

NFL REC FLAG RULES

1. Age brackets will be as follows: (Age is age as of Aug 1st)
 - A. 6U Co-Ed
 - B. 8U Co-Ed
 - C. 10U Co-Ed

Coaches and Spectator Conduct/Responsibilities

1. Family members, parents, and spectators are required to observe the contest from designated areas.
2. 6U, 8U and 10U, offensive coach allowed on field to call plays, then must be 10 yards back when ball is snapped. 8U only, defensive coach may be on the field before the snap but must be off field before ball is snapped.
3. Participants, coaches, parents, and family members must conduct themselves appropriately during games.
4. Inappropriate, rude, or confrontational behavior by a coach, player or spectator may lead to disqualification from the area at the sole discretion of the League Officials.

I. League Play

1. Teams will play a minimum of eight (8) games in league play.
2. Teams must start the game with a minimum of five (5) players. In the event of an injury to one (1) player, without available substitutions, that team may play with four (4) players on the field, but no fewer than four (4).

II. Game Preliminaries

1. At the beginning of each game the officials will inspect the uniforms and equipment of each player. A legal uniform consists of the following:
 - A. Jersey – All players must wear matching jerseys during the game. It is the responsibility of each player to make sure that his jersey stays tucked in at all times.
 - B. Shorts – Only shorts with NO POCKETS are allowed.
 - C. Flag Belts –Flag belts and flags must be worn by all players. It is the responsibility of each player to make sure that their flags are on their hips and pointing out prior to each play. (League will supply flags for each team. The flags are to be used for practice and games. Flags will be returned to the League at the end of the season.)
 - D. Mouthpiece – Each player must be properly wearing a mouthpiece while on the field.
 - E. Cleats – Each player must have cleats or athletic shoes. No metal spikes will be allowed.
 - F. Jewelry – Players are not allowed to wear any type of jewelry during the game.

Exception:

Medical Alert jewelry may be worn if taped down.

G. Gloves – Any player may wear gloves during the game. No sticky-aid is allowed. (Sole discretion of League officials)

H. Ball Size- League provided game ball must be used for each game.

- U6 Mini Ball
- U8 Peewee (NFL Blue)
- U10 Peewee (NFL Blue)

Exception:

Both coaches agree to use the same ball for the entire game. Game ball must be size equivalent for that age division. If coaches do not agree, league ball will be used.

2. After the equipment has been checked, the team captains and coaches will meet at midfield for the coin toss. The visiting team will call the toss. The team winning the toss will either choose who will start with possession or which goal to defend. The team losing the toss will make the other choice. Both decisions will be reversed at the start of the second half.

3. Each team will be responsible to provide someone to work the down marker for a half. Teams will swap at the half.

4. The Head Coach is the only person allowed to address the officials or to call time-outs.

V. General Rules

1. Each possession will begin with the offensive team starting with the ball on their own 5-yard line. The team will have three (3) downs to reach midfield or their opponent's end zone.

Exception:

When an interception occurs, the possession shall start from the dead ball spot.

2. Upon crossing midfield, the offensive team will have a first down and will then have three (3) downs to reach their opponent's end zone.

3. Upon reaching their opponent's end zone, the offensive team will be awarded a touchdown.

4. When the offensive team scores a touchdown, they shall choose to attempt an extra point from either the 5-yard line (1 point) or 12-yard line (2 points). The team will have one down to score.

5. After the offensive team has tried for the extra point, or should the offensive team not reach midfield or the end zone after three (3) downs, their opponents will take possession on their own 5-yard line.

6. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.

7. To start each play, the center must snap the ball between both legs, not around the side of the body.

8. At the time of the snap, only one (1) offensive player is allowed to be in motion. This motion must be parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.

9. The ball shall be spotted where the ball carrier's most forward in-bounds foot was at the time they became down. If the ball carrier's most forward foot is in their own end zone, the defensive team will be awarded a safety. If the ball carrier's foot is on the midfield line, the team will be awarded the first down.

10. Any fumble is an immediate dead ball. When this occurs, the ball will be spotted at the first place the ball lands, when it is behind the line of scrimmage. If the ball lands in the end zone, it will be a safety.

Exception:

If the ball is fumbled forward, it will be spotted at the most forward foot of the last ball carrier.

11. At no point may any player intentionally kick the ball. There are no kick offs, punts, or field goals allowed.

12. Each team must field exactly five (5) players for each play. All coaches and remaining players must be on the sideline during each play. If a team starts the game with five (5) players and loses a player because of injury or illness, they will be allowed to continue with four (4) players. The opposing team will continue at full strength.

Note: If a team loses its fifth player to ejection, they will not be allowed to continue.

13. Substitutions are unlimited and are made at the coach's discretion. Any number of substitutions may be made between plays. All exiting players must be completely on the sideline before the ball is snapped.

14. Tackling and/or blocking is illegal. No player shall at any time intentionally make contact with an opposing player. Any attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier is also illegal.

15. All players, coaches, and spectators are required to show good sportsmanship at all times. Anyone committing actions found to be unsportsmanlike will be subject to possible penalties and/or ejections.

Note (1): Any official may eject a player whose actions are deemed excessively unsportsmanlike.

Note (2): Coach and spectator ejections must be ruled on by a minimum of two (2) League Officials

16. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the official. The clock does not stop and any delay by the offense in retrieving and returning the ball to the official with result in delay of game and loss of down.

VI. Passing Plays

1. The quarterback (QB) shall be defined as the first player to have possession of the ball after the snap.

2. From the time the ball is snapped, the QB shall have seven (7) seconds to either hand the ball off to another player or pass the ball. Ball in hand at the time of 7-seconds will constitute a penalty.

3. A legal pass shall be defined as a ball thrown by a player with both feet behind the line of scrimmage to a player with both feet across the line of scrimmage. Such a pass may be thrown or tossed in any manner.

4. To make a legal catch, a player must attain complete possession before the ball touches the ground and must have one (1) foot or any part of their body touch completely in bounds before any part of their body touches out of bounds.

Note: Any player diving or falling to catch a pass must retain complete possession through any fall, roll, dive, etc.

5. Any player may legally pass the ball provided they have not crossed the line of scrimmage at any time during the play.

6. All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the QB if the ball was handed off.

Exception:

The passer may not legally catch their own pass if deflected or blocked. Such a catch will be ruled an incomplete pass.

7. There may only be one (1) forward pass on any down. For example, players may not catch a pass, run behind the line of scrimmage, and pass again.

8. Any player stepping out of bounds becomes ineligible to receive a pass unless the ball is first touched by another player (not including the passer).

9. Defensive players must give right of way to an offensive player running their pass pattern. (Sole discretion of League officials).

Exception:

The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does

not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.

10. Interceptions are live turnovers. Any player making an interception may return the ball until down. The team will begin their possession where they became down.

Exception (1):

A pass intercepted during an extra point attempt is immediately dead and cannot be returned.

Exception (2):

If the ball is intercepted behind the line of scrimmage, it will be ruled an incomplete pass.

Exception (3):

If the ball is intercepted in the end zone, and the flag is pulled, it will be ruled a touchback

11. No player may spike the ball to avoid their flag being pulled. Such an act shall be ruled a fumble.

Note: The QB immediately snapping and spiking the ball for the sole purpose of stopping the clock during discretionary time shall not be ruled a fumble.

12. A QB is sacked if their flags are pulled while the ball is still in hand. The motion of the arm is not relevant.

VII. Running Plays

1. Any player receiving a handoff is eligible to run the ball across the line of scrimmage.

Exception:

The QB is never allowed to run the ball, even after multiple handoffs.

2. Any number of handoffs is allowed on each play.

3. All handoffs must occur behind the line of scrimmage.

4. "No-run zones" shall be 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the end zone. If the ball was spotted in a "No-run zone", no player may run the ball across the line of scrimmage, although handoffs are still allowed.

5. No handoffs shall be given between the legs of a player.

6. Pitches, laterals, or tosses that begin and end behind the line of scrimmage are not legal. All handoffs must be direct.

VIII. The Ball Carrier

1. The ball carrier is defined as any player with legal possession of the ball.

2. The ball carrier is down when:

A. Either of their flags are pulled,

- B. Either of their flags falls off,
- C. They step or touch out of bounds,
- D. Any part of their body other than the foot or hand touches the ground,
- Note:** For the purpose of this rule, if at any time the Ball touches the ground the play is considered dead.
- E. They receive a pass or handoff without both flags on,
- F. They receive a pass or handoff with their jersey covering their flags,
- G. Their flag belt falls below their hips.

3. It is the ball carrier's responsibility to avoid making contact with any defensive player with an established position on the field.

4. No offensive player is allowed to run alongside the ball carrier at any time.

5. Once the ball carrier is across the line of scrimmage, all offensive players must stop where they are.

Note: Offensive players may be used as a screen as long as they remain motionless. Any movement by such a screen will be deemed a block.

6. The ball carrier may not jump or dive at any time.

Exception:

Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that they have done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.

7. The ball carrier is allowed to spin, but must take a normal step between consecutive spins

8. Offensive players may not cross the line of scrimmage and then come back for a hand off.

IX. Rushing the Passer

1. The rush line is defined as the line parallel to and seven (7) yards beyond the line of scrimmage.

2. Any defensive player behind the rush line is a legal rusher and is allowed to cross the line of scrimmage. The defensive team may have any number of legal rushers.

3. If the QB hands the ball off, all defensive players become legal rushers.

4. Once a rusher crosses the line of scrimmage, they shall not:

- A. Initiate ANY contact with the passer, above the waist or excessive contact.
(Sole discretion of League officials)
- B. Scream/yell at the passer (except run or pass) (Sole discretion of League officials)
- C. Leave their feet.
- D. Rush in with arms up in the air after crossing the line of scrimmage.

X. Dead Balls

1. The ball will be considered dead when either official blows their whistle. The officials shall only blow their whistles when:

- A. The ball carrier is ruled down,
- B. The ball is fumbled,
- C. An incomplete pass is thrown,
- D. A touchdown, extra point, or safety is scored,
- E. A penalty is called that ends the play.

2. If at any time during a play, if either official blows their whistle and none of the previous has occurred, it will be ruled an inadvertent whistle.

3. When an inadvertent whistle is blown, the team with possession at the time of the inadvertent whistle may elect to either replay the down or accept the result of the play had the whistle not been inadvertent.

XI. Timing

1. Each game will consist of two (2) halves. Each half will be twenty (20) minutes in length.

2. The clock will begin running on the snap of the ball on the first play of each half. The clock will remain running at all times, stopping only:

- A. During a team timeout,
- B. During an official's timeout,
- C. During a coach's challenge,
- D. At the two-minute warning in the second half, (only when the game is within 8 points)
- E. When required during discretionary time.

3. Every play, once the ball is spotted, one of the officials will mark the rush line. Once the rush line is marked, the time-keeping official will blow a ready-whistle. The offensive team will then have thirty (30) seconds to snap the ball. The offensive team must not snap the ball before the ready whistle is blown.

4. Each team will have two (2) timeouts per half. Each timeout will be 30 seconds in length.

5. Discretionary time will start at the two-minute warning in the second half if the teams are within eight (8) points in score. During discretionary time, the clock will stop:

- A. When the ball carrier becomes down by running out of bounds,
- B. When an incomplete pass is thrown,
- C. At the end of any play on which there is a penalty,
- D. After any play resulting in a change of possession,
- E. When a touchdown or safety is scored.

Note: If such a score takes the score difference outside of eight (8) points, discretionary time will end and the clock will continue to run. Also, if the score is not within eight (8) points at the

two-minute warning, any score bringing the difference within eight (8) points will start discretionary time.

6. During discretionary time, a stopped clock will restart on the next snap of the ball.

Exception:

If the clock is stopped ONLY because of the calling of an offensive penalty or an official's time out, the clock will restart on the ready whistle.

7. During discretionary time, the clock will remain stopped during any extra point attempts. It will restart on the first snap of the following possession.

8. If at the end of regulation time the scores are tied, the teams will go into overtime.

9. Overtime will start with a coin toss, called by home team, to decide who will take first possession. Each team will have three (3) plays starting from their opponent's 12-yard line. At the end of the first team's possession, the other team must match or beat any score.

A. League Play - If after one possession the teams are still tied, another coin toss will take place. The winner of the coin toss will choose offense or defense and a single possession will take place. If the offensive team scores they win, if the defensive team prevents a score they win.

B. Playoffs/Tournament – If after one possession each the teams are still tied, first possession will alternate and the process is repeated.

Note: In the second overtime or later, teams must attempt a two-point conversion after scoring a touchdown.

Note: After the 1st overtime the team calling the coin toss will alternate.

XII. Penalties

1. Game officials shall have sole authority on calling all penalties. The head official on the game will have the right to overrule a penalty called by any other official(s).

2. Offensive Penalties and their definitions:

Offsides – Any player standing on or over the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

False Start – Any player, after becoming set, making any motion towards the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball; the center making any movement simulating a snap without completing the snap.

Note: It is not a false start for the QB to not take the ball immediately from the center.

A false start shall not be called on the center until he makes movement to put the ball back down.

Illegal Shift – Having two or more players in motion at the time of the snap.

Note: Players not set for a full second prior to the snap will be considered in motion for the purpose of this rule.

Blocking – Any player making a movement to intentionally deter a defender from reaching the ball carrier.

Illegal Contact – Any player intentionally initiating contact with a defender; a ball carrier not avoiding a planted defender.

Illegal Run – A ball carrier running the ball across the line of scrimmage when the ball was snapped from the no-run zone; any attempted pitch or lateral.

7-Second Violation – The QB failing to pass or handoff the ball within seven (7) seconds of the snap.

Delay of Game – Failing to snap the ball within thirty (30) seconds of the official blowing the ready whistle; snapping the ball before the ready whistle.

Flag Guarding – A ball carrier using their hands/arms to prevent their flag from being pulled; a ball carrier jumping or diving to advance the ball. Any offensive player running with the ball carrier once they are across the line of scrimmage. If a ball carrier flag guards in their own end zone, it is a safety.

Illegal Forward Pass – Any player throwing a pass from over the line of scrimmage; any player catching a pass behind the line of scrimmage.

Pass Interference – Any player making contact with a defender attempting a catch without being in the action of attempting a catch himself; pushing off of a defender to make a catch.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Any player, coach, or spectator committing any action deemed to be unsportsmanlike. This includes but is not limited to foul language, spiking the ball, inciting violence, trash talk, or arguing with officials.

3. **Defensive Penalties and their definitions:**

Offside – Any player standing on or over the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

Illegal Rush – Any player not behind the rush line at the time of the snap that crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff; any rusher jumping/raising hands once across the line of scrimmage; any rusher yelling or screaming at the passer.

Illegal Contact – Any player intentionally initiating contact with an offensive player; moving directly into the path of the ball carrier and making contact with him.

Holding – Any player grabbing the jersey or uniform of an offensive player; any player making contact with the ball carrier hindering his forward progress.

Pass Interference - Any player making contact with a receiver attempting a catch without being in the action of attempting a catch himself; any player not giving right of way to a receiver running his route.

Illegal Flag Pull – Pulling the flag of an offensive player before he makes contact with the ball; any player leaving the ground in an attempt to pull a flag.

Roughing the Passer – Any rusher, initiating ANY contact with the passer, above the waste or in an excessive manner, regardless of intent. (Sole discretion of League officials)

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Any player, coach, or spectator committing any action deemed to be unsportsmanlike. This includes but is not limited to spiking the flag of an opponent, inciting violence, trash talk, or arguing with officials.

4. The following is a chart showing the yardage and assessments of all penalties:

DEFENSE:

<u>Infraction</u>	<u>Marked From</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
Offside	Scrimmage	5 Yards + First Down
Pass Interference	Spot Foul	Automatic First Down
*If penalty occurs in end zone the ball will be placed on the 1-yrd line.		
Illegal Flag Pull*	Spot Foul	5 Yards + First Down
Illegal Rush	Scrimmage	5 Yards + First Down
Illegal Contact (Initiating)	Scrimmage	5 Yards + First Down
Holding a Ball Carrier	Spot Foul	5 Yards + First Down
Stripping or Tackling*	Spot Foul	5 Yards + First Down
Roughing the Passer	Scrimmage	15 Yards + First Down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Scrimmage	15 Yards + First Down
Illegal Play	Scrimmage	5 Yards + First Down

***If an illegal flag pull, holding, stripping or tackling is called on the last defender, a touchdown is awarded.**

OFFENSE:

<u>Infraction</u>	<u>Marked From</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
Delay of Game	Scrimmage	5 yards & Loss of Down
7 Second Violation	Dead Ball	Consumes Down
Offside / False Start	Scrimmage	5 yards & Loss of Down
Illegal Play	Scrimmage	5 yards & Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass	Scrimmage	5 yards & Loss of Down
Illegal Contact*	Scrimmage	5 yards & Loss of Down
*Holding or bumping a defender, not avoiding contact, blocking, etc		
Pass Interference	Scrimmage	5 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding*	Spot Foul	5 yards & Loss of Down
*Stiff arm, holding the flag, slapping a hand away, diving or jumping, etc.		
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Scrimmage	15 yards & Loss of Down

Unsportsmanlike Conduct fouls may result in team warnings and or player/coach ejections.

Examples: Use of vulgar language, trash talking, tackling, or intentional rough play.

Incidental contact resulting from the normal running of play is a judgment call and will be determined by the referees

Players cannot dive for first down or TD

Any play not covered in the rule book is subject to be penalized as an illegal play

Any offensive penalty that occurs IN the End Zone is a safety.

5. The opposing team, with the exception of a dead ball foul, can decline any penalty.

6. On any play in which both teams commit a penalty; the down will be replayed from the previous line of scrimmage.

7. On any play in which there is more than one penalty on one team, the opposing team may only choose to accept one penalty.

Exception:

If one of the penalties is Unsportsmanlike Conduct, the team may accept both penalties.

8. A half cannot end on a play in which the defensive team was penalized, unless the offense declines the penalty. The offensive team will have one un-timed down. After this down, the half is over.

9. Any penalties occurring during a dead ball will be assessed from the dead ball spot. If the dead ball penalty follows a touchdown, the team will have the choice to take the penalty on the extra point attempt or on the ensuing possession.

10. No penalty shall take a team more than half the distance towards their own goal line.

Exception:

Defensive Pass Interference will place the ball at the spot of the foul.

11. All offensive penalties will be an immediate dead ball.

Exception:

Illegal Forward Pass and Pass Interference penalties shall not be blown dead until the defense has no further chance to intercept the ball.

12. Any player or coach receiving a second Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty in a game will be immediately ejected. An Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty called on a team's sideline may be placed on the head coach at the officials' discretion.

XIII. Scoring

1. The games will be scored as follows:

Touchdown – 6 points

Extra Point from 5-yard line – 1 point

Extra Point from 12-yard line – 2 points

Safety – 2 points