



NFL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

WITH MODIFICATION (*)



GAME

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.

2. 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.

3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.

If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.

Offensive Teams MUST declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt", when asked by the referee and prior to the 'Ready for Play'.

Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.

If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration.

If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line

4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense

EQUIPMENT

Teams are expected to provide their own footballs and flag belts.

Flag Belts: Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as the shorts or pants.

Footballs: PEE WEE SIZE BALL 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th / Junior Size Ball 5th & 6th

Mouth guards are required, soft shell helmets are not required but recommended.

FIELD

field dimensions for this tournament for all division is as follows:

***25 yards wide by 64 yards long with two seven-yard endzones.**

Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

***TIMING AND OVERTIME**

1. Game time is forfeit time
2. Games are played on a 24-minute continuous clock with (2) 12-minute halves unless one team gains a 30-point advantage at any time (Mercy Rule), which will then end the game. No PAT attempts after 28-point advantage.
3. Clock stops only for timeouts or injuries at the official's discretion.
4. Halftime is 2 minutes
5. 30 second play clock when each play ends. (not when the ball has been spotted)
6. Offense is responsible for retrieving the football after every play and spotting the ball.
7. Each team has (2) two 30-second timeouts per game.
8. Clock will be stop for injuries and injured player must be removed for at least one play.

Overtime Format

Home team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.

If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime.

This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.

Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team.

Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.

If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.

Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line

Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5 yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner.

The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.

All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.

There are no timeouts.

Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points

LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.

2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone.

A. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.

3. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground in the field of play.

4. 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.

5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

6. Any official can whistle the play dead.

7. Play is ruled “dead” when:

a. The ball hits the ground. i. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.

b. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.

c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.

d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.

e. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.

f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.

g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).

h. The 7 second pass clock expires.

i. Inadvertent whistle

j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning or to avoid a downed player on the field of play.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball becomes a dead ball. (If the ball is fumbled forwards then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession.

8. If inadvertent whistle occurs the offense has two options:

A) take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed

B) replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

9. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

10. Officials should all agree in order to change a call on the field that is in dispute

RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.

3. 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.

a. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.

b. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. c.

c. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.

4. Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind.

5. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

6. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.

7. Spinning/Jump Cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. a. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.

8. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage.

9. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.

10. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
 11. 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.
 12. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 13. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
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PASSING

1. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.
 - a. There is no intentional grounding
 - b. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.
 - c. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage
 2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 3. 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 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.
 - a. 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 (LOS).
 - b. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.
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RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
 2. 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.
 3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
 4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
 5. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.
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RUSHING THE PASSER

1. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. A special marker, 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. A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - b. A penalty may be called if:
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
 - iii. iv. 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).
 - iv. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.
 4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
 5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. 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.
 6. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled. a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.
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FLAG PULLING

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
 2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
 3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
 4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
 5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
 6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
 7. 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, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.
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FORMATIONS

1. 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.
 - a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.
 - b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
 2. 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.
 3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.
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UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. 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 considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
 2. Offensive or confrontational language is NOT allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.
 3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
 4. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
 5. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED
 6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
 - 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.
 7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
 - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
 - b. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.
 - c. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.
 8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties: a. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down b. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.
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PENALTIES

1. The referee will call all penalties.
 2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
 3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
 4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
 5. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it. 6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
 7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
 8. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)
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ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference Automatic first down	Defensive pass interference Automatic first down
Holding +5 yards and automatic first down	Holding +5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping +10 yards and automatic first down	Stripping +10 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening, blocking or running with the ball -10 yards and loss of down	Screening, blocking or running with the ball -10 yards and loss of down
Charging -10 yards and loss of down	Charging -10 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding -10 yards and loss of down	Flag guarding -10 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness +10 yards and automatic first down	Defensive unnecessary roughness +10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct +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	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 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	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	Roughing the passer +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down	Taunting +5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness -10 yards and loss of down	Offensive unnecessary roughness -10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct -10 yards and loss of down	Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct -10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start	Offside / false start
Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage) -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down	Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage) -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down	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	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	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	Impeding the rusher -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down	Illegal Procedure -5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

***1ST & 2ND GRADE DIVISION ONLY**

1. 'No Run' zones are eliminated. Teams may run the ball anywhere on the field.
 2. Defenders may NOT rush the passer unless there is a legal handoff executed in the backfield.
 3. One Coach for each team is permitted on the field pre-snap to help their players but **MUST** be 10 yards behind LOS when the huddle breaks and prior to the snap of the ball.
 4. If the ball falls to the ground during the initial center to quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a 'Do Over' with no loss of down, once per down. On a second consecutive occurrence, the down is consumed.
 5. Defenders **MUST** line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
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COACH AND SPECTATOR CONDUCT/RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches, family members, parents, and spectators are required to observe the contest from designated areas.
3. Coaches must agree to sign a coach's code of conduct and strictly adhere to our guidelines for coach conduct and attitude.
 - a. If a coach displays any type of negativity toward his or her players, coaches or staff, the coach will be removed from the field immediately and unable to coach for the remainder of the tournament. This will be explained in greater detail at the coaches meeting prior to the tournament. Coaches are responsible for their players and any spectators associated with their team.
4. All family members, parents and spectators will observe play from the designated areas. Participants, coaches, parents and family members must conduct themselves appropriately during tournaments.
5. Inappropriate, rude or confrontational behavior by any coach, team or parent(s) may lead to a team's disqualification from a tournament at the sole discretion of NFL FLAG.
6. Misconduct by any individual may lead to removal from the premises at the sole discretion of NFL FLAG. Officials, at their discretion, may enforce unsportsmanlike penalties on the TEAM/Coach for such behavior. Two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties on any Coach or player is disqualification from that game.
7. No team coolers or outside food/drinks allowed in gated area.