



2023 Flag Football Rules

GOAL OF C3 SPORTS RULES

- **The rules of C3 sports Flag Football are designed to provide a high level of competition with a family friendly atmosphere.** Thank you for your help to create a positive atmosphere!

GENERAL RULES

- Each team will have 6 players on the field.
 - Exception: Kindergarten/1 coach is the quarterback and 6 players on offense and 6 on defense. (6 on 6 including the coach)
- Scores are not kept in the K/1 league.
- Teams will switch ends of the field following halftime.
- Coaches may walk **their** sidelines and encourage players without walking onto the playing field.
- One coach per team is allowed in the huddle throughout the season in the K-3rd grade leagues
- No Coaches will be allowed on the field during the 4th – 6th grade games
- A coin toss determines which team takes first possession of the ball. The designated away team for the game will call the coin toss. The winner of the toss has the option to begin on offense or defense. The team that begins on offense in the first half will begin on defense in the second half
- No over time will be played.
- 4th through 6th grade may run back extra point attempts
- **Inappropriate conversation from the players or coaches (as deemed by the Ref) will result in the following penalties. Offense: 5 yd & loss of down. Defense: 5 yd & automatic 1st down.**

BALL SIZE

- K/1 Football Size #5 “Pee Wee”
- 2/3, 4/6 Football Size #6 “Junior”

PLAYER ATTIRE

- Players are required to wear protective mouthpieces at all times during both games and practices
- Molded and screw-in cleats are permitted. No metal cleats are allowed
- No jewelry is permitted during the games
- Shorts and pants may not have open pockets or belt loops
- Players must have 2 flags on (one on each side)

SCORING

- Touchdowns
 - K/1 No score kept
 - 2/3, Touchdown = 7 points
 - 4/6 Touchdowns = 6 Points
- Extra Points
 - 2/3 No Extra points attempted

- 4/6
 - 1 point (played from the 5-yard line with a pass)
 - 2 points (played from the 10-yard line with a run or pass)
- Safety
 - 4/6, Safety = 2 Points (Also receive the ball on your 5 yard line)

CLOCK FORMAT

- Periods
 - Games consist of six, six minute periods with a brief halftime
- The clock stops briefly at the end of each period for substitutions
- Time outs
 - 4/6, Each team has one 30 second timeout (coach can meet with the players) and one clock stoppage timeout (no meeting with players) in each game.
 - No time outs in K/1, 2/3
- A 30 second play clock will begin after the referee spots the ball ready-for-play
- When there is one minute before the end of the game (4th -6th), the clock will stop in the following instances and will start again on the snap of the football:
 - After an incomplete pass
 - After the runner goes out-of-bounds
 - After a touchdown
 - During an extra-point attempt
 - After an interception
 - After a turnover on downs
 - Official's timeout
 - During a called timeout

DOWN FORMAT

- K/1 Grade Leagues
 - The offensive team has four plays to cross midfield
 - If after a 1st down is gained a sack behind midfield occurs, a new 1st down is not gained by re-crossing midfield
 - Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown
 - If the team fails to cross midfield or score a touchdown in four downs, the other team takes possession on its own 5 yard line
- 2/3, 4/6 Grade Leagues
 - The offensive team has four plays to cross midfield
 - If after a 1st down is gained a sack behind midfield occurs, a new 1st down is not gained by re-crossing midfield
 - Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown
 - On 4th down, a team has two options:
 - A team may play the 4th down to attempt to convert.
 - If the team fails to score or gain a 1st down, the ball changes possession at the current spot of ball

- Select to “punt” the ball as the 4th down play (the referee is to be notified)
 - The ball will be placed on the opposing team’s 5 yard line and a change of possession occurs

OFFENSE BASICS

- **NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT** of any kind is permitted
- A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap. If a player is in motion there still needs to be 3 players on the line of scrimmage.
- Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped, but cannot be in forward motion
- Snapping the ball to the Quarterback
 - K/1, 2/3 grade players may snap the ball between the legs or use the side snap
 - 4th – 6th grade players must snap the ball between the legs
 - Shotgun snaps are allowed
 - If there is a female center/quarterback the ball **must** be side snapped in all grades
- Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete possession of the ball
 - This includes any trick plays involving the snap. There are no center sneaks allowed
- Laterals
 - K/1, 2/3 Grade backward laterals are allowed, but only behind the line of scrimmage
 - 4th – 6th Grade backward laterals are unlimited when behind the line of scrimmage, and one backwards lateral is allowed once the ball is past the line of scrimmage
- Spinning is permitted but the player **may not leave their feet**.
- Jumping or diving is illegal while caring the football; Jumping to catch a pass is permitted.
- No penalty will be given for a runner leaving his/her feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player.

RUNNING GAME

- The quarterback CANNOT run the ball across the line of scrimmage
- The person who receives the snap from the center (under-center or shot-gun) is considered the quarterback and cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage
- The option play, where the quarterback runs the ball down the line of scrimmage before pitching the ball is allowed, keeping in mind that he/she cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage
- Pitches can occur at any time while behind the line of scrimmage
- Quarterback in K/1 grade cannot fake handoffs multiple times and seven second pass clock will be called
- Once the pitch is received, the ball carrier can run the ball, hand-off the ball (behind the line of scrimmage), pitch the ball, or pass the ball (halfback pass)
- Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal.
 - Multiple handoffs may be used.
- The 5 yards leading toward the goal line, and the 5 yards leading to the midfield first-down line are no-run zones.
 - The no-run zones do not apply to the K divisions
- A ball carrier may not dive (or jump).

- This will result in a penalty
- The ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football. (Furthest forward foot.)
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball, as long as he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage first.
- It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.

PASSING GAME

- All forward passes must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage
- Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the defender can make a play on the ball
- The defender must avoid contact with the receiver
- A shovel pass is considered a pass
- Only one forward pass per down
- The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw a pass
 - If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down)
 - A handoff or pitch will end the 7-second pass count
- If the quarterback catches their own pass the play is down at the point of the catch
- Trick plays that involve intentionally throwing the ball off someone else will be considered an incomplete pass.

RECEIVING GAME

- All six players are eligible to receive passes
 - The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or pitch
- A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football prior to the ball hitting the ground while having at least one foot in bounds and no feet out of bounds
- If a player catches a pass with his knee(s) on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion
- Once the receiver has possession of the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, his/her teammates must not impede the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull the ball carrier's flag or will be called for illegal blocking penalty
- If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off, even without contact from another player, that player is ruled down at the spot the flag fell off
- If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off prior to receiving the ball and later in the same play catches the ball without replacing the flag, the receiver will be down immediately at the point of reception
- In the event that a receiver and defender both catch the ball at the same time and both retain possession to the ground, then the tie would go to the receiver, with receiver being down at the point of the tied reception

- Once the ball is caught by the receiver any loss of the ball during the running process will be defined as a fumble (dead ball at the spot) even if the defense catches the fumble in the air. Defense will take possession at spot of fumble.
 - If the ball is intentionally knocked out of the receiver's hands by the Defense this will result in a defense penalty

GENERAL DEFENSE

- **NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT** of any kind is permitted.
- Teams may run man-to-man, zone defenses or a combination of both
- Interceptions may not be returned (Except in the 4th-6th grade)
 - K/1, 2/3 change of possession will be awarded at the point of the interception
 - 4th-6th interceptions can be returned
 - 4th – 6th Interceptions made in the end zone will result in a touchback if not returned out of the end zone and the ball will be spotted at the 5-yard line
 - 4th – 6th Interceptions are returnable on conversions after a touchdown
- Defenders must only attempt to grab an offensive players' flags
- Diving after a flag is not allowed
- After a safety, forced punt, or touchdown, the football will be placed on the 10 yard line for K-3, and the 5 yard line for 4-6.

“NO RUN ZONES”

- **“No Run Zones” are enforced in 4th-6th grade league ONLY**
- “No Run Zones” are designed to avoid short-yardage collisions situations
- “No Run Zones” come into effect only when the offensive team is within 5 yards of a first down or the end zone
 - Exception: If the offensive team has already achieved a first down, but has been pushed back into a “No Run Zone”, then the “No Run Zone” is no longer in effect.
- Whenever the ball is in the “No Run Zone” the offense must pass.
- If a run play occurs while inside the “No Run Zone”, a penalty will be called
- If a penalty is called while in the “No Run Zone” the team is still in the “No Run Zone” even if the ball is placed outside the “No Run Zone”
- If a penalty moves you back into the “No Run Zone” after crossing midfield, the No Run rule does not apply.
- All passes in the “No Run Zones” must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- **You may rush the quarterback in 2nd – 6th grade leagues**
- **No rushing in the K/1 leagues**
- 2/3 grade: All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage

- 4th – 6th grade: All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 12 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- Before each snap, the referee will designate the 10-yard or 12 yard rush line
- The number of allowed rushers per play
 - 4th – 6th grade division, any number of players may rush the quarterback
 - 2/3 may only rush 1 player
- Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage
- Once the ball is handed off or pitched, the 10 or 12 yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier
- If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the 10 or 12-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is 10 or 12 yards back may rush instead.
- The rusher CANNOT run straight into the center. The center has the right away so long as the center remains at his/her original spot at the time the ball was snapped.
- Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage.
- The rusher may attempt to block the pass but it is a penalty to make any contact with the quarterback
- Once the ball is pitched or handed off all players may cross the line of scrimmage

DEAD BALLS

- The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds
- The ball carrier's knee hits the ground
- A touchdown or safety is scored
- A pass falls incomplete
- At the point of an interception
- The ball hits the ground as a fumble
 - The ball will be spotted at the point of the fumble
 - One exception to this rule is with the center/quarterback exchange. If a snap is mishandled, the quarterback may pick up the ball and continue play, if any other player picks up the ball they are the quarterback.

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

- **Illegal motion** - (more than one person moving): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down. The 2nd penalty in a row is a loss of down.
- **Illegal formation** - (not enough men on the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
- **Illegal pass** - (a pass thrown after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down
- **Illegal procedure** - (moving before the snap of the ball, false start, including illegal shift, illegal motion): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down. After the first penalty the next penalty in a row is another 5 yards and loss of down

- **Delay of game** - The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
- **Shielding** - (a non-contact block that impedes a defender from making a tackle): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down
- **Illegal run** - (a running play in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
- **Intentional grounding** - The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down
- **Offensive pass interference** - (illegal pick play, pushing a defender): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down
- **Flag guarding** - (intentional or unintentional use of the arm to prevent the flag from being pulled): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down
- **Illegal use of the hands** - (stiff-arming, blocking): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down
- **Diving** - (diving toward the end zone or first down): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down
- **Unsportsmanlike conduct** – (using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar gestures, disrespectfully addressing any persons, illegally stripping or attempting to strip the ball, spiking or kicking the ball, spiking or throwing flags, fighting, excessive celebrations.) The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down
- **Illegal ball advancement** – (jumping or diving to advance the ball, laterals) The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul
- **Inappropriate conversation to the Refs** - The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down (play does not stand)

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

- **Encroachment** - The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
- **Illegal rushing** - (enforced when players start rushing from inside the 7-yard rush line): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
- **Interference** - The penalty is a spot foul and an automatic first down
- **Illegal contact** - (pulling the jersey, holding, blocking, pushing): The penalty is 5 yards from the end of the run and an automatic first down. Includes hitting QB on a pass play.
- **Illegal flag pull** - (before the receiver catches the football): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down on an incomplete pass or 5 yards from reception and automatic first down
- **Roughing the passer** - The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
- **Too many players on the field** - The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
- **Unsportsmanlike conduct** – (using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar gestures, disrespectfully addressing any persons, illegally stripping or attempting to strip the ball, spiking or kicking the ball, spiking or throwing flag, fighting, excessive celebrations.) The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
- **Diving for a Flag Pull** - The penalty is 5 yards from the end of the run and automatic first down
- **Inappropriate communication to the Refs** - The penalty is 5 yards from the end of the play and automatic first down