

FDC Flag Football League Rules – 2025

The Basics

-A coin toss determines first possession winner chooses to play offense or defense, loser chooses side of field. After halftime, team switch sides of field in whichever team started the game on offense will start second half on defense.

-The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its own goal line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four chances score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its own goal line. No safeties are allowed. If the QB gets sacked in the end zone ball will return to the goal line.

-All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense is own goal line.

-Interceptions may be returned for a score.

-Fumbles are a dead ball at the spot of the fumble.

-** If a team is losing by 18 points or more, the losing team will start all their ensuing possessions at the 20-yard line. (This rule DOES NOT apply in playoffs)

-There are only two ways the offense loses possession of the ball. 1) Loss of downs or 2) in interception. The defense cannot recover a fumble or strip the ball carrier.

- Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field (AFC ONLY)

Players

-All divisions: teams must always field six players at all times. Teams can field five players to avoid a forfeit.

-All players must wear a mouth guard, an official NFL flag football team jersey. All players should wear

black shorts. Players without a mouth guard, official flag football jersey and shorts are ineligible to play.

-Playing time should be equitable for all players. We understand that some players are more talented than others, but we ask that all coaches keep the spirit of youth sports in mind and make sure all players play a reasonable amount and have the best experience possible. Coaches should target all players to play a minimum of 25% of the plays, with the goal being closer to 50%. No player should sit for more than two consecutive series. We appreciate the volunteer time coaches put in, and trust that you will do your best to meet these guidelines. If this becomes an issue, the league will ask board members to monitor games and may provide board member assistance to teams who are consistently having issues meeting minimum play targets.

Timing/Overtime

- Games consist of 50 minutes running time. Two 25-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced. After a delay of game penalty is issued, a LOSS of down will be enforced on next infraction.
- Teams do NOT have any timeouts in first half.
- If a game is tied after 50 minutes of play it will result in a tie. Playoffs will have overtime.
- There is a 2:00 minute warning in 2nd half ONLY.** Clock will stop. After that, each team has 2 timeouts. Clock will stop under 2 minutes on TD, turnovers, and timeouts **ONLY**. Clock will resume on the snap of ensuing drive.

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 pts, Extra point 1 pt from 5 yard line (No run zone for AFC) or 2 pts from 10 yard line (Run or Pass)
 - No safeties are allowed - ball gets returned to the goal line.
- Regular season games can end in a tie. Playoff games there will be overtime.

Running the ball

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- No blocking or tackling is allowed
- Stripping of the ball or taking the ball out of a player's hand is not allowed. Direct handoffs, laterals and pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted and are considered running plays. Offense may use multiple handoffs. No handoffs are permitted beyond the line of scrimmage. Laterals are permitted beyond the line of scrimmage.
- "No running zones"** are located 5 yards from each end zone and five yards from the midfield first down mark are designed to avoid short yardage, power running situations that may result in collisions.
- ** AFC ONLY- WHILE IN NO RUN ZONE,** Ball must be thrown 1 yard passed the line of scrimmage to be deemed a forward pass

(NFC can run at any time)

- A player who takes a handoff or lateral behind the line of scrimmage can throw the ball.
- Once the ball has been handed off or leaves the QB's hand, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

-Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet or jump to avoid a defensive player. No diving is allowed on offense.

-The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled. Except for the end zone and first down line. If the ball breaks the plane, it is a touchdown or first down.

-The first person to touch the ball at the line of scrimmage on offense is considered QB. any center to QB snap is considered a handoff.

-Once the ball is spotted by referee it's a live ball and the offense may snap it even if the defense is not ready.

-Once a ball carrier hits the ground, he/she is considered down in cannot advance the ball.

Receiving

-All players are eligible to receive passes. Including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage prior to the pass.

-Only one player is allowed in motion at a time, however, **falling forward, taking a step up, or shifting up will not be enforced as a false start. Motioning up field is prohibited.

-A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

-Shovel passes are allowed. Only one forward pass per play is allowed.

-If an offensive receiver catches the ball and does not have two flags in place for a defender to grab, the ball will be spotted at catch. If a defender catches an interception and does not have two flags in place for an offensive player to grab, the ball will be spotted at the catch

Dead Balls

-Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

-Play is ruled dead when the following occurs:

Ball carriers' flag is pulled or if a defender grabs the excess middle belt hanging down

Ball carrier steps out of bounds.

Ball carrier hits the ground.

Ball carriers flag falls out ball is spotted at the point where the flag falls off.

Touchdown is scored.

-There are no fumbles. The ball spotted where the ball hits the ground.

Rushing the Quarterback

-There must always be one defensive player on the line of scrimmage. This player cannot drop back into coverage, he has the option to rush to QB or stay on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback has five Mississippi count which will be counted by referee before a defensive player can rush. Once the ball is handed off or leaves the QB's hand, the five Mississippi rule no longer is in effect.

-Any number of players can rush to QB after the five Mississippi count.

-The quarterback cannot run with the ball even after the five Mississippi count.

Penalties

-All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defensive penalties

-Offsides: 5 yards from line of scrimmage replay the down.

-Line of scrimmage defender drops off the line of scrimmage: 5 yards replay the down.

-Unnecessary roughness: 10 yards from spot of the foul or end of run.

-Defensive pass interference: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay the down.

-Illegal contact: 10 yards from spot of the foul or end of run.

-Illegal flag pull: Pulling a player down by something other than their flag: 10 yards added to end of run or half distance inside the 10-yard line.

(defender grabs flag before receiver catches the ball): 10 yards from spot of foul if the ball is caught. If the ball is dropped, then 10 yards from line of scrimmage.

Offensive penalties

-False start: 5 yards from line of scrimmage replay the down.

-Delay of game: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage (LOSS OF DOWN ON 3RD OFFENSE)

-Flag guarding: 5 yards from spot of foul and loss of down.

- Offensive pass interference: 10 yards from line of scrimmage

-Unnecessary roughness: 10 yards from spot of foul and loss of down

- Grounding: 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down. (AFC ONLY)

-Illegal forward pass: 5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

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

Note: if an offensive penalty occurs on a play when the ball crosses the 20 yard line, then, after enforcing the penalty, the ball is brought back behind the 20 yard line, the offensive team will have just four plays to score a touchdown.

Sportsmanship

-Foul play will not be tolerated. If the referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act the game will be stopped, and the player will be removed from the game.

-Trash talking will not be tolerated. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If trash talking occurs the referee will give one warning if it continues the player or players will be removed from the game.

-Excessive celebrating will not be tolerated after big plays or touchdowns, no spiking, taunting, or dancing. Let's teach the kids to celebrate with all their teammates!

-All fans must stand behind designated blue line along the sideline. All coaches and players not in the game must stand 1 yard off the sideline. Game will stop if rules are not followed, and clock will continue to run. Coaches are responsible for their fans

-Playing time should be equitable for all players. We understand that some players are more talented than others, but we ask that all coaches keep the spirit of youth sports in mind and make sure all players play a reasonable amount and have the best experience possible. Coaches should target all players to play a minimum of 25% of the plays, with the goal being closer to 50%. No player should sit for more than two consecutive series. We appreciate the volunteer time coaches put in, and trust that you will do your best to meet these guidelines. If this becomes an issue, the league will ask board members to monitor games, and may provide board member assistance to teams who are consistently having issues meeting minimum play targets.

The Head Coach is responsible for his or her assistant coaches and parents. There will be zero tolerance for coaches or parents yelling at players or officials. Coaches or parents can be asked to leave if this occurs, let's teach by example.

Dress code

-Turf shoes or sneakers are allowed. No metal spikes.

-All players must wear a protective mouthpiece there are no exceptions.

-All players must wear official NFL league issued team jerseys and black shorts.

-Sweatshirts or hoodies are allowed to be worn under team jerseys, hoods must be tucked under jerseys

-All jerseys must be tucked into shorts.

- Flags must be worn on the hip sides at all times.
- Belt strap hanging down the middle is a violation.
- Baseball caps must be worn backwards at all times during the contest.

Field dimensions

-Each playing field will be 26.7 yards by 60 yards that consist of two 10 yard end zones and 40 yards of playing field.

-A combination of red, green, and orange cones will help determine areas of the field.

New rules for 2025

- Ball carriers must make every attempt to avoid contact with the defender during a run, after a catch or after an interception. Intentional contact will result in a unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- 2nd and 3 grade only: Offensive team must allow the defense to substitute at anytime
- Final minute of the half and final 2 minutes of the game Offense does NOT need to wait for substitutions

Additional 6th Grade league rules “EAST”

- Teams must always field FIVE players at all times. Teams can field **FOUR** players to avoid a forfeit.
- There is a required snapper on each team.
- The ball must be snapped through the legs of the center/snapper in order for a down to begin.
- Quarterback can line up under center or in the shotgun
- No coaches on the field at any time.
- 1 defense player must lined up on the line of scrimmage on each play
- The defensive player lined up on the line can rush the passer at the 3 second count
- Defender CANNOT drop into coverage
- QB is sacked at the officials 10 second count.
- Ball will be spotted where the QB is when official reaches 10 seconds.