



RJFL Adult League Official Rules

Game Management

- Shirts must be tucked into shorts/pants and are not allowed to hang over the flag belt.
- Cleats are optional; metal cleats are not allowed.
- Yarmulkes or Ski Caps must be worn by all players.
- The field must be kept orderly. All participants are asked to assist in the clean up of empty bottles, cups, flags, etc.
- During the game, team captains (or one other designated player per team) are the only players allowed to have discussions with the referees. Violations will result in penalties.
- The game can begin as long as there are at least four players for each team. If a team does not have six players at the start of the game, the opposing team will get possession of the ball at the start of BOTH halves. If a team does not have six players five minutes past the scheduled start of the game, they will need to play with whomever they have (even if it results in an unequal number of players on the field). Refusal to play will result in a forfeit.
- There are 15 players allowed per roster. Only players that are on the roster may play. **ONLY the Commissioners have the ability to authorize a substitute.** Usage of any non-roster player without prior permission will result in a forfeit. If a player gets injured and is confirmed out for the season by end of week 3, a replacement player is allowed as long as the replacement is similar value or less - this must be approved by commissioners before being finalized.
- Please note that this is a league for adults, as indicated by our name. Players under the age of 18 are ineligible to join without specific approval from a commissioner (those in 12th grade may be allowed, with parental approval and on a case-by-case basis).

Game Time

- The game consists of two 23 minute halves (time permitting) with running time. **The clock will begin at the designated start time, whether or not players are ready to begin.** (The same applies after halftime, which will be a two minute break.)
- Each team has two timeouts per half.
- A timeout may be called by any player on the field, or by the captain. If a timeout is called following a touchdown, the clock will not restart until the ball is snapped on first down.
- In the last three minutes of the first half, the clock will stop for changes of possession (if a touchdown is scored, the clock will continue to run until the conclusion of the extra point attempt).
- Once there are three minutes remaining in the second half (or first stoppage in play after that point), the clock will stop. From that point forward, the clock stops for incomplete passes, runs out of bounds, scoring plays, defensive penalties and changes of possession (similar to the NFL's "two minute warning").
- If one team is ahead by 17 points or more in the last three minutes of the second half, the clock will run in all situations.
- The game begins with the coin toss or similar method (except in the playoffs, see below). The team that wins the toss has the option of receiving the ball at the beginning of the game or at halftime. The team that loses the toss chooses which direction to play.
- At halftime, the teams switch directions, and the team that did not get the ball at the beginning of the game starts with possession.
- In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.



- The first down marker is 40 yards downfield from the line of scrimmage, if applicable.
- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - o Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
 - o Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage. (If the ball was intercepted, the intercepting team has the option.)
- An offensive penalty that stops the clock with less than three minutes at the conclusion of a half will require a 10 second runoff and the clock will continue as soon as the ball is placed at the line of scrimmage. (If the team has a timeout available, they may use it to avoid the 10 second runoff. The defense may also choose to decline the runoff and have the clock stop.) Penalties that do not cause a running clock to stop do not require a runoff.
- After a defensive penalty in the last three minutes, the clock will restart on either the spot of the ball or the snap (whichever is more advantageous to the offense).

Scoring

- A touchdown is worth 6 points, after which the scoring team has the option of attempting a 1- or 2-point conversion. 1-point conversions are from the 10-yard line, and no running is allowed (nor blitzing by the defense). 2-point conversions are attempted from the 20-yard line. - the offense may run or pass; the defense cannot blitz. Once the decision is made to go for 1 or 2 points, it may not be changed without spending a timeout.
- Penalties on conversions are treated the same as penalties on regular plays - the non-offending team can either decline the penalty, or the conversion will be re-tried.
- If a conversion pass is intercepted, the defensive player may attempt to run it back. The result will be the amount that was attempted by the offense. If he does not score, his team will begin their possession at their own 10-yard line, regardless of how far he went.
- A quarterback sack, botched snap or offensive penalty in the end zone results in a 2-point safety, with the scoring team gaining possession from their own ten yard line.

Offense

- Offensive possessions at the beginning of a half or following scores begin at the 10 yard line.
- **If an offensive substitution is made, the offense must “huddle” before beginning the next play.**
- The offensive huddle must only contain 6 players
- On the first down of the drive, the defense has 25 seconds to set up their team. The referee will indicate when the offense may snap the ball. (The offense will only have 10 seconds after the full 25 seconds are used by the defense.) The Defense may call that they are ready prior to the full 25 second count, whereupon the ref may signal to the offense that they can then snap the ball.
- On all other plays, including after first downs, the offense may snap the ball whenever they are ready, as long as all players “set”. Snapping the ball before the offense is set is a false start, even if the defense has not fully returned to their side of the line of scrimmage.
- Once the offense is set, only one player per team may be in motion. He may not be moving forward as the ball is snapped.
- The offense has 25 seconds to snap the ball from the time the official places the ball down at the line of scrimmage. Failure to do so results in a 5-yard penalty for delay of game.
- The ball must be snapped from the ground by the center, but it does not need to be through his legs. The center is ineligible to receive any passes (unless the ball is first touched by an eligible receiver) and may not move downfield until the ball has passed beyond the line of scrimmage (either by a pass or run). If the ground is wet, the referee may waive the requirement that the ball be snapped from the ground at his discretion.



- The ball is in play as soon as it is SNAPPED (not necessarily upon calling “hike”)
- If a snap hits the ground, the play is dead, and the line of scrimmage is where the ball hit the ground.
- Running plays are allowed (both handoffs and quarterback scrambles), except in the “no-run” zone (within 10 yards of the end zone). A play is defined as a “run” if it does not include a forward pass (a handoff, even forward, is NOT a pass for these purposes). The line official is responsible to inform the offense if they are in the NO Run Zone.
- Two forward passes (including *forward* handoffs) may not take place in the same play.
- An offensive player who runs out of bounds may not be the first player to touch a forward pass. If he was forced out by the defense beyond five yards, he is eligible, and a defensive penalty for illegal contact will be called.
- The ball is spotted at the forward-most part of the runner’s body that is touching the ground when the flag is pulled (“breaking the plane” would not be a touchdown).
- Once a team is in the “no run” zone, they may no longer run, even if they are subsequently knocked out of the zone due to a sack or penalty.
- “False start” is an immediate 5-yard penalty (the play is blown dead).
- Offensive holding, illegal block in the back and penalties are 10 yards from the spot of the foul, but do not result in loss of down (if committed behind the line of scrimmage). The defense may choose to decline these penalties.
- Offensive pass interference is ten yards from the previous line of scrimmage, but does not result in a loss of down. The defense may choose to decline this penalty.
- A downfield “pick” is considered offensive pass interference, but will only be called if there is a pass on the play.
- Flag guarding and stiff arming are not allowed (the play is immediately blown dead). If this occurs in the final three minutes of a half, a decision on whether or not time will stop is made based on whichever is more disadvantageous for the offending team.
- If an offensive player is missing a flag or his flag is in an incorrect location, the play is dead as soon as a defender attempts to grab his flag per the judgment of the referee. (If the flag was in the correct position at the beginning of the play and subsequently knocked out by the defense, this does not apply.)
- Jumping by the ball carrier is not allowed (the play will be blown dead at the spot of the jump); spinning, however, is permitted.
- Offensive lineman may not hit a defender that is on the ground - the defender (rushing the quarterback) must be given the ability to get back on his feet and establish himself.
- Intentional grounding is a ten yard penalty (or spot of the foul, if more than ten yards behind the line of scrimmage), plus loss of the down. If the quarterback is outside the pocket, intentional grounding will not be called as long as the ball passes the line of scrimmage.
- When throwing a ball, as long as the quarterback has one foot behind the line of scrimmage, he may throw a forward pass.
- When catching a ball, the receiver’s **first foot** must land inbounds. Both feet landing simultaneously, one in and one out, is an incomplete pass.
- There are no fumbles. The play is dead as soon as the ball hits the ground.
- The blockers may not engage the defensive players on the line of scrimmage before the 3-second count (although they may do so if the player is off the line of scrimmage and within one yard).
- The ball carrier is not allowed to run over a defender – he **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position. **Any blatant abuse of this rule - may result in a 15 yard penalty. Two of these penalties by the same player can result in an automatic ejection.**
- On fourth down, a team must announce whether they will be punting or “going for it”. There are no fake punts. Once a team’s decision is made, it cannot be changed without spending a timeout.
- Punts must be kicked. The punter has three seconds from the snap to punt the ball, or the play is blown dead and the defense will be given possession at that spot.



- The defense can not rush on a punt.
- If the ball is touched by the receiving team but not caught, it is dead at the spot the ball hits the ground (possession to the receiving team). The same rule applies if a punt is partially or completely blocked. A blocked punt that lands in the kicking team's end zone (first bounce) is a safety. A muffed punt in the receiving team's end zone is a touchback (unless it was touched outside the end zone and landed inside, in which case the receiving team takes possession at their own goal line).

Defense

- Defenders may **not** push players out of bounds. Pushing a player out of bounds will result in a penalty of five additional yards being added on to the end of the run. (In the last three minutes, this WOULD have the effect of stopping the clock, with the penalty yardage enforced. Similarly, pushing a receiver who is mid-air out of bounds would have the effect of the pass being incomplete, with the down replayed after assessing the five yard penalty.)
- Reasonable contact is allowed with receivers within **FIVE YARDS** of the line of scrimmage.
- One defender must be lined up at the line of scrimmage, directly opposite the ball (**including punt plays**).
- After the ball is **snapped**, the referee will count three seconds, at which point the defense may rush in. The defense can send as many rushers as it wishes; however no rushers may begin their "rush" before three seconds (even if they have not yet crossed the line of scrimmage).
- If the quarterback passes or hands off the ball, the defense may cross the line of scrimmage immediately.
- The defense gets one blitz (immediate rush) per four downs. They are not required to call it out. (If the offense gets a first down, the defense may blitz again.)
- If any defender crosses the line of scrimmage before three seconds, that counts as the team's blitz. If this happens when the team has already used their blitz, a 5-yard offside penalty will be called. The offense can elect to decline the penalty if the result of the play is to their liking. The same penalty will be called if any member of the defense lines up on the wrong side of the line of scrimmage.
- **The quarterback's arm may not be hit, even incidentally. If it happens, it will be penalized as Roughing the Passer and a 10 yard penalty will apply.**
- Defensive penalties (including pass interference) are **not** automatic first downs. The yardage is marked off (or, in case of pass interference, the ball is placed at the spot of the foul) and the down is replayed. If the penalty yardage brings the offense across the first down marker, it is a first down.
- If a receiver "hit" hard while attempting a catch, a roughness penalty can be called even if he touched the ball first, and even if he makes the catch (the yardage will be added on).
- If, in the judgment of the referee, a defensive player purposely throws another player's flag further away than necessary, a 5-yard penalty for delay of game may be called.
- Defenders must make an attempt for the flag. Any "tackle" will be a 10 yard penalty (and abuse of this rule by a defender may result in an automatic ejection from the game).
- A ball carrier on the ground needs only to be touched.
- No half or "drive" can end on a defensive penalty - an extra play will be added on from the spot of enforcement.
- In the event of a push out of bounds, tackle or grabbing the runner by the shirt, the play counts (the down is consumed, unless it's fourth down or the end of a half) with the penalty yardage added to the end of the run. If it took place behind the line of scrimmage, the penalty yardage is measured from the original line of scrimmage.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct



- An unsportsmanlike conduct penalty 15 yards, and possible ejection at the discretion of the referee. Two penalties in the same game will result in an automatic ejection, and a possible suspension for the next game (commissioner's decision).
- Unsportsmanlike conduct includes threatening, offensive, or abusive behavior/language to players, fans, or officials.
- Inappropriate Language : The first offense is a warning for the whole team. After that, usage of inappropriate language from ANY player will lead to a 15-yard penalty. A second violation from the same player will result in an automatic ejection from the game.
- Taunting: The first occurrence will result in a 15 yd penalty. A second offense will be an automatic ejection. Please note that all taunting penalties are at the discretion of the referees.
- Any dangerous or targeted hits can lead to automatic ejection and suspension, even with no previous warning. Again, this is at the discretion of the referee or commissioners.
- While fans are permitted to watch from behind the sidelines (but not up against the field itself), they are expected to behave in a manner befitting the league, and any fan that is not doing so may be asked to leave by one of the commissioners or the referees.
- We know that football is an intense sport – players get emotionally involved, and games get heated. That being said, it is still very important that all remain calm and remember that this is a frum league. Any players who do continue to cause issues risk likely suspension - even for playoffs - and not being allowed to return for future seasons (no matter how long they've been part of this league). While we of course hope never to have to come anywhere near this point, past events have made clear that all options must be on the table.

Overtime

- A coin toss will determine who gets first possession (the winning team can choose to get the ball first or second), **even in the playoffs**. Each team gets one set from the opponent's 40-yard line, and has four plays to score a touchdown.
- Running plays are allowed, with the exception of in the “no-run” zone.
- If the team starting on defense intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown (pick 6), the game is immediately over. If they intercept it but do not score a touchdown, their possession begins at the 40-yard line, regardless of how far it was returned.
- Possession goes back and forth until one team ends an “inning” with the lead. A pick-6 by either team ends the game immediately.
- An extra point is played after a touchdown by the offense.
- At the discretion of the Commissioners, a regular season may be declared a tie due to time constraints.

Standings/Playoffs

- At the end of the season (Season 10, 2025), the top 6 teams (per conference) by record will advance to the playoffs, and the top 2 teams will get a bye. This will change per season depending on the number of teams in the league that year. In seasons where 6 or more teams make the playoffs, re-seeding is done for the second round.
- **A player must participate in at least 3 games in order to be eligible for the playoffs**, unless special dispensation is granted by the Commissioners.
- In the event of a tie, standings will be determined based on head-to-head record, followed by intra-conference record, followed by strength of schedule (cumulative record of teams faced), followed by strength of victory (meaning cumulative record of the teams defeated).
- As mentioned, there is no coin toss to start the game for the playoffs - the higher seed chooses to start with the ball or take it at halftime. (In the event of overtime, a coin toss will take place.)

