



Field Sports at SportsOhio Outdoor Flag Football Rules

I. All captains are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring all team fees turned in before the start of the first game.
- b. Ensuring all registration for team & teammates completed before deadlines.
- c. Only allowing players on the field who have paid all fees in full and all names of players listed on roster with a completed waiver; no roster changes can be made after the third game.

II. Number of players and league type description:

- a. Each team's roster can have 7–15 players during the current season.
- b. Team's will consist of 7 players on the field. All must be at least 18 years or older.
- c. All teams may start with 6 players; teams may play with only 5 if injury or disqualification of team member occurs.

III. Equipment Rules:

- a. All games will be played with a Field Sports football. Teams are permitted to use their own ball that must approved by officials. All games will be played with a Field Sports flag.
- b. Baseball caps are illegal.
- c. Cleats can be worn for all outdoor games but cannot be worn inside the building.
- 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 adhesive strip.
- e. Teams must wear matching colored shirts. If one player does not have their shirt, the captain or co-captain is required to checkout mesh pennies for the entire team.
- f. **Legal Optional Equipment:** Football gloves may 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 are not to be attached at the players' waist or side.

IV. Player Eligibility:

- a. All players on a team must be listed on the roster before the first game. Roster changes are not allowed after the third game has been completed. 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 start of the first game 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 or false date of birth 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) 22-minute halves with a 6-minute halftime period. There is a running clock except the last 2 minutes of the 2nd half. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, overtime will be played as in college. Each team will have 4 downs to score from mid-field.
- b. For regular season games, if the game is still tied after the first overtime period it will result in a tie.
- c. For postseason games, if it is tied after each team has had two tries in overtime, teams will have to go for three-point conversions if they score.
- d. 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.
- e. There can only be 7 people on the field before the snap of the ball.
Penalty: Too many men on the field, 5-yards.
- f. Each team will receive (1) 30 second time out per half. Time outs do not carry over into the second half. Any time out will stop the clock. All time outs must be clearly communicated to the referee, prior to the time out taken. If a time out is taken after a touchdown, the clock will stop until the next possession (the extra point will be an untimed down).

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

- a. Possession begins at the 10-yard white 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 that 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. After the infraction, the play clock will start at 10 seconds.
- d. In the last 2 minutes of either half, any delay of game that is determined to be intentional by 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 their flag belt removed.
 4. A snap hits the ground.
 5. The passer is de-flagged before releasing the football.
 6. **Out-of-Bounds:** The sidelines of the field represent out of bounds. 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.
 7. Any other occurrence when the flag belt is removed or falls off 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 one possibility for a first down. The center line is the first down line.
- b. Each team has four downs to try and advance past the first down or the goal line. Teams may elect to pass-punt on 4th down.

VIII. Kicking the Ball (Pass-Punt):

- a. A team may elect to punt the ball on 4th down. All pass-punts must be announced to the referee. Any offensive player may notify the referee of the pass-punt. There are no fake pass-punts allowed. Once a team has decided to pass-punt they must execute the punt, and they must release the ball downfield within 10 seconds of the snap. ***Once a team has broken huddle and not declared punt, it will be assumed the offensive team is going for the first down. The team cannot change the declaration unless a time out is called. A penalty does not allow the team to change the declaration.***
- b. The ball will be down at the spot if the pass-punt goes out-of-bound or touches the ground.
- c. The ball will be ruled a touchback if the pass-punt goes into the end zone.
- d. The pass-punt must be executed behind the line of scrimmage within the 20-second play clock.
- e. The defense cannot attempt to de-flag the pass-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.
Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5-yards
- b. During the snap teams are required to have at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage.
Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5-yards from the previous spot.
- c. No player on the offensive team shall make a false start. A false start is any movement simulating the start of a play. This does include the quarterback either simulating a snap with their body or any motion forward.
Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5-yard 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 make contact with any player on the opposing team. Play will continue unless a defensive player is unobstructed to quarterback.
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. The offense is responsible for placing the cones, which designate the offensive and defensive LOS (line of scrimmage). The cones should be spaced 1-yard apart for all leagues.
- f. All offensive players are to remain motionless for one second prior to the snap of the ball, with the exception of one player in motion; moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage. The player in motion is not counted as one of the 4 on the scrimmage line. Once the center is set, he/she may not reset or change position
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.
Penalty: Illegal Shift, 5-yards from previous spot.
- h. **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 1-4: Illegal Pass, 5-yards from the original LOS and a loss of down if made by the passing team before possession changes during a scrimmage down. If the illegal pass occurs on 4th down by the passing team, the passing team will turn the ball over on downs and be penalized 5 yards.
- i. **Roughing the Passer:**
 - 1. No defensive player can make contact with the quarterback unless the contact is deemed incidental while attempting to de-flag the quarterback. No rusher is allowed to hit the quarterback's throwing arm before or after he releases the ball. The only exception to this is if you block the pass after he releases it.
Penalty: Roughing the passer, 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. This includes face guarding.
Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10-yards from the previous spot and loss of down.
 - 2. Men's Leagues Only: The defense is permitted to make contact with the offense only within 3 yards of the LOS, the defense may only "bump" the offense once and then must release. Coed and High School Leagues: the defense is not permitted to make contact with the offense.
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 farthest solid white line on each of the field.**
- b. **Touchdown:**
 - 1. All Touchdowns are 6 points.
 - 2. The ball must cross the goal line before his/her flags are removed to be a touchdown.
- c. **Mercy Rule:**
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 3-yard line; 2 points from 5-yard line; 3 points from 10-yard line. There is no kicking for extra points.
 - 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:**
A safety is worth 2 points. The team that records the safety will start possession at the 10-yard white line.
- f. **Touchback:**
Any pass-punt that is downed in or past the endzone will be a dead ball, the ball will be placed at the 10-yard white line.
- g. **Field Goal:**
There will be no field goals or kicks for extra points for outdoor leagues.

XI. Rule Classifications per League:

1. The defense is allowed to rush the passer after the offensive snap.
 - a. The defense is not permitted to rush more than 2 players on any play. The play will continue unless defensive player is unobstructed to quarterback. If the quarterback clearly leaves the pocket then other defensive players may come up to make the play.
Penalty: Illegal Rushing 5-yards.
 - b. Defensive players cannot cross the defensive LOS before the snap. This will be considered offsides. The play will continue unless defensive player is unobstructed to quarterback.
Penalty: Encroachment 5-yards.
 - b. The defensive LOS will be marked off 1-yard from the offensive LOS for all men's leagues.
1. Interception returns are allowed in all leagues
2. Blocking is allowed only on the line of scrimmage. This includes 5-yards on both sides of the original snap (the tackle box) 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.
3. 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, loss of down. (a hold that occurs in the end zone will be a safety).
4. The following blocks are illegal: Block in the back, crack-back, cut block, double team (more than one player blocking another player at the same time).
Penalty: Illegal Block, 10-yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down. (an illegal block that occurs in the end zone will be a safety).

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.
Penalty: Illegal Block, 10-yards from spot of the foul, 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 change direction. The speed of the player to be screened dictates where the screener may take his/her stationary position. This will vary between opponent 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 from spot of the foul, 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.
Penalty: Illegal Block, 10-yards from spot of the foul, 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 from spot of the foul, loss of down.

XII. Sportsmanship and Conduct of Players and Others:

- a. Any player who commits two unsportsmanlike penalties in the same game will be disqualified from the game and will be considered for further suspension 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 who participates in a fight will be automatically ejected from the game and suspended for a minimum of four games. The player will also be subject to review by Field Sports administration, with the possibility of ejection from the league.
- c. The fourth unsportsmanlike conduct penalty by the same team will result in forfeit of game and a review of all team actions to consider whether that team shall be disqualified for that session and/or following sessions.
- 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.**
Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10-yards from the end of the play, automatic first down.
- f. Threats will not be tolerated. Any threats made to anyone (teammates, opponents, refs, etc.) heard by the referee will result in ejection from the game and other possible game suspension.
- g. Any player that is ejected from the game will be required to leave the SportsOhio Complex.

XIII. Schedule Standing and Playoffs

- a. Schedules will be updated the day after games are played and can be viewed on EZ Leagues.
- b. Standings will be based on the following:
 1. Head to head record – If you and the team you are tied with have played each other, the winner of the previous game played between the two of you takes the higher seed.
 2. Common opponent record - Overall record played against common opponents. Example: If 2 teams played 3 common opponents and Team 1 goes 2-1 and Team 2 goes 1-2, then Team 1 gets the higher seed.
 3. Total points scored - Total points scored through the duration of the regular season.
 4. Total points against - Total points your team got scored on through the duration of the season.
 5. Coin flip – if two teams tie in all of the above categories, a coin flip will be done to determine the higher seed.

XIV. Flag Belt Guarding and 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 flagbelt. 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: 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: Personal foul, 10-yards from the spot of the foul.
- 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, 10-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 LOS, repeat the down.
- e. Flag Belt Removal and Player Restrictions:
 1. A player must be wearing a flag belt before the snap, and more importantly, 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 the original spot.
 2. Players must have possession of the ball before they can be de-flagged. Once a pass attempt is touched by either an 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 of the runner.
 4. A defensive player intentionally pulling a flagbelt 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.
 6. The ball carrier is not permitted to dive or jump. The play will be blown down at the spot of the ball before the infraction.
 7. Inadvertent whistle:
 - a. If an official inadvertently blows the whistle during a play, the down will be replayed from the original spot and time will be put back onto the clock.
 8. If for any reason a player is unable to wear the belt provided, “one-hand touch” will be applied for that player at the discretion of the referee.
- f. In the event of a forfeit (team not showing up or not having enough players), the forfeiting team’s captain **must** notify Field Sports staff of the forfeit by no later than 3pm EST on the day of the game. Failure to notify staff may result in ejection from the league (without refund), exclusion from playoffs, and/or banned from future participation in SportsOhio leagues. If a team forfeits, the opposing team will win the game with a 30-0 score.

Please respect all officials, players, staff and fans throughout the season. Field Sports reserves the right to remove any player(s) or fan(s) that act disorderly (without refund).