTIVE 4/22/24

As per FNL rules, "All players must wear a protective mouthpiece- there are no exceptions!!"

Any defensive player(s) on the field without a mouthpiece will be penalized 5 yards and an automatic first down for offense.

If the offending player(s) is on offense, it will result in a 5 yard penalty and a loss of down.

If there are multiple players on the same team in violation there is only one penalty assessed per play."

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.

**COACHES COACH – PLAYERS PLAY – REFEREES REF – FANS CHEER**