



1st - 8th Grade Rules: Mini, JR, SR, Varsity

Flag Football Fanatics Operates Under a ZERO Tolerance Policy.

I. Game

1. At the start of each game, captains/coaches from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
2. The winner of a coin toss gets a choice of possession. Losers have a choice of direction. These will alternate in the second half; teams may NOT choose to defer to the second half.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its own 8-yard line and has **three (3) or four (4) plays to cross midfield and score a TD** ****See Graph on last page****
4. If the offense fails to score or obtain a first down, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team gains possession on its own 8-yard line.
5. **Flag guarding** is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey. **Flag Guarding will be called at the full discretion of the referee.**
6. **Interceptions can be returned for 2 points.** After an interception, the defensive team can try to return the interception for 2 points and will gain possession at their own 8 yard line regardless if they score on the interception. An interception on a PAT the defensive team can try to return the interception for 2 points and will gain possession at their own 8 yard line regardless if they score on the interception.
7. **There are NO FUMBLES. The ball will be spotted where the player lost control of the ball.**
8. When a muffed snap occurs, the offense will have 1 retry. Play clock resets to 10 seconds to convert a successful snap.
9. The Home Team wears dark-side jerseys; Away Team wears white-side jerseys.
10. Teams must field a minimum of five (5) players at the start of the game (**Except for Micro Division**).. Showing up with four (4) or less players will result in a forfeit. The kids may play a 4 on 4 scrimmage. **Micro Division can have 4 players with out forfeiting the game.**
11. Participants and Coaches are always expected to shake hands at midfield no matter the outcome of the game.
12. Every child must play (2) quarters. No child may play (3) consecutive quarters (unless the team has 7 or less players present. No substitutions during a quarter (unless injury).
13. The Micro, Mini and JR Division will play with the FFF JR ball inflatable to 6-7lbs. The SR & Varsity Divisions will play with the FFF Intermediate ball inflatable to 7-9lbs.
14. All Grade Levels will be 5 on 5.

II. Coaches

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to Flag Football Fanatics Philosophies, Coaching Guidelines and Flag Football Fanatics Code of Conduct at all times.

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(Updated 3/9/22) **changes highlighted**

2. The League Director has full authority to **remove a coach** at any time from his/her coaching duty indefinitely.
3. **Only four coaches** (including the stat keeper) per team are **allowed on the coach/player sideline**.
4. Rosters, Rules and Guidelines will be emailed to each coach a few weeks prior to Meet & Greet Day.
5. **Coaches will be the QB in the Micro Division**
6. Coaches on field per age division: Micro=2, Mini=2, **Junior=2**, Senior=1, Varsity=1

III. Equipment

1. All players must wear mouth guards at all times while on the playing field.
2. **Shorts and Pants CANNOT have pockets.**
3. Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants, with the complete belt showing at all times. If a coach notices an opposing player's jersey is untucked, he must ask the referee to have the player tuck his/her jersey in **before the start of the next play**.
4. The excess belt must be cut off so that it does not hang down from the player's waste. If the belt is hanging down, making three (3) belts visible, then the referee can **rule the player down** when they gain possession of the ball.
5. Players must wear the official Flag Football Fanatics Jersey and Flag Belt provided by Flag Football Fanatics for games. If a player does not have the official FFF Flag jersey they will not be permitted to play.
6. Footballs will be provided to each coach by Flag Football Fanatics and these footballs will be used as the game balls.
7. It is the defensive coach's responsibility to make sure all of the offensive player's flags are located on the hips prior to snap.
8. Players can wear shoes or cleats; however, cleats with exposed metal are not allowed.
9. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads.
10. Casts or Braces (even if wrapped or covered) of any kind are not allowed. Players must remove all jewelry and hats.
11. The shorts must be an off color of the player's flag belt. If a member of Flag Football Fanatics Staff believes a team is gaining an advantage by the color of their shorts we will switch belts or that entire team will play one hand touch.

IV. Field and No-Run / Buffer Zones ****See Graph on last page****

1. The field dimensions are 50 yards by 25 yards with two 5-yard end zones and a midfield line (25-yard line) which will always be the first down line. No-Run Zones precede each midfield line and goal line by 4 yards. Field Dimensions may vary depending on playing location.
2. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No-Run Zones (**a 4 yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone**), teams **CANNOT run the ball**. All plays must be pass plays, with the pass going BEYOND the line of scrimmage. Teams may hand-off, pitch, or lateral the ball, however, the end result of the play must be a forward pass BEYOND the line of scrimmage. ****See Graph on last page****
3. **Buffer Zone (applied to the Micro Division only)** – This is the 2 yard zone from the LOS of scrimmage, in which the players cannot cross until the ball leaves the Coach/QB's hands. ****See Graph on last page****
4. Stepping on an out of bounds line is considered out of bounds.
5. No-Run Zones will be marked on the field and the referee will notify you before the play whether you are in a No-Run Zone or not. ****See Graph on last page****
6. No-Run Zone exception: If a defensive penalty pushes the offense into a No-Run Zone, the offense can still run until they run a play that results in positive or negative yardage.
7. The game ball will be placed at or near the center of the field after each play (designated by center cone).
8. The center may move the ball along the line of scrimmage (5 yard limit to either side). Movement must take place prior to offense being set.

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V. Timing and Ties

1. Games will consist of four 9-minute quarters and a two minute half-time.
2. **Clock will only stop during dead balls during the final minute of the 2nd half and timeouts. (Fumbles or Pitches are not considered dead balls = Meaning Clock runs during last minute)**
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams may receive warning(s) before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. The 30-second play clock will start once both cones (line of scrimmage and rush/blitz cone are designated). The offense may not snap the ball or run a play prior to both cones being designated.
5. Each team has **one 60-second time-out per half**. They do not carry over to the next half.
6. **Referees can stop the clock at their discretion.**
7. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
8. The clock will stop on all dead balls in the final minute of the **second half** except when a penalty is called on the team that would benefit from the clock stoppage.
9. If the score is tied at the end of the second half, the game will result in a Tie; **NO OVERTIMES**
10. **Game times can be shortened at the discretion of the League Director.**

VI. Playing Time / Substitutions

1. The games will consist of four (9) minute quarters and a (2) minute half-time.
2. Each child must play (2) quarters each game and absolutely no substitutions during a quarter (unless injury)
3. **Every child must play 2 quarters**
4. **No child may sit (2) consecutive quarters**
5. If a child leaves the game due to injury, restroom, or refuses to play, the opposing coach may choose the player for substitution.

VII. Scoring

1. Touchdown: **6 points**
2. PAT (Point After Touchdown) **1 point** (4-yard line), **2 points** (8-yard line), or **3 points** (12-yard line).
Note: 1 point PAT is in the No-Run Zone so the conversion must be a pass only, 2 and 3 point PAT's can be run or pass plays. Safety: **2 points**. **Defensive interception that is run back for a Touch Down = 2 points** **Defensive interception during a P.A.T that is run back for a Touch Down = 2 points**
3. PAT: If there is an offensive penalty during an extra point, the attempt is **automatically no good**. If there is a defensive penalty on an extra point, the attempt is **automatically good**.
4. A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flag is pulled by a defensive player, they step out of bounds, or they hit the ground with their knee, arm, or ball. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone. Example: The QB flag guards a defender while in his/her own end zone.
5. A Safety results in a change of possession
6. A team that scores a touchdown must declare to the referee whether they wish to attempt a 1-pt. conversion, 2-pt. conversion, or 3-pt. conversion. The conversion may be moved back, not forward, once the decision has been made (Play clock will not stop if conversion is changed)

VIII. Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the referee whistles the play dead.
2. The snap is considered any backwards motion (towards the QB) as the ball lifts off of the ground.

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3. The referee will place a special marker down to designate the line of scrimmage. Referees may give both teams "courtesy" neutral zone notifications to allow their players to move back beyond the line.
4. The referee will place a special marker down to designate the rush/blitz line. The offense may not snap the ball or run a play prior to both cones being designated.
5. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play.
6. There are **NO FUMBLES**. The ball will be spotted where the player lost control of the ball.
7. If a defensive player intercepts a pitch or lateral the play will be treated as a defensive interception and try to return the interception for a touchdown = 2 points and will gain possession at their own 8 yard line regardless if they score on the interception. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - The ball hits the ground or the ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - The ball carrier's elbow/knee hits the ground or steps out of bounds
 - A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - The defense intercepts a pass attempt.
 - The ball carrier is **touched with one hand** in the case that one (or both) of his/her flags fell out.
 - Inadvertent whistle, if there is an inadvertent whistle, the offense will have the choice of either the result of the play or replaying the down.
 - If a player gains possession of the ball with three (3) belts visible.

IV. Receiving

1. 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).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have **at least one foot inbounds** when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

X. Touches ****See Graph on last page****

1. **What is considered a Touch?** (a) any child that has possession of the ball beyond the LOS when the play ends (b) the QB and WR will receive a touch during a completed pass (c) No one receives a touch on an incomplete pass
2. Every child must have (1) touch per game (excluding SR and Varsity Divisions)
3. The player that has possession of the ball when the play is blown dead, will get the credit for a touch.
5. **No child may RUN the ball on consecutive running plays.** First offense- If a player runs the ball twice in a row you will lose a down. Second offense- If a player runs the ball twice in a row you will lose your possession.

XI. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the **runner's belt is** when the flag is pulled. (Not Where The Defensive Player Is Standing)
2. **No blocking, screening, picking, or running with an offensive player is allowed at any time.** The defense always has the right of way to reach the offensive player's flag belt. It is at the referee's discretion to rule if an offensive player's intent is to impede the progress of the defender(s).
3. If a receiver/runner's flag belt comes off inadvertently, then the receiver/runner must be **touched with at least one hand to be down.**
4. Defensive players must wait until the ball is handed-off, pitched, or lateraled before they can cross the line of scrimmage, unless the player(s) are behind the 7 or 9 yard rush line. ****See Graph on last page****

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5. Whenever a lateral, hand-off, or pitch occurs; **the 7 or 9 yard rush rule is no longer in effect** and every defensive player is eligible to rush.
6. Teams may hand-off, pitch, or lateral the ball as much as they want behind the line of scrimmage, however, **once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, teams may only have one (1) hand-off, pitch, or lateral.**
7. Flag Obstruction – **All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins.** If a coach notices an opposing player's jersey is untucked, he must ask the referee to have the player tuck his/her jersey in **before the start of the next play.**
8. **Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.** Not making an effort and making contact with a defender may result in a charging penalty.
9. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The QB can only run if he/she receives a direct hand-off, pitch, or lateral.
10. "No-Run Zones," located 4 yards before each end zone and 4 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
11. The center may not receive a hand-off between his/her legs or behind the back. Hand off to center MUST be in the front (belly area).
12. The player receiving the lateral, hand-off, or pitch, may pass the ball as long as he/she does not cross the line of scrimmage.
13. Spinning: A player may spin, however, **excessive spinning will result in the player being ruled down.** Excessive spinning is defined as more than 3 consecutive spins in a row (Number is reset if ball-carrier makes a football move in between spins)
14. Jumping: A player may jump, however, jumping over or into a defender and **diving to advance the ball is prohibited at any time.**(Example: No Diving for a First down or Touch Down)
15. A player is considered an **Illegal Runner** when the QB crosses the line of scrimmage (without receiving a pass or handoff), the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage with the ball in the **NO RUN zone**, and when the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage with the ball on **two (2) consecutive plays.**

XII. Rushing the Passer

1. The defense may rush any number of defenders as long as the defenders are at least 7 or 9 yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap. The 7 or 9 yards will be designated with a special marker by the referee. ****See Graph on last page****
2. It is the center's and offensive players' responsibility to get out of the way of the rusher. **The rusher has the right of way to the QB.** If any **contact or interference** occurs the offensive team could be penalized. It is at the referee's discretion to rule if an offensive player's intent is to impede the progress of the rusher(s).
3. The rusher must declare his rush by lining up one yard (or more) to the left or right of the center. If this path is crossed AND contact is made involving the rusher this will result in an offensive penalty.
4. Once the ball **leaves the QB's hands**, the 7 or 9-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
5. A special marker will designate the rush line 7 or 9 yards from the line of scrimmage on every play.
6. The rusher must go for the Quarterback's flag. Players rushing the Quarterback may **NOT attempt to block a pass.**
7. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the Offensive team's end zone.

A legal rush is:

- Any rush from a point 7 or 9 yards from the line of scrimmage behind the designated marker. ****See Graph on last page****
- A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed-off, pitched, or lateraled.

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- If a rusher leaves the rush line early, **they will not be permitted to rush, if they continue to rush and cross the LOS, this will result in a defensive penalty.**

A penalty may be called if:

- The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a hand-off, pitch, or lateral occurs.

Special circumstances:

- Teams are not required to rush the Quarterback.
- Teams are not required to identify their rusher(s) before the play.
- If the rusher leaves the 7 or 9-yard line before the snap, he/she may drop back to act as a defender with no illegal rush penalty enforced; as long as he or she does not cross the line of scrimmage.

XIII. Flag Pulling

1. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
2. It is **illegal to attempt to strip** or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
3. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player must be **touched with at least one hand to be ruled down.**
4. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
5. **Flag guarding** is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey. **Flag Guarding will be called at the full judgment of the referee.**

XIV. Formations

1. The offense must have ONE player on the line of scrimmage. The only player required to be on the LOS is the center.
2. One (1) player at a time may go in motion. Fly motion is not permitted (toward the LOS)
3. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one (1) second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the one (1) player in motion.
4. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start. **Referees will be lenient to movement before the ball is snapped.**
5. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield (NOT on the line of scrimmage), and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

XV. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. **28 Point Rule- If a team is winning by 28 points or more, the losing team will keep possession until a TD is achieved. The winning team may no longer use a blitz the remainder of the game.** The winning team may take possession as normal when the Point Differential is under 28 points. **Exception: The losing team has the choice to decline the unlimited downs**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Referees have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the player or coach could be ejected from the game and removed from the league indefinitely.
3. **Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.** Not making an effort and making contact with the defense may result in a charging penalty.
4. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
5. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well: - Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass referees or other

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teams. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

6. Fans are required to keep our field safe and kid friendly and must stay on their designated sideline.

XVI. PENALTIES

1. **Two (or more) delay of game penalties in one game will result in a loss of down.**

2. **Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.**

3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).

4. Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. **Players and coaches cannot question judgment calls.**

5. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

6. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage if the distance to the goal is less than the penalty yardage.

8. Extra points: If there is an offensive penalty during an extra point, the attempt is **automatically no good**. If there is a defensive penalty on an extra point, the attempt is **automatically good**.

9. Penalties deemed as Intentional or Flagrant will be enforced at the referee's discretion (**anywhere from giving extra yardage to granting a breakaway touchdown**).

Yard Penalties

Off-sides on the Defense.....5 yards from the LOS & replay the down

Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)5 yards from the LOS & replay the down

*Delay of game.....5 yards from the LOS & replay the down

Two (or more) delay of game penalties in one game will result in a loss of down

Offense

Illegal forward pass.....5 yards from the LOS & loss of down

Offensive pass interference.....5 yards from the LOS & loss of down

Illegal Runner..... loss of down

Two (or more) illegal runner penalties in one game will result in a loss of possession

Offensive Spot Fouls

Flag guarding / Charging.....5 yards from the LOS & loss of down

Screening, Blocking, or Running with the ball carrier.....5 yards from the LOS & loss of down

Defense

Illegal rushing (Starting rush from inside 7 or 9-yard marker).....5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down

Pass Interference.....5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down

Roughing the passer 5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down

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Defensive Spot Fouls

Illegal contact/tackling/holding5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down

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| | Micro | Mini | Junior | Senior | Varsity |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|--------|--------|---------|
| 4 Downs | X | X | X | | |
| 3 Downs | | | | X | X |
| Muffed Snaps | | X | X | X | X |
| Score Won't Be Kept | | | | | |
| 2-Yard Buffer Line | X | | | | |
| Snake Touch Rule | X | | | | |
| 9-Yard Rush Line | | X | | | |
| 7-Yard Rush Line | | | X | X | X |
| No Child can RUN twice in a row | X | X | X | X | X |
| No Run Zones | | | X | X | X |
| Child gets (1) touch | | X | X | | |
| Possession begins @ the 8 | X | X | X | X | X |
| Negative Plays / Loss of Yards | | | X | X | X |
| May Sub Any Time | X | | | | |

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