

# RULE BOOK

## SPRING 2021



Revised 3/30/2021

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## I. GAME

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at the midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of the direction.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses the midfield, they have four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
6. All possession changes, **except** interceptions start on the offense's 5-yard line.
7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
8. PreK and Kinder - 4 vs 4 or 5 vs 5 (the **Coach** acts as the **QB**)  
1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade - 6 vs 6  
*(Subject to change; based on the number of participants per season)*

## II. TERMINOLOGY

Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and back of the end zone.
Line Of Scrimmage	(LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-To-Grain	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
Rush Line	An imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Offense	The squad with possession of the ball.
Defense	The squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
Downs (1-2-3-4)	The offensive squad has four attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. They must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties, live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
Dead Ball	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Whistle	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, half time, or the end of the game.
Inadvertent Whistle	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	The movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
Flag Guarding	An act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier's flag by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, or by block access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm.
Shovel Pass	A legal pass attempted beyond the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot put type manner.
Lateral	A backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

### III. ELIGIBILITY

1. All players' legal guardians must agree to the online waiver form at the NFLFLAG.com for their specific league before participating

### IV. EQUIPMENT

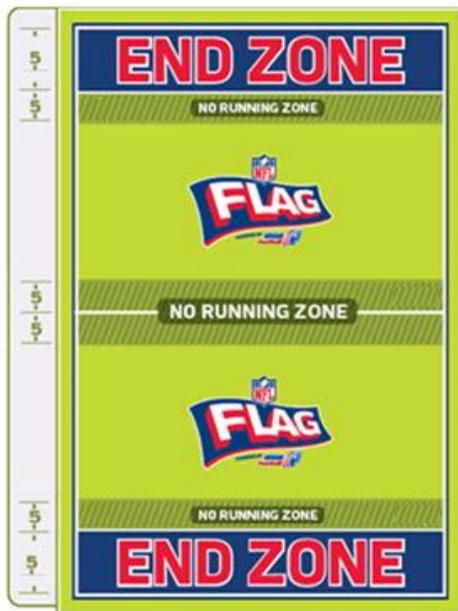
1. The league provides each player with a flag belt and NFL Flag powered by USA Football NFL jersey. Teams will use the football provided by the league, *no exceptions*.
2. Players must wear shoes. Football cleats are encouraged; however, cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed. Referee will check prior to game.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
4. Players must remove all watches, jewelry, hats and any other objects that officials deem hazardous.
5. Official NFL FLAG powered by USA Football NFL jerseys must be worn during play.
6. Players' jerseys **MUST** be tucked into the shorts.
7. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will *not* be delayed for player to tape up pockets or belt loops.
8. All games must be played with the **blue** or **brown** Play60 football...no exceptions.

## V. FIELD

1. The field dimensions:

**PreK** - 15 yards by 50 yards with two 5-yard end zones and a midfield line-to-gain.

**Kinder** - 20 yards by 60 yards with two 5-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain.



**1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade** - 25 yards by 70 yards with two 5-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. *No-Run Zones are in place.*

2. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. Each offensive squad approaches TWO No-Run Zones. While in the No-Run Zones (a 10-yard imaginary zone at midfield and 5 yards before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All Plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff. ***This does not apply to PreK and Kinder.***  
***Penalty for running in the No-Run Zone: Delay of game - loss of 5 yards & loss of down***
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

## VI. ROSTERS

1. Home teams wear dark color jerseys; visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
2. Teams must consist of at least four, with a maximum of twelve players.
3. Teams must start a game with a minimum of four players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field, but no fewer than four and the opposing team has to remove 1 of their players until the injured player returns.

## VII. **TIMING and OVERTIME**

1. Games are played in 4 quarters (PreK 6 minute quarters, Kinder 7 minute quarters, 1st-8th grade 10 minute quarters). The clock stops only for timeouts.
2. Halftime length: PreK and Kinder 3 minutes & 1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade 2 minutes.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced. *(1st-8th grade divisions only)*
4. Each team has one 60 second time out per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game should be determined a tie.
8. In playoff and championship situations (1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions only), an overtime (OT) Period will be used to determine a winner. OT format is as follows:
  - a. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at mid-field. There is no No-Run zone at mid-field.
  - b. Each team is allowed a minimum of one possession. The only exception is the first offensive team throws an interception. In this case, the game ends with the intercepting being returned for a touchdown (PICK6).
    - i. First possession choice goes to the winner of regulation coin toss.
    - ii. Each team gets a minimum of one possession.
  - c. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
  - d. There are no time-outs.
  - e. Each team will be scored based on yardage gained or points scored:
    - i. Yardage gained - each team will be given one complete series to drive the field as far as they can. The yardage gained will be noted by the official. The team with the most yards gained wins. If both teams score touchdowns and complete the same amount of points in conversion, the process is repeated.
      1. In the case of an interception, the ball will be marked at either the line of scrimmage or the point where the defender's flags were pulled, whichever is the more advantageous spot to the defense.
      2. If Team B intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown (PICK6), Team B wins.
    - ii. Scoring - Same as regulation. The team with the most yards gained wins.
      1. Winning through yardage is equivalent to winning by 6 points for tie breaker purposes.
  - f. Change of possession:
    - i. Change of possession takes place when Team A's forward progress is halted on downs or scores a touchdown.
    - ii. Team B takes possession at midfield as Team A and advances in the same direction.
  - g. Multiple OT periods:
    - i. First OT Period - shown above:
      1. Scoring teams can go for 1 or 2-point PAT.
    - ii. Second OT Period:
      1. First possession goes to loser of regulation coin toss.
      2. Scoring teams must go for 2-point PAT.

## VIII. SCORING

1. Touchdown: 6 points (*score is not kept for the PreK division*).
2. PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line)
3. Note: 1-point PAT is pass only; 2-point PAT can be run or pass.
  - a. A Team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt conversion (from the 12-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
  - b. Interceptions on conversions **can be returned for 2 points**.
4. Safety: 2 points
  - a. A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls off, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm in the end zone.
  - b. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty or a fumble in the end zone.
5. Forfeits are scored 14-0 for the winning team. (*excluding kinder division*)

Note: On bad snaps or snaps going through QB's hands and out the end zone, play is over and the ball is re-spotted at the line of scrimmage.

## IX. COACHES

1. PICK6 coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all times.
  2. PreK, Kinder, 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade divisions: Only 1 coach is allowed on the field to direct players according to need but must be at least 15 yards off the line of scrimmage or go to the sideline prior to the snap. Coaches can rotate or switch during the game. For 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions: Coaches are to remain on the sideline. Players can huddle at the sideline to get the play from the coach.
  3. 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade division ONLY: If a coach runs hurry up offense / no huddle, the defensive coach must avoid impeding the offense.
  4. Coaches are expected to adhere to PICK6's Coaches Code of Conduct.
  5. To avoid the perception of sexual harassment or misconduct:
    - a. Avoid being alone with a child
    - b. Do not engage in communication or interaction that are inappropriate to the coach-athlete relationship
    - c. Do not have physical contact with the children that are not reasonable intended to coach, teach, or demonstrate a skill.
    - d. (Please refer to the Coaches Conduct documents for full policy).
- \*\*TRICK PLAYS: Are allowed as long as the coach is not involved with the play.**
6. Referee score card- At the end of the game, coaches must **sign** the referee's scorecard to

confirm the score. If you fail to sign the referee's scorecard, you are waiving your right to dispute the score and the score is FINAL. We highly suggest that at the end of each quarter, that you or the asst coach confirm with the referee that the scorecard is correct.

## **X. LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL**

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. 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.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled "dead" when:
  - a. The ball hits the ground
  - b. The ball carrier's flag is pulled
  - c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored
  - e. The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
  - f. The ball carrier's flag falls out
  - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
  - h. The 7 second pass clock expires
  - i. Inadvertent whistle

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.

8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
  - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
9. A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a time out. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

## XI. RUNNING

1. **The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.** Forward progress will be measured by the players' front foot.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.
3. Direct handoffs, pitches, and tossing from behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs, pitches, and tossing may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. Pitches / tossing are also allowed beyond the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
  - a. "Center Sneak" play - The ball must completely leave the center's hand on the snap and he/she must step backwards off the line of scrimmage in order to receive a direct handoff from the QB before advancing the ball.
4. "No-Run Zones", located 5 yards before each end zone and 10 yards at midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run Zones in each drive - 10 yards at midfield and 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD.)

***This does not apply to PreK and Kinder.***
5. The player who takes the handoff, pitch, or toss can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Runners are to **avoid contact at all times** but may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
8. Spinning is allowed, but players may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball, while attempting to avoid a flag pull, is not allowed. Lateral moves to the left or right and vertical moves forward and backwards are permitted.
9. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
10. No Blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
11. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. **No running with the ball carrier.**
12. Flag Obstruction - All jerseys **MUST** be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

## **XII. PASSING**

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and can be received behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed and can be received behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a 7-second "pass clock". If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.
  - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

## **XIII. RECEIVING**

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. **Interceptions are returnable on conversions after touchdowns (2 points).** Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

## XIV. RUSHING THE PASSER

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7-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.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line 7- yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
  - a. A legal rush is:
    - i. Any rush from a point 7-yard from the defensive line of scrimmage.
    - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
    - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
    - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
  - b. A penalty may be called if:
    - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass - Illegal Rush (5-yards LOS and first down.)
    - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped - Offside (5-yards LOS and first down).
    - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off - Illegal Rush (5-yards LOS and first down).
  - c. Special Circumstances:
    - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, 7 second clock in effect.
    - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play, however, if they do send a rusher, the rusher must verify with the official that they are in the correct position.
    - iii. If the rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced.
4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, **NO** contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and them making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
5. 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.
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.
  - a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

## XV. FLAG PULLING

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the jersey.
7. Players who push the ball carrier from behind/side, instead of going for the flag will be assessed an *Unnecessary Roughness Penalty* – Spot foul, +10 yards and automatic First Down.

## XVI. FORMATIONS

1. Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (center). The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
  - a. One player at a time may go in motion 1 yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - b. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
2. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion.
3. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs (not around the side of the body) to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

## XVII. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player, players and/or coach will be ejected from the game and **Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty (Spot foul, +10 yards and automatic First Down or Spot foul, -10 yards and loss of down) will be assessed.**
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well:
  - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
  - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
  - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
  - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 5-yards off the field.

## **XVIII. PENALTIES**

### **i. General**

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (spot fouls)
4. Only team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question judgment calls.
5. Games may not end on defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

### **ii. Spot Fouls**

Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic First Down
Holding	+5 yards & Automatic First Down
Stripping	+10 yards & Automatic First Down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+10 yards & Automatic First Down
Screen, Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier	-5 yards & Loss of Down
Charging	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	-10 yards & Loss of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards & Loss of Down

### **iii. Defensive Penalties**

Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Rush (starting rush from inside 7 yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Flag Pull (before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Roughing the Passer	+10 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Taunting	+10 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Defensive Pass Interference	Spot Foul, Automatic First Down
Holding	Spot Foul, +5 yards & Automatic First Down
Stripping	Spot Foul, +10 yards & Automatic First Down
Unnecessary Roughness / Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Spot Foul, +10 yards & Automatic First Down

### **iv. Offensive Penalties**

Offside/False Start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass (throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Offensive Pass Interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Illegal Motion (more than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Delay of Game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage & Loss of Down
Screen Blocking or Running with the Ball Carrier	Spot Foul, -5 yards & Loss of Down
Charging	Spot Foul, -10 yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	Spot Foul, -10 yards & Loss of Down
Unnecessary Roughness / Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Spot Foul, 10 yards & Loss of Down

## **Updates made for 2021 Spring:**

### **Scoring – pg 8**

3b. Interceptions on conversions can be returned for 2 points.

### **Running – pg 10**

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

### **Receiving – pg 11**

5. Interceptions are returnable on conversions after touchdowns (2 points).