

 **EAA Flag Football**

**Rules and Guidelines - 2021**

**FOOTBALL SIZE**

Kindergarten through 4th grade – 7v7 Flag Football (Ball size – Pee Wee)

5th grade through 8th grade – 7v7 Flag Football (Ball Size – Junior)

**FIELD DIMENSIONS**

Kindergarten through 5th grade Co-ed field dimensions – 50 yards long (goal line to goal line) by 25 yards wide with two 5-yard end zones on either end.

**EQUIPMENT**

Flags will be provided by EAA. Each flag belt has 2 flags. Flags must be positioned, one on each hip.

No metal tipped cleats

Mouth guards must be worn at all times (on practice fields and game fields).

**COACHES/PARENTS/SPECTATORS: CODE OF CONDUCT**

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behavior in the game.

EAA *Code of Conduct for Parents/Spectators* has been created to ensure the sport can be enjoyed in a safe, positive environment.

Remember, youth sports are a time for our children to develop their technical, tactical, physical and social skills.  Winning isn’t everything.

Play your part and observe the *Code of Conduct* at all times.

**I will:**

* Remain off the court and within designated spectator areas during training and games
* Let the coach do their job and not confuse the players by telling them what to do during training and games
* Always respect the decisions of the referee
* Encourage the players to respect the coaches, opposition and referees
* Avoid criticizing a player for making a mistake- mistakes are part of learning
* Avoid placing undue pressure on players away from training/games
* Never engage in or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behavior
* Never promote/support unsporting behavior
* Never confront a referee or coach
* Make every effort to be early when dropping off and picking up my child for training sessions and games
* Be positive and supportive at all times
* Avoid making negative comments about the game, coaches, referees or players in my child’s presence
* Speak directly to the coach (in person) if I have questions concerning my child’s participation and development
* Wait a minimum of 24 hours after a game or training session before contacting the coach with questions or concerns

**I understand if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by the Elkhorn Athletic Association:**

**I may be:**

* Warned about my conduct by an EAA official
* Required to meet with an EAA official
* Obliged to leave the venue by an EAA official
* Requested by an EAA official not to attend future training sessions and games
* Suspended or requested to leave the EAA along with any dependents

Referees and site administrators have the right to remove a coach, player, or fans for inappropriate conduct or unsafe play.

**RULES OF PLAY**

A coin toss by the referee will determine which team has the choice to receive or defend (winner of the toss may defer until the second half).

The offensive team will start with the ball at the 10-yard line. They have four plays to get a first down at the 25-yard line and four plays to score from there. If the offensive team fails to gain a first down or score a touchdown, the opposing team will take over at the current line of scrimmage (point at which the ball becomes dead on 4th down).

The offense has the option on fourth down to “punt” the ball which would be a change of possession and the opposing team would start at their own 10-yard line.

All possession changes, except interceptions and fourth down turnovers, start on the defense’s 10-yard line.

Interceptions are live balls and can be returned.

No more than two coaches will be allowed in the huddle.

All players must play at least half of the game.

Belts must be properly worn, and jerseys tucked in. If a player does not have their jersey tucked in, and their flag gets pulled, there will not be a penalty enforced.

**Dark color shorts are required**

**GAMETIME - OVERTIME (PLAYOFFS ONLY)**

A 5-minute grace period will be allowed at the start of the game to wait for enough players to arrive before the game is called a forfeit. The minimum number of players allowed is 6.

There will be two 25-minute halves, with a 5-minute halftime.

Overtime: If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, each team will be given four downs to break the tie starting from the 10-yard line. If the score is tied at the end of the first overtime period, there will be a second overtime period. If a touchdown is scored during the second overtime period, it is required to go for a 2-point conversion from the 10-yard line. There will be no more than two overtime periods.

The game clock stops on change of possession, at the end of a scoring play, team timeouts, injury, and official timeouts only.

In the last two minutes of each half the clock will stop on incomplete passes and plays ending out of bounds. Officials will announce when there are 2 minutes left in the half.

Each team has one 60-second time-out per half.

A team is allowed to use a charged time-out to review an official’s application of a rule. The time-out remains charged if no change in the ruling results.

A play clock of 30 seconds will begin once the ball is spotted by the referee. In the case of a no huddle, the defense will be given 10 seconds to get set.

Teams will receive **one warning** before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.

**SCORING**

Touchdown: 6 points

Point(s) After Touchdown:

* 1 point, snapped from the 5-yard line
* 2 points, snapped from the 10-yard line

\***Mercy Rule:** After one team is winning by 28 points or more, the losing team gets one offensive series to continue regular play. If they do not score, the game will be played in scrimmage mode until the end of regulation game time. The score at the time of the beginning of scrimmage mode will be the final score and no new scores will be added to the team totals.

Scrimmage Mode: Possessions last until the offensive team scores or fails to achieve the line to gain. The defense will not be allowed to rush on any plays until the quarterback runs, passes, hands off, or fakes the hand off of the ball.

**LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL**

It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense is lined up in the neutral zone at the time of the snap. In the case of a neutral zone infraction, the official may give both teams a warning on the first penalty without assessing a penalty. The official may state to either team, prior to the snap, that they are lined up in the neutral zone and no penalty may be called if the player(s) reset, prior to the ball being snapped.

A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds if their first foot to contact the ground comes down in the field of play.

The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, in an attempt 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:

* The ball carrier’s flag is pulled or falls off their belt while in possession of the football.
* A player gains possession of the ball with less than 2 flags on their belt.
* The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
* Any part of the ball carrier’s body contacts the ground other than their hands or feet.
* A touchdown, PAT, or safety is scored.
* An inadvertent whistle is performed.
	+ The ball is ruled dead at the spot where the ball was at the time of the inadvertent whistle.
	+ In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
		- Take the ball where the whistle blew the play dead.
		- Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
* The ball contacts the ground, except if the Center or Quarterback fumbles the initial exchange. A fumbled snap remains live and the ball can only be recovered by the Quarterback, in order to finish the play. Any other fumbles are ruled a dead ball and will be spotted where the ball first contacted the ground.
* A ball carrier attempts flag guarding. Flag guarding is the obstruction by the ball carrier when an attempt to pull their flag is made. This includes but is not limited to stiff-arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey. If it occurs, the ball is declared dead and it is a 5-yard penalty from the spot of the foul.
* When the ball is declared dead behind the offense’s goal line or out of the back of their endzone the defense will be awarded a safety (2-points) and receive the ball at their own 10-yard line.
* No penalty can be enforced for a loss of yards greater than half the distance to the offense’s goal line.

**PASSING**

Backward and lateral passes are allowed behind the line of scrimmage.

It is an illegal forward pass when the passer releases the ball from beyond the line of scrimmage. Both of the passer’s feet must be behind the line of scrimmage to constitute a legal forward pass.

There is a 7-second pass clock for the Quarterback. If a pass is not thrown in that time, the play is declared dead and a loss of down occurs.

All players are eligible receivers.

**RUNNING**

The quarterback is allowed to run the ball.

Any offensive lineman in the tackled box cannot be handed the ball.

The snap must completely leave the center’s hands.

No forward pitches or handoffs beyond the line of scrimmage.

**BLOCKING**

Blocking is allowed anywhere on the field.

Blockers must be on their feet at all times while blocking.

**Initial contact must be with the hands and elbows must be bent.**

Blockers are not allowed to extend their arms or elbows to initiate or complete a block.

**FLAG PULLING RULES**

A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.

Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold, trip, or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.

It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier’s possession at any time.

A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is 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.

**FORMATIONS**

An offensive team must have a minimum of three players on the line of scrimmage. The players on the line of scrimmage are not required to be in linemen positions (inside the tackles).

The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

One player at a time may go in motion 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage. The player in motion can run parallel or away from the line of scrimmage. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.

Offensive players must come to a complete stop before the ball is snapped except for the player in motion.

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.

The Center must snap the ball with a continuous motion between their legs to a player in the backfield. The ball must completely leave the Center’s hands.

**RUSHING THE PASSER RULES**

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. A maximum of two players can rush the Quarterback during a play. Players not rushing the Quarterback may defend on or beyond the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball is passed, handed off, pitched, or the Quarterback fakes a handoff or a pitch, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

A fake handoff is defined as the quarterback must extend their arms and appearing to hand off or pitch the ball to a teammate. A teammate must be in the general area of the fake handoff or pitch.

The official will designate a Rush Line, 7 yards beyond the line of scrimmage. The defensive rushers should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

A legal rush is any rush from a point 7 yards beyond the line of scrimmage or a rush from anywhere on the field after the ball has been handed off by the Quarterback, or the Quarterback fakes a handoff or pitch.

If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset, and then legally rush the Quarterback

If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off, pitched, or a pitch or handoff is faked before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally pursue the ball carrier behind the line of scrimmage.

An Illegal rush penalty may be called if:

* The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass
* Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped.
* Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, handed off, pitched, or a pitch or handoff is faked.
* Teams are not required to identify their rusher(s) before the play, however if they do send a rusher, the rusher must check with the official to ensure they are lined up at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
* The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, handed off, pitched, or a pitch or handoff is faked.

Rushers must go for the Quarterback’s flags while they are still in possession of the ball. Anyone can bat a ball in flight that has completely left the passer’s hand. **Defenders cannot contact the QB’s arm at any time.**

A sack occurs if the Quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the ball was when the flag is pulled.