



# 2023 – 2024 RULE BOOK



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## GAME FORMAT

### 5 V 5 & 6 V 6 FLAG GAME FORMAT

- Field is 25 yards wide and 50 yards long, including the 5-yard end zones.
- Standard games are 5 players v 5 players for 8U, 16U, and 18U.
- Standard games are 6 players v 6 players for 10U, 12U, 14U.
- If teams are short players and have 1 less player than the standard game format listed above for their division, the game format can be reduced to 5 players v 5 players for 10U, 12U, 14U and 4 players v 4 players for 8U, 16U, and 18U. The referee and coaches must discuss this prior to the game whistled in.
- Two 20-minute running clock halves (5-minute break at half).
- Each possession starts at the 5-yard line after scores, turnover on downs and/or halftime.
- 45-second play clock for **Grade K-2/8U Division**.
- 30-second play clock for **Grade 3 – 12/10U – 18U Divisions**.
- The offensive team has three downs to get a first down at mid-field, then 4 downs to score once they have crossed mid-field.
- **NO RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK** in **Grade K – 6/8U – 12U Divisions**, unless the QB fakes a handoff, which will trigger a defensive player to cross the LOS and rush the QB.
- **YOU CAN RUSH THE QUARTERBACK** in **Grade 7 – 12/14U – 18U Divisions and All-Girls**.  
*\* Specific rules are listed in their division below. \**

### SCORING

- Touchdowns = 6 points
- Extra Point (5-yard line) = 1 point
- Extra Point (10-yard line) = 2 points
- Safety = 2 points and the defense gets the ball
  - A safety can happen when the ball carrier's flag is pulled in the endzone.
- When a ball is intercepted on a convert play, it is considered a dead ball.

## DIVISION RULES

### K – 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE/8U DIVISION RULES & GOALS

- 45-second play clock.
- Unlimited runs.
- One coach is allowed on the field for both offense and defense.
- Pass count is **5 seconds** until "sack".

In this division we want to get the players lined up properly and running in the right direction. We want to be flexible with the rules and teach the players the proper fundamentals of football.



### **3<sup>RD</sup> – 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE/10U DIVISION RULES & GOALS**

- 30-second play clock.
- Two runs per offensive possession.
- Only one run allowed to gain a 1<sup>st</sup> Down (teams CAN run the ball within 5 yards of midfield).
- One run allowed to advance towards the endzone.
- No runs 5yds or less from the endzone.
- No runs on extra points.
- One coach is allowed on the field for both offense and defense.
- Pass count is **4 seconds** until “sack”.

In this division we want to start limiting the number of run plays and start encouraging the use of the pass play. Players should understand where to line up and how to apply basic football fundamentals.

### **5<sup>TH</sup> – 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE/12U DIVISION RULES & GOALS**

- 30-second play clock.
- One run per offensive possession (teams CAN run the ball within 5 yards of midfield).
- No runs 5yds or less from the endzone.
- No runs on extra points.
- No Coach allowed on the field.
- Pass count is **4 seconds** until “sack”.

In this division we want to encourage the teams to start focusing on passing the ball more than running the ball.

### **7<sup>TH</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE/14U DIVISION RULES & GOALS**

- 30-second play clock.
- Defense can rush the QB for only **ONE** time per defensive possession.
- Defender must be lined up 7-yards behind the line of scrimmage and at least 3-yards away to either side of the rusher bag.
- **MUST DECLARE** to the official they are rushing the QB for that down.
- QB can run the ball if defense decides to rush the QB.
- No coach allowed on the field.
- Pass count is **3 seconds** until “sack”.

In this division we make the transition into an every-down is a pass play or a scaled-down version of HS 7v7 pass game. We want the players to start working on their skills as a QB, WR, and DB that they have learned from their coach and apply it in a fun, competitive format.

### **9<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE/16U & 18U DIVISION RULES & GOALS**

- 30-second play clock.
- Defense can rush the QB except at the +5-yard and +5 goal line.
- Defense does not need to declare to the official that they are rushing.



- Defender must be lined up 7-yards behind the line of scrimmage and at least 3-yards away to either side of the rusher bag.
- QB can run the ball if defense decides to rush the QB.
- No coach allowed on the field.
- Pass count is **3 seconds** until “sack”.

## 7<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE/14U – 18U DIVISION DEFENSE RUSHING THE QB

- Grade 7-12/14U – 18U Division can rush the QB/blitz outside of the +5-yard line.
- There is no QB rush/blitz if the LOS is at the +5 to goal line.
- The rush/blitz can come from any defensive position if they are 7-yards back from the line of scrimmage and are at least 3-yards away to either side of the rusher bag.
- There is 5-yard penalty if an offensive player obstructs the rushers path.

## OVERALL LOGISTIC RULES

- Coin flip determines choice of possession or direction (winning team can elect to defer to the 2nd half).
- Two 30-second timeouts per half.
- If there is a bad snap, the ball is dead and placed at the LOS – there is no loss of yardage.
- Center cannot take a handoff from the QB.
- Ball is placed where a flag pulled, not where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
- A receiver must have one foot in bounds when making a reception.
- Laterals are allowed but if the ball hits the ground, the ball is spotted at that yard mark.
- Absolutely no tackling or blocking (stationary pick is allowed but player cannot move).
- Only one player can be in motion at the same time.
- 3 players must be on the LOS for 6 v 6 and 2 players must be on the LOS for 5 v 5 or it will result in illegal formation; the center counts as 1 player on the LOS.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty.
- Teams switch sides at halftime.
- The clock will only stop for time-outs and injuries unless it is the last minute of the game; it does not stop for incomplete passes, out of bounds, change of possession.
- **LAST 1 MINUTE OF THE GAME** – The clock will stop in the final 1-minute of the game on these actions:
  - Incompletions
  - Out of bounds
  - QB sack and kneel downs
  - Change of possession
  - Penalties – If it’s an offensive penalty the clock will start on the official unless dead ball foul
  - If a timeout is called after a touchdown, the clock will not start until the play after the conversion attempt

## SPECIAL ALERT RULES

- Defensive players can cross the line of scrimmage when a handoff, fake handoff, or backward pass has occurred.
  - This “Deception Rule” is applied to define the integrity of the LOS and development of the passing game for both offense and defense; rule applies to all divisions.
- Interceptions can be returned for a TD if intercepting team’s flag is pulled before the end zone; possession will begin where the defender is flagged.

## MERCY RULE

- If a team is up by 35 or more points, they only have 2 downs to get a first down and 2 downs to score until that point difference is trimmed below 35 points, then regular game rules apply.
- The team that is behind by 35 or more points will start their offensive possession at the +10-yard line and has 4 downs to score.
- If the point difference is trimmed below 35 points, then regular game rules apply.
- Grade 7 – 12/14U – 18U division – there is no defensive QB rush/blitz.

## PASS GAME RULES

- The Offense must throw the ball within:
  - K – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade/8U – 5 seconds
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade/10U – 4 seconds
  - 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade/12U – 4 seconds
  - 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade/14U – 18U – 3 seconds
- Pass count sounds as follows:
  - **K – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade/8U** – ONE one-thousand, TWO one-thousand, THREE one-thousand, FOUR one-thousand, FIVE one-thousand, SACK!!
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade/10U – 12U** – ONE one-thousand, TWO one-thousand, THREE one-thousand, FOUR one-thousand, SACK!!
  - **7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade/14U – 18U** – ONE one-thousand, TWO one-thousand, THREE one-thousand, SACK!!
- The sack count starts on the snap of the ball no matter what the offensive play is attempted.
- Forward pass can be underhand or overhand if it is beyond the LOS.
- If the QB does not release the ball before time expires, the result of the play is a sack, and the ball stays at the LOS.
- There are NO forward passes behind the LOS; this will result in a 5-yard penalty and loss of down.
- NO RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK! (Except in the Grade 7 – 12/ 14U – 18U divisions; see rushing rules above).
- In grades K – 6/8U – 12U, the QB can hand or pitch the ball off to another player and they can throw the ball within the allotted time; if/when the QB hands or pitches or throws a backward pass to another player, this alerts the defense that they can cross the LOS to pull the flag of the player with the ball.
- All grade levels have the option to throw a backward pass for a double pass play; this alerts the defense that they can cross the LOS to pull the flag of the player with the ball (Grade 7 – 12/14U

- 18U divisions can never take a hand off nor run the ball across the line of scrimmage on a backwards pass)
- Defense must start 2 yds off the line of scrimmage unless the ball is at the +1 then the defense can start at the goal line.

## SNAPPING THE BALL

- K – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade/8U – 10U, ALL girls' divisions – The center can side-saddle snap.
- If teams choose to do side-saddle snaps, the center must snap the ball to the QB standing DIRECTLY behind the center – no trick plays can be run from the direct side-saddle snap.
- 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade/12U – 18U – The center must snap between the legs.

## RUN GAME RULES

- A play will be considered a run play, when the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, or if a player takes a hand-off from the quarterback and does not cross the line of scrimmage in the allotted time.
- A play in which a player takes a hand-off from the quarterback, and then throws a forward pass will be considered a pass play, and not count as a team's run play.
- **Reminder on grade 3 – 6/10U – 12U run rules** – If you are going to use a run/pass Option (RPO) play with your RB, see below:
- In all RPO offenses, when the QB gives the ball to the RB, this will alert the defense that they can cross the LOS to pull the ball carrier's flag.
- To keep it simple – If you **have not** used your 1 run attempt in either zone:
  - If the QB gives the ball to the RB and the RB's flag is pulled before crossing the LOS and before the 4 second sack count, this will be considered a pass attempt and a sack.
  - If the QB gives the ball to the RB and the RB's flag is pulled before crossing the LOS but after the 4 second sack count, this will be considered as your 1 run attempt.
  - If the QB gives the ball to the RB, the RB does not have to cross the LOS before the 4 second sack count; the RB can stay behind the LOS if they choose but cannot pass.
- If you **have** used your 1 run attempt in either zone:
  - If the QB gives the ball to the RB, the RB must make a pass attempt before the 4 second sack count.
- The play is dead when the following occurs to the ball carrier:
  - Flag is pulled.
  - Runner's knee or elbow touches the ground.
  - Runner steps out of bounds.
  - Runner loses their flag then the opposing team must touch the runner.
  - Runner DIVES; ball is spotted where the runner left their feet.
  - Runner JUMPS; ball spotted where the runner left their feet.
  - Runner LEAPS; ball spotted where the runner left their feet.
  - NO direct QB runs.

- ONLY in the 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade/14U – 18U division can the QB run the ball if they are rushed/blitzed.
- The ball carrier can spin to avoid their flag being pulled but cannot flag guard.
- No fumbles (a fumbled, or stripped ball is dead and placed at the spot of the fumble with the offensive team retaining possession).

## RISE FLAG GAME PENALTIES

### OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

**Offensive Pass Interference** – 10-yard penalty and replay the down.

**Illegal Motion (2 players in motion)** – 5-yard penalty and replay the down.

**Illegal Formation** – 5-yard penalty and replay the down.

**Illegal Run** – 5-yard penalty and loss of down.

**False Start** – 5-yard penalty, replay the down.

**Illegal Forward Pass** – 5-yard penalty and loss of down (QB steps over the LOS or QB throws a forward pass behind the LOS).

**Blocking** – Ball is placed at the spot of the foul and loss of down.

**Leaping** – Ball is placed at the spot of the foul and loss of down.

**Flag Guarding (including stiff arms)** – 5-yard penalty from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – 15-yard penalty (possible ejection).

**Delay of Game** – Clock is stopped and a 5-yard penalty.

**No Intentionally Grounding Penalty** – 5-yard penalty, loss of down and start the clock.

### DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

**Defensive Pass Interference** – 10-yard penalty and replay down unless it's an offensive catch; Offense decides. 1st down can occur depending on the yardage.

**Illegal Contact (holding, jams, etc.)** – 5-yard penalty and replay down unless it's an offensive catch; Offense decides. 1st can occur depending on the yardage.

**Defensive Holding while Pulling Flag** – 5-yard penalty added to the end of the play. 1st down can occur depending on the yardage.

**Illegal Flag Pull (before player has ball)** – 5-yard penalty and replay down. 1st down can occur depending on the yardage.

**Offside** – 5-yard penalty and replay down. 1st down can occur depending on the yardage.





**Illegal Rushing (before a hand-off has occurred)** – 5-yard penalty and replay the down; offense decides depending on the result of the play. 1st down can occur depending on the yardage.

**Inadvertent Tackle** – 5-yard penalty added to the end of the play and replay down.

**Inadvertent Tackle from Behind with a Clear Path to Endzone** – Automatic touchdown.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – 15-yard penalty and automatic 1st down (possible ejection).

Defensive Penalties inside the 10-yard line will result in half the distance to the goal line if applicable.

## **OVERTIME FORMAT - ONLY IN THE PLAYOFFS, NOT THE REGULAR SEASON**

- Coin flip determines choice of overtime offensive possession.
- Possession begins at the 5-yard line.
- Offensive team will get 1 down to score from the 5-yard line.
- If a touchdown is scored, the scoring team must go for a 2-point conversion.
- An extra point cannot be intercepted and returned for points; it is a dead ball play.
- If the defense intercepts the ball, it's a change of possession unless the defense returns it for a TD.
- **Game Over** if intercepting team returns it for a TD on its 1st defensive possession per OT.
- **Game Over** if the intercepting team was ahead in points in OT prior to playing defense.
- **Game Over** if a team has more points than the other team, after both shared an offensive possession.
- If the game is still tied, overtime will be repeated until there is a winner.
- Teams alternate first possession each overtime period.