

Flag Football Rules

Gameplay Basics

- The maximum number of players for a game will be 7 v 7 and one coach will be permitted to be on the field for all age divisions.
- Possession will be determined by a coin toss by the referee. The winning team may elect to start on offense or defense.
- The offensive team will start out on the 5-yard line of their choice.
- The game will be two 24-minute half and the clock will only stop on water breaks, halftime, injuries, timeouts, and at refs' discretion 5-minute half time, 1 minute water break.
- Teams will have four downs to reach the first down line (midfield) and then will be awarded an additional four downs to score a touchdown after successfully crossing the first down line.
- There is one timeout allowed per half.
- Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra point:
 - Ug League: The extra point will be run from the 5-yard line. A conversion on a run play will be awarded 1 point and a conversion on a pass play will be awarded 2 points.
 - U11 and U14 League: The extra point can be a run or pass play from either the 5-yard line (1 point) or the 10-yard line (2 points)
- Safety: 2 points. The scoring team will also receive possession on its own 5-yard line.

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Offensive Basics

Prior to Snap

- A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap, this includes wide receiver and offensive lineman.
- Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped.
- Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete possession of the ball.
- A low-profile field cone or beanbag may be used to mark the line of scrimmage.

Running the Football

- The quarterback may only run the ball if they are rushed.
- Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Multiple handoffs may be used. After the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, handoffs and laterals are not permitted.
- A quarterback may immediately pitch or lateral the ball after receiving the ball (i.e., one motion).
- The 5 yards leading toward the touchdown are no-run zones. For the older age divisions, U11 and U14 there will be a 5 yard no rush zone leading up to the first down line.
- A player receiving a handoff or immediate pitch can pass the ball (halfback pass) from behind the line of scrimmage.
- A ball carrier may not dive. A dive will result in a penalty.
- The ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football.

Blocking

- There is blocking allowed, however, all blocking must be done according to the following standards:
 - Blocking must be done with hands down either in front, as in a basketball screen, to the side, or behind the back. The hands can not be extended out in any direction from the blocker.
 - Blocking must not involve any contact with the defender
 - Blocking downfield must not be done prior to the football being thrown on a pass play.

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Receiving the Football

- All players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or immediate pitch.)
- A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football while having at least one foot in bounds.
- If a player catches a pass with his knee(s) on the ground, the play is dead, and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion.

Passing the Football

- All forward passes must be caught beyond the line of scrimmage. Shovel passes are allowed but must be caught beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). A handoff, pitch, or forced quarterback scramble will end the 7-second pass count.

Dead Balls

- The ball should be spotted in the middle of the field for every play in accordance with the spot the ball carrier was marked "down".

Play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out. If the player is on a break-away (determined by referee) and a flag falls out, the play will not be stopped.
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- The ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- Delay of game.
- A touchdown or safety is scored.
- A pass falls incomplete.
- At the point of an interception.
- The ball hits the ground as a fumble. The ball will be spotted at the point of the fumble, and it will be considered a loss of down. One exception to this rule is with the center/quarterback exchange. If a snap is mishandled, the quarterback may pick up the ball and continue play.

Punting

On any down a team may elect to "punt" by forfeiting the ball at the opposing team's 5-yard line.

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Defensive Basics

- Teams may run man-to-man or zone defenses.
- Interceptions may not be returned (except for the U14 league where they can return an interception). Change of possession will be awarded at the point of the interception or the spot of the ball after a 4th down attempt.

Rushing the Passer

- All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 7-yard rush line.
- Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off or pitched, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier.

Penalties

Referees will call all penalties.

If a penalty happens near the end zone where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.

Defense

- **Encroachment:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal rushing:** (enforced when players start rushing from inside the 7-yard rush line): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Interference:** The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- **Roughing the passer:** The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- **Illegal contact:** (pulling the jersey, holding, blocking, pushing, tackling): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal flag pull:** (before the receiver catches the football): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.

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Offense

- **Illegal motion:** (more than one person moving): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal formation:** (false start, not enough men on the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Illegal pass:** (a pass is caught behind the line of scrimmage or thrown after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of down.
- **Delay of game (40 sec. max):** The first instance is a verbal warning. The second instance the penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Shielding/blocking:** (a contact block in which the blockers hands are not behind there back or in front of them, similar to a basketball screen): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and replay of down.
- **Illegal run (excluding U9):** a running play in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage, unless he is rushed by a defensive player: the penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Intentional grounding:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Offensive pass interference:** (illegal pick play, pushing a defender): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- **Flag guarding:** (intentional or unintentional use of the arm to prevent the flag from being pulled): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and replay of down.
- **Illegal use of the hands:** (stiff-arming, hand batting): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and replay of down.
- **Diving:** (intentional): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and replay of down.