

FOOTBALL (FLAG) RULES

Game Play Rules:

- 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.
- 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.
- Only seven (7) offensive and defensive players on a field at a time. (7v7)
- No coaches are allowed on the field during game play.
 - Exception: 7-8 is allowed one coach on the field. The coach must be at least 10 yards behind the deepest player in the formation on offense and defense along with absolutely no talking to or positioning of players once they break the huddle.

Offensive Rules:

- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has (4) plays to the midfield line. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to score or reach the line to gain, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- 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.
- 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. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - 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.
 - The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled
 - The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored
 - The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
 - The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
 - The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.
- 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.

Quarterback/Throwing Rules:

- The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
- 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. “Center sneak” play is not allowed.

- The Quarterback is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
- Absolutely NO laterals of any kind.
- Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
 - a. Spinning is allowed, but players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
- 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.
- 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.
- No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
- Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
- Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction.
- On offense once the ball is snapped the official will do a (7) second count off and if the quarterback does not release the ball by the end of that count the play is blown dead. This will result in a loss of down.
- Quarterbacks may not advance the ball past the line of scrimmage even if the defensive team is rushing.
- All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
 - The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed (loss of down), and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
- If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.
- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- 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.
- The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion. Players may side snap the ball.
- 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 toward the line of scrimmage.
 - 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.
- A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
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- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

Defensive Rules:

- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
 - Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.
- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- A flat cone, 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 legal rush is:
 - Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - 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.
 - 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 new ball carrier.
 - A penalty may be called if:
 - 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 first down).
 - Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5 yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
 - 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 first down).
 - Special circumstances:
 - Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
 - Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
- 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.
- 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 or 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.
 - The offense cannot block the rusher in any way.
- 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 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 or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- 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.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

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

Penalties:

- **Defensive Spot Fouls**
 - Defensive pass interference - automatic first down
 - Holding - automatic first down
 - Stripping +10 yards and automatic first down
- **Offensive Spot Fouls**
 - Screening, blocking, or running with the ball carrier -10 yards and loss of down
 - Charging -10 yards and loss of down
 - Flag guarding -10 yards and loss of down
- **Defensive Penalties**
 - Defensive unnecessary roughness +10 yards and automatic first down
 - Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct +10 yards and automatic first down
 - Offside +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - Illegal rush (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - Illegal flag pull (before the receiver has the ball) +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - Roughing the passer +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - Taunting +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- **Offensive Penalties**
 - Offensive unnecessary roughness -10 yards and loss of down
 - Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct -10 yards and loss of down
 - Offside / false start -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
 - Illegal forward pass (any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)
 - Offensive pass interference -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
 - Illegal motion (more than one person moving) -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
 - Delay of game -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
 - Impeding the rusher -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

(Tournament Rules)

Uniforms:

Teams must wear reversible jerseys with one side being a dark color (No Grey Jerseys) and the other white. Must have a number on the back.

- All players must wear complete uniforms that include the same team jersey.
- Molded rubber cleats.
- Black shorts with no pockets, zippers, or buttons.
- 3 flag belts.

Equipment:

- All teams will be equipped with flags and belts from the Tournament Site Director.
- Each player must have a mouthpiece to play.

Flag Footballs:

Footballs will be provided by the host Tournament Director (these balls or equivalent):

7 & 8 Wilson K-2

9 & 10 Wilson TDJ

11 & 12 Wilson TDY

Time:

- The length of flag football games of all age divisions will be two (2) twenty (20) minute halves. The clock will run continuously except for the last two (2) minutes of each half where it will be a regulation tackle football clock (stop on out of bounds, incomplete pass, timeout, or touchdown).
- Once the ball is spotted, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- Each team has two 30-second timeout per half.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. In the event of an injury.

Field:

- The field dimensions are 40 yards by 80 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones precede the midfield and end zone lines by 5 yards.
- No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones, teams cannot run the ball in any fashion - all plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
- Adequately lighted fields, scoreboard, spectator seating, restrooms, and a concession area should be provided by the host site.

Scoring

- Touchdown: six (6) points.
- PAT (point after touchdown) one (1) point (5-yard line) pass only, or two (2) points (10-yard line) run or pass. 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 charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
- Safety: 2 points - A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone or a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the 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.

- Overtime 5-yard one play pass