

5 on 5 Flag Football Rules



GAME STRUCTURE

TOPIC	SPECIFICATION
DIVISIONS	7U (7 or under), 9U (9 or under), Girls (10U and 13U)
BALL SIZE	Pee Wee/K2 Ball for 7U and 10U Girls; and Junior Ball/TDJ for 9U and 13U Girls
FIELD SIZE	26 yards wide (1/2 of the width of a football field) x 50 yards long (see diagram below). Offensive play starts on the 40-yard line. This design allows for four games to be played on one regulation sized field.
GAME LENGTH	ALL games are 40 minutes in length with two, 20-minute halves with a running clock, except for the final minute of the second half, when the clock will stop for incompletions, out of bounds, touchdowns, and changes of possession (following standard football rules) and restart on the snap. Clock will also stop for timeouts and at referee's discretion for penalties and injuries. Halftime is five minutes. No timeouts are allowed in overtime. Tournament/playoff games are 21 minutes long. The clock runs continuously during the 1st 20 minutes & stops according to rules during the final 1:00.
PLAYERS	5 defenders and 5 offensive players (must use a center to snap)
TIMEOUTS	Each team is allowed one time-out per half (30-seconds in duration)

EQUIPMENT

1. Each player must wear uniformed shirts and flag belts with flags attached by ball-and-cup model. Jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
2. Flag belts must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction and may not be the same color as the shorts or pants.
3. Metal cleats are not allowed.
4. Mouthguards **ARE REQUIRED** for all players.
5. Players are encouraged to wear a soft-shell helmet or loops/bands, but are not required.

OFFENSIVE PLAY

6. The OFFENSE always starts at the 40-yard line and has 4 plays (downs) to reach the 20-yard line for a first down.
7. Once the offense reaches or crosses the 20-yard line, it has 4 plays (downs) to score a touchdown. If the offensive team fails to reach the 20-yard line in three plays or if they fail to score within four plays after reaching or crossing the 20-yard line, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team starts its drive from the 40-yard line.
8. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage by spotting the ball before each play. Once the ball is spotted, the offense will have a 25-second PLAY CLOCK to snap the ball.
9. PASS CLOCK: Offensive teams have five seconds to throw a pass or make a handoff once the snap is made. If the quarterback still has the ball after an official counts-off five seconds, the play is dead and a down is lost.
10. A double pass is legal as long as the first pass is backwards.
11. All offensive formations must be legal sets. A minimum of 2 players must line up on the line of scrimmage (center is considered on the line of scrimmage).
12. Motion is allowed, only one player can be in motion at the time of the snap, and that player must be moving laterally (sideways) or backwards.
13. The 25-yard line to the 20-yard line, and from the 5-yard line to Goal line are No Run Zones. Thus, within 5 yards of the first down and touchdown line to gain, no handoffs allowed, and all passes must be beyond the line of scrimmage.
14. A shovel pass is considered a forward pass as long as there is separation between the QB and Receiver. The referee will have the final determination on if there was clear separation. Within the No Run Zones, this shovel pass must be beyond the line of scrimmage.
15. Fumble is a dead ball. No recovery. Ball is placed at spot of fumble. If fumble is behind the LOS (bad snap or exchange), ball is placed where ball first touches the ground (not original LOS). If fumble is behind the LOS (bad snap or exchange) at 40-yard line, ball is placed at 40-yard line.
16. NO BLOCKING/SHIELDING: Meaning, there can be no contact between linemen, nor can there be any offensive player in advance of the ball carrier that acts in any way to prevent a defender the opportunity to pull the flags of the ballcarrier.
17. NO FLAG GUARDING: Flag Guarding is illegal and is the result of the ball carrier attempting to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, arms, shoulders, or intentionally covering the flags. Ball carriers may not leave their feet (jumping or diving with possession of ball) to advance the ball. This is considered flag guarding. Ball

carriers may leave their feet only if it is clear that he or she has done so to avoid collision with another player and not used as a form of flag guarding.

18. No BALL CARRIER INITIATED CONTACT: Running backs or receivers with the ball must avoid contact with defenders. They cannot run straight over defender. If defender has position, the ball carrier must run try to avoid or around the defender.
19. In addition to play clock or pass clock expiring, a play is ruled “dead” when: A) The ball hits the ground; B) A defensive player pulls the flag of the ball carrier; C) The ball-carrier steps out of bounds; D) A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored; or E) Any part of the body other than feet or hands touches the ground.

OFFENSE/OFFENSIVE POSITIONS

20. CENTER: The ball must be center-snapped, but the center is an eligible receiver.
21. QUARTERBACK (QB): Is the person that receives the center exchange. The QB can hand off to another player or throw the ball. The QB cannot run with the ball across the line of scrimmage unless rushed from the Defense/Defender(s). The QB can also run with the ball if he/she first hands the ball off to a teammate and then receives a second handoff or pass.
22. RECEIVER/RUNNINGBACK: Any player who does not initiate the snap nor receives the snap is considered an eligible receiver/back and can either receive a handoff or catch a pass.
23. OFFENSIVE SCORING: A) touchdown= 6 points; B) PAT (point after touchdown)= 1 point from the 5-yard line (can only be a pass play) or 2 points from the 10-yard line (run or pass). A team that scores a touchdown must declare prior to the snap whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point or 2-point conversion.

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

OFFENSIVE PENALTY*	ASSESSED FROM	RESULTS
Offsides/False Start/Illegal Motion	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Replay Down
Delay of Game (stops clock in final minute of game)	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Replay Down
Holding/Blocking/Shielding	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Replay Down
Flag Guarding	-5 Yards from Spot of Foul	Loss of Down
Offensive Pass Interference	-10 Yards from Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Replay Down
Ball Carrier Initiated Contact	-10 Yards from Spot of Foul	Loss of Down
Coach interference (not 5 yd behind deepest player)	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Replay Down
Unnecessary Roughness/ Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-15 Yards from Spot of Foul	Loss of Down

** Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the 40-yard line when the penalty yardage would cause the spot to go behind the offensive start line. If Penalty occurs from the 40-yard line, a loss-of-down will be assessed.*

DEFENSIVE PLAY

24. The DEFENSE is the team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball. All players on defense are eligible to rush the quarterback, defend on the line of scrimmage or drop into pass coverage.
25. No blitzing
26. Once the ball is handed off any defender may go behind the line of scrimmage.
27. A player is ruled down when the flag belt is legally pulled/removed from the ball carrier, or the flag falls off inadvertently and was tagged by one-hand by a defensive player. When a flag is pulled, the defensive player should immediately hold flag above head. The spot of the ball is determined at the point where the clip of the flag belt becomes detached, not where the belt falls to the ground. If a player starts a play with his/her flag belt secured but the flag falls off during a play inadvertently, the defensive team must tag that player with one hand to be marked down.
28. If a ball carrier’s flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage, A down is lost, and the ball is placed where the ball carrier’s front foot was when the flag was pulled.

DEFENSE/DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

29. DEFENSIVE PLAYER: Any player assigned to prevent the offensive receiver from catching the ball and/or stop a ball carrier from getting up field. Thrown balls knocked down by the defense will be ruled incomplete. If the defensive player intercepts the ball, the defending team is awarded 3-points. Interceptions may be returned for touchdowns. A team that intercepts a pass and returns it past the 40-yard line without getting their flag pulled or downed will be awarded a touchdown and then will then attempt a PAT (this will constitute the team’s offensive possession). A team cannot be awarded both 3-points for the interception and 6-points for the interception touchdown. No defensive points are awarded on PAT conversions.

30. DEFENSIVE SCORING: An interception will reward the defensive team 3 points. An interception returned for touchdown is 6 points. No points are awarded for interceptions on PAT conversions, and they may not be returned.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

DEFENSIVE PENALTY*	ASSESSED	RESULTS
Illegal Participation	5 Yards + Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Repeat Down
Encroachment/Neutral Zone/Offsides	5 Yards + Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Repeat Down
Illegal Rush	5 Yards + Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Repeat Down
Illegal Flag Pull (pulling flags of players w/o the ball)	5 Yards + Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Repeat Down
Holding	5 Yards + Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Repeat Down
Defensive Pass Interference	10 Yards + Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Repeat Down
Tackling**	10 Yards + Spot of Foul	Automatic First Down
Unnecessary Roughness/Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15 Yards + Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	Automatic First Down

* Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

** Tackling is a judgment call for the referee. It should be obvious the player was not attempting to pull a flag and initiates contact that results in the offensive player falling to the ground

OTHER RULES

31. INADVERTENT WHISTLE: On an inadvertent whistle, the play is dead where the ball carrier was when the whistle blew. The result of the play is null and void. The ball will be spotted where the ball was when the whistle blew
32. COACHES: Three coaches are allowed on the sideline per team and one coach is allowed on the field to call plays and direct players according to need. Prior to the snap, the coaches on the field must be 5-yards behind the deepest player on their side of the ball and can no longer speak, provide extra instruction or make audibles. No headphones are allowed.
33. MINIMUM PLAYING TIME: All players must play at least four offensive or defensive snaps every game. (Exceptions: If a player consistently misses practice playing time will be at the discretion of the coach.)
34. SUBSTITUTIONS: Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
35. OVERTIME: A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first. There are no timeouts in overtime. The ball is placed on 20- yard line. Each team is given one offensive possession and four downs to score plus a PAT. If the score is tied after both teams' offensive possession, the game will result in a tie except during playoffs. During playoffs, if the score remains tied, each team will have another 4-down series with the opposite team having 1st option of offense or defense. This type of play will continue until a winner is determined.
36. MERCY RULE: If a team is ahead by 19 points or more, the clock shall not stop in the final minute of the game.
37. FORFEITURE: Teams cannot play an official game with less than five (5) players. Forfeited games can be played as an exhibition if both coaches agree to play, but they are not officiated and they do not count on either team's record. A forfeited game will be logged as a 19-0 loss for the team that forfeits
38. BLOOD: Any player having bleeding is to be removed from the game. Open cuts must be bandaged before returning.
39. NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Suggested no more than 10 players per roster for 5 vs 5.
40. **THE REFEREE IS THE AUTHORITY ON THE FIELD HIS INTERUPATION OF THE RULES IS BINDING.**
41. **CODE OF CONDUCT:** Unsportsmanlike conduct is prohibited by all players/coaches/spectators and can result in a penalty and/or IMMEDIATE ejection from the game with the potential of a week suspension to a lifetime ban from the GMYAA. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to: Fighting, foul language, throwing or kicking the ball, taunting the other team or spectators, baiting or "confronting" opponents or officials, using inappropriate gestures and/or harassment of any kind towards opponents or officials.
42. **EJECTIONS:** Any player/coach/spectator ejected from a game will serve a mandatory one (1) game suspension not including the game he or she was ejected from. A second ejection will result in a two (2) game suspension and a third will result in a 1-year suspension.
43. **STANDINGS:** Regular season standing based on "Win Percentage" will determine playoff seedings. In the case of a tie, Head-to-Head (H2H) will be the main tiebreaker, meaning the game(s) played against each other will be used first to determine seeding within the tied group(s). **Example:** Team A, B, and C all have equal win percentages. If Team C has defeated Team A and Team B, then Team C would be the highest seed in that group. The H2H between Team A and Team B would determine the next seed. If three or more teams are tied, and no one team has beaten all other tied teams, then the initial tiebreaker shall be lowest Average Points Against, then revert to H2H to determine remaining seed(s). **Example:** Team A, B, and C all have equal win percentages and no one team of the three has defeated both the other two. Thus, the

highest seed would be the team with the lowest Average Points Against. The next seed would then be based on the H2H between the remaining teams. **Note:** In the event the lowest Average Points Against cannot break the tie, then a coin toss by the conference coordinator will be used to break. **Example:** Team A, B, and C all have equal win percentages and no one team of the three has defeated both the other two. Team A and Team B both have the same Average Points Against, which is lower than Team C's. A coinflip between Team A and B will determine the highest seed, then revert to H2H to determine remaining seed(s).

5 vs 5 Flag Field Diagram

