



# Graham Recreation & Parks Department



## 2018 Flag Football Rules

(Clarifications or Modifications to NFL FLAG rulebook)

### I. GAME

1. At the start of each game, captains (2 from each team, which will be different for each game) will meet at the 20 yard line of their respective flag football field. A coin toss will be made by the officials along with reminders of rules and regulations. The winner of the coin toss will choose to have the ball first or to have the ball first in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. The visiting team on the schedule will call heads or tails prior to the toss
2. Games are played 7v7, unless needed for amount of players at a certain game. If this happens, both teams will play with the same amount of players. **(6U league will play 5v5.)**
3. Each game will consist of two 20 minute halves. There will be a running clock with the following stoppages: timeouts, change of possession, and injury. In the last two minutes of the game, the clock will stop as in a regular game (out of bounds, incompletions).
4. The offensive team takes possession at the 35 yard line and plays towards the goal line. The offensive team will have 4 attempts to cross the 20 yard line, which will give them 4 more downs to try to score touchdown.
5. If the offensive team fails to score a touchdown, the other team takes over at the 35 yard line and repeats the attempt to score a touchdown. Regardless of where the offensive team finishes their drive towards the end zone, the ball will always start back at the 35 yard line.
6. All possession changes will start at the 35 yard line. The only exception would be a returned INT which would only be different if the player returns the ball past the 40 yard line to score a touchdown. In this case, the team throwing the INT TD would take possession again at the 35 yard line.
7. All players will have a chance to be involved in the offense during the season and will have multiple attempts (plays ran for them or involving them). During each game, the Quarterback will remain the same for an entire half. Quarterbacks must switch at half time and a majority of the players should have a chance to play quarterback during the season.
  - a. All players currently on the sidelines will enter into the game following a possession of offense or defense. Players should have the same amount of opportunities to play both offense and defense during a given game.
    - i. Players are not allowed to participant in the entire half or entire game, each player must sit at least one possession per half and at least two possessions per game. (assuming there are substitutions available)

## VIII. Scoring

1. Touchdowns: 6 Points
2. PAT (Point After TD) – All will be Pass Plays
  - a. 1 Point = From 5 Yard Line
  - b. 2 Points = From the 10 Yard Line
3. Safety
  - a. 2 Points = The players flag is pulled behind the 40 yard line or the player runs behind the 50 yard line or goes out of bounds on the sideline behind the 40 yard line
    - i. If a players knee touches the ground behind the 40 yard line it will also be noted as a safety
  - b. If a snap is fumbled, there will be no safety, however, the ball will down and the next down will take place from the location of the snap
4. Mercy Rule: If one team is winning by 22 points or more at half time, OR by more than 30 points at any point during the game, the game will end, teams will be switched around and play will resume with a new game (this will be played with the remaining time left in the 40 minute game)

## IX. Coaches/Officials

1. All coaches on the field during the games must pass a background check with the Recreation department.
2. 1 Coach is allowed on the field to help with play, however, they must remain 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
3. Coaches must register on the NFL FLAG Website and hopefully utilize the free information on the website. [www.nflflag.com](http://www.nflflag.com)
4. Each group of volunteer coaches will be paired with a Graham Recreation Staff Member for all practices. When games are played, staff members will become officials and will officiate the game that their volunteer partner will be coaching. The team staff members will be unbiased officials making sure rules are followed by both coaches and players.

## X. Live Ball/Dead Ball

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. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made following each teams full possession
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - a. The ball hits 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 or arm hits the ground.
  - f. The ball carrier’s flag falls out.
  - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
  - h. Inadvertent whistle.

NOTE: There are no fumbles recoverees. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble. (With exception of a fumbled snap, fumbled snaps will result in loss of down, but the ball will be placed back at the line of scrimmage)

8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
  - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
9. A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official’s rule interpretation. If the official’s ruling is correct, the team will be charged a time out. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

## XI. Running

- a. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
- b. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field, but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap. Quarterbacks are allowed to cross the line of scrimmage once the defense crosses the line of scrimmage.
- c. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
  - i. The Quarterback may not hand off the ball to the center in front of the quarterback, for the center to receive a hand off, they must be behind the quarterback before they can run the football.
- d. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind past the line of scrimmage
- e. "No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad 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).
- f. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- g. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- h. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
- i. Spinning is allowed, but players may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball, while attempting to avoid a flag pull, is not allowed. Lateral moves to the left or right are permitted.
- j. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- k. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
- l. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
- m. 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.

## XII. Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

## XIII. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have a least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball, but unless the INT is returned for a touchdown, the ball is placed back at the 40 yard line. Any situation in which an INT is not returned for a touchdown will result in the team intercepting the ball starting at the 40 yard line. If a team scores an INT touchdown, the team throwing the INT will then take over again at the 40 yard line.
6. Interceptions are returnable for touchdowns, but not on conversions after touchdowns.

## XIIV. Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
  - a. A legal rush is:
    - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
    - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
    - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7 yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
    - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
  - b. A penalty may be called if:
    - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
    - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside (5 yards LOS and first down).
    - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
  - c. Special circumstances:
    - i. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before they play, however, if they do send a rusher, the rusher must verify with the official that they are in the correct position.
    - ii. If rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as defender with no offside penalty enforced.
4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. 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 to avoid contact.
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
  - a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.