



# OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT GAME PLAY RULES

**Guideline:** NFL Flag Rules | **Authority:** Pink Flag Football Staff

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## I. DIVISIONS

| CATEGORY | AGE GROUPS                     |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| COED     | 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U              |
| GIRLS    | 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U, High School |

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## II. GENERAL RULES & EQUIPMENT

- **Coin Toss:** The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser chooses direction. Possession changes at half to the team that started on defense.
  - **Flags:** Players must wear **YOUTH flags with poppers (2)**.
  - **Mouth Guards:** All players **MUST** wear mouth guards at all times while on the field. Game balls need to be age specific.
  - **Footwear:** Players must wear cleats. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
  - **Headwear/Vision:** Players may wear soft shell helmets, halos and sunglasses but they must be secured at all times while on the field. Prescription glasses are permitted without a strap.
  - **Jersey/Pants:** Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants, if they hang below the belt line. **No pockets on shorts/pants/sweats/etc.**
  - **Player Responsibility:** Participants must bring their own flag belts and mouth guards to the field. Extra belts and mouth guards may be available for purchase.
  - **Color Coding:** Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as the player's shorts or pants.
  - **Compliance:** Teams not prepared to play at Game Time due to equipment compliance issues will have their team timeouts used, up to 2, for the time taken to get compliant.
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## III. FIELD DIMENSIONS

About 25 yards wide by 50 yards long, including 2 endzones 7-10 yards long.

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## IV. OFFENSIVE POSSESSION

- **Starting Point:** Ball starts at the 5-yard line. Offense has 4 downs to cross midfield.
- **Midfield:** After crossing midfield, offense has 3 downs to score.
- **Punting:** If offense elects to Punt on 4th down before crossing midfield, ball moves to opposing 5-yard line.
- **Turnover on Downs:** If offense goes for it on 4th down and fails, opposing team takes over at the spot.

### 4TH DOWN DECLARATION

- Offense must declare "Play" or "Punt" when asked by referee.
- Timeout may be used to change declaration before the play clock expires.
- Once "Punt" is declared, possession changes immediately to opposing 5-yard line.

### NO RUN ZONES

- No-run zones exist 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the end zone.
  - Teams must run pass plays in these zones.
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## V. GAME TIMING

- **Clock:** Two 12-minute halves (24-minute continuous clock).
- **Play Clock:** 25-second play clock.
- **Timeouts:** 2 timeouts per game.

### OVERTIME (Bracket Play Only)

- **1st OT:** Each team gets one play from 5-yard line for 1 point OR 10-yard line for 2 points.
  - **2nd OT:** All attempts must be from 10-yard line (2 points).
  - **3rd OT:** Longest play from midfield, each team gets 1-play. Higher seed gets choice.
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## VI. SCORING

- **Touchdown:** 6 points
- **1-point try:** Pass from 5-yard line
- **2-point try:** Run or pass from 10-yard line
- **Interception Return (regulation):** 6 points
- **Interception (conversion/OT):** 2 points
- **Safety:** 2 points

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## VII. RUNNING

- QB may not directly run.
- No diving/hurdling.
- Ball spotted where ball is at flag pull.

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## VIII. PASSING

- Forward passes must cross line of scrimmage unless touched by defender.
- **Pass Clock:** QB has 7-second pass clock.
- **Forward Pass Limits:** 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.
- **Laterals:** There can be unlimited backward passes behind the line of scrimmage.
- **Grounding:** There is no intentional grounding. The quarterback may throw the ball anywhere across the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack.
- **Illegal Passes:** 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.
- **Clock Violation:** 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.
- **End Zone Safety:** 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.
- **Self-Catch:** If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

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## IX. RECEIVING

- **Eligibility:** 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).
- **Possession:** A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
- **Simultaneous Catch:** In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- **Interceptions:** 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.

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## X. RUSHING THE PASSER

- Allowed beginning at 8U divisions.
- **Distance:** Rusher must start 7 yards off LOS.

- **Hand-offs:** 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.
- **The PATH:** 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.
- **Responsibility:** 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.
- **Officials:** We will utilize NFL Flag rules as a guideline, Pink Flag Football officials will have the final say.

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## XI. FLAG PULLING

- **Legal Pull:** A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- **Contact:** Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- **Stripping:** It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- **Inadvertent Fall:** 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.
- **Missing Flag:** 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.
- **Illegal Pull:** A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flag(s) off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- **Flag Guarding:** 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.

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## XII. FORMATIONS

- **Line of Scrimmage:** 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.
- **False Start:** Movement simulating the snap, by a player who is set, is considered a false start.
- **The Snap:** 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.

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

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### XIII. COACHES

- Max 2 per sideline.
- **10U and below:** 1 offensive coach allowed on field at least 5 yards behind QB, no defensive coaches on field.

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### XIV. MERCY RULE

Game ends immediately once point differential reaches **28 points**.

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### XV. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- **Zero Tolerance:** If the field manager or game officials witness any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected. No appeals. **INTENTIONAL PHYSICAL PLAY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED!**
- **Language:** Offensive or confrontational language is NOT allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language and penalize or eject accordingly.
- **Abuse:** Players or Coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or game official.
- **Defensive Rules:** Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage and are not allowed to run through the ball carrier. Offensive players may NOT initiate contact at the line of scrimmage.

### FAN ETIQUETTE

- Fans should cheer on their players only, not harass officials or opposing team.
- Comments must be clean and profanity free. Compliment ALL players.
- **Safety Zone:** Keep younger kids and equipment (coolers, chairs, 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.

### PENALTY ASSESSMENT

- **Defensive penalty:** +10 yards from the dead ball spot and an automatic first down.
- **Offensive penalty:** -10 yards from the dead ball spot and a loss of down.
- **Disqualification:** Two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties on any player or coach result in a disqualification.

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## 🚩 XVI. GENERAL PENALTY INFO

- Officials determine incidental contact.
- All penalties assessed from the LOS, except as noted (Spot fouls).
- Only the **head coach** may ask referee questions about rule clarification.
- Games/halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- **Half the Distance:** Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance.
- **Spot Fouls in End Zone:** \* Defensive: Ball on one-yard line, first down.
  - Offensive: Safety.

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## 🚩 OFFICIAL PENALTY CHART

### I. SPOT FOULS

*Assessed from the spot of the foul*

| INFRACTION                  | CATEGORY  | PENALTY RESULT                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--|
| Defensive Pass Interference | Defensive | <b>Automatic First Down</b>                |
| Holding / Illegal Contact   | Defensive | <b>+5 Yards &amp; Automatic First Down</b> |
| Stripping                   | Defensive | <b>+5 Yards &amp; Automatic First Down</b> |
| Screening or Blocking       | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>         |
| Charging                    | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>         |
| Flag Guarding               | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards &amp; Loss of Down</b>         |

|                           |           |                                |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Holding / Illegal Contact | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards</b> & Loss of Down |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|

## II. LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS) PENALTIES

*Assessed from the Line of Scrimmage*

| INFRACTION                            | CATEGORY  | PENALTY RESULT                          |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Defensive Unnecessary Roughness       | Defensive | <b>+10 Yards</b> & Automatic First Down |
| Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct     | Defensive | <b>+10 Yards</b> & Automatic First Down |
| Offside / Illegal Substitution        | Defensive | <b>+5 Yards</b> & Automatic First Down  |
| Illegal Rush (Inside 7-yard marker)   | Defensive | <b>+5 Yards</b> & Automatic First Down  |
| Illegal Flag Pull (Before possession) | Defensive | <b>+5 Yards</b> & Automatic First Down  |
| Roughing the Passer                   | Defensive | <b>+5 Yards</b> & Automatic First Down  |
| Taunting (Defense)                    | Defensive | <b>+10 Yards</b> & Automatic First Down |
| Offensive Unnecessary Roughness       | Offensive | <b>-10 Yards</b> & Loss of Down         |
| Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct     | Offensive | <b>-10 Yards</b> & Loss of Down         |

|                                      |           |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| Offside / False Start / Substitution | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards</b> & Loss of Down  |
| Illegal Forward Pass                 | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards</b> & Loss of Down  |
| Offensive Pass Interference          | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards</b> & Loss of Down  |
| Illegal Motion (Multiple players)    | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards</b> & Loss of Down  |
| Delay of Game                        | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards</b> & Loss of Down  |
| Impeding the Rusher                  | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards</b> & Loss of Down  |
| Illegal Procedure                    | Offensive | <b>-5 Yards</b> & Loss of Down  |
| Taunting (Offense)                   | Offensive | <b>-10 Yards</b> & Loss of Down |

