

STYFL – Flag Football

**STYFL
Flag Football Rules**



Updated: 9/29/2008

GENERAL RULES

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How Flag Football Is Played

A team has 4 downs to reach a zone line in order to receive a first down. Teams may pass or run the ball during these downs.

There is no contact allowed in flag football. In order to end a down, a defensive player must remove the offensive player's flag belt. Teams must screen block (forcing the opposition to go around them but without making contact with the opposition).

Touchdowns are worth 6 points. After a touchdown is scored, the offensive team may elect to try for 1 extra point (from the 3 yard line) or 2 extra points (from the 10 yard line).

A safety may be scored when: (2 points)

An offensive player carries the ball across their goal line and the ball becomes dead while in their team's possession. **EXCEPTION:** If a player's momentum carries him/her into the end zone and the ball is declared dead there, the possession is given to the team of the player making the catch at the spot where the pass was intercepted.

After a touchdown, the ball will be put in play on the scored upon team's first zone line. After a safety, the ball will be put in play on the first zone line of the team that scored.

Number of Players

The game will be played 7 on 7. If necessary, coaches can decide to play with fewer players and/or share players. The most important thing is that the kids have an opportunity to play. Offensive teams must have at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the start of play.

Keeping Score

There will be no official scorekeeping. There will be no records or standings.

Timing

Each game shall consist of two twenty-minute halves. Each participant must play the equivalent of at least half of each game. The choice of goals and receiving shall be decided by a coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss has the option to defer their decision to the second half. Teams will change direction at halftime. Each coach is allowed TWO time outs per half. An injury or official's time out will stop the clock.

Half-time periods shall be a total of five (5) minutes as designated by the referee.

The referee may declare a timeout for any situation not covered by the rules.

The ball must be put into play within 30 seconds of the ready to play whistle.

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Equipment	Program Shirts must be tucked in. Pants or shorts with any belt(s), belt loops, pockets, or exposed drawstrings are not recommended and should be taped to prevent injury.
Size of Ball	6-7 = Peewee, 8-9 = Junior, and 10-12 = Intermediate.
Field of Play	The dimension of the playing field shall be approximately 40 yards by 80 yards. The field shall be divided into four equal 20-yard sections.
Sideline Rule	Players must remain at least 1 yard from the sidelines and between the 20 yard line on each side of the field. Parents and spectators must remain at least 2 yards from the sidelines. The first infraction will result in a warning. Each infraction after that may result in a field penalty, 10 yards.
Coach on the Field	Coaches are permitted to be on the field during play for all age groups. The coach must stand a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and must remain motionless during the play (unless getting out of the way of a play). The coach cannot contact/assist a player or in any way physically influence the outcome of the play. If a coach is not in compliance of these stipulations they may be removed to the sideline.

Definitions

Fumble	There are no fumbles. The ball is dead at the spot where the ball touched the ground and will be spotted at that point. EXCEPTION: If the ball is dropped and is recovered (caught) by an opponent before the ball touches the ground, possession of the ball belongs to the player who recovered (caught) the ball. The play is over and the ball is dead at the point of the turnover.
Interceptions	On an interception, the ball is dead at the point of interception. There are no returns allowed for interceptions. This includes interceptions during a point after touchdown attempt. There will be no opportunity to run an interception back on an extra point in an attempt to score 2 points. The ball is dead as soon as it is intercepted. The team making the interception during normal play will still begin their possession at the spot of the interception. The team making an interception during a point after touchdown attempt will begin their possession at their first zone line.
Kick-offs	There are no kickoffs or punts.
Flag Belt/Removing the Flag Belt	All shirts must be tucked in, and are not permitted to hang over the flag belt. When a player scores they must immediately raise their hands and allow an official to remove their flag belt. This is done to insure that the flag belt has not been illegally secured. If

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the belt has been illegally secured the score is disallowed, the player is ejected and a 15 yard Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty will be administered from the previous spot. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged. It is illegal for a defensive player to intentionally pull a flag from an offensive player who is not in possession of the ball.

When the flag belt clip is clearly broken from the runner in possession of the ball, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A flag belt is considered removed at the point when the clasp comes unclipped, and is marked down where the ball carrier's feet are. If a flag belt is inadvertently dislodged and falls to the ground, a one hand tag between the shoulders and knees is required to deem the runner down.

Contact while deflagging: In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, a defensive player may contact the body and shoulders (incidental contact), but not the face, neck, or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock down the runner in an attempt to remove the flag belt or break up a pass.

Rules of the Game and Penalties

Delay of Game

The ball must be put in play promptly and legally. The following are examples of delay of game:

1. Failure to snap within 30 seconds of the ready to play whistle.
2. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready to play.
3. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.

Substitutions

No substitute may enter during a down. Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players.

Dead Ball

A ball is declared dead when:

1. A ball carriers flag is legally pulled, or is tagged with one hand by a defensive player if the flag has fallen off unintentionally.
2. Any part of the runner, other than a hand or foot, touches the ground, or when the runner steps out of bounds.
3. A touchdown, safety or try for point is completed.
4. At the point of an interception or in the case of a dropped ball caught by an opponent before the ball touches the ground. (returns are not allowed).
5. A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
6. A backwards pass, dropped ball, or a snap hits the ground before reaching the intended receiver.
7. An official blows his/her whistle inadvertently during a down.

Inadvertent Whistles

On occasion, an official may blow his/her whistle inadvertently, stopping play during a time when play should not normally be stopped. When an inadvertent whistle is sounded, the ball is

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declared dead, and the following options are available.

1. If a whistle is blown while a team has the ball, the team that has the ball may choose to put the ball in play at the spot of the whistle or replay the down.
2. If a whistle is blown during a legal forward pass, the ball is replaced to the previous spot and the down is replayed.

If a foul occurs during any of the above downs, an accepted penalty shall be administered as in any other play situations. When the foul is accepted, disregard the inadvertent whistle.

The Zone Line to Gain

The zone line to gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to negative yardage on a play or a penalty. The most forward point of the ball when declared dead shall be the determining factor.

Snapping, Handing and Passing the Ball

Ball Responsibility

The team in possession of the ball is responsible for retrieving the ball after a down. The officials are responsible for placing the ball on the scrimmage line.

Encroachment

No player on the defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor make contact with opponents or in any way interfere with them. This includes standing in the neutral zone.

False Start

No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of play (the offense may not move). This penalty is enforced whether the ball is snapped or not.

Formation on the Line

The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the time of the snap. All players must be inbounds.

Motion

Only one offensive player may be in motion at a time any distance from the line of scrimmage provided he/she is not moving towards the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.

Shift

Before the snap, offensive players who attempt to shift positions must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position for at least 1 second prior to the snap.

The Snap

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The snap can be passed back to the receiver/quarterback in any manner provided it is a continuous motion and starts from the ground.

Jumping rule

Participants are not allowed to hurdle or jump in order to avoid their flag from being pulled.

Forward and Backward Passing

Passes

A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

NOTE: The initial direction of the pass determines if it is forwards or backwards. A Forward Pass is Illegal:

- a. If the passer crosses the line of scrimmage when the ball leaves his/her hand.
- b. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out of bounds to save loss of yardage.
- c. If there is more than one forward pass.

Forward and Backward Passing (cont)

NOTE: It is ILLEGAL for a player to run the ball over the line and then: (1) pass the ball backwards into the backfield and then throw a forward pass or (2) run the ball over the line of scrimmage and then retreat back behind the line and then throw a forward pass.

Simultaneous Catch by Opposing Players

Simultaneous catches are declared dead balls and possession is awarded to the offense at the spot of the catch.

Interceptions

Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the first zone line.

Pass Interference

It is pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged or touched prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond the offense's line of scrimmage.

Personal Fouls

If the field supervisor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, tripping, striking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. Trash talking is illegal (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators). 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 ejected from the game.

Blocking/Rushing

Offensive Screen Blocking

The offense may screen or shadow block and create minor or

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incidental contact. The blocker must act as a screen to ward off defenders. Offensive players must have their hands and arms at their sides, across their groin area, across their pelvic area or behind their back when screen blocking. A screen blocker can not use their hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact. If they do use contact it will be called a Personal Foul.

Rushing the Passer

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the passer, and players not rushing the passer may defend on the line of scrimmage.

It should be noted that if the quarterback shows any sign of forward motion (during a run or pass play), he becomes eligible for all players on defense to rush.

Blocking/Rushing (cont)

Use of hands or arms by the defense

Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. Defensive players shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of the runner when attempting to remove the flag belt.

Spinning Rule

Spinning is allowed.

Flag Guarding

Runners may not guard the flag belt, either intentionally or unintentionally, to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes, but is not limited to:

1. Swinging the hands or arms over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging or placing the ball over the flag belt for the same purpose.
2. Lowering the shoulders, placing the arm over the flag belt.
3. Stiff arming an opponent. Stiff arming is not allowed; a personal foul will be called, and if warranted an unsportsmanlike conduct. penalty or ejection will result.
4. Using the ball to protect the flags.

Penalty Yardage Summary

Offensive Penalties Delay of Game (Dead Ball), 5 yards.
Illegal Motion (Dead Ball), 5 yards.
Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards and loss of down.
Flag Guarding, 10 yards and loss of down.
Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards and loss of down.
Intentional Grounding , 5 yards and loss of down.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards and loss of down.

Defensive Penalties Offsides, 5 yards and automatic first down.
Illegal flag pull, 10 yards and automatic first down.
Illegal rushing, 10 yards and automatic first down.
Illegal Contact, 10 yards and automatic first down.

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Pass Interference, 10 yards and automatic first down.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 15 yards and automatic first down.

NOTE: All penalties will be assessed from the ORIGINAL line of scrimmage. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.