



FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES

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UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

EQUIPMENT

1. Molded cleats or tennis shoes are the only allowable footwear. **NO METAL CLEATS ARE ALLOWED.**
2. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shirts must be worn and tucked in or kept short.
3. Athletic attire is required. No denim or khaki pants/shorts or cargo shorts are allowed. Pants/shorts with belt loops are not allowed. **POCKETED SHORTS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED, but are allowed.**
4. Flags must be evenly distributed; one on each hip and one in the back. If flags are not properly distributed, players may be ruled down when touched.
 - a. Players must use the league's flags, unless approved by officials and the opposing captain. Flag-A-Tag Sonic Boom flags are SportsLink's official flag equipment. Triple Threat and other tearaway sets are not permitted.
5. To avoid a "same color" conflict, the home team will wear a "light" color and the visitors will wear a "dark" color. Teams should bring two jerseys to each game to be safe. All players on a team should be wearing the same color. We will require teams/players to wear pinnies if conflicts.
6. All balls must be official NCAA or NFL weight & size. No junior balls are allowed. Balls must be adequately inflated. Any discrepancies on weight, size or inflation will be settled by officials & staff.

GAME DURATION

A game shall be divided into 22-minute halves.

1. The clock will run continuously throughout the first half; only stopping for timeouts by teams or officials.
2. During the last minute of the second half, the clock will stop for timeouts, incomplete passes, out of bounds, and change of possession.
3. Each team has one 1-minute timeout per game. Unused timeouts will carry over to overtime.
4. Halftime shall be one minute in duration.
5. Following a change of possession, the offense must allow the defense to get set. The offense cannot begin play until the official has signaled the ball ready to play. If the defense is taking too long to get set, the official will tell them to get set and then can allow the offense to snap the ball.
6. After a stopped clock, the clock will restart on the snap.
7. Coin Toss – The toss of the coin will take place within three minutes of kickoff in the center of the field. The toss will be called by the visiting captain before the

coin is flipped. The winner of the toss may choose one of the following, followed by a choice for the losing team:

- (a) Receive or kick
- (b) Goal their team will defend
- (c) Defer their choice to the second half

8. Immediately prior to the start of the second half, the captains of both teams must inform the officials of their respective choices. The loser of the original coin toss gets first choice, unless the winner of the original coin toss chose to defer.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

PLAYERS

1. SportsLink will be offering 7v7 and 8v8 flag football leagues.
 - In 7v7 leagues, teams will field a maximum of 7 players (4 males maximum) at a time. There must be a minimum of 5 players and at least 1 female on the field at all times.
 - In 8v8 leagues, teams will field a maximum of 8 players (5 males maximum) at a time. There must be a minimum of 5 players and at least 1 female on the field at all times.
 - For the 5v5 and 6v6 leagues – 4 players must be present to play. 1 must be a female if a coed league.

OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS

1. All plays must originate with a snap from center. The ball must be snapped from the ground. If the center picks up the ball and replaces it on the ground without snapping, this will be considered a false start penalty. A verbal “hike” by an offensive player is not required.
2. Players may line up in any formation as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage. Motion from the players prior to the snap is allowed as long as it is not towards the line of scrimmage at the snap.
3. Players may not break the neutral zone until the ball is snapped. If a player steps into the neutral zone, but gets back before the ball is snapped, there will not be a penalty.
4. Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended.

CARRYING THE BALL

1. The ball will be spotted at the location where the flag was pulled, NOT where the ball is at the time of the flag pull.

- Example: If a player is straddling the line of the end zone and one foot is in, but the flag was pulled out, the ball will be marked outside the end zone.
2. The quarterback will NOT be able to run for positive yardage until after the 5-count. He/She CAN run if blitzed and when the 5-count expires (regardless if defense rushes). Anyone he/she pitches the ball to before the 5-count expires, can also run.
 3. A ball carrier may not deliberately guard their flags. “Spinning” to avoid being de-flagged is legal. Actions such as slapping with the hand or stiff-arming are examples of flag guarding. Hands or arms down the side of the body while spinning will be considered flag guarding.
 4. If a player inadvertently loses their flags, or the opposition pulls a flag before an offensive player gains possession of the ball, the play will continue and the player must be downed by a one-hand touch.
 5. A player will be ruled “down” when any part of the body other than the hand or foot touches the ground.
 6. A fumble, muffed ball, or incomplete backwards pass is dead when it strikes the ground. The ball will be marked at the spot it first contacted the ground.
 7. There is a “No Run Zone” within 10 feet of the end zone. When the spot of the ball is within this “No Run Zone” the ball must be passed across the line of scrimmage. If a player attempts a running play within his zone, a penalty of 10 paces and loss of down will occur. If the new line-of-scrimmage is outside the “No Run Zone,” the team is able to run.
 8. It is illegal to attempt to steal a ball in a player’s possession.
 9. In pulling a flag or making a play on a ball, a player’s feet MAY leave the ground. Diving is legal by the defense, however; the diving player is still responsible for any contact they initiate. A defender cannot dive directly TOWARD an offensive player. It must be from the side or behind and solely an attempt to pull a flag and NOT to hinder the player’s progress. An offensive player must make an effort to avoid contact if a defensive player has obtained “the spot” first and vice-versa.
 10. A player may not jump to advance the ball. A jump backwards or sideways is legal.

BLOCKING & DEFENSE (RUSHING, BLITZ)

1. No blocking, tackling, or unnecessary roughness. Defensive players must avoid contact with the quarterback's arm (illegal contact).
2. During all plays, defensive players will not be allowed to cross the line of scrimmage until the rush count (5 count in coed & 3 count in men’s) is completed, unless they blitz or the quarterback pitches the ball.
3. The defense has five blitzes per game. There are no restrictions on how many can be used in a half. At the time of blitzing, you can blitz as many players as

you would like. **NOTE:** If a down is replayed, blitzes are returned. All actions on that penalized play are returned/replayed (other than unsportsmanlike conduct).

4. There are no additional points awarded for a female scoring on an interception return.

PASSING

1. A forward pass may be thrown from any point behind the line of scrimmage. Once the line of scrimmage is crossed, a player may not go back and throw.
2. Only one forward pass may be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage on a given play.
3. A forward pass is illegal if:
 - It is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback's entire body AND the ball must be beyond the line of scrimmage to be considered across the line.
 - It is intentional grounding. (An intentional grounding foul is called when the passer throws a forward pass that has no realistic chance of being completed. To be considered a realistic pass, there must be an eligible offensive player in the area where the ball lands. The passer can avoid an intentional grounding penalty if he/she is able to scramble out of the "pocket" and throw the ball away. To be considered out of the pocket, the passer must be outside the boundaries set by the first player on the left and right of the snapper. The ball must be thrown at least as far as the line of scrimmage, but it may land out of bounds as long as it reaches the proper distance forward.)
 - It is the second forward pass during a play.
 - It is thrown to him/herself.
 - It is thrown forward after a change of possession.
4. A player must have possession of the ball and land with at least one foot or knee inbounds, to be a legal reception.
5. If an offensive player goes out-of-bounds on his/her own accord and returns inbounds, it is an illegal touching penalty (dead ball, 10 paces, and loss of down) if they catch the first pass. Such a player may only legally catch a tipped pass.

KICKING

1. There will be no kickoffs. Possessions beginning a new half will begin at the 10-foot line.
2. Following any touchdown, the ball shall be placed on the 10-foot line, possession being given to the opponent of the scoring team.

3. Following a safety, the ball shall be punted from the 10-foot line, kicked to the team that scored on the safety.
4. On 4th down, the offensive team may punt if they choose to do so. They must declare their choice of punting or playing to the official and opponent within 15 seconds of the start of the play clock.
5. If a kick is to be made, the kick must be made immediately upon receiving a snap. There will be a 5-second count once snapped. A grounded punt shall be spotted where it hit the ground. If the ball is kicked out of bounds, it will be spotted where it left the field.
6. Once a team captain declares to punt, he/she may change the decision only through the use of a charged time-out or delay of game penalty.
7. Players must wait until the ball is kicked to cross the line of scrimmage.

PENALTIES

1. Teams can accept or decline all penalties, even if it takes you in/puts you out of the No Run Zone. All penalties are live until the ref blows the whistle dead. No team may accept more than one penalty per play on the opponent (other than unsportsmanlike conduct, of which there is no limit to the number of penalties that can be accepted on a play.)
2. The line-of-scrimmage for the current down determines scoring/running options. If a penalty takes a team outside the "No Run Zone," they will be able to run and are eligible for 8 point touchdowns by a female.

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

(All 10 PACES from the line of scrimmage & loss of down):

- Offsides
- Blocking/Picking
- Illegal Contact
- Illegal Forward Pass
- Illegal Motion
- False Start
- Delay of Game
- Delay of Game for excessive arguing or complaining
- Fielding Too Many Players
- Flag Guarding – From the spot of foul
- Diving & Jumping – From the spot of foul
- Pass Interference – From the original spot
- Illegal Touching – From the original spot

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Can be in addition to another penalty. Player must sit one play.
- Intentional Grounding – If foul occurs inside 10 paces from own end zone, penalty is half the distance to the goal. If the QB is in his/her own end zone, a safety is awarded.
- female Play Foul – If line of scrimmage was not crossed, it remains a female Play.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

(10 PACES from line of scrimmage & replay the down):

- Offsides
- Illegal Contact
- Holding
- Fielding Too Many Players
- Delay of Game – excessive arguing/complaining
- Diving with contact – Spot of the foul, automatic first down
- Pass Interference – Spot of the foul, automatic first down
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – automatic 1st down. Can be in addition to another penalty. Offending player must sit out one play.

SCORING

1. Point values will be as follows:
 - A. Touchdown: 6 points for males and 8 points for females.
~Female points are only awarded on offense, not on an interception return.
 - B. Safety: 2 points (and reception of a punt from the offensive team).
 - C. PAT: 1 point will be from the 10-foot line.
~ Defensive player returning an intercepted pass on this attempt: 1 point.
 - D. PAT: 2 points will be from the 20-foot line.
~ Defensive player returning an intercepted pass on this attempt: 2 points.
3. Once a team captain declares his/her choice of going for a 1 or 2 point conversion after scoring a touchdown, he/she may change the decision only if a charged time out is granted to either team, or via a delay of game penalty.
4. If a ball is intercepted on a 1 point or 2 point conversion and the now-defensive team commits a penalty, the intercepting team will automatically be awarded the 1 or 2 points.

TIE BREAKERS / OVERTIME

Regular season games will not have overtime. A tie at the end of regulation games will stand. Playoff games that end in a tie will be decided by 2-pt conversion attempts. Each

team will alternate possession, attempting a 2-point conversion. If still tied at the end of the 1st OT, the team that went last will now go first and so forth.

FIRST DOWN, FIELD SETUP, SUBSTITUTIONS

1. All fields will have **ONE** first down (mid-field).
2. Our standard field size will be 200 feet with 25-foot end zones. Teams will have 75 feet spacing to achieve a first down or score.
3. A team shall have four downs to complete the task of a first down
4. All substitutions must be made on one side of the field only.

GENDER PLAYS

1. Any touchdown pass caught by a female or thrown by a female will be worth 8 points (vs. 6), when originating outside the 10-foot "No Run Zone." Extra points will be a standard one (from 10 feet) or two (from 20 feet) points. If a penalty takes a team's line-of-scrimmage outside the "No Run Zone," the team is able to get 8 points on a female score. The line-of-scrimmage for the current down determines whether there is a possibility for "female scoring."
2. One out of every three plays must involve a female AS AN OPERATIVE PLAYER. The play, incomplete or complete, must have been initiated by a female or been obviously intended for a female. Any forward pass thrown TO a female or BY a female, must cross the line of scrimmage. Failure to involve a female will be a loss of a down, 10 pace penalty, and a female must now be the operative player on the next play. See below for unique examples:
 - When a female calls for the snap and is sacked, this counts as a female play.
 - When a female calls for the snap and pitches the ball backwards to a male, he must throw to a female across the line of scrimmage to count as a female play.
 - When a male calls for the snap and pitches the ball backwards to a female, she must either run for the positive yards or throw an attempted pass across the line of scrimmage to count as a female play.

CLARIFICATION on TIPPED BALLS: If a ball is tipped, whoever ends up catching the ball determines the gender of the play, regardless of the quarterback's intent. If the pass is incomplete, the gender of the first person to touch/tip the ball determines the gender of the play. If the ball is untouched, it's the official's decision.
3. If a female play was established, but a penalty results in a loss of down, the next play would be open. If the line of scrimmage was not crossed, the play will remain a female play. If the down is replayed, the female play will be also.

4. Calls made by an official on the fact of whether or not a play was a “female play” in some cases are judgmental and not to be argued over once the call has been made.
5. Female points are only awarded on offense.

WOMEN’S LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

1. Women’s leagues are played either 5v5 or 6v6.
2. Must have 4 females present to start a game.

INDOOR LEAGUE ADDITIONAL RULES

1. Indoor leagues are 5v5 unless otherwise stated.
2. Coed is played with 3 males and 2 females. Teams can replace a male with a female, but no more than 3 males can be on the field at one time.
3. First down is at midfield.
4. Teams will start on the 3 yard line to begin the game and after an opponent’s score.
5. Extra points: 1 pt will be from the 3 yd line. 2 pt will be from the 5 yd line.
6. Female points are not awarded for plays starting inside or on the 3 yard line (no run zone).
7. Wall, ceiling, and netting are out of bounds. Players cannot use the wall to assist in making a catch. A player must secure the ball and one foot on the turf prior to making contact with the wall to be considered a completion.
8. All punts will be thrown. There is no punting of the football due to ceiling height.
9. No cleats are allowed. Must wear turf, tennis shoes, or flat soled shoes.
10. All offensive penalties are 5 paces from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
11. All defensive penalties are 5 paces from the line of scrimmage and replay the down.
12. Games are 20 minute halves.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

ONLY CAPTAINS MAY TALK TO THE OFFICIALS IN A RESPECTFUL MANNER.

Anyone else will be ejected from the game, including sideline banter towards the opponents or officials, mumbling under your breath, etc. If the captain becomes out of control during conversation with the ref, the captain will be ejected. We have a ZERO TOLERANCE for out of control players. If our staff finds you rude, disrespectful, or out of control, we have the right to remove you from the game or league.

For less intense situations:

Coordinators & Referees may issue warnings to players for team and personal unsportsmanlike conduct or safety concerns. (Yelling to frighten someone making a catch is considered unsportsmanlike and will be penalized without warning). Staff may also ask players to leave the game for a specified amount of time if they feel it is for the betterment of the team and/or game. If a player fails to respect a staff member's decisions or heed their warnings, they may be ejected from the game, season or an indefinite amount of time.

Judgment calls made by the referee shall NOT be contested. A formal protest can be made at any time by letting the referee and the league coordinator aware of the situation. After the protest is filed, the game will continue as scheduled. If the protest is not filed until the conclusion of the game, the final score of that game will be official and will not change. SportsLink will review the protest and make a ruling before the following week's game.

Any individual who by his/her misconduct (profanity, gestures, physical or verbal abuse toward officials, players, etc.) causes himself/herself to be removed from a contest is automatically ineligible to participate for the remainder of that contest, any other games that day and at least one full week. That person may also be assessed additional suspensions.

- **2 unsportsmanlike penalties by a player in one game will result in an automatic ejection. An ejection is an automatic 1-week or longer suspension.**
- **4 unsportsmanlike penalties in a 6-month period will result in an automatic 1-month suspension (on top of any other suspensions accumulated). Once the time is served, the count will reset. Players who are repeat offenders may be dismissed from league play.**

Additional rules and policies may be added or amended by SportsLink before or during the season.