



**1st - 12th Grade Rules: Mini, Junior, Senior, Varsity, Minor, and Major Divisions  
Flag Football Fanatics Operates Under a ZERO Tolerance Policy.**

**I. Game**

1. All Grade Levels will be 5 on 5.
2. The field is 50 yards long and 25 yards wide. Goallines and midfield, which is the first down line, are marked by yellow cones. Field dimensions may vary in the postseason.
3. At the start of each game, captains and coaches from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss. The visiting team calls the toss.
4. The winner of the coin toss chooses whether they start the game on offense or receive the ball after halftime. The loser of the coin toss will choose which direction they would like to go. These will alternate in the second half.
5. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 8-yard line/2nd orange cone and has 3 or 4 plays to cross midfield and score a TD. **\*\*See Graph on the last page\*\***
6. 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.
7. The quarterback can never run past the line of scrimmage with the ball. Every play must include a pass, handoff, or pitch.
8. After an interception, the defensive team can try to return it for 2 points and will gain possession at their 8-yard line regardless of whether they score on the interception return. The same rule applies to an interception on a PAT. Furthermore, if the team that threw the interception commits a penalty during the return, the intercepting team will be awarded 2 points.
9. When a muffed snap occurs, the offense will have 1 retry. The play clock resets to 10 seconds to convert a successful snap. A second consecutive dropped snap will result in a loss of down.
10. If a team has fewer than 5 players, they may choose to play the game at a player disadvantage for a chance to still win. Alternatively, they may forfeit and play a scrimmage.
11. No substitutions can take place during a quarter, except for injuries.
12. The team with the first possession will provide the game ball. The Micro, Mini, and Junior divisions will play with the FFF PeeWee size ball inflated to 6-7lbs. The Senior & Varsity divisions will play with the FFF Junior size ball inflated to 7-9lbs.
13. After each game, participants are expected to shake hands at midfield no matter the outcome of the game.

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## II. Timing

1. Games will consist of four 9-minute quarters and a 2-minute halftime. **Playoffs and tournaments are subject to different timing formats.**
2. The clock will not stop except for timeouts until the final minute of the game on a dead ball. A dead ball is defined as an incomplete pass, score, change of possession, first down, runner going out of bounds, timeout, injury or penalty where a stopped clock benefits the offended team.
3. The clock will stop for a 1-minute warning and will resume on the next snap.
4. The clock will not run during a PAT in the last minute of the game.
5. The 30-second play clock will start once both the line of scrimmage cone and the blitz cone are set. The offense may not snap the ball or run a play prior to both cones being set.
6. Each team has one 60-second timeout per half. They do not carry over to the next half.
7. Referees can stop the clock at their discretion.
8. **If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the following overtime rules are observed:**
  - a. **First overtime: Both teams get one 3-point conversion attempt. Whichever team advances the ball farther on their play wins the game. A coin toss will determine which team runs its play first.**
  - b. Second overtime: Coin toss will determine possession. The offense runs 1 play from the 5-yard line. If the offense scores, they win. If the offense does not score, the defense wins.
  - c. A penalty in second overtime will result in the offended team winning the game.
  - d. **Teams may freely substitute before overtime, and between plays during overtime.**

## III. Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (Point After Touchdown)
  - a. 1-point conversion: 4-yard line (No-run zone)
  - b. 2-point conversion: 8-yard line
  - c. 3-point conversion 12-yard line
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. Safety: 2 points. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her end zone. 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. Safeties do not apply in the mini division, as there are no negative plays.
6. Interception returned to end zone: 2 points.
7. A safety can occur on an interception return if the interception occurs outside the end zone and the ball is carried and downed in the intercepting team's own end zone.
8. A team that scores a touchdown must declare to the referee whether they wish to attempt a 1-point conversion, 2-point conversion, or 3-point conversion.
9. 28-Point Rule: If a team is leading by 28 points or more, the losing team has unlimited downs until a TD is achieved. The team that has the lead can't blitz while the 28-point rule is in effect. 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 28-point rule.

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10. An interception by the leading team during the 28-point rule will be treated as an incomplete pass.

#### IV. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's flag is when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is or 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 ball carrier'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 falls out, the player is marked down.
4. No player may **RUN** the ball on two consecutive plays. **For the purposes of this rule, a forward pass caught behind the line of scrimmage is considered a run.**
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 covering flags with the football or jersey. Flag Guarding will be called at the full discretion of the referee.
6. Teams may handoff, 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 1 handoff, 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 is defined as the first player to control the snap.
10. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. If the QB steps over the line of scrimmage with one foot, the play will be blown dead, and the ball returns to the original spot.
11. The center may not receive a hand-off between his/her legs or behind the back.
12. The player receiving the lateral, hand-off, or pitch may pass the ball as long as the player does not cross the line of scrimmage.
13. A player may **spin**; however, spinning more than three times in a row will result in an excessive spinning foul. The number is reset if the ball carrier makes a football move in between spins.
14. A player may **jump**; however, jumping over or into a defender and **diving** to advance the ball are prohibited. (Example: No diving for a first down or touchdown.)

#### V. No-Run Zone

1. No-run zones precede each midfield line and goal line by 4 yards. **\*See Graph on last page\***
2. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run 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 hand off, pitch, or lateral the ball; however, the end result of the play must be a forward pass **beyond** the line of scrimmage.
3. If a defensive penalty pushes the offense into a no-run zone, the offense can run on the following down. After the following down, no run zone rules apply.

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4. If an offensive penalty backs the offense out of the no-run zone, the no-run zone rules will apply for one play.

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

3. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

## VII. 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. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.

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. A snap is a rapid and continuous motion of the ball between the center's legs to the quarterback. The ball must completely leave the center's hands.

5. The blitzer can start blitzing when the snap begins. (The center repositioning the ball is not considered the start of a snap.)

6. The center may move the ball along the line of scrimmage (5-yard limit to either side). The movement must take place before the offense is set.

## VIII. Defense

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. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball, except during a fake handoff.

4. The defense may blitz 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 or after the snap. The 7 or 9 yards will be designated with a cone by the referee. **\*See Graph on the last page\***

5. 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.**

6. The rusher(s) must line 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 may result in an offensive penalty.

7. Once the ball leaves the QB's hands, the 7 or 9-yard blitz rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage.

8. Any rusher on the offensive side of the line of scrimmage must go for the flag and may not attempt to block a pass.
9. Defenders on the defensive side of the line of scrimmage may defend the pass once the ball leaves the QB's hands.
10. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback.
11. Teams are not required to identify their rusher(s) before the play.
12. Defensive players may not jam wide receivers at the line of scrimmage. Initiating contact is a foul.

### IX. Penalties

1. Offensive penalties will end the play and be enforced immediately. On defensive penalties, the play will be allowed to finish.
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 if that is shorter than the typically enforced yardage.
5. If the final defender creates an advantage through excessive contact, the referee has the authority to award a clear-path touchdown.
6. 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).

### Defensive Penalties

Tackling.....	5 yards from the spot & automatic 1st down
Holding.....	5 yards from the spot & automatic 1st down
Illegal blitz.....	5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
Roughing the passer.....	5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
Illegal contact.....	5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
Defensive Pass Interference.....	5 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
Offside.....	5 yards from the LOS & replay the down
Unsportsmanlike conduct.....	5 yards from LOS

### Offensive Penalties

Flag guarding.....	5 yards from the spot & loss of down
Blocking.....	5 yards from the spot & loss of down
Illegal motion.....	5 yards from the LOS & replay the down
False start.....	5 yards from the LOS & replay the down
Charging.....	5 yards from the spot & loss of down
Illegal forward pass.....	5 yards from the LOS & loss of down
Unsportsmanlike conduct.....	5 yards from LOS
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*	
Offensive pass interference.....	5 yards from the LOS & loss of down
Illegal Runner.....	loss of down

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

### **X. 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. We encourage players to celebrate plays with their teammates. Celebrations that taunt the opponent can be called for unsportsmanlike conduct at the full discretion of the referee.
3. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship: Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass referees or other teams. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
4. Fans are required to keep our field safe and kid-friendly and must stay on their designated sideline.
5. Any coach, player, or spectator addressing a referee must do so respectfully.

### **XI. Substitutions**

1. Each child must play at least 2 quarters each game. No substitutions are allowed during a quarter (except for injuries).
3. No child may sit out 2 consecutive quarters.
4. No child can play 3 consecutive quarters, unless the team has 7 or fewer players present.
5. If a child leaves the game due to injury, restroom, or refusal to play, the opposing coach may choose which player substitutes into the game.

### **XI. 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.
2. Only four coaches per team are allowed on the coach/player sideline.
3. Coaches on the field per age division: Mini=2, Junior=2, Senior=1, Varsity=1 Minors=1 on offense only. Majors=1 on offense only.
4. Coaches cannot touch any players once the play starts, including to signal the blitz to go.
5. Coaches are expected to adhere to Flag Football Fanatics Philosophies, Coaching Guidelines, and Flag Football Fanatics Code of Conduct at all times. The League Director has full authority to remove a coach at any time from his/her coaching duty indefinitely.

### **XII. 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 3 belts visible, then the referee can rule the player down when they gain possession of the ball.
5. If two teams are the same color, the away team will wear their jersey inside out.

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6. 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 jersey they will not be permitted to play.**

7. Footballs will be provided to each coach by Flag Football Fanatics, and these footballs will be used as the game balls.

8. It is the defensive coach's responsibility to make sure all of the offensive players' flags are located on the hips and fully visible prior to the snap.

**9. Players may not wear towels or hand warmers around their waist.**

9. Casts or Braces (even if wrapped or covered) of any kind are not allowed. Players must remove all jewelry.

10. The shorts must be an off-color of the player's flag belt. If a member of the 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.

**XII. Playoff & Tournament Rules**

1. Fields may be one-directional.
2. Games are played in halves rather than quarters.
3. Substitutions are allowed between any play.

	Micro	Mini	Junior	Senior	Varsity	Minors/Majors
<b>4 Downs</b>	X	X	X			
<b>3 Downs</b>				X	X	X
<b>Muffed Snaps</b>		X	X	X	X	X
<b>2-Yard Buffer Zone</b>	X					
<b>Snake Touch Rule</b>	X					
<b>No-Run Zone</b>			X	X	X	X
<b>9-Yard Blitz Cone</b>		X				
<b>7-Yard Blitz Cone</b>			X	X	X	X
<b>No Child Can Run Twice in a Row</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Coaches Allowed on Field</b>	2	2	2	1	1	1 Offense only
<b>Negative Plays</b>			X	X	X	X
<b>Substitute any time</b>	X					X