



OFFICIAL RULE BOOK



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Rules

I. Game	3
II. Terminology	4
III. Eligibility.....	6
IV. Equipment.....	6
V. Field.....	6
VI. Rosters.....	7
VII. Timing and Overtime.....	7
VIII. Scoring	9
IX. Coaches	9
X. Live Ball/Dead Ball.....	10
XI. Running	11
XII. Passing	12
XIII. Receiving	13
XIV. Rushing the Passer.....	14
XV. Flag Pulling.....	16
XVI. Formations.....	16
XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct.....	17
XVIII. Penalties	19
XIX. Standings/Tie Break Procedure	22
XX. Format	22



RULES

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 has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 10-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they have four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.



II. Terminology

Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and back of the end zone lines.
Line of Scrimmage	(LOS) 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 to get 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 (may or may not be the Quarterback).
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass (a player becomes the rusher when he/she crosses the rush line).
Downs (1-2-3-4)	The offensive squad has four play attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. They must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties, live ball penalties are considered part of the play and will be enforced after the action on the play ends (i.e. the play is not blown dead automatically).
Dead Ball	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Whistle	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, half time, or the end of the game.
Inadvertent Whistle	Official's whistle that is performed in error. Play stops, and the officials determine the correct course of action.

Charging

The movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field, rather than attempting to avoid the defender. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.

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, arm, or the ball.

Shovel Pass

A legal pass attempted behind the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shotput typemanner.

Lateral

A backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language, or any behavior not in the spirit of fair play and acceptable conduct for NFL Flag Football.



III. Eligibility

1. All players' legal guardians must agree to the online waiver form at NFLFLAG.com/PLAYERS for their specific league before participating.

IV. Equipment

1. The League provides each player with a flag belt and a NFL FLAG jersey powered by USA Football. Teams will use the football provided by the League. Flag belt must be of different color of player's jersey/short. Flag belts must be League issued.

- Blue NFL FLAG football – Pee Wee and Juniors
- Brown NFL FLAG football – Majors and Pro

2. Players must wear shoes. Football cleats are encouraged. However, cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.

3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Soft shelled helmets are allowed. Players are NOT allowed to wear shoulder pads, elbow pads, and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.

4. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.

5. Official NFL FLAG powered by USA Football NFL jerseys must be worn during play.

6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.

7. Pants or shorts MUST HAVE NO POCKETS.

8. Mouthguard is required.

V. Field

1. The field dimensions are 30 yards by 60 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain.



VI. Rosters

1. Home teams wear dark color jerseys; visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
2. Teams must consist of at least five players, with a maximum of twelve players.
3. The game is played 6 on 6. Teams must start a game with a minimum of five players. If/when a team has only 5 players, the opponent will still be allowed to play 6 players. *(For Fall seasons only, the game is played 5 on 5.)*
4. **Players are not allowed to play on multiple teams.**

VII. Timing and Overtime

1. Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock with two 20 minute halves.
2. The clock stops only for timeouts, with the exception of the last two minutes of the 2nd half. During the last two minutes of regulation, the clock will stop on when the ball is run out of bounds, at the end of the down which a foul occurs, and when a forward pass is incomplete.
3. Halftime is approximately 5 minutes long.
4. Each team has two 60-second time outs per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.



6. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.

7. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game should be determined a tie (during the regular season).

8. In tournament or playoff situations, an overtime (OT) Period will be used to determine a winner. OT format is as follows:

a. Each team is allowed a minimum of one possession. The only exception is if the first offensive team throws an interception return for touchdown. In this case, the game ends with the intercepting team winning.

i. First possession choice goes to the winner of coin toss. Loser of coin toss determines which end zone.

ii. Each team gets one possession.

b. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.

c. There are no time-outs.

d. Each team will have an opportunity to go for 1 point (2-yard line) or 2 points (5-yard line)

i. First OT Period

1. Scoring teams can go for 1 or 2 point PAT

ii. Second OT Period

1. First possession goes to loser of regulation coin toss

2. Scoring teams must go for 2 point PAT

VIII. Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (2-yard line); 2 points (5-yard line)
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 endzone.
4. Interceptions are returnable. On extra point conversions, interception for touchdown is 2 points to the defense.
5. In the event of a forfeit, the score is recorded as 16-0. The game is recorded as a loss in the standings for the forfeiting team and a win for the other team.

IX. Coaches

1. Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all times.
2. Coaches allowed on field during play
 - a. Pee Wee – 2 Coaches
 - b. Juniors – 1 Coach
 - c. Majors – 1 Coach
 - d. Pro – No Coach
3. It is the responsibility of all coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players, and supporters in all matches. Failure to do so undermines the referee's authority and the integrity of the game resulting in a hostile environment for players, referees, coaches, trainers, parents, and spectators. In the event a coach harasses, intimidates, yells, and/or makes derogatory comments will lead to ejection from the game and a multiple game suspension or possible expulsion will follow. Coach privileges will also be revoked and length of sentence is at discretion of League Director.

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 regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
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. This will result in an unsportsmanlike 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.
 - 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. Inadvertent whistle.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball was when the flag is pulled

8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:

a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.

b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

XI. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the ball was when the flag is pulled.

2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field, but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.

3. "Center Sneak" play – The ball must completely leave the center's hands on the snap and he/she must step backwards off the line of scrimmage in order to receive a direct handoff from the QB before advancing the ball.

4. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

5. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

6. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flagguarding.

7. Spinning is allowed, but players may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.

8. 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.

9. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.

10. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before each play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

XII. Passing

1. Laterals are allowed.

2. Shovel passes are allowed.



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 a 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 the interceptor's flag falls out.
6. Interceptions are returnable. On extra point conversions, interception for touchdown is 2 points to the defense.



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.

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. 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 (breaks the 7 yard area), 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 crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOSS and replay the down).

ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside (5 yards LOSS and replay the down).

iii. Any defensive player not lined up at or beyond the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOSS and replay the down).



c. Special circumstances:

i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback.

ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before they play

iii. If rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as 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. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.

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. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.

6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is spotted where the ball was 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 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 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 the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

XVI. Formations

1. Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to five additional 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 behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - b. No motion is allowed towards 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, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

a. There is an exception in the Pee Wee Division where centers are allowed to snap the ball from his/her side

XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field monitor 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 will be considered.
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, coach or official.

4. Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.

6. Coaches and Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well:

a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.

b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.

c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

7. Coaches and Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:

a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.



b. Stay on the sideline areas, not betweenfields.

8. It is the responsibility of all fans to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players, and supporters in all matches. Failure to do so undermines the referee's authority and the integrity of the game resulting in a hostile environment for players, referees, coaches, trainers, parents, and spectators. In the event a fan harasses, intimidates, yells, and/or makes derogatory comments will lead to ejection from the game and a multiple game suspension or possible expulsion will follow.



XVIII. Penalties

i. General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (spot fouls)
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question judgment calls.
5. Games may not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball or dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. 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. Defensive Penalties

Defensive Pass Interference	SPOT FOUL, automatic first down
Holding	SPOT FOUL, automatic first down
Stripping	SPOT FOUL +10 yards & automatic first down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+ 10 yards & automatic first down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+ 10 yards & automatic first down
Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & replay the down
Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & replay the down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down
Roughing the Passer	+10 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down
Taunting	+10 yards from line of scrimmage & automatic first down



iii. Offensive Penalties

Screening, Blocking or Running Ahead of the Ball Carrier	SPOT FOUL, 10 yards & loss of down
Charging	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & loss of down
Flag Guarding	SPOT FOUL, -5 yards & loss of down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards & loss of down
Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 yards & loss of down
Offside / False Start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & replay the down
Illegal Forward Pass (Throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & loss of down
Offensive Pass Interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & replay the down
Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & replay the down
Impeding the Rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & loss of down



XIX. Standings/Tie Break Procedures

If at the end of the regular season, two or more clubs in the same division finish with identical won-lost-tied percentages, the following steps will be taken until a champion is determined.

1. Head to Head (best won-lost-tied percentage in games between the clubs)
2. Net points
3. Points For
4. Points Against

NOTE: Tie games count as one-half win and one-half loss for both clubs

XX. Format

1. Age divisions are as follows
 - a. 5 to 7 - Pee Wee
 - b. 8 to 9 - Juniors
 - c. 10 to 11 - Majors
 - d. 12 to 14 - Pros
2. Age cutoff
 - a. Spring season - Jan 1 of the current calendar year
 - b. Summer season - May 1 of the current calendar year
 - c. Fall season - August 1 of the current calendar year
3. To be eligible to play, a birth certificate is required for all new players
 - a. If you do not have a birth certificate, we accept other documents:
 - i. Original passport
 - ii. Government issued state ID with birthday
 - iii. Certified copy of birth certificate issued by a state county, municipal authority, or territory of the U.S. bearing an official seal
 - iv. School ID with birthday
 - v. School document with birthday
 - vi. Medical record with birthday

