# NMARS Santa Fe NFL Flag – Basic Game Rules (Fall 2025)

These rules are meant to provide clarity and consistency for gameplay across all divisions. They are informed by NFL FLAG guidelines with adaptations specific to our league’s needs.

## 1. No Run Zones

All divisions except Pre-K will follow a no run zone rule. No run zones are designated areas 5 yards from the first down line and 5 yards from the end zone. In these areas, teams may not run the ball or use a rushing defender. Only forward passes are allowed.

The quarterback may only run if rushed by the defense, and the run must be outside of the center lane—no middle runs allowed. This rule only applies outside of the no run zones.

## 2. Fumbles & Strips

Fumbles are considered dead balls—the play ends where the ball hits the ground. However, if the ball is dropped behind the line of scrimmage (e.g., mishandled handoff or snap) and no defender has yet crossed the line of scrimmage, the play may continue. Defenders and offensive players may go after a live ball in the air. Stripping the ball is not allowed and will result in a dead ball.

## 3. Passing & Catching

The quarterback may pass the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass is allowed per play. Laterals and pitches are allowed behind the line of scrimmage.

Runners may spin, juke, and use hip dips but may not jump straight up into the air to avoid a defender. Initiating contact (e.g., lowering the shoulder, trucking, or dropping the shoulder into a defender) is prohibited.

## 4. Screening & Contact

A screen (similar to basketball) is permitted if the player is completely stationary with no movement or arm extension. All forms of blocking or initiating contact, including screen blocking with movement, are prohibited.

## 5. Flag Pulling

Defenders must make a clear attempt to pull flags—no grabbing of clothing, wrapping, or obstructing the ball carrier. Flags must be worn on the hips, visible, and accessible. Play ends when a flag is pulled or if the ball carrier’s flag falls off (dead ball at that spot).

## 6. Penalties & Enforcement

• Illegal Contact – 15 yards & possible loss of down: Includes pushing a ball carrier out of bounds without going for the flag, grabbing jerseys or arms, and lowering the shoulder.

• Loss of Down Infractions:

- Flag guarding (e.g., stiff-arming, swatting hands, or shielding flags with the ball)  
- Illegal forward pass (past the line or a second forward pass)  
- Illegal motion (more than one player moving forward at the snap)  
- Delay of game (25–30 seconds to snap)  
- Illegal run (QB run violations)  
- Blocking or screening with contact  
- Hurdling over another player  
- Dead ball if a flag falls off before contact

• All players must wear mouthguards.

• Sportsmanship: Taunting, trash talk, or aggressive behavior may lead to penalties, ejection, or suspension.