



# Next Level Sports



## Men's/HS Boys Flag Football League Rules

### 1. COIN TOSS:

- Visiting team will call the coin toss.
- The winner has **three** choices to start the game: (1) Offense, (2) Defense, (3) direction of the field. The loser will pick either possession or direction, depending on what the winner picked. There is no defer option!
- Teams switch direction in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half and the team that started the game on defense will start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half on offense.

### 2. EQUIPMENT:

- Mouthpieces are optional for all players but are encouraged for safety.
- The field will be 25 yards wide by 80 yards long (plus two 10-yard end zones).
- Matching jerseys are required on the field of play. **Failure to wear matching jerseys will result in a team losing a timeout for each missing jersey in each half!!! (unless advised differently from a league director)**
- Each player must wear their flag belts over their jerseys. Flag belts must be visible at all times & of a different color from their shorts/pants and may not be altered in any way.
- No hard football pads, hard braces, casts, metal cleats or any other illegal equipment- this is enforced at the referee's discretion (1<sup>st</sup> time: WARNING!!!; 2<sup>nd</sup> time: forfeiture of the game)
- Players are allowed to wear only plastic frame glasses or sports goggles w/ a strap!!!!  
NO METAL FRAME GLASSES OR SUNGLASSES!!!
- Hoodies are allowed to be worn but must be tucked into back of jersey!!
- Only the QB may wear a hand warmer pouch and/or towel. If they do & it gets pulled off or tugged (if clipped on), blow play dead as if the flag got pulled at that spot.
- Football must be a "Official" sized ball.

### 3. GAME CLOCK / TIME OUTS:

- A game will consist of (2) twenty-five (25) minute halves. It is a running clock and will ONLY be stopped by a timeout or during the last minute each half, in which it will be a pro-clock.
- Each team gets two (2) timeouts in the 1<sup>st</sup> half and three (3) time-outs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. Each time-out will be (20) seconds. Timeouts can only be called by the QB (offense), a designated player on the field (defense) or a designated coach. There is NO penalty for calling back to back timeouts!
- Games must start on time. The clock will be started at the scheduled game time. If a team is more than (10) minute late, that team will forfeit the game. If a team is less than (10) minutes late, the team that was on time will have the option to receive the ball both halves.

#### **4. PLAYERS:**

- Each team will field (6) players on offense and defense.
- A minimum of (5) players are required to field a team – opposing team may still field (6) players.
- Only the “HEAD COACH” is allowed to question a call and to have an officials’ conference.

#### **5. BLOCKING:**

- There is NO BLOCKING for the ball carrier. However, offensive players may set a basketball style pick. A player cannot pick the rusher on a pass play; the rusher must have free range to move along the line of scrimmage!
- An offensive player can run behind the ball carrier to receive a lateral pitch but he cannot prevent a defender from making a play on the ball carrier.
- No offensive player is allowed to be moving forward **directly** in front of the ball carrier to set a pick while the ball carrier has possession of the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Individual basketball style picks must be at least shoulder length apart.
- There cannot be any 2 on 1 picks on a defender & there are no walls!!!!

#### **6. DEADBALLS:**

- Any part of the ball carrier’s body that touches the ground, except for the hands and/or feet.
- Anytime the ball touches or falls to the ground. There are no fumbles!
- If the flag falls off the ball carrier or the QB in possession at the 4 count
- If an Offensive player and a Defensive player catch the ball at the same time, the ball is awarded to the offensive player at that spot.
- If a player catches a ball while his knee is down, or if his flag has already fallen off before the catch is made, the catch is legal but cannot be advanced.
- When a receiver who has gone out of bounds and returns inbounds and is the FIRST to touch the ball, it is an incomplete pass. (**EXCEPTION: If a receiver is forced out of bounds by a defensive foul, he may legally be the first to touch a pass once he re-establishes himself inbounds.**)

#### **7. FROZEN ZONES:**

- Ten yards before the end-zones and the first down marker at mid-field; if a team is declared to be in a Frozen Zone, the offense is only allowed to pass the ball. The offense cannot run the ball for the yardage needed even after the referee finishes the four count, but the defense can still rush after the referees’ four count.
- All plays in the Frozen Zone, **MUST BE A FORWARD PASS BY THE QB** only, beyond the line of scrimmage. There are no handoffs!!!!!! If any other player but the QB throws a pass, it will be considered an illegal pass. Let the play go on in case of an interception by the defense.
- Once inside the Frozen Zone, you are considered to be in it no matter what (i.e. bad snap, penalties, or a sack).

## 8. INTERCEPTIONS:

- If a defensive player intercepts a pass, they may run it back. However, once the interception is made, that team now becomes the offense and must obey the offensive rules. If they commit a penalty during the return they will keep possession and the penalty will be enforced accordingly.

## 9. MERCY RULE:

- If a team is winning by (17) points or more at the 1 minute warning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, no matter who has the ball, **THE GAME IS OVER**. This rule does include the playoffs.

## 10. DEFENSE:

- The defensive player must wait for the referees' (4) count before crossing the line of scrimmage. NO BLITZES!!!
- The defensive player can cross the line of scrimmage prior to the referee finishing the count ONLY if there is a handoff, pitch/lateral or a forward pass. Play action does not count.
- A defensive player is allowed to leave their feet in order to pull a flag but must not impede the runner. Example: The defensive player cannot slide or dive into the ball carrier making contact. If so it could be a flag for tripping or unnecessary roughness even if flag is pulled.

## 11. OFFENSE:

- Offensive team starts on their own (5) yard line. They have (4) downs to reach the first down marker at mid-field. If so they will receive (4) more downs to score. On 4<sup>th</sup> down, the team must declare to go for it or punt. Only get the choice from either the QB or the head coach only. A team can only change their declaration by using a timeout. If a team goes for it and fails, the opposing team will take possession at the spot of the last completed play.
- If the offense declares they want to punt on 4<sup>th</sup> down, it will be a 40 yard walk-off from the end of the previous play. However, no punt shall put the opposing team inside their own 5 yard line.
- Offense has (30) seconds to call and start execution of a play after the referee sets the ball at the line of scrimmage and blows the ready whistle or they will be called for Delay of Game penalty.
- The snap of the ball can be from the side or between the legs.
- The Quarterback can run with the ball ONLY after the referees' four count.
- Receivers' must have the (1st) foot inbounds for it to be a completed pass.
- There are NO SILENT COUNTS.
- Whoever receives the ball from the center is considered the Quarterback.
- The Quarterback must receive the ball from the center. The ball MUST exchange hands. The Quarterback cannot just touch the ball so the center can run with it.

- When a flag is pulled the ball is spotted where the ball carriers' hips are, NOT THE BALL.
- The ball carrier can spin, juke, dip or jump to avoid a defender but cannot dive. He must avoid the defending player. He may jump to avoid but cannot hurdle over another player!!!
- All players must be (5) yards from the sideline for the huddle to be legal.
- The offensive team no longer has to have a balanced line. However, the regular rules about players in motion still apply.
- The offense is allowed (1) forward pass per play. Pitch backs are OK and does not count as a forward pass. Shuffle passes are allowed.

## 12. SCORING:

**Touchdown - 6 Points.**

**Extra Point - 1 Point from the (5) yard line --- Pass Only  
2 Points from the (10) yard line --- Pass Only**

**Safety - 2 Points.**

**Interception Return on the Extra Point attempt - 3 Points**

**\*\*\*\*Only the QB can throw a pass on the extra point. If any other player throws a pass, a flag will be thrown for an illegal pass. It is a live ball foul & if the defense intercepts the ball they can return it for 3 pts. Whoever takes the snap from the giver is considered the QB.\*\*\*\***

## NOTES:

- **Article 1:** if there is an interception on the Extra-Point, and the defending team commits a penalty **on** the **ball carrier** during the return, that team will get one play at the **10** yard line (**Pass Only!!!!**) to be awarded the **3 points**.
- **Article 2:** if there is an interception on the Extra-Point, and the defending team commits a penalty **away** from the ball carrier during the return, the penalty will be administered on the change of possession.
- **Article 3:** **The offense can only change their declaration on the extra point after taking a timeout!!! If a penalty occurs either way, the offense may not change their choice.**

## **DEFENSIVE PENALTIES**

### **5 yards from the line of scrimmage, repeat the down.**

- Failure to wear proper equipment
- Illegal Contact with the receiver
- Off-Sides
- Too many men on the field

### **5 yards, spot foul, repeat down (Offense has option of taking result of play or 5 yds. from spot of foul & repeat down)**

- Holding the ball carrier
- Stripping or attempting to strip ball

### **10 yards, LOS, 1<sup>st</sup> down**

- Offsides in the frozen zone on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> down with 5 yards or less to go (see rule clarification)

### **10 yards, end of the play, automatic 1st down.**

- Fighting (Ref's discretion on ejection of players)
- Pushing out of bounds
- Roughing the Quarterback
- Tripping
- Tackling
- Unnecessary Roughness
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- Grabbing the flag off the receiver before possession (See rule clarification)

### **Spot Foul and an automatic 1st down.**

- Pass Interference

## **OFFENSIVE PENALTIES**

### **5 yards line of scrimmage, repeat the down.**

- Delay of game
- False Start/Illegal Motion/Illegal Shift
- Illegal Formation
- Improper Equipment
- Snap Infraction
- Too many players on the field

### **5 yards, line of scrimmage loss of down.**

- Running play in the Frozen Zone.
- Q.B. runs before the 4 count.

### **5 yards spot of the foul, loss of down.**

- Diving/Sliding - {No Exceptions}
- Flag Guarding/Stiff Arming (including holding the flag belt)
- Hurdling over another player
- Illegal Forward Pass.

### **10 yards from spot of foul, loss of down**

- Blocking
- Charging into defensive player
- Illegal Picks

### **10 yards, line of scrimmage, loss of down**

- Fighting (Ref's discretion on ejection of players)
- Tying flag to the belt
- Unnecessary roughness
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- Intentional Grounding (See rule clarification)

### **10 yards, LOS, repeat down**

- Offensive Pass Interference.

## **Rule Clarifications:**

### **1. Intentionally grabbing the flag off the receiver before possession:**

- If the pass is completed to the receiver whose flag was pulled, 10 yards at the end of the play and is an automatic 1st down. If the receiver bobbles the ball, this rule does not apply.
- If the flag is pulled from a receiver who does not catch the pass, there is no penalty. (**Exception:** if that player receives a lateral, then ten yards will be added from that spot, since the play will be blown dead and is an automatic 1st down.)

### **2. Intentional Grounding:** Can only occur when the Q.B. is in imminent danger of being sacked and tosses, flips, or spikes, the ball to avoid a sack, and the ball does not go beyond the line of scrimmage, the pass must be a forward thrown pass that goes beyond the line of scrimmage.

### **3. Declaring On 4<sup>th</sup> down:** The offensive team has till the end of the play clock (30 seconds) to make a choice on whether to punt or go for it. The clock will not stop unless the defense calls a timeout, the offense chooses to punt (if under 1 minute), the offense calls a timeout, a delay of game or the 1 minute warning occurs. If a change of possession happens with the clock stopped, it will start again on the snap.

### **4. The 1st down marker**

- If the offense passes the first down marker and, during the play, commits a "LIVE" ball foul that brings the ball back behind the 1st down marker, they can still gain a 1st down.
- If the offense passes the first down marker and after the play commits a "DEAD" ball foul after the play that brings the ball back behind the 1st down marker, it will be 1<sup>st</sup> & Goal and they cannot gain another 1st down.

### **5. The Quarterback Snap:**

- If the flag falls off the Quarterback, he has until the four count to release the ball. If he does not, blow the play dead and spot the ball from the previous spot, the line of scrimmage.
- If the snap is dropped and hits the ground the play is dead, and the ball is spotted where it hits the ground.

### **6. Unsportsmanlike Conduct:**

- Taunting a player before the endzone on a touchdown will be a 10 yd. Unsportsmanlike penalty to be assessed on the extra point or change of possession. Any player getting 2 unsportsmanlike penalties (non-contact) for cursing at an official or at other team will be ejected from the game and may face further disciplinary actions.

**7. Fumbles or Loss of Possession:**

- If a player is running with the ball & loses possession or laterals to the opposing team without the ball hitting the ground, the ball can be advanced/returned by the defense. If the ball hits the ground at any time, it is dead at that spot!!!!

**8. Offsides- Frozen Zone on 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> down with 5 or less yards to go:**

- If the defense goes offside on 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> down with 5 or less yards to get a 1<sup>st</sup> down (offense is frozen in this case), the foul will result in a 10 yard penalty and a 1<sup>st</sup> down. This is a live ball foul and enforced from the LOS if accepted.

**9. Ejections - If anyone (player, coach, parent) is ejected from a game for any reason, they are suspended for at least the NEXT GAME. Further suspension may be added pending investigation by league directors.**

**10. Fighting/Acts Towards Officials – There is zero tolerance in regards to fighting or any physical/verbal act towards game officials. They will not be tolerated in any circumstance. Anyone involved will face suspension and possible expulsion from the league.**