



2016 NFL Flag Football Rules

- 4th-8th Grades

NFL Flag Football is a five-on-five game where an offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone. Running and passing plays are allowed, although there are “no-running zones” at midfield and near each goal line. The defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer and grabs flags to make “tackles.”

Basics

“Home” team on the schedule wears the dark jerseys.

The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense’s 5-yard line.

Games will consist of two 20-minute halves using a running clock. Halftime will be 2 minutes. Each team has three 60-second time-outs per game. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. A coin toss will be held pregame. The winner of the coin toss can choose to begin the game on offense or defense. If a team chooses to begin on offense, they will be on defense to start the 2nd half. (Vice versa if a team chooses to start on defense) There are no kickoffs or punts.

Defensive coaches must be off the playing field at the start of each play.

Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced. **Officials will make sure both teams are ready for play before the ball is snapped on a change of possession.**

Scoring

Touchdown: 6 pts
Extra Point: 1 point (played from 5-yard line) OR 2 pts (played from 12-yard line)
Safety: 2 pts

Running

The quarterback can run with the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. Only direct handoffs or pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offenses may use multiple handoffs or pitches behind the line of scrimmage. A player who takes a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. Once the ball has been snapped, all defensive players lined up 5 yards from the line of scrimmage are eligible to rush. **Exception: If the ball is spotted in a “no running zone” defensive players can line up at the goal line/first down line. These players can’t rush. Players lined up 5 yards from the line of scrimmage in this scenario can rush.** Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is. No laterals or pitches of any kind beyond the line of scrimmage. Shadow blocking is allowed anywhere on the field. Blockers must keep their hands below their waist.

“No-running zones” located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.

Receiving

All players are eligible receivers (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. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

Shovel passes are allowed.

Any type of forward pass in the no running zone must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

Interceptions may be returned in all leagues, except on an extra pt. and 2-pt try.

Dead Balls

The ball may be snapped between the legs, off to one side or using shotgun to start play. A dropped snap is considered a dead ball. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball. Play is ruled "dead" when the ball carriers: flag is pulled, steps out of bounds, scores a touchdown or safety is scored, knee hits the ground, or flag falls out.

There are no fumbles; the ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

Rushing the Quarterback

All defensive players must be a minimum of 5 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush. The referee will designate five yards from the line of scrimmage.

Exception: If the ball is spotted in a "no running zone" defensive players can line up at the goal line/first down line. These players can't rush.

Shadow blocking is allowed anywhere on the field. Blockers must keep their hands below their waist. **Intentional contact is not allowed anywhere on the field and will be penalized.**

Sportsmanship/Roughing

If the referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be removed from the game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Trash talking is not tolerated. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be removed from the game.

Penalties: All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defense:

Offsides: 5 yards

Interference: 5 yards and automatic first down

Illegal contact: Holding, blocking, etc. 5 yards and automatic first down

Illegal Flag pull: Before receiver has ball 5 yards and automatic first down

Illegal rushing: Starting rush from inside 5-yard marker 5 yards

Breakaway Tackle: Tackling or intentionally pushing a runner with the ball if they have a clear pathway to the end zone will result in a Touchdown for the offense.

Offense:

Illegal motion/false start: More than one person moving, false start, etc. 5 yards and loss of down

Illegal forward pass: Pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage. 5 yards

Pass interference: Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender. 5 yards and loss of down

Flag guarding: 5 yards from line of scrimmage

Illegal contact: Holding, blocking, etc. 5 yards and loss of down

Delay of game: Clock stops, 5 yards and loss of down

Running play in no run zone: Play stopped and loss of down

Charging: Ball Carrier intentionally runs over defense. 5 yards and loss of down

Any coach instructing their player(s) to tackle or intentionally push another player will be penalized and possibly suspended from future games.

Referees determine incidental contact from the normal running of a play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage. Only the team coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Attire:

Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; no exceptions. Official NFL Flag jerseys must be worn during play and **should be tucked in to pants at all times.**