

Flag Football Tournament Rules

FLAG FOOTBALL IS NON-CONTACT, BLOCKING AND TACKLING ARE NOT ALLOWED.

Attire

- Cleats are allowed, but must be rubber. Inspections must be made prior to the game. It is recommended that all players wear a protective mouthpiece.

Field Dimensions and Markings

Length: 60(or 80) yards

Width: 20(or 30) yards

End Zones: Maximum 10 yards deep, minimum 7 yards deep

No-running zones: Must be marked 5 yards from each end zone.

The football used must fit the size and ability of players. Since this is a grade 6, 7, 8 tournament, that means only junior sized balls are appropriate.

Teams are expected to provide their own game balls. The opposing coach is under no obligation to loan out their game ball.

Possession

- Classic Coin Toss - winner of coin toss gets choice (defer or take ball)

There are no kickoffs

- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has **four** plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has **four** plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line. An automatic first down by penalty will overrule the other requirements regarding three plays to make either a first down or score. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides at half time.

Number of Players

- Teams consist of 6 players on the field at one time.
- Teams may play with a minimum of four (4) players (due to injuries).
- If less than 4 players are available, the game is cancelled.
- A maximum of four boys (or four girls) are allowed on the field at one time

Timing/Overtime

- Game length is 24 minutes running time (two halves, 12 minutes each).
- If the score is tied at the end of semi final or final the game is decided by alternating convert attempts from the 5 or 12 yard line.
- Each time the ball is spotted the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- Each team has 1 x 30-second timeout per game. The clock stops during a timeout.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- The teams will be warned when there are 5 plays left in the half and game. The game cannot end on a defensive penalty.
- There will be a halftime period of 2 minutes between the first and second half.

Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points

Extra point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line)

2 points (played from 12-yard line)

Safety: 2 points

Note: An interception return to opponent's end zone on any extra-point play by the defense will result in the defense scoring 2 points plus gaining possession for the next series at its own five yard line.

Running

- To start the play, the ball must be snapped between the legs of the snapper and the ball must travel in the air before the quarterback gets possession (ie. can't be an 'under centre' snap).
- The center is the player who gives the ball to the quarterback via a snap. The center cannot take a direct handoff back from the quarterback (no center sneak play).

- The quarterback is the player who receives the ball directly from the snap.
- The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage.
- An offence may use multiple handoffs **behind** the line of scrimmage. Only backward or lateral handoffs are allowed during a down.
- Tosses or sweeps behind the line of scrimmage are allowed and are running plays. Downfield tosses are not permitted. Once a player has possession of the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, any loss of possession will be blown dead by the official.
- "No-running zones" are located 5 yards from each end zone. When the ball is on or inside the 5-yard line going towards the opponent's end zone, the offense cannot use a running play to cross the line of scrimmage.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- All defensive players are eligible to rush once the ball has been handed off or tossed, or there is a play-action fake or fake handoff.
- Spinning is allowed, but offensive players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- It is up to the ball carrier to avoid contact with the defender. Good defensive position should be rewarded by the officials.

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception. (A receiver cannot return on to the playing field from an out of bounds position)

Passing

- Only players starting 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage can rush the passer.
- The quarterback has seven seconds to throw the ball. If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down and the ball is spotted at the previous line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off or tossed, or there is a play-action fake or fake handoff, the seven second rule no longer is in effect.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball.
- The defence can return interceptions.
- On interceptions that occur and remain in the end zone, the ball will become dead and will result in the ball belonging to the intercepting team at its 5-yard line. Should an interception occur in the end zone and the ball carrier leave the end zone, the ball will belong to the intercepting team at the spot the ball becomes dead. However, should the ball carrier return to the end zone and be de-flagged, or the ball be ruled dead the result would be a safety for the other team.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Once a player catches the ball he/she is no longer allowed to lateral the ball. This applies to receivers as well. (i.e. hook and laterals are not permitted)

Dead Balls

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Official blows the whistle.
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled or becomes illegal.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - Touchdown or safety is scored.
 - When any part of the ball carrier's body, other than a hand or foot, touches the ground.
- If the ball carrier's flag falls off, the play will be whistled dead and the ball will be spotted at the spot where the flag fell off.
- Players are ineligible to catch a pass if their flag has fallen off.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball will be spotted where the ball carrier's feet were when the fumble was made. I.e. a bad snap will be blown dead and the ball will be spotted at the centre's feet. There is no stripping of the ball.

Rushing the Quarterback

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage and be lined up within 2 yards (side to side) of the ball when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback but only players lined up within two yards (side to side) of the ball are entitled to a clear path to the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off or tossed, or there is a play-action fake or fake handoff, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

REMEMBER, BLOCKING OR TACKLING ARE NOT ALLOWED.

Sportsmanship/Roughing

- If the referee witnesses any acts of flagrant contact, tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the tournament. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Trash talking is illegal. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) 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 ejected from the game.
- Once a flag is pulled, the defensive player should hold the flag above his/her head so that the referee can spot the location of the flag pull. The pulled flag should be handed to the player who lost the flag or to a teammate. Intentionally throwing the flag onto the ground is considered poor flag etiquette.

Penalties

- All penalties are 5 yards (except for Pass Interference - 15 yards). The down will be repeated, and will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, unless otherwise noted.
- All penalties can be declined.
- Penalties will not exceed half the distance to the opposing team's goal line from the line of scrimmage.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage except for flag guarding.
- Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty.

Defensive Penalties

- Offside -- 5 yards and automatic first down
- Pass Interference -- 15 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.) -- 5 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball) -- 5 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) -- 5 yards and automatic first down.
- Substitution fouls (player enters field after ball is blown ready for play, i.e. To deceive opponents, or 6 players on the field)
- Disconcerting signals (signals to distract opponent or simulate offensive signals prior to snap)
- Interference with opponent or ball at the snap.

Offensive Penalties

- Delay of game
- Substitution fouls
- Illegal motion (more than one person moving, etc.) -- 5 yards and loss of down;
- False Start
- Illegal Snap
- Offensive holding
- Illegal shift or failure to pause for one second
- Player out of bounds (if player goes out of bounds, player cannot return to the field and catch ball)
- Illegal forward pass (pass received behind line of scrimmage) -- 5 yards and loss of down;

- Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) -- 5 yards and loss of down;
- Flag guarding -- 5 yards from the point of foul and loss of down;
- Rusher Interference - It is illegal for a receiver to run a pattern that interferes with a rusher on his/her direct path to the quarterback.