



OUTDOOR 8 MAN FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

(VERSION 2.0)

THE PLAYING FIELD

DIMENSIONS – The playing field will be a regulation sized football field.

MARKINGS - First down markers are positioned in set locations roughly every 20 yards (20, 40, 40, 20, yard lines.) First downs are only achieved by crossing these markers or through a penalty.

EQUIPMENT

THE BALL - Each team must provide an NCAA, or Pro Type Football fully inflated. The Referee shall be the sole judge as to whether all balls offered for play comply with these specifications.

FLAG BELTS - Each team will be provided “Triple Threat” flag belts, which must be returned after the game. In the event they are stolen, a **belt-restocking fee** may be charged to the team. A player caught with a “**tied**” or illegal flag belt may be ejected from the game and an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty assessed to their team. If the play resulted in a score, the points will be disallowed. Any hanging object on the ball carrier (such as towels, or playbook etc.) shall be considered illegal and shall be removed immediately. Uniform/Equipment penalty: 5-yard penalty will occur if not removed after a warning from the official.

ATTIRE

UNIFORMS - Teams will be required to bring BOTH light and dark shirts or jerseys. All members of the same team must wear the same like color jersey/shirt. No article of clothing may cover any portion of a player's flag (Flag Guarding). Officials should warn violators of this between plays. The lower uniform may be shorts, warm-ups, pants or any other type of athletic wear. Uniform/Equipment penalty: 5-yard penalty will be enforced if not corrected after a warning from the official.

CLEATS - Only molded cleats will be allowed for indoor play. Screw-ins, metal or metal tipped cleats will not be permitted. Any flat-soled or completely molded cleat shoes are acceptable. Players with illegal footwear are removed from the game until the footwear is removed and the team is penalized a Uniform/Equipment penalty: 5-yard penalty will occur if not removed after a warning from the official.

HATS – Baseball caps with the visor turned to the back of the players head is acceptable.

JEWELRY - No jewelry will be allowed including but not limited to necklaces, watches, bracelets, or hooped earrings. Uniform/Equipment penalty: 5-yard penalty will occur if not removed after a warning from the official.

THE GAME

PLAYERS - The game is to be played by two teams of 8v8. More than allotted number of players on the field is illegal, while less than eight (8) players is legal with a **minimum of six (6) players** needed. Penalty for too many players: 5 yards for illegal substitution or 10 yards for illegal participation



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CAPTAINS - At the beginning of the game, each team must designate a captain. The captain will act as sole representatives of their team in all communications with the officials.

ROSTERS - Teams may carry up to 16 players on their roster. Team rosters are frozen after the third game. Players cannot switch teams after this game. Players can be added throughout the season but must have participated in at least **four (4) games** to be eligible for the playoffs.

LENGTH OF THE GAME - The length of the game is 48 minutes, divided into two halves of 24 minutes. Running time with no clock stoppage is used in the first half. During the **final 2 minutes of the second half, if the game is within 8 points**, traditional clock stoppage will be used. This includes, when the ball carrier steps out of bounds, there is an incomplete pass, a change in ball possession, a score is achieved, and when there is a penalty. The clock will start as soon as the penalty has been accessed. Exception: Delay of game penalty - clock will start on the snap.

HALFTIME - Between the first and second halves, there shall be an intermission of **two (2) minutes**.

STARTING EACH GAME - A coin toss will determine the call. One of three choices may be called. You may DEFER until the second half. Meaning you can have the right to choose at that time. You may choose to receive the ball or you may choose which goal your team will defend. Teams will start their possession line designated for the facility except on penalties or interceptions.

TIME OUTS - Each team is allowed two time outs per half. Timeouts will not carry over into the second half. Charged time outs can be used at any time. The time clock will begin at the snap of the next play.

TIME BETWEEN PLAYS - The offensive team has **25 seconds** in which to snap the ball once the referee has spotted the ball after the previous play has been ruled dead. It shall be the responsibility of the offensive team to retrieve the ball. The referee will indicate by signaling to the offensive team when 10 seconds remains on the 25-second clock.

MERCY RULE - Should a team be trailing by **17 or more points** at the final "Two-Minute Warning" or by **25 points any time within 5 minutes** left of the second half, the referees shall **end the game** immediately. There will be no exception to this MERCY RULE.

FORFEIT GAMES – If your team fails to show up within 5 minutes of your game time, the game may be declared a forfeit. If a team forfeits twice in a season, they will be removed from the schedule with no refund. The winning team shall have a final score of 28-0 posted as the margin of victory (for net point purposes) for the forfeited game. All teams are required to pay ref fees for each game of their scheduled season even in the event of a forfeit.



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OFFENSE

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE - Offensive team must have at least **four (4) players** on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. If the offense fails to have (4) players on the line at the start of the play, a penalty will be called. 5 yards and replay the down.

MOTION - Only **ONE PLAYER** can be in motion at the snap of the ball and must be **running parallel to or away from** the line of scrimmage. Please note that more than one player can initially shift, however all players must be set before the player goes in motion. 5 yards and replay of the down.

CHARGING – All offensive players once receiving the ball must make an attempt to avoid contact with the defense. If an offensive player lowers their shoulder, or attempts to bull through a defensive player, a 10 yard penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul. A ball carrier may spin or jump, but must realize that while spinning or jumping he is in a "State of Non-Control" and should contact occur as a result of his uncontrolled momentum, he will be penalized. The ball carrier may jump over a player on the ground only in the effort to avoid injury, not for show.

The "Stiff Arm" is illegal. Penalty: 10 yards from L.O.S. (if behind the line) and repeat the down or from P.O.I. (if beyond the L.O.S.) and loss of down. (see also flag guarding)

OPEN HAND BLOCKING – **ALL blocking must contact a player between the waist and shoulders.** Contact can be made with **OPEN HANDS ONLY while blocking beyond the line of scrimmage.** Open hands can be thrust forward initially to contact an opponent inside their body frame. Hands cannot be thrust forward above the shoulders to contact an opponent on the neck, face, or head. Two on one blocking is allowed.

ELIGIBLE RECEIVERS – All players, **including the linemen,** are eligible to run down field and catch passes. Receivers can all line up on one side, there does not have to be a balanced receiver set.

FORWARD PASSES – The offensive team is only allowed one forward pass.

DIRECT SNAPS – Any player receiving the snap must be off the line of scrimmage and (2) yards from the center.

FLAG GUARDING - A ball carrier cannot guard their flags from the opponent while attempting to elude tacklers. Play will be dead at the spot of the foul and will result in a 10-yard penalty and loss of down, unless the ball carrier exceeds the 1st down mark by more than 10 yards.

DEFENSE

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE – All players must use a (2) point stance. Defensive team does not have to commit anyone to the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.

RUSHING - A rush is allowed on every down except for extra points or punts. The defense may **not**



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make contact with the center until the center raises his/her head AND takes a step in any direction.

BUMP AND RUN – Only one defensive player allows Bump and Run on a receiver within five (5) yards of the line of scrimmage. Penalty: 5 yards

TACKLING - A legal tackle is defined as pulling OFF the ball carrier's flag belt, without impeding his forward movement. **Incidental contact does not constitute a penalty against the offense or defense.** Tackling a ball carrier is illegal, as is aggressively shoving or pushing the ball carrier to the ground or out of bounds, which will result in a 10-yard penalty.

STRIPPING THE BALL – Players attempting to strip the ball and not attempting to pull a flag are subject to a personal foul penalty: 10 yards added to the end of the run.

FIELD & BALL POSITIONING

SPOTTING THE BALL - The ball will be placed according to the **position of the ball** at the time the flag was pulled.

PLAYER IS NOT WEARING FLAG BELT - 5 yard penalty.

BALL CARRIER INADVERTENTLY LOSSES HIS FLAG BELT during the play. Single hand touching of the ball carrier between the waist and shoulders will constitute a legal tackle.

BALL CARRIER INADVERTENTLY FALLS TO THE GROUND - A ball carrier who falls to the ground is considered down and will not be allowed to get back up to play.

FUMBLES - There are no fumbles. When the ball carriers loses control of the ball and it touches the ground the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted at the point it touched the ground as long as the spot is at or behind the ball carriers forward progress.

BAD SNAPS FROM CENTER - Any center snap that falls and touches the ground will be ruled dead at the spot of the ball hits the ground.

BALL PLACEMENT- The team that is receiving the ball at the start of the game or after any touchdown will start the ball at the spot designated for the facility. There are **NO KICKOFFS** to start play.



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PUNTING - The offensive team is allowed to punt the ball on 4th down to better their field position. The punt is a protected kick meaning that there is no rush. On 4th down the referee will ask the offense what they wish to do. The offense must declare what they will do i.e. go for 1st, or punt. The offense may not change their mind on 4th down unless they use a timeout. The offensive team must declare they are going to punt immediately after the official whistles ball ready for play. Both offense and defense are required to have 4 players on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball. Once snapped the defense may leave the line of scrimmage. The ball may not hit the ground before it reaches the punter, should the ball at any time go behind the punter or be snapped short of the punter it will be ruled dead at the spot. Punting team must give a 2-yard halo around a player attempting to catch the ball. The receiving team has unlimited bounces to field the ball. While the ball is still in motion, the return team may pick it up for advancement. Once stopped, the ball is dead. If a punt touches a player i.e. muff, the ball will be spotted where it touches the ground.

OVERTIME – If both teams are tied after regulation the game will go into overtime. The format will follow the High-School/College system of each team getting 4 downs to score from the 10-yard line. Both teams get equal chances to score, if **no winner is determined after two overtime periods the game will be considered a TIE. Playoff games will be played out with teams being required to attempt a (2) point conversion after the second overtime. In overtime the defense cannot score.**

SCORING

TOUCHDOWNS = 6 points

EXTRA POINTS = 1 point (from the 5-yard line) **or = 2 points** (from the 10-yard line)

You may kick, run, or pass for an extra point attempt. If you attempt to pass for the extra point and your pass is intercepted, the ball may be returned for (2) points.

When kicking for an extra point, once the offensive team has snapped the ball, the extra point attempt must be made within 5 seconds, to avoid delay of game situations.

FIELD GOALS: = 3 points

SAFETY = 2 points

PROTEST PROCEDURES - Any protests for misinterpretation or application of playing rules must be settled on the spot before the next play. The manager or captain **must have a copy of the rules in order to validate his protest.** Otherwise, "Delay of Game" will be called. If coach/manager is wrong in the protest there will be a loss of a time-out, if no time-outs remain a 5-yard penalty will be assessed. Remember only the captain, may confer with the officials. Judgment calls are not protest able. The League Director may assist in the protest. If no director is present, the head official will have the final say.



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OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

ENCROACHMENT/OFFSIDE - A lineman will be considered offside when he/she breaks the neutral zone prior to the snap, even if there is no contact made with the opponent. A false movement of the football by the center shall constitute offensive encroachment. These are Dead Ball fouls and the play shall be immediately whistled dead before play begins and 5 yards automatically marked off against the encroaching team unless a first down would occur (Captain's Choice).

If a player on either side lines up offside, the official will point toward that player's team side. It is the player's responsibility to look at the referee. If that player does not get back on side before the ball is snapped, he will be considered as having been offside at the moment of the snap.

ROUGHING THE PASSER – This is when the defender makes contact with the quarterback in a manner that is aggressive or that is not deemed an attempt to go after the flag belt. This includes when a defender tries to deflect the pass and makes contact with the quarterback's arm or hand. There may be no contact with the QB whatsoever, whether the ball has been tipped or not. 10-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down. If the pass is completed, then the penalty will be assessed from the end of the play.

INTENTIONAL GROUNDING – Intentional Grounding shall constitute an illegal forward pass. This when a quarterback throws the ball away to avoid a sack and there is not a receiver in the area. 5 yards loss of down.

HOLDING – This occurs when a player grabs the clothing of another player from the opposing team. This includes when the defender is attempting to pull a flag and misses and grabs the ball carriers shorts or shirt. 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul or end of the play of the hold was on the ball carrier.

PASS INTERFERENCE - After the pass is in the air, neither pass receiver nor defender may touch the other until one of them touches the ball, or else offensive or defensive pass interference may be called. Screening a receiver's eyes (face guarding) by a defender without playing the football is pass interference and shall be penalized as such.

- All offensive pass interference calls which are accepted by the defensive captain shall be marked off 10 yards from the previous line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- All defensive pass interference calls which are accepted by the offensive captain shall be marked at the point of infraction and awarded an automatic first down.

FLAG GUARDING – Flag guarding is defined as any attempt by the ball carrier to shield his/her flags from being pulled. **Stiff arming is defined as flag guarding.** This includes but is not limited to, swinging free hand, pushing an opponent's hand away, holding flags with free hand, lowering or dipping their shoulder, and using the ball to shield the flag. 10-yard penalty from point of infraction and loss of down (unless a first down is achieved after the penalty has been marked off).



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DIVING – At no time may a ball carrier leave his feet to advance the ball.

EXCEPTION - Jumping is allowed as long as the ball carrier maintains his feet. This will be deemed a football move and allowed. Jumping into or on a defensive player or falling forward is illegal. A 10-yard penalty (unless a first down is achieved after the penalty has been marked off) will be applied.

INADVERTENT WHISTLE - If the official whistles the play dead prematurely, the offense shall have the choice of: 1) accepting the ball where it was whistled dead, or 2) replaying the down.

FIGHTING AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – ZERO TOLERANCE

Fighting and unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. Players ejected by the referee for striking an opponent or official may face criminal charges. A player ejected for fighting (i.e. throwing a punch) will be suspended for 1 calendar year **PERIOD**. There will be no exceptions to this rule. **If you throw a punch, you are gone (IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU CONNECT)**. If you leave the field or bench to get involved you will be suspended as well. Even if your intentions are good, it is not your job to get involved. The staff and officials will handle this situation. Verbal abuse also will not be tolerated. Such abuse when deemed appropriate will be grounds for game ejection and possible league suspension.

TAUNTING

Over excessive celebration will also be grounds for a penalty or ejection. Penalty: 10 yards unsportsmanlike conduct

PLAYER BEHAVIOR

Any verbal badgering of officials or derogatory language between opposing players after officials have asked once for Team Captains' control may result in player(s) involved in the action being disqualified. The first derogatory action or language will be penalized 10 yards, the player(s) will be asked to sit for 4 plays and the team captain warned. The second derogatory action or language will cause player(s) to be ejected for a (2) game minimum, and a 10-yard penalty against the team of the disqualified player(s). Sideline players are subject to the same disqualification for abusive, obscene, or badgering language to either opposing players or officials. If the Captain or Coach of the penalized team cannot control the action of his players, the game can be forfeited at the discretion of the game officials. Illegally kicking or throwing the ball will result in a 10-yard penalty unsportsmanlike penalty.

TRASH TALKING AND TAUNTING:

No trash talking or taunting of opponents and/or referees either on the field or from the sidelines. This will result in a 10-yard penalty, the player(s) will be asked to sit for 4 plays and a team warning. The next offense will be an automatic two (2) game suspension. If conduct persists from the same team, official has the right to declare a forfeit. Referees can penalize a team for remarks from the sideline, including players or fans. Any fan that makes remarks to the field will have to leave the premises. That means no religious or racial remarks will be tolerated. Players will be ejected immediately! League reserves the right to suspend or banish a player(s) and/or team for verbal abuse and/or misconduct.



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THREATING AN OFFICIAL OR STAFF MEMBER:

Any verbal abuse of an official and/ or league representatives will result in a 10-yard penalty and an automatic discretionary suspension. If conduct persists from the same team, official has the right to declare a forfeit. This applies to fans as well. Any player that touches an official or director in anger will result in police charges being filed by the league, as well as lifetime banishment. The above goes for before, after or during any game. League reserves the right to suspend or banish a player(s) and/or team for verbal abuse and/or misconduct.

DRINKING/CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES: Drinking of alcoholic beverages is **NOT** allowed before or during games. Player(s) found drinking prior to or during their game would not be allowed to play. A player believed to be under the influence of a controlled substance will not be allowed to play.

ALL OTHER RULINGS (if applicable): Rules not covered by the Michigan Flag Football Association rulebook, will automatically defer to MHSAA rules and procedures.