

# RULES OF PLAY – FLAG FOOTBALL

## A. Rules of Play

- Players on field per team: 6, or at least 5
- Players on team: 12
- Ball size: Pee Wee or Nerf ball for 4-7 year olds, Junior Size for 8 to 11 year olds, Youth Size for 12 to 13 year olds
- Game Length: 4 quarters, each 10 minutes with one minute between 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> quarters. Half time is 2 minutes
- Time-outs: Each team has 2 time-outs per half, TWO 60-second TIME OUTS
- Clock: Running clock except for last 2 minutes before end of first half and end of game (stops between quarters). Games will end to time (70mins) or game time mins.
- Field size: 30 x 70 yards including two 10 yard end zones
- If inclement weather occurs, an update on field conditions and game schedules will be sent out.
- No profane language or inappropriate gestures during play.
- Zero tolerance for unsportsmanlike conduct. Foul language; taunting; no spiking the ball; anything that draws attention to particular player; tackling an opponent; etc...

## B. Players

- Each roster will consist of maximum 12 players. 6 or at least 5 players will be on the field for both offensive and defensive teams. No players can be added to rosters once the season begins. Everyone is an eligible receiver. The quarterback can only run the ball if a defensive player breaks the line of scrimmage to rush. Referees discretion.

## C. Equipment

- Players are required to wear shoes made of soft pliable upper material (canvas, leather, or synthetic), which attaches to a one piece molded composition bottom. Screw in cleats is allowed if the screw is a part of the cleat. NO METAL CLEATS!
- Player must wear a flag belt without any knots (Belt will be provided) with at least two flags attached.
- Jerseys must be long enough to tuck into pants/shorts, or 4 inches above the player's waistline. No pockets on shorts or pants, (pockets can be zipped shut).
- Game balls will be provided.
- Mouth guards required at all times.

- No football pads. Padding to cover an injury is at the referee's discretion.
- No hard billed caps or bandanas with exposed knots are to be worn.

#### **D. Series of Downs**

\*The offense is allowed four plays, or downs, to advance to the 25 yard line (in the middle of the field). Start at the 3 yard line for kick-offs. If the offense is successful, they are given a first down, a new set of four plays, and they maintain possession of the ball until they:

- Are stopped by the defense and have to punt, typically on fourth down;
- Turn the ball over to the defense by means of an interception or failure to gain first down;
- Score a touchdown

#### **E. Scoring**

Touchdowns are worth 6 points. After scoring, teams must always attempt a two-point conversion. The ball will be placed on the 3-yard line for two point conversions. No running the ball on a two point conversion unless the QB is rushed. Safety, 2 points.

#### **F. Starting a Play**

- Each team must have 6 or at least 5 players on the field.
- The offensive team must have at least three players set on the line of scrimmage.
- The snap must be done within 25 seconds of the official's whistling the start of play.
- The snap does not have to go between center's legs.
- Touchbacks will start on the 10 yard line.

#### **G. Passing**

- All forward passes can be received beyond and within the line of scrimmage.
- No forward passes can be thrown beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Only one forward pass per down.
- Backward passes and handoffs are allowed anywhere.
- Interceptions may be returned

#### **H. Running**

- The quarterback cannot directly run the ball. He or she must exchange or handoff the ball before the ball can cross the line of scrimmage. However, if the quarterback is rushed while

attempting to pass, the quarterback can run downfield with the ball. REFEREE POINT OF INTEREST: Rushers must be seven yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball.

- Only forward handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. The offense may use multiple handoffs. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Laterals or pitches are allowed. A dropped lateral or pitch is not incomplete; it is a fumble and that equals a dead ball.
- Offensive players are not permitted to guard the flags by making contact with defensive players who are trying to remove their flags.
- Center plunges and stiff arms are illegal.
- Clipping, or hitting a defender in the back or from behind, is not allowed.
- Screen Blocking is allowed, arms tucked in, to the side, or behind the back.
- No running the ball from within 5 yards of the end zone.
- Teams winning by more four touchdowns or more must throw the ball on every play

#### **I. Kicking and Punting**

- No Kickoffs
- Punting is a free kick and can be either kicked or thrown from 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is dead when it has hit the ground and is spotted where the ball first contacted the ground or cross the out of bounds line. A player may not return a dropped punt after it hits the ground. It will be spotted where it landed.
- No Fake Punts

#### **J. Dead Balls**

- The ball is “dead” if a defensive player removes the flag from the offensive player’s waist and immediately holds the flag up above his or her head so the official can see where the flag pull occurred. If a flag falls off the ball carrier and the ball carrier is tagged by a defensive player with one hand between the shoulder and knees, the ball carrier is down.
- A ball also is “dead” when the ball carrier steps out of bounds, any part of the ball carrier’s body other than feet or hands (ie. knee, elbow) hits the ground, a touchdown or a safety is scored.
- The defense cannot recover a fumble; the ball is down either at the hips of the person who fumbled or, on a pitch backward, where the ball hits the ground.

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball. (REMEMBER THAT EACH PLAYER MUST PLAY AT LEAST HALF THE GAME.)

### **K. Defense**

- Any number of players can rush the quarterback 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. REFEREE POINT OF INTEREST: Rushers must be seven yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball.
- Once the defense rushes the quarterback (QB), the QB can run downfield with the ball.
- Pushing, striking, holding, slapping, or tripping a player when attempting to pull the flag is not permitted. Defensive players may leave their feet to pull a flag. If an offensive player's flag inadvertently falls to the ground, a one-handed tag between the shoulders and knees by a defensive player constitutes a flag pull.
- A defensive player may not remove a flag from an offensive player who does not have possession of the ball.
- One coach is permitted to be on the field with their team, offensive coach can be in the huddle and the defensive coach behind the defense.

### **L. Time**

- 4 quarters, each 10 minutes long, with a running clock. During the first 18 minutes of each half, the clock is stopped only for team or injury time-outs, scores, or penalties (if the official asks for time.) During the last two minutes of each half, the clock also is stopped for changes of possession, the ball going out of bounds, and incomplete pass, and penalties. Officials notify each team of the last two minutes in the half and the game with a two-minute warning.
- During the last two minutes of the half and of the game the QB can spike the ball to stop the clock.
- Each team has two time-outs per half, two 60-second time-outs.
- Two overtimes will be played if tied at the end of regulation time. Games may end in a tie after overtime. Overtime is to place ball on the 10 yard line with attempt to score by each team.
- A 25-second play clock will be enforced.

### **M. Violations and Penalties**

- Off-sides (illegal procedure or formation) – 5 yards, enforced from the line of scrimmage.
- Defensive pass interference – 5 yards and a first down, enforced from the previous spot. If in the End Zone, ball placed at the 1 yard line.
- Defensive holding or illegal use of hands – 5 yards enforced from the spot of the foul.

- Illegal removal of a flag – 5 yards, enforced from the point of the foul.
- Illegal rushing (starting rush too early) – 5 yards and first down.
- Fair catch interference (when receiver is interfered with on a fair catch signal) – 5 yards from spot of the foul.
- Illegal procedure or formation – 5 yards, enforced from the line of scrimmage.
- Illegal forward motion – 5 yards, enforced from the line of scrimmage.
- Illegal forward pass – 5 yards and loss of down, enforced from the point of the foul.
- Offensive pass interference – 5 yards enforced from the line scrimmage.
- Flag guarding (guarding the flag with hands or arms by contacting a defensive player or illegal arrangement of flags) – 5 yards enforced from the point of the foul. Spot Foul and loss of down.
  - Delay of game (25 seconds to put the ball into play) – 5 yards, enforced from the line of scrimmage. Referee will raise hands at 10 seconds and then count down from 5.
- Illegal use of hands or body – 5 yards, enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Clipping – 5 yards, enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Leaving the feet or diving in making an open-field block – 5 yards and a loss of down, enforced from the point of foul.
- Improper blocking – 5 yards and down over
- Intentionally grounded pass – 5 yards and a loss of down, enforced from the point of foul.
- Stiff arming – 5 yards enforced from the point of foul. General
- loose clothing – 5 yards, enforced from the line of scrimmage
- Illegal contact – 5 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage
- Un-sportsman like conduct – 10 yards, enforced from the line of scrimmage. Second un-sportsman like conduct is automatic ejection.