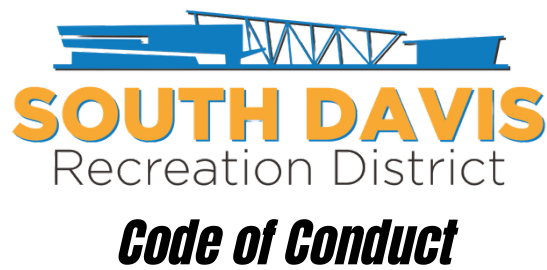


YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULEBOOK

1st-9th Grade Levels

Revised 3/17/2026





For Parents:

- Support your child with positivity and respect.
- Show good sportsmanship toward all players, coaches, officials, and parents.
- Avoid abusive language, taunting, or negative comments.
- Respect coaches' and officials' decisions; raise concerns respectfully through proper channels.
- Help foster a safe, inclusive space free from bullying or discrimination.

For Coaches:

- Prioritize athlete well-being and development.
- Lead with fairness, respect, and sportsmanship.
- Create a supportive environment focused on learning and enjoyment.
- Communicate clearly and professionally with players and families.
- Ensure safety and follow all relevant guidelines.

For Players:

- Respect teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and spectators.
- Play by the rules and compete with integrity.
- Handle wins and losses with grace and a growth mindset.
- Share concerns respectfully with coaches or trusted adults.
- Promote teamwork and avoid bullying or discrimination.

For Referees:

- Officiate fairly and consistently, upholding the rules of the game.
- Treat all participants with respect and professionalism.
- Maintain composure and neutrality, even under pressure.
- Communicate clearly and calmly when needed.
- Support a safe and respectful playing environment.

For Everyone:

- **HAVE FUN!!!**

This code of conduct should be communicated to all participants and their families at the beginning of each season, and it should be consistently enforced to ensure a positive and respectful sports environment for everyone involved.

Game Play Rules

I. Game

- Games will be played 7v7.
 - Minimum of 5 players are required to start the game.
- At the start of each game, both teams will meet the referee at mid field to discuss the game rules, get checked on their equipment, and introduce themselves to each other.
- The listed home team via quickscores.com (first team listed) will start the game with possession. They can choose to defer possession if they would like. Visiting team chooses direction.
 - At the start of the second half the team that did not start the game with possession will get the ball.
 - Teams change directions after the first half.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and will have 4 downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield they will have an additional 4 downs to score a touchdown.
 - If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after 3 downs they have the ability to elect to “PUNT” the ball on 4th down. If they elect to punt the ball, the possession of the ball changes and the opposing team will start a new possession from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross midfield, the opposing team will start a new possession from the spot where 4th down ended.
 - Any time there is a ‘PUNT or PLAY’ decision on 4th down, the referee WILL ask the offense’s Head Coach to declare ‘Punt or Play’. The coach will be given 10-seconds and **MUST** make an immediate decision or risk a delay of game penalty.
 - Once a PUNT is declared, possession immediately changes. If a team declared to PLAY, they may change to a PUNT by calling a timeout prior to the expiration of the play clock.
 - After crossing midfield, if the offense fails to score after 4th down, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts at its own 5-yard line.

II. Equipment

- All Players must wear official NFL FLAG jersey, belts and flags, shoes (cleats preferred). Gloves and mouth guard (optional).
- All players must wear closed toed shoes. Preferably tennis shoes or football cleats.
 - If a player elects to wear football cleats the spikes must NOT be metal.
 - **Crocs or sandals are not allowed**, and player will not be allowed to play until he/she changes shoes.
- Players must remove all jewelry including necklaces, earrings, wristbands, rings, etc. If these items cannot be removed, they must be taped or covered.
- Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. However, braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- Players may wear sunglasses but they must be secured at ALL times while on the field. Multiple infractions of sunglasses falling off will result in a Delay of Game penalty.
- All players must tuck their jerseys into their shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
 - **Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as the players shorts or pants.**
 - Multiple infractions of untucked jerseys will result in a Delay of Game penalty.
 - It is strongly recommended for players to wear shorts that DO NOT have pockets. This is to eliminate injury to fingers or hands when defensive players reach for their flag.

Equipment cont.

- NFL FLAG footballs will be provided.
- 1st-2nd grade will use a Mini size football (Red)
- 3rd-4th grade will use a Pee Wee size football (Blue)
- 5th-8th grade will use a Junior size football (Brown)

III. Fields

- There will be one field size for all grade levels. 60yds long X 25yds wide with two 7-yard endzones. **Field dimensions are depicted on page 11 of this rulebook.**
- Stepping on or past the boundary lines indicated by the cones and or lines on each field is considered out of bounds.
- No-run zones are indicated by the painted lines 5-yards before the midfield point and the end zones.
 - No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zone, teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
 - Each offensive team approaches up to TWO no-run zones in each drive.

IV. Timing and Overtime

- Games will consist of two 18 minute halves and a 3 minute halftime break. Running clock except for the final 2 minutes of the second half. Clock runs without stopping in the first half (other than during timeouts).
 - In the final 2 minutes of the second half; clock stops on incomplete passes, out of bounds, change of possession, penalty, momentarily on first downs, and during PAT's. The clock only stops for timeouts prior to the last 2 minutes of the second half.
 - If the Mercy Rule has been applied during the game, the clock will run and not stop for the last two minutes of the game. (See on page 5).
- Each time the ball is spotted, the referee will indicate 'Ready for Play' by whistling. Offensive teams MUST wait for the referee to whistle before starting their play, and the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball from that point (teams will receive a 15 second warning).
- **Officials may stop the clock at their discretion.**
- Each team will have ONE 60 second timeout **per half**. These timeouts will not carry over into overtime.

Overtime format is as follows:

- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, overtime periods will be used to determine a winner.
- Visiting team will determine who has possession first. The team who wins can elect to be on offense or defense first.
- Overtime periods will be decided by PAT attempts (Point after touchdown). Each team will be given ONE chance to try for a 1pt conversion (from the 5-yard line - PASS ONLY) or 2pt conversion (from the 10-yard line - RUN or PASS). Coaches must indicate to the referee(s) if they are going for 1pt or 2pt. Once that decision is made and given to the referee, it cannot be changed.
- If at the end of the first OT the score is still tied, the home team will be given the option to be on offense or defense first for the second OT.

IV. Timing and Overtime cont.

- If a third OT is reached - 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.
- The Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored in the overtime periods.
- All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- There are no timeouts in overtime. Each team will be afforded one (1) 'coaches challenge' for the entire overtime session. Challenge MUST be a misapplication of a rule, NOT a judgement call by an official.
- Interceptions are returnable for a score in OT and are worth 2 points.
 - Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over.
 - Interceptions advanced in the third overtime period, the game is over.

V. Scoring

- Touchdowns are scored when the offensive player passes through their endzone with all of their flags still attached.
- **Touchdown:** 6 points
- **PAT:** There are two options for PAT attempts.
 - 1pt conversion: 5 yards (pass play only)
 - 2pt conversion: 10 yards (run or pass play)
 - After scoring a touchdown, the coach must declare whether they wish to attempt a 1pt conversion or a 2pt conversion. This decision, once given to the referee(s), is final and cannot be changed.
- **Safety:** 2 points
 - A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own endzone. They can be called down when their flag is pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, knee touches the ground, the offensive player drops or fumbles the ball, or an offensive penalty occurs inside of the end zone. All these infractions must occur in the opponents end zone.
- **Mercy Rule**
 - When a team is up by 35 points or more, the team in the lead will begin all of their possessions at their 5-yard line (except in the case of an interception). If the team that is up by 35 or more scores a touchdown, they will not get the chance to go for any extra points.
 - The clock will run and not stop for the last two minutes of the game.

VI. Coaching

- Coaches are expected to adhere to the rules, guidelines, and code of conduct.
- Coaches are permitted to coach on the sideline (see page 11 for grade based guidelines).
 - 1st-4th grades: One coach for each team is permitted on the field pre and post snap to help their players, but post snap at a safe distance to plays completion. Only the head coach can talk to the referees.
 - 5th-8th grades: Only the head coach for each team is allowed a few steps on the field to relay a play during dead ball. Only the head coach can talk to the referees. Coaches can receive a penalty if they impede a play.
- All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team parents, fans, etc. are required to remain off the playing field in the designated league viewing area.
- Coaches are responsible for their fans' conduct and behavior plus any other associated team members in their designated team area.
- **Coaches are to coach the kids NOT coach the refs.**

VII. Live/Dead Ball

- The ball is considered live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- The official before the ball is ready for play will pace out 10 yards marking the rush line.
- Substitutions may be made during any dead ball.
- A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or body part (other than the hand) contacts the ground in the field of play with full control of the ball.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - The Ball hits the ground. (see grade specific section for additional clarification)
 - The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - The ball carrier's flag falls out.
 - The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - There is a touchdown, PAT, or safety scored.
 - The ball carrier's knee, shin, leg, forearm, or arm hits the ground.
 - The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flags.
 - The 7-second pass clock expires.
 - Ball carrier leaves their feet to dive, jump, or hurdle a player.
 - Inadvertent whistle:
 - If an inadvertent whistle occurs, the team in possession has two options:
 - Take the ball where the whistle blew and the down will count.
 - 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.
- A team is allowed to use a timeout to respectfully question an official's rule interpretation. If the official ruling is deemed 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. **If a team or coach questions a call in a disrespectful way, referees may review and overturn the call at their discretion. Miscalls happen, but there is no reason to be disrespectful to our referees or staff in a 1st–8th grade recreational league.**

VIII. Running

- The ball is spotted where the **forward foot of the runner** is when the flag is pulled.
- The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the Line of Scrimmage at any age level. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center directly or in shotgun formation.
- Direct handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead by the official. The ball shall be placed at the spot of the ball when the lateral took place.
 - “Center Sneak” play is NOT allowed. the QB may NOT handoff, pitch, or lateral the ball first to the center.
 - Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch, or lateral 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, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occurred, the 7-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Teams are not allowed to run in the ‘NO RUN ZONES’ - (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).
- Runners are not permitted to dive, jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials' judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead and the ball spotted where the dive, jump, leap or hurdle occurred.
- Ball carriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player. The play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, illegal contact is made, a penalty may be enforced by the official.
- No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.
- 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.
- Flag obstruction - All jerseys MUST be tucked into their shorts before the play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed or tampered flags will be considered flag guarding.
- Once the ball is advanced beyond the Line of Scrimmage, the current ball-carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.

IX. Passing

- Only 1 forward pass, thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, is permitted each offensive play. The ball must be released prior to crossing the line of scrimmage. There can be unlimited backward passes behind the line of scrimmage.
 - There is no intentional grounding penalty. The quarterback may throw the ball anywhere across the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack.
 - All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. All forward passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed and must be a forward pass, from behind the line of scrimmage, and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a 7 second “pass clock.” If the QB does not get rid of the ball within 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down counts and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, 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 and it will be the next down.
 - If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

X. Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
- A player must have at least one foot or other body part other in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
 - If a player has clear possession of the ball, a player on the opposite team may not swipe at the ball to make them lose control.
- Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regulation, the score will be worth six points, and two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.

XI. Rushing the passer

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped (yardage will be marked by the official with a special marker/cone each play).
 - Up to **TWO** players on the defending team can rush the quarterback. **Rushers MUST identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap AND be acknowledged by the official.** Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
 - Rushers **MUST** rush the passer immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is not permitted. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
 - **1st-2nd grade division: Defenders may not rush the passer.**
 - Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled backwards behind the line of scrimmage, all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to defend and pull the flag.

XI. Rushing the passer cont.

- **A legal rush is:**

- Any rush by the 1 or 2 designated rushers, 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off, pitched, or lateraled by the quarterback.

- **A penalty may be called if:**

- The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, pitch, lateral or pass – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- Any defensive player crossed the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped- Encroachment (5-yards from the 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, pitched, lateraled or handed off - Illegal Rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- If the offense draws the identified rusher(s) across the 10 yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, the rusher(s) CANNOT legally rush. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to a handoff, pitch, lateral or forward pass.

- **Teams are never required to rush the quarterback with the 7 second clock in effect.**

- Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, ANY contact to the QB, unless rules incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- The offense cannot impede the defensive rusher(s) 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.** If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offensive player’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down).
 - 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.
- A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where the runner’s forward foot is when the flag is pulled.
 - A safety (2 points) is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.
 - If a safety occurs, then the team that scored the 2-points will then receive possession on their 5-yard line.
 - The runner’s forward foot must be inside the endzone line when their flag is pulled for it to be considered a safety.

XII. Flag Pulling

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders cannot dive, tackle, trip, hold, or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. Any of these will result in a defensive unnecessary roughness penalty (+10 yards and automatic first down).
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
- 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.
- If a player who has one or no flags in the belt and takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
- 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 their jersey.
- If the runner's arm gets in the way of the defender pulling the flag while the runner is in a natural running motion with their arms, that may not be deemed flag guarding and is up to the discretion of the official(s) based on what they feel the player's intention was.

XIII. Formations

- Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center). The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
- Movement simulating the snap, by a player who is set, is considered a false start.
- The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs or from their side to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands. The center must snap the ball from the ground. **The first player to touch the ball from the snap is deemed the quarterback.**
- Only one player is allowed in motion when the ball is snapped. The player **MUST** be in motion, off the line of scrimmage. All motion must be parallel or backwards to the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- Players may shift positions on offense at any time, all players must still reset for 1 second, prior to the snap.

XIV. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- If the field supervisor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player(s) involved will receive an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. A referee timeout will be taken, all players will be asked to go to their teams sideline, and referees on the field will come together to discuss the penalty. If an ejection is warranted, the Head Referee will make that decision. The individual(s) ejected will be asked to leave the fields immediately. The Field Supervisor may also be involved in that decision if necessary.
- Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official at any time.
- All parents, coaches, players, and referees must adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times.
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalties:
 - Two unsportsmanlike penalties on any player, coach, or fan in a game is automatic disqualification from that game and may lead to additional discipline.

XV. Penalties

Defensive Spot Fouls	
Defensive pass Interference	Automatic first down
Holding/Illegal Contact	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down
Offensive Spot Fouls	
Screening or blocking	-5 yards and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag Guarding	-5 yards and loss of down
Holding/Illegal Contact	-5 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 / illegal substitution	+5 yards from LOS and automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush inside 10-yard marker)	+5 yards from LOS and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from LOS and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from LOS and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from LOS 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 / illegal substitutions	-5 yards from LOS and loss of down
Illegal forward pass	-5 yards from LOS and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from LOS and loss of down
Illegal motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from LOS and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from LOS and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from LOS and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from LOS and loss of down
Taunting	-5 yards from LOS and loss of down

XVI. Penalties Cont.

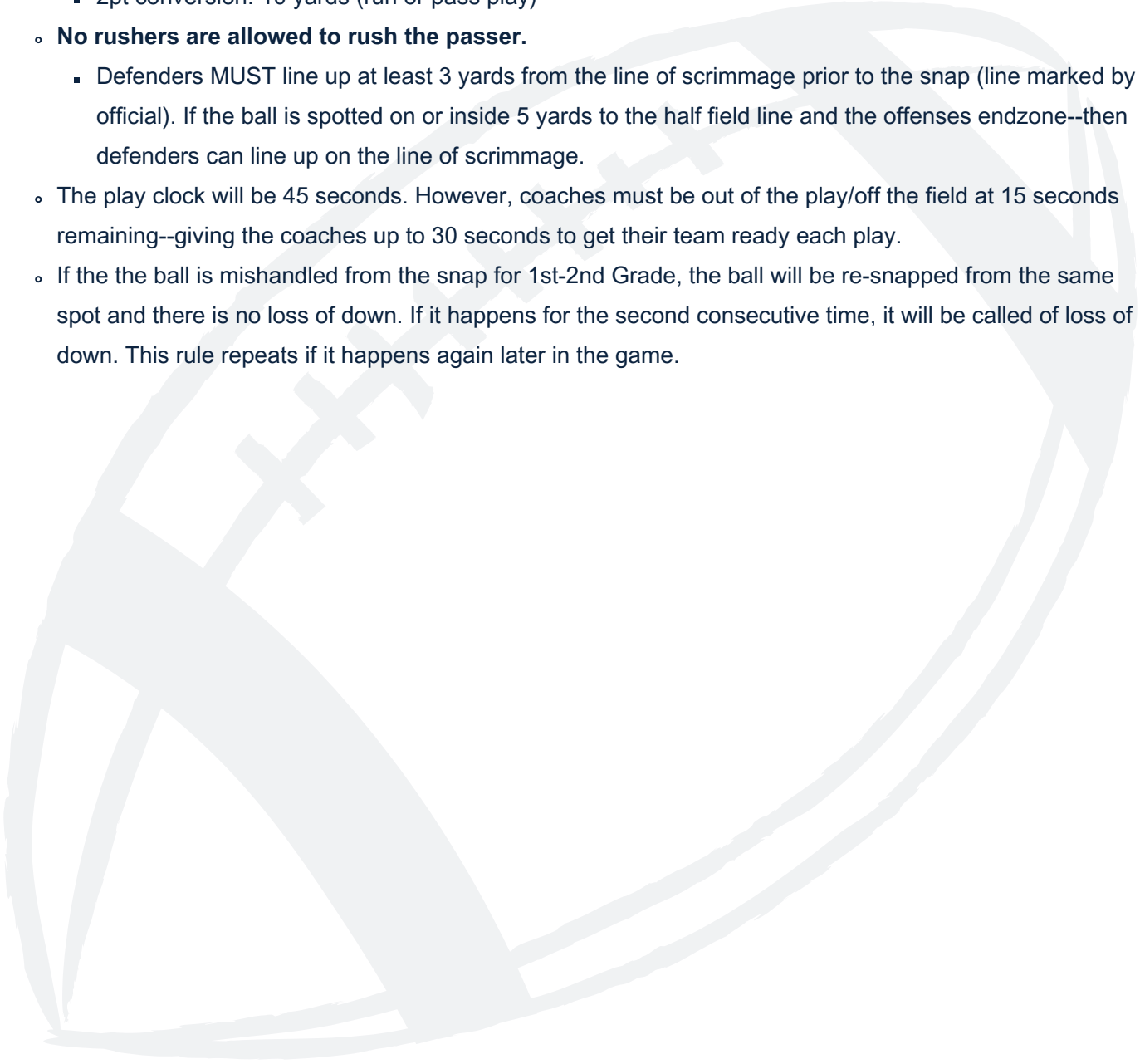
- General
 - The game officials' will administer all penalties.
 - The officials will determine incidental contact that may result from the normal run of play.
 - All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
 - Only the teams head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.
 - Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
 - Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
 - Spot fouls administered in the end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down) / Offensive (Safety)
- **Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.**

XVII. Weather Cancellations

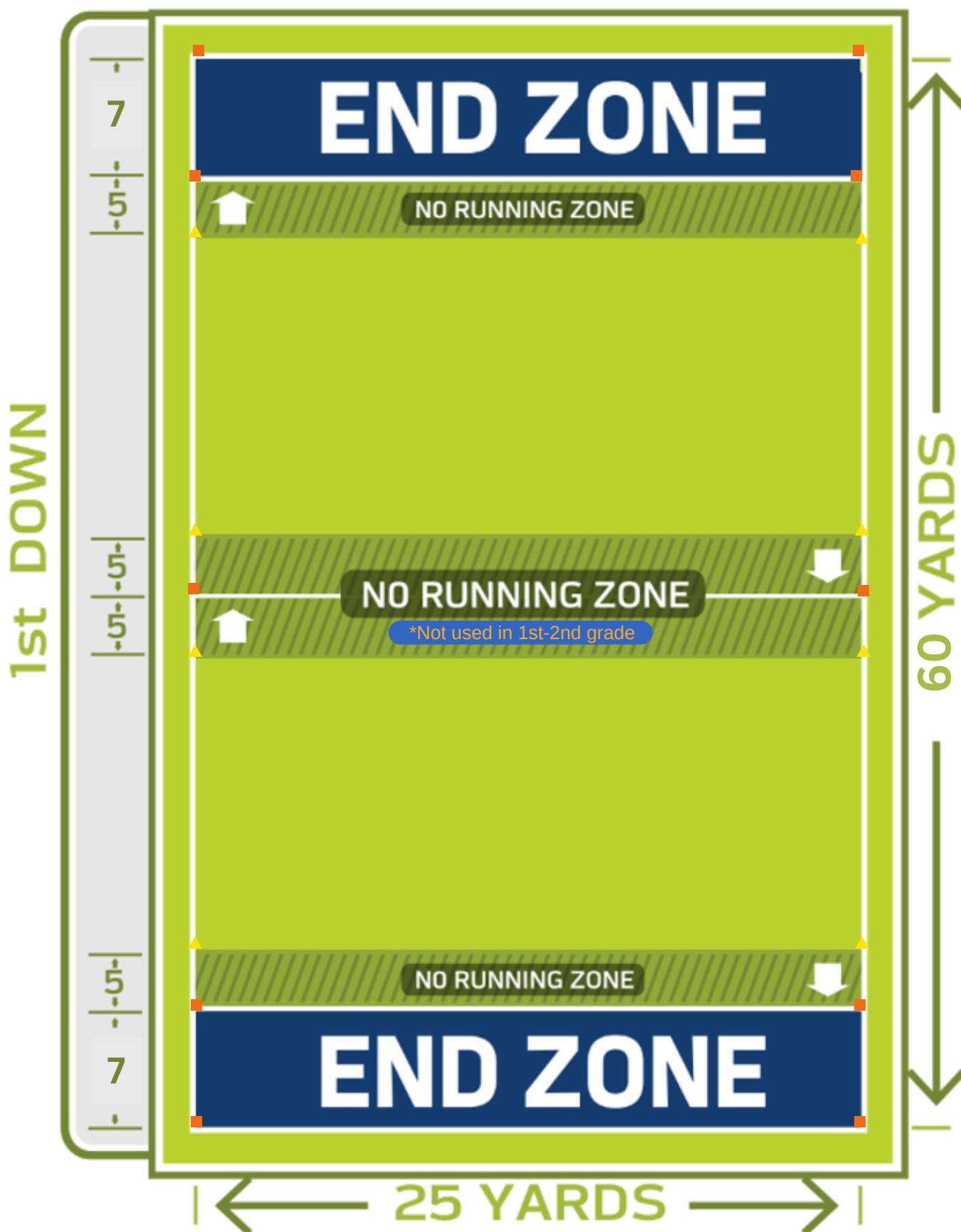
- In case of inclement weather, cancellations will be decided by the referees, field supervisors, and league coordinator after collaboration.
- If there are 2 lightning strikes within 15 minutes of each other, and in close radius of the fields, games will be cancelled.
- In most cases, we will still play in rainy or windy conditions, unless it is causing large disruptions in the games being played.
- On any games that are cancelled **after** halftime, those games will not be rescheduled to a later date.
- On any games that are cancelled **before** halftime, those game will be rescheduled to a later date.
- The league coordinator will do their best to reschedule games on the same night that grade level typically plays during the season, but dependent on other cancellations and field availability, games may be rescheduled on different nights than was is normally scheduled. Special accommodations will not be made for individual teams unless deemed necessary by the league coordinator.

XVIII. Grade Specific Rules

1st-2nd Grade

- Games will be played 7v7.
 - 'No Run' zones are eliminated. Teams may run anywhere on the field, even for extra point attempts after a touchdown.
 - 1pt conversion: 5 yards (run or pass play)
 - 2pt conversion: 10 yards (run or pass play)
 - **No rushers are allowed to rush the passer.**
 - Defenders MUST line up at least 3 yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap (line marked by official). If the ball is spotted on or inside 5 yards to the half field line and the offenses endzone--then defenders can line up on the line of scrimmage.
 - The play clock will be 45 seconds. However, coaches must be out of the play/off the field at 15 seconds remaining--giving the coaches up to 30 seconds to get their team ready each play.
 - If the the ball is mishandled from the snap for 1st-2nd Grade, the ball will be re-snapped from the same spot and there is no loss of down. If it happens for the second consecutive time, it will be called of loss of down. This rule repeats if it happens again later in the game.
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Field Dimensions



Field Locations

West Bountiful Elementary Fields

(all games)



NFL Flag Drills



NFL Flag Playbook

