

Flag Football Rules - 1st-4th Division

START OF GAME

- Coin toss to determine possession. Winning team chooses to play offense or defense in the first half. Losing team chooses which goal to defend. The team that starts on defense in the first half will start on offense in the second half.
- Time kept by referees.
- No kickoffs. Ball placed on 10 yard line to begin play
- PeeWee football for 1st-2nd and Junior football for 3rd-4th
- Players MUST wear shorts without pockets
- Each team must stay in their “bench area” for the entire game. This “bench area” is from the endzone to the midfield line. Players and coaches on the bench cannot cross midfield. They must stay on their side of the field.
- Parents are required to sit on the far side of the field away from the bench area.

TIMEOUTS

- Each team has 2 one minute timeouts per half.
- Officials may stop the clock at their discretion for injuries, etc.

GAME PLAY

- 7 on 7 format for 3rd-4th. 5 on 5 format for 1st-2nd.
- Two coaches per team allowed on field
- Two 20 minute halves with a running clock
- Clock stops only for timeouts and injuries in the first 18 minutes, but stops for “dead ball” the last two minutes of each half.
- No overtime
- 45 second play clock
- Each down sequence lasts four plays
- On 4th down the offensive team can “punt” or go for it
- A “punt” consists of placing the ball at opponent’s 10 yard line (5 yard line if punting beyond mid-field)

RUNNING

- The QB may only run once per “4 down sequence”
- The center may only advance the ball after handing off to the QB Handoffs to the center must be wrapped around the body to his chest/hands
- Only direct handoffs or pitches behind the line of scrimmage are legal. No laterals or handoffs allowed past the line of scrimmage
- Intercepted laterals may be advanced the same as an intercepted pass
- The ball carrier may not jump or dive to avoid his flag being pulled
- Moving screens protecting the ball carrier downfield are not allowed

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes
- Only one player allowed in motion at a time and must be parallel to the line
- Players must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception
- Intentional pick plays are not allowed

PASSING

- Laterals behind the line of scrimmage are allowed
- Teams must pass the ball at least once per down-sequence. Failure to do so results in a five yard penalty. So, if a team has not passed by 4th down then they must either pass or punt on 4th down.
- Shovel passes must be across the line of scrimmage to be considered a pass/
- Passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage. Interceptions may be advanced.
QB has 10 seconds to pass, lateral or handoff
- Play-action fakes are legal

BLOCKING AND FORMATION

- A block is only legal if the blocker has his arms across his chest or behind his back
- A blocker may not engage a defender – only shield the defender. Blocks must be behind the line of scrimmage.
- A defender must go around blockers and not through them. No “bull-rushing”.
- There must be 4 players on the line of scrimmage for 3rd-4th and 2 players on the line of scrimmage for 1st-2nd.

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- Any player rushing the QB must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- There is no limit to the number of players allowed to rush the QB
- Defenders must go around blockers
- Players not rushing the QB may defend the line of scrimmage but may not cross the line until the QB relinquishes possession of the ball
- Once the ball is handed off the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect

DEAD BALL AND FUMBLES

- Centers may snap the ball between their legs or to the side
- Subs may enter on a dead ball
- Play is ruled dead when:
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Touchdown is scored
 - Ball carrier’s knee or elbow touches the ground
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled or loses his/her belt
 - A fumble, lateral, or forward pass hits the ground
 - Inadvertent whistle by the official
- There is no change of possession on a fumble that hits the ground. The ball will be spotted where it first hits the ground. If a player intentionally fumbles “forward” the ball will be marked at the point of last possession
- Fumbles intercepted in the air are treated as pass interceptions
- Fumbles occurring in the team’s own end zone will be “dead” and placed on the one yard line
- If a player with the ball loses his flag belt, the ball will be “dead” where the belt was lost

If a player catches the ball with no flag belt, the completion will count and the ball will be spotted where the player makes the catch

SCORING

- Touchdown – 6 points
- Extra point from 5 yard line – 1 point for pass or run
- Extra point from 10 yard line – 2 points for pass or run
- Extra points intercepted and run back for a score – 1 point on a 1-point try; 2 points on a 2-point try

PENALTIES

- Only a captain or head coach may ask referees about rule clarifications
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty
- Penalties are assessed “live-ball” first, then “dead ball”
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal
- Failure to wear a mouthpiece will be a dead ball/delay of game penalty
- Players must wear their flags on their hips/sides. Failure to do so results in a delay of game penalty
- Failure to tuck in jerseys will result in a delay of game penalty
- Offensive Coach Interference results in the player being down at the spot of contact

DEFENSIVE Fouls

Offside.....	5 yards from LOS, replay the down
Illegal Contact (holding, arm blocking, etc).....	5 yards from LOS & 1 st down
Illegal flag pull before receiver has ball.....	5 yards from LOS if pass is incomplete & 1 st down
Illegal flag pull before receiver has ball.....	5 yards from spot if pass is complete & 1 st down
Bull rushing.....	5 yards from LOS & 1 st down
Roughing the passer.....	10 yards from end of play and 1 st down
Unnecessary Roughness.....	Spot foul, 10 yards and 1 st down
Stripping.....	Spot foul, 5 yards & 1 st down
Pass Interference.....	Spot foul & 1 st down
Coach Interference.....	Spot foul, 10 yards & 1 st down
Tackling.....	Spot foul, 10 yards & 1 st down
Taunting.....	10 yards from LOS & 1 st down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct.....	10 yards(1 st offense), Ejection(2 nd offense)

OFFENSIVE FOULS

Illegal Motion.....	5 yards from LOS
Illegal Forward Pass.....	5 yards from spot & loss of down
Offensive Pass Interference (illegal picks included).....	5 yards from LOS & loss of down
Flag Guarding.....	Spot foul, 5 yards & down counts
Screening or Blocking.....	Spot foul, 5 yards & down counts
Running over Defensive Player.....	Spot foul, 5 yards
Delay of Game.....	5 yards from LOS
Unnecessary Roughness.....	Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
Failure to Pass Once Per Series.....	5 yards from LOS
Lining up Beyond the Neutral Zone.....	5 yards from LOS
Taunting.....	10 yards from the basic spot

Unsportsmanlike Conduct.....10 yards(1st offense), Ejection(2nd offense)