



# NFL FLAG: FIELD RULES



## Game

- At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice to take offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss chooses which direction it will be defend. There is no option to defer to second half.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to cross midfield or fails to score, the ball changes possession, and the new offensive team takes over on its own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes (including interceptions) start on the offense's 5-yard line
- Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game of defense

## Timing

- Games are 40 minutes running time (20 minutes each half).
- Halftime is 1 minute long (Teams changes sides of the field).
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- Each team is permitted one timeout per half. Timeouts do not carry over.

## Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Safety: 2 points
- Extra point: 1 point (from 5-yard line) OR 2 points (from 10-yard line)
- Overtime winner: Add 1 or 2 points to winning team's score which is determined

## Passing

- All passes must be forward and must be received beyond the line of scrimmage (LOS). Only one (1) forward pass per play.
- Absolutely NO screen passes behind the LOS
- Absolutely NO laterals or pitches beyond the LOS.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the LOS.
- If the QB's flag is pulled before the ball leaves his or her hand, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted where the QB's feet are.
- Interceptions may be returned on any play (including PAT)
- If a pass is tipped/ blocked by the defender and the QB catches the ball, the play is whistled dead and considered an incomplete pass.
- The QB may throw the ball to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the LOS.

## Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive a pass (including the QB if the ball has been handed off behind the LOS).
- Only one (1) player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- 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.
- Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the remaining offensive players cannot impede the defense from attempting to pull the offensive player's flag. (No screening or blocking; no running next to the ball-carrier)

## Running

- The QB cannot run beyond the line of scrimmage with the ball.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Teams may perform multiple handoffs as long as they remain behind the LOS.
- The player who receives the handoff can throw the ball as long as he or she remains behind the line of scrimmage
- The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- Center sneak play is not allowed. The QB may not handoff the ball to the center on the first handoff of the play.

## No Handoff Zone

- "No Handoff Zones" are located 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the goal line in each offensive direction
- If the ball is spotted on or inside the "No Handoff Zone," the offense MUST use a pass play or pitch to achieve a first down or touchdown. No direct handoffs or power runs are allowed.

## Rushing the Passer

- Players that rush the passer must be 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- **6U ONLY:** Players are not allowed to rush the quarterback. They may rush behind the LOS only after a handoff or pitch.
- Before each play, an official will mark off 7 yards from the LOS.
- The rusher has a clear path to the passer and any interference by the offense to impede his or her path will be considered screening.
- If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7 yard area), the rusher may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the passer.
- Players not rushing the passer may defend on the line of scrimmage but may not enter the backfield unless the ball is handed off.
- Players rushing the passer may attempt to block the pass, however NO contact can be made with the QB in any way.

## Flag Pulling

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball. A defensive player may not pull the flags off a player who does not have possession of the ball
- Defenders can dive to pull a ball carriers flag. But cannot hold, tackle or run through the ball carrier when attempting to pull their flags
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier
- Flag guarding is the attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the hand, arm, shoulder, or head or intentionally covering the flags with the football or jersey.





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## Penalties

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. This is considered a judgement call
- Players cannot question judgement calls. Only the team captain or the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and rule interpretations
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except for SPOT FOULS.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines.
- If the distance to the goal is shorter than the penalty yardage, then the penalty will be assessed half the distance to the goal.
- Loss of down means that down is consumed.
- Any loss of down on the fourth down results in a turnover on downs and the other team taking possession.

## Spot Fouls

### Defensive

- Defensive pass interference Automatic First Down
- Holding Automatic First Down
- Stripping +10 Yards & First Down
- Defensive unnecessary roughness +10 Yards & First Down

### Offensive

- Screening, blocking -10 Yards & Loss of Down
- Charging -10 Yards & Loss of Down
- Flag guarding -10 Yards & Loss of Down
- Offensive unnecessary roughness -10 Yards & Loss of Down

## Defensive Penalties

- Offside +5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
- Illegal rush +5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
- Illegal flag pull +5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
- Roughing the passer +5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
- Taunting +5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
- Unsportsmanlike conduct +10 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down

## Offensive Penalties

- Offside/false start -5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Illegal forward pass -5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Offensive pass interference -5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Illegal motion -5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Delay of game -5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Impeding the rusher -5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Illegal Procedure -5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Taunting -5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Unsportsmanlike conduct -10 yards from LOS & loss of down

## Live Ball / Dead Ball

- Substitutions may be made at any dead ball.
- Team must have a minimum of four (4) players but no more than seven (7) on the field at a time. *6U: 5 players maximum*
- The play is ruled "dead" when:
  - » Ball-carrier's flag is pulled
  - » Ball-carrier steps out of bounds
  - » Incomplete pass
  - » Ball hits the ground
  - » Touchdown, PAT or safety is scored
  - » Ball-carrier's knee hits the ground
  - » Ball-carrier's flag falls out (ball is spotted where the flag is on the ground)
  - » Receiver has one (1) or no flags when catching the ball (ball is spotted where the receiver caught the ball)
- Any player who starts a play without a flag is down where he or she touches the ball
- There are no fumbles! Ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.
- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - » Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew down is consumed
  - » Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage

## Overtime (Graham Only)

- Overtime winner is determined by whichever team scores more points within a single overtime period.
  - » Winner of the coin toss chooses offense or defense first.
  - » Each team takes turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5 yard line for one point or defense's 10 yard line for two points.
  - » Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team
  - » Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting out one- or two-point play of its own.
- If both teams score and complete the same amount of points on conversions, then the process is repeated with the team that lost the first coin toss getting to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
  - » **Both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line starting with the third round of overtime.**
- Final points earned by winning team, in the FINAL overtime, will be added onto the winning team's total score.

## Equipment

- Home team wears dark jerseys. Away team wears light jerseys.
- Players' jerseys must be tucked in at all times.
- Players must remove all jewelry deemed hazardous by the officials.
- All players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed. However, cleats with exposed metal are not permitted.