



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Version 1.01

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TERMINOLOGY

BOUNDARY LINES The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.

CHARGING An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.

DEAD BALL Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.

DEFENSE The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.

DOWN The offensive team has four attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.

FLAG GUARDING An illegal 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.

INADVERTENT WHISTLE Official’s whistle that is performed in error.

LATERAL A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier. There are no legal laterals or pitches allowed in USA Football 7-on-7 Flag.

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. In USA Football 7-on-7 flag, this is the midfield point.

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 must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

OFFENSE The team with possession of the ball.

PASS CLOCK Offensive teams have seven seconds to throw a pass or make a handoff once the snap is made. If the quarterback still has the ball after an official counts off seven seconds, the play is dead and the ball returns to the line of scrimmage as if an incomplete pass occurred.

PASSER The offensive player who throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.

RUSH LINE An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.

RUSHER The defensive player(s) assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.

SHOVEL PASS A legal forward pitch attempted from behind the line of scrimmage traveling beyond the line of scrimmage.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

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, halftime or the end of the game.

Registration Requirements

Registration Requirements:

Players must comply with League age and school grade eligibility requirements.

1. Freshman Division

. Kindergarten and 1st grade – Must be currently enrolled in either grade.

. Must not be 8 before 09/01/2024.

1. Sophomore Division

. 2nd and 3rd grade - Must be currently enrolled in either grade.

. Must not be 10 before 09/01/2024.

1. Junior Varsity

. 4th and 5th grade – Must be currently enrolled in either grade.

. Must not be 12 before 09/01/2024.

1. Varsity Division

. 6th and 7th grade - Must be currently enrolled in either grade.

. Must not be 14 before 09/01/2024.

1. Pro Division

. 8th grade - Must be currently enrolled in either grade.

. Must not be 15 before 09/01/2024.

POSITIONS

Offense

- The seven players on offense consist of a center, a quarterback and five eligible receivers. Two of those receivers must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap – each positioned on opposite sides of the center
- Center. This player's responsibility is to snap the ball to begin the play, a critical skill at all levels of football. The center is an eligible player on the field. Once the center has delivered the football to the quarterback – either directly or from a pistol or shotgun formation – the center can run out as an eligible receiver.
- Quarterback. This player receives the snap from the center and initiates the play either through a handoff or pass. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the line of scrimmage without first handing the ball off to a teammate and then receiving a second handoff back or receiving a pass.
- Receiver/back. Any player is considered an eligible receiver/back and can either receive a handoff or catch a pass. Two receivers must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap – on opposite sides of the center – while the other three are at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage in either a slot or running back position. No player other than the quarterback may line up within three yards of the center.

NOTE: Leagues may consider waiving the restriction on lining within three yards of the center for younger age groups.

Defense

All players on defense are eligible to drop back into coverage.

- **Rusher.** Following a legal handoff, any member of the defense can cross the line of scrimmage.

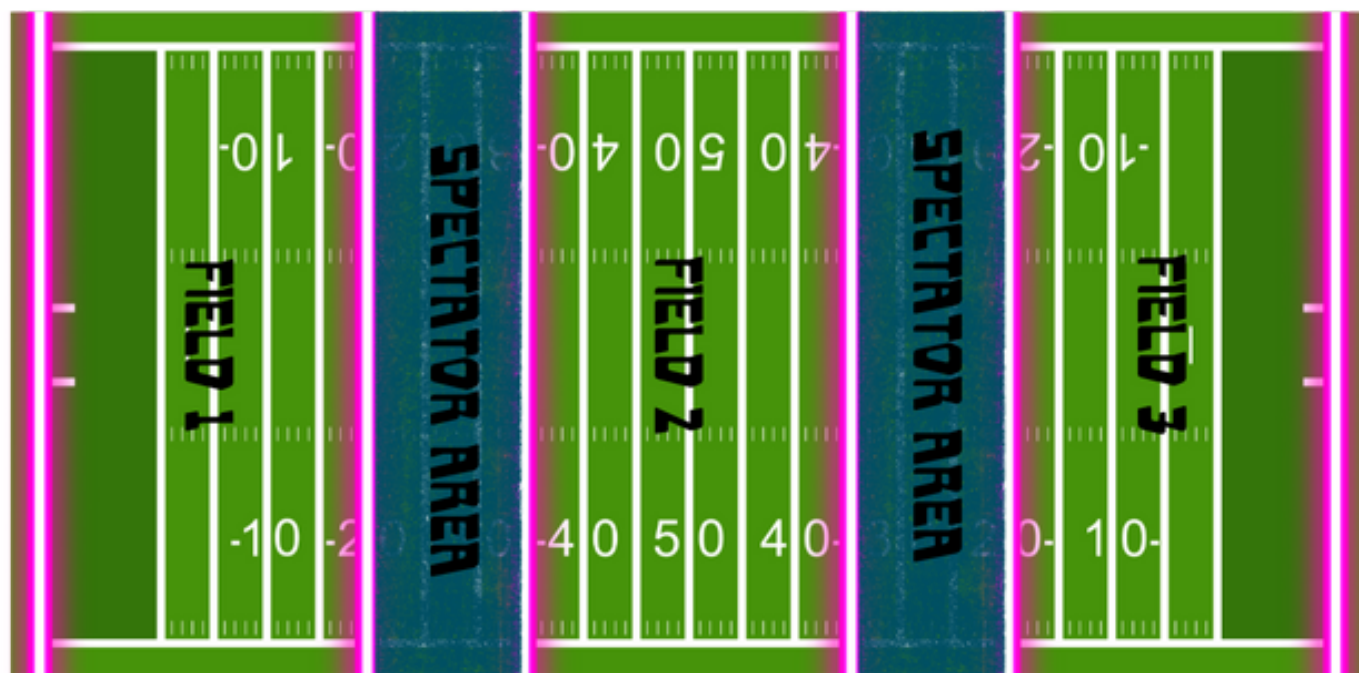
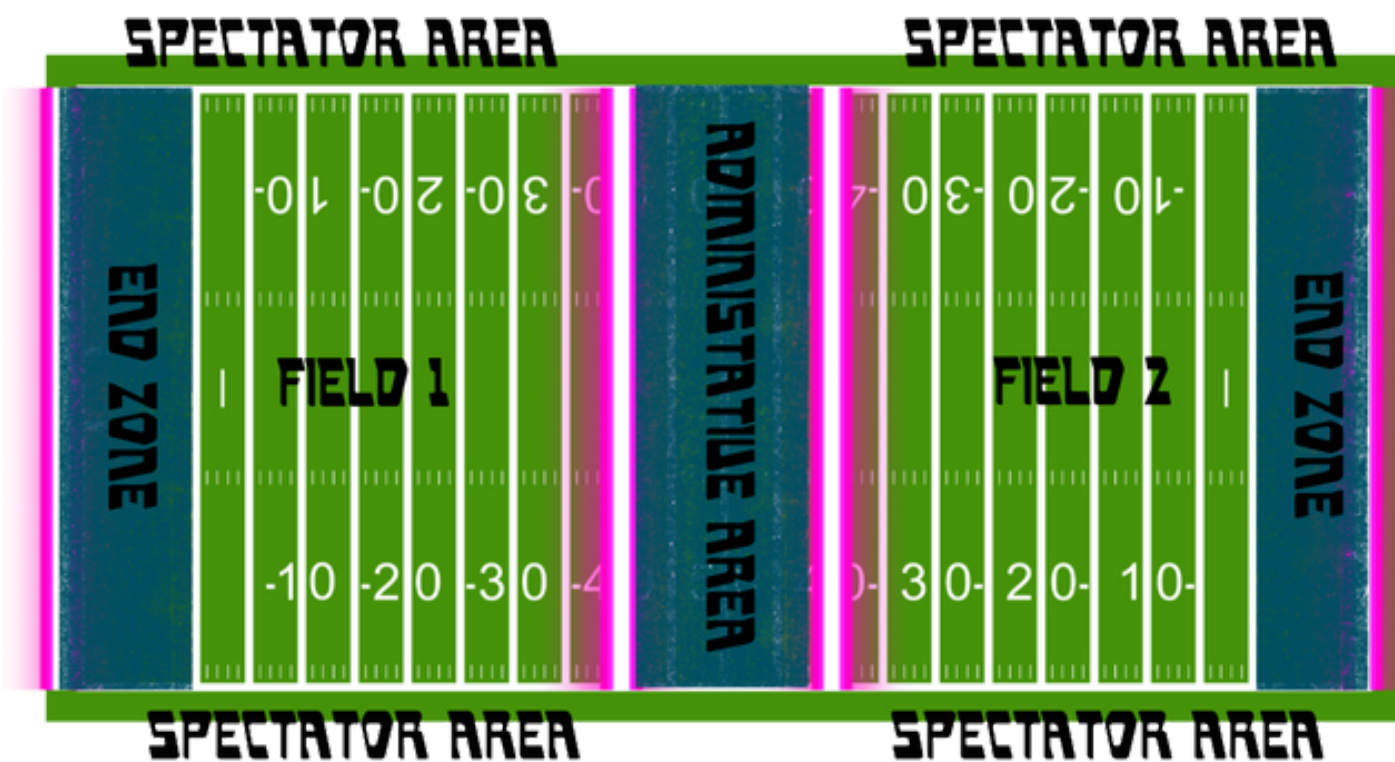
GENERAL RULES

1. For all games visitors will start the game with the ball. Home team will begin 2nd half with the ball.
2. All offensive play begins at the 40--yard line and move towards the closest endzone.
3. The offense will have three downs to cross the 30--yard line (10 yards), four downs to cross the 15--yard line (15 yards) and four final downs to cross the goal--line (15 yards). If an offense is unable to cross the yard markers within the specified number of downs, a change of possession will occur.
4. Each team will have 40 seconds to snap the ball from the end of the previous play.
5. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the official spot.
6. The play clock will not stop while the ball is reset by the offense.
7. There are no special teams plays (kicking/punting/FG).

EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORM

1. Each player must wear uniformed shirts Teams will use footballs suitable for the age division.
2. 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 knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed. Players are required to wear mouth pieces during practices and games.
4. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
5. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
6. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.
7. Football sizes used will be listed below
 - The freshman and sophomore division will use a "peewee" size 5 football
 - The JV division use a "Junior" size 6 football while on offense
 - The Varsity Division will use a "Youth" size 7 football while on offense
 - The Pro Division will use an "Official" size 9 football while on offense.

PLAYING FIELD



TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two 20-minute halves. The clock stops for timeouts or injuries only, though officials can stop the clock at their discretion for injury, to stop a team from delaying or other unsportsmanlike conduct.
2. Halftime is five minutes.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.

NOTE: USA Football recommends that officials should use discretion with younger ages who may need more time to line up and get a playoff.

1. Each team has one 30-second timeout per half.
2. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play and both teams are lined up ready to restart the play.
3. In playoff games only, if the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. The overtime format is as follows:
 - A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - Each team will take turns getting one play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of its own.

Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the five-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.

- If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
- All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- There are no timeouts in overtime.

SCORING

1. **Touchdown:** Six points
2. **PAT** (point after touchdown) one point from the 5-yard line or two points from the 10-yard line. a. Because of the no-run zone, a one-point PAT is pass only; two point PAT can be run or pass.
 - **NOTE:** At younger levels, leagues should consider waiving the no-run zone for first downs, touchdowns and point-after tries.
 - A team that scores a touchdown must declare prior to the snap whether it wishes to attempt a one- or two-point conversion. Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
3. **Safety:** zero points
 - There are no safeties awarded in the league. If a player is called down behind the starting 40 yrd line, the ball will be replaced at the 40 for the next down.
4. There will be a max of 21 points for point differential. There will be no benefit from winning by more than 21 points for standing or brackets.

COACHES

1. No coaches will be allowed on the field during plays. All plays will be called from the side lines.

LIVE BALL DEAD BALL

1. The ball is live at the snap and remains live until an official's whistle blows the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage by spotting the ball before each play and signaling ready for play with a short whistle.

- It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. Regarding the neutral zone, an official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification prior to the snap to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. The defense may not mimic the offensive team’s signals by trying to confuse the offensive players while the quarterback is calling signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
 4. A player who gains possession of the ball is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
 5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
 6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
 7. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - The ball hits the ground.
 - If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hits the ground.
 - The ball-carrier is touched and ruled down.
 - The ball-carrier steps out of bounds
 - A touchdown or PAT
 - Any part of the body other than feet or hands touches the ground.
 - The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
 - An inadvertent whistle
 8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
 - Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
 9. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official’s rule interpretation. If the official’s ruling is correct, the team is charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout is not charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.
 10. A team with no time out remaining cannot challenge a rule interpretation, though officials can come together independently and reverse a call by unanimous decision.

RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the runner’s front foot is where the player is touched and ruled down, not the position of the ball.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must take place behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - The “center sneak” play is not allowed.
4. No laterals of any kind are allowed, including pitches and throwbacks.
5. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
8. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
9. 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.
10. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.
11. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. There is no running with the ball-carrier.

PASSING

1. All overhand passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage and thrown forward. Screens and bubble screens are allowed. But receiver must catch the ball ahead of the quarterback.
 - The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage and be in the vicinity of a receiver per NFHS rules.
 - Quarterbacks cannot spike the ball dead the clock will continue to run.
2. A pass clock begins upon the snap and continues until there is a handoff or pass. If the pass clock expires while the quarterback still has the ball, the play is blown dead, a down is lost and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage as if an incomplete pass occurred.
 - 4TH and 5TH Grade pass clock will be 7 seconds.

- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade pass clock will be 5 seconds.
- 3. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 4. Any player who has received a legal handoff can throw the ball forward.

RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes.
2. A player must have at least one foot inbounds to make a legal reception.
3. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
4. Interceptions change possession at the point of the catch. Interceptions are returnable and are the only changes of possession if a pick 6 does not happen the ball will be returned to the 40 yrd line and possession will switch sides.
 - If there is a pick 6 the PAT will be played as a normal PAT.
5. The play is blown dead immediately if an interception is made on an extra-point try. There are no returns on that lay.

RUSHING THE PASSER

1. No rushing of the passer is allowed.
2. Once the ball is handed off or thrown to a receiver, all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

Player is considered down when

1. A Defender two hand touch takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to two hand touch but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when attempting to two hand touch the ball carrier.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.

PENALTIES

General

1. The officials will call all penalties.
2. Game officials 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. Other players, coaches and fans may not question calls.
5. Games and halves may not end on a penalty unless the opposing team declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal line when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	Five yards from line of scrimmage and Automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+Five yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	Five yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	Five yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Offensive Taunting	5 yard penalty from line of scrimmage and a loss of a down
Defensive Taunting	5 yard penalty and automatic first down
Blocking	10 yard penalty
Passing Interference	10 yard penalty and loss of a down
Ejected from the game	Automatic suspension from next game
Multiple ejections in one season	Subject to league suspension

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Noncontact Player Acts (9-1-1)

No player shall commit acts including: A. Using words similar to the offensive's audible or quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offense B. Intentionally kicking the ball, other than a punt C. Participating while wearing illegal player equipment D. Fighting or attempting to fight (results in disqualification)

Dead Ball Fouls (9-1-2) When the ball is dead, no player shall: A. Intentionally kick the ball B. Spike the ball 8.1.3

Prohibited Acts (9-1-3) There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or others subject to the rules. Examples include, but are not limited to: A. Attempting to influence a decision by an official B. Disrespectfully addressing an official C. Using profanity, taunting, insulting or

vulgar language or gestures D. Intentionally making contact with a game official during the game E. Fighting F. Leaving the team area and entering the playing field during a fight

Second Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul by Player (9-1-4) The second unsportsmanlike conduct foul by the same player results in disqualification. If a spectator receives the penalty, it will be assessed to the captain.

Third Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul by Team (9-1-6) The third unsportsmanlike conduct foul by the same team results in their forfeiture of the game.

Personal Fouls

Player Restrictions (9-3-1) No player shall: A. Strip or attempt to strip the ball from a player in possession by punching, striking, or stealing. B. Contact an opponent who is on the ground C. Throw a runner to the ground D. Hurdle any other player E. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is dead F. Make contact of any nature which is deemed unnecessary G. Deliberately dive or run into a defensive player H. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms. 8.2.2 Roughing the Passer (9-3-2) Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass. NOTE: The passer remains the passer while the ball is in flight or until they move to participate in the play.

Registration Requirements

Registration Requirements:

Players must comply with League age and school grade eligibility requirements.

1. Freshman Division
 - a. Kindergarten and 1st grade – Must be currently enrolled in either grade.
 - b. Must not be 8 before 09/01/2024.
2. Sophomore Division
 - a. 2nd and 3rd grade - Must be currently enrolled in either grade.
 - b. Must not be 10 before 09/01/2024.
3. Junior Varsity
 - a. 4th and 5th grade – Must be currently enrolled in either grade.
 - b. Must not be 12 before 09/01/2024.
4. Varsity Division
 - a. 6th and 7th grade - Must be currently enrolled in either grade.
 - b. Must not be 14 before 09/01/2024.
5. Pro Division
 - a. 8th grade - Must be currently enrolled in either grade.
 - b. Must not be 15 before 09/01/2024.