

# Flag Football Rules Fall 2018

1. Team Composition: Teams may consist of five (minimum) to seven (maximum) players on the field. Team rosters are limited to eighteen participants.
2. Game Duration: Each game will consist of two 20-minute halves with a two-minute break between halves.
3. Timing: The clock will stop for all time-outs and injuries. The clock will stop during the last minute of each half on incomplete passes, out of bounds, first downs, penalties, changes of possession, and scoring plays. However, if one team has a 10-point or more advantage during the second half, the clock will run regardless of the outcome of the play unless a time out is called.
4. Timeouts: Each team will have 2 time-outs per game. Only one time-out is permitted in case of overtime. No accumulation of time-outs is allowed.
5. Coin Toss: The captain winning the coin toss shall have a choice of options for the first half or shall defer his/her option to the second half. The options for each half shall be:
  - a. To choose whether his/her team will start on offense or defense.
  - b. To choose the goal his/her team will defend.The captain not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option.
6. Penalty Provisions: The team captain's first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable.

Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time out is granted to either team.
7. Series of Downs: The team in possession of the ball shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone (first down line). A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty, or a penalty against the opponent moves the ball into the next zone, or an accepted penalty against the opponent involves an automatic first down.
8. Punting: Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the Referee will ask the offensive captain if he wants to punt. The offensive team may request to punt on any down.

After such announcement, the ball must be punted. [Exception: If (a) a time-out is called by either team, or (b) the period ends, or (c) a foul occurs any time prior to or during this down that results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down. The offensive team may then change their decision whether or not to punt the ball.] Neither K (kicking team) nor R (receiving team) may advance beyond their respective line until the ball is

punted. After receiving the snap, the kicker must immediately punt the ball in a continuous motion; any intentional delay to punt the ball will result in a penalty. When a punt, which has crossed K's scrimmage line, touches any player from either team and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to R. However, if a punt hits R and is caught by K before the ball touches the ground, the ball is dead, belongs to K, and a new series begins for K. K may not kick to themselves.

9. Snapping and Associated Restrictions: Following the ready for play and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor make contact with an opponent or in any other way interfere with them. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals, or shifting through the zone. After the snapper has placed his hand(s) on the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball. The snapper, after assuming position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play until it is snapped. When over the ball, the snapper shall have his feet behind his scrimmage line. The snapper may snap the ball between his legs or to the side of his/her body. The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.

10. Handling the Snap and Associated Restrictions: The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Any fumble of the snap will be declared a dead ball and the ball will be downed at the spot it hit the ground.

11. Motion: One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the snap.

12. Passing: A forward pass is counted as a completion or interception as long as the first part of the person to make contact with the ground after the catch, usually one foot, touches inbounds. A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble anytime. A backward pass or fumble in flight may be caught or intercepted by any player inbounds and advanced. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. An unlimited number of forward passes may be thrown and caught as long as they originate behind the line of scrimmage. It is illegal for a passer to catch his untouched forward pass. Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.

13. Scoring Plays:

a. Touchdown: A touchdown shall count as six points. The player scoring the touchdown must raise his arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one pull and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed, and the player is disqualified.

b. Try: An opportunity to score 1 point from the 3 yard line, 2 points from the 10 yard line, or 3 points from the 20 yard line by running or passing shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown. It is the captain's decision for which try will be attempted.

c. Safety: A safety is worth 2 points during regular play, and 1 point during a try after a touchdown. After a safety, the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their own 14 yard line, unless moved by penalty. A safety is when:

i. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his/her team's possession. [EXCEPTION:

Momentum Rule—When a defensive player intercepts his/her opponent's forward pass, fumble, backward pass, or a Team R player catches a punt between his/her 5 yard line and the goal line and his/her original momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead. The ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where possession was gained.]

ii. A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her goal line and the ball subsequently becomes dead there in his/her possession.

iii. A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from his/her end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves him/her in possession at the spot of the foul and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.

14. Offensive Screen Blocking: The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his hands and arms at his side or behind his back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive players' screen block is illegal.

A blocker may use his hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his balance. A player must be on his feet before, during, and after screen blocking. Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block and may not initiate contact with his opponent if he is splitting two offensive screen blocks. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official.

15. Running with the Ball: The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a "stiff arm" extended to ward off an opponent attempting to de-flag/tag. The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate. A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his path nor attempt to run between two opponents or between an opponent and a sideline, unless the space is enough to provide a reasonable chance for him to go through without contact. If a runner in his progress has established a straight-line path, he may not be crowded out of that path. But if an opponent is able to legally establish a defensive position in that path, the runner must avoid contact by

changing directions. The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or making a legal tag.

16. Flag Guarding: Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Examples of flag guarding include, but are not limited to:

- a. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt.
- b. Placing the ball in possession over the belt.
- c. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner, which places the arm over the flag belt.

17. Flag Belt Removal: Players must have possession of the ball before they can be de-flagged legally. When a runner loses his flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The de-flagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees. In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play. A defensive player intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal.

18. Overtime: In the event of a tie game during regular season play, the game will stand as a tie and each team will be credited with a win. During tournament, a coin toss will ensue to begin the tiebreaker. The winner of the coin toss will be given the options of offense, defense, or direction, with all other options being exercised by the opposing captain. The offensive team will start 1<sup>st</sup> and goal from their opponent's 10-yard line and will have 4 downs to score a touchdown. If they succeed in scoring, the offense will choose to go for a 1, 2, or 3 point try. Following the try or missed conversion, the defense (now offense) will then attempt to score from the same 10-yard line and will be able to attempt a try if they score. If they win or fail to tie their opponent, the game is over. If a tie still exists, another overtime is played until a winner is determined. In the event of a triple overtime (or more), teams must go for 2 or 3 on the point after touchdown.

### Summary of Fouls and Penalties

#### **Loss of 5 Yards**

1. Required Equipment Worn Illegally
2. Delay of Game (Dead Ball)
3. Substitution Rules Infractions
4. Infraction of Punt Formation
5. Encroachment (Dead Ball)
6. False Start (Dead Ball)
7. Illegal Snap (Dead Ball)
8. Offensive Player Not Within 15 Yards of Ball
9. Infraction of Scrimmage Formation

10. Player Out-of-Bounds When Ball is snapped
11. Offensive Player Illegally in Motion
12. Player Receiving Snap within 2 Yards of Scrimmage Line
13. Illegal Shift
14. Intentionally Throwing Backward Pass or Fumble Out-of-Bounds to Conserve Time (Loss of Down if by Team A)
15. Illegal Forward Pass (Loss of Down if by Team A)
16. Intentional Grounding (Loss of Down)
17. Helping the Runner

### **Loss of 10 Yards**

1. Illegal Player Equipment
2. Two or More Consecutive Encroachments during Same Interval between Scrimmage Downs
3. Offensive Pass Interference
4. Defensive Pass Interference
5. Illegally Secured Flag Belt on Touchdown (Loss of Down if by Offense) (Automatic First Down if by Defense)
6. Unsportsmanlike Player Conduct
7. Spiking, Kicking, or Throwing Ball during Dead Ball
8. Personal Fouls: i.e. (Strip or attempt to strip the ball, Unnecessary Contact of Any Nature, Hurdling, Drive or Run into a player, tackling the runner, etc.)
9. Roughing the Passer (Automatic First Down)
10. Illegal Offensive Screen Blocking
11. Defensive Use of Hands
12. Illegal Flag Belt Removal
13. Guarding the Flag Belt
14. Stiff Arm
15. Obstructing or Holding the Runner
16. Batting a Loose Ball
17. Illegal Kicking
18. Illegal Participation

### **Disqualification (Red Card) Associated With Certain 10 Yard Penalties:**

1. Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Players, Substitutes or Others Subject to the Rules
2. Intentionally Kicking at or Swinging an Arm, Hand or Fist at any Opposing Player
3. Flagrant Spiking, Kicking, Throwing Ball

4. Intentionally Contacting an Official or Supervisor
5. Flagrant Personal Fouls
6. Tackling the Runner
7. Intentional Tampering With Flag Belt-Offense (Loss of Down)
8. Intentional Tampering With Flag Belt-Defense (Automatic First Down)