

General Rules

1. Coin toss determines which team has first choice of offense, defense, picking an end, or deferring to the second half for the choice of offense or defense.
2. Once the clock starts at the beginning of the game, the clock will only stop for time-outs and/or injuries. The clock starts again at the snap. **The clock does not stop for incomplete passes, out of bounds, or change of possession.**
3. TWO 60-second timeouts per half. These cannot be carried over to the second half or overtime.
4. If a timeout is called after a touchdown, the clock will not start until the play after the conversion attempt.
5. Teams switch sides at halftime.
6. If there is a bad snap, the ball is dead and placed at the LOS. There is NO loss of yardage.
7. The snap must pass between the center's legs to the QB.
8. Center cannot take a handoff from the QB.
9. Ball is placed where a flag pulled, not where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
10. A receiver must have **one** foot in bounds when making a reception.
11. Spinning is allowed. One foot at least must remain in contact with the ground. The ball carrier cannot dive forward, slide or jump to avoid a defensive player or gain yardage. The ball is potted where the ball carrier's hips are when the flag is pulled.
12. All defensive players are eligible to rush from anywhere on the field once the ball has been handed off, tossed, pitched or lateraled or there is a play action fake handoff, toss, pitch or lateral.
13. Any number of players can be in motion when the ball is snapped; only the center must be at the line of scrimmage. Players in motion towards the line of scrimmage will not be considered offside unless they have entered the 1 yard scrimmage neutral zone by placing 1 or more of the feet on the ground at the snap of the ball. If they return back behind their side of the zone before the ball is snapped, they will not be penalized.
14. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty.

U12 Game Format

6 v 6 Flag Game Format

The field is 25 yards wide and 55 yards long, including the 7-yard end zones.

6 players v 6 players

Teams are required to have a minimum of 5 players or the game will be considered a forfeit.

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.

30 second play clock

Defence can choose to send a rusher – see Rushing for rule explanation.

The QB has 7 seconds to throw the ball after the ball has been snapped. If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead which results in a loss of down and the ball is spotted at the previous line of scrimmage.

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.

The QB defined as the player that gains possession of the ball from the Centre, cannot run with the ball past the LOS unless the ball has been handed off, tossed, pitched or lateraled to another player and then returned.

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.

Run plays are allowed during downs

NO runs 5-yards from the End Zone

If an offensive penalty in the No Run Zone occurs that takes the team outside the No Run Zone then the team still cannot run.

NO runs on extra points

NO Coach allowed on the field

All players are eligible!

The sack count starts on the snap of the ball no matter what offensive play is attempted.

Forward passes/pitches/handoffs are allowed behind the line of scrimmage. However, once received the offense can no longer make another pass/pitch/handoff to another offensive player.

Once the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage the ball cannot be handed off, tossed, pitched or passed forward in any way.

The QB can HANDOFF, THROW or PITCH the ball backwards to another player where they can throw the ball beyond the LOS within the allotted time. If the QB hands-off, 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.

Prior to a forward pass or handoff, an offense may use multiple backwards behind the LOS.

Defense must start 2-yards off the LOS unless the ball is at the 1-yard mark, then the Defense can start at the goal line.

RUSHING

All players who rush the passer must be 7 yds from the line of scrimmage (every part of his/her body) at any point until after the ball has been snapped. This 7 yd distance is marked with a bean bag. Any number of players may rush the qb from this distance. The rusher must rush continuously in a direct path towards the qb if they are in the pocket or rolling out. A rusher lined up within 2 yds of the 7 yd bean bag is entitled to a free direct path to the qb. If the rusher is lined up outside this distance or the rusher switches sides once the center is ready to snap the ball then the rusher is not entitled to a direct path to the qb. A rusher cannot line up directly over the center but must be at least 1 ft over from the center. Any deliberate or accidental contact with the qb's upper body or his/her arm while he/she is attempting to throw the ball will result in an illegal contact penalty. If the qb's arm is in motion forward while attempting a pass when his/her flag is pulled by a rusher the play will be allowed to continue.

The rusher closest to the centre must raise their hand prior to the centre being set and identify themselves as the rusher.

Secondary rushers must start 7 yards from the LOS if they are first to cross the LOS but don't need to identify as they do not get the direct path to QB and could be called for illegal contact.

Rushers can not run with their hands above their head as they approach the QB, they need to go for the flags. Unless the QB goes to throw the ball, the rusher can try to block the ball but if the rusher makes any form of contact with the QB they will be called for a penalty.

The center shall not impede the rusher and must alter their route or it will be a penalty.

Run Game

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.

Dead Ball

- The play is dead when the following occurs to the ball carrier:
- Flag is pulled
- Runner's knee touches the ground
- Runner steps out of bounds
- Runner dives, jumps or leaps; ball is spotted where the runner left their feet.
- NO direct QB runs
- 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)

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. This rule applies to all Divisions.
- Interceptions can be returned for a TD, if intercepting teams flag is pulled before the end zone, then possession will begin where the defender is flagged.
- If a runner loses their flag, then the opposing team must tag them.

Mercy Rule

- team is ahead by 30 points
- team ahead has two downs to get to half and two downs to score
- team behind gets to start at the half and has 4 downs to score
- once the difference is less than 30 points both teams revert back to regular game rules

Overtime Format

OVERTIME IS ONLY IN THE PLAYOFFS

- Coin flip determines 1st possession of overtime
- There will be no time outs granted during the overtime period
- Overtime is split into two periods. The first period shall consist of 2 series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap at the middle line for one series of downs (no first down at middle). Should the defense score during the first series, other than on the try, then the extra period is over
- If teams are still tied after the first period, teams will get 1 play to score 1 extra point from the 5-yard no run zone line at 1 end zone that is chosen by the officials. If the game is still tied after each team has completed their play, then the teams will repeat period 2 until a winner is declared when 1 team scores and the other does not.

Scoring

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Extra Point (5-yard line) = 1 point
- Extra Point (10-yard line) = 2 points
- An interception returned to opponent's end zone on any extra point play by the defense will result in the defense scoring 2 points plus possession for the next series at its 5-yard line.
- A team scoring a safety touch is awarded 2 points. A team will score a safety when their opponent is flagged, loses possession of the ball, or goes out of bounds while they are in the end zone. A safety is not awarded when a player's momentum, while intercepting a pass in the field of play, in the judgment of the officials causes the ball to be brought into the end zone, where it is eventually ruled dead and the intercepting team shall be awarded a first down at the point of the interception.

U14 & U16 Game Format

6 v 6 Flag Game Format

The field is 30 yards wide and 55 yards long, including the 7-yard end zones.

6 players v 6 players

Teams are required to have a minimum of 5 players or the game will be considered a forfeit.

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.

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General Information

Safety

These flag rules consider all players to be responsible for the safety of their opponents as well as their teammates. It is imperative that each player exercise control to avoid bodily contact or minimize inevitable contact.

Ethical Play

Traditionally in flag football when a player removes an opponent's flag to end a play, the player must first hold up the flag to show the referee and hand the flag back to the respective opponent. To toss a flag aside or to the ground for the opponent to pick up is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. The football player who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct; and whether they escape being penalized; they bring discredit to the good name of the game, which is their duty as a player to uphold.

Coaching Ethics

Coaches must adhere to the guidelines in the rule book. It is expected that coaches have respect and integrity for the game and towards players, parents, officials, and staff. As a coach, it is your responsibility to provide inclusive and equitable play for all players on your roster.

Coaches to assist with field take down – last teams playing at the end of the day, coaches please stack the pylons on the field for pick up.

This is a recreational league and about development of the game and skills. Fair play is mandatory for all players. Make sure to sub players in and out equally has much as possible. Mix players up between running and throwing and share the ball among players.

Score keeping – a coach or a volunteer will keep score on the score sheet provided. At the end of the game both teams will confirm with the ref what score they have to make sure it's correct. Then coaches are to provide the score sheet to the Coordinator by email same day.

Equipment & Uniform

Mandatory equipment includes a mouth guard and shorts/pants that have **no pockets** including zippers to avoid any potential injury. Jerseys must be tucked into shorts. Flag belts must be around the waist and each flag on the players hips. Optional equipment for consideration is cleats (without metal spikes). All jewelry must be removed before game play. Any jewelry that cannot be removed must be fully taped and covered. Medical bracelets are an exception. Hoodies must be always worn with the hood tucked in. Any baseball style caps being worn must be turned backwards.

FOOTBALL SIZES

U6/U8 - Peewee or K2

U10 & U12 - Junior or TDJ

U14 & U16 - Youth or TDY

Penalties

Offensive Penalties

Offensive Pass Interference	10-yard penalty and replay the down.
Illegal Motion/ 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	5-yard penalty and loss of down (QB steps over the LOS or QB throws a forward pass behind the LOS).
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.

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 and replay down. 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.
Off-Side	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 w/Clear Path to End Zone	Automatic Touchdown.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15-yard penalty (possible ejection)
** Defensive Penalties inside the 10-yard line will result in half the distance to the goal line if applicable. **	

Terminology

Blocking	When a player deliberately impedes an opponent's approach to the ball, ball carrier, or potential ball carrier with or without making bodily contact with the opponent.
Dead Ball	When the ball is not playable by either team.
Defensive Pass Interference	When the defender significantly impedes on the eligible opponent's ability to catch the ball.
Delay of Game	A team or player who purposely stalls the game.
Fumble	A fumbled, or stripped ball is dead and placed at the spot of the fumble with the offensive team retaining possession.
Illegal Contact	When an opponent is grabbing/holding opponent.
Illegal Flag Pull	A player pulling off their opponent's flag before the opponent has possession of the ball.
Illegal Forward Pass	A forward pass that is completed in front of the line of scrimmage.
Lateral	A pass made parallel or rear to the line of scrimmage.
Line of Scrimmage (LOS)	An imaginary line extending from sideline to sideline, parallel to the goal line, the position of which is determined by the point of the ball closest to the defense's goal line.
Offensive Pass Interference/Pass Interference	When a player deliberately obstructs an opponent from catching the ball.
Off-side	When a player is in or beyond the neutral zone the instant that the ball is snapped; or when a player is closer to the opponent's dead-line the instant that a teammate touches the ball.
Pass Game	A play completed as a throw beyond the LOS.
Pick	A player intercepting the ball.
Run Game	A play completed as a hand-off behind the LOS.
Stationary Pick	When a defender has not moved from their position at the snap. If a pass is thrown where the defender is standing stationary, they become eligible to pick the ball without it being a pass interference on the offensive opponent.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	When a player is offensive, violating rules and/or sportsmanship towards others.

*Note all rules are subject to change without notice at the discretion of the NRFF Coordinators.

RESOURCES

<https://www.flagfootballplaymaker.com/> - help with making plays

<https://footballcanada.com/resources/> - check out the mobile app

VIDEOS

<https://nflflag.com/football-drills/running-back-drills> - handoffs

<https://nflflag.com/football-drills/how-to-throw-a-football> throw and catch

<https://nflflag.com/football-drills/football-agility-drills> - agility drills

<https://nflflag.com/football-drills/flag-pulling-drills> - flag pulling

<https://nflflag.com/football-drills/how-to-catch-a-football> - use at route and throwing station

<https://nflflag.com/football-drills/wide-receiver-drills> - route running

<https://nflflag.com/football-drills>

<https://flagfootballacademy.com/youth-flag-football-drills/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86HV5HhZ_3Y

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgpkihKWfnE>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOeca_Y049Lt3tR3JZeYmA