



## **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.

### **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.

## **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.

## **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
  - F. The 7-second pass clock expires
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. Direct handoffs and pitches are permitted behind the line of scrimmage. Offense may use handoffs or pitches.
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 or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, 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. 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.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
4. 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 (LOS).

## **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: 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.

Remember - no blocking or tackling is allowed

## Section J: 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. Illegal FLAG Pull (before receiver has the ball) = 10 yards and automatic first down
- e. Illegal Rushing (starting rush from inside the 7-yard marker) = 10 yards and automatic first down

### 2. Offensive

- a. Illegal Motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) = 5 yards and loss of down
- b. Illegal Forward Pass (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage) = 5 yards and loss of down
- c. Offensive Pass Interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) = 10 yards and loss of down
- d. Flag Guarding = 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
- e. Delay of Game = clock stops, 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.