

XL SPORTS GIRLS 7v7 FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

(Revised on June 23, 2025)

The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

- **Field Dimensions:**

- a. JV/VARSITY (15/17U) 40 yards wide by 80 yards long with two 10-yard end zones.
- b. Intermediate (12/14U) 40 yards wide by 60 yards long with two 10 yard end zones.
- c. When space is limited AND/OR DURING PLAYOFFS:
 - i. Width: 40 yards minimum (Fields may be up to 45 yards in width if there is a permanent marking on the field such as a Lacrosse boundary that provides a permanent visible line to be used as the sideline).
- d. Length: 50 yards + 2 end zones (10 yards each)

- **Restricted Area:**

- a. The restricted area is the area extending two yards outside the perimeter of the entire field (i.e., outside both sidelines and end lines). This restricted area is designated by the restraining line.
- b. The restraining line is a coned or lined mark on the field, at least 2 yards from the sideline.
- c. The team box is the area immediately outside the restricted area between the 20- yard lines (or the lines to gain nearest the end zones on fields that are shorter than 80 yards) on each side of the field. With limited exceptions, nonplayers are not permitted in the restricted area at any time during the game. Non-Players include coaches, team personnel, spectators, game administrators, and members of the media.
- d. During a dead-ball interval, no more than two coaches are permitted in the restricted area directly in front of the team box. No one may be in the restricted area from the time the center is over the ball until all live and continuing action has finished.
- e. The restricted area is designated to make the sidelines safer for everyone and to allow game officials ample room to work. If the restricted area is not delineated or not enforced by game administration, coaches, or game officials, individuals in the restricted area are at risk for injury during or after a play.
- f. Coaches are required to instruct team personnel on the parameters and boundaries of the team box and to effectively communicate the requirements to always stay in the team box.
- g. Coaches MUST be OFF the field once the ball is snapped.

- **Players:**

- a. Each team shall begin the game with 7 players, but if it has no substitutes to replace injured or disqualified players, it may continue with a minimum of 5.

- **Officials:**

- a. The game will be played under the supervision of 3-4 officials.

- **Shoes:**

- a. Players **MUST** wear shoes with rubber cleats. **NO METAL CLEATS!**
- b. Coaches/Staff **MUST** wear covered shoes.

- **Players Uniforms:**

- a. No Open Pockets, belt loops, or exposed drawstrings.
- b. **HEADGEAR & MOUTHPIECES ARE MANDATORY**
- c. All players jerseys from each team must be 100% identical **OR** be the same color.
- d. No Sunglasses
- e. **NO JEWELRY**

- **Flags:**

- a. A one-piece flag belt without any knots.
- b. One flag on each hip (2 flags total) By state adoption, 3-flag belts are permitted.
- c. Flags **MUST** be at least 2” wide by 15” length.
- d. Flags **MUST** be removable from the belt and a contrasting color from the shorts/pants.
- e. All “pop” flags must be designated by the manufacturer to be for **YOUTH**. Any flag designated by the manufacturer to be an “adult” pop flag will be illegal.
- f. Flags may not be altered in width or length (from their original manufactured size) and may have no tape on them **UNLESS** the tape is used to assist with contrasting color of players shorts/pants.
- g. The officials of each contest will have the final rule for that contest as to the legality of all flags, belts, and attachments.
- h. **PLAY CARDS** may not be worn on the flag belt. They can be on players arms or wrist.
- i. Flags must be a contrasting color to the pants or shorts.

- **Football SIZE:**

a. 12/14U - Size 6 (JUNIOR)

b. 15/17U - Size 7 (YOUTH)

DEFINITIONS

- **Blocking:**

1. The blockers shall have their arms and hands at their side, across their chest, in front of the body, or behind their back. Any use of hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive block is illegal.
2. The defense is responsible for avoiding contact with a stationary blocker or blocker screening in the same line of approach.
3. To be deemed stationary, the blocker must be stationary for a distance of at least 2 yards in advance of the defender.

- **Defensive Rushing:**

1. Prior to the snap, all defensive players shall be lined up on or behind the neutral zone that is set 1-yard from the ball.
2. All defensive players are eligible to rush.

- **Diving:**

1. No runner shall leave the ground and dive so that their body becomes horizontal to the ground. A runner who dives will result in the end of the play and the ball spotted where the runner left the ground.
2. A non-runner is permitted to dive to make a catch or pull a flag.

- **Down - Loss of Down:**

1. A down is an action that starts with a legal snap by passing or handing backwards from the ground and must be quick and continuous and immediately leave the hands of the snapper.
2. The ball becomes dead when the ball carrier's flag is pulled, the ball touches the ground or any body part, other than the hand or feet of the ball carrier touches the ground, or any body part of the ball carrier touches out of bounds.
3. The loss of a down is the loss of the right to replay the down.

- **Flag Guarding:**

1. The runner shall not make any movement of the hand or arm, even if unintentional, that restricts access to the runner's flag.
2. Flag guarding can and does occur with the normal motion of a runner's arms and hands, the runner shall not "stiff arm" a defender.
3. The runner shall not lower their shoulder to ward off a defender.

- **Forward progress:**

1. Forward progress is the end of advancement of the ball, toward the opponent's goal, in a runner's possession when the runner's flag is removed.
2. Forward progress of a fumble that contacts the ground, and becomes dead, in advance of the runner who had possession will be marked at the spot where possession was lost.
3. Forward progress of a fumble that contacts the ground, and becomes dead, behind the runner who had possession will be marked at the spot that the ball crosses the sideline prior to touching out of bounds.

- **Fouls and Penalties:**

1. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.
2. Types of fouls:
 - a. Dead Ball – a foul that occurs in the time interval after a down has ended and before the ball is next snapped.
 - b. Double – one or more live-ball fouls (other than nonplayer) are committed by each team at such a time that the penalties offset.
 - c. Flagrant – a foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of injury, and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive.
 - d. Live ball – a foul that occurs during a down.
 - e. Multiple – two or more live ball fouls (other than nonplayer) are committed during the same down by the same team at such a time that the offended team is permitted a choice of penalties.

- f. Nonplayer – a foul while the ball is dead or during the down which is not illegal participation and does not influence the play in progress.
- g. Unsportsmanlike – a non-contact foul, typically taunting or use of improper language. Any player or coach who receives two unsportsmanlike fouls will be disqualification from the contest. Coaches who are disqualified must leave the field and stands area. Players who are disqualified may stay on the sideline.
- h. Simultaneous with the snap – an act which becomes a foul when the ball is snapped.

- **Fumble:**

- 1. A fumble is any loss of player possession except handing or passing.
- 2. A fumble that contacts the ground becomes a dead ball.
- 3. A fumble that does not contact the ground will remain live.

- **Handing & Passing**

- 1. Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one player to a teammate in such a way that the ball is still in contact with the first player when it is touched by the teammate.
- 2. Any player may hand the ball backward at any time. No player may hand the ball forward except during a down before a change of possession provided both players are in or behind the neutral zone.
- 3. Passing occurs when the player in possession of the ball completely releases the ball while the ball travels in the air either forward or backward before another player possesses the ball. If the ball contacts the ground, it is a dead ball.

- **Leaping:**

- 1. The runner shall not jump and leave both feet causing the runner's waist to elevate above normal waist level.
- 2. A player may leap to catch or block a pass.

- **Pass Interference:**

- 1. Pass interference restrictions only apply beyond the neutral zone and only if the legal forward pass, untouched by B in or behind the neutral zone, crosses the neutral zone. Pass interference

restrictions for both A and B players are in effect until the ball is touched or the pass is incomplete.

2. It is forward pass interference if any player of A or B interferes with an opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch, or bat the pass.
3. Pass interference restrictions for A begin at the snap, and for B they begin when the forward pass is in flight.
4. Pass interference includes restrictive acts including but not limited to, holding, grabbing, redirecting, or otherwise hindering the movement of a player trying to secure a forward pass.

- **Passing:**

1. A pass is defined as a ball in player possession that is then thrown.
2. A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line.
3. A forward pass ends when it is caught, touches the ground, or is out of bounds.
4. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the runner's end line.
5. A backward pass ends when it is caught, contacts the ground or is out of bounds.
6. The offensive team may NOT throw more than one forward pass per down.
7. The offensive team may throw an unlimited number of backward passes during any down.
8. No player may throw the ball forward if the **entire body** of that player is beyond the line of scrimmage.
9. The quarterback may intentionally ground the ball by throwing the ball into the ground or out of bounds to avoid a sack. If the ball is thrown laterally or backwards it is considered a backward pass, and the ball will be placed at the spot where the ball crossed the out-of-bounds. If the pass is thrown forward it is considered an incomplete pass and will be placed at the previous spot.
10. No forward passes are allowed after a change of possession.
11. Passing Clock - The Quarterback has 7 seconds to release the ball. At the expiration of the passing clock, the officials will signal the play dead.
 - a. Once any other A-player possesses the ball, the Passing Clock dissolves.

- **Quarterback:**

1. The Quarterback (QB) is the A player who receives the legal snap to start the scrimmage play.
2. The QB must receive the ball by a shotgun snap and be at least 4 yards behind the LOS.
3. The center may snap the ball from the side or between her legs.

- **Safety:**

1. It is a safety when a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across their own goal line, and it becomes dead there in their team's possession.
 - a. Exception: When a defensive player intercepts an opponent's fumble, forward or backward pass and their original momentum carries them across their own goal line where the ball then becomes dead. The ball will be spotted where the ball was caught but no closer than the team five-yard line.
2. It is a safety when the team in possession fumbles and the ball first contacts the ground in their own endzone.
3. It is a safety if the offense commits a penalty in their own endzone. The opponent will retain the option decline the penalty or have the penalty enforced from the previous spot and decline the safety points.

- **Snapping:**

1. The snap begins when the snapper first moves the ball legally other than in adjustment. In a snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backward motion of the ball during which the ball immediately leaves the hand(s) of the snapper.
2. Shotgun snaps are required at a distance of at least 4-yards.
3. If the snap touches the ground the ball is dead where it touches the ground.

- **Spinning:**

1. Spinning is rotation (twisting) of the body, greater than 360°, while moving along a straight line, to avoid a flag being pulled. Spinning is permitted as long as it does not include flag guarding.
2. A turn or cut that includes an obvious change of direction is legal as long as it does not violate another rule.

- **Tagging:**

1. Tagging is the act of touching a player with one hand, anywhere between the shoulder and knees.
2. A tag will be used to down a player who has lost their flag either legally or illegally before possessing the ball.

- **Tripping:**

1. Tripping is the use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent, including the runner, below the knee.

- **Game Length:**

1. (2) 20 minute halves
2. Halftime will consist of 3-5 minutes.
3. Running clock until the last (1) minute of the 2nd half. The game clock will start on the snap following the stoppage for notification of a 1 minute warning.
4. Mercy Rule - 35 point or more deficit. Game clock will run through the 1 minute warning.

- **Starting and Stopping the Game Clock:**

1. The clock will start on the snap to begin each period.
2. The game clock will run continuously until the final minute of the 2nd half.
3. The clock will stop at the discretion of the Referee to administer fouls, for injured players, or for prolonged events.
4. The clock will stop for charged team timeouts.
5. The clock will stop in the final minute of 2nd half when:
 - a. The ball/runner goes out of bounds.
 - b. A new series of downs is awarded – this is a momentary stop of 5 seconds. Clock resumes once officials signal the “ready to play”.
 - c. A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete.
 - d. A team attempts to consume time illegally.
 - e. A penalty for delay of game foul is accepted.

- f. The down ends following a foul.
- g. A score occurs. (will remain stopped during the try)
- h. Penalty and administration of the penalty
- i. An inadvertent whistle is sounded.

6. The clock will start on the Referee signal:

- a. After the Referee stops the clock during the running clock period.
- b. When at the discretion of the officials, the officials determine that the foul committed was to conserve time.
- c. After the line to gain is reached for a first down.
- d. Exception: The try will be an untimed down and the clock will start on the snap in the next series of downs.

- **Timeouts:**

- a. Each team has 2 timeouts per half.

- **Play Clock**

- a. The offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.

- **Extending a Half:**

- 1. A half may be extended for an untimed down when, during the last timed down, one of the following occurred:
 - a. There was a foul by the defense and the penalty was accepted.
 - b. If there is a foul by the offense and they score a touchdown, the touchdown will be nullified and the half is over.
 - c. If there was a double foul without a change of possession or a double foul prior to a change of possession.
 - d. If there was an inadvertent whistle and the down is replayed or the team in last possession accepts the result of the play.
 - e. If a touchdown is scored and the try is attempted; unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the second half and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

SCORING

- **Touchdown:**

1. A touchdown is the act of moving a live ball across the opponent's goal line while in player possession.

- a. 6 points

- **Safety:**

- a. 2 points

- **Try:**

1. After a touchdown, the scoring team shall attempt a try of their choice during which the ball is snapped from on either the team 3 or 10 yard line.
2. There are no kick attempts unless permitted by state adoption.
3. A successful try from the 3-yard line results in 1 point.
4. A successful try from the 10-yard line results in 2 points.
5. During a try, the ball remains live after a change of possession, allowing the opponent to return the try for 2 points.
6. Once a team declares their choice for a 1- or 2-point try and the ball is declared, the team may change their decision only after calling a timeout or penalty is accepted either before the try or during the try.
7. The try will be an untimed down at 2:00 or less in each half. When a touchdown is scored and the try has not been played when any half reaches 0:00, the period shall be extended for the try on the same end of the field that the touchdown was scored.

- **Overtime:**

1. The visiting team shall call the coin toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss can choose to be on offense first, defense or choose the end of the field that overtime will be played on.

3. 1st OT - Each team will have 2 plays to score from their opponents' 10-yard line. If they score a TD, they must elect to go for 1pt from the 3 or 2pts from the 10.
4. 2nd OT LONGEST YARD (1 PLAY) - Each team will have 1 play from their own 10-yard line. Team with the Most yards gained from that 1 play wins.

GAMEPLAY FOR THE OFFENSE

- **Formations**

1. For all plays, the ball will be spotted at the hash or between the hashes as determined by the previous play. In the event there are no marked hashes, cones will be placed two yards off of the end lines to provide a reference for spotting the ball.
2. All players are eligible receivers.
3. Before the snap, all players of Team A must be set, without motion in their feet, body, or head, for at least one second before the snap.
4. Team A is allowed to have one player in motion moving parallel to or away from the LOS at the snap. The player in motion must be at least 2 yards off the LOS to begin their motion.

- **Running with the ball:**

1. Running is permitted on every down by any player.
2. Leaping: A player may not leave their feet in a way that elevates their waist (both feet at the same time, into the air, while advancing the ball) to attempt to prevent a flag from being pulled. Athletic moves, cuts, changes of direction are not leaping.

- **Receiving - A reception is deemed made if:**

1. The receiver controls the ball before the ball contacts the ground and
2. The receiver has a foot or body part down in the field of play and maintains control of the ball.
3. The receiver has made a football act or had time to do so.

- **Kicking Punt Plays**

1. If a team declares a punt, they must snap the ball prior to the expiration of the play clock.
2. The offense may not move downfield prior to the kick.
3. The defense may not rush.
4. The kick must be made within 7 seconds.

5. The receiving team may advance a grounded punt as long as it was not touched prior to being grounded.
6. If the offense elects to run a play from scrimmage and does not reach the line to gain or goal line, the defense will take possession of the football at the dead ball spot and start a new series.

GAMEPLAY FOR THE DEFENSE

- **Blocking:**

1. Blocking is permitted without initiating contact pursuant to the rules relating to the offense.
2. NO EXCESSIVE CONTACT will be allowed.
3. The defense is responsible for avoiding contact with a stationary blocker.

- **Rushing:**

1. Rushers must attempt to avoid any stationary offensive players. NO contact is allowed with a stationary offensive player.
2. Rushers must avoid all contact with the passer, other than incidental contact while attempting to pull a flag. When crossing the LOS They may jump and/or raise their hands to deflect a pass. However they will be subject to a penalty if there is contact with the passer.

COACHES AND PLAYER CONDUCT

1. Coaches and/or players who disrespectfully object to a game official's call may be assessed an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty.
2. No coach, player or substitute shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner.
3. Examples are, but not limited to:
 4. Using Profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
 5. Attempting to influence a decision by a game official.
 6. Disrespectfully addressing a game official.
 7. Failure of a head coach, following verification, to have his/her player(s) wear legal and/or required equipment.
 8. Being on the field except as a substitute or replaced player.
 9. Being outside the team box, but not on the field.
10. These actions result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty enforcement, with a second unsportsmanlike conduct foul resulting in disqualification.
11. Team captains should be the players that address the officials.
12. Fighting is any attempt by a player or nonplayer to strike or engage a player or nonplayer in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent with the arm, hand, leg, or foot, whether there is contact or not.

UNFAIR ACTS:

1. The Referee has latitude in handling obviously unfair acts during a game. This would include situations that arise when a team commits a blatant and obvious intentional foul or fouls to gain a clock advantage late in a game.
2. A player or nonplayer or person(s) not subject to the rules shall not hinder play by an unfair act which has no specific rule coverage.
3. No team shall repeatedly commit fouls which halve the distance to the goal line.
4. No player shall hide the ball under the jersey.
5. Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the Referee, tends to make a travesty of the game.