

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES & REGULATIONS

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	Grade 1/2	Grades 3/4
Players	5x5	5x5
Ball Size	PeeWee	Junior
Game Time	Two 20-minute halves	
Halftime	5-minutes	5-minutes
Running Clock	Yes	Yes
Timeouts	One 1-minute per half	One 1-minute per half
Field Size	70x30 yards (with 10-yard endzones)	

I. Uniforms & Equipment

- Uniforms** - Players must wear the uniform provided; players may wear athletic shorts or sweatpants without pockets - no jeans or jean shorts are allowed. Shirts must be tucked in.
- Flag belts** - Flag belts must be worn outside of the shirt with flags hanging at the sides and back.
- Mouthguards** - Players must wear a protective mouthpiece; **parents must provide their own mouthpiece.**
- Shoes** - Rubber athletic cleats are allowed but no metal cleats or sandals.
- Hats** - Baseball caps/billed hats are not allowed.
- Jewelry** - Jewelry of any kind is not allowed.

II. Game Play

- Games shall operate with a running clock and stop only in the event of serious injury.
- Teams must have a minimum of five (5) players on the field at all times.
- A coin toss will determine first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. If the offensive team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or score a touchdown, the opposing team shall take possession of the ball at their own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except for interceptions, will start on the offense's 5-yard line. Interceptions may be returned, including on extra point attempts.
- Teams will switch at halftime; the team that started the game on defense shall have first possession to start the second half.
- Teams will have 30 seconds from when the ball is spotted to snap the ball. Each team will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- The ball shall be spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- Substitutions are permitted during a change of possession, dead balls, and timeouts.

III. Dead Balls

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play; shotgun snaps are allowed.
- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and shall remain live until the play is ruled "dead". The ball shall be ruled dead when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - Ball carrier's flag falls off.
 - Ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - Ball carrier steps out-of-bounds.
 - Receiver catches the ball with one or no flags.
 - The seven-second pass clock expires.
 - Ball hits the ground.
 - Touchdown, PAT, or safety is scored.
- There are **no fumbles**; if a player fumbles the ball, the ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.
 - If the ball is fumbled forward, the ball will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession.

IV. Scoring

- a. Touchdown - 6 points
- b. Point after Touchdown (PAT) - 1 point.
 - a. All PATs will be played from the 5-yard line.
- c. Safety - 2 points
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in their own endzone.

V. Running

- a. The Quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.
- b. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage (LOS) are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the LOS.
- c. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
- d. Center sneak play is **illegal**. At no point can the Center run with the ball (via handoff).
- e. Any player who receives a handoff may throw the ball from behind the LOS.
- f. After the ball has been handed off, the 7-second passing clock is not in effect, and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- g. No pitches or laterals are allowed beyond the LOS.
- h. "No Run Zones" are located 5-yards before each endzone and 5-yards on either side of midfield. These designated areas are meant to prevent short-yardage, power-running situations to maintain player safety. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones.
- i. Ball carriers must make an effort to avoid any defender with an established position.
- j. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull will be considered flag guarding. Spinning is allowed but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
 - i. **Exception** - the only time a player is allowed to leave their feet is to avoid a collision with another player.
- k. No blocking or screening is allowed.
- l. No running with the ball carrier is allowed; players near the ball carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the LOS.
- m. **Flag obstruction** - all jerseys must remain tucked under the flag belt before snapping the ball. Flags must be on each player's hips and back, and free from obstruction; deliberate obstruction of flags will be considered flag guarding.

VI. Receiving

- a. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the Quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the LOS).
- b. Players must have at least one-foot inbound when making a catch.
- c. In the case of simultaneous possession by an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

VII. Passing

- a. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the LOS, thrown forward and the ball must be out of hand prior to crossing the LOS.
- b. The Quarterback has a seven-second "passing clock". If a pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is dead. Once a handoff has occurred, the seven-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - i. If the Quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated as an incomplete pass.
- c. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received behind the LOS.

VIII. Rushing the Quarterback

- a. All players who rush the Quarterback must be a minimum of 7-yards from the LOS when the ball is snapped. Players not rushing the Quarterback can defend on the LOS.
- b. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may pass the LOS.
- c. The referee shall designate a rush line 7-yards from the LOS. Defensive players should confirm they are in the correct position with the official each play.
- d. A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the LOS.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field after the ball has been handed off by the QB.
- e. A penalty shall be called if:
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the LOS before a handoff or pass; penalty - illegal rush.
 - ii. A defensive player crosses the LOS before the ball is snapped; penalty - offsides.
 - iii. A defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the LOS before a handoff or pass; penalty - illegal rush.
- f. Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass, however, any contact with the Quarterback is not allowed; penalty - roughing the passer.

IX. Flag Pulling

- a. A legal flag pull occurs when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- b. No diving is allowed to pull flags.
- c. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- d. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the course of play and that player has possession of the ball, the player is down immediately, and the play is dead. The ball is placed where the flag landed.
- e. Defensive players may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is **not** in possession of the ball.
- f. **Flag guarding** - an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defenders access to the flag by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering their flags with their uniform is illegal.

X. Sportsmanship

- a. Trash talking is illegal; players will be given one warning before a penalty.

XI. Penalties

- a. All referee decisions are final; players may not question judgment calls. Head coaches may ask the referee for rule clarifications and interpretations.
- b. Referees shall determine incidental contact that may result from the normal course of play.
- c. All penalties will be assessed from the LOS, except as noted below for spot fouls.
- d. Games may not end in a defensive penalty unless the offense chooses to decline.
- e. Penalties will be assessed as half the distance to the goal when the penalty is more than half the distance to the goal.

Defensive Penalties	
Offsides	5 yards + automatic first down
Illegal Rush	5 yards + automatic first down
Illegal Flag Pull	5 yards + automatic first down
Illegal Contact (holding, stripping, tackling, roughing the passer)	5 yards + automatic first down
Pass Interference	Spot foul + automatic first down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards + automatic first down

Offensive Penalties	
Offsides/False Start	5 yards + loss of down
Illegal Pass/Run	5 yards + loss of down
Pass Interference	5 yards + loss of down
Delay of Game	Minus 5 yards + repeat down
Impeding the Rusher	Minus 5 yards + loss of down
Illegal Blocking/Screening	Spot foul minus 5 yards + loss of down
Flag Guarding	5 yards + loss of down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards + loss of down

