



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES AND INFO





Flag Football Rules/Information

- ❖ Game time is forfeit time! The winning team of a forfeited game will receive fourteen points for the point differential of that game. Teams with less than the required number of participants at the scheduled start time will forfeit the contest.
- ❖ Teams are responsible for keeping their spectators under control. Misconduct of spectators, players or coaches can result in assessment of a penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain in the area designated by the officials.
- ❖ The official and or supervisor have the power to make decisions on any matters or questions not specifically covered in the rules.

PLAYING FIELD:

All flag football games will be played on an 80-yard field. The home team will be responsible to have the field “ready for play” by game time. Cones or other markers will be placed on the goal lines, the end lines, both 20-yard lines, and the 40-yard line. Lines will be marked by paint or chalk. The width of the field shall be 160 feet, which is the same measurement for the tackle football fields.

The team area is located between the 20-yard markers. Only players, coaches, officials, MPR recorders (no more than 3 people), down marker holder and water carriers are allowed inside the field area. Coaches and team members are required to stay within this area. A team will get 2 warnings, then a 5 yard penalty will be assessed.

Spectator area is to be roped/marked off. The spectator area is designated as five yards from the sideline. Spectators are not allowed in the team area.





The GAME COMMISSIONER shall ensure that the playing surface is safe for play PRIOR to the start of the game. Caution should be given to sprinklers, holes, rocks, or other objects that could prove hazardous to our players. The liability of the field conditions rests on the GAME COMMISSIONER'S shoulders.

PLAYERS:

- All players must be recorded on the roster and waiver form (with personal signature) before they can participate.
- A team shall consist of eleven players. A team can play with a minimum of 10 players with the agreement of both head coaches.
- The offensive team must have any 7 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
- NO players should assume a 3-point stance.
- Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time outs.
- Minimum Play Rule (MPR): Coaches must focus on letting all players play. The goal for the league is to get each player a minimum of 10 plays per game (5 per half). This includes all players in good standing (attending practices and games)

COACHES:

One coach may be on the field at all times during the game. The rest of the coaching staff must be at their designated areas on the sidelines. Coaches are reminded to be careful of their language and actions during the game. You are a role model and example to your team, parents, and fans.

HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Select a responsible adult to serve as the GAME COMMISSIONER for each game.
2. Choose a dependable adult to hold the down marker for each game. (Closed toe shoes required)
3. Your flag color will be RED, unless agreed upon earlier.

Teams are responsible for keeping their spectators under control. Misconduct of spectators, players or coaches can result in assessment of a penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain in the area designated by the officials.

PRACTICES/GAMES:



1. For the first two weeks, divisions may practice 12 hours a week until regular season at the locations approved by the Board.
2. After the first two weeks, the routine schedule kicks in and consists of 6 hours per week until the end of the season.
3. Games will be scheduled for Saturdays at various home fields starting at 8:00 am.
4. All players must participate in at least 4 practices before playing in a game.

FOOTBALL:

Your team will use a Wilson Brand football (provided it meets the requirements) during your offensive downs. The football **MUST** be provided to the officiating crew on the **FIRST DOWN** of your series.

Football will be of leather or composite leather material. Freshman Flag will use only Pee-Wee Size Footballs & the Sophomore Flag will use only Junior Size Footballs.

Each team is responsible for bringing their game ball(s).

FLAGS/SHIRTS/EQUIPMENT

Players must wear two HIFA approved same length flags attached to a belt no to exceed to length of the players leg. The approved flags allowed could be secured by velcro or suction (pop flags). The flags must be attached with the flag on the outside of the body and the attachment on the body side. All flags must be worn on the players' hips for each play. Each coach on the field is to ensure that this is done. Failure to wear flags properly (especially on offense) could result in the play being declared "dead" where he/she could have been de-flagged by the defense. Flag colors are **ONLY** red and yellow. Home flag color will be **RED**. All flag belts must be free of knots.

All players' shirts **MUST** be tucked into the shorts or pants completely before each play. Again, the coach on the field will ensure that process. All team members must wear the same color shirt. Shorts/pants **CANNOT** be the same color as the team's flag color. Players should not have pockets on their shorts or pants. Towels may not hang from a participant's waist or otherwise interfere with the removal of a flag.

Rubber cleated shoes will be allowed. Open toe, open heel or hard soled shoes will not be allowed. No metal cleats.

Mouthpieces are optional (no designs allowed).

Equipment such as billed hats, bandana's, braces worn above the waist, leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances, casts and all jewelry are strictly prohibited. Knee braces made of hard, non-yielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other hard substances covered with at least 1/2 inch of slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed.



Optional equipment (knee pads, elbow pads, soft head protection, etc.) will be allowed as long as it meets the requirements above.

Soft Helmets are MANDATORY starting the Fall season of 2018.

TIMING:

- Toss of the Coin – five minutes before the start of the game, the referee will conduct a captain's meeting in which he or she will designate which captain shall call the toss of the coin. The captain winning the toss will have a choice to receive for the first half or defer his/her option to the second half.
- All Levels of flag football games will consist of 2 (two) 25-minute running halves, with the exception of the 2nd half. The last two minutes of the 2nd half will be on “regulation clock” with stoppages for incomplete passes, a runner going out-of-bounds, touchdowns, safety, or on time-outs. Approximately four minutes before the end of the second half the referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the time left on the clock. The clock will restart on the snap.
- **2 minute Warning:** Only team and official time-outs can stop the clock. During the final two (2) minutes of the second half the clock will stop for:
 - Incomplete legal or incomplete illegal forward pass – clock starts on the snap.
 - Out-of- bounds – clock starts on the snap.
 - Safety – clock starts on the snap.
 - Team time-out - clock starts on the snap.
 - First down – dependent on the previous play.
 - Touchdown - clock starts on the snap (after the Try).
 - Penalty and administration – dependent on the previous play. (EXCEPTION: Delay of game – clock starts on the snap).
 - Referee’s time-out – clock starts on his/her discretion.
 - Touchback – clock starts on the snap.
 - Team A (offense) is awarded a new series – dependent on the previous play.
 - Team B (defense) is awarded a new series – starts on the snap. (ie. Interception)
 - Either team is awarded a new series following a legal punt - clock starts on the snap.
 - Team attempting to conserve time illegally – clock starts on the ready.
- Teams are allowed three, 60 second timeouts per half. No carryover from the 1st half.
- There will be a 5-minute break between the first and second half (also known as halftime). The officiating crew will have the “official time” for all games.



- The offensive team has 30 seconds to start a play after the ball is spotted (if not, loss of down). The intent of this rule is to keep the game moving and prevent intentional delays by the offensive team. The officials should work with the offensive team to keep the game moving.

SCORING:

Touchdown.....6 points
Safety.....2 points
Point After Try
P.A.T. (Pass caught in the end zone).....2 points
P.A.T. (Runner crossing goal line).....1 point
The defense CANNOT score on a P.A.T. attempt
There are NO field goal attempts.

MERCY RULE:

A mercy rule will not be necessary with a running clock game.

GAME RULES:

- A team shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line to gain (and earn a first down).
- An offensive team can only secure a first down by crossing the 20 or 40 yard lines unless there is a penalty (with an automatic first down stipulation).
- Flag Removal
 - When the flag is taken from the runner, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. The spot of the ball is determined at the point where the flag becomes detached, not where the flag falls to the ground.
 - If a flag inadvertently falls off, the ball is dead at that point.
 - A player may leave their feet to remove a flag.
 - The ball becomes dead when:
 - a legal de-flagging occurs.
 - the ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet.
 - a fumble hits the ground.
 - a snap from the center touches the ground. Officials discretion on the call.
- Each member of the offensive team is eligible to receive a pass unless the player voluntarily goes out of bounds during the play.
- A receiver is still eligible to catch the ball without a flag but is considered “down” at the point of reception.



- For an offensive lineman to be handed the ball, that player must make a 180-degree turn and face his/her goal line before becoming eligible.
- The center, after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may not move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion, not necessarily between the center's legs, from the spot designated by the ball marker. The ball may be moved with approval by the official due to poor field conditions.
- Before the snap, all offensive players must come to a complete stop for at least 1 full second. Only one offensive player may be in motion, and may not be moving towards the opponent's goal line at the time of the snap. If two or more players go in motion before the snap, then this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap.
- For a legal catch, a pass receiver must come down with at least one foot in bounds.
- Rush – The defense must line up at least 1 yard from the line of scrimmage. This is true even when the offensive team is less than one yard from the end zone or the zone line to gain.
- All offensive players must be momentarily within 15 yards of the ball. It must be clear who the eleven offensive players are on each play. The intent of this rule is to eliminate all sleeper or hideout plays. These plays will result in a 10 yard penalty for illegal participation.
- Fumbles
 - Fumbles are dead when the ball touches the ground.
 - The ball is put into play at the point where the ball first touched the ground.
 - Any passed or fumbled ball that does not touch the ground may be advanced by any player catching the ball.
 - A ball fumbled into the offensive team's end zone will result in a safety. If the ball is fumbled into the opponent's end zone the result is a touchback (opponent's ball on their 15 yard line).
- Touchback - The ball is placed on the 20 yard line after a touchback. The team puts the ball into play with a series of downs.
- Safety – The ball is kicked off from the 20 yard line after a Safety.
- Tie score at the end of regulation during the playoffs - The field captains shall be brought together and a coin toss will be conducted. During the regular season, NO overtime periods shall be played. During the playoffs, the overtime format will be repeated until a winner is declared. The winner of the toss shall be given the option of either offense or defense. If additional overtime periods are necessary, captains will alternate choices. Each team will be given 4 downs from the same 20 yard line to score a touchdown. If the first team scores, then the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to win or tie the game. If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, the game will be over. If not, the ball will be placed at the 20 yard line to begin the series of four downs. Conversion attempts will be held as in regulation play. Each team is entitled to one time out per overtime period.



FLAG REMOVAL

- In an attempt to remove the flag from the ball carrier, defensive players may contact the body of an opponent with his or her hands. A defensive player may not hold, push or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.
- No player shall trip an opponent, contact an opponent who is on the ground, make unnecessary contact with an opponent, deliberately dive or run into an opponent or tackle the ball carrier. Penalty: personal foul, 10 yards (flagrant offenders will be ejected from the game and possibly suspended for the remainder of the season).
- Covering Flags: A 10 yard penalty will be assessed. (No warnings will be given)
- Attempting to steal the ball or stripping of the ball is legal.

BLOCKING

- Blocking CANNOT be done with the elbows or forearms. Extended arms are legal prior to initial contact with the defense.
- No THRUST BLOCKING allowed.
- The center is vulnerable so no direct hit by the defense is acceptable. It will result in a 10-yard penalty.

INJURY

- If an injured player delays the game and the officials stop the clock, the injured player must sit out at least one play.

KICKING/PUNTING

The opening kickoff for both halves will take place from the kicking team's 30-yard line with the receiving team being 20-yards away. The only exception would be a penalty assessed at the end of the 1st half, which is enforced in the 2nd half. No matter where the ball is placed, the receiving team will place their players no closer than 20-yards away.

During scrimmage play, the offensive team MUST declare its intent before the snap of the 4th down or going for the first down prior to the snap. This declaration will be made to the referee, who will immediately inform the defensive team. If the team elects to punt, BOTH teams are to remain motionless and set. NO RUSHING FROM DEFENSE! If the snapped ball is dropped by the punter (who is a minimum of 5 yards from the center), the punter may pick up the ball and proceed with the punt. This is the ONLY play where a dropped ball can be picked up without being blown dead by the officials.

During a kickoff, a ball is declared to be "free" after traveling 20-yards or more and the team that touches the ball first will be on offense. If the kicking team touches or recovers the ball after it has gone 20-yards or more, no advance will be allowed. However, the ball will belong to the receiving team if the ball is "downed" prior to traveling 20-yards.



There are NO field goal attempts.

CLARIFICATION

A defensive player may not remove an offensive player's flag when the offensive player does not have the ball. Similarly, the defensive player may not remove the quarterback's flag after the ball has been thrown. Penalty: Illegal flag removal, 10 yards.

A defensive player may not remove an offensive receiver's flag prior to the receiver touching the ball. Penalty: defensive pass interference, 10 yards and automatic first down.

A defensive player must avoid running into the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer's hand or arm, whether or not he or she touches the ball, it is roughing the passer. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic first down.

A player may not fasten his or her flags to his or her uniform or belt other than prescribed in the rules. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic disqualification. The official will check the flags of each person who scores a touchdown or conversion. **Following a touchdown or conversion, if a player removes their flag prior to being checked by the official the score will be nullified.**

The defensive players are NOT to say words or sounds while the offensive team is communicating its verbal signals.

Pushing or chucking a receiver/defender is not allowed. Penalty: Illegal use of hands. 10 yards.

An offensive player may not dive or hurdle over, through or into an opponent who is on their feet.

Any dead-ball penalty occurring after a touchdown will be assessed on the extra point. Any dead-ball penalty occurring after a conversion will be assessed on the next play from scrimmage at the 15 yard line.

An offensive player may not stiff arm or guard his or her flags by blocking them with their hands or the ball.

When an inadvertent whistle is blown by an official, the ball is dead at the point when the whistle was blown. The team against which the inadvertent whistle was blown has the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.

All players on the field must wear flags. Failure to do so will result in a five-yard penalty, if noticed prior to the ball being snapped.

Spiking/Kneeling the ball is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Penalty: 10 yards.

The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a play. The offensive team, if they choose, may bring the ball into the huddle.

The 25 second clock begins when the official signals "ready for play."

SUMMARY OF FOULS AND PENALTIES

Major penalties will result in 10-yard losses (or half the distance to the goal line) while minor penalties are 5-yard losses.

Loss of 5 yards:



1. Required equipment worn illegally.
2. Delay of game.
3. Illegal Snap.
4. False start.
5. Encroachment.
6. Illegal Procedure.
7. Illegal forward pass (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).
8. Intentional grounding (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).
9. Helping the runner: the runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate.

Loss of 10 yards:

1. Delaying the start of either half.
2. Two or more consecutive encroachments during same interval between downs. The initial encroachment 5 yards.
3. Illegal participation.
4. Offensive pass interference. (Loss of down)
5. Defensive pass interference. (Automatic 1st down)
6. Illegally secured flag on touchdown. (Revoke touchdown and loss of down)
7. Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
8. Spiking the ball or not returning the ball to the official during the dead ball.
9. Hurdling. (An attempt by a player to jump (hurdle) with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one or both feet)
10. Thrust Blocking (leaving feet to attack an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body to make contact in the head or neck area).
11. Unnecessary contact of any sort.
12. Roughing the passer. (Automatic 1st Down)
13. Defensive use of hands.
14. Guarding the flag belt (and stiff arming).
15. Illegal batting.
16. Illegal flag removal.
17. Personal foul.
18. Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct. (Disqualification)
19. Flagrant personal fouls. (Disqualification)



20. Intentionally tampering with flag. (Disqualification)

21. Illegal equipment.

HIFA promotes and encourages good sportsmanship. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated in any form.