



AMERICAN FORK
RECREATION

Flag Football Rulebook 2022

1st-12th Grade

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americanfork.gov/recreation

THE FIELD

The dimension of the field is approximately 60 yards long for 1st - 6th grades and 80 yards long for 7th - 12th grades. All fields are about 35 yards wide. Each field is divided laterally into 4 equal quadrants within which the offensive team has 4 downs to cross into the next quadrant.

THE EQUIPMENT

BALL SIZE – 1st-6th Grades will use a Pee wee size football. 7th-12th Grades will have the option of using either a youth size or a college size football. Both teams must agree on the ball before the game. Switching footballs during the game is not allowed.

SHOES – All players must wear shoes. Rubber cleats (no metal), that are approved for football, soccer, and/ or baseball are legal. Players wearing illegal shoes are ineligible to play until problem is resolved.

FLAGS – All players shall wear a flag belt with 3 flags; a flag shall be positioned just to the rear of each hip, and one down the back. The belt must be worn outside the uniform shirt, and may not be hidden, or the flags be secured in any way that would prohibit access, or from being pulled.

PENALTY-LOST FLAG: A player is considered tackled if he has lost his belt and has possession of the ball.

PENALTY – HIDING THE FLAG: Blown dead at first tackle attempt

UNIFORM SHIRTS – All players are supplied with a uniform shirt from the Recreation Department. Uniform shirts must be worn on the outside of any jacket or sweatshirt. It is recommended that all upper body clothing be tucked in but is not required if opposing players have access to the belt and flags.

WATCHES, JEWELRY, CASTS, ETC – All watches and jewelry must be removed prior to start of game. No casts, hats, or anything dangerous to themselves or others are allowed. The Referee or Supervisor will be the judge to determine dangerous items.

THE PLAYERS

NUMBER OF PLAYERS – 6 players shall constitute a team playing on the field at any one time. A team will forfeit if they have fewer than 4 players at game time. Teams are allowed to scrimmage after the forfeit. More than 6 players on the field at one time is a violation.

Players who are not registered on the team roster are not allowed to play. Any portion of a game played with an illegal player will be considered a forfeit for the team. Two forfeits during the season may result in removal from the league and/or tournament. Questions regarding eligibility should be determined before the game with the referee or field supervisor.

PENALTY – ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION: 5 YARDS/ LOS

THE GAME

DOWNS – Each team shall have 4 downs to gain entry into the next quadrant, upon which another 4 downs shall be awarded. If penalties or poor play causes the offense to lose ground into a rear quadrant, the forward quadrant remains the quadrant to gain. The offense must then pass through the quadrant in which the penalty occurred and cross into the next quadrant to achieve a first down. On changes of possession, however, when a penalty sends the ball into a rear quadrant, the offense has 4 downs to make it back into the quadrant in which the penalty occurred to achieve a first down.

A down is declared when the person having the ball is tackled (knee touches ground, flag is pulled or merely loses flag) and no penalty is called. If a penalty is called and accepted, the down remains the same (some exceptions) and yardage walked off.

DEAD BALL – Dead ball is declared any time the ball touches the ground after touching an offensive player. The offense always keeps possession. Exceptions to the dead ball rule are:

1. When the ball touches the ground during the snap (before the designated rusher is within a step and a reach of the ball). Only the quarterback may pick the ball up and continue play.
2. On a scrimmage kick, if the ball touches the ground before a punt attempt, the ball may be picked up and punted.

SCORING – A Touchdown will count as 6 points; 1 or 2 extra points may be attempted after the TD.

A safety is 2 points and the ball kicked from the 20-yard line. **Note:** A player scoring the touchdown must raise his arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one pull and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. **PENALTY:** loss of down.

TIMING – The game shall consist of two 25-minute halves. Halftime will be 3 minutes long.

OUT OF BOUNDS – A player is considered out of bounds as soon as he steps on the perimeter lines.

THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS) – The scrimmage line is an imaginary line that runs the width of the field at the front tip of the football.

POINT OF INFRACTION (POI) – That point at which a violation of the rules occurred and often the point from which the penalty is enforced. Hiding the Flag, Pass interference, Illegal Runs, Tackles or Blocks etc.

THE KICKING GAME

KICKOFF

There will be no kickoffs. The “home team,” as shown on the game schedule, will choose whether they would like to start on offense, start on defense, or choose which side to defend. For 1st-4th grade, the home team will wear the silver side of jersey. During Tournament play for the 7-12th grade, the higher seed will have the option.

The starting team begins with the ball on their own 15-yard line.

THE SCRIMMAGE KICK (PUNT)

ANNOUNCES INTENTION TO KICK – A team must announce its intention to kick. If a kick is not intended, no announcement need be made. All players on the LOS and every member of the kicking team, except the kicker, may not move off the line or in any other direction until the ball is kicked.

RECEIVING THE SCRIMMAGE KICK – The kicked ball may be caught and returned. However, if the ball touches the ground before being caught by the receiving team, it becomes dead, and is marked at that spot. The kicked ball will be the possession of the receiving team: (A) Where the ball touches the ground (B) at the point it goes out-of-bounds (C) Where the receiver, after catching the ball on the fly, is tackled.

THE PASSING AND RUNNING GAME

OFFSIDES – Neither the offense, nor the defense may in any way cross the LOS until the ball is put into play, either by kicking or hiking.

PENALTY – OFFSIDES: 5 YARDS/ LOS.

OFFENSIVE FORMATION – Any offensive formation is legal as long as: (A) The ball is hiked (between the legs or from the side) to someone behind the line of scrimmage (B) **There is at least 1 player** on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. (Players are considered on the LOS if they are within two yards of that line). The ball must be hiked from the ground and remain on the ground until it is hiked.

PENALTY – ILLEGAL FORMATION: 5 YARDS/ LOS.

RUSHING

Designated Rushers –

1st- 2nd Grade – An Official will stand 20 yards from the line of scrimmage into the defense and act as a marker for all defensive players who want to rush the quarterback after the ball is hiked from the ground. **NO defensive player can rush the quarterback unless he/she starts behind the official at 20 yards down field.**

Any defensive player can rush the ball when the ball is handed off and in possession of an offensive player who did not receive the ball from the center. Defense must have one man on the line of scrimmage.

3^r-12th Grade- An Official will stand 10 yards from the line of scrimmage into the defense and act as a marker for all defensive players who want to rush the quarterback after the ball is hiked from the ground. **NO defensive player can rush the quarterback unless he/she starts behind the official at 10 yards down field.**

Any defensive player can rush the ball when the ball is handed off and in possession of an offensive player who did not receive the ball from the center. Defense must have one man on the line of scrimmage.

PENALTY – ILLEGAL RUSH: 5 YARDS/ LOS, *replay the down.*

ROUGHING THE PASSER – Defensive players rushing the quarterback may not make any contact with the quarterback’s upper body or arm as he releases the ball for a pass. Pulling the flag is the preferred method of stopping the pass.

PENALTY – ROUGHING THE PASSER: 10 YARDS/ LOS / First Down

PASSING

The person receiving the initial snap of the ball cannot run the ball unless he hands off or laterals the ball once (No Center Sneak)

EVERYONE ELIGIBLE – All players are eligible to receive or throw passes.

FORWARD PASS – Only one forward pass may be thrown passed the line of scrimmage. Any pass thrown after ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage is an illegal pass. However multiple forwarded passes may be made behind the LOS.

PENALTY – ILLEGAL PASS: 5 YARDS/ LOS and LOSS OF DOWN.

LATERALS – Any pass thrown or tossed backwards is called a lateral. Any lateral which touches the ground shall be dead and that spot becomes the new LOS.

DEFENDING THE PASS – The defense may not hold, trip, or in any way interfere with, or impede the pass receiver in his attempt to catch a thrown ball.

PENALTY – DEFENSIVE INTERFERENCE: 10 YARDS/ LOS and FIRST DOWN

OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE – The offense may not hold, trip, or in any way interfere with a defensive player in his attempt to catch thrown ball.

PENALTY – OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE: 10 YARDS/ LOS and LOSS OF DOWN.

RUNNING

BALL CARRIER MAY – Ball carrier may jump or spin in a controlled manner. Ball carrier **may not** jump or spin in a way that the official views as dangerous to himself or any other person.
(Jumping into defenders or spinning 2 times consecutively may be considered dangerous)

PENALTY – ILLEGAL RUN: 5 YARDS/ POI and LOSS OF DOWN.

BALL CARRIER MAY NOT – Ball carrier may not stiff-arm, guard his flag to avoid a tackle, jump over other players, or run through tacklers. (Ball carrier must attempt to run around defenders to avoid head on collisions)

PENALTY – ILLEGAL RUN: 5 YARDS/ POI and LOSS OF DOWN.

BALL CARRIER MAY NOT – intentionally fumble a ball forward in order to take advantage of field position or achieve a first down. In the case of an intentional forward fumble, the ball will be spotted at the point of release.

BALL CARRIER MAY NOT – Ball carrier may not dive with ball to gain field advantage. Ball will be placed where dive was initiated.

NO CENTER SNEAK – The player who snaps the ball to the quarterback is ineligible to carry the ball. (The center is still eligible as a receiver)

PENALTY – ILLEGAL PLAY: REPLAY THE DOWN.

MAN IN MOTION-- or any person in offensive backfield may receive the ball from the Center but cannot advance the ball past the line of scrimmage unless a lateral is made.

PENALTY – ILLEGAL PLAY: REPLAY THE DOWN.

TACKLING

PULLING THE FLAG – Tackling is the process of pulling the flag of the ball carrier. The tackler may not hold, pull down, or run through the ball carrier himself to pull the flag, nor may he deliberately trip the ball carrier, or intentionally push him out of bounds. The defense may not deliberately pull the flag of any player not in possession of the ball or knock the ball out of the ball carriers' hands. Once the flag has been pulled, it must be immediately dropped to the ground. Flags swung around in the air can be unsafe.

PENALTY – ILLEGAL TACKLE: 10 YARDS/ POI. (Player ejection if FLAGRANT: 10 YARDS/ POI)

LOST FLAG – A player is considered tackled if he has lost his belt and has possession of the ball.

DEAD BALL – A Fumble or a dropped ball is a dead ball, with one exception. If the ball is dropped by a quarterback during the initial snap and before the rusher is within a step and a reach of the ball, the quarterback can pick up the ball once and continue the play.

UNFAIR CIRCUMSTANCE CLAUSE – If the defense tries to pull the flag of a ball carrier but is unsuccessful because of some unfair circumstance, the official may blow the play dead and spot the ball at that point.

SPOTTING THE BALL - The ball will be spotted at the location of the ball carrier's torso when tackled, not where the ball is located.

BLOCKING

OFFENSE – **There is no blocking!** Players may not run over, push, step into, shoulder, hold, trip, or in any deliberate way impede the defense except by being an obstacle, stationary where the defense must run around in order to gain access to the ball carrier.

PENALTY – ILLEGAL BLOCK: 5 YARDS/LOS IF BLOCK OCCURRED BEHIND LOS, OR 5 YARDS POI and LOSS OF DOWN IF INFRACTION OCCURRED BEYOND LOS.

Referee may impose harsher penalty if he feels the infraction was flagrant or dangerous.

DEFENSE – The defensive players must run around the offensive player in order to gain access to the ball carrier. **Elbows may not be raised from the body** with forearms or hands aimed toward the opponent when contact is made. They may not run over, push, shoulder, hold, trip, or in any deliberate way remove the offensive player from his station, even if that player is moving.

PENALTY – ILLEGAL BLOCK: 5 YARDS/ LOS OR 5 YARDS/ POI IF INFRACTION OCCURRED BEYOND LOS.

Referee may impose harsher penalty if he feels the infraction was flagrant or dangerous.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND PENALTIES

SPORTSMANSHIP – Players or coaches shall not swear, scream, fight, spike the ball, complain about the referee's judgment, deliberately deter the official in his attempt to officiate the game, or in any manner show unsportsmanlike conduct.

PENALTY – UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: 10 YARDS/LOS ASSESSED AT END OF PLAY. A more severe penalty may be assessed at the referee's discretion depending on severity of offense. Ejection from the game or from the field is within the power of the official.

OFFICIAL – The official shall have the right to rule on anything not specifically covered in the rules. Judgment calls are not to be questioned or protested. Improper application of the rules by the official may be questioned by the coach if done in a respectful and kind manner. The official oversees the game; his ruling shall be final. There will be a field supervisor at each location to assist with official/coach questions. Coaches who are ejected for continued arguing must sit out next scheduled game.

INADVERTENT WHISTLE – If the referee blows his whistle by mistake the ball shall be placed at the spot of the ball when the whistle was inadvertently blown and the down counted, or the down may be replayed at the discretion of the offensive team.

WIN/ LOSS – There will be no win/ loss records kept during the season for 1st-6th grade. Win/loss record will be kept for 7th-12th grade.

COACHING –

1st-2nd Grade: One Coach from each team will be allowed on the field for the entire season.

3rd Grade: One offensive coach may be on the field for the season. **NO** defensive coach allowed on field.

4th Grade: One offensive coach only, will be allowed to coach on the field of play for the first **four** games.

5th - 12th Grade: Coaches will **not** be allowed on the field of play for the entire season.

PENALTY SUMMARY

INFRACTION

PENALTY

Unsportsmanlike conduct	10 Yds/LOS assessed at end of play
Offensive Interference	10 Yds/LOS and Loss of Down
Defensive Interference	10 Yds/LOS and FIRST DOWN
Pass Interference	10 Yds/LOS and FIRST DOWN
Roughing the Passer	10 Yds/LOS and FIRST DOWN
Hiding the flag	Blown dead at first tackle attempt
Flag Guarding	Blown dead and 5 yd. POI, penalty
Off sides	5 Yds/LOS
Illegal Participation	5 Yds/LOS
Illegal Rush	5 Yds/LOS
Illegal Pass	5 Yds/LOS and Loss of Down
Illegal Tackle	10 Yds/POI
Illegal Run	5 Yds/POI and Loss of Down
Illegal Block-Offense	5 Yds/LOS if occurred behind LOS 5 Yds/POI and Loss of Down if infraction occurred beyond LOS
Illegal Block-Defense	5 Yds/LOS if occurred behind LOS 5 Yds/POI if occurred beyond LOS

Official may assess 10-yard penalty if he felt that any above infraction was flagrant or occurred in a dangerous manner. When an infraction occurs, the offended team usually has the choice to accept result of play or assess the penalty for that infraction.