

## **Flag Football Study Guide**

### **NFL Rules**

#### **The Game**

- A coin toss determines first possession
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over at its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first 20-minutes, (5-minute halftime) but possession does not change.

#### **Players / Game Schedules**

- Teams must field a minimum of five (5) players at all time.
- Teams consist of 8-10 players (5 on the field with 5 substitutes)

#### **Timing / Overtime**

- Games are played to 40 minutes running time
- If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. The first team to score wins.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced. Clock stops on a delay of game penalty.
- Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time out per half
- Player injury will stop clock if player cannot leave the field before the ball is spotted.
- If the clock is stopped due to an injury, the player must sit out one play
- A delay of game penalty will be called within 2 minutes of ending of the game.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

#### **Scoring**

- **Touchdown** 6 points
- **Extra Point** 1 point (played from 5-yard line) or  
2 points (played from the 12-yard line)
- **Safety** 2 points

#### **Running**

- The Quarterback cannot run with the ball
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- There are absolutely no laterals or pitches of any kind
- No running zones, located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving)
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

### Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage)
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time
- A player must have at least one foot in-bounds when making a reception

### Passing

- All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage
- The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock”. If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule is no longer in effect.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line

### Dead Balls

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - a. ball carrier’s flag is pulled
  - b. ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - c. Touchdown or safety is scored
  - d. At the point of an interception (interception returns are not allowed)
  - e. ball carrier’s knee hits the ground
  - f. ball carrier’s flag falls out

*There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.*

### Rushing the Quarterback

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling allowed.

### Sportsmanship / Roughing

- If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the tournament. FOUL PLAY IS NOT TOLERATED.
- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected of the game.

### Penalties

- The referee will call all penalties
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage (LOS)

- Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Defensive Penalties:

- **Off-sides** 5 yards and automatic first down
- **Interference** 10 yards and automatic first down
- **Illegal contact** 10 yards and automatic first down
- **Illegal flag pull** 10 yards and automatic first down
- **Illegal rushing** 10 yards and automatic first down

Offensive Penalties:

- **Illegal motion** (more than one player moving) 5 yards and loss of down
- **Illegal forward pass** (pass received behind LOS) 5 yards and loss of down
- **Offensive Pass interference**(pushing off) 10 yards and loss of down
- **Flag guarding** 10 yards and loss of down
- **Delay of game** Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down