



## FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

**Persons subject to the rules of the game are team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, spectators & other persons affiliated with the team & shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.**

### ***EQUIPMENT, FIELD, PLAYERS, GAME TIMING & SCORING***

- 1) **Illegal / Prohibited Equipment is as listed by not limited to the following:**
  - a. Jewelry: Includes earrings, rings, watches, bracelets, necklaces
  - b. Any exposed body or facial piercing must be taken out
  - c. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in or detachable cleats
  - d. Any item containing exposed knots: Includes bandannas, do-rags & stocking caps
  - e. Headwear containing any hard & unyielding material: Baseball caps
  - f. Pants, shorts or jerseys with any belt, belt loop, **pockets**, exposed drawstring or zippers
  - g. Tear-away pants, shorts or jerseys, hooded coats & hooded sweatshirts
  - h. Hard & unyielding leg & knee brace material
  - i. Helmets, braces, pads or casts worn above the waist
  - j. Ski or logger boots or boots with exposed metal, hook (s), loop (s) or soles exceeding 2-inches
  
- 2) **Legal Equipment**
  - a. Protective gear is highly recommended (Mouth, crotch & pelvic protectors)
  - b. Cleats that are molded to the sole of the shoe or shoes made of canvas, leather or synthetic material which covers the foot & attached to a firm sole of leather, rubber or composition material
  - c. **Jersey (short / long sleeve or sweaters) must be long enough to remain tucked into pants or shorts & short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to player's waistline**
  - d. Pants or shorts without belt (s), belt loop (s), pocket (s), exposed drawstring or zippers
  - e. Religious & medical alert bracelets or necklaces must be taped to the body for participation
    - i. Written prove may be required for religious bracelets/necklaces
  - f. Knit headwear without a bill & headbands made of non-abrasive material
  - g. Hair control devices, knee pads, gloves & mittens that are soft, pliable & non-abrasive
  - h. Play books may be carried inside clothing
  - i. Towels can be attached to a player's waist, used to wipe football or set beneath the football on a snap
  
- 3) **Men use a regular size ball & coed uses a regular, intermediate, youth or junior sized ball**
  
- 4) **The game field shall be a rectangular area with (4) 20 yard zones & (2) 10-yard end zones.**

- 5) **Men's game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players**
  - a. 5 players are required to start the game to avoid a forfeit
- 6) **Coed game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players**
  - a. 6 players are required to start the game to avoid a forfeit
  - b. Coed teams can have the following combinations:
    - i. Teams with 8 players shall be 4 women & 4 men
    - ii. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 women & 3 men or 4 men & 3 women
    - iii. Teams with 6 players: 3 women & 3 men, 4 men or 2 women & 4 women & 2 men
  - c. The game maybe continued w/ less than 5 (men's) or 6 (coed) players if a team has the chance to win
- 7) **Game Timing:**
  - a. 20 - minute running halves w/ the clock stopping in the last 2-minutes of each half
    - i. During the final 2-minutes the clock will begin on the snap or officials signal
      1. At the 2-minute warning of each half the clock will stop for a:
        - a. Incomplete legal /illegal pass, pass goes out-of-bounds or penalty
        - b. Team is awarded a new series after gaining a first down or a legal punt
        - c. First down or touchdown
        - d. Change of possession
        - e. Team attempting to consume or conserve illegally
        - f. Safety or touchback
        - g. Time-out, referee's time-out or inadvertent whistle
- 8) **Mercy Rule:**
  - a. Game will end @ 2 minute warning in the second half when:
    - i. A team in a men's game is 19 or more points ahead
    - ii. A team in a coed game is 25 or more points ahead
- 9) **Touchdown Values**
  - a. Men's game touchdowns count as 6 points
  - b. Coed game touchdowns count as 6 or 9 points
    - i. If a female scores a touchdown, point value is 9.
    - ii. If a female player throws a legal forward pass & a touchdown is scored by a teammate, prior to a change of possession, point value is 9.
    - iii. All other touchdown points are 6 points.
  - c. The player who has scored the touchdown must raise their arms so, nearest official can deflag them.
    - i. If the player is not deflagged with one pull & the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed & the player is disqualified.
      1. Personal foul = 10 yards from previous spot
      2. By the offense = no touchdown, loss of down & disqualification
      3. By the defense = no touchdown, automatic first down & disqualification
  - d. Teams cannot score points by field goal attempt
- 10) **Try**
  - a. 1 point = 3-yard line, 2 points = 10-yard line & 3 points = 20-yard line
  - b. Once a team makes a choice, the choice is final unless a time-out is granted
  - c. If a penalty occurs before the time-out, a team cannot change their choice
  - d. Enforcement of yardage penalties does not change the value of the Try
  - e. An intercepted Try attempt can be returned for a touchdown = 3 points
  - f. If a Try is intercepted & it results in a safety the point value is 1 point

### 11) Safety

- a. If a safety occur its 2 points
- a. It is not a safety when a player intercepts a forward pass, fumble, backwards pass or catches a punt between the 5 yard line & the goal line & momentum carries player into the end zone

### 12) Overtime shall occur when a game ends in a tie

- a. The overtime game shall be played towards the same goal line.
- b. Only one coin toss will occur & the winner of the toss is given the options of offense or defense.
- c. The opponent shall make a choice of remaining options.
- d. **Each team is awarded 1 time-out (time-outs do not carry over from regulation)**
- e. Unless a penalty occurs, each team will start 1<sup>st</sup> & goal on the 10-yard line. Each team will have 4 downs to score. If a tie remains after one period, captains will alternate choices & series will continue until a winner is determined.
- f. **Teams can intercept a pass or fumble & return it for a touchdown, if team scores, team wins & the game ends.**

**The objective of flag football is to remove the runner of their flag belt in order to decrease ball advancement & scoring. Striking the player or the ball is unnecessary & a violation of the rules.**

### **PLAYING REGULATIONS**

- 1) Each team is allowed 3 time-outs per game & one (1) minute in length
- 2) Each half will begin with a coin toss between opposing captains.
  - a. The captain winning the coin toss shall have a choice of the following:
    - i. Defer their option to the second half
    - ii. Begin game on the offense or defense
    - iii. The captain not winning the coin toss shall have the choice of what goal to defend

### **PLAYERS**

- 1) All players must be inbounds within 5-yard of the sideline & 15-yard of the play when the ball is snapped.
- 2) The offense & defense scrimmage lines shall be 1-yard apart & separated by ball spotters.
- 3) All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.
- 4) Players may use a 2, 3, or 4 point stance.
- 5) The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a down & marking ball for play.
  - a. Offensive team has 25 seconds to put ball in play after ball is marked ready for play
    - i. **Penalty = Delay of game = 5 yards**
- 6) No defensive player may encroach, touch the ball, make contact or interfere with opponents prior to snap.
  - a. **Encroachment = 5 yards, Consecutive encroachments = 10 yards**
- 7) The offensive team must have at least 4 players (men's) & 5 players (coed) on their scrimmage line at snap.
  - a. One offensive player may be in motion but not in motion towards the opponent's goal line at the snap. All other players must come to a stop & remain stationary (without movement of feet, body, head or arms) for a full second until the ball is snapped.
    - i. **Illegal Motion = 5 yards**
- 8) No offensive player shall false start, which includes simulating a charge or start of play.
  - a. **Illegal Procedure = 5 yards**

- 9) The player who receives the snap must be at least 2-yards behind the offensive scrimmage line.
- a. Illegal Procedure = 5 yards**
- 10) The snapper, after assuming the position for the snap & adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball & shall be penalized for such movement whether or not the ball is snapped
- a. Encroachment = 5 yards**
- 11) The snap must be in a backwards motion either between the legs or to the side of the snapper & the snap must be quick & in a continuous motion.
- a. Illegal snap = 5 yards**
- 12) All fumbles, muffs or backwards passes that hit the ground shall be dead on the spot.
- a. If the ball is intercepted during a fumble, muff or backwards pass it may be advanced.**
- 13) A backwards pass or fumble which goes out-of bounds between the goal lines belongs to the offensive team at the out-of bounds spot. If out-of-bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.
- 14) Any player, replaced player or substitute enters during a down = **Illegal Participation, 10 yards**
- 15) Only one forward pass can be thrown per down
- a. Illegal forward pass = Illegal pass = 5 yards from spot & loss of down**
- i. Passer's foot is beyond the scrimmage line
  - ii. Passer intentionally throws ball to the ground to save loss of yardage
  - iii. Passer catches untouched forward or backward pass
  - iv. If there is more than one forward pass per down
- 16) Pass interference can only occur beyond offensive scrimmage line: after the ball is snapped, passed & touched:
- a. Offensive pass interference = after the ball is snapped & until touched
    - i. 10 yards & loss of down from previous spot**
  - b. Defensive pass interference = after the ball is thrown & until touched
    - i. 10 yards from previous spot = automatic first down**
    - ii. Defense deflags an offensive player before receiving the ball
- 17) A runner may pass the ball backwards (lateral) at anytime & a backwards pass or fumble in flight may be caught or intercepted by any player inbounds & advanced
- 18) A runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed to gain yardage
- a. Helping the runner = 5 yards**
- 19) Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms or the ball to deny opportunity of pulling or removing the flag belt such as but not limited to:
- a. Personal foul = 10 yards**
- i. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt
  - ii. "Stiff arm" opponents
  - iii. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt
  - iv. Lowering shoulder in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt
- 20) A runner may not **jump** over or **hurdle** a player
- a. Penalty = 10 yards from spot of foul**
- 21) A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in their path, nor attempt to run between two opponents unless space provides a reasonable chance to proceed without contact
- 22) An opponent may dive to grab a flag belt**
- 23) An opponent 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
- a. Personal foul = 10 yards**

**SUBSTITUTIONS**

- 1) All subs must enter field from their team bench.
- 2) No substitute shall enter during a down.
- 3) Substitution can occur between downs, an accepted penalty, time-out, injury or ending of a half.
- 4) Substitutes shall be on their side of the neutral zone before ball is snapped / becomes live

**BLOCKING**

- 1) Offensive screen block shall take place without contact = **Personal foul = 10 yards**
  - a. Hands & arms must be on their side or behind their back
  - b. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact is illegal
  - c. At no time shall players interlock to encircle or interfere with the runner
- 2) Defensive players may not go or push through offensive screen blocker's, they must go around an offensive screen = **Personal Foul = 10 yards**

**BATTING**

- 1) Players shall not bat a loose ball other than a pass of fumble in flight
  - a. Exception
    - i. Kicking team may bat a grounded punt beyond their scrimmage line toward their own goal line = **Illegal Batting, 10 yards**
- 2) Batting a ball in player possession
  - a. A ball in player possession shall not be batted forward by a player of the team in possession
    - i. **Illegal Batting, 10 yards**

**ROUGHING THE PASSER**

- 1) Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally.
  - a. **Roughing the passer = 10 yards & automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down**
- 2) No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as they are considered out of the play after the pass.
  - a. **Roughing the passer = 10 yards & automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down**
- 3) **Contacting hand or arm, regardless of contacting the pass**
  - a. **Roughing the passer = 10 yards @ automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down**
- 4) **Contacting the ball before contacting the passer**
  - a. **Roughing the passer = 10 yards @ automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down**
- 5) **Roughing the passer restrictions do not apply if the forward pass is thrown from beyond the scrimmage line but personal foul penalties can be assessed.**

**FLAG BELT REMOVAL**

- 1) Players must have possession of the ball before they can be legally deflagged by an opponent
- 2) A runner who accidentally or inadvertently loses their flag belt shall be deflagged by one-hand touch between the shoulders & the knees by an opponent
- 3) **A runner who purposely removes their flag belt to gain an advantage**
  - a. **The play shall continue with the option of the penalty or the play**
    - i. **Personal foul, 10 yards**
- 4) In circumstances where the flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play
- 5) An opponent intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal = Personal foul = 10 yards

- 6) Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, use foreign materials or other methods results in a personal foul & disqualification.

### **KICKING THE BALL**

- 1) Quick kicks, onside kicks & free kicks are illegal, **Illegal Kick = 10 yards**
- 2) No player shall intentionally kick a ball other than a punt = illegal punt & shall be treated like a fumble
  - a. **Illegal Kicking, 10 yards**
- 3) Players shall ignore signals given by kickers or receivers, the ball remains live
- 4) Punting, after the kicker receives the snap the ball must be kick immediately in a continuous motion
  - a. **Illegal procedure = 5 yards**
- 5) If a punt goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest inbounds untouched and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead & belongs to the receiving team @ that spot.
- 6) If the ball is dropped or muffed by the receiving team the ball is dead on the spot.
- 7) An offensive team shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance the ball to the next zone.
  - a. On the forth down, the team may punt or attempt to advance, if punting is not chosen & advancement is not obtained, the ball shall be the opponents at the spot.
  - b. A captain may declare a punt on any down (Exceptions apply)
- 8) The kicking team may not recover a punt by the kicking team.
  - a. **Illegal Kicking = 10 yards**
- 9) After a punt, the ball may be blocked, if blocked to the ground it is dead at that spot.
  - a. If the punt is blocked & then caught behind the scrimmage line the ball may be advanced.
- 10) All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.

### **COED RULES SUMMARY**

- 1) **Male runner**
  - a. A male runner cannot advance the ball through their scrimmage line
  - b. There are no restrictions; during a run by a male runner once the ball has been beyond the scrimmage line; during a run by a female runner; and after change of possession
    - i. **Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot**
- 2) **Male to Male Completion**
  - a. During offensive possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to a Try.
  - b. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or female receiver for positive yards.
    - i. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the scrimmage line.
    - ii. There are no restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to female receiver, or female to female, or female to male.
    - iii. **A legal forward pass caught jointly by a male & female teammates is considered a female reception**
      1. **Illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the spot where the second consecutive male to male completed legal forward pass is released & a loss of down.**

- iv. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next forward pass completion is “open” or “closed”

**3) Illegal Forward Pass**

**a. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down**

**a. Illegal Forward Pass**

- i. “Closed” play means a male player may NOT throw a legal forward pass completion to any other male player.
- ii. “Open” play means any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player
- iii. There is NO foul for a female receiver being tagged or de-flagged behind the scrimmage line
  - 1. The next legal forward pass completion remains “closed”
- iv. If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the scrimmage line on either a “open” or “closed” play, and any offensive male player runs beyond the scrimmage line, it is a illegal forward pass
  - 1. Illegal forward pass, 5yards from the spot of the pass & loss of down
- v. All illegal forward pass fouls are classified as fouls during a running play, thus illegal forward passes do not change the “open / closed” status of a down
- vi. If an official erroneously indicates the “open /closed” status of a down, the play is nullified and the down will be repeated.

***PLAYER RESTRICTIONS, UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT & DISQUALIFYING ACTS***

**PLAYER RESTRICTIONS (10 yard penalty)**

No player shall commit a personal foul during a half or intermission & if act is viewed as intentional or flagrant the offender will be disqualified.

- 1) Strip or attempt to strip the ball from runner by punching, striking or stealing the ball from opponents
- 2) Contact an opponent who is on the ground
- 3) Throw the runner to the ground
- 4) Hurdling any player
- 5) Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead
- 6) Make contact of any nature with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary including using fists, locked hands, elbows or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to the rules
- 7) Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player
- 8) Position themselves on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage

**UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT (10 yard penalty)**

No player shall be involved in unsportsmanlike conduct during a half or intermission & if act is viewed as intentional or flagrant the offender will be disqualified.

**Non-contact player acts are acts during a period or intermission, include but are not limited too:**

- 1) Refusal to comply or abide by the request or decision of an official
- 2) Attempting to influence a decision by an official
- 3) Disrespectfully addressing an official
- 4) Indicating objections to an official’s decision
- 5) Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or obscene gestures to officials or opposing players

- 6) Attempting to kick, strike (using arm, hand or fist) or jump at an opposing player/ teammate
- 7) Using words similar to the offensive audibles & quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with defensives signals of movements
- 8) Intentionally kicking at the ball, other than during a punt
- 9) Spiking the ball into the ground
- 10) Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or with permission of the referee
- 11) Holding an unauthorized conference or being on the field illegally
- 12) Participate while wearing illegal player equipment
- 13) Cursing or any use of profanity

### ***DISQUALIFICATION ACTS***

**Second unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or non-player results in disqualification**

**Fourth unsportsmanlike foul by the same team results in their forfeiture of the game**

**Exhibit, participate in or perform any of the following acts & disqualification will occur:**

- 1) Intentionally contacting a game official physically (spitting, kicking, striking (swinging an arm, hand or fist), jumping at during the game (applies to team representatives)
- 2) Tackling an runner or opponent by grasping or encircling with the hand (s) or arm (s) & taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football
- 3) Intentionally spitting, kicking or striking (swinging an arm, hand or fist) any opposing player/ teammate
- 4) Fighting (engaging in a combative manner unrelated to football)
- 5) Leaving a team area & entering the playing field during a fight
- 6) Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, use foreign materials or other methods
- 7) Throwing the ball high in the air, if viewed as flagrant
- 8) Using & participating under an assumed name