



# **RULE BOOK**

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# GAME

1. 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.

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. Possession changes to start the second half.

3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 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.

- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, in 3 downs, and elects to "punt" on 4th down, then possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start possession from the spot.

- Offensive Teams **MUST** declare 4th down intent; "Play or Punt", when asked by the referee.

- Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.

- If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration.

- If the offense fails to score, after crossing mid-field the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line

4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.





# EQUIPMENT

1. All players must wear flag belts and flags. All players **MUST** wear **mouth guards** at all times while on the field. Players are also **required** to wear **pocketless shorts**. Extra belts and mouth guards may be available for purchase on site.
2. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are suggested, but not required. However, metal cleats are never allowed.
3. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. These are not required.
4. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed- weather permitting.
5. Players may wear soft shell helmets but they must be secured at **ALL** times while on the playing field. Some tournament locations may **require** soft shell helmets, confirm with your local commissioner prior to the tournament.

## FIELD DIMENSIONS:

30 yards in width by 50 yards in length plus 10 yard End Zones.





# TIMING & OVERTIME

- Games are played on a 28-minute continuous clock with two 14-minute halves, unless one team gains a 28-point advantage which will end the game. The clock stops for halftime, injuries, or at the Officials' discretion.

- Halftime is two minutes.

- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball. Each team has one 60-second timeout per half. If unused, they do not carry over to the next half.

- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. In the event of an injury, officials will stop the clock, then restart once the injured player has been removed from the field of play.

- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner.

## - Overtime format is as follows:

1. Home team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get 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. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.

2. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the 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 a one- or two-point play of their own. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.

3. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line

4. Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5 yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.

5. Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored for each team

6. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.

7. There are no timeouts.

8. Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points. Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period. Interceptions advanced from the possession point in the third overtime period

9. Each team has one rules challenge for the entire overtime session





# SCORING

1. **Touchdown:** 6 points

2. **PAT (point after touchdown):** 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line) Note: 1 point PAT is pass only; 2 point PAT can be run or pass.

3. Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions or overtime are worth two points.

4. **Safety:** 2 points

- A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. 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. After one team is winning by 35 points or more, the game is over. Once a 35 or more point advantage is gained, no PAT will be attempted.

7. Forfeits are scored 28-0 for the winning team.

8. Once point differential reaches or breaches 28 points, the game is over





# COACHING

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to all Gridiron Football coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
2. Only two coaches are permitted on the sidelines to coach. Coaches must remain on the sideline, unless in the case of needing to attend to an injured player.
  - All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. are required and must remain off the field/sideline, in a designated viewing area. Coaches, this is your responsibility to keep your fans and any other team associated members in the designated areas.
3. Teams may huddle on the sideline with their coach to get the play, but the play clock will not stop once the ball is signaled 'Ready for Play'.





# LIVE/DEAD BALL

- The ball is live at the snap, and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead. Any official can whistle the play dead. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
  - It is an automatic dead ball 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.
- A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground in the field of play.
  - 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 conduct penalty.
    - Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

**NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball becomes a dead ball. (If the ball is fumbled forwards then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession.)**

## **Play is ruled "dead" when:**

1. The ball hits the ground. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
2. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
3. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
4. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
5. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
6. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
7. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
8. Ball-carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning, or to avoid a downed player on the field of play
9. The 7 second pass clock expires or an inadvertent whistle. If an inadvertent whistle occurs the offense has two options:
  - A) take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed
  - B) replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.
10. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout 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.





# RUNNING

- The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
- Only direct handoffs **behind the line of scrimmage** are permitted. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. 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. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
  - Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind.
- No-run Zones are 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.
  - Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding. Spinning/Jump Cuts are allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage.
  - No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
- 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.
- **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.





# PASSING

- All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.

There is no intentional grounding. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack.

- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

- The quarterback has a seven (7) second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, 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). If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

# RECEIVING

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

- 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 toward the line of scrimmage.

- A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.

- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

- 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.





# FLAG PULLING

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
  - Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
  - 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.
  - If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- 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 their jersey.

# FORMATIONS

- Offenses must have a minimum of 1 player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to 4 players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
  - Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- 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



# UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion.

No appeals will be considered.

## **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

- Offensive or confrontational language is **NOT** allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.

- Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

- Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

## **ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**

- Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well: Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams. Keep comments clean and profanity free.

Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

- Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly: Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.

## **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT PENALTIES:**

- **Defense:** + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

- **Offense:** - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down





# POOL PLAY FORMAT

- Teams will play a minimum of **three (3)** games in pool play.
- Teams must start a game with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four.

## Tie Breakers

Two teams tied for one place:

- Head-to-head competition
- Total points allowed during tournament play
- Total points scored during tournament play
- Coin toss

Three or more teams tied for one place:

- Total points allowed during tournament play
- Total points scored during tournament play
- Coin toss if two teams are still tied. Drawing if three teams are still tied.

## Playoffs and Championship

- Playoff and championship games will be scheduled after pool play results are received and confirmed. Playoff rounds are **single elimination**.
  - Playoff seeds may be determined by:
    - Overall record
    - Points allowed
    - Points scored
    - Coin toss