

FLAG FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT RULES

PLAYER UNIFORM & ATTIRE

- Teams are expected to dress with same color shirts. Teams should come prepared with a primary team color and an alternate team color that is different from their primary.
- If teams matched up to play and have the same primary color, Tournament officials will assign one team to wear their alternate color.
- Pants can be of any color, but that color must contrast the color of flags they wear. A player, for example, wearing red pants, cannot wear red flags. Flags are Red, Yellow, Green, and Blue.
- Shirts must be tucked into pants and must be worn under the flag belt.
- Flags must be positioned on the hips and both flags attached to the belt. After belt is tightened, any extra must be tucked under and not hang down and simulate a flag.
- All players must wear flags supplied by the tournament.
- Cleats may be worn, but not comprised of metal or have metal tips.
- No pads can be worn.
- Only sweatshirts and shirts without hoods or pockets can be worn during game play.
- All players are expected to fix their equipment after every play and/or when asked by an official.
- Players may wear gloves
- Players may not bring a towel onto the game field

OVERVIEW

- All games will begin at their schedule time or immediately after the preceding game.
- Teams should be ready to play 15-30 minutes prior to their start time.
- Games, once the tournament starts, are subject to change during the course of the tournament. Teams can get updates from tournament officials.
- Games are played 6-on6.
- Each team will have a sideline to substitute from and must substitute from their appropriate sideline.
- Players on the sideline may not interfere with game officials working the sidelines
- Teams provide their own game balls and must be of similar size to official tournament ball (Wilson 1005). Balls can be made of leather or composite leather; Nerf balls are not allowed.
- It is the team's responsibility to return the ball to the line of scrimmage or get the ball to an official at the end of plays and during change of possession. The game official's responsibility is to mark the spot and to start the play clock. Officials will not chase down loose balls and play clock will start at conclusion of preceding play.
- Teams must have a designated captain.

Timing & Overtime

- Games consist of two 20 minutes halves. Game clock runs continuously until a 1-minute warning in each half.
- There will be a 15 second Officials timeout at each 1-minute warning.
- Clock Stoppage after 1-minute warning: Incomplete pass, Out of Bounds, Touchdown, Penalties, Extra Points and Punts, and officials can stop at their own discretion to confer.
- **Play Clock**
 - A 30 second play clock will start at every change of possession. The 30 second play clock will start immediately after the conclusion of every play. Offensive teams have the responsibility to retrieve their ball and hand to an official.
 - The offense cannot start a play until after the play clock has started.
 - It is a delay of game penalty to not start play before the play clock expires.
 - Game officials will give a 10 second and 5 second warning.
 - Delay of game penalty under 1 minute stops the game clock.
 - 2 consecutive delay of game penalties by the offense is a turnover.
- **Timeouts**
 - Each team will have 3 timeouts per game. Teams will have 2 timeouts to stop the game clock and play clock will restart immediately after a called timeout. Game clock will restart on the next play.
 - Teams will have 1 -30 second timeout. There will be a 30 second run-off before the play clock resumes. The game clock will stop on the timeout and resume when the next play starts.
 - It is responsibility of team captain to alert officials to the type of timeout. Officials will default to the stop clock timeouts first if not declared.
- **Halftime**
 - Halftime will be a 3-minute break at conclusion of the first half. Teams must be ready for play at conclusion of the 3 -minute break. Game officials will start the play clock immediately following the break.
- **Overtime**
 - During Pool-Play Rounds, if the score is tied at conclusion of the game, there is no overtime and each team will receive a tie for the game.
 - During Knockout Round, if score is tied teams will move immediately to a college football style overtime. A coin toss will determine possession. The team on offense will have 2 plays to score from the 2-point conversion line. If team scores they must go for 2-point conversion. Offense and defense will switch to have equal possessions. If the defense forces a turnover and returns it for a touchdown, that teams wins immediately.

- **Mercy Rule**

- If a team is up by 28 points at any time in the 2nd half the game is over.
- If a team is up by 20 points at the 1-minute warning in the 2nd half, the game is over.

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra Points:
 - 1-point conversion: score (pass only) from extra point marker – 1 offensive play
 - 2-point conversion: score (pass only) from quarter field marker – 1 offensive play
 - A defensive penalty on an unsuccessful attempt will result in replay of extra point attempt with appropriate penalty marked off.
 - Teams must declare if they are going for 1- or 2-point conversions. They can change if a defensive penalty warrants a replay of the down with appropriate penalty marked off the appropriate conversion line.
- Safety
 - 2 points for defensive team if they down offensive player in their respective endzone or if the offense commits a penalty in their endzone.
 - The team earning the safety will also get the ball at their normal drive start location (extra point line).
- Extra Point Defensive Turnover Return
 - 2 points is awarded to defense if a turnover on an offensive extra point play is returned to their respective endzone. Any penalty on the defense during the return will nullify any points earned. Defense will take over possession following the return.

Game Play

- A coin toss will determine first possession
 - Teams must be on the field and ready, when officials call for captains and the coin toss
 - The team that wins the toss can select possession or field direction. The field direction and possession will flip in the 2nd half. There are no deferrals by the team winning the toss to select in the 2nd half.
- Offense will have 4 plays to cross mid-field to earn a first down. After crossing mid-field, the team will have 4 plays to score.
- Only penalties can allow a team to have more than 4 plays to cross midfield or the endzone.
- Offense after gaining a first down, cannot regain the first down line if they lose yardage to game play or penalties that push them behind the mid-field line.

Flag Pulls

- If an offensive player starts the play without both flags positioned correctly, play is dead when they touch the ball and an illegal flag penalty will be assessed. This includes the quarterback.
- If the defense pulls a flag prematurely before the offensive player has possession of the ball, the defense must pull the other flag. If the defense prematurely pulls both flags and that player gains possession the offensive player will automatically be awarded a touchdown.
- If an offensive player legally starts a play and a flag falls out before possession the defense only needs to touch the player to down the player.
- If a flag falls out while a player has possession of the ball, they are down at the spot the flag falls out.

Change of Possession

- At change of possession it is team's responsibility to get their ball onto the field and to an Official.
- Play clock will start when the Officials have the line of scrimmage marked with a field marker. They will not wait for teams to get ready.

Punt Rules

- A team can declare a punt any time within the first 15 seconds of the play clock.
- The 30-second play clock is in effect and ball must be snapped before 0.
- The punting team must allow time for defense to line up appropriately after declaring punt. It is a delay of game penalty if they do not and is discretion of the Officials.
- Defensive team must immediately line up for punt.
- Punts cannot be faked

Punt Formation

- Each team will line up with 3 players on the line, with the center in the middle for the offense and a defender across from each player 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.
- Each team will have 2 "gunners" on the outside lined up on the line of scrimmage.
- The punting team will only have a punter in the backfield and the defensive team will only have the punt returner in the defensive backfield

Punt Play

- Ball to be snapped between centers legs
- Punter has 6-second clock to kick the ball.
- No players can release from the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
- Defenders cannot rush the punter. They can only stand with their arms up.
- There is no jumping or diving to try and block the punt

- If the kick hits the defenders at the line of scrimmage the punt return team receives the ball at the spot of the first touch.
- The punt returner will fair catch the ball.
 - If the punt hits the ground it is downed at the spot where either team touches it.
 - If the punt returner muffs the catch; the ball is a live ball to be recovered by either team. The return team if they recover a muff will receive the ball at the spot it was first touched or the recovered spot if it is behind the first touch. Return team cannot gain yards by muffing the return.

Offensive Formation

- All offensive formations must start play with a snap from the center between the center legs.
- The offensive must start their formation with a quarterback and at least 1 running back in the offensive backfield
 - Offensive backfield is defined as 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage and 5 yards on either side of the center.
- Once lined up, teams can motion out to any formation.
- Teams can shift (moving more than one player at a time), but all players must be set (stopped moving) prior to snap.
- Teams can but players in motion, but only one player can be moving, and they cannot be moving toward the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- Receivers can line up on or off the line of scrimmage.
- Players cannot line up over the line of scrimmage

Defensive Formation

- Defenders lined up within 5 yards on either side of the center, must be 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.
- Defense can align in any formation
- Defense cannot cross the line of scrimmage unless the ball is handed off by the quarterback or the defense is using a blitz.
 - Any defender stepping on or across the line of scrimmage is considered a blitz, regardless of intent.
 - It is Officials discretion if a defender crossed before a hand-off, thus counting as a blitz or after a hand-off with no blitz being counted.

Game Play Rules

- The quarterback is the first person to touch the ball after a snap from the center
- If the Snap hits the ground, the quarterback can pick up cleanly on one bounce, otherwise the play is dead where the ball hits the ground.
- If the snap touches the quarterback and then hits the ground, it is a dead ball at that spot.
- The quarterback has a 6-second clock to throw the ball from the snap.
 - On a hand-off the 6-second clock is still in effect, the Running Back can continue to run, but cannot throw a pass after 6 seconds.
 - A 6-second violation is a 5-yard penalty and loss of down
- Quarterbacks cannot run the ball unless the defense blitzes. 6-second pass clock is in effect.
- Quarterback must throw the ball across the line of scrimmage and in the area of a receiver to avoid intentional grounding, if they are in the pocket (area 5yds on either side of Center). This is judgement call by Officials.
- Defense can blitz across the line of scrimmage twice during a series, but not on consecutive downs.
 - If there is a hand-off by the offense the defense can come across the line of scrimmage – not a blitz.
 - If there is an offensive penalty on a play the defense blitzed that results in the replay of the down, the defense will get their blitz back.
 - If the defense has a penalty on a play they blitz, they lose that blitz.
- There are no running/ no hand-off zones from the extra-point line going in and on all extra point plays.
- There are no blitzes on extra point plays.
- Any player receiving a hand-off, backwards pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. 6-second pass clock is in effect.
- Once the offense crosses the line of scrimmage, they can lateral the ball backwards only.
- A player must throw from behind the line of scrimmage. The whole body must be across the line to be a foul.
- There are no fumbles, any fumbled ball or lateral is down at the spot.
 - The defense cannot strip or swat at a ball in an offensive players hand.
 - Swatting and stripping is a penalty, this includes pass defenders attempting to break up a pass. Once a receiver has their hands on the ball, a defender cannot swat it out of their hands. The defense must attempt to pull flags only.
- Offensive players cannot jump or dive to gain yardage. Players can spin to avoid contact.
 - It is the responsibility of the player with the ball to pull up and avoid contact with a defender.
 - Offensive players cannot run through or over defenders.

- A player can jump to avoid contact with defenders on the ground
- A player is marked down where their flag is pulled. Where the ball is positioned is inconsequential. Players cannot reach a line to gain by extending the ball.
 - A player attempting to score or gain a first down must have their entire body over the line to gain prior to the flag being pulled.
 - Stiff-arms and flag guarding are prohibited.
- All offensive players are eligible to receive a pass.
- A player must have possession and 1-foot in bounds to be a catch.
 - If a player goes out of bounds, they must reestablish in bounds with both feet.
 - A player must try to immediately return to field of play if they go out of bounds
- A player cannot run onto the field of play from the sideline after play has started, including any situation where a team may not have 6 players on the field to start a play.
- Any contact with a quarterback in the head, neck, shoulder, arm area is roughing the passer.
 - Defenders must make attempt at pulling flags and not at hitting the ball.
- Offensive players can block with an arm extended, open palm technique.
 - This includes blocking downfield and blocking on blitzes.
 - Players cannot use their shoulders to initiate contact
 - Players cannot bull rush or drive players into the ground
 - Players cannot chop block
 - Crack-back style blocks, blind-side blocks are illegal.
- Players can push players on the boundary out of bounds with arm extended and open palm technique; they cannot use their shoulders or forcibly drive players out of bounds and to the ground.
- Players cannot block into the head/neck area of a player
- Players cannot block in the back
 - It is not a block in the back for players to be engaging with a player who then turns and gets hit in the back, but the offensive player must make an effort to ease up. These types of blocks are judgment calls by Officials.
- When the ball is in the air, the defender can only make a play on the ball. The defensive player may not disrupt the offensive player with contact before or after possession of the ball.
- Incidental contact while defenders and receivers are positioning for a play on the ball is legal, but contact can't be substantial to force either player out of their respective space on the field.
- Defense can use bump and run technique within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage, but can't hold, turn, or knockdown a receiver.
- No tackling is allowed. An offensive player taken to the ground is an automatic penalty, regardless of intent

- If an offensive player is taken to the ground, tripped, or held with a clear path to the endzone, the player will be awarded a touchdown. The defensive player is assessed an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- A defender cannot pull on the pants, short or flag belt to slow a defender down to allow flags to be pulled.
 - Defenders must attempt to pull flags at the players hips
 - If a player's shirt becomes untuck and is pulled while player is attempting to pull flags, it is not a penalty
 - If a player grabs a portion of pants in act of pulling flags it is not a penalty.
 - If a player misses grabbing the flag and holds shirt, pants, belt it is a penalty.

Sportsmanship & Roughing

- If game Officials witness any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, and or fighting, the team and player(s) will be penalized with an unsportsmanlike foul.
- A 2nd unsportsmanlike foul in the same game will result in the players ejection from that game and ejection from the next game.
- A player that who receives 3 unsportsmanlike fouls is ejected from the tournament, these will be accumulated from the start of play and carry over game to game. A player receiving an unsportsmanlike foul must provide their name to Officials or receive an additional unsportsmanlike foul against them and their team.
- Any acts of taunting an opponent or Official will result in an unsportsmanlike foul, this includes arguing swearing, threatening any player or official.
- Any physical fighting will result in immediate ejection from the tournament.
- Tournament Officials have the right to dismiss any player from the tournament, without refund, for any acts deemed egregious enough by Officials.

Penalties

- Game Officials will assess all penalties.
- Game Officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play from contact that can be penalized.
- Only team captains may ask Game Officials for call clarification and interpretations.
- Players cannot question judgment calls by Officials.
- The half or game cannot end on a defensive penalty unless declined by offense.
- On plays with penalties by both sides, the penalties will be offsetting, and the down will be replayed at the original spot.
 - The only exception is if a team commits a penalty and the other team commits a personal foul or unsportsmanlike penalty. In this instance the penalty during the play will be assessed before the personal foul or unsportsmanlike penalty is assessed.
 - If a team commits 2 penalties, the other team can choose 1 to enforce, unless the 2nd penalty is a personal foul or unsportsmanlike, then both penalties are assessed.

Penalty	Result	Examples (not limited to)
Defense		
Clear Path	Touchdown	If a player commits a hold or tackle on a player with clear path to 1st down or Touchdown
Unsportsmanlike	15 yards, 1st Down from end of play	Unsportsmanlike Acts Forceful Tackling - Wrap up tackle, no attempt to pull flags Unnecessary and forceful contact - outside normal game play Swearing / Taunting directed toward players or Officials Fighting - Immediate ejection Belligerent arguing
Tackle	15 yards, 1st Down from spot of foul	Contact resulting in player being tackled to the ground within normal play Partial wrap up, no attempt to pull flags Not forceful enough in Officials eyes to warrant unsportsmanlike
Personal Foul	15 Yards, 1st Down from spot of foul	Lowering shoulder initiating contact, driving player into the ground Tripping, elbowing Swearing on the field Initiating contact with head/neck area Roughing the Passer - contact with head, neck, shoulder, arm, hand of QB (passing)
Block (pick)	10 Yards added to end of play, down counts	Player steps in front of offensive player and doesn't establish position Feet should be set and not moving
Offsides	5yds, replay down	Player lines up on or across line of scrimmage
Pass interference	Spot Foul, 1st Down	Defender makes contact and interferes with Offense ability to catch ball Foul when ball is in the air Defender must make play on the ball and not go through Receiver Defender pulling, turning, holding Receiver while ball is in air

		Defender instead of pulling flags, hits ball out of Receivers hand during catch
Illegal Contact	10 yards, 1st Down	Defender makes contact to reroute receiver, turns receiver off route Holds receiver - after 5 yards and before ball is thrown
Swatting/Stripping	5 yards from end of play	Defender swats or strips balls from Offensive player
Illegal Blitz	5 yards replay down	Defense blitzes 3rd time during series Defense blitzes on consecutive plays
Holding, Shirt/Pant Pull	5 yards from end of play or 5 yds from LOS and replay down	Defense pulls on shirt, pants, or flag belt to slow player and aid in pulling flags ***If the hold is purposeful to prevent a 1st down or touchdown - it is clear path call
Delay of Game	5 Yards from end of play	Throwing ball or opponents flags Any act to delay opponent from lining up to run a play Crossing line of scrimmage to enter opponents huddle Not correctly lining up for a punt Holding a player down
Offense		
Unsportsmanlike	15 yards, from end of play	Unsportsmanlike Acts Blind Side Block, chop block unnecessary and forceful contact - outside normal game play Swearing / Taunting directed toward players or Officials Fighting - Immediate ejection Belligerent arguing
Personal Foul	15 Yards, from spot of foul	Lowering shoulder initiating contact, driving player into the ground Tripping, elbowing Swearing on the field Initiating contact with head/neck area Pancake block
Delay of Game	5 Yards replay down	Throwing ball or opponents flags Any act to delay opponent from lining up to run a play Crossing line of scrimmage to enter opponents huddle Not declaring punt on time Not snapping ball before play clock expires 2 consecutive delay of game penalties is a turnover by Offense
False Start	5 yards replay down	Flinch or movement from offense prior to snap, player not set - blow play dead
Illegal Procedure	5 yards replay down	Illegal motion - 2 men in motion, moving toward line of scrimmage at snap No Running Back in backfield
Offsides	5yds, replay down	Player lines up on or across line of scrimmage
Illegal Forward Pass	5yds, loss of down	2 forward passes on 1 play 6-second pass clock violation Forward pass after ball has crossed line of scrimmage Forward lateral

Offensive Pass Interference	10 Yards Replay down	Push off by receiver Pick move by Receiver to allow another receiver to get open
Flag Guarding/ Stiff Arm	5 yards, loss of down	Offensive player uses arm to prevent flag pull Player swipes at hands, arms of defender - doesn't have to make contact Player stiff arms defender anywhere on their body
Illegal Flag Belt	10 Yards Replay down	Player starts play without both flags on hips and touches ball Flags are not positioned on the hips - give warning Shirt is hanging over flags and player gets ball Belt not tight enough to hold flags in position Any modification to make flags harder to pull Not wearing tournament approved flags ***Player must fix flags before he can return to field
Charging	5 yards, from spot, down counts	Players run over defender, doesn't attempt to avoid contact Player jumps to gain yardage (only allowed in avoiding contact)
Illegal Block	10 Yards, from spot, down counts	Downfield blocking: Holding, block in back, using shoulder Screen Pass - Receivers can only block 1 yd down the field before play crosses LOS
Holding	10 yards replay down	Behind line of Scrimmage Holding, block in back, using shoulder
Intentional Grounding	5 yards, loss of down	QB pass doesn't go past the line of Scrimmage Pass isn't in the area of a Receiver (15 yards)