

[7 ON 7 FLAG FOOTBALL NON-BLOCKING RULEBOOK]



Administration:

- ✓ This is an adult 7v7 recreational league. Our aim is to be safe, be fair and to have fun. Remind yourself and others that no one will get drafted by an NFL team from this league, so just relax and enjoy.
- ✓ Our league is a minimal-contact league. However contact does occur on occasion. The vast majority is unintentional and insignificant. Players must understand that contact is impossible to avoid and is usually a result of bodies moving in space simultaneously and the simply the nature of the sport. It is the job of each player, team captains and the Officials to keep contact and collisions to a minimum through self-control, training and enforcement. Any significant contact may result in a penalty.
- ✓ Officials are encouraged to use the 'preventive style' of officiating allowing Officials to talk to, remind and help players avoid violations whenever feasible.
- ✓ Our Officials aim to assist teams to avoid penalties. Cautions and teaching points are appropriate most times. The Officials are there to administer the rules of this league, not the NFL, NCAA etc. Please give the referees your open ears and respect. Remember, No Officials = No Games
- ✓ It is not the mission of game Officials to flag every small, nuanced infractions of traditional football rules (ex: breaking the huddle incorrectly, being an inch Offsides, or other insignificant issues that do not produce a significant or 'unfair advantage'.
- ✓ Playoff Eligibility: Players must play in at least two regular season games with their team to be eligible to play in the playoffs. This is open to CBS's exemption in case of injury, or a rainout occurring that prohibited a player from taking the field. If the player in question has played with the team before and isn't a random/new addition, they may be allowed to take the field.
- ✓ Some type of team jersey is required (*minimal standard: same colored shirts*). Comeback Sports provides extremely affordable options. Please call our offices to inquire.
- ✓ Players must ensure the jersey is long enough to remain tucked the entire down and belts are attached over jerseys (jersey should never cover flag belt).
- ✓ Flag Belts are provided by Comeback Sports. Flags must be evenly distributed on the belt. Suction cups must face down/away from the body. Belts must be snug around the waist to avoid rotating.
- ✓ Each player is responsible to ensure they are wearing different colored flags to the pants or shorts they are wearing.
- ✓ Players must wear shoes. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed.
- ✓ We recommend players remove or use medical tape to tape down all jewelry for safety reasons.
- ✓ We recommend players wear pants or shorts that do not have pockets, belt loops or exposed draw strings for safety reasons. Baseball-styled caps must be removed or turned around backward.
- ✓ We recommend you do not wear hoodies to avoid injuries resulting from pulls and you wear a mouth guard.
- ✓ Players may tape forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear soft: gloves, elbow pads, shin guards and knee pads. Unyielding items such as braces, anything with exposed metal and casts are not allowed.

- ✓ No team will be 'seeded' or designated "Home" or "Away" during the regular season. First possession is decided using the traditional game of "rock, paper, scissor" or a coin toss at the Head Official's discretion.
- ✓ Team boxes will be determined by the Officials prior to the start of the game.
- ✓ Teams are required to clean up their garbage and return Comeback Sports gear after their games.

Field Dimensions:

- ✓ The length of a High School regulation field played sideline-to-sideline plus marked end zones.

Scoring:

- ✓ Touchdowns are 6 points, with a chance to go for a 1, 2 or 3 Point After Touchdown (PATs) conversion.
- ✓ Safety: 2 points
- ✓ PAT attempts: 1 point = From the 5 yard line
2 points = From the 10 yard line
3 points = From the 20 yard line

Caution: Once the scoring team has informed an Official of which point conversion choice they want to attempt and broken the huddle, it cannot be changed, unless the scoring team uses a Team Time Out.

- ✓ Unsportsmanlike Conduct and Personal Fouls during scoring plays will be assessed as Half the Distance to the Goal during the PAT attempt (i.e. 3 point PAT attempts will be spotted at the 10 yard line, 2 point attempts spotted at the 5 yard line and 1 point attempts at the 2 1/2 yard line.). All other Defensive Penalties may be declined by the Offense and the score will stand.
- ✓ During PAT attempts or when the ball is spotted within 5 yards of the goal, the Officials will require the Offense to spot the ball on a solid white line (of the Offense's choice) to assist the Official in observing and enforcing the 5 yard box rule.
- ✓ Fouls by the Offense during a PAT attempt will result in the PAT being 'no good' and the attempt will not be repeated.
- ✓ Fouls by the Defense during an unsuccessful PAT attempt will be replayed after the options are administered.
- ✓ *Interceptions on any PAT can be returned by the Defense for the value of the attempted PAT.*
- ✓ Forfeited games are recorded as a score of 14-0.
- ✓ Mercy Rule: If a team is ahead by **19 points** or more when the Referee announces the two min. warning during the second half, the Referee will ask if either Team Captain request mercy. If neither Team Captain request mercy the game will continue per normal rules and scoring.

Safeties Occur When:

- ✓ The ball becomes dead, or the Offense commits a foul, in the Offense's End Zone.
- ✓ Examples include: fumbles in the end zone, player's flag is pulled in the end zone, going out of bounds behind the Goal Line while in possession of the ball, the ball is snapped or fumbled out of the end zone,

the Offense commits a foul inside of end zone (flag guarding, stiff arm, intentional grounding, Illegal Forward Pass, ball carrier stepping on the back line etc.).

- ✓ When leaving the End Zone the entire length of the football (not just the tip 'breaking the plane' must be outside the End Zone to avoid a Safety.
- ✓ After a safety, the kicking team (team giving up the safety) must 'free kick' (i.e. no Snap is required) from their own end zone.

Game Length / Clock Mechanics:

- ✓ The game has two 20 minute halves.
- ✓ Each team has two team timeouts per half. Timeouts do not roll over from the 1st half.
- ✓ Halftime is three minutes.
- ✓ The clock will run continuously during the 1st half unless a 'team timeout' is used or play is stopped by an Official (*normally to assess penalty yardage, deal with an injury etc. and the clock will start again immediately*).
- ✓ The clock will run during point after touchdown attempts (PATs) in the 1st half, unless the Defense opts to use a valid Team Time Out.
- ✓ In the 2nd half the clock will run continuously until the 'two-minute' warning, unless a 'team timeout' or an 'official's timeout' is used.
- ✓ Officials will use 'stop clock' procedures from the two minute warning of the second half till the end of the game.
- ✓ Second half 'stop clock' procedures requires the clock to stop for plays that end out of bounds, incomplete passes, scores, PATs, penalties, injuries, changes of possession and time outs.
- ✓ First Downs will momentarily stop the clock while an Officials resets the ball marker etc. but will start on the Ready.
- ✓ The game may not end on a Defensive penalty, unless the Offense declines it. Penalties by the Offense that include a Loss of Down with time expired in either half (i.e. no time on the clock), will not extend the half.
- ✓ Play clock: The Offense has a 30 second play clock to snap the ball before a Delay of Game penalty is assessed.
- ✓ Time Outs are 30 seconds. After 30 seconds the Official will audibly place the Offense on a 30 second 'Play-Clock'. Time out may be shorter if both teams are ready.
- ✓ Team Captains are encouraged to yell "Clock?" or "Clock Check?" in lieu of "Time?" as this may be construed as a request for a Team Time Out. Help your Refs and the flow of the game.

Overtime:

- ✓ During the regular season: If regulation time ends in a tied score and rented field time, daylight etc. is available, OT may be played. This decision is completely up to the Head Official.
- ✓ If overtime is granted the Officials shall bring all players of both teams to the center of the field and discuss Overtime procedures. After this meeting the Captains will stay and conduct a Coin Toss.
- ✓ Only 1 coin toss will occur during Overtime. If additional Overtimes are played Captain's will alternate choices.

- ✓ Each team will receive an Offensive possession during Overtime (Interceptions returned for points will be considered a possession).
- ✓ Interceptions are returnable for the value of the PAT attempt.
- ✓ If the score is tied at the end of the second Overtime, teams must alternate going for a 2 point conversion. (*i.e. one play for 2 point PAT at the 10 yard line.*)
- ✓ One Team Time Out per Overtime period.

Offense:

- ✓ First Down markers are a series of five differently colored markers spaced evenly apart. Teams must pass two colored markers to earn a 1st down. The exception being within two cones of the end zone (then it is '1st and Goal').
- ✓ Teams will have four downs to advance the ball past the Zone Line to Gain (*i.e. First Down*).
- ✓ After the huddle and the Offensive players initially set, only one player may go in motion per play. A player in motion must move parallel to or away from the line-of-scrimmage. He may face scrimmage but may not advance toward it.
- ✓ The ball must be snapped back to the quarterback to start play. Sideways or 'shotgun' snap are recommended for ease of play. The Snapper may adjust the ball or pick it up to dry it off prior to the snap. However, the ball must be snapped off the ground and in one continuous motion. Only the Snapper's hands (and if side-snapping, one foot) may occupy the neutral zone.
- ✓ 'Center Sneaks' are not allowed (Illegal Advancement). The ball must completely leave the Center's hand and the Center take at least one step forward or backward to receive a hand off or a pass.
- ✓ No more than four players can be in the backfield at the Snap.
- ✓ A snap to the QB that hits the ground can be played only by the QB. If the ball is snapped over the QB's head, past him, or the QB has to *significantly* turn his body to retrieve the ball from his side or behind him it will be called a dead ball. The ball will be declared dead where it hit the ground unless the QB touched the ball as it passed by, in this case the ball will be declared dead where the QB's feet were at the time the ball was touched.
- ✓ The quarterback may run at any time. The QB is defined as the Offensive player who initially receives the snap.
- ✓ Rushing the QB - Each play will have an rush count before a Defender is allowed to cross the line-of-scrimmage. (except on hand-offs or if QB releases or throws the ball prior to the end of the count). The count will begin as soon as the ball leaves the ground at the beginning of the snap and takes *approximately* three seconds.
- ✓ All players are eligible to receive a pass unless they have stepped out of bounds on their own accord.

- ✓ To be ruled a catch, the Receiver must have demonstrated a secured possession of the ball and a minimum of one foot on the ground and in-bounds. There is no requirement to ‘make a football move’ or ‘survived the ground’ as is often heard on television, simply have possession and comedown in bounds.
- ✓ When a ball carrier’s flag is pulled by a Defensive player, the position of the BALL shall determine the spot of placement, *not the flag or hips*. If the ball has broken the plane of the goal the result will be a score.
- ✓ If a player chooses to wear a hand towel on his waist, it will be treated as part of the flag belt.
- ✓ Down by Touch: If the ball carrier has all three flags on but is not properly wearing the flag belt, they may be called downed by first touch / contact. This is most often seen when flags are bunched next to one another or the player’s flag falls off inadvertently.
- ✓ It is illegal for a Defender to pull an Offensive player’s flag prior to them touching the ball.
- ✓ In the event of a ‘bobbled catch’ (i.e. the ball is being batted about by the receiver in an attempt to catch it) and the intended receiver is de-flagged prior to taking full possession the receiver shall remain live and downed by one hand touch. In this situation there is no penalty for Early Flag Pull.
- ✓ When a receiver steps out of bounds and is the first to touch a pass, the ball will be blown dead. There will not be a yardage penalty assessed but the Offense will incur a Loss of Down (i.e. will not replay the Down).
- ✓ Simultaneous Flag Guard & Flag Pull: If a ball carrier Flag Guards and Defensive player pulls their flag simultaneously, no penalty will be called.
- ✓ Any Offensive players that receives a handoff behind scrimmage can pass the ball from behind the line-of-scrimmage.
- ✓ If the ball makes contact with any player other than the quarterback, the Official will stop the rush count and immediately announce “GO!” and the Defense is eligible to cross the line-of-scrimmage.
- ✓ Neither an Offensive player nor a Defensive player has the right to ‘play through’ another player as in traditional football. Flag football is a finesse games versus the brute strength game of traditional football and ball carriers must make every effort to avoid a Defender that has established a stationary position.
- ✓ Physical-contact blocking (as seen in traditional football) and non-contact blocking ‘Screen Blocking’ (as seen in basketball) are not allowed (even if unintentional). This is a difficult transition for traditional football players.
- ✓ Screen Blocking clarified: When an Offensive player either makes contact with a Defensive player that impedes the Defender from getting to the ball carrier OR takes a position (*generally less than two normal strides away from a defender*) that the Defender COULD NOT AVOID contact with the Offensive player while in pursuit of the ball carrier’s flag. The Referee will consider if ‘an unfair advantage’ was gain by the Offense when considering Screen Blocking calls and reserves the right to ‘wave it off the flag’ if the Officiating team determines no ‘unfair advantage was gained’

- ✓ QBs caught between a running back and a rushing Defender will not be considered to be screening if there is no clear and obvious attempt to be doing so. Offensive players that remain in their initial position after the snap or do not leave their initial position are not usually considered to be Screening.
- ✓ Defensive contact-type 'pick plays' (often seen in basketball) during a Receiver's pass route are not allowed.
- ✓ The ball carrier shall not Flag Guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity of an opponent to remove a flag. We recommend you carry the ball with your hands held high on the body to avoid Flag Guarding (this is one of the most difficult transitions for traditional football players).
- ✓ Fumbles will be considered 'dead ball' when they hit the ground. If a lateral, muffed or fumbled ball is intercepted prior to it becoming dead, it remains a 'live ball'. Forward fumbles that become dead will be marked where the ball carrier's feet where when he lost control, not the spot where it hit the ground.
- ✓ Muffed snaps will be marked where they hit the ground *except* if the quarterback touched the ball on its way past him as the ball goes over his heads. In this instance the ball will be marked where the QB's feet where at the time he touched the ball.
- ✓ The Offense is responsible for retrieving the ball and returning it to scrimmage at the end of each play.

Defense:

- ✓ Any Defensive player who removes the flag from an Offensive ball carrier is encouraged to show good sportsmanship and hold the flag above his own head to assist the Officials in locating the spot where the capture occurred. Failing to do so only slows the game and the Defender may be penalized for Delay of Game. Defensive players may be penalized for Unsportsmanlike Conduct for throwing, spiking or obscuring the pulled flag.
- ✓ A Defender may leave his feet or dive to capture an opponent's flag but cannot tackle.
- ✓ No Defender may line up directly 'on or over' a snapping Center, Defenders must 'shade' to one side or another.
- ✓ Contact made with hands or arms to the neck or head of an opposing player (even if unintentional) will be treated as a Personal Foul. (*Safety First*)
- ✓ Early Rush- It is illegal for the Defense to cross the line-of-scrimmage before the "GO!" call is made by an Official. However, Defensive players may cross the line-of-scrimmage immediately after a handoff, lateral or pass occurs (*they do not have to wait for a "GO!" command, although the Officials will endeavor to announce it anyway*).
- ✓ A Defensive player that *insignificantly* crosses the line of scrimmage early and immediately self-corrects and returns to his side of the line-of-scrimmage usually is not penalized (unless the Official deems that the Defensive team benefitted from the early cross. Example: Defender was in a better position to capture a flag or influence the play like cutting off a runner).

- ✓ Defensive players may not 'crash' the QB's throwing arm, shoulder or general body (even if the ball is touched first). Defensive players must make a concerted effort to avoid charging into a passer. An insignificant '*brush-by*' may be allowed, but is not guaranteed. Teaching point: Avoid the Passer. Stripping or attempting to strip the ball from a player's hand, including the QB, is illegal.
- ✓ Stripping or attempting to strip a ball from a players hands is not allowed.
- ✓ This is a 'free release' league. No 'bump-and-run' or 'chucking' type defenses on Receivers as they go down field. Failure to 'free release' Receivers or the Center = Illegal Contact.
- ✓ Face Guarding- A Defensive player may use their arms or hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver's view of the ball without turning his own head to play the ball.
- ✓ Bumping-Out on the sidelines is not permitted unless the Defense was making a fair and reasonable attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag.
- ✓ Defensive players do not have the right to 'play through' another player as in traditional football. Remember: Flag football is more of a finesse games aimed at capturing the ball carrier's flag versus the brute strength game of traditional tackle football.
- ✓ Charging and/or Unnecessary Roughness penalties occurs when contact is initiated by the ball carrier or Defender intentionally creating contact to be used as an advantage to gain yards (Offense) or impede the runner (Defense). This type of play is prohibited and may lead to additional penalties such as Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Ejection.
- ✓ Last Man Rule: If a Defensive player physically contains the ball carrier (ex: bear hugs / holds up / wrestles with / obstructs, pushes the ball carrier out of bounds etc.) without making an attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag, the Offensive team will be awarded at least one cone distance from spot of foul and an automatic 1st down. This type of action can result in a touchdown granted if the foul occurred inside the final colored cone. Teaching point: Play the flag not the ball carrier's body or ball, as in traditional tackle football.

The Kicking Game / Special Teams:

- ✓ There are no Kickoffs in this league. Possessions will begin at the 5-yard line. (*1st Down and 2 cones*).
- ✓ Punting may occur. Offensive teams must openly declare to the Officials that they are punting (a punt can be completed on any down). Once a punt is declared the Offensive team has a 'free kick', no blocking, attempting to block or standing in front of the Punter.
- ✓ The Offensive team cannot leave the line-of-scrimmage until after the ball is kicked. Defensive players cannot cross the line-of-scrimmage, stand in front of Punter, attempt to block the ball or rush the Punter (*i.e. 'Free Kick'*). No "fake" punts allowed.
- ✓ The Receiving team can have up to three Returners on the field to receive the punt.
- ✓ Note: A punted ball that hits the ground prior to a Returner touching it remains 'live' and can be advanced (only by the receiving team). However, if a Returner touches the ball and it hits the ground afterward (ex: failed catch) it will be ruled a dead ball and marked where the ball hit the ground.

Fouls Between Downs:

- ✓ The penalty for a foul between downs is enforced from the succeeding spot. Any foul following a penalty incurred after a series ends and before the next series begins will be first down, but the zone line-to-gain will be established after the penalty is enforced.

Five Yard Box Rule:

- ✓ Due to safety concerns and to avoid power runs up the middle, when the ball is spotted within 5 yards of the Goal Line (going in to score) no player can run *'up the middle'* (i.e. within 5 yards either direction of where the ball was spotted prior to the snap). Running plays must be made outside this '5 yard box'. The 'off limits box' stays in effect the entire play. Offenses may Pass through the Box but may not Run through the Box for the entire play.
- ✓ Officials may require the Offense to spot the ball on a solid white line (of the Offense's choice) to assist the Official in observing and fairly judging the 5 yard box.



Fouls by Both Teams:

- ✓ If off-setting fouls occur during a down, that down will be repeated. Exception: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul was not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty of its opponents foul (called the Clean Hands Principal).
- ✓ When a live ball foul is followed by a dead ball foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

Establishing Zone Line to Gain:

- ✓ On live ball fouls, the penalty yardage will be marked off first, then the next line to gain (first down marker) will be established.
- ✓ To determine if a First Down was achieved the Official will mark off any un-administered penalty yards prior to making that determination.
- ✓ If a Penalty awards an Automatic First Down (ex: Roughing the Passer) and the original Line to Gain was not achieved after the yardage has been resolved, the original Line to Gain will remain in effect.

Referee's Options on Contact Between Players:

This is a minimal contact league but contact will occur, so on any given collision or physical contact, the Officials have six options:

- Make 'no call' if they think the contact was accidental and / or incidental
- Issue cautions / warnings to the Team Captain in lieu of assessing penalties
- Penalize the Defense, if they feel the Defender is the aggressor

- Penalize the Offense, if they feel the Offensive player is the aggressor
- Call Off-Setting Penalties (Officials could not determine who is the aggressor)
- Eject a player if the Official feels the contact was intentional or egregious
(Note: Normally the player that 'drops his shoulder' first is deemed the aggressor)

Inadvertent Whistle:

- ✓ When an Official blows an Inadvertent Whistle he will declare the ball dead where the ball was at the time the Inadvertent Whistle. The team against which the action offended may have the option of accepting the play (i.e., the yards gained and the down advances) or replaying the down from the original Line of Scrimmage.
- ✓ If the ball was in the air when the IW occurred it will be returned to Scrimmage and the down will be replayed. The Head Official also has the option of sorting the situation under the Unfair Acts Rule.

Challenge Procedure:

- ✓ Generally, the Head Official is happy to answer questions during the game, IF it does not impede the game. The priority is to spot the ball then address questions without impeding the Play Clock.
- ✓ If a Captain believes an Official has made a procedural error he may call for a 'time-out'. If the Head Official agrees that there has been a procedural error (ex: wrong down, incorrect penalty yardage etc.) the procedural error will be addressed and the time-out will not be charged.
- ✓ Note: Only procedural issues may be addressed, not an Official's 'calls' or 'no-calls'. If the team did not possess a legal team time out, a five yard penalty will be assessed.

Bench Fouls:

- ✓ Team may incur Bench Fouls for a variety of reasons to include but not limited to: players on the sidelines or spectators interfering with play or an Official, disrespect toward Officials or other players, and teams not remaining in the designated team box.

Unfair Acts:

- ✓ Neither team shall commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, tends to make a travesty of the game.
- ✓ The Head Official on each field may enforce any penalty, or remedy any situation, with anything he considers equitable (including the award of a first down, a replay, a score, forfeiture etc.) for any situation not specifically covered in these rules.

Disqualification / Ejection / Forfeiture:

- ✓ If a person is Ejected, that person must leave the facility immediately. If they fail to comply within a reasonable time and manner the Head Official may decide to forfeit the game. (Note: Comeback Sports rents the facility and therefor it is not a public space during that time). If a player is Disqualified they may be allowed to remain at the facility at the Head Official's discretion.

Ejections or Disqualifications may occur for:

- A second Unsportsmanlike or Personal Foul on a single player.
- Any act deemed egregious by the Head Official.
- Fighting.
- Disrespectfully addressing or intentionally touching a game Official.
- Four Unsportsmanlike and / or Personal Fouls by one team (forfeiture).

League Philosophy:

- ✓ Comeback Sports is continuously interested in people that would like to become Officials. Call (253) 326-5168.
- ✓ This document uses the pronouns 'he', 'his' and 'him' for readability and is not an act of gender bias, the program seeks and encourages female participants.
- ✓ Officials are encouraged to use the 'preventive style' of officiating allowing Officials to talk to, remind and help players avoid violations whenever feasible. If an Official believes that this 'Preventive Officiating' has significantly or negatively impacted with the Offense's cadence (example: instructing a QB during the Snap) they MAY allow the play to be treated as an Inadvertent Whistle and the down be replayed.
- ✓ Normally our fields have very few fixed markings and we have no replay capabilities so on extremely close calls Officials will generally give the benefit of the doubt to the Offense (first downs, scores, sacks etc.).
- ✓ An Official shall have the authority to rectify an error and correct a down until the series has ended.
- ✓ Whether or not a ball is tipped in the air by the Defense has no bearing on the manner of play as it applies to fouls (Roughing, Pass Interference, Personal Fouls etc.)
- ✓ Officials are taught to hustle, not hurry. They must control the game and not let an anxious team set the pace. Snaps that occur prior to Officials being ready / Ready-to-Play whistle or announcement: On the *first offense* the ball will be blown dead and the quarterback issued a warning. On the *second offense* a Delay of Game penalty will be incurred.
- ✓ All Officials respect the calls of other Officials. However, it is purely acceptable for another Official to 'come over the top' if that Official had a better angle or saw something the primary did not. Do not bother arguing with an Officials with statements like "you can't make that call" or "you can't let him override you". The Officiating crew is a team and we understand the mechanics and discipline of the job.
- ✓ Please respect that many of our Referees have been with Comeback Sports and other sports organizations for multiple years and seasons. They have officiated *thousands* of games between them.

Clarifications / Explanations of Terms:

- ✓ **Intentional Grounding-** As long as the ball is thrown past the line-of-scrimmage or if an Offensive player is in the area behind the LOS where the ball was thrown incomplete, intentional grounding will NOT be called). *Note: Spiking the ball to stop the clock will be allowed.*

- ✓ **Pass Interference** - Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched (commonly seen through “pick plays”). Shoving or pushing off, and creating separation (most common type). Note: Pass Interference occurs above the waist, entangled feet is not considered PI. Whether the pass was ‘catchable’ or ‘uncatchable’ has no bearing on Offensive or Defensive Interference.
- ✓ **Encroachment / Early Rush (Defense)**- Defensive player is lined up in the neutral zone when the ball is snapped. Defensive player rushes past the line-of-scrimmage prior to the referees “GO!” call.
- ✓ **Illegal Advancement** - The ball carrier is allowed to spin to elude the Defense but may not significantly leave the ground with both feet (ex: hurdling, jumping, diving etc.) due to safety concerns. The ball carrier cannot dive / leap / hurdle *over or through* another player. Not every ‘jump’ or small hop constitutes a safety issue and the definition of ‘significantly’ is totally in the eyes of each Official. Jumping to throw the ball by the quarterback is legal.
- ✓ **Early Flag Pull**- The Defense is not allowed to pull an Offensive player’s flag prior to an Offensive player touching the ball. If the Defense does so, the Offensive player is still ‘live’ and may continue the play until he is down by first touch / contact.
- ✓ **Minor Hold**- Use of hands or arms that restrained or slowed an opponent and was immediately released. No advantage was gained by the Defense and no significant disadvantage was suffered by the ball carrier.
- ✓ **Major Hold**- Use of hand or arms to hook, lock, clamp, grasp, encircle or hold, in an effort to restrain an opponent that was not immediately released and a disadvantage was suffered by the ball carrier.
- ✓ **Roughing the Passer**- Defensive players are forbidden to ‘crash’ the QB’s throwing arm, shoulder or general body (even if the ball is touched first). Defensive players must make a concerted effort to avoid charging into the passer. An insignificant ‘brush-by’ may be allowed, but is not a guaranteed. Teaching point: Avoid the Passer. If a QB initiates contact with a Defender while in the throwing motion a Roughing penalty will not be enforced. Offensive players must make a definitive effort to avoid charging into a passer. Stripping or attempting to strip the ball from the QB hand is illegal.
- ✓ **Charging** – Charging may be called when a player runs into another player to avoid being tackled, to make a tackle, or in an effort to block a defender from the ball. When contact is initiated by the ball carrier or defender by lowering their shoulder(s) or intentionally creating contact to be used as an advantage to gain yards (offense) or impede the runner (defense). Ball carriers cannot go through defenders to gain yards and defenders cannot intentionally engage the ball carrier to slow down their forward progress.
- ✓ **Diving** – Diving is an act of an Offensive player attempting to advance the ball or gain an advantage against a Defender by leaving their feet or significantly lunging or falling forward in a ‘perceived intentional manner’. This is an Official’s judgement call. Treated the same as Flag Guarding. Diving by the Defense to capture a ball carrier’s flag is legal.
- ✓ **Flag Guarding** – A player may not use any part of their body or ball to intentionally or unintentionally hinder the Defense from capturing their flag. The ball carrier may dip, side cut, skip or take short hops. The Official may call Flag Guarding if they feel a ball carrier’s ‘natural running motion’ gave the ball carrier a decisive advantage over the Defender and the running motion caused part of the ball carrier’s body to block a de-flagging attempt.

- ✓ **Illegal Screen** - Illegally obstructing an opponent and may occur as a moving or stationary screen. When an Offensive player either makes physical contact with a Defensive player that impedes the Defender from getting to the ball carrier OR takes a moving or stationary position (generally less than two normal strides away from a defender) that the Defender COULD NOT AVOID contact with the Offensive player while in pursuit of the ball carrier's flag.

PENALTY CHART

Flag Football Specific Penalties:

Offensive- Flag Guarding, Illegal Advancement (Hurdling/Diving/Jumping), Box Rule Violation, Blocking/Screening

Defensive- Stripping, Early Flag Pull, Early Rush, Last Man Rule

Note: 'Loss of Down' means the Down will not be repeated.

Loss of Down Penalties?	Yardage	Where is the Penalty Assessed?	Loss of Down?
Illegal Advancement (Handing Ball Forward/Jumping/Diving)	5	Spot of Foul	Yes
Illegal Pass	5	Previous	Yes
Intentional Grounding	5	Previous	Yes
Flag Guarding or Stiff Arm	5	Spot of Foul	Yes
Offensive Pass Interference	5	Previous Spot	Yes
Box Rule Violation	5	Previous Spot	Yes
Bench Foul	5	Succeeding Spot	Yes
Illegal Screen	5	Spot of Foul	Yes

Dead Ball Penalties:

Dead Ball Penalties 5 Yards	Yardage	Where is the Penalty Assessed?	Loss of Down?
Delay of Game	5	Previous Spot	Repeat Down
False Start	5	Previous Spot	Repeat Down
Snap Infraction	5	Previous Spot	Repeat Down
Offside / Encroachment	5	Previous Spot	Repeat Down
Dead Ball Penalties 15 Yards	Yardage	Where is the Penalty Assessed?	Loss of Down?
Personal Foul (after the play is dead)	15 & Auto 1 st	End of Play / Succeeding Spot	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection)
Personal Foul (before ball is snapped)	15 & Auto 1 st	Previous Spot	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct by player or Non Player (before ball is snapped)	15 & Auto 1 st	Previous Spot	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct by player or Non Player (after the play is dead)	15 & Auto 1 st	End of Play / Succeeding Spot	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection)

Live Ball Penalties: A “live ball” is a ball in play. A ball becomes live when the ball has been legally snapped or free kicked and a down is in progress.

Live Ball Penalties 5 Yards	Yardage	Where is the Penalty Assessed?	Loss of Down?
Illegal Screen	5	Spot	Yes
Illegal Substitution / Participation	5	Previous Spot	No
Illegal Formation	5	Previous Spot	No
Illegal Shift or Illegal Motion	5	Previous Spot	No
Early Rush (Defense)	5	Previous Spot	No
Intentional Grounding	5	Previous Spot	Yes
Stripping or Attempted Strip	5	End of the run or spot of the foul. Whichever penalizes the offender worse	No
Minor Hold	5	End of Run	No
Illegal Advancing the Ball (hurdle, dive, box rule violation)	5	Spot of foul	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection)
Illegal Contact	5	Previous Spot	No
Early Flag Pull	5	End of Run / Previous	No
Live Ball Penalties 10 Yards	Yardage	Where is the Penalty Assessed?	Loss of Down?
Illegal Blocking	10	End of the run or spot of the foul. Whichever penalizes the offender worse	Yes
Major Holding	10	End of the run or spot of the foul. Whichever penalizes the offender worse	No
Defensive Pass Interference	10	Previous Spot	Auto 1 st Down
Roughing the Passer	10	Previous Spot / End of Run	Auto 1 st Down
Charging	10	End of the run or spot of the foul. Whichever penalizes the offender worse	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection or Disqualification)
Live Ball Penalties 15 Yards	Yardage	Where is the Penalty Assessed?	Loss of Down?
Unsportsmanlike Conduct by player or Non Player (During live ball)	15 & Auto 1 st	Succeeding Spot	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection or Disqualification)
Personal Foul / Unnecessary Roughness.	15 & Auto 1 st	End of the run or spot of the foul. Whichever penalizes the offender worse	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection or Disqualification)
Unfair Acts	15 or refs discretion & Auto 1 st	End of the Run	No (warning issued on 2nd penalty, Ejection or

			Disqualification)
15 yard DQ Penalties	Yardage	Where is the Penalty Assessed?	Loss of Down?
Fighting: Ejection	15	End of Run / Succeeding Spot	No, one week mandatory suspension up to permanent ejection, must leave venue immediately
Intentionally contacting a game Official: Ejection or Disqualification	15	End of run or Succeeding spot	No, Officials Determination
Second Personal Foul and/or Unsportsmanlike Conduct by a player.	15	End of Run	Disqualification or Ejection (Officials prerogative).

