

Field Sports Outdoor Flag Football Rules

I. All captains are responsible for:

- a. All team fees turned in before registration deadlines
- b. Only allowing players on the field who have paid all fees in full, and all names of players listed on roster; No roster changes can be made after the start of the third game

II. Number of players and league type description:

- a. Each team is allowed a maximum of 5 players on the field at one time; each team's roster can have 12 players during current season.
- b. *Men's Divisions* will consist of any male 18 years or older.
- c. All teams may start with 4 players; Teams may play with only 3 if injury or disqualification of team members occurs.

III. Equipment Rules:

- a. All games will be played with Field Sports football. Teams are not permitted to use their own ball. Unless approved by officials.
- b. Baseball caps are illegal.
- c. Cleats are permitted. No metal spikes. Detachable metal tip cleats are permitted
- d. No jewelry can be worn during game play. This includes and is not limited to: Watches, earrings, rings, and necklaces; facial/body piercing must be covered with band aid or other adhesive strip.
- e. All players must wear pants or shorts without belt loops, exposed drawstrings, exposed knots and pockets. Pants or shorts must be of a different color than flags. Taping pockets, loops, and/or drawstrings is prohibited. All Shirts must be tucked into shorts.
- f. Teams must wear matching jerseys or T-shirts, without pockets. If one player does not have their jersey, the captain or co-captain is required to check out mesh pennies for the entire team.
- g. **Legal Optional Equipment:** *Ace Bandages* are no more than two turns thick and anchored with tape only no more than two turns thick. Football gloves may also be worn. All gloves worn must be designed for football use only and have no metal parts and/or abrasive components and approved by the head referee. Headwear must consist of no hard, sharp, abrasive, metal and/or any other material deemed unsafe.
- h. **Illegal Optional Equipment:** Pads and/or braces which consist of metal, plastic or any material deemed unsafe are prohibited. Towels attached at the player's waist or side.

IV. Player Eligibility:

- a. All players on a team must be listed on roster before first game. Any team may add a player by the beginning of the third game. Roster changes are not allowed after the beginning of the third game. Captains may speak with a Field Sports administrator if there are any questions throughout the season.
- b. All team fees must be turned in prior to the registration deadline for the team and the players to be considered eligible.
- c. Any team found to have a player(s) who have falsified or played under an assumed name will have to forfeit the game in which the infraction was noticed and could be subject to league ejection without refund of team fees for that particular session.

V. Periods, Length of game, Substitutions & Time-outs:

- a. Each game will consist of (2) 24-minute halves and a 2-minute halftime period, combined for 48-minute continuous clock. There will be a sudden death 4-minute overtime in playoff/championship game.
- b. Players may substitute freely between downs. Each substituted player must be in uniform, ready to play and with flags in position during time of substitution.
Penalty: illegal substitution, 5 yards.
- c. There must only be 5 people on the field before the snap of the ball.
Penalty: Too many men on the field, 5 yards.
Penalty: Substitution infraction, 5 yards.
- e. Each team will receive (1) 30 second time out per half; time outs do not carry over into the second half. The clock will stop when the timeout is acknowledged by the official. All time outs must be clearly communicated to the Referee, prior to the time out taken.

VI. Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-of-Bounds:

- a. The offense will begin their possession at the 2-point line
- b. The offense has 20 seconds to start the play. The 20 second play clock will begin at the official's discretion by blowing the whistle and announcing, "20 seconds", at this time the offense is permitted to snap the ball.
Penalty: dead ball foul, delay of game, 5 yards.
- c. If a team continues to delay the game after the first delay of game penalty, the next infraction will result in loss of down, with the third infraction resulting in loss of possession.
- d. **In the last 2 minutes of either half, any delay of game that is determined to be an intentional attempt by either team to stall the game, the referees will stop the clock until the beginning of the next play.**
- e. Ball is declared dead when:
 1. A forward pass is incomplete.
 2. A backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground. In case of a fumble, the ball becomes dead at the point where it touches the ground. The ball goes to the team which had last possession. The spot where the ball touches the ground becomes the new line of scrimmage. The offense cannot advance a fumble; the ball will be placed where the ball was fumbled.
 3. A runner has his/her flag belt removed illegally by an opposing player.
Penalty: personal foul, 10 yards.
 4. A snap hits the ground.
 5. The passer is de-flagged before releasing the football.
 6. **Out of Bound:** The red sideline is considered out-of-bound. If the ball carrier steps on or outside the line, the play will be blown dead. Any offensive or defensive player without the ball may step out-of-bounds and be eligible to come back in bounds as an eligible player. Players must have 1 foot in bounds and possession of the ball for the ball to be considered a catch. *Any defensive player who pushes, tackles, trips, or any other unsafe behavior to force the player out-of-bounds will receive an unsportsmanship penalty resulting in automatic first down for the offense and possible ejection for the responsible player(s). Any offensive player who commits similar actions will result in loss of possession and possible ejection.*
 8. Any forward pass that comes in contact with the out-of-bound will be considered incomplete/dead ball.
 9. Any other occurrence when the flag belt is removed or falls off of the ball carrier.
- f. The ball will be spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

VII. Series of Downs, Number of Downs:

- a. There will be (1) possibility for a first down. The center line is the first down line.
- b. Each team has (4) downs to try and advance past the first down or the goal line. Teams may elect to punt on 4th down.

VIII. Kicking the Ball (Punt):

- a. A team may elect to punt the ball on 4th down. All punts must be announced to the referee. Any offensive player may notify the referee of the punt. There are no fake punts allowed; once a team has decided to punt, they must execute the punt.
- b. The ball will be down at the spot if the punt hits the ground or goes out-of-bounds.
- c. The ball will be ruled a touchback if the punt goes into the end zone.
- d. The punt must be executed behind the line of scrimmage within the 20-second play clock.
- e. The defense cannot attempt to de-flag the punter, i.e. no rushing the kicker.
Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.

IX. Snapping, Passing, and Handing of Ball:

- a. **Snapping:** The ball must be snapped between the center's legs. The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the center. Direct snaps are illegal.
Penalty: *Illegal Procedure, 5 yards*
- b. During the snap teams are required to have at least 3 players on the line of scrimmage.
Penalty: *Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.*
- c. Once the center is in position, no player on the offensive team, including the center, shall make a false start. A false start is any movement simulating the start of a play. **Penalty:** *Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot.*
- d. **Encroachment:** After the center has touched the ball, it is considered encroachment for any player to cross the line of scrimmage and/or makes contact with any player on the opposing team.
Penalty: *Encroachment, 5-yard penalty from previous spot.*
- e. Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after the completion of the down. The center is responsible for placing the ball in the center of the field on the offensive line of scrimmage.

- f. All offensive players are to remain motionless for one second prior to the snap of the ball, with the exception of (1) player in motion; moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage. The player in motion is not counted as one of the 3 on the scrimmage line.
Penalty: *Illegal Motion, 5 yards from the previous spot.*
- g. Any offensive player that moves/shifts (other than going legally in motion) must stop for one full second prior to the ball being snapped. Once the center is in position the center is NOT permitted to shift change positions. **Penalty:** *Illegal Shift, 5 yards from previous spot.*
- h. **Legal and Illegal Forward Passes:**
1. If the passer's foot is beyond the scrimmage line when the ball leaves his/her hand.
 2. If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
 3. If a passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass.
 4. If there is more than one forward pass per down.
Penalty for 1-5: *Illegal Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down if by passing team before possession changes during a scrimmage down.*
- i. **Roughing the Passer**
1. **No defensive player cannot make contact with the quarterback unless the contact is deemed incidental while attempting to de-flag the quarterback.**
Penalty: 10 yards from original LOS, automatic first down
- j. **Pass Interference and defensive holding**
1. After the ball is snapped, and until the ball has been touched by a receiver, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the passing teams scrimmage line.
Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.
 2. The defense is permitted to "bump" the offense ONCE within 3 yards of the line of scrimmage. No defensive player may hold or make contact with the offensive player beyond 3 yards.
Penalty: Illegal contact, 5 yards from the previous spot and replay the down.
 3. The offense receiver is not permitted to pick or interfere with the defense during a passing play.
Penalty: Illegal contact, 5 yards from the previous spot and replay the down.
 3. After the ball is thrown, and until it has been touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the passing teams scrimmage line while the ball is in flight
Penalty: 10 yards from the previous spot, automatic first down.
Note: *If the pass interference by either player is intentional or unsportsmanlike, his/her team shall be penalized an additional 10 yards.*

X. Scoring Plays and Touchback:

- a. **End zone is marked by the two pylons.**
- b. **Touchdown:**
1. All Touchdowns are 6 points.
 2. The ball must cross the goal line to be a touchdown before his/her flags are removed.
- c. **Mercy Rule:**
1. **The game will end if one team is ahead of the other team by 19 points or more with 2 minutes remaining in the game.**
- d. **Extra Points (1, 2, or 3 points)**
1. Opportunities for extra points are as follows: 1 point from 4-yard line; 2 points from 8-yard line; 3 points from 12-yard line.
 2. If the defensive team intercepts a pass and returns it past their goal line during a try for 1, they score 1 point; 2 points for any 2-point attempt and 3 points for any 3-point attempt returned.
- e. **Safety**
1. A safety is worth 2 points. The team that records the safety will start possession at the 3-point yard marker.

XI. Rule classifications per League:

- a. **All divisions:**
1. **The defense is allowed to rush the passer at the snap of the offensive snap.**
 - a. Defensive players cannot cross the defensive line-of-scrimmage before the snap. This will be considered offsides.
Penalty: Encroachment 5 yards.
 2. Interceptions allowed returned in all leagues.

3. **All Adult Divisions:**

- a. Blocking is allowed only on the line of scrimmage. This includes 5 yards on both sides of the original snap and 3 yards downfield from the LOS. All blocking downfield must be a screen block. CONTACT IS NOT PERMITTED past 3 yards of the original LOS.
- b. Offensive players are not permitted to block the defensive player by holding of any kind. This includes, but is not limited to holding the jersey, hooking the player with their arm, grabbing the player to stop his progress. Penalty: Offensive Holding, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, repeat the down. (a hold that occurs in the end zone will be a safety)

b. All Leagues: Screen Blocking

1. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking occurs.

Illegal block: 10 yards, loss of down.

2. A player who screen blocks shall not:

- a. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
- b. Make any type of contact when assuming a position at the side of or front of a stationary opponent.
- c. Take any position too close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping and/or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened dictates where the screener may take his/her stationary position. This will vary between opponents and can be anywhere from 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
- d. After assuming his/her legal screening position, the player must not make any attempt to move in the same direction and/or path of his/her opponent. If any violation of these rules results in contact, he/ she has committed a personal foul.

Penalty for 1-4: Illegal block: 10 yards, loss of down.

3. Teammates of a runner or passer shall not use any interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner. **Illegal block:** 10 yards, loss of down.
4. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block the arms and hands must not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent.

Penalty: Illegal block: 10 yards, loss of down.

XII. Sportsmanship & Conduct of Players and Others:

- a. Any player who commits two unsportsmanlike penalties in the same game will be disqualified from the game and suspended for at least one game. If a player is disqualified from a second game in the same season; that player is automatically disqualified from league play for the remainder of the season.
- b. Any player that intentionally tackles a player will be subject to being ejected from the game.
- c. Any player who participates in a fight will be automatically ejected from the game and the league.
- d. The fourth unsportsmanlike conduct penalty by the same team will result in forfeit of game, and review of all team actions to consider whether that team shall be disqualified for that session and/or sessions that follow thereafter.
- e. **Only the designated team captain will be allowed to talk with officials. Any other player who complains or argues with the officials will be given a verbal warning. If after the warning the player does not stop; the team will be penalized 10 yards. The player may also be subject to ejection from the game.**

XIII. Other miscellaneous rules:

- a. Runner shall not in any manner guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes:
 1. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
 2. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
 3. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.

Penalty for 1-3: Flag guarding, 5 yards from the spot of the foul
- b. The runner shall not make contact with defensive player by means of extending the hand or arm. This includes the use of "stiff-arm" extended to ward off an opponent while attempting to de-flag. **Penalty: Illegal contact, 5 yards, loss of down.**
- c. The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt.

- Penalty:** *Defensive holding, 5 yards from the spot of the foul*
- d. No defensive player may attempt to strip the offensive player of the football.
Penalty: Illegal procedure, 5 yards from the spot of the foul or 5 yards from the LOS, whichever is greater.
- e. **The offensive runner with possession of the ball is not permitted to dive or jump. The play will be blown dead, and ball will be spotted where the runner was before the incident occurred.**
- f. Flag Belt Removal and Player Restrictions:
1. A player must be wearing a flag belt before the snap for that player to be eligible to touch the ball. Without a flag belt the player is ineligible on that play and if he/she touches the ball the play will be dead, resulting in a loss of the down and return to original spot.
 2. Once a pass attempt is touched by either a offensive or defensive player the offense or defense is permitted to de-flag the opponent.
 3. When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently, or on purpose; the play is dead and the player is down wherever the flag fell off the runner.
 4. A defensive player intentionally pulling a flag-belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal.
Penalty: *Personal Foul, 10 yards.*
 5. Any form of tampering with flag belt to gain an advantage including but not limited to taping, using foreign materials, or other such acts is considered illegal.
Penalty: *Personal Foul, 10 yards from spot, and player disqualification if committed by offensive team, loss of down. If committed by defensive team, automatic first down for the offense.*