



OFFICIAL RULE BOOK

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RULES

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I. Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss gets first offense possession. The loser of the coin toss chooses the end zone it would prefer to defend. Teams may not choose to defer to a second half choice.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 10-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield for a first down. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over at the spot of the ball.
 - a. If the spot of the ball is beyond mid-field, then the new offense will have (4) plays to score a touchdown or,
 - b. the ball changes possession and the opposition has four (4) plays to cross mid-field for a first down.
5. All possession changes, except interceptions, start at the spot of the ball.
6. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the loser of the coin toss.
7. In the spirit of the day and fairness of play, all participants on a team will be afforded equivalent playing time. A Field Marshall or Referee may at his/her discretion, enforce substitution of players to balance play time amongst teammates.

II. Terminology

- **Boundary lines** – the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and the rear end zone lines.
- **Line Of Scrimmage** – an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
- **Line-To-Gain** – the line the offense must pass (get beyond) to achieve a first down or score.
- **Rush Line** – an imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the Line of Scrimmage.
- **Offense** – the squad with possession of the ball.
- **Defense** – the squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
- **Passer** – the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the QB.
- **Rusher** – the defensive player assigned to rush the Quarterback to prevent him/her from passing by pulling his/her flags or blocking the pass.
- **Downs (1-2-3-4)** – the offensive squad has four attempts or “Downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the “Center Line” to get another set of downs or to score.
- **Live Ball** – the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regards to penalties, Live Ball Penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
- **Dead Ball** – the period of time immediately before or after a play.
- **Whistle** – the sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for timeout, half time or the end of the game.
- **Inadvertent whistle** – an official’s whistle that is performed in error.
- **Charging** – the movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, chest or forearm.
- **Flag Guarding** – an act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm.
- **Shovel Pass** – a legal pass attempted behind the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot put type manner.
- **Lateral** – a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

III. Eligibility

1. All players from grade 4 to grade 12 are eligible to participate. The division you are eligible for is determined by the grade you will be entering in the fall of the current year.
 - a. For Example: If you are entering 4th grade in September of 2011, you are eligible to play in the (Youth) division.

Divisions:

(Senior) 10th, 11th, 12th Grades

- (Middle) 7th, 8th, 9th Grades
- (Youth) 4th, 5th, 6th Grades

2. All players must present a waiver that is signed by a legal guardian or parent.

IV. Equipment

1. The Tournament provides each player with flag belts and each team with footballs. Teams can also provide their own ball for use, but it must be of the specified size for the division listed below and approved by the Field Marshal.

Football Sizes:

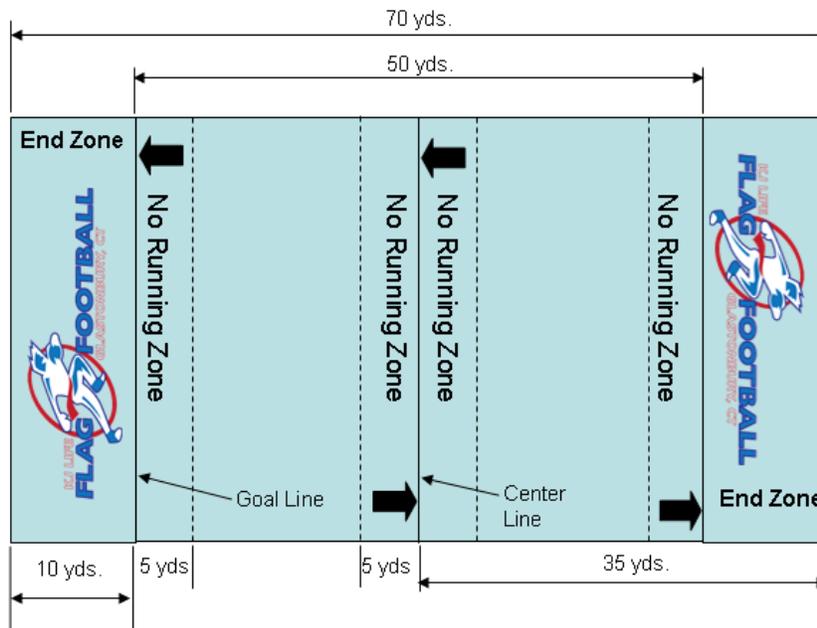
- Division (Senior) – TDY or Equivalent
- Division (Middle) – TDY or Equivalent
- Division (Youth) – TDJ or Equivalent

2. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed, however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. A mouthpiece must be used for Braces with exposed metals.
4. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
5. Players/teams may create their own Jersey's. Teams with conflicting jersey colors, requires the home team to wear a contrasting Pinny.
 - a. Pinnies are made available by the Tournament as necessary.
6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.
7. **Pants or shorts with belt loops are not allowed.**

V. Field

1. The recommended field size is 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones and a "Center" midfield line-to-gain. No-Running Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards.
2. No Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No Run Zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams may not run the ball in any fashion. All plays, including those that begin with a handoff, must be pass plays.
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No Run Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

Proposed Field Layout



VI. Rosters

1. Team rosters must not include less than five (5) players, and recommended not to exceed ten (10) players.
2. Teams must field a minimum of four (4) players at all times.

VII. Timing and Overtime

1. Games are played on a 25 minute continuous clock. The clock continues to run for all timeouts and injuries.
2. Halftime is one minute long.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. Each team has one 30-second time out per half. A time out cannot be used to end the half or the game.
5. In the event of an injury the clock will continue to run as the injured player is removed from the field of play.
6. If the score is tied at the end of 25 minutes, the game should be determined by the following:
 - a. Each team gets one play from the 10 yard line. If either team scores, they break the tie with one (1) point.
 - b. If both teams score, and both teams fail to score, each team will pick one player to throw the football at a cone placed at midfield. Starting from the 10 yard line, the ball which stops the closest to the cone wins with (1) point.

VIII. 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 a **pass only**. 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
3. Safety: **2 points**
 - a. A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
4. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 10-yard line).
 - a. Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point will result in an automatic loss of 5-yards. The PAT can then only be started from the 10 or 15 yard-line.
 - b. Interceptions on conversions can not be returned.

IX. Coaches

1. Coaches are allowed only for the teams in the (**Youth**) Division.
2. Coaches must move to the sidelines before the snap of the ball.
3. Only one coach per team is allowed on the sidelines.

X. 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 the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regards to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back beyond the line.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
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.
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.
 - 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 flag.
 - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - i. An inadvertent whistle is performed (at the spot where the ball was whistled dead).
8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
- a. Take the ball where the whistle blew.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.*
9. The Official's calls are final. If there is any question about a ruling, the assigned Field Marshal will make Judgment on final interpretation of the ruling on the field.

XI. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run in an attempt to advance the ball.
3. Handoffs, laterals or pitches are only allowed behind the line of scrimmage. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
4. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
5. "No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. No team may execute a run play from these zones.
6. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
7. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping is considered flag guarding.
 - a. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
8. Screen blocking shall take place without contact. The blocker shall have their hands and arms at their sides or behind their back. A screen blocker cannot use their hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact. If they do use contact it will be called a, "Personal Foul".
 - a. Screen blockers may not:
 - i. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
 - ii. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
 - iii. Take a position so close to an opponent that they cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.
9. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
10. 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.
11. Stiff arming is not allowed; a personal foul will be called, and if warranted an unsportsmanlike conduct or ejection will result.

XII. Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a (7) seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.
4. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

XIII. 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 towards the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception.
6. Interceptions are returnable, but not on conversions after touchdowns.

XIV. 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 may defend on the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Only one rush is allowed per series of downs. You must indicate to the Official that you intend to rush.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
 - a. **A legal rush is:**
 - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
 - b. **A penalty may be called if:**
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - c. **Special circumstances:**
 - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, seven second clock in effect.
 - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play, however if they do send a rusher, the rusher must check in with the official.
 - iii. If rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced.
4. Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass. However, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way.
5. Offense can impede the rusher by body screening. The defense may attempt to block a pass provided they do not strike the passer.
6. Blocking the pass and then striking the passer will result in a 10-yard penalty.
7. A Sack occurs if the QB's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the QB's feet are when the flag is pulled.
 - a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

XV. 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 ball carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball or pull from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.

XVI. Formations

1. An offensive team must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the Center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard beyond and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - b. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
2. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the one player in motion.
3. 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.

4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.
 - a. Player in the (C) Division may **side snap** the ball with the same condition as in paragraph 4.

XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the Field Marshal or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals! FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent or official.
4. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.

XVIII. Penalties

I. General

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
- Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- Penalties are assessed Live Ball then Dead Ball. Live Ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered completed.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

II. 5 Yard Penalties

- Offside
- Illegal motion
- Illegal forward pass (Pass received behind the line of scrimmage)
- Offensive pass interference (pushing off of defender)
- Blocking or running with the ball carrier
- Delay of game
- Defense illegal contact (blocking, holding etc.)
- Defense illegal flag pull (before receiver has the ball)
- Defense illegal rushing (more than once in 4 downs, starting rush from inside 7 yds)

III. 10 Yard Penalties

- Roughing the passer
- Taunting
- Unsportsmanlike conduct (Field Marshal and Referee discretion).
- Flag Guarding
- Defense pass interference
- Stripping the ball
- Unnecessary Roughness