

5v5 Sports Tournament Rules

In teaching the game of Flag Football, the coach must realize that certain rules exist that are designed to protect the player and provide common standards for determining a winner and a loser. Any attempt to circumvent these rules, to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or acts of deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct, have no place in the game, nor has any coach guilty of teaching these any right to call themselves a coach. The coach should set the example for winning without boasting and losing without bitterness. A coach who conducts themselves according to these principles needs have no fear of failure, for in the final analysis, the success of a coach can be measured in the terms of the respect they have earned from their players and their opponents.

A player or coach who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct and whether or not they escape being penalized, they bring discredit to the good name of the game. Players, coaches and officials should emphasize the elimination of initiating contact against an opponent. Talking to a teammate, opponent or official in any manner that is demeaning, vulgar, abusive or “trashy” or intended to incite a physical response or verbally put an opponent down is illegal. Coaches are urged to discuss conduct frequently and support all officials’ actions to control play. Officials are on the field to uphold the integrity of the game of Flag Football and their decisions are final and conclusive and should be accepted by players and coaches.

All 5v5 Sports Tournaments are Stay-to-Play for teams who reside outside 75-miles driving radius from event location.

Rosters will be a MAX of 12 players/3 coaches. No roster adjustments can be made after the roster deadline.

Age verification: players age as of 1/1/25. Athletes must be currently enrolled in high school (2025-2026 school year) to be eligible for the HS Division.

5v5 Tournament Format:

- All teams will be put into a Pool Play Format.
- Every team is guaranteed a minimum of (3) three pool play games.
- All teams from Pool Play in each division will advance to a single elimination playoff bracket.
- All teams will be reseeded according to the following criteria for bracket play:
 - *Least Games Lost*
 - *Most Games Won*
 - *Head-to-Head Record (2 teams only)*
 - *Points Against*
 - *Points For*
 - *Coin Toss*

I. Game Setup and Flow

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams will meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The Visiting Team will call the coin 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. There is no option to defer. Teams will automatically switch sides of the field and the team that started the game with possession will begin the second half on defense.
3. The Offensive team takes possession of the ball at its own 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
 - a. If the Offensive team fails to cross midfield after 3rd down and elect to “punt” on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team will start a new possession from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross midfield, the opposing team will start a new possession from the spot where 4th down ended.
 - b. Any time there is a “Punt or Play” decision on 4th down, the referee will ask the Offense’s Head Coach to declare ‘Punt or Play’. The coach must make an immediate decision or risk a delay of game penalty.
 - c. Teams may use a timeout to change the declaration of ‘Play’ at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
 - d. After crossing midfield if the Offense fails to score on 3rd down, the ball changes possession and the new Offensive team starts at its 5-yard line.

II. Field

Two standard field size options:

Option A: 25 yards wide x 70 yards long with 10-yard end zones

Option B: 25 yards wide x 64 yards long with 7-yard end zones

1. Both field layouts will have a midfield line to gain for a first down. 'No Run Zones' are located 5 yards prior to midfield and 5 yards prior to the opponent's end zone.
2. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
3. 'No Run' Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting fun plays. While in the 'No Run' Zones, teams cannot run the ball across the Line of Scrimmage. All plays must result in a forward pass across the Line of Scrimmage.
4. The referee will spot the ball in the middle of the field prior to the 'Ready to Play' whistle. The ball may NOT be closer than 10 yards to any sideline.

III. Timing and Overtime

Tournament Games are played on a 24-minute continuous clock with two 12-minute halves, unless one team gains a 30-point advantage, which will end the game. The clock stops for halftime, injuries and at the Officials' discretion.

Halftime is 3 minutes.

Once the ball is spotted, a team will have a 25-second play clock to snap the ball.

Teams will have three (3) 30-second timeouts for the entire game.

Officials will stop the clock for team timeouts, player injuries and at their discretion.

During Pool Play, if the score is tied at the end of regulation play, the game result will be a tie.

During Bracket Play, if the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine the winner. Overtime format is as follows:

The Home team calls the coin toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first. Teams will alternate for a 1-point try to determine

If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating the choice to be on offense or defense to start every round of overtime.

The referee will determine which end of the field the entire overtime will be played.

- a. First Overtime: Each team will get one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points.
- b. Starting with the second overtime, both teams must attempt a 2-point conversion from the 10-yard line. This will continue until there is a winner.
- c. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- d. Interceptions are returnable for a score in OT and are worth 2 points.

IV. Scoring Guide

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (point after touchdown)
 - a. 1 point (5-yard line) or
 - b. 2 points (10-yard line)
3. Interceptions returned from scores during a regulation scrimmage down are worth 6 points. One- or Two-point extra point conversions or overtime interceptions returned are worth 2 points.
4. Safety: 2 points
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her endzone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
5. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
6. When a team is winning by 30 points or more, the game is over.
7. Forfeits will be scored 30-0 for the winning team.

8. The coaches, officials and scorekeeper must verify the score card. If a coach does not verify the score card before leaving the field, the scorekeeper will note on that score and the score will be final.

V. Coaching Guidelines

1. Only three (3) coaches are permitted on the sidelines during the games.
2. Coaches must remain on the sideline, except to attend to an injured player. The exception is in 6u and 8u, the Offensive Coach may be on the field to call plays but must move to the sideline once play is called.
3. Teams may huddle on the sideline with their coach to get a play call, but the play clock will not stop once the ball is signaled 'Ready for Play'.

VI. Live Ball/Dead Ball Regulations

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. The game officials may give teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.

3. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds, as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand, contacts the ground in the field, while maintaining possession.
4. Substitutions may be made during any dead ball period.
5. The defense may not simulate the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. Other unfair acts would be; not returning five (5) eligible players to the field of play after halftime, a team or officials' time out prior to the 'Ready to Play' signal by the referee. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the Head Coach.

6. Any official can whistle the play dead.

Play is ruled “dead” when:

- a. The ball hits the ground. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a snap, backwards pitch or lateral, the ball will be placed where the ball hit the ground.
- 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, shin, leg, forearm or arm hits the ground.
- f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
- g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of 1 or 0 flag(s).
- h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- i. Inadvertent whistle. If an inadvertent whistle occurs, the team in possession has two options.
 - a. Take the ball where the whistle blew and the down will count
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage
- j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet to dive, jump or hurdle a player.

(Exception: A PLAYER CAN DIVE TO CATCH A PASS OR PULL A FLAG)

VII. Running Game

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the Line of Scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center directly or in shotgun formation.
3. Direct handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place, after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead by the official. The ball shall be placed at the spot the possession was lost for the next play.
 - Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occurred, the 7-second passing clock is eliminated, and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
4. Definition of a “Legal Handoff” - Total loss of possession directly from one offensive play to another.

5. Teams are not allowed to run in the 'NO RUN ZONES' - (Reminder: Each offensive team 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).
6. Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials' judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead, and the ball spotted where the jump, leap or hurdle occurred.
7. Ball carriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player. The play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, illegal contact is made, a penalty may be enforced by the official.
8. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
9. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
10. 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.
11. Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the current ball carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.

VIII. Passing

1. Only 1 forward pass, thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, is permitted each offensive play. The ball must be released prior to crossing the line of scrimmage. There can be unlimited backward passes behind the line of scrimmage.
 - There is no intentional grounding. The quarterback may throw the ball anywhere across the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack.
 - All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. All forward passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed and must be a forward pass, from behind the line of scrimmage, and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a 7 second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down counts and the ball is returned to the line of

scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, the 7 second rule is no longer in effect.

- If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7 second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS) and it will be the next down.
- If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

IX. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
2. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
3. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
4. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.

X. 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 a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. If a player who has one or no flags on their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flag(s) off a player who is not in possession of the ball.

7. 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, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

XI. Formations

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
2. Movement simulating the snap, by a player who is set, is considered a false start.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

**** Only one player is allowed in motion when the ball is snapped. The player MUST be in motion, off the line of scrimmage. All motion must be parallel or backwards to the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.**

**** Players may shift positions on offense at any time, all players must still reset for 1 second, prior to the snap.**

XII. Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Up to three (3) players can rush the quarterback. Rushers MUST identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap. Rushers MUST rush the passer immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is NOT permitted. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled backwards behind the line of scrimmage, all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to defend and pull the flag.

A Legal Rush is:

- Any rush by the designated rushers, 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
 - A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off, pitched or thrown backwards by the player receiving the snap.
3. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

4. The offense cannot impede the rusher's PATH to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an 'Impeding the Rusher' penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher(s) responsibility to go around the offensive player and avoid contact.
5. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is when the flag is pulled. A 2-point Safety is awarded if a flag pull takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

XIII. Penalties

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| I. Defensive Spot Fouls | |
| a. Defensive pass interference | Automatic First Down |
| b. Holding/Illegal Contact | +5 yards and automatic first down |
| c. Stripping | +5 yards and automatic first down |
| II. Offensive Spot Fouls | |
| a. Screening or Blocking | -5 yards and loss of down |
| b. Charging | -5 yards and loss of down |
| c. Flag Guarding | -5 yards and loss of down |
| d. Holding/Illegal Contact | -5 yards and loss of down |
| III. Defensive Penalties | |
| a. Unnecessary Roughness | +10 yards and automatic first down |
| b. Unsportsmanlike Conduct | +10 yards and automatic first down |
| c. Offside/Illegal Substitution | +5 yards from LOS and automatic first down |
| d. Illegal Rush | +5 yards from LOS and automatic first down |
| e. Illegal Flag Pull | +5 yards from LOS and automatic first down |
| f. Roughing the Passer | +5 yards from LOS and automatic first down |
| g. Taunting | +10 yards from LOS and automatic first down |
| IV. Offensive Penalties | |
| a. Unnecessary Roughness | -10 yards and loss of down |
| b. Unsportsmanlike Conduct | -10 yards and loss of down |
| c. Offsides/False Start/Illegal Sub | -5 yards from LOS and loss of down |
| d. Illegal Forward Pass | -5 yards from LOS and loss of down |
| e. Pass Interference | -5 yards from LOS and loss of down |
| f. Illegal Motion | -5 yards from LOS and loss of down |
| g. Delay of Game | -5 yards from LOS and loss of down |
| h. Impeding the Rusher | -5 yards from LOS and loss of down |
| i. Illegal Procedure | -5 yards from LOS and loss of down |
| j. Taunting | -10 yards from LOS and loss of down |

The game officials will administer all penalties. The officials will determine incidental contact that may result from the normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the Line of Scrimmage (LOS), except as noted (Spot Fouls). Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines. Penalties are assessed live ball, then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal line when penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal. Defensive spot fouls administered in the end zone, ball will be placed on the one-yard line. Offensive spot fouls administered in the end zone will result in a Safety.

XIV. Equipment and Uniforms

1. Uniforms

- a. All players must have matching color uniform tops. Numbers are not required but encouraged. All teams must have a Dark uniform top and Light uniform top.
- b. Uniform bottoms must be a solid color with no stripes and no pockets. Uniform bottoms cannot be the same or similar color of worn flags.

2. Flag/Belt

- a. All Players must wear flags that are a contrasting color from their uniform bottoms.
- b. Flag poppers must be of the Youth variety.
- c. Flags must be at least 14 inches in length from the popper.
- d. Flags may not be cut or altered.
- e. Flags must be pushed fully in & players must be able to pull their own flag out with one hand in a fluid motion. Illegal flags will result in ejection of that player and the Head Coach from that game.

3. Football Sizes

- a. All footballs must be composite or leather material.
- b. 6u – 8u (Boys and Girls) = Pee Wee equivalent (Size 6)
- c. 10u – 12u (Boys and Girls) = Junior equivalent (Size 7) TDJ
- d. 14u and up (Boys and Girls) = Youth equivalent (Size 8) TDY

- Teams are allowed to use a larger size football but not a smaller size football.

4. Mouthguards – Mouthguards are required for all game play.

5. Jewelry – Jewelry is not allowed to be worn during game play.