

## North Metro Football League (NMFL) Flag Football Rules Grid

<b>Fall 2017</b>	<b>Junior Division (K-1st Grade)</b>	<b>Senior Division (2nd-3rd/4th-5th Grade)</b>
<b># of Officials</b>	1 official minimum. Program may request more than 1.	1 official minimum. Program may request more than 1.
<b>Field</b>	80-yard field (100-yards with endzones). 50+ yards wide.	100-yard field (120-yards with endzones). 50+ yards wide.
<b>Clock</b>	Four 8 Minute quarters. Running Clock. During the last minute of the 2nd & 4th quarter the clock will be stopped for all penalties, TO's, first downs, injuries, incomplete passes, etc. as outlined in HS Tackle Rules. After a TD the clock will stop for an untimed PAT. Once the PAT is dead the clock will be started immediately. The clock will be running as the teams transition from offense to defense.	
<b>Play Clock</b>	Offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball after the ready signal	
<b># of Players</b>	8 vs 8 (forfeit if a team cannot field 7 players)	
<b>Ball</b>	Pee Wee Size	2nd-3rd Pee Wee Size / 4th-5th Junior Size
<b>Halftime</b>	5 minute	5 minutes
<b>Overtime</b>	No overtime games can end in a tie.	
<b>Timeouts</b>	2 per half (1 minute in length)	
<b>Coaches on Field</b>	2 coaches allowed on the field all season. Coaches may give instructions to their team even after the huddle is broken but must remain 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Coaches may not give instruction after the Center touches the ball.	1 coach allowed on the field all season. Coaches may give instructions to their team even after the huddle is broken but must remain 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Coaches may not give instruction after the Center touches the ball.
<b>1st Down Marker</b>	10 yards	
<b>Scoring</b>	<u>Touchdown</u> = 6 points. <u>Safety</u> = 2 points. <u>PAT</u> = 1 point for a run <u>PAT</u> = 2 points for a pass. (All PAT's initiate from the 3-yard line)	
<b>Mercy Rule</b>	When a team is ahead by 21 points or more the winning team must change out the entire backfield, and those players are not allowed to run or catch the ball while on offensive. If the lead drops below 21 points, this rule no longer applies.	
<b>Line of Scrimmage</b>	Offense must have min of 4 plays on the LOS. Guard splits can be no wider than each guard extending his arms and touching fingertips with the Center. Defense may not line up or rush in the A gaps (between the Center and Guard). Defense must line up over the Guard.	Offense must have min of 4 players on the LOS. Offensive players can line up as wide as they'd like, but they lose the protection of the Defense not being allowed to rush the A gap if the Offensive line is lined up wider than where the Guard and the Center can touch finger tips. If the Guard and Center are lined up where they can touch finger tips, the Junior League LOS rule applies.

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<b>Blocking (Offense)</b>	An offensive blocker must be on his feet at all times while blocking. The O-line except for the Center must be in a standing position or with hands on knees at the LOS. 3-point stance not allowed. Blocks should be done with arms slightly extended and hands open. Blockers may not use hands to hold or grasp. No two on one blocking beyond LOS. Cross body blocking, roll blocking, butting, elbowing, and knee blocking are not permitted.	
<b>Blocking (Defense)</b>	Defensive player may only use his hands on the blocker's body. Defensive player may not run over, push, or pull a blocker away from him. He may push the blocker sideways once past the blocker but may not push the blocker down.	
<b>DeFlagging</b>	Ball carrier cannot be held while defense tries to remove flag. Ball carrier cannot be pushed out of bounds. Defender may not dive to deflag ball carrier. Defenders may not contact the passer except in an attempt to deflag him. Contact other than in an attempt to deflag is roughing the passer. The deflagger shall hold the flag high over his head until the ball carrier takes it back. A player may not deflag an opponent unless that opponent is in possession of the ball, faking as though in possession of the ball, or if that player had just released or lost possession of the ball. <b>Ball is to be spotted where the ball was when the player was deflagged</b> (like tackle football). (Ex1: Player is deflagged while extending ball across plane of the endzone but body and flag short of endzone. Ruling: Score) (Ex2: Player is deflagged while extending ball across line to gain but body and flags are short of line to gain. Ruling: 1st down)	
<b>Kickoffs/Punts</b>	Kickoffs- Not allowed. Each half starts with the ball being placed at the 30-yard line. After a score the ball is placed on the 30-yard line. Punts- not allowed. If Offense wants to punt, the ball will be spotted 20-yards from the last dead ball spot but never inside the opponents 15-yard line.	

- This is FLAG football. Incidental contact will occur, but unnecessary and/or deliberate and/or severe contact must be penalized. Safety is our number one concern and responsibility.
- Pregame coin toss:
  - Winning Captain has his choice of offense or defense.
  - Losing captain will select offense or defense to begin 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
- Teams will change sides at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
- Neutral zone will be established by placing 2 disks about 1 yard apart from the nose of the football to where the defensive line may line up.
- At the conclusion of each down, the referee will place the ball in the center of the field equal distance from each sideline. Hash marks will not be utilized to spot the ball.
- There is NO one hand touch in this league. If a player in possession of the ball loses a flag and/or belt, the play is dead and the ball is spotted where the player lost the flag and/or belt. If a player loses a flag and/or belt before obtaining possession of the ball that player is ineligible to handle the

- All players on offense are eligible receivers/ball carriers/passers.
- A pass is complete as long as the receiver catches and controls the ball while one foot is inbounds and the other foot is either in the air or also inbounds.
- If a team fails to make a 1<sup>st</sup> down, the opponent will be awarded the ball at the point where the ball was last declared dead.
- An interception is a live ball and should not be blown dead (unless it occurs during a conversion attempt).
- If an official timeout is called to attend to an injured player, that player must leave the field for a minimum of one snap.
- Center must snap the ball between his legs.
- Defense cannot strip the ball.
- Equipment:
  - Mouthpiece and flag belt are mandatory. Knee and elbow pads are allowed but optional.
  - No padding such as shoulder pads, hip pads, hard head protectors, or face-masks will be worn. Soft helmets are optional.
  - Stick-um is not allowed on the football or any players hands.
  - A player wearing a cast of any kind may not play. A cast is not allowed even if it is padded.
  - Shoes must be rubber cleats or sneaker. All metal or plastic cleats are prohibited.
  - Eyeglasses must be athletically approved construction with non-shattering safety glass.
  - No jewelry.
  - Pants/Shorts must be a solid color and cannot be the same color as flags.
  - Jerseys/Shirts must be tucked in (so they do not cover flags), and they must be numbered on both front and back of jerseys.
  - Flag belt must have 3 flags with one flag on each side and the third flag in the rear; flags must be sewn to belt; belt must have a clip holding the belt together..
- Ball becomes dead:
  - When any part of the ball carrier, other than his hands or feet, touches the ground.
  - When the ball is caught simultaneously by opponents (ball is awarded to the offensive team)
  - If the pass receiver or ball carrier has a missing flag (ball is dead at that spot).
  - If an extra point try is intercepted.
  - On all fumbles; once the ball hits the ground the play should be called dead. The ball is awarded to the team with the last possession at the spot of the fumble. If the offensive team had the last possession, a loss of down is assessed.
    - Exception to fumble rule: if the snap from the Center hits the ground before it reaches the QB, the QB may field the ball. It must be fielded cleanly by the QB (only applicable behind the LOS.) If the QB does not field the ball cleanly, the play is blown dead, and the ball is spotted where it hit the ground. This rule may be ignored by the officials if they feel that the QB is at risk of injury while attempting to field a fumble.

## **SUMMARY OF PENALTIES**

The offended team will always have the choice of accepting or declining a penalty. If the penalty is declined, the down will remain the same as if no infraction occurred. Also, when the penalty is greater than the distance to the goal line, the penalty shall be half the distance to the goal line.

### **LINE OF SCRIMMAGE:**

- A. Offside, defensive, or offensive (5 yards)
- B. Illegal Snap (5 yards)
- C. Failure to observe the 30-second rule (5 yards)
- D. Illegal Motion- more than one backfield man in motion (5 yards)
- E. Illegal Formation, offense (5 yards)
- F. Defender rushing between Offensive Guards (1<sup>st</sup>: Warning, 2<sup>nd</sup>: 5 yards)

### **PASSING:**

- A. If an illegal forward pass is thrown and intercepted, the play will continue until the ball is declared dead. The intercepting team has the option of possession from that spot or accepting the penalty (5 yards)
- B. Passer crosses the line of scrimmage before throwing a pass (5 yards and loss of down)
- C. Intentional Grounding (5 yards and loss of down)
- D. Offensive Pass Interference (15 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down)
- E. Defensive Pass Interference (first down from spot of infraction for the line of scrimmage.)

### **DELAY OF GAME:**

- A. Continuing to play after the ball is dead (5 yards from point of infraction)
- B. Ball not snapped within 30 seconds after ball is marked ready for play (5 yards from point of infraction)
- C. Unnecessary delay of game for any reason (5 yards from the line of scrimmage)

### **FLAG WEARING AND DE-FLAGGING:**

- A. Tackling (10 yards from point of infraction)
- B. Wearing the flags in an illegal manner (5 yards from the line of scrimmage)
- C. Flag Guarding: Ball carrier using his hands to prevent a defensive player from de-flagging (10 yards from the point of infraction)
- D. Holding, pushing, or hitting the ball carrier while de-flagging (10 yards from line of scrimmage or from the point of infraction, whichever is greater)
- E. Leaving one's feet while de-flagging (10 yards from the point of infraction)
- F. Wearing one flag (5 yards from the line of scrimmage)

### **ILLEGAL HAND-OFF:**

- A. If the ball is handed forward beyond the scrimmage line (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down)
- B. Snapping a ball to a lineman (5 yards) (No center sneaks are allowed)

### **ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS:**

- A. More than nine (9) men on the field (5 yards from the line of scrimmage)

- B. Substitution(s) while the ball is in play or before it is declared dead (5 yards from the line of scrimmage, or the point of infraction, whichever is greater)
- C. Disqualified player entering the game (10 yards from the line of scrimmage)

**BLOCKING:**

- A. Leaving feet to block (10 yards)
- B. Cross-body blocking or roll blocking (10 yards)
- C. Illegal use of hands by blocker (10 yards)
- D. Holding a defensive player (10 yards from the point of infraction)
- E. Defensive player blocking or pushing the ball carrier out of bounds (10 yards)
- F. Butting, elbowing, or knee blocking (10 yards)
- G. Defensive Player using hands illegally (5 yards)
- H. More than two blockers for the ball carrier (on one defensive player) beyond the line of scrimmage (5 yards)
- I. Clipping (10 yards)
- J. Interlock Blocking (10 yards from point of infraction)

**BALL CARRIER:**

- A. Stiff-arming (10 yards from point of infraction)
- B. Lowering head to drive or run into a defensive player (10 yards from point of infraction)
- C. Use of head (10 yards from point of infraction)
- D. Use of hands or arms to protect flag (10 yards from point of infraction)
- E. Spinning or hurdling (5 yards from point of infraction)

**UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS:**

- A. Offensive or Defensive (1<sup>st</sup>: 15 yards, 2<sup>nd</sup>: ejection)

**UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:**

- A. Fighting (15 yards. Offenders ejected from the game)
- B. Defensive player pulling offensive player's flag to make him ineligible for play (15 yards)
- C. Insulting and abusive language (1<sup>st</sup>: 15 yards, 2<sup>nd</sup>: ejection)
- D. Coaches instructing the players after the Center has put his hand(s) on the ball (1<sup>st</sup>: Warning, 2<sup>nd</sup>: 5 yards)
- E. Interference with progress of the game by coaches or any other team personnel (15 yards)
- F. Illegal play (15 yards)
- G. Team leaving the field before game is completed (15 yards); Failure to return (Forfeit) Win for team remaining on the field.
- H. Coaches who fail to stay at least 10 yards from the line of scrimmage (15 yards)

## Flag Player Grade and Ages

The age of a player shall be determined as of September 1 of the current year.

The following table provides the grade and age schematic that will govern team make up:

K-1st Grade 7 and under years old

7 in 1st grade cannot turn 8 on or before September 1

Exception: Age 7 in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade as of 8/31 can go down one level

2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade 7-9 Year Olds

9 in 3rd grade cannot turn 10 on or before September 1

\*EXCEPTION: Age 9 in 4th grade as of 8/31 can go down one level

4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade 9-11 Year Olds

11 in 5th grade cannot turn 12 on or before September 1

\*EXCEPTION: Age 11 in 6th grade as of 8/31 can go down one level

\* EXCEPTIONS are to be used for players who have advanced a grade Participants who meet this criteria may move down 1 level.

This is meant to be used as an exception and are to be used in extenuating circumstances. Any team or organization found to be using this exception rule to strengthen a team shall be subject to game forfeitures and/or suspension from the league play. Players wishing to use this Exception Rule must fill out an NMFL Grade Exception Form and submit for consideration to the Executive Committee prior to certification date .