



NFL Flag Football Rules

Section A: General Rules

1. Every player **MUST** play at least (2) quarters unless there are issues with the player's attendance or attitude. The coach **MUST** relay any playing time adjustments and the reason to PRC staff, the player, and the parent(s) before the start of the game.
2. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
3. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
4. Games must be played 5v5 or even sided.
5. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
 - a) If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard start line.
 - b) If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
 - c) All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offensive's 5-yard line.
 - d) Interceptions may be returned.
6. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
7. During the first & second game of the season coaches can be on the field to help direct players before the play but cannot interfere with the play. After the second game of the season, coaches must stay on the sidelines at all times.

General Personal Conduct

Anyone using foul or disrespectful language at any time before, during, or after the games will be asked to leave the park. Coaches using said language during practices and/or games may be dismissed from his/her coaching responsibilities. Set a good example! Parents, coaches, and spectators are expected to cheer in a positive fashion for all players! This is a recreational league, and its sole purpose is for the players to learn the game of football and have fun!

Section B: Equipment

1. All players must wear official NFL FLAG belts and flags. All players **MUST** always wear mouth guards while on the field.
2. Players must wear shoes or non-metal cleats.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
4. Players must remove all jewelry, hats, and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
5. Players may wear soft shell helmets, but they must be always secured while on the playing field.
6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
7. **Shorts or pants CANNOT have pockets**
8. Participants must bring their belts and flags given to them at practice to games. Extra belts may be available for purchase if forgotten or lost.
9. NFL FLAG footballs will be provided.

Rosters

- Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
- Teams must consist of at least five players.
- Teams must start games with a minimum of four players. The fifth player may enter the game during a dead ball period with no penalty. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four.

Section C: Game Timing

1. The games will consist of 4 (10) minute quarters and a (2) minute half-time.
2. Each child must play (2) quarters each game.
3. Game clock is a running clock.
4. Each team will be permitted one time out per half – 60 seconds in length. Time outs do not carry over.
5. If the score is tied at the end of the game, teams move directly into overtime. A coin toss will determine who starts with the ball. The visiting teams calls the toss. The first team to score wins. There are no timeouts in overtime.
6. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
7. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
8. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.

Section D: Scoring

1. Touchdown = 6 points
Extra Point = 1 point from 5-yard line
2 points from 10-yard line
 - a) Note: 1-point extra point is pass only; 2-point extra point can be run or pass.Safety = 2 points
2. Coach's must declare if their team wishes to attempt a 1-point extra point or a 2-point extra point. Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

Section E: Deadball / Live Ball

1. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
2. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
3. Play is considered "dead" when:
 - A. Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - B. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - C. Touchdown is scored
 - D. Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
 - E. Ball carrier's flag falls out
4. There are NO FUMBLES. The ball will be spotted where the player lost control of the ball.
5. The referee will place a special marker down to designate the rush/blitz line. The offense may not snap the ball or run a play prior to both cones being designated.

Section F: Running

1. The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
2. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs. **Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind.**
3. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
4. "No-running zones" are located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield. These are designed to avoid short-yardage and power-running situations.
5. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Spinning and jump cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
8. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
9. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

Section G: Passing

1. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.
 - a. There is no intentional grounding.
 - b. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.
 - c. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

Section H: Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense

Section I: Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball. An unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be enforced.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

Section J: 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. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker or the referee will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defense of players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

➤ **A legal rush is:**

- Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
- A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.

➤ **A penalty may be called if:**

- The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5 yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
- Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.

➤ **Special circumstances:**

- Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
- Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then contacting the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
- A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage.

Section K: Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
6. **Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:**
 - **Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.**
 - **Keep comments clean and profanity free.**
 - **Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.**
7. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
 - Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Section L: Penalties

1. Defensive

- a. Offsides = +5 yards and automatic first down
- b. Interference = +10 yards and automatic first down
- c. Illegal Contact (holding, blocking, etc.) = +10 yards and automatic first down
- d. Stripping = +10 yards and automatic first down
- e. Illegal FLAG Pull (before receiver has the ball) = +5 yards and automatic first down
- f. Illegal Rushing (starting rush from inside the 7-yard marker) = +5 yards and automatic first down
- g. Defensive Unnecessary Roughness = +10 yards and automatic first down
- h. Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct = +10 yards and automatic first down
- i. Roughing the Passer = +5 yards and automatic first down

2. Offensive

- a. Illegal Motion = -5 yards and loss of down
- b. False Start = -5 and loss of down
- c. Illegal Forward Pass (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage) = -5 yards and loss of down

- d. Offensive Pass Interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) = -5 yards and loss of down
- e. Flag Guarding = -10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
- f. Delay of Game = -5 yards and loss of down
- g. Impeding the Rusher = -5 yards and loss of down
- h. Offensive Unnecessary Roughness = -10 yards and loss of down
- i. Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct = -10 yards and loss of down

3. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

4. Only the team coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

5. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.