

2024 4A Conference Flag Football Rules

Game:

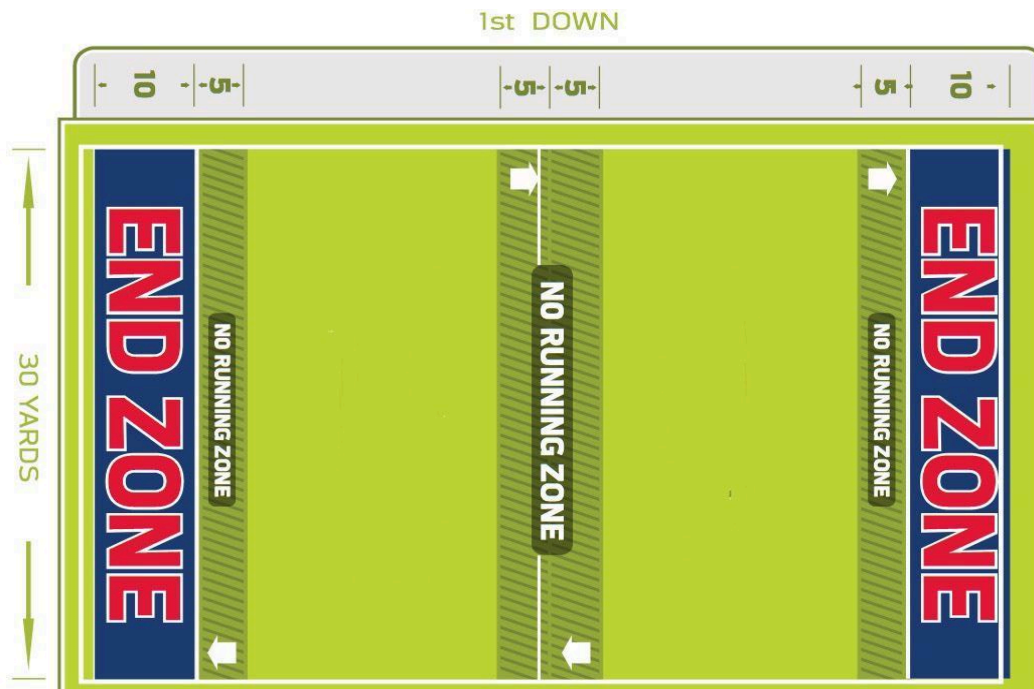
1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 10-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they have four (4) downs to score a touchdown. The offensive team has the option to go for it on 4th down or punt. If the offensive fails to convert on 4th down, the opposing team will take over at that spot.
4. If the offense fails to convert and elects to punt (NO KICKING), the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 10-yard line.
5. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 10-yard line.
6. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

Equipment:

1. Mouthpieces must be worn at all times.
2. Players' jerseys must be tucked into their shorts at all times.
3. Flag belts must be worn at all times by all players. Belts must have (3) flags and flags are to be located as follows: (1) on the back and (1) on each hip. If a player in possession of the ball does not have (3) flags that are in the correct position, the play will be blown dead and replayed from the same line of scrimmage.
4. PeeWee size football will be used for all games.

Field:

1. The field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Run Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards.
2. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No-Run Zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be forward pass plays, even with a handoff.
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain a first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).



Rosters:

1. Teams must consist of at least seven players.
2. Teams must start a game with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with five players on the field, but no fewer than five.

Timing and Overtime:

1. Games consist of two 20-minute halves with running clock except for the final two minutes of each half.
2. During the final 2 minutes of each half the clock will stop ONLY for:
 - a. Incomplete pass in thrown
 - b. Player ends a play by going out of bounds
 - c. Either team scores (Clock will remain stop until the opposing team snaps the ball after the PAT attempt; clock does not run during extra points)
 - d. Change of possession
 - e. Time Out
 - f. Penalty
 - g. The offense gains a first down. The clock will run once the ball has been spotted.
3. Halftime is five minutes long.
4. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before the game clock will be stopped until the ball is snapped.
5. Each team has two 60-second timeouts per half.
6. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
7. In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
9. A 'mercy rule' will take effect any time a team is up by 25 or more points. During this time the game clock will only stop on the referee's whistle. If the deficit drops to 24 or less this rule will no longer apply.
8. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes; an overtime (OT) Period will be used to determine a winner. OT format is as follows:
 - A. Play shall begin with Team A on the 5 yard line and has 4 downs to score.
 - B. Change of Possession:
 - i. First possession choice goes to the winner of regulation coin toss. If Team B intercepts the ball and scores, the game is over.
 - ii. Change of possession takes place when Team A's forward progress is halted on downs or scores a touchdown.
 - iii. Team B takes possession on the same 5 yard line as Team A and advances in the same direction. Team B begins on the 5 yard line regardless of whether or not Team A's possession ended in an interception.
 - iiii. If the score is still tied after 3 overtimes teams must go for 2-pt conversion.

Scoring:

1. **Touchdown:** 6 points
2. **PAT** (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line) Note: 1 point PAT is pass only, 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
 - a. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. Decisions cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
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 off, 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 end zone.

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. IF a player is in the neutral zone at any time during the play but in no way affects the play, this penalty may be excused by the referee.
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. (Unless during the Center/QB exchange, in which case the QB and only the QB may pick up the ball and continue the play, if any other player touches the ball, it is dead. The QB shall be defined as the first player to touch the ball after the Center.
 - 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 off.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of two or less flags.
 - h. Inadvertent whistle.
8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle was blown and the down is consumed.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.

Running:

1. The ball is spotted where the runner’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is defined as the offensive player to first touch the ball after the snap.
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 be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
4. “No-Run Zones,” located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run Zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD). If a team runs in a no run zone, the play will be blown dead with a loss of down.

5. The player who takes the 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.
9. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.
10. No power running plays up the middle will be allowed, all running plays must be outside the tackles as marked by orange pylons.

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 motions must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds and no feet out of bounds 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 interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 10-yard line.
6. Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

Rushing the Passer:

1. Any number of players can rush the quarterback after a 5 Mississippi count by the referee.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the 5 Mississippi is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. 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.

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, this will result in a holding penalty.
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.

Formations:

1. Offense must have three 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..

Penalties:

i. General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. During regular season games the referee shall have discretion to allow warnings for penalties, in a fair and sportsmanlike manner, to help maintain an exciting and fun playing environment.
3. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
4. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (spot fouls)
5. Only a head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question judgment calls.
6. Games may not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
7. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
8. 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. Spot Fouls

Holding	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Tripping	+ 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+ 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Illegal Blocking for Ball Carrier	- 5 yards & Loss of Down
Charging	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Taunting	-10 yard & Loss of Down

iii. Defensive Penalties

Offside	+ 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Illegal Rush (Crossing line of scrimmage before 5 mississippi count)	+ 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+ 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Roughing the Passer	+ 10 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+ 10 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Defensive Pass Interference	+ 10 yards from line of scrimmage, Automatic First Down
Holding	+ 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Stripping	SPOT FOUL + 10 yards & Automatic First Down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	SPOT FOUL + 10 yards & Automatic First Down

iv. Offensive Penalties

Offside / False Start	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Illegal Forward Pass (throwing a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage)	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Offensive Pass Interference	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage
Blocking for the Ball Carrier	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	- 5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Charging	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & Loss of Down

Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	SPOT FOUL, -10 yards & Loss of Down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Running Between Tackles (Pylons)	Loss of down