

## **Flag Football Rules**

### **1. Substitutions**

1.1 Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time-outs.

### **2. Length of Game and Timing**

2.1 The captain winning the coin toss will choose from the following options. The other captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining options.

- a) to start with the ball.
- b) to defend a particular goal.
- c) to defer to the second half.

2.2 Games will consist of two 20-minute halves with a 3-minute halftime. Timing will be continuous the first 18 minutes of the 1st half and the first 18 minutes of the 2nd half. Only team and Official time-outs can stop the clock.

2.3 During the final minute of the first half, the clock will only stop for penalty enforcements team and official time-outs. During the last two minutes of the 2nd half, the clock will stop for:

- a) 2-minute warning - clock restarts on the snap
- b) Incomplete pass - clock restarts on the snap.
- c) Out of bounds - clock restarts on the snap.
- d) Time Outs - clock restarts on the snap.
- e) Touchback - clock restarts on the snap.
- f) Change of possession - clock restarts on the snap.
- g) First downs - clock restarts depending on previous play.
- h) Penalties - clock restarts depending on previous play.
- i) Field Goal attempt - clock stops to re-establish new line, then restarts depending on previous play.
- j) Touchdown - clock restarts on opponent's next snap from scrimmage.

k) Fumble, dropped lateral, or dropped snap - clock does not stop.

2.4 A half must be extended by an untimed down, except for unsportsmanlike or nonplayer fouls, if during the last timed down, one of the following occurs:

- a) There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted.
- b) There was a double foul.
- c) There was an inadvertent whistle.

*Exception:* A period will not be extended for a foul that specifies loss of down, if accepted. Also, any score by the team that fouled is cancelled.

2.5 Each team will receive two time-outs per half. (they do not carry over)

2.6 There will be a 25-second play clock. The ball must be snapped no more than 25 seconds after the Official has signaled "Ready for Play". *Penalty: delay of game, 5 yards.*

2.7 Mercy Rule

- a) A regular game will end if a team is leading by **17 points** or more during the final two minutes. They coaches may come to an agreement to keep playing but the clock will not stop for the rest of the game.
- b) A Co-Rec game will end if a team is leading by **23 points** or more during the final two minutes. They coaches may come to an agreement to keep playing but the clock will not stop for the rest of the game.

2.8 A game that is called due to weather with less than 5 minutes remaining will be considered a complete game.

### 3. Game Rules

3.1 Field dimensions:

- a) The minimum size is 80 yards by 40 yards including 10 yard endzones and "zone line-to-gain" markings every 20 yards. (there should be 2 first downs 20 yards from each endzone, the field is 60 yards and plus two 10 yard endzones would equal an 80 yard field)

3.2 The ball will be placed on the 10-yard line during the following situations:

- a) Following a point-after attempt.

- b) Following a safety, touchback, or successful "field goal".
- c) There will be a kickoff in the beginning of each Half.

### 3.3 First Downs:

- a) A team shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line-to-gain (and earn a 1<sup>st</sup> down).
- b) The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain.
- c) A new series of downs will be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone.

### 3.4 Starting a play:

- a) The offense must have 4 players within one yard of the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
- b) The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion from the spot designated by the ball marker. The ball may be moved with approval of the Official due to poor field conditions. The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards from the line of scrimmage. *Penalty: false start, 5 yards.*
- c) After leaving the huddle, all offensive players must come to a complete stop for at least 1 full second. One offensive player may be in motion, but may not be moving towards the opponent's goal line at the time of the snap. If two or more players go in motion before the snap, then this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap.
- d) All offensive players must be momentarily within 15 yards of the ball. It must be clear who the seven offensive players are on each play. The intent of this rule is to eliminate all sleeper or hideout plays. A penalty will be assessed for this type of play, regardless of when the Official becomes aware of the illegal formation. *Penalty: illegal participation, 10 yards.*

### 3.5 Passing/Catching the ball:

- a) Each member of the offensive team is eligible to receive a pass unless a player voluntarily goes out-of-bounds during the play. *Penalty: illegal participation, 10 yards.*

- b) Only one forward pass will be allowed per down.
- c) For a legal catch, a pass receiver must come down with at least one foot in-bounds.

### 3.6 Defensive Rush:

- a) The defense rusher/rushers must line up at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- b) The defense may rush once the ball is snapped.

### 3.7 Laterals & Fumbles:

- a) All laterals and fumbles become dead when the ball touches the ground.
- b) The ball will be put into play at the point where the ball first touched the ground.
- c) Any lateral or fumble that does not touch the ground may be advanced by any player catching the ball.
- d) A ball fumbled by the offense into their endzone will result in a safety. A ball fumbled into the opponent's endzone will result in a touchback.

### 3.8 Touchdowns, Safeties, & Extra Point Attempts:

- a) Touchdowns are worth six points.
- b) Safeties are worth two points.
- c) Following a touchdown, a try for one point may be taken from the 5-yard line. A try for two points may be taken from the 10-yard line.
- d) If the defense should intercept a pass during an extra point attempt, they may return it for a score. A score will equal 2 points, regardless of whether the attempt was for one or two.
- e) Once the team captain has informed the Official of whether the attempt will be for one or two points, the decision cannot be changed unless a time-out is called.

### 3.9 Overtime:

- a) The field captains shall be brought together and a coin toss will be conducted. During the regular season, only one overtime period shall be

played. During the playoffs, the overtime format will be repeated until a winner is declared.

b) The winner of the toss shall be given the option of either offense or defense. If additional overtime periods are necessary, captains will alternate choices. Each team will be given 4 downs from the same 10-yard line to score a touchdown. If the first team scores, then the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to win or tie the game.

c) If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, the game will be over. If not, the ball will be placed at the 10-yard line to begin the series of four downs. Extra Point attempts will be held as in regulation play.

d) Each team is entitled to one time-out per overtime period.

#### **4. Screen Blocking**

**4.1 Blocking, as in regulation tackle football, is prohibited.**

#### **5. Flag Belt Removal**

5.1 When the flag is taken from the runner, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead.

5.2 If a flag inadvertently falls off, the ball is dead where the flag fell or the minute someone without a flag has the ball.

5.3 A player may leave their feet to remove a flag.

5.4 The ball becomes dead when:

- a) A legal de-flagging occurs.
- b) A player in possession of the ball steps out-of-bounds.
- c) A ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet.
- d) A forward pass, lateral, or fumble hits the ground.
- e) A snap from the center touches the ground.

5.5 In an attempt to remove the flag from the ball carrier, defensive players may contact the body of an opponent with his/her hands. However, a defensive player may not hold,

push, or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag. Similarly, no player shall attempt to trip an opponent, contact an opponent who is on the ground, make unnecessary contact with an opponent, deliberately dive or run into an opponent, or tackle the ball carrier. *Penalty: illegal contact, 10 yards (flagrant offenders will be ejected).*

5.6 Inadvertent contact may occur during flag removal. The Officials will determine if the contact created an advantage or disadvantage for either player.

5.7 Spinning to avoid a pull is legal. However, an offensive player may not stiff arm, jump, dive, or guard his/her flags by blocking them with their hands or the ball. *Penalty: flag guarding, 10 yards.*

## **6. Punting the Ball**

6.1 Punts must be announced before the ball is ready for play. The kicking team must have 4 players on their line of scrimmage and the ball must be snapped from the center. The punter must be at least 1 yard off the line of scrimmage upon receiving the snap and must punt the ball immediately. There will be no movement by the offense until the ball is kicked. *Penalty: false start, 5 yards.*

6.2 Defensive players may not enter the neutral zone until the ball is kicked. *Penalty: false start, 5 yards.*

6.3 The ball may be advanced by the receiving team after it has touched the ground; however, if the ball hits any player and then touches the ground, the ball is dead at that spot.

6.4 Quick kicks and fake punts are illegal.

6.5 Once the team captain has informed the Official that the team will punt, the decision cannot be changed unless a time out is called.

## **7. Rule Clarifications**

7.1 A defensive player must avoid running into the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage. It is illegal for a defender to contact the QB's arm at any time. *Penalty: roughing the passer, 10 yards, automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.*

7.2 Pushing or chucking a receiver/defender is not allowed. *Penalty: illegal use of hands, 10 yards.*

7.3 No player shall attempt to strip the ball from another player. *Penalty: stripping, 10 yards.*

7.5 Spiking the ball is illegal. *Penalty: unsportsmanlike conduct (dead ball), 10 yards.*

7.6 Any dead-ball penalty occurring after a touchdown will be assessed on the extra point attempt. Any dead-ball penalty occurring after an extra point attempt will be assessed on the next play from scrimmage.

7.7 When an inadvertent whistle is blown, the ball will be dead at the spot when the whistle was blown. The team against which the inadvertent whistle was blown has the option of accepting the play or replaying the down. If the ball is in the air when an inadvertent whistle is blown, the down must be replayed.

7.8 The offense is responsible for retrieving the ball after a play. The offense may bring the ball into the huddle.

7.9 All players on the field must wear a flag. Failure to do so during a live ball will result in a 5-yard penalty, if the Official notices prior to the ball being snapped.

7.10 A defensive player may not remove an offensive player's flag when the offensive player does not have the ball. *Penalty: illegal flag belt removal, 10 yards.*

7.11 A defensive player may not remove an offensive receiver's flag prior to the receiver touching the ball. *Penalty: defensive pass interference, 10 yards & automatic first down.*

7.12 A player may not tie knots in his/her flag or fasten the belt to his/her uniform. *Penalty: illegally secured flag, 10 yards & loss of down.*

7.13 At the request of the team that was scored upon, the Official may check the flagbelt of players who score a touchdown or conversion. If a player removes his/her flagbelt prior to being checked by the Official, the score will be nullified. *Penalty: illegally secured flagbelt, 10 yards & loss of down.*

7.14 The QB (the player that receives the snap) cannot run with-in 5 yards of the endzone and 1<sup>st</sup> down markers. (There must be a handoff in order to run) *Penalty: Loss of down.*

7.15 Shirts must be tucked in at all times and flags must be placed on the sides. The referee will issue a warning to fix the belt or the flag. *Penalty: 5 yard loss.*

7.16 Flags cannot be the same color as the shorts.

7.17 No jewelry can be worn.

7.18 Shorts cannot have pockets.

7.19 Coaches must be prepared to show proof of age before the game. A coach cannot ask for proof of age after halftime has ended.

## 8. Summary of Fouls and Penalties

### 8.1 Loss of 5 Yards:

- a) Illegal equipment (ie - jewelry).
- b) Delay of game (dead ball).
- c) Illegal snap (dead ball).
- d) False start or Encroachment (dead ball).
- e) Illegal procedure (ie - 2 players in motion at snap, moving forward at snap).
- f) Illegal forward pass (from point of pass and loss of down).
- g) Intentional grounding (from point of pass and loss of down).
- h) Helping the runner (ie - runner may not be pulled or pushed by a teammate).

### 8.2 Loss of 10 Yards:

- a) Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- b) Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct or personal foul (*disqualification*).
- c) Flag guarding, jumping, and diving (*from the spot of the foul*).
- d) Offensive illegal contact (blocking or impeding the rusher) (*from the spot of the foul*).
- e) Defensive illegal contact (*from the end of the run or the line of scrimmage*).
- f) Offensive pass interference (*from the line of scrimmage and loss of down*).
- g) Defensive pass interference (*from the line of scrimmage and automatic 1st down*).
- h) Illegal use of hands (ie - bumping or pushing-off during a pass play) (*from the line of scrimmage*).
- i) Roughing the passer (*from the end of the run or the line of scrimmage and automatic 1st down*).



j) Stripping or attempting to steal the ball from the runner (*from the spot of the foul*).

k) Two or more consecutive encroachments during the same interval between downs.

l) Illegal participation.

m) Illegal flag belt removal.

n) Illegally secured belt (*loss of down - on touchdown, revoke touchdown*).