



Spring 2026 Flag Football Rules

Rule Exceptions

- A. **Preschool – 3rd Grade**
 - I. 'No-Run' zones are eliminated. Teams may run the ball anywhere on the field.
 - II. Defenders may NOT blitz the passer.
 - III. Rushers may NOT cross the line of scrimmage after FIRST handoff.
 - a. Rushers MAY cross the line of scrimmage after the SECOND handoff.
 - IV. Defenders MUST line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
 - a. If the ball is within 5 yards of the Line-to-Gain or Goaline, the defense is allowed to line up on the line of scrimmage.
 - V. One coach for each team is permitted on the field pre-snap to help their players, but MUST be well out of the way of the play before the snap.
- B. **Preschool – 1st Grade**
 - I. If the ball touches the ground during the initial Center to Quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a "Do Over" with no loss of down, once per down. On a second consecutive occurrence, the down is consumed.

1. The Game

- A. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
 - I. Winner of toss chooses offense or defense
 - II. Loser has choice of direction
 - III. There is **no option to defer**
- B. NO Kickoffs
- C. Offense starts possession on own 5-yard line
 - I. Offense has 4 plays/downs to cross midfield (awarded first down)
 - II. Offense then has 4 downs to score a touchdown
- D. If the offense fails to reach midfield or score on a possession, the ball changes possession to the opposition.
 - I. The opposing team will start its drive from its own 5-yard line
- E. ALL possession changes, EXCEPT for interceptions, will start on the offense's 5-yard line
- F. Teams will change sides at half-time.
- G. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- H. The number of players that take the field will vary by age division and season in order to maximize playing time for players on a team with a relatively large roster. For Spring 2026, the following standard will be used:

Division		X v X	Ball
PreK	Coed	6 v 6	Red (Mini)
KG/1st	Coed	6 v 6	Red (Mini)
1st-3rd	Girls	6 v 6	Blue (Pee Wee)
4th-6th	Girls	6 v 6	Blue (Pee Wee)
7th-12th	Girls	6 v 6	Brown (Junior)
2nd/3rd	Boys	7 v 7	Blue (Pee Wee)
4th/5th	Boys	7 v 7	Blue (Pee Wee)
6th-8th	Boys	7 v 7	Brown (Junior)
6th-8th Rec+	Boys	7 v 7	Brown (Junior)
9th-12th	Boys	7 v 7	Brown (Youth)

2. Terminology

- A. **Boundary Lines** – the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
- B. **Line of Scrimmage (LOS)** - an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
- C. **Rush Line** – imaginary line running width of field, 7 yards from line of scrimmage (defense)
- D. **Line-to-Gain** – Midfield
- E. **No-run zone** - Located five yards before the Line-to-Gain and five yards before the end zone in the direction the offense is headed. They are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run beyond the LOS in this zone.
- F. **Blitzer** – The defensive player, identified by raising one hand above the head continuously until the snap, that is at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage assigned to rush the passer to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass. The act of raising the hand beyond the 7-yard line guarantees the blitzer Right of Way.
- G. **Rusher** – Any player who legally crosses the line of scrimmage through the normal course of game play
- H. **Live Ball** – period of time the play is in action. Live ball penalties must be enforced before down is complete.
- I. **Dead Ball** – time between previous down and up until snap of next down
- J. **Contact** - Contact is touching an opponent with impact. Touching with no impact is not a foul.
- K. **Holding** – grasping an opponent or their equipment, not releasing immediately, and impacting the opponent’s motion or direction
- L. **Charging** – illegal movement of ball carrier directly at defensive player that has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.
- M. **Flag Guarding** – act by ball carrier to prevent defender from pulling flag by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, blocking access to the runner’s flag with a hand or arm, or an untucked jersey will be considered flag guarding.
- N. **Offsides** - player illegally breaks the plane of the LOS before the snap; penalty can be called on either the offense or defense
- O. **Shielding** – obstructing an opponent without contact by moving into their path. A moving player without right of way who impedes an opponent from running a pass

- route, getting to the runner, or impedes a legal blitz is guilty of shielding.
- P. **Forward Pass** – initiated when one offensive player releases the ball in a **forward** motion, **in the air by any means and any distance**, in an attempt to give another offensive player possession of the ball, which must take place behind the LOS to be legal. Only one forward pass per play is allowed.
 - Q. **Handoff** – initiated when one offensive player hands the ball to another offensive player in a direct exchange to transfer possession of the ball, which must take place behind the LOS to be legal
 - R. **Shovel Pass** – legal pass attempted by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot-put type manner
 - S. **Lateral** – illegal backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier beyond the LOS
 - T. **“Jamming” a Receiver** – an illegal act where the defender bumps, chucks, or blocks the receiver at or near the LOS in an attempt to throw the receiver off his/her route.
 - U. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** - physical behavior, language or celebration that is rude, confrontational, disrespectful or offensive

3. Equipment

- A. League provides each player with a flag belt and jersey
- B. Footballs vary by division.
 - I. Mini (Size 6- Red ball, ~8.5in length)
 - a. PreK - Coed
 - b. KG/1st - Coed
 - II. Pee Wee (Size 7- Blue ball, ~9.5in length) (example: USA Football (peewee) or Wilson K2)
 - a. 1st-3rd Girls
 - b. 4th-6th Girls
 - c. 2nd/3rd Boys
 - d. 4th/5th Boys
 - III. Junior (Size 8- Brown ball, ~10.5in length) (example: USA Football Youth)
 - a. 7th-12th Girls
 - b. 6th-8th Boys (Rec / Rec+)
 - IV. Youth (example: Wilson GST Youth)
- C. All flags must be located on each side of the player (not front and back) and free from obstruction
 - I. Extra slack from the flag belt must be taped to the belt or tucked in.
- D. Players must wear shoes. Football cleats are encouraged, but NO cleats with exposed metal are allowed.
- E. Players must wear shorts or pants. Athletic skirts are not permitted as the loose fabric impedes flag pulling.
- F. Players may tape forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces of any type with exposed metal are not allowed.
- G. Players may not wear jewelry, rings, bracelets, or necklaces. Earrings MUST be taped.
- H. The coaches are responsible for ensuring their players are properly dressed before the start of each game.
- I. Player’s jersey MUST be tucked into their pants or shorts.
- J. Game officials will perform an equipment check before the start of the game. The game official will have final decision on uniform issues.

4. **The Field**

- A. Field dimensions are 40 yards long by 25 yards wide with 10-yard endzones.
- B. A midfield line-to-gain will be marked.
- C. No run-zones are located on each side of midfield line and 5 yards from each goal line.
- D. No run-zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays.
 - I. Teams cannot run the ball beyond the LOS within these zones
 - II. These zones will be marked by either a painted line or cone placed out of bounds

5. **Rosters**

- A. Each team **MUST** start a game with a minimum of 5 rostered players, and no more than 10
 - I. A team with less than the minimum of 5 rostered players at the start of the game must forfeit.
 - II. After a forfeit is declared, coaches may agree to play for fun with or without players borrowed from another team.
- B. A team with the minimum of 5 rostered players but no subs may play 4 v 4 with a single sub without forfeiting, but no fewer than 4 v 4
- C. **To avoid a forfeit:** If necessary and agreed upon by BOTH coaches, teams may borrow players from another team only if they do not have the required minimum of 5 rostered players. This will help **avoid forfeits**.
 - I. Honoring the spirit of the league, caution should be exercised by both coaches during the agreement process to ensure borrowing players does not create an unfair advantage.

6. **Timing**

- A. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two, 20-minute halves.
 - I. Referees are responsible for keeping time
 - II. Clock starts on the referee's whistle
- B. Regulation time is 40 minutes
 - I. No clock is kept during overtime
- C. Clock stops only for timeouts
- D. Once ball is spotted and ready for play, each team will have **30 seconds** to snap the ball.
 - I. Teams will receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced
- E. **ONLY 1 timeout** (60 seconds) is available **per team per half**
- F. Officials may stop the clock at their discretion
- G. In the event of injury, the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- H. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, an overtime (OT) period will be used to determine a winner as follows:
 - I. Each team will be allowed a minimum of one possession
 - II. First possession is determined by winner of regulation coin toss. Loser determines end of field that both teams will start their respective drives
 - III. There are no time outs during OT

- IV. Each team will be scored based upon **yardage gained** (NO SCORING)
- a. Each team will be given four downs starting from its own 5-yard line to drive the field as far as they can. The game official will note yardage gained. The team with the most yards gained will win the game.
 - b. There are no First Downs during OT
 - c. In the event of an interception, it is a turnover and stops the opponent's drive.
 - a. Yards gained that possession will be based on the LOS prior to the turnover
 - b. The play and the drive are stopped at the point of interception; the interception is not returnable
 - d. If both teams reach the end zone, the process will be repeated.

7. Scoring

- A. Touchdown – 6 points
- B. PAT (Point After Touchdown) –
 - I. 1 Point from 5-yard line
 - a. Pass ONLY (No run zone)
 - II. 2 Points from 10-yard line
 - a. Run or Pass
- C. Safety – 2 points
 - I. Occurs when player with ball has possession in own endzone
 - a. Has flag pulled while in endzone
 - b. Flag falls out
 - c. Player in possession of ball steps out of bounds
 - d. Player in possession of ball has knee or elbow touch ground
 - e. Safety also occurs when offensive has a penalty in endzone
- D. Maximum of 3 offensive touchdowns per player
 - I. Turnover on downs if a player scores 4 or more offensive touchdowns
 - II. Pick 6 touchdowns are unlimited per player
 - III. 1-point or 2-point conversions are unlimited per player
 - IV. Maximum TD rule does not apply in overtime situations
- E. Mercy Rule
 - I. One team winning by 28 points or more
 - II. Losing teams gets one possession to score
 - a. If they do not score, the game is over
 - III. Once the game is over, coaches may agree to play out the remaining time for fun
- F. Forfeit
 - I. Forfeits will be scored 28-0

8. Coaches

- A. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and division
- B. Coaches MUST move to the sidelines before the snap of the ball

9. Live Ball / Dead Ball

- A. Game official will indicate neutral zone and line of scrimmage (LOS)
- B. Automatic dead ball foul if any player (offense/defense) enters neutral zone
 - I. Officials may give a “courtesy” notification for players to move back
- C. Player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as **one foot** comes down in field of play
- D. Defense may not mimic offensive team signals or confuse offensive players
 - I. Unsportsmanlike penalty
- E. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - I. Ball hits the ground
 - II. Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
 - III. Ball carrier steps on or beyond boundary lines
 - IV. Ball carrier’s knee or elbow touches the ground
 - V. Ball carrier’s flag falls out
 - VI. 7 second pass clock expires
- F. THERE ARE NO FUMBLES – Ball is spotted where ball carrier’s feet were at time of fumble
- G. Inadvertent whistle – offense has two choices
 - I. Take the ball where it was when the whistle was blown
 - II. Replay the down from original line of scrimmage

10. Running

- A. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must take place **behind** the line of scrimmage.
 - I. Offense is allowed to use multiple handoffs
 - II. “Center sneak play” is NOT ALLOWED as centers are ineligible to receive handoffs
 - III. “QB sneak play” is NOT ALLOWED
- B. Ball is spotted where runner’s **feet** are when flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
 - I. Forward progress measured by the player’s front foot
- C. Quarterback cannot directly run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage (LOS)
 - I. Any player who receives a legal handoff or pass from the QB is eligible to run the ball
- D. No-Run Zones – offense is not allowed to run the ball beyond the LOS within 5 yards of midfield line as well as 5 yards from goal line.
- E. After ball is handed off in backfield, ALL defensive players are eligible to rush
- F. The ball has **7-seconds** to cross the LOS.
 - I. 7-second clock starts upon the snap
 - II. The runner has seven seconds or play will be blown dead and down will count.
 - a. If the runner is in endzone and 7-second clock expires, ball is returned to LOS, and down will count. This is NOT a penalty and therefore is not considered a Safety.
- G. Runners may NOT leave their feet to advance the ball
 - I. No diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull (Flag Guarding)
- H. Spinning is allowed as long as player does not leave their feet
- I. Only lateral moves to the left and right are allowed

- J. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position
 - I. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- K. **NO** blocking or “screening” is allowed
- L. Offensive players must stop their motion once ball has crossed the LOS
 - i. No running with ball carrier
 - ii. At the official’s discretion, they may give a warning for “running with the ball carrier.” Otherwise, a dead ball foul will be called and the ball will be marked.

11. Passing

- A. All passes **MUST** originate from **behind LOS**: forward, sideways, or backward; overhand or underhand
 - I. Shovel passes and pitches are allowed
 - II. Any player who receives a handoff or **backward pass** from the QB or ball carrier **behind the LOS** is eligible to pass (or run) the ball.
 - a. A pass parallel to the LOS is considered a “backward pass”
- B. Only **ONE** forward pass per play/down is allowed.
 - I. If a player behind the LOS receives a forward pass, that player is ineligible to make a second forward pass. (Illegal forward pass – 5 yards LOS & loss of down)
- C. No passes from **beyond the LOS**
 - I. Any ball exchanges, including laterals, beyond the LOS are not allowed (Illegal forward pass – 5 yards LOS & loss of down)
- D. The ball has **7-seconds** to cross the LOS.
 - I. Pass must be thrown within seven seconds or play will be blown dead and down will count.
 - a. If passer is in endzone and 7-second clock expires, ball is returned to LOS, and down will count. This is **NOT** a penalty and therefore is not considered a Safety.

12. Receiving

- A. All players are eligible to receive passes, including the QB
- B. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time and that motion must be parallel to LOS until snap of ball
- C. All players must have **one foot** in bounds when making a catch
- D. Simultaneous possession will be awarded to offense
- E. Interceptions result in a change of possession at the moment of interception. This is the only possession that does not start on 5-yard line
- F. Interceptions during regulation time are returnable, including 1pt and 2pt attempts

13. Blitzing the Passer

- A. Blitzing the passer is **NOT** allowed in the Preschool through 3rd grade divisions.
- B. Blitzing the passer is a defensive strategy that a team may use but otherwise is not required.

- C. **Blitzer:** A defender who lines up with all parts of their body more than 7 yards away from the scrimmage line at the snap can establish themselves as a blitzer with a legal signal by **raising one hand clearly above the head continuously while center is touching the ball**. This grants them right of way which supersedes the general right of way for the offense, because they are pursuing the runner.
- I. The rush of a blitzer shall be immediately after the snap, quick and straight towards the point where the quarterback receives the snap in order to **retain the right of way**.
 - II. If a blitzer is rushing late, slowly, towards a different spot, changing direction during the rush or just does not rush the quarterback, the player **loses the right of way** but still can continue the blitz or participate as any other defender.
 - III. If a blitzer is forced to change direction due to an offensive foul (shielding), the blitzer will not lose their right of way for a further direct rush to the point where quarterback received the snap.
- D. A blitzer **MUST** signal by raising his/her hand above head continuously while center is touching ball
- E. A maximum of 2 players may blitz the QB
- F. A maximum of 2 players may signal (raising hand above head)
- I. If a player who signals is less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage or if a player is giving an invalid signal or if more than 2 players simultaneously keep their hand raised after the snapper has touched the ball, it's an illegal signal foul. (Illegal Signal - 5 yards from the LOS)
 - II. Either player who signals is not required to blitz
- G. Official will indicate 7-yard rush line
- I. A blitz is legal from the 7-yard line point.
 - a. All players who blitz quarterback must be a minimum of seven yards from the LOS when ball is snapped.
 - II. If Blitzer leaves rush line before snap, they may return to rush line and reset and then legally resume blitzing QB
 - III. Penalty may be called if Blitzer leaves rush line before snap (breaks the 7-yard area) and crosses LOS before handoff or pass (Illegal blitz – 5-yard penalty from LOS & first down)
 - IV. If a blitzer leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the ball handler.
 - V. Any defensive player that crosses LOS before ball is snapped (Offsides – 5-yard penalty from LOS & first down)
 - VI. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line that crosses the LOS before ball is passed or handed off (Illegal Rush 5 yards penalty from LOS & first down)
- H. Players blitzing the QB may attempt to block pass or pull flag. **NO CONTACT** can be made with passer in **ANY** way.
- I. Blocking pass and then making contact with QB is a penalty (Roughing the passer – 10 yards LOS & first down)
- I. Offense cannot impede Blitzer in **ANY** way. Blitzer has right to clear path to QB, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap.
- I. No shielding the Blitzer
 - a. Shielding is obstructing an opponent without contact by moving into their path.
 - b. A player standing still (with the right of place) is not shielding, even if the player

is obstructing an opponent. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the Blitzer's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.

- II. Offensive players are responsible for avoiding contact. (Impeding the Rusher-5 yards & loss of down)
- III. Any disruption to blitzer's path is a penalty (Impeding Rusher-5 yards & loss of down)
 - 1. If offensive player does not move after snap, it is defensive players responsibility to avoid offensive player

14. **Flag Pulling**

- A. Legal flag pull occurs only if ball carrier has complete possession of ball
- B. Defenders can dive, but cannot tackle, hold or run through ball carrier (Tackling, holding, or running through the ball carrier will be considered "Unnecessary Roughness" and followed with a penalty.
- C. It is illegal to strip the ball
- D. If ball carrier's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon gaining possession of the ball
- E. **Flag guarding is illegal** – no stiff arms, elbow dips, swatting defender's hand, or intentionally covering flags with an untucked jersey (Flag guarding penalty – 10 yards loss of down)
 - I. During an attempted flag pull, if the ball carrier's arm, elbow, or hand is below his/her waist (even due to the natural motion of running), it is still considered flag guarding. **ANY hand motion** that impedes the defender's ability to pull the ball carrier's flag is flag guarding.
 - II. All flags **MUST** be located on the player's hips at the start of the play. Flags located in the front or back of the ball carrier is considered flag guarding.
 - III. A player whose flags are partially covered due to an untucked jersey will receive one warning before flag guarding penalty is called.

15. **Formations**

- A. **Center.** This player is responsible for snapping the ball and is eligible to go out for passes, once they have snapped the ball. The Center may NOT receive a handoff.
- B. **Quarterback.** The quarterback is the offensive player who first gets possession of the ball after the snap. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the line of scrimmage without first handing the ball off to a teammate and then receiving a second handoff back or receiving a pass.
- C. **Passer.** Any offensive player, including the QB, who legally throws or tosses the ball to another offensive player.
 - I. Any player who receives a handoff or **backward pass** from the QB or ball carrier **behind the LOS** is eligible to pass the ball
 - II. No laterals beyond the LOS
- D. **Receiver/back.** Any player who does not initiate the snap nor receive the snap is considered an eligible receiver/back and can either receive a handoff or catch a pass. The QB is also an eligible receiver but otherwise may not directly run the ball after receiving the snap.

- E. Offense must have a minimum of one player on the LOS (Center) and any number of players on the LOS. The quarterback must be off the LOS but can be lined up under Center.
- F. **One** player may go in motion behind the LOS (min 1 yard)
- G. No motion is allowed towards LOS at any time (False Start)
- H. All offensive players, except player in motion, must come to complete stop for one second before snap (Offside/False Start)
- I. Center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs or turned to the side to a player in the backfield, and the ball **MUST** completely leave his/her hands.
- J. **Rusher.** A defender who does not give a signal and legally crosses the line of scrimmage. Following a legal handoff or pass behind the line of scrimmage, any member of the defense can cross the line of scrimmage.

16. Playing Time

- A. All players **MUST** play a total of at least 20 minutes (half) of each game.
- B. Coaches are strongly encouraged to rotate players following the rule: no player can sit twice until every player has set out at least once.

17. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- A. Includes intentional act of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, and blocking. The game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game.
 - I. Decision is made at the official's discretion and is final.
 - II. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
- B. "Jamming" the receiver at the LOS or anywhere beyond the LOS is considered a form of blocking.
 - I. Unsportsmanlike – 10 yards LOS & auto first down
- C. No mocking, taunting, or harassing of players, coaches, or referees.
 - I. Coaches, parents & fans are also subject to same penalties.
 - II. Unsportsmanlike penalty
- D. Celebrations are encouraged but must be respectful
 - I. Decision is made at the official's discretion and is final
 - II. Official will provide **one** warning per team
 - III. Second offense will warrant an Unsportsmanlike penalty
 - 1. If penalty is on the Offense during a scoring play, a 10 yard advantage will be given to the opponent starting its next drive. The ball will be spotted at its 15 yard line.
- E. Offensive language is also illegal
 - I. Official has right to determine offensive language
 - 1. Official will provide **one** warning
 - 2. Second offense will warrant ejection
 - 3. Offensive language is not limited to only players
 - a. Coaches, parents & fans are also subject to same penalties.

18. Spectator Conduct

Fans must adhere to good sportsmanship as well

- A. Yell and cheer for your players, not to harass officials or other teams
- B. Keep comments clean and profanity free
- C. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team

19. Penalties

- A. Official will call all penalties
- B. Official will determine all incidental contact
- C. Game may not end on defensive penalty
- D. All penalties will be assessed from LOS, except as noted (Spot fouls)
 - I. Spot Fouls
 - 1. Defensive Pass Interference – Automatic first down
 - 2. Holding – 5 yards auto first down
 - 3. Stripping – 10 yards auto first down
 - 4. Defensive unnecessary roughness – 10 yards auto first down
 - 5. Screening, Blocking/running with ball carrier – 5 yards loss of down
 - 6. Charging – 10 yards loss of down
 - 7. Flag guarding – 10 yards loss of down
 - 8. Offensive unnecessary roughness – 10 yards loss of down
 - II. Defensive Penalties
 - 1. Offside – 5 yards LOS & auto first down
 - 2. Illegal Rush – 5 yards LOS & auto first down
 - 3. Illegal Blitz – 5-yards LOS & auto first down
 - 4. Illegal Signal – 5-yards LOS. Live ball foul
 - 5. Illegal flag pull – 5 yards LOS & auto first down
 - 6. Roughing the passer – 10 yards LOS & auto first down
 - 7. Unsportsmanlike – 10 yards LOS & auto first down
 - III. Offensive Penalties
 - 1. Offside/False Start – 5 yards LOS & loss of down
 - 2. Illegal forward pass – 5 yards LOS & loss of down
 - 3. Offensive Pass Interference – 5 yards LOS & loss of down
 - 4. Illegal Motion – 5 yards LOS & loss of down
 - 5. Delay of game – 5 yards LOS & loss of down
 - 6. Impeding the Bitzer – 5 yards LOS & loss of down
 - 7. Unsportsmanlike – 10 yards LOS & loss of down

(Updated on 04.05.26)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Why the extra language around blitzing the passer?

A. Blitzing is one aspect of Flag Football that is relatively unique compared to Tackle. While the rules of Tackle are fairly well established, blitzing rules in Flag have continued to evolve to minimize player collisions, increase fair play, and improve the officiating around that aspect of the game. Blitzers have always had the right of way to the QB, and by raising the hand and declaring, it notifies (and reminds) both the offense and the officials of that right of way. It should also help reduce collisions between the blitzer and receivers. The additional language also helps ensure that this defensive strategy is not abused by specifying what a blitzer can and cannot do. Furthermore, our blitzing rules are now in direct alignment with USA Football and IFAF rules, and accommodations are still in place for the younger divisions.

2. Why extra language around flag guarding?

A. The "flag" in Flag Football is key to how the game is played compared to Tackle. Pulling a ball carrier's flag is the only legal means of stopping a play. As Flag Football continues to grow, ball carriers are developing enhanced, legal means of evading a flag pull. Nonetheless, flag guarding has always been and is still strictly enforced. The modified language in the Spring 2025 rules hopefully makes it clear what is legal and what is not, for both the ball carriers and the officials.

3. Can the QB run the ball? Is the QB sneak legal?

A. The quarterback is the player who directly receives the snap from the center. Therefore, no, the QB sneak is not legal. The rules on this have not changed. Where there has been ambiguity is whether the player who receives a legal handoff from the QB is eligible to run and/or pass the ball. The rules on this have not changed either, but hopefully they are now clearer. Any player who receives a legal handoff or backward pass from the QB or ball carrier **behind the LOS** is eligible to run or pass the ball.

4. Why limit the maximum offensive touchdowns per player to 3?

A. Particularly in our Rec league, the Mercy Rule for games should not need to be used. Every effort was made to create fair and balanced rosters. Nonetheless, the output of the rostering process is only as good as the input. If a player ranking or evaluation is incorrect, a game could become lopsided. And sometimes there's "that" player who is exceptionally talented. In an effort to keep the games fun and competitive for all players at all age levels and divisions, the 3 TD max rule has been put into place. It was piloted during our Fall '24 season and has received positive feedback from a sample of coaches.

5. Are direct snaps to the running back legal?

A. No, in this case the running back would be considered the QB since he/she received the direct snap. Therefore, the "no QB sneak" rule is still in effect.

6. Wherever the Blitzler is lined up, should we assume that the straight line to the QB is their “right of way”? Emphasis on STRAIGHT LINE.

A. Yes, exactly as stated. See Rule 13.C.I. and 13.C.II. for specific language. Any delay or weaving by the Blitzler negates the "right of way". If a Receiver impedes the Blitzler's "right of way" forcing a delay or redirection, this is considered Shielding, which is a penalty. (Impeding the Rusher-5 yards & loss of down). In line with USA Football and IFAF rules, notable detail was added to Section 13 in attempt to cover most "what if" scenarios related to blitzing. Please reach out to your League Coordinator or League Commissioner with any additional questions.

7. Can a Blitzler "time the snap"?

A. Yes, the rules allow a Blitzler to get a running start (i.e., "time the snap") so long as the 7-yard rush line is not crossed prior to the snap. Otherwise, Rule 13.G.II states, "If Blitzler leaves rush line before snap, they may return to rush line and reset and then legally resume blitzing QB." Rule 13.G.III and 13.G.IV further states, "Penalty may be called if Blitzler leaves rush line before snap (breaks the 7-yard area) and crosses LOS before handoff or pass (Illegal blitz – 5-yard penalty from LOS & first down). If a blitzler leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the ball handler."

8. When does the Blitzler need to signal and for how long?

A. The USA Football / IFAF rules indicate that, "A defender who lines up with all parts of their body more than 7 yards away from the scrimmage line at the snap can establish themselves as a blitzler with a legal signal by raising one hand clearly above the head **at least during the last second prior to the snap.**" To be consistent and avoid grey area or splitting hairs, Rule 13.D states, "A blitzler **MUST** signal by raising his/her hand above head continuously while center is touching ball." Therefore, it is recommended that each blitzler initiate their signal the moment the center touches the ball. Furthermore, the blitzler should continuously hold the signal until the ball is snapped.

2. In 2nd/3rd grade boys, is the offense required to pass the ball on 4th down?

A. No, in 3rd grade and under, No-Run zones are eliminated. The offense may run the ball anywhere on the field, on any down.

3. In 2nd/3rd grade boys, can the offense run the ball if they are within 5 yards of Line-to-Gain or the Goaline?

A. Yes, in 3rd grade and under, No-Run zones are eliminated. The offense may run the ball anywhere on the field, on any down.

4. Can you please clarify the rule exceptions for grades 3rd and below, particularly related to defense?

A. In 3rd grade and under, the defense must stay 5 yards behind the LOS until the ball is snapped. Once the ball is snapped, the defenders may move forward towards the LOS and stand at the LOS, but no defender may cross the LOS at any time, including when the QB is passing the ball. The defense, however, does not have to wait until the QB throws the ball to begin moving towards the LOS after the snap. Nonetheless, the offensive backfield must remain free of defenders at all times, both for pass and run plays.



Defenders can (and should) pick up offensive players (i.e., the receivers) as they cross the LOS. The only trigger the defense is waiting for is the center to snap the ball.

5. With No-Run zones eliminated for 3rd grade and under, how is the defense supposed to defend against an easy first down, TD, or extra point?

- A. If the ball is within 5 yards of the midfield Line-to-Gain or Goalline, the defense in 3rd grade and under is allowed to line up on the line of scrimmage. In this situation, the defense is not required to line up 5 yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. Nonetheless, Rushers may NOT cross the line of scrimmage after a handoff, which is consistent with Exception A.III. Defenders, however, have the right-away if they are standing in place. In other words, the rules do not allow an offensive player to run over or through a defender, even at the goal line.