

# FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

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## A. THE GAME AND PLAYERS

- a. Flag football is a non-contact sport with contact.
- b. Men's and Women's games shall be played between two teams of seven players each. Four players are required to avoid a default.
- c. **A designated captain will be the only player to confer with the referees.** The team will identify this player before the game.
  - a. The captain who wins the toss will have the first choice of options for the first half or defer their option to the second half. The options for each half shall be as follows:
    - i. To choose whether their team will start on offense or defense, or
    - ii. To choose the goal their team will defend.
  - i. Overtime coin toss - winner has choice of ball, defense, or goal to defend
  - ii. In additional overtime periods during the tournament, choice is made alternately by teams. Example: Red won first overtime option and a second overtime period is necessary, blue has choice, etc.

## B. GAME TIME

Playing time shall be 40 minutes, divided into four quarters of ten (10) minutes each. The intermission between halves shall be no more than five (5) minutes. When overtime is used there will be a three (3) minute intermission. Each team will have three (3) timeouts of one (1) minute in length **per game**.

- a. The clock will start when the ball is legally snapped. It will run continuously in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the clock will run continuously for the first eight (9) minutes unless it is stopped for a:
  - i. Team time-out -- starts on the snap.
  - ii. Referee's time-out -- starts based upon referee's discretion.
- b. Approximately one (1) minute before the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter the referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in that quarter. The clock will start again on the snap. The back judge will announce the remaining time to both teams after each play in the last one (1) minute.
- c. During the final (1) minute of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the clock will stop for a(n):
  - i. Incomplete pass -- starts on the snap.
  - ii. Out-of-bounds -- starts on the snap.
  - iii. Score (touchdown or safety) -- starts on the snap at the 15-yard line.
  - iv. Team time-out -- starts on the snap.
  - v. First down -- dependent on the previous play inbounds/out of bounds.
    - i. Penalty and administration - dependent on the previous play. (Exception: delay of game -- starts on the snap).
  - vi. Referee's time-out -- starts at his/her discretion or previous play.
  - vii. Touchback -- starts on the snap.
  - viii. Change of possession -- starts on the snap.
  - ix. Team attempting to conserve time illegally -- starts on the snap.

## C. STARTING THE GAME

- a. All games opening series will start at the 14-yard line.

- b. After every touchdown the opponents next series of downs will start on the 14-yard line unless moved by penalty.
- c. After a safety the team who scored will next put the ball in play at their own 30-yard line unless moved by penalty.

D. SERIES OF DOWNS

- a. The team on offense is responsible to get the ball at the end of every down. The center will bring the ball from the huddle to the scrimmage line.
- b. Zone-line-to-gain: getting the ball to or into the next zone results a first down.
  - i. Exception – first down because of penalty that results in automatic first down. It could be the first and near twenty or first and less than one depending on where the next zone-line-to-game is.
  - ii. Loss on the play or due to a penalty a team may need more than twenty yards for a first down.

E. THE SNAP

- a. Must be one continuous motion
- b. To a back at least two yards behind the scrimmage line on scrimmage plays and punts. There cannot be a hand-to-hand center-back exchange on the snap. This would be an illegal snap.
- c. Illegal snap is a dead ball foul.

F. DEFLAGGING/TAGGING

- a. Runners must not guard the flags with ball, hands or shoulders.
- b. Flags must not be attached to runner in a way that one pull cannot deflag the runner. (Flag tampering results in a 10-yard penalty and disqualification.)
  - i. If a runner loses his/her flag belt, a one-hand tag by the opposing team between knee and shoulder will end the run. Touching the head or below the knee will not stop the play.
- c. Runner scoring a touchdown must raise hands so nearest official can deflag the scorer.
  - i. *If two pulls do not remove the flag, the touchdown does not count. Penalty: Ten yards from the previous spot and a loss of down.*
- d. Intentional deflagging of an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player result in a 10-yard penalty.
  - i. *Basic spot for penalty is based on all-but-one principle.*
- e. Deflagger may leave feet to deflag runner.

G. RUNNER CANNOT

- a. Stiff arm
- b. Run over potential deflagger
- c. Flag guard in any way

H. DEFENSIVE PLAYER CANNOT

- a. Intentionally deflag a player without the ball (personal foul).
- b. Hold, push or knock the runner down while attempting to deflag.

I. SCREEN BLOCKING

- a. Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body.
- b. Blocker cannot use arms or elbows. Hands must be at side or behind the back.
- c. Blocker must get in the moving rusher's direction of movement quick enough for a change of direction to be made prior to possible contact.
- d. Screen block must be made short of contact in defensive player's visual field and one step away in defensive player's blind area (directly behind player being blocked).

#### J. FORWARD PASS

- a. Only one forward pass can be made per down.
- b. Ball can be passed or handed backward to any player at any time.
- c. Forward **handing** can be made at any point during the game and as many times as you want.
- d. All players are eligible pass receivers.
- e. Illegal forward pass:
  - i. Two forward passes during a down.
  - ii. Intentionally throwing ball away; however, ball can be spiked into ground to stop clock.
  - iii. Intentionally throwing ball away to save a loss. This includes backward pass out-of-bounds. Player can spike in ground to stop clock.
  - iv. If passer is beyond offensive scrimmage line.
  - v. Pass after possession change.
  - vi. If passer catches own untouched pass.
- f. If a player throws a backward pass to conserve time or fumbles to keep from being deflagged/tagged, it is an illegal pass. (Penalty is five yards and is a loss of down; and the clock will be started on ready for play whistle.)

#### K. BALL TOUCHES GROUND

- a. The Ball is dead when it touches the ground at any time, except for on a punt prior to it being touched by any player.

#### L. PUNTS

- a. Must be announced by referee after asking team captain on fourth down how they want to play the down: kick or play.
- b. There are no quick kicks - illegal kick.
- c. Punting formation: Kicking Team must have at least one player on the scrimmage line.
- d. Kicker must kick immediately upon receiving the snap. If not, it is illegal procedure (5 yards).
- e. Neither kickers nor receivers can cross their scrimmage line until ball is kicked.
- f. Punts can be fielded off the ground and then returned.
- g. Scrimmage kicks that are not announced are illegal kicks (10-yard penalty).
  - i. If a time-out is taken by either team, "K" team can change decision concerning a kick or an announced scrimmage play. Also, decision can be changed if down is repeated because of penalty.
  - ii. A "K" player may not kick the ball to himself or any other "K" player. Illegal Kicking - 10 yards.

#### M. BASIC PENALTY SPOTS

- a. Previous spot is used to administer:
  - i. Loose ball fouls.
  - ii. Fouls (including encroachment) that are committed at about snap time.
- b. Spot of foul - distance is marked from foul spot.
- c. Illegal pass.
- d. Fouls by offense behind end of run.
- e. All-but-one penalty principle.
  - i. Used after play gets under way and does not involve a loose ball.

#### N. PENALTIES THAT RESULT IN A LOSS OF DOWN

- a. Illegal forward pass in all cases except after change of possession – illegal pass
- b. Illegally secured flag belt
- c. Illegal backward pass

O. FOULS THAT CREATE AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN

- a. Roughing the passer
- b. An illegally secured flag belt

P. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- a. Ejection from the game because of flagrant foul(s)/unsportsmanlike conduct (physical or verbal) will result in disqualification from at least the next scheduled game.
- b. Individuals who receive two unsportsmanlike penalties or one major unsportsmanlike penalty will be ejected from the game and suspended from the next game.
- c. When ejected from the game, the offending player(s) will be expected to leave the playing area within 60 seconds. This means "out of sight and sound."
- d. Offending team will enforce the sound and sight rule.
  - i. Failure of team to maintain control of their players and fans will result in the forfeit of the game.
- e. Two discipline reports filed on an individual and/or the team will result in the team being dropped from the program.
- f. Teams receiving 2 ejections in the season, or the playoffs combined will be removed from the league.

Q. OTHER

- a. Rules decisions are final after the ball is next legally snapped
- b. Inadvertent whistle
  - i. Replay down if ball is loose on pass or kick
  - ii. Replay down or take play results option to team whose player is in possession at time of whistle
- c. Roughing the Passer
  - i. If a defensive player trying to block a pass contacts the passer's arm, it will constitute roughing the passer. This is the case if the ball is touched or missed by the defender. Defensive players should go for the flag belt ONLY.
- d. No run plays can occur and a QB can only run once he is rushed by a defender.

R. TIE GAMES

- a. During the regular season, a tie after one (1) over-time period will be recorded as a tie. In tournament play, over-time periods will continue until a winner is decided.

S. OVERTIME

- a. Each team is given a **series of downs** from the ten (10) yard line.
- b. Visiting team will call the toss. Toss is made for:
- c. Defense or offense first or:
- d. End of field overtime will be played.
- e. Choice on other overtime periods is made on an alternate basis. If red won choice on toss, blue has second overtime choice, etc.
- f. If a team scores on first down, then their series of downs is over.
- g. **If the defense intercepts or gains possession of the ball, then the play is dead, and the series is over.** The overtime period is over if the defense has already played its series in overtime; otherwise, the defense gets their series of downs.
- h. Extra points will be played if the contest has not been decided.
  - i. One overtime, if necessary, will be used in regular season play. After one overtime a tie game is recorded. During the post season tournament overtime play will continue until a winner is decided.
  - ii. Example: Red is on offense first and throws an interception and does not score. Blue then scores a touchdown so no extra points are needed to decide the game and

blue is declared the winner.



