

Men's Flag Football Rules:

Coin Toss:

At the start of each game, the winner of the coin toss will choose one of two options:

Which team will start with the ball

Which goal the team will defend

There are no kick-offs. Play starts on the 20-yard line.

To begin the second half, teams will switch the end zone they are defending and the team that started the game on offense will start on defense.

Time:

Each game consists of two twenty minute halves. Time is running, and stops only with change of possessions, timeouts, and scoring plays. Inside two minutes the timing is NFL style (see below)

Once the ball has been spotted, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Failure to snap the ball within 30 seconds will result in a 5 yard penalty. The referee will count down the final five seconds and give a ten second warning.

TWO MINUTE WARNING:

There will be a two-minute warning in the first and second half.

In the final 2 minutes of the each half, NFL rules implied. The referee will stop the clock for an incomplete pass, a player goes out of bounds, and either team scores.

Time-outs:

Each team is allowed two time-outs per half.

Change of possession:

Change of possession occurs when the offensive team decides to give up the ball and then the other team automatically starts at their own 20 (there is no actual punt, the team has the option to "punt" and give the ball to the other team at the other team's own 20. Other change of possessions include the defensive team intercepting and returning the ball and when there is a safety.

Starting of Play / Hiking the Ball:

Offense must hike the ball from the center to the QB, where the center must hike between the legs. Long snaps are allowed. Illegal motion or false starts and blown dead with a 5 yard penalty assessed.

Infractions against the center/rusher:

If the center takes one step in any direction and contact occurs, the penalty is on the center. If the center moves straight downfield after snapping the ball and there is a contact then the penalty is assessed to the rusher. A 5yd penalty will be marked against the guilty party. This will be a judgment call by the official. Impeding the rush the defense can refuse the penalty and take the result of the play. Penalty on rusher the offense can refuse penalty and take result of the play.

Rusher has to get to line of scrimmage and can then drop back or rush the quarterback.

Laterals:

Laterals are allowed. It occurs when an underhand or overhand pitch/throw of the ball to a fellow team member next to you or behind you. Penalties are assessed when the player who lateraled the ball to a team member laterals it forward and from that spot are given a five yard penalty. Play is allowed to continue until a flag is pulled, this is in case the defense picks off a lateral. If a lateral is fumbled, it is a dead ball where it is marked where the player drops it however the team does not get any benefit from forward progress of the ball, this does not stop the clock.

Rules for the Quarterback:

Once the ball is snapped, the quarterback has six seconds to do one of the following: Throw the ball past the line of scrimmage; run past the line of scrimmage, and the ball off or pitch the ball (in which the runner must pass the line of scrimmage before six seconds). After the snap the referee will count to five, instead of saying "six" if the ball has not reached the line of scrimmage the play is blown dead at the spot where the ball is. The Quarterback cannot run, within 5 yards of any first down, or in the red zone. If a running play is tried in this area, it must be someone other than the person who receives the snap taking it across the line of scrimmage.

Pass Receptions:

A catch is made when the receiver has BOTH feet in bounds where the ball is controlled. No part of the body touches the area out of bounds. Any player who goes out of bounds can come back in but cannot be the first person to touch the ball this will be deemed an incomplete pass. However if it is tipped and the receiver has established both feet in bounds it is a legal reception.

Stripping the ball:

Any attempt to strip the ball carrier of the ball will result in a 5yd penalty assessed at the end of the play and down counts.

Motion:

NFL rules applied to a motion call on the offense. If a team commits an infraction of this rule than the defense shall be given the option of penalizing the offensive team 5 yards.

Blocking:

Blocking is considered the movement, whether deliberate or unintentional, that impedes a defensive player's pursuit of the ball carrier, unless movement is to avoid personal injury (as interpreted by the referee). This also includes the deliberate or unintentional movement of limbs by a stationary player. More leeway may be given to players moving at the time of a reception, but this is up to the referee's discretion.

A violation of this rule will result in the the ball being spotted at the point of the infraction, or

the ball carrier's position at the time of the infraction and a five yard penalty being assessed from whichever point is in favor of the defensive team.

Picks

No picks are allowed. However the criteria that will be used by the referees will depend on the action of the player setting the pick. If the player is running a pass route and making an attempt to get open, and brushes off another player's defender, that is legal. If the sole purpose of that player's action is to brush off the defender, a 5 yard penalty will be assessed.

Pass Rushing:

The defensive team must have at least one player rushing the QB. All players rushing the QB must be at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Violation of this rule will be as follows:

This will be a 5 yard penalty. The rusher has to be aware that any contact with the QB's forward arm motion will be a 5 yard penalty and automatic first down.

Tackling:

A player is "tackled" by removing a ball carrier's flag belt. If a flag is removed by a defensive player prior to full possession (as determined by referee), the offense is not considered tackled and play continues with no infraction charged until another member of the opposing team touches the advancing player.

Flag Guarding:

An offensive player may not avoid a tackle by guarding his/her flag. This occurs if a player pushes an opponent's hand away from the flag, stiff arming, lowering an arm to shield the flag, and dipping the shoulder or using the ball to deflect a tackler's arm or hand. Play is dead in an event of a flag guard and a five yard penalty will be assessed at the spot of the ball where the penalty is called. Juking and spinning are legal to avoid a tackle only in the case where none of the above events occur at the same time.

First-Downs:

Teams earn a first down by moving the ball through the designed first down markers. Just like in the NFL, the ball will be the main factor of where the first down will be marked. A defensive penalty can result in the ball moving the chains.

Inside the 20

In the red zone, the offense can not run the ball. Violation of this rule will result in a penalty of a 5-YDs and loss of down.

Fourth Down:

At each fourth down, the offensive team must state whether it plans to punt or not

Fumbles

If a player fumbles the ball, the play is dead at the spot where the ball first touched the ground.

The play is live if any player on either team takes possession of the ball before it hits the ground. Possession goes to that team and that player may attempt to advance the ball towards

his/her own end zone. Stripping to cause the fumble is prohibited. A 5 yard penalty and automatic 1st down will be assessed.

Interceptions

Interceptions of forward passes or laterals may be advanced. If defensive and offensive players appear to both have possession or are struggling for possession, the reception is granted to the offense.

Point After Try:

After a touch down is scored, each team is allowed a PAT for either 1 or 2 points. If a team chooses to try for 1 point, the ball will be placed 5 yards from the goal line. If a team chooses to try for 2 points, the ball will be placed 10 yards from the goal line.

If a turnover occurs during a PAT, the defensive team may run back the ball for 2 points.

Touchdowns

Only the ball is required to cross the goal line in order for it to count as a touchdown or extra point. **NO DIVING TO ADVANCE THE BALL IS ALLOWED.** A five-yard penalty will be assessed in the event that there is a player in violation of this rule.

Overtime:

Both teams will start at the other team's 20 yard line (red zone rules apply) and will alternate trying to score and convert PATs until one team outscores the other (similar to college OT rules)