

Elementary School Sports

Flag Football Rules

Overview

Elementary School Flag Football is a five-on-five game filled with fun and action. In this game, the offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone. Running and passing plays are allowed, although there are “no-running zones” at midfield and near each goal line. The defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer and grabs flags to make “tackles.”

The Basics

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on 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 will change sides after the first half (20 minutes of game play). Possession changes to loser of coin toss and the clock does not stop.

Players/Scoring

Teams must field a minimum of five players at all times.

Timing/Overtime

Games are played in (2) 20 minute halves with running time. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. Overtime is sudden death meaning the first team to score wins. Possession will be determined by a coin toss.

Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 45 seconds to snap the ball in the K/1 league, 30 seconds to snap the ball in 2nd/3rd and 4th/5th grade divisions. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.

Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time-out per half.

Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

Scoring

Touchdown:
6 points

Extra point:

1 point (played from 3 yard line for K/1 and 5-yard line for 2/3 and 4/5) or
2 points (played from 10 yard line for K/1 and 12-yard line for 2/3 and 4/5)

Safety:
2 points

Running

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs on each individual play.
- "No-running zones" located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw or pitch the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball leaves the QB's hands, 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.
- Laterals and pitches are allowed.

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback (excluding K/1) if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage). Coach is QB in K/1 and not able to receive passes.
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

- Shovel passes are allowed.
- The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock" for 2/3 and 4/5 Divisions, 10 seconds for K/1 Division. If a pass is not thrown within the ten (K/1) or seven seconds (2/3 and 4/5), play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the pass clock rule no longer is 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. Interceptions can be advanced by defensive team.

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:

- Ball carrier's flag is pulled
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds
- Touchdown or safety is scored
- Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
- Ball carrier's flag falls out

Note: 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. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. No rushing allowed in K/1 Division.
- Once the ball is released from the QB, 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 is 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 game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

Penalties

- All penalties will be called by the referee. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Defense:

Offsides

Five yards and automatic first down

Interference

10 yards and automatic first down

Illegal contact

(holding, blocking, etc.)

10 yards and automatic first down

Illegal FLAG pull

(before receiver has ball)

10 yards and automatic first down

Illegal rushing

(starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)

10 yards and automatic first down

Offense:

Illegal motion

(more than one person moving, false start, etc.)

Five yards and loss of down

Illegal forward pass

(pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)

Five yards and loss of down

Offensive pass interference

(Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)

10 yards and loss of down

Flag guarding

10 yards (from line of scrimmage) and loss of down

Delay of game

Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

Attire

- Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
- Official Elementary School shirt must be worn during play.
- Note: There are no kickoffs, and no blocking is allowed.

Diagrams

