



RULEBOOK

Disclaimer: MFL abides by the regional and international flag football rules.
If any disputes are raised, the final decision will be based on this rule book.

flagfootballph.com

MFL RULEBOOK



GAME

1. The game starts with both teams on either side of the field. Teams turn to each other and shake hands.
2. After the whole line of hand shakes, both captains meet in midfield for the coin toss which will determine the first possession of the ball. The captain with the majority of their members who arrived earlier calls the toss.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line.
5. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
6. If the ball is intercepted, the intercepting team (defense when they intercepted, now becomes offense) continues from the point of where the flag was pulled.



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 seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Offense	The team who had the ball, attempted for a touchdown.
Defense	The team preventing the other team to score a touchdown.
Passer	Most likely the quarterback, but could be any alternative offensive player that throws the ball to a receiver.
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent them from launching the football to a receiver.



TERMINOLOGY

Live Ball	Refers to the when the ball is officially snapped and released to the QB. This term may also be used in regard 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 before or after the ball is in play. Usually used when the ball goes out of bounds with or without the receiver, or when the ball touches the floor before it's caught.
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.
Flag Guarding	An illegal act by the ball-carrier done by covering their flags to prevent a defender from pulling it. This can be done by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand, arm or ball.
Lateral	A possible backward or sideways toss by the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage.
Shovel Pass	A legal forward pass across the LOS underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	An unruly or offensive behavior or language determined by the officials and/or the referee/s.



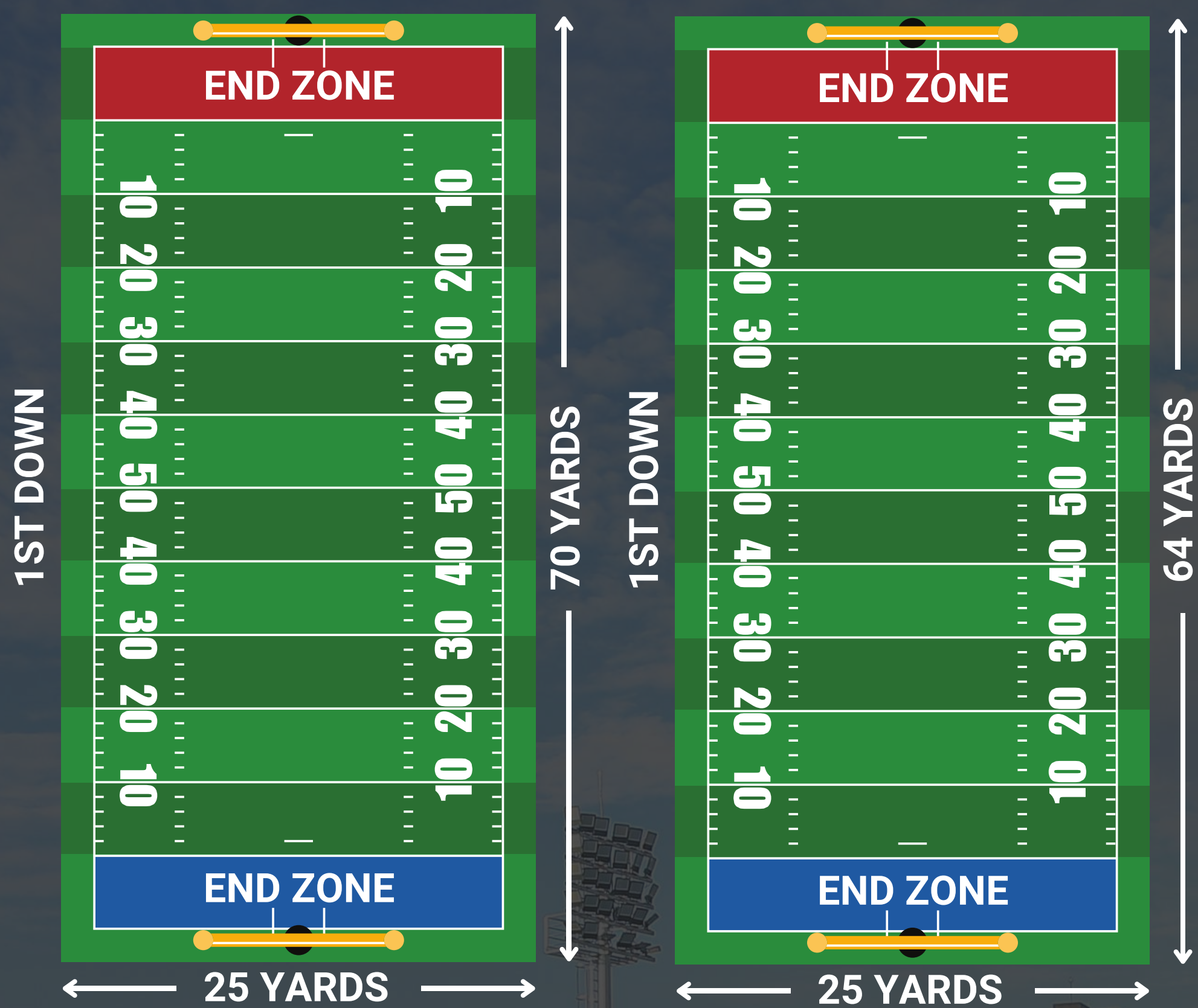
EQUIPMENT

1. All players are required to wear the assigned official MFL belt.
2. Teams are not allowed to choose flag belts that are the same color of their jerseys or bottoms.
3. There will be official balls provided by MFL for every game. Teams will **not** be allowed to play with their own footballs. Officials will be in charge of maintaining the assigned footballs for each game.
4. Players may taper their forearms, hands, and fingers.
5. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads.
6. Players must remove all jewelry and accessories.
7. Each player is expected to wear bottoms that have no pockets or zippers.
8. Games will not be delayed for loose flags, loose shorts, or taping up pockets.
9. Jersey tops must be tucked or tied at all times.
10. Teams not prepared to play at the exact Game Time due to noncompliance for equipment will have their all game timeouts taken up for the delay.

MFL RULEBOOK



FIELD



1. Recommended field dimensions:

- 25 yards wide by 70 yards with two 10-yard endzones
- 25 yards wide by 64 yards long with two seven-yard endzones.

Both with a midfield line to gain.

2. No-run zones are located five yards prior to the endzone in the offense's direction.

3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

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JERSEYS

PRIMARY



WHITE ALTERNATE



1. Teams are required to show up in identical jerseys on game day.
2. Teams are allowed to have their own jerseys made, however, the placement of a **3x3 in.** MFL crest logo is required.
3. The MFL crest logo must be placed on the upper left part of the jersey, as shown above.
4. The high-resolution .png file may be sent to team captains upon request via admin@manilaflagfootball.com.
5. All jersey designs must be submitted for approval 2 weeks before game day.
6. Jerseys without MFL's official approval will not be permitted to be used on MFL grounds.
7. Teams must have reversible jerseys with a white-side option or an alternate white jersey.



TIMING & OVERTIME

1. Play pool (Round robin) games are played on a 30-minute continuous clock with 15 minutes per half.
2. Halftime is two minutes
3. Each time the ball is spotted, the team has 35 seconds to snap the ball.
4. Each team has one 60-second timeout per half. They can carry over.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. If the defensive team chooses not to send a rusher, the quarterback has 10 seconds to pass the ball.
7. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
8. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner.



TIMING & OVERTIME

Overtime format is as follows:

- A. The higher seed team or if both teams are tied on the same seed, the the team with a higher aggregate score calls the toss to determine offense or defense first.
- B. 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.
- C. Each team will take turns getting one (1) 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 their own.
- D. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line
- E. Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored for each team
- F. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- G. There are no timeouts in overtime.
- H. Interceptions are returnable in OT.



SCORING

1. **Touchdown:** 6 points
2. **Conversion:** (point after touchdown) **1 point** (5-yard line) or **2 points** (10-yard line)
 - a. Note: 1 point PAT is 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 their own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, they step out of bounds, their knee touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
4. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether they wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout.
5. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
6. Forfeits are scored 35-0 for the winning team.



LIVE | DEAD BALL

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles and calls the ball dead.
2. The neutral zone starts from the line of scrimmage and goes up to one yard before the first defender may be placed.
 - a. 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 of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as their feet land within the grounds of 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 conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may only be made on any dead ball.
6. Only the head referee can whistle the ball to be dead.



LIVE|DEAD BALL

Play is ruled “dead” when:

- a. The ball hits the ground.
- b. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
- c. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
- d. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
- e. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
- f. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled out.
- g. The ball-carrier gets touched while on the ground or while running given that their flag fell off (and was not pulled by someone else.)
- h. The 10 second pass clock expires.
- i. Inadvertent whistle
- j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet other than side steps, spinning or to avoid a downed player on the field of play.



LIVE|DEAD BALL

NOTE: If the ball fumbles forward then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession.

NOTE: If the ball fumbles and falls into the hands of the opposing team, then it will be considered an interception.

7. If Inadvertent Whistle Occurs The Offense Has Two Options:

- A.) Continue from where the whistle was blown and count it as a down.
- B.) Replay the down from the previous line of scrimmage.

If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

8. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be 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.

9. Officials should all agree in order to change a call on the field that is in dispute.



RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's flag gets pulled.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
3. The quarterback may only run with the ball if at least one hand off has made.
4. 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 be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - A. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.***
 - B. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.***
 - C. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the 10-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.***
5. Lateral passes and pitches ARE ALLOWED so long as they happen behind the line of scrimmage.
6. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone to avoid short-yardage power-running situations.



RUNNING

7. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding – unless the action was done CLEARLY to avoid collision with a player on the ground.

8. Spinning/side steps are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning ***out of control*** will be called for flag guarding.

9. Ball-carriers ***may*** leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning and if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player.

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

11. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.

12. Flag obstruction – All jerseys **MUST** be tucked in or tied before play begins. The flags must be on both sides of each player’s **hips** and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

13. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

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



PASSING

1. All passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.
2. Intentional grounding is a loss of down.
3. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
4. The quarterback has a 10-second “pass clock” if the defensive team chooses not to send a rusher or if the defensive team fails to declare a rusher. In that case, if a pass is not thrown within the 10 seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 10-second rule is no longer in effect.
5. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.



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 the ball carrier is allowed in motion after the ball has been caught.
3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part contacting the inbound ground first with possession.
4. A moving touchdown will only be counted if at least one of the receiver's feet is within the end zone.
5. Stepping on the first boundary line of the end zone is considered a touchdown.
6. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the **offense**.
7. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points.
8. Offense and defense have 50/50 right to a ball in mid air.



RUSHING THE PASSER

1. All rushers must be at least 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer applies and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line of seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players are responsible for verifying their position with the official on every play.
4. A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point 7-yards or beyond from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the Quarterback.
5. A penalty may be called if:
 - a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap.
 - b. **Illegal rush:** If a defensive player (who was not the **declared** rusher) crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass.
 - c. **Offsides:** Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped.
6. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play anymore.
7. Teams are **required** to identify their rusher/s before the play.



RUSHING THE PASSER

8. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, which then gives the quarterback 10 seconds to make a pass.

9. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB whether intentional or not will be counted as roughing the passer.

10. 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.

11. The PATH must be **set pre-snap** from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the offense is in place..

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.

a. A **Safety** is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.



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 FULL POSSESSION at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the defensive team can tap the ball carrier as a replacement to pulling the flag.
5. If a player who has no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead, you lose a down, and you replay where the previous line of scrimmage was.
6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
7. 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, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.



FORMATION

1. Offense 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. All quarterbacks are required to say “set” as a marker for when all their members be set until the ball is snapped.
 - B. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as it is done before the word “set” has been verbalized by the quarterback.
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 their legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave their hands.



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 a YELLOW CARD PENALTY will immediately be called, sanctioning the offensive player to be ejected from the rest of the game. Should the players continue to engage in rowdy and/or unsportsmanlike behavior, a RED CARD PENALTY will be called, sanctioning the players involved to be ejected for the rest of the tournament. The decision is made at the referee's discretion.
2. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
3. Offensive or confrontational language is NOT allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.
4. Players are prohibited from physically or verbally abusing any opponent, coach or official.
5. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
6. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players.
7. Defensive players are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
8. ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED
9. Supporters must also adhere to good sportsmanship.
10. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for the rest of the team:
Defense: + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Offense: - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down



PENALTIES

General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. Penalties may only be decided on, in between downs when ball is not in live play.
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
5. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
6. Live ball penalties must be assessed then and there.
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.
8. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)
9. Team captains may accept or decline a penalty granted it is one that comes with a choice. (examples of penalties that do not come with a choice are: false start, offsides, impeding the rusher, illegal flagpull, etc.)



PENALTIES

Defensive Spot Fouls:

Defensive pass interference	Ball is potted where the interference happened & automatic first down
Holding	+5 yards for the offense & automatic first down
Stripping the ball	+10 yards for the offense & automatic first down

Offensive Spot Fouls:

Screening & blocking	- 10 yards for the offense & automatic loss of down
Charging	- 10 yards for the offense & automatic loss of down
Flag Guarding	- 10 yards for the offense & automatic loss of down



PENALTIES

Defensive Penalties:

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards for the offense & automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards for the offense & automatic first down
Offsides	+5 yards from the LOS for the offense & repeat down
Illegal Rushing from inside the 7-yard marker not declaring intent to rush	+5 yards from the LOS for the offense & repeat down
Illegal Flag Pulling opponent's flag before they have full control of the ball	+5 yards from the spot of the foul
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from the LOS for the offense & repeat down
Taunting	+5 yards from the LOS for the offense & repeat down



PENALTIES

Offensive Penalties:

Offensive unnecessary roughness	- 10 yards for the offense & automatic loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	- 10 yards for the offense & automatic loss of down
Offsides/False Start	- 5 yards from the LOS for the offense & automatic loss of down
Offensive pass interference	- 5 yards from the LOS for the offense & automatic loss of down
Delay of game	- 5 yards from the LOS for the offense & automatic loss of down
Impeding the rusher	- 5 yards from the LOS for the offense & automatic loss of down