



Timbergrove Sports Association

Flag Football Rules

F2023

GAME PLAY RULES

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) downs to score a touchdown.
 - a. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after 3 downs, and elects to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5 yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross midfield, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot where the ball was snapped (on an incomplete pass) or where the play was blown dead.
 - b. Offensive Teams MUST declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt".
 - c. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
 - d. If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession (without actually kicking the ball) and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration.
 - e. If the offense fails to score after crossing midfield, the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line
4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession for the opening drive of the second half changes to the team that started the first drive of the first half on defense.
5. The games will be played with no more than 12 players on the field at any time. 6 offense vs. 6 defense. Team may elect to play with 5, but not less. If a team cannot field at least 5 players during the game, a forfeit will be declared. Any pickup players from other teams must be approved by the Division Director for the respective league

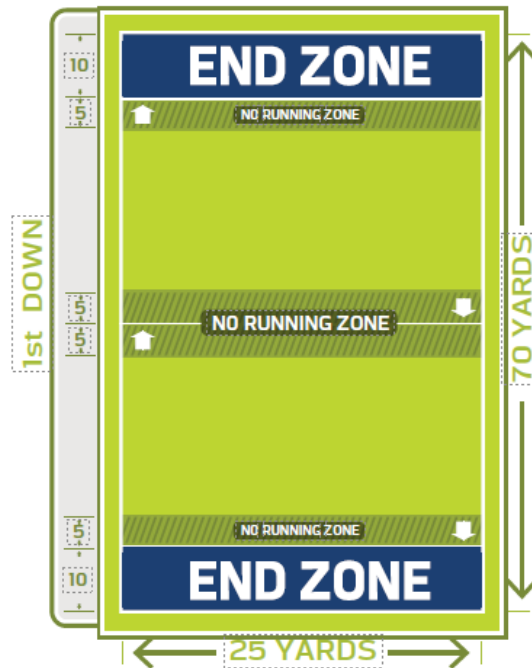
before the coin flip. If permission is not granted prior to the start of the game, a forfeit will be awarded. The coaches may elect to play the game for practice but the result and final score of the game will not be determined based on the “practice game”.

EQUIPMENT

1. All players must wear the league provided belts and flags. All players **MUST** wear mouthguards and soft helmets while on the field.
2. Game balls should be age specific (to be determined by league officials prior to the start of the season) and provided by the coaches.
3. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed, however, cleats with exposed metal are not allowed.
4. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
5. Players must remove all jewelry.
6. Players’ jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
7. Pockets and belt loops are not allowed.
8. Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as the shorts or pants.
9. Uniform infractions will result in a warning for the team and a player ejection upon the discovery of the 2nd uniform infraction of the game. It is understandable that shirts are likely to become untucked during the course of a play. Officials will use their judgement on uniform infractions. The intent is not to penalize players for minor infractions but to prevent players from purposefully gaining an advantage while playing the game.

FIELD

1. 25 yards wide by 70 yards with two 10-yard endzones
2. Two (2) no-run zones are in place. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive team going the length of the field approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).



Timing and Overtime

1. Games are played on a 48-minute continuous clock with two 24-minute halves, unless one team gains a 35-point advantage which will end the game unless teams agree to continue without changing the score. The clock stops for halftime and injuries at the Officials' discretion.
2. Halftime is 5 minutes.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball.
4. Each team has one 60-second timeout per half. They do not carry over to the next half if unused. If the timeout is called within the last 5 minutes of either half, the game clock will stop.
5. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format, when applicable, is as follows:
 - a. Home team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.

- i. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - ii. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
- b. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
 - i. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
 - ii. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
- c. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line.
- d. Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5 yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.

Scoring

- 1. Touchdown: 6 points
- 2. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)
 - a. 1 point PAT is pass only; 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
 - b. Interceptions returned for scores are worth six points unless during PAT then they are worth 2 points.
- 3. Safety: 2 points
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
- 4. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
- 5. After one team is winning by 35 points or more, the game is over. TEAMS may elect to continue but no additional points scored will be added.

6. Forfeits are scored 35-0 for the winning team.
7. The coaches, officials and scorekeeper should verify the score sheet.

Coaches

1. Coaches must coach from the sidelines.
 - a. A coach must call timeout to enter the field of play. The first penalty will result in a loss of down or automatic first down. The 2nd penalty will result in the same as above along with the head coach being ejected from the game.
 - b. For 6U and 8U one coach from each team is permitted to be on the field (and in the huddle prior to the ball being snapped) and 10 yards from the line of scrimmage for both defense and offense once the ball is snapped.
 - i. Interference (touching a player on either team during the course of a play, touching the ball when the play is live, or being deemed to have interfered with the play at the official's discretion) by a defensive coach will result in an automatic first down at the spot of the foul.
 - ii. Interference by an offensive coach will result in a loss of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
 - c. For 10u and 12u, only an offensive coach is allowed on the field and in the huddle during the play. The coach must stay 10 yards from the line of scrimmage once the ball is snapped.

Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate line of scrimmage.
 - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone (defined as the width of the ball prior to being snapped). In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - i. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed at the spot where the ball hit the ground.
 - b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.

- c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - i. Inadvertent whistle
 - j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet diving or to hurdle a player
 - k. **NOTE:** There are no fumbles, ground contact does not have to be made. If the ball is fumbled forwards then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession. Loss of possession is a DEAD BALL
 - l. **NOTE:** If it is determined that a player who gains possession of the ball was participating in the play with one or more flags missing, the play will be ruled dead where the offending player first came into possession of the ball
8. If inadvertent whistle occurs the offense has two options:
- a. take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed
 - b. replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- If the inadvertent whistle occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.
9. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should ALL agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

Running

- 1. 6U and 8U are permitted to run the ball three times (for each set of downs)
- 2. 10U is permitted to run the ball two times (for each set of downs)
- 3. 12U is permitted to run the ball one time (for each set of downs)
- 4. The ball is spotted where the ball is located when the flag is pulled.
- 5. One quarterback sneak is allowed for each set of downs. If more than one quarterback sneak is run prior to a new set of downs, the ball is spotted at the prior line of scrimmage with a loss of down.
 - a. It is not considered a quarterback sneak on a play in which the quarterback has previously yielded full possession of the ball to another player prior to regaining possession.
- 6. Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - a. "Center sneak" play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.

- b. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - c. Once the ball has been handed off, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
 - d. Backward laterals are permitted at any point on the field. Any lateral deemed by the official to be a forward lateral will result in a 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul. Dropped laterals will be considered a fumble and the ball will be placed at the spot where the dropped lateral hit the ground.
7. Definition of a “Legal Handoff” - Total exchange of possession directly from 1 offensive player to another.
 8. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
 9. Runners are not permitted to dive or hurdle any player while advancing the ball.
 10. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB’s passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, contact is made unnecessary roughness penalty may be enforced by the official.
 11. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.
 12. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
 13. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

Passing

1. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
2. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward with the ball out of the passer’s hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.
 - a. There is no intentional grounding
 - b. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.
 - c. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. A pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage. (This will be considered a pass attempt)
3. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage. (a shovel pass is not considered a pass attempt and is considered a run play)

Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions.

Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
 - a. 6U & 8U may only rush 3 times per game.
 - b. 10U and 12U may rush one time during each series while they are on defense.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
4. A penalty may be called if:
 - a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
 - b. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down)
 - c. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
 - a. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.
5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap.
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where the flag was pulled.
 - a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
7. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

Formations/Substitutions

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to five players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.
 - b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield or under center. Both shotgun snaps and under center snaps are allowed in all divisions.
 - a. 6U are allowed to have the center take a knee and face the QB and snap the ball directly into the QB's hands without snapping the ball between the center's legs.
4. If the offense substitutes players between downs they will do so immediately after the play and the defense will be given an appropriate amount of time to substitute their players and come set prior to the ball being snapped. The 40 second play clock is still in effect.

Penalties

Offensive Penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start / illegal substitution	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Screening or blocking	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Flag guarding	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

Defensive Penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Offside / illegal substitution	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker or rushing when not eligible)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down at the spot of the foul
Holding	+5 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down