



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

Flag Football Fanatics Operates Under a ZERO Tolerance Policy.

I. Game All Grade Levels will be 5 on 5.

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 8-yard line and has **three (3) or four (4) plays to cross midfield and score a TD** ****See Graph on the 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 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 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. Furthermore, if the team who threw the INT commits a penalty during the return, the intercepting team will be awarded (2) Points.
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. The play clock resets to 10 seconds to convert a successful snap.
9. If two teams are the same color, the top team / away team will wear their jersey inside out.
10. Teams must field a minimum of five (5) players at the start of the game. Showing up with four (4) or less players will result in a forfeit. The kids may play a 4 on 4 scrimmage.
11. 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). (Exception: Playoffs + Tournaments) ****See Graph on last page****
12. The Micro, Mini, and JR Division will play with the FFF PeeWee ball inflatable to 6-7lbs. The SR & Varsity Divisions will play with the FFF Intermediate ball inflatable to 7-9lbs.

II. Coaches

1. **Coaches who fail to wear Authentic FFF Coach Shirts as the outermost layer will be penalized 5 yards per possession. Please see your Field Director if the size provided does not fit.** Coaches are expected to adhere to Flag

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(Updated 12/7/23) **changes highlighted**

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- Football Fanatics Philosophies, Coaching Guidelines, and Flag Football Fanatics Code of Conduct at all times.
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/scorekeeper) per team are **allowed on the coach/player sideline**.
 4. Coaches on the field per age division: Mini=2, Junior=2, Senior=1, Varsity=1

III. Equipment

1. All players must wear mouthguards 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 waist. 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 and fully visible **prior to the snap**.
8. Casts or Braces (even if wrapped or covered) of any kind are not allowed. Players must remove all jewelry and hats.
9. 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 and/or Diagram 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** advance the ball by running. All plays must be pass plays, with the pass going BEYOND the line of scrimmage. Teams may handoff, 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. **No-Run Zone exception: If a defensive penalty pushes the offense into a No-Run Zone, the offense will have the opportunity to run on the following down. After the following down, No Run Zone rules apply.**
4. The center may move the ball along the line of scrimmage (5-yard limit to either side). The movement must take place prior to the offense being set.

V. Timing and Ties

1. Games will consist of four 9-minute quarters and a two-minute half-time. Playoffs and tournaments are subject to different timing formats.
2. **The 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 the Clock runs during the last minute) ***See Full List Graph on the last page*****
3. 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.
4. Each team has **one 60-second time-out per half**. They do not carry over to the next half.

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5. Referees can stop the clock at their discretion.

6. If the score is tied at the end of the second half, the game will result in a Tie; **NO OVERTIMES** ***Exception Playoffs + Tournaments***

7. Game times can be shortened at the discretion of the League Director

VI. Playing Time / Substitutions **Exceptions Playoffs + Tournaments**

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 refusal 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 PATs can be run or pass plays. Safety: **2 points**. Defensive interception that is run back for a Touchdown = **2 points** Defensive interception during a P.A.T. that is run back for a Touchdown = **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 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. A Safety results in a change of possession. Exception: No Safeties in Mini Division

5. Safety can occur on an INT

6. A team that scores a touchdown must declare to the referee, within a reasonable amount of time, whether they wish to attempt a 1-point. conversion, 2-pt. conversion, or 3-pt. conversion.

7. **28-Point Rule-** If a team is leading by 28 points or more, the losing team will keep possession until a TD is achieved. **The team that has the lead can't blitz during the 28-point margin. If the score drops within 28 points blitzing may resume.** The leading 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

VIII. Live Ball / Play Stoppage

1. 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 before both cones are designated.

2. 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.

3. There are **NO FUMBLES**. The ball will be spotted where the player lost control of the ball.

4. 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 stopped 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.

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- A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
- The ball carrier's flag belt inadvertently falls 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 or pitched 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 the last page****

1. FFF requires each coach to get all of his/her players involved as much as possible. With that mindset, coaches are encouraged to get each player (1) touch per game.
2. **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
3. The player that has possession of the ball when the play is blown dead, will get the credit for a touch.
4. **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 gained an advantage.
3. **If a receiver/runner's flag belt comes out, the player is marked down.**
4. 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. ****See Graph on the last page****
5. 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.**
6. 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.
7. **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.
8. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The QB can only run if he/she receives a direct hand-off, pitch, or lateral.
9. The center may not receive a hand-off between his/her legs or behind the back. **Handoff to any player MUST be in the front (belly area).**
10. 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.
11. Spinning: A player may spin, however, **excessive spinning will result in the player being ruled down.** Excessive

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spinning is defined as more than 3 consecutive spins in a row (The number is reset if the ball-carrier makes a football move in between spins).

12. Jumping: A player may jump or make a football move, 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).

XII. Rushing the Passer

1. The defense may rush any number of defenders (0 to 5 players) 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 the 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 gained an advantage.
3. The rusher(s) 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. **Any rusher that is on the offensive side of the line of scrimmage must go for the flag and may not attempt to block a pass. Defenders on the defensive line of scrimmage may defend the pass once the ball leaves the QB's hands.**

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.
- **If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they must reset, by going beyond the designated rush cone, then they are permitted to rush**

A penalty will be called if:

- The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage without resetting or 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.

XIII. Flag Pulling

1. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags. If the referee deems the defense gained an advantage a penalty will be called.
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 is marked down.**
4. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball. Penalty: Illegal Contact
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.

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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. 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.**
4. 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. 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.
2. **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.
3. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
4. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well: Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass referees or other teams. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
5. Fans are required to keep our field safe and kid-friendly and must stay on their designated sideline.
- 6.

XVI. PENALTIES

1. **Two (or more) delay of game penalties in one game will result in a loss of down.**
2. Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. **Players and coaches cannot question judgment calls.**
3. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
4. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage if the distance to the goal is less than the penalty yardage.
5. 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**.
6. If the final defender creates an advantage through excessive contact the referee has the authority to award a Clear Path Touchdown.
7. Penalties deemed as Intentional or Flagrant will be enforced at the referee's discretion (**anywhere from giving extra yardage to granting a Clear Path 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

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Offensive Spot Fouls

Flag guarding / Charging.....5 yards from the infraction & loss of down
 Screening, Blocking, or Running with the ball carrier.....5 yards from the infraction & 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

Defensive Spot Fouls

Illegal contact/tackling/holding5 yards from the infraction & automatic first down
 Clear Path TouchdownAutomatic Touchdown

Deadballs That Stop Clock

Out of Bounds

Penalties (**Exception:** A penalty is called on the team that would benefit from the clock stoppage.)

Change of Possession

PAT Conversion

1st Downs (in last minute)

1 Minute Warning (NFL style)

Incomplete Pass

Playoff + Tournament Rule Differences

Halves instead of Quarters

Unlimited Substitutions

OT – Mid Field each team receives 1 play. Whichever team advances further, wins. Double OT will be just ONE play.

Possession awarded by coin flip. Offense scores, they win. Defense stops them, they win.

Potentially 1 Directional Fields

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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			

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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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