



## NFL Flag Football 9-11 Rules of Play



### APPAREL/ EQUIPMENT:

- Jerseys must be **tucked in** to the pants or shorts of EVERY player!
- Game schedule will indicate and determines which jersey shade (dark or light of reversible jersey) teams wear for each game.
- Both flags must be available for pulling and located on each players' hip/ side.
- Excess belt strap must be tucked in so not to confuse defensive players.
- Mouthpieces must be worn at all practices and games by players. Parents are responsible for making sure a player has a mouthpiece.
- Spikes of any kind are highly recommended. Must be plastic spikes, no metal.

### THE GAME:

- Coin toss at 50 yard line with head coaches and referees. Team that wins coin toss chooses to start w/ ball or defer. Team that loses coin toss chooses 1<sup>st</sup> half end zone.
- 9-11 Village of Hamburg NFL Flag is **6 vs. 6**.
- Games are 54 minutes in length (Two 27-minute halves/ running clock).
- After the first half is complete, there is a 4 minute halftime break.
- Teams change sides for the second half.
- Every player must play at least half of the game (27 game minutes). Additionally, and while not mandatory, we encourage coaches to rotate players on offense and defense, to allow them to play both sides of the ball.

### OFFENSE RULES:

- Offensive team starts each possession on its own 5 yard line (dotted line), except after intercepting a pass. After intercepting a pass, offensive possession start will happen where intercepting player was deflagged or ran out of bounds on his/ her return.
- Play clock...the offensive team must snap the ball **40 seconds from the time the ball is spotted by the referee for the next play**. Referees will monitor the play clock and issue warnings or call a delay of game penalties at their discretion (if persistent delays by the same team happen/ if it's deemed that a team is intentionally delaying the game).
- Offensive team has four (4) plays to get to the midfield line for a first down if their possession starts behind the 50 yard line...and subsequently, four more plays to score a touchdown. If a team begins a possession beyond midfield or gains a first down beyond midfield, they must score a TD in four downs, regardless if one of their plays results in a loss of yards that moves their line of scrimmage back behind the 50 yd. line.
- BOTH direct under-center snaps and shotgun snaps are permitted and BOTH conventional (between the legs) or non-conventional (to the side) snaps are LEGAL. HOWEVER, both of the Center's feet must be behind the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap and the the football must be touching the ground until the snap occurs.
- The QB is the player who receives the snap from the center.
- The QB has a seven-second pass clock to get rid of the ball if the referees determine there is no pressure on the QB, a dead ball whistle will occur, and the ball be placed at the original line of scrimmage, with a loss of down being administered.
- If the QB is considered under duress, he/ she can scramble behind the line of scrimmage and attempt to make a play without a seven second clock in effect.
- The QB cannot run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, unless he/ she catches a forward pass.
- Forward passes are legal by any offensive player provided that the ball is thrown behind the line of scrimmage.
- A non-QB may throw a pass only after receiving a legal direct hand-off.
- The reception of forward passes can happen behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.

- All offensive players are eligible to receive a forward pass including the Center and QB. The QB may receive a forward pass only after the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- Offensive Motion...motion by offensive players can occur PRE-SNAP, but all offensive players must be stopped and stationary when the ball is snapped. Additionally, only one player can be in motion at a time
- Pitch backs, tosses or laterals are NOT PERMITTED, regardless of who or where a pitch/toss/ lateral happens. Only direct hand offs are allowed.
- All hand offs must occur BEHIND the line of scrimmage.
- Center sneak plays are NOT permitted. The QB cannot hand the ball off directly to the Center.
- A receiver is required to only have ONE FOOT in bounds when possessing and catching a pass for it to be ruled a completion.
- There is no blocking, body shielding, picking or screening by the offensive team. Incidental contact might occur, and will be the judgment of the referee.
- If the ballcarrier's knee(s), shoulders(s), elbow(s), torso hit the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at that spot.
- If a ballcarrier's flag falls out on its own without a defender de-flagging him/ her, the ball carrier is considered de-flagged and the play is whistled dead. Referees should spot the ball where the flag inadvertently fell to the ground.
- Spotting the ball on a deflag...When a play concludes, the ball will be spotted where the ball carrier's FEET were when his/ her flag is pulled, **not where the ball is.** If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
- NO-RUN LINE...an offensive team whose line of scrimmage is on or inside the opposing team's 5 yard line is NOT permitted to run a running play. **Must-pass plays must consist of plays where the ball is NOT HANDED OFF, AND MUST THROWN BY THE QB ONLY** on or inside the opposing team's 5 yard line.
- Offensive coach... ONE (1) Offensive "play-calling" coach may be located in the offensive backfield during the play as long as the coach is **10 yards** behind the line of scrimmage and does not interfere with the play. Referees will monitor this and consult with coaches. A delay of game penalty may be called if an offensive coach intentionally OR unintentionally interferes with a play.

#### **DEFENSE RULES:**

- Any type of defense is permitted (man or zone).
- Defensive teams may have one pass rusher, lined up 8 yards (or more) from the line of scrimmage. Pass rushers are eligible to rush the QB. Before each play from scrimmage, a referee will designate the "8 yard defense line" with a cone.
- **Pass rushers are permitted to jump and knock down a pass, but may NOT make contact with the QB when doing so. The only contact permitted with a QB, by a pass rusher, is an attempt to deflag the QB.**
- **If the ball is handed off by the QB to any other offensive player,** ANY defender may rush across the line of scrimmage regardless of where they started the play in relation to the line of scrimmage.
- Defensive players who intercept a pass (including on conversion attempts) may return the interception.
- Defensive coach...ONE (1) defensive coach may be on the field **between plays, but must report to the sideline before the ball is snapped.**

#### **GENERAL OCCURANCES:**

- **Interceptions** are returnable (even on conversion attempts).
- **Dead ball...**the ball is dead when it hits the ground, the offensive player's flag is pulled from their belt, the ball-carrier steps out of bounds, or the ball-carrier's body—outside of their hands or feet—touches the ground. Referees will whistle all dead balls.
- **Fumbles** are also whistled dead immediately, and the offensive team maintains possession at the spot of the fumble. The down that the fumble occurred counts. For example, if the fumble occurs on 2<sup>nd</sup> down, the play is whistled dead, and the offensive team has 3<sup>rd</sup> down at the spot of the fumble. If a fumble occurs on 4<sup>th</sup> down and the

yardage gained did not result in a first down, it would be a turnover on downs and the defensive team takes over possession at their own 5 yard line.

### **SCORING:**

- **Touchdown** **6 points**
- **Conversion after a TD =** **2 points from the 10 yardline (run or pass).  
1 point from the 5 yardline (pass by QB only).**
- **Conversion Interceptions** **2 pts. if offense going for 2/ 1 pt if offense going for 1**
- **Safety** **2 pts.**

### **OVERTIME:**

- The clock does not run during OT.
- Each team will have ONE offensive possession from midfield and have 4 downs to score a TD. If a TD is scored, the normal Conversion after TD rule is in effect (choice).
- The team who possessed the ball last during regulation will be the defensive team to start Overtime.
- If the game is still tied after each team receives ONE POSSESSION, the game ends in a tie.

### **PENALTIES (BY THE OFFENSE):**

- **All infractions listed below result in a loss of down and the ball is spotted where the play began (the original line of scrimmage):**
  - Holding
  - Blocking/ Body Screening
  - Offensive Pass interference
  - QB violations of stepping or running across the line of scrimmage while possessing the ball or throwing the ball.
  - Delay of game (30 second play clock violation) **AND** must line up again and play without a huddle.
- **Ball-carrier Stiff Arm/ Charging/ Flag guarding/ Flag Concealing...**
  - play is whistled dead and ball is spotted where the ballcarrier committed the infraction. The down counts. *Charging is the direct and intentional movement toward a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes contact by lowering the shoulder, lowering the head, using the chest or the forearm. Charging can also be considered a "Dangerous Play", see later in document.*
- **Offensive Diving...** Like flag guarding, if offensive diving occurs, the play will be whistled dead and the ball will be spotted where the ball carrier's feet were when the dive began.
- **False Starts**
  - False starts **INCLUDE** illegal motion and illegal shifts.
  - **FIRST 2 FALSE STARTS...** referee gives a warning, no infraction, line up again **without a huddle** and run the play.
  - **3<sup>RD</sup> FALSE START** by a team (and thereafter), offensive team loses a down **AND** line up again **without a huddle** and run the play.

### **PENALTIES (BY THE DEFENSE):**

- All of the infractions below must be accepted or declined by the offensive team to determine what consequences are imposed.
  - **Accepted...** the offensive team accepts the penalty and is rewarded an automatic first down and the ball is spotted at the previous spot.
  - **Declined...** the offensive team declines the penalty and prefers the result of the play, and no penalty is enforced.
    - Tackling the ball carrier
    - Holding the ball carrier
    - Shoving/ Pushing the ballcarrier.
    - De-flagging an offensive player before that player possesses the ball.

- **Defensive holding.**
- **Illegal Rushing**
  - **Defensive rusher FALSE START...**this occurs when a player who is lined up at or behind the 8 yard defense line, crosses the 8 yard defense line BEFORE the ball is snapped and rushes the QB across the line of scrimmage on a pass play without handoffs. The referee will wait for the result of the play before making the call.
  - **Defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage illegally**
- **Defensive pass interference: this penalty must be accepted or declined.**
  - If declined, the result of the play stands.
  - If accepted, the ball will be placed at the spot of the foul and the offense will be granted an automatic first down.

**DANGEROUS PLAY/ UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT (BY A PLAYER):**

- Unsportsmanlike conduct (toward opposing players, coaches, parents, referees, etc.)
- Physically aggressive/ dangerous/ intimidating plays
- Dirty plays/ cheap shots
  - IF ONE OF THE INFRACTIONS ABOVE IS COMMITTED, THE INDIVIDUAL(S) COMMITTING THE INFRACTION WILL SIT OUT 4 CONSECUTIVE PLAYS.
  - A TEAM PENALTY (15 YARDS AND AUTO FIRST DOWN IF DEFENSE COMMITS/ 15 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN IF OFFENSE COMMITS) IS IMPOSED (ON TOP OF ANY LIVE BALL PENALTIES THAT MAY HAVE BEEN CALLED DURING THE PLAY)
  - THE LEAGUE WILL ALSO SUPPORT FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN BY HEAD COACHES WHEN PLAYERS COMMIT SUCH ACTS/ PENALTIES.
  - IF THE INFRACTION IS SO SEVERE THAT A REFEREE DETERMINES THAT A PLAYER BE EJECTED FROM THE GAME (IE: HORSE COLLAR TACKLE, PUNCH THROWN, ETC.), THE GAME WILL NOT CONTINUE UNTIL THE PLAYER LEAVES THE FACILITY WITH A PARENT/ GUARDIAN.

**UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT (BY A COACH/ SPECTATOR):**

- **HEAD COACHES** are the ONLY individuals permitted to speak with the referee about disputed calls. HOWEVER, head coaches are not permitted to make a public scene and be disrespectful when addressing an official. If a head coach does not follow this rule, his team will be assessed a penalty without warning (loss of down if on offense/ automatic first down if on defense).
- **ASSISTANT COACHES OR SPECTATORS** disputing calls, berating officials, confronting other parents/ players/ coaches will result in that individual's team being assessed a penalty without warning (loss of down if on offense/ auto first down if on defense).
  - A TEAM PENALTY (15 YARDS AND AUTO FIRST DOWN IF TEAM IS ON DEFENSE/ 15 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN IF TEAM IS ON OFFENSE) IS IMPOSED (ON TOP OF ANY LIVE BALL PENALTIES THAT MAY HAVE BEEN CALLED DURING THE PLAY).

Coaches & Parents signed a Code of Conduct with our league upon registration, and will be held accountable for any violations of the Code of Conduct, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Ejection from the facility.
- Suspension from future games.
- Expulsion from attending games for the rest of the season.
- Expulsion from attending games held by the Village of Hamburg permanently.

IF THE INFRACTION IS SO SEVERE THAT A REFEREE DETERMINES THAT A COACH OR SPECTATOR BE EJECTED FROM A GAME, THE GAME WILL NOT CONTINUE UNTIL THE INDIVIDUAL LEAVES THE FACILITY. EJECTIONS FROM A GAME WILL RESULT IN A ONE-GAME SUSPENSION FOR THE NEXT GAME (MINIMALLY).