



Please read all rules so that you understand and follow them in the games. Team captains are responsible for making sure their players have read the rules.

FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES

GENERAL

- ✓ Home team has the option for first possession (take/defer) and the visitor chooses end.
- ✓ We do not change ends at half as there are no real game impacting environment elements
- ✓ The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its end zone line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) downs to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to make a first down or score after a first down is made, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over at their own end line.
- ✓ All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's end zone line.
- ✓ Game balls used during league play will be provided by The Zone Sportsplex. If a team wishes to use their own (NFL size) ball, the team must bring their ball out when they are on offense as the 25 second clock is ticking.
- ✓ All shorts or pants must NOT have belt loops. Absolutely no cargo pants or shorts allowed.
- ✓ Players will not be able to participate in any league game without a player card and they must be on the team roster.
- ✓ A complete roster must be issued by each team before the start of league play.

TEAMS

- ✓ Teams must field a minimum of four (4) players at all times.
- ✓ Teams should consist of 10 players (maximum of 18 players) to assure adequate substitutes and compensate for players who may have conflicts on certain nights.
- ✓ The youth (Elementary and Jr. High) teams will play 6 on 6. The high school and adult teams will play 5 on 5.
- ✓ Teams must use only players on their rosters. Substitutions or additions cannot be made after the 3rd week of the season unless special circumstances require it and are approved by the league director. Absolutely no additions or substitutions may be made for playoff games. To help ensure proper roster and player identification, The Zone Sportsplex requires a mandatory Player Identification card for all league play.
- ✓ If a team (at least four players) fails to arrive within 5 minutes of the designated start time the opposition will be spotted 7 points and the game will be shortened by 10 minutes. If the team is more than 10 minutes late they will automatically forfeit the contest. If a team captain knows the team will be late or cannot show, he is responsible for contacting The Zone Sportsplex at least two days in advance, the game may then be rescheduled.

TIMING/OVERTIME

- ✓ Games consist of two 20-minute halves with continuous clock. It will stop for timeouts and in the final minute of each half for incomplete passes, out of bounds, touchdown, and change of possession.
- ✓ The offense has 25 seconds to snap the ball after the ball is set to start the play.
- ✓ After change of possession, the defense has 10 seconds to change personnel if desired. This 10 second count is part of the 25 second count.
- ✓ Each team is allotted one (1) 45 second timeout per half and timeouts cannot be carried over to the second half or overtime.
- ✓ The clock will stop at 1 minute if it is a dead ball.
- ✓ If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game goes to an overtime period. Each team will be given the ball and will have 4 plays to score from mid-field. This will continue until a winner is decided. If the game is still tied after the first possession, the teams **MUST** go for a 2 point conversion the next time they score.
- ✓ Officials can stop the clock at their discretion

SCORING

- ✓ Touchdown: 6 points
- ✓ Extra point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line), 2 points (played from 12-yard line)
- ✓ Safety: 2 points (**when the line of scrimmage is the goal line there can be no safeties**)
- ✓ An interception returned during an extra point try will be worth 3 points.

RUNNING

- ✓ The quarterback can only run once a rushing defender has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- ✓ Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Pitch plays are allowed, but only if behind the person pitching the ball. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- ✓ “No-handoff zones” and “no pitch zones” are located 5 yards in front of the end zone and 5 yards in front of midfield (the first down), these zones only occur if the line of scrimmage is within the five yards. They are designed to avoid short-yardage, power running situations. The QB may run if rushed.
- ✓ The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- ✓ Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- ✓ Spinning is allowed, **but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player. Jumping to gain yardage will result in a penalty.**
- ✓ The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled, where the carrier’s knees hit the ground or where they go out of bounds. If the ball is not visible, we will spot the ball at the location of the players hips at the time of the flag pull.

RECEIVING

- ✓ All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off or pitched behind the line of scrimmage).
- ✓ Only one player is allowed in motion at the time of the snap. Motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage.
- ✓ A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- ✓ There is no bumping or jamming receivers at the line when on defense.
- ✓ If a receiver steps out of bounds, they may not be the next player to touch the ball.

PASSING

- ✓ The offense will have 7 seconds to move the ball past the line of scrimmage once the ball is received on the snap. The count will be: 1 2 3 4 5 6 whistle
- ✓ Interceptions may be run back.
- ✓ Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start at the end line.

DEAD BALLS

- ✓ The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
- ✓ Substitutions may be made on any dead ball
- ✓ Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled. The flags are considered ‘pulled’ if the defensive player actually has the flag in hand after it has been pulled off of the ball carrier. If the ball carrier’s flags fall off in the course of the play, the ball carrier is down after at least a one hand touch.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Touchdown or safety is scored
 - Ball carrier’s knee or elbow hits the ground if flags were not pulled
 - If the ball carriers flag falls off, it is one hand touch to tackle
- ✓ **There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground unless fumbled forward, then the ball is spotted where it left the ball carriers hand.**

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- ✓ All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. The referee will walk off this distance and stand along the sideline; all defenders must be behind the referee’s line to be eligible to rush. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. Players rushing the quarterback cannot use their hands to push, grab, throw, or in any way try to move a blocker out of the way to get to the quarterback. **The defender is responsible for using footwork only to get around the blocker. A “lineman” may protect the quarterback with their hands behind their back using footwork only to disrupt the path of a rushing defender. They may not raise their hands, throw their bodies into the rushing defenseman in an overtly physical way, push the rushing defenseman or grab the rushing defenseman**
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Roughing the passer will result in a penalty. This includes but not limited to... hitting the arm, pushing the quarterback.

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

- ✓ If the referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, overtly physical contact or any un-sportsmanlike act, the referee may call illegal contact, and a warning will be issued. Any more such behavior will result in ejection from the game and possibly a one game suspension.
- ✓ **Officials have the right to determine offensive language. Trash talking that is offensive to either the referee; the other players or the spectators will not be tolerated. A warning will be given for one infraction; any more will result in an ejection. Referees have a difficult job and do not need comments made about any judgment calls they make. All calls made by the referees will be supported by the league director.**
- ✓ Any person ejected from a game could possibly serve an additional game suspension. If another ejection occurs, the player will be suspended from the league. Upon returning, if one more ejection occurs the player will be suspended indefinitely.
- ✓ Any contact with the “quarterback” other than grabbing for the flags will not be tolerated.

PENALTIES

The referee will call all penalties. The non-offending team can decline penalties.

Defensive Penalties:

- ✓ Offsides – 5 yards and automatic first down
- ✓ Pass Interference – **spot of the foul** and automatic first down (Interference will be called if contact between the defender and the receiver happens before the ball arrives, if the defender is not making a play on the ball (turn and look for pass), and if the contact is more than incidental, resulting in the receiver being unable to catch a ball that could have been caught)
- ✓ Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.) – 5 yards and automatic first down
- ✓ Illegal flag pull (before receiver has the ball) – 5 yards and automatic first down
- ✓ Roughing the quarterback (hitting his throwing arm) will result in a 10 yard penalty and automatic first down.
- ✓ Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yards) – 5 yards and automatic first down

Offensive Penalties:

- ✓ Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) – 5 yards, loss of down
- ✓ Illegal forward pass (pass received behind line of scrimmage) – 5 yards, loss of down
- ✓ Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) – 5 yards, loss of down
- ✓ Illegal Flags (leaving the line of scrimmage while not possessing flags to begin play or not on the hips) -5 yards, loss of down. Thus, the offensive team may hike the ball while one of their players is putting their flags on, but the player putting their flags on may not leave the line of scrimmage.
- ✓ Shirt untucked covering flags – 5 yards, loss of down.
- ✓ **Flag guarding** – 5 yards (**from line of scrimmage**), loss of down (If a defender is reaching for a flag and would have been able to pull it but the ball-carrier deliberately prevents him, the penalty will be called)
- ✓ Delay of game –5 yards and loss of down
- ✓ **Referees determine if contact is incidental.** All penalties enforced from the line of scrimmage
- ✓ Only the **team captain** may ask the referee questions about rule clarification. **Players cannot question judgment calls.**
- ✓ Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it. The clock will continue to run on an offensive penalty.

ATTIRE

- ✓ **Molded cleats are allowed.**
- ✓ Colored pullover mesh jerseys will be provided unless teams have their own single color jerseys.
- ✓ Shirts will be tucked in at all times to alleviate obstruction of flags.
- ✓ Shorts or athletic pants must be worn. Any shorts or pants with belt loops will not be allowed.

League tie-breakers are as follows:

- ✓ **Head to head competition**
- ✓ **Point differential**
- ✓ **Points for**
- ✓ **Points against**

Tournament and Playoff points for places are as follows:

Win – 6 points

Points For – 1 point for every 21 points scored, with 3 points maximum

Points Against – 1 point for holding your opponent to UNDER 21 points

After each team has played their initial 2 games, the points will dictate who plays in the Place vs Place games.