



# 2011 Flag Football Rules

## (Update 01/12/2011)

### The Basics

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses the midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score the ball, possession changes and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross the midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5 yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offence's 5-yard line.
- A game is 40 minutes in duration and split into four ten-minute quarter. The clock does not stop except for scheduled substitutions, injury, a 3-minute half time and the last 2 minutes of the game on a dead ball.
- Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes. Possession changes to loser of coin toss.
- During the regular season, a tie game at the end of 40 minutes ends in a tie. Only in the playoffs will overtime be played.

### Timing

- **Games will be played as 4 - Ten minute periods using a running clock**
  - **During the last two minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> period, the clock will stop on dead balls if the score difference is two scores (16 points) or less.**
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has one 60 second and one 30 second time-outs per half.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- **During games where the score difference is 21 points or greater, the losing team will begin their drive at 20-yard line. This will continue until the team decreases the deficit to less than 21 points.**
  - **The score of the winning team will also be frozen on the scoreboard if they lead by more than 21 points.**

## Players/Substitutions

- Teams consist of no more than 10 players. Division I and II will play with six players on the field. Division III will play with seven players on the field.
- **Each player must play a minimum of two full periods per game, and at least one period in each half.**
  - **During the last 5 minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, a team that has met the playing time requirements for all players is allowed to “free-sub,” meaning they freely move players in and out between plays.**

Substitution Penalties:

Defense - Illegal substitution: 10 yards and repeat down

Offense - Illegal substitution: 10 yards and loss of down

## Scoring

Touchdown:

6 points.

Extra Point:

1 point (played from the 5-yard line and requiring a passing play only)

or

2 points (played from the 12-yard line)

Safety:

2 points

## Running

The quarterback cannot run with the ball.

“No-Running Zones” located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of the midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power running situations. Teams cannot do a running play within the 5-yard zone leading up to midfield or within the 5-yard zone leading into their attacking end zone.

Only handoffs (direct, lateral, pitch) behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.

The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).

The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

## Receiving

All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).

As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.

A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

## Passing

Shovel passes are allowed.

The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock”. If a pass is not thrown within the seven-second period, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule is no longer in effect.

Interceptions result in a change of possession and the opposition takes over at the exact spot the ball was intercepted at. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line. Interceptions occurring in the end zone will be placed at the 5-yard line to start possession.

## Dead Balls

**Substitution is not allowed during dead balls, unless coach has earned FREE SUBSTITUTION.**

The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side to start play.

Play is ruled “dead” when:

- Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- Touchdown or safety is scored.
- Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground.
- Ball carrier’s flag falls out.
- Ball carrier drops the ball.
- Missed snap.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

## Rushing the Quarterback

The one player rushing the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

## **Sportsmanship/Roughing**

If the field monitors or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or an unsportsmanlike act the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If trash talk occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

## **Penalties**

All penalties will be called by the referee.

### **Defense:**

- Off sides: Five yards and repeat down
- Interference: 10 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.): 10 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal flag pull (before receiver had the ball): 10 yards from the end of the play
- Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside marker or too many rushers): 10 yards and repeat down.

### **Offense:**

- Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.): Five yards and loss of down.
- Illegal forward pass (passer throwing beyond line of scrimmage): Five yards and loss of down.
- Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender): 10 yards and loss of down.
- FLAG guarding: 10 yards (from infraction) and loss of down.
- Delay of game: Clock stops, 10 yards and same down.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offensive declines it.

## **Playoffs**

- Playoff participation: Any player, who does not play in at least three regular season games, will not be eligible for playoff participation.
- Tie breakers will be as follows for leagues with 5 or more teams:  
Total Season Point Value (wins, losses, and ties), Total Wins, Head to Head Competition, Goals Against Average, Coin Toss

## **Attire**

Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made.

All players must wear a protective mouthpiece, there are NO exceptions.

Official NFL FLAG jerseys must be worn during play.

Note: There are no kickoffs, and no blocking is allowed.

**Good luck to all the coaches and players. If you have additional questions, please call John Filipponi at 714-593-0753.**

**BE GREAT**

