



5 on 5 Arena Flag Football Rules

Current as of 2/17/10

General

The purpose of our flag football leagues is to have fun and to compete in a spirit of good sportsmanship. All players are expected to do their very best to play by the rules of the game. Treat others the way you would like to be treated and we should all have a great time.

Field dimensions are 180 ft. x 80 ft., including two 10 yard end zones.

Roster changes may be made until the third game of the season begins. After that time, no roster changes are allowed except as stated below.

Play is 5 on 5. A team must have a minimum of 4 players to start the game including a minimum of 3 players from the team's official roster. A team may draft a fourth non-roster player at will in order to start a game. A team may draft a fifth non-roster player only with permission from the opposing team's captain. If non-roster players are playing on a team in this situation, that team may consist of no more than 5 players.

Substitutions may be made after any dead ball.

This is a NON-CONTACT league. Any player who does not make his best attempt to avoid contacting another player will be assessed a personal foul.

All players must have their shirts tucked so as not to cover the flag belt in any way. Shorts with no pockets or with pockets taped closed are required to avoid torn clothing and broken fingers.

A coin toss will determine which team gets possession first. The other team will have possession beginning the second half.

First possessions and possessions after scores or punts start at the red dot at the top of the white arc.

Play will be started by a snap between the legs.

The offense has 4 downs to cross mid-field for a first down, and 4 downs after a 1st down to score. Only one 1st down per possession will be awarded for crossing midfield.

A team may elect to "punt" on 4th down. The ball will not actually be kicked, but the opposing team will take possession at their own red dot on top of the white arc.

Mercy Rule: If a team is behind by 25 or more points in the last two minutes of the game, the game is over.

Game Clock

The game consists of two 22 minute halves, with a 2 minute halftime. The game clock will be started at the published game time or five minutes after the completion of the previous game, whichever is later. The clock runs continuously with the following exceptions: 1. Each team gets two 30 second timeouts per half. 2. In each half, the clock will stop with two minutes time remaining. If a play is ongoing at the two minute point, the clock will stop when the play is over. In the first half, when play resumes after the two-minute warning, the clock will run continuously except for timeouts. In the second half only, after the two-minute warning the clock will stop for incomplete passes, changes of possession, scores, and for the entire time during a point after touchdown (PAT) attempt. The clock will also stop for first downs and penalties, but only until the ball is placed by the referee and ready for play. The 25-second play clock as referenced below under the "Offense" section will still be in effect.

There will be no overtime during the regular season - a tie is a tie. (See the playoff section below for playoff rules.)

Officials may stop the clock any time at their discretion. The clock will resume when the ball is ready for play.

Scoring

A score will be awarded when any part of the ball crosses the plane of the goal line before the ball carrier's flag is pulled.

Touchdown: 6 points

PAT: 1 point from the 5 yard line, 2 points from the 10 yard line

Interception return for a touchdown on any PAT attempt: 2 points

Safety: 2 points (Any part of the ball behind the plane of the goal line when ball carrier's flag is pulled)

Offense

Play clock: The offense has 25 seconds to snap the ball from the time the referee places the ball.

At least three players must be set on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. A back who is not lined up on the line of scrimmage may be in motion parallel to or away from the opponent's goal line.

The ball carrier is down when one of his flags is pulled by a defender. The ball will be spotted where it was when the flag was pulled.

The ball carrier is down if any part of his body other than his feet or hands touches the turf. The ball is considered an extension of the ball carrier's hand. If a ball carrier's flag falls out without being pulled, he will be down when touched with at least one hand by an opposing player. If there is any doubt as to whether the flag fell out or was pulled, the play will be whistled dead and the ball will be spotted at the flag.

A ball carrier may not guard his flag, initiate contact with a defender, or in any way interfere with a defender trying to pull his flag. Flag guarding is defined as any part of the ball carrier's body or the ball obstructing the defender's attempt to pull the flag, whether intentional or unintentional. This definition of flag guarding includes both the natural running motion of the arms and lowering a shoulder to prevent a flag pull.

The ball carrier may not charge through a defender who has established position. A defender having established position will be judged in a way similar to basketball rules.

The ball may be played off of the nets and walls.

The ball is dead if it touches the turf. If a fumbled ball hits the turf, it is dead and will be spotted where it first hit the turf.

Running:

No running in the zones 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the goal line. (The midfield no running zone will be in effect only if there is an opportunity to make a first down. In other words, if a team has already been awarded a first down but on a subsequent play loses yardage and the line of scrimmage is again within 5 yards before midfield, running will be allowed since no opportunity exists to be awarded another first down.)

The quarterback may not run the ball directly from the snap.

Only handoffs are permitted behind the line of scrimmage – no pitches and no forward passes which don't cross the line of scrimmage.

Past the line of scrimmage, lateral or backward tosses and passes are permitted.

The runner may not leave his feet at any time in order to advance the ball.

The walls are in bounds; however players may not run on or climb on the walls.

Passing & Receiving:

A pass from behind the line of scrimmage must be forward and received past the line of scrimmage.

All players are eligible including the quarterback after a hand off.

Players may leave their feet in order to catch a ball.

Blocking:

This is a NO CONTACT league. Only stationary screen blocking is allowed. The blocker must be set in time for the other player to avoid contact by stopping or changing direction – generally two full steps away. The blocker's arms must be entirely against his body. His stance must be no wider than a natural athletic stance, meaning legs no wider than just outside shoulder width. No exaggerated, wide-legged stances allowed.

Defense

The ball carrier is down when one of his flags is pulled. The defender should return the flag to the ball carrier once the play is dead.

The defender must avoid contact with the ball carrier when attempting to pull a flag. The defender may not hold the ball carrier or his clothing, or impede him by contact in any way when attempting to pull a flag. Holding will not be called if the ball carrier's shirt is inadvertently grabbed because it was untucked or obstructing the flag belt.

The defender may not try to strip or steal the ball.

A defender may not pull a receiver's flag **before the ball has reached the receiver.**

Pass rushing:

Defenders rushing the quarterback must start at least 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. No contact with the quarterback is allowed even after a successful pass block.

After a handoff the "7 yard" rule no longer applies; any defender may rush regardless of where he lined up.

Interceptions:

An interception is any legal pass, toss, or fumble caught by a defender before the ball touches the turf.

Interceptions may be advanced and the ball will be spotted at the end of the run. An interception in the end zone will be a touchback if the ball is downed in the end zone or the ball carrier's flag is pulled while the ball is still in the end zone.

Penalties

Referees will call the games to the best of their abilities. As such, judgment calls may not be challenged at any time. The team captain is the only player allowed to address the referee, and then only in regard to the rules of the game. The referee will call a timeout, and if the captain's challenge is upheld by the referee, the team will not be charged for the timeout. If the referee's ruling stands, the team will be charged a timeout. A spirit of good sportsmanship must prevail on the field at all times.

Penalties may be declined. The game cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless declined.

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to rough, intentional contact; foul language, trash talk or rude gestures directed at anyone on or off the field; or any other aggressive behavior deemed by the referee to be detrimental to the fair conduct of the game. For a flagrant offense the offending player will be ejected from the field for the remainder of the game. Chronic offenders will be permanently barred from play at Score Indoor Sports.

Spots for penalty assessment will be in accordance with the USFTL Flag Football Rule Book.

Offensive penalties:

Unsportsmanlike conduct – 10 yards

Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct – 10 yards and offending player ejected from the field for the remainder of the game.

Flag guarding – 5 yards from the spot of the foul
Illegal blocking behind the line of scrimmage (moving screen, using hands, arms, or a wide stance to deter a defender) – 5 yards from the line, replay the down
Illegal blocking downfield – 5 yards from the spot
Illegal motion – 5 yards
Illegal forward pass – 5 yards from the line, loss of down.
Pass interference (anything other than incidental contact caused by the receiver) – 5 yards from the line, loss of down
Forward lateral – 5 yards from the spot of the foul
Delay of game – 5 yards
False start – 5 yards

Defensive penalties:

Unsportsmanlike conduct – 10 yards
Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct – 10 yards and offending player ejected from the field for the remainder of the game.
Pass interference (Anything which interferes with the offender's attempt to catch the ball including face-guarding and contact. The referee will decide whether contact is incidental.) – 10 yards or spot of the foul, automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (before ball has reaches the receiver) – 10 yards
Illegal rushing (starting closer than 7 yards from the line, using hands to get around a blocker, contact made while not trying to avoid a screen blocker) – 5 yards
Illegal contact – 5 yards
Roughing the passer – 10 yards, automatic first down
Offsides – 5 yards

Playoff & Tournament Rules

Regular season playoff format will be single-elimination.
Tournament elimination format will be as published for each tournament.

Tie game:

In an overtime round, each team will get 4 plays starting from the red dot at the top of the white arc. **No first downs will be awarded.** The team who advances the ball farthest down the field in 4 downs will be declared the winner. If a team scores, no PAT will be played. If both teams score in an overtime round, additional complete rounds will be played until a winner is declared.