

7 on 7 flag football rules

Start of the Game

1. Game time is starting time; there will be no grace period. The officials watch will be the timepiece used to decide game time.
2. The referee shall toss a coin after designating which captain shall call the toss. The winner of the toss shall have first choice of taking the ball first in either the first or the second half. The other team shall have the ball at the beginning of the half the winner of the toss did not select. Teams automatically switch directions with each possession such that the offense is always going the same direction (generally with the wind).

Game time

1. Games will be two 25-minute halves of running time. Half time will be 5-minutes
2. The offensive team has 25 seconds from the time the ball and restraining line are set by the officials to put the ball back into play. If the team exceeds 25 seconds, officials will call a delay of game penalty.
3. A game or half cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the penalty is refused.
4. In case of tie at the end of regulation play during the regular season, the game will end and be recorded as a tie.

Passing

1. All players are eligible to receive a pass at 2nd – 5th grade. The center is not eligible at 6th – 8th grade unless otherwise agreed to by the coaches before the game.
2. Only one forward pass per down (either over handed or underhanded).
3. No forward hand-off between the quarterback and the center are allowed.
4. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. 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.

Formations

1. The offensive team can have no more than four players in the backfield (three on the line of scrimmage)
2. Players in motion do not count as players on the line of scrimmage.
3. Following the ready for play whistle and until a legal snap, no defensive player may encroach, touch the ball, stand in, or in any other way interfere with the offensive team.

Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 Points
2. Point after touchdown: From 5-yard line: 1 Point (pass only), From 10-yard line: 2 Points (run or pass)
3. Once a team has made their choice on the extra point, they can only change their decision by taking a time-out.
4. Interceptions returned for touchdown: 6 points (no extra points).

Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
2. The player who receives the snap from center (generally quarterback) cannot directly run the ball.
3. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
4. Once the ball has been handed off in front or behind the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Only one player may rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the QB may not cross the line of scrimmage while the quarterback is in possession of the ball.
2. Once the ball is handed off or passed, the seven yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. The player rushing the QB may attempt to block a pass. However, no contact can be made with the QB in any way.
4. Offensive players cannot impede the rusher in any way. Any interference will be considered screening.

First Down

1. A first down is awarded when the offensive team crosses the midfield line whether by pass or run.

Punting

1. There is no punting. If on fourth down the offensive team fails to get a first down [cross the midfield line] or a touchdown the defensive team takes possession at the 40-yard line.

Fumbles

1. All fumbled balls touching the ground are dead immediately at the spot the ball is next put into play at that spot.
2. The team fumbling the ball retains possession of the ball (except on the 4th down).
3. All incomplete laterals or passes behind the line of scrimmage will be spotted where the ball lands.
4. Any player catching a passed or fumbled ball that does not touch the ground can advance that ball.

5. A fumbled ball by an offensive team in their end zone that hits the ground before the defensive team recovers is placed on the 40-yard line, the offense retains possession, and the down is advanced in the same manner as an incomplete pass.

Flag Belts and Legal “Tackles”

1. Each player must wear a flag belt with the flags positioned on the side of the player. Every player must have their shirt/sweatshirt tucked under their flag belt.
2. If a player loses his/her flag belt not due to the actions of the defense and has possession of the ball, the defense must touch them with one hand between the shoulders and knees to make the legal "tackle."
3. A legal tackle is made when a defensive player detaches the flag or flag belt from the ball carrier.
4. A shielding infraction will be called if a ball carrier uses his/her hands, arms, the ball or clothing to hide or prevent an opponent from pulling the flag belt.
5. Any ball carrier caught wearing the belt illegally will be ejected from the field of play.
6. The ball is dead if either knee of the ball carrier touches the ground at any time.

Equipment

1. Only sneakers and artificial turf shoes or football cleats are permitted. (No metal spikes or bare feet will be allowed.)
2. No jewelry (rings, necklaces, or earrings) is to be worn when playing.
3. For clarification, illegal equipment consists of: Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots. Pads or braces worn above the waist. Shirts or jerseys that do not remain tucked under the flag belt. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt that does not remain tucked under the flag belt. Pants or shorts with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pockets(s), or exposed drawstring(s). Exposed metal on clothes or person. Towels attached at the player's waist.

Field Dimensions and Downs

1. The size of the field will be 50-yards by 85-feet, with 10-yard end zones.
2. The field will have no-running zones that will be 5 yards before the end zone and 5 yards before the first down line.

Number of Players

1. There is a maximum of seven players on the field at one time but a team must have at least five players to play a game.
2. Free substitution is allowed after the ball is ready for play and before the snap, each player or entering substitute of an offensive team can be lined up anywhere behind the line of scrimmage.
3. All players and coaches on the sidelines are expected to stay one yard from the playing area.
4. Only one player may be in motion parallel to the line at any one time before the ball is snapped.

Blocking

1. For 2nd – 5th grade there will be no blocking.
2. For 6th – 8th grade players may screen block (without use of hands) behind the line of scrimmage. Players may not use their hands to block. This is for the purpose of developing foot work of the offensive lineman. If hands are used it will be an illegal use of hands penalty.

Touchbacks

1. If a team intercepts a pass in the end zone and does not advance the ball out of the end zone it is a touchback. The intercepting team takes possession at the 40-yard line.
2. If a team intercepts a pass and does not run it for a score it is a touchback. The intercepting team takes possession at the 40-yard line.

There may be one coach on the field at all levels.

Penalties

Penalties with a loss of 5 yards

Delay of game or illegal substitution
 Interference with opponent or ball before snap
 False start or any illegal act by the snapper.
 Encroachment
 Illegal position at snap
 Player illegally in motion
 Illegal shift
 Illegal handing ball forward
 Illegal forward pass.
 Illegal procedure
 Off sides

Penalties with loss of 10 yards

Delaying start of either half
 Offensive forward pass interference
 Holding
 Striking, kicking, kneeling (also result in disqualification)
 Clipping, hurdling, tripping
 Illegal participation
 Unsportsmanlike conduct by player, coach, or attendant
 Pushing runner or interlocked interference
 Illegal use of hand or arms
 Roughing the passer
 Holding ball carrier to remove flag
 Guarding the flag or stiff arming

If a penalty pushes the line of scrimmage behind the 40-yard line the ball shall be placed at the 40-yard line.