

PARK RIDGE FLAG FOOTBALL RULES AND GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

Flag football is a sport that anyone can play at any stage of his or her life – from youth to high school into the adult years. The 7-on-7 version of this sport is enjoyed by millions of high school and adult players across the United States each year, whether as recreation or offseason preparation and competition.

This rule book sets the procedures for playing 7-on-7 flag football closely aligned within USA Football's American Development Model. It has been modified by the Park Ridge Football and Cheer board for use in our progressive, inclusive Flag Program., from 4 years old to 14 years old (pre-K to 8th grade) based on our collective experiences over the last 20+ years.

Any rule not directly addressed in this rule book, or an addendum (highlighting key rules and exceptions), should refer to the IHSA football rules that govern our high school football.

Additional information can be found on our website at www.parkridgefootballandcheer.com

1 / TERMINOLOGY

BLOCKING: An illegal attempt by the offensive player to obstruct, block, or screen an opponent.

BOUNDARY LINES: The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.

CHARGING: The ball-carrier challenges a defensive player for space or an established position or on the field without using their arms or elbows. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with the shoulder or the chest.

DEAD BALL: Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.

DEFENSE: The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.

DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE: The player significantly hinders an eligible receiver's opportunity to catch the ball by making significant physical contact with the targeted receiver.

DELAY OF GAME: Repeatedly taking longer than 30 seconds in huddle for 3rd grade and up, or 45 seconds for 2nd grade and younger. Deliberately running out the clock by taking a Delay of Game penalty must be penalized by officials, who will stop clock until Center snaps the ball.

DOWNS: The offensive team has four attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to reset and obtain another set of downs or to score.

FLAG GUARDING: The ball-carrier intentionally obstructs the defender's access to their flag.

HOLDING: The player restrains another player who is not in possession of the ball before the ball has been thrown at or to any offensive player.

ILLEGAL CONTACT: An illegal touching, pushing, tackling, blocking, shoving, screening, or grabbing by the defensive player once the ball has been thrown at or to any offensive player.

ILLEGAL FORMATION: An illegal offensive player in motion that begins movement toward the line of scrimmage before the snap, or an entire offensive formation that does not include at least one receiver on each side of the Center at the time of the snap.

INADVERTENT WHISTLE: Official's whistle that is performed in error.

LATERAL: A legal backward or sideways toss or pitch of the ball by the ball-carrier.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS): An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.

LINE-TO-GAIN: The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score. In 2nd grade and younger on the small fields, a first down is at the midfield point. In 3rd grade and older on the larger fields, a first down is at the 20 yard line.

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.

OFFENSE: The team with possession of the ball.

PASS CLOCK: For teams aged 2nd grade and younger, the offensive team have seven (7) seconds to throw a pass or make a handoff once the snap is made in order to prevent stalling and since there is NO RUSHER at these age levels. If the quarterback still has the ball after an official counts off seven seconds, the play is dead and the ball returns to the line of scrimmage as if an incomplete pass occurred.

PASSER: The offensive player who throws the ball may or may not be the quarterback.

PASS RUSH CONE: Starting with 3rd & 4th grade teams, a cone will be placed at 10 yards from the line of scrimmage (LOS) on the defensive team's side of the field. This cone signifies the point where an unidentified rusher must start behind if they are rushing the passer. For 5th and 6th grade teams, a cone will be placed at 12 yards from the line of scrimmage (LOS) on the defensive team's side of the field. For 7th & 8th grade teams, a cone will be placed at 15 yards from the line of scrimmage (LOS) on the defensive team's side of the field.

Note: The game official's subjective discretion will be allowed during the game on the pass rush cone distances if the offensive team is unable to get a play off effectively, then the referees may inform both head coaches and then move the distance out to 15 yards or more from the LOS for both teams for the remainder of the game.

PASS RUSHER: One unidentified defensive player (each play) assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent opponent from passing the ball by pulling flags or by blocking the pass, who must start behind the Pass Rush Cone or yard line set by the game official at the start of each play.

SCREEN PASS: An illegal forward pass attempted to a receiver behind the line of scrimmage.

SHOVEL PASS: A legal forward pitch attempted from behind the line of scrimmage traveling beyond the line of scrimmage.

STRIPPING: A player smacks or grabs the football out of the ball-carrier's possession.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: A rude, confrontational, overtly aggressive or offensive behavior or language meant to injure, harass, or intimidate others at a game will result in a 10-yard penalty and automatic first (1st) down. If a player or coach receives a 2nd unsportsmanlike

penalty in the same game, the player or coach will be removed from the current game and will then be subjected to minimum additional one game suspension. Repeated abuses (in more than one game or instance) will be reported to the League Manager and upon a fair and impartial review, may lead up to a season-long expulsion and inability to participate in our Flag league going forward.

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, halftime or the end of the game.

2 / POSITIONS

Offense

The seven players on offense consist of a center, a quarterback and five receivers/backs. Two of those receivers must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap – each positioned on opposite sides of the center. All players are eligible receivers.

- a. Center. This player snaps the ball to begin the play, a critical skill at all levels of football. The center is an eligible receiver and may go out for a pass.
- b. Quarterback. This player receives the snap from the center and initiates the play either through a handoff or pass. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the line of scrimmage without first handing the ball off to a teammate and then receiving a second handoff back or receiving a pass. If the quarterback passes the ball, the ball must travel in a forward motion towards the LOS.
- c. Receiver/back. Any player who does not initiate the snap nor receive the snap is considered an eligible receiver/back and can either receive a handoff or catch a pass. Two receivers must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap – on opposite sides of the center – while the other three are at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage in either a slot or running back position.

Defense

The seven players on defense consist of 6 defenders and 1 eligible Pass Rusher (with the exception of the 2nd grade and younger divisions which only allows 7 defenders – NO RUSHER).

- a. Pass Rusher. Each team, 3rd grade and older, may assign 1 Pass Rusher. This player lines up behind the Pass Rush Cone at the snap, which is placed 10 yards beyond the line of scrimmage for 3rd & 4th grade, 12 yards for 5th & 6th grade, and 15 yards for 7th & 8th grade. This unidentified player may rush the passer after the snap and cross the line of scrimmage before a legal handoff or pass has been performed.

Note: If the offensive team is unable to get a playoff effectively, then the referees may inform both head coaches and then move the distance out to 15 yards or more from the LOS for both teams for the remainder of the game.

b. Defender. Defenders may line up anywhere on the defensive side of the ball, beyond the line scrimmage. These players may drop into coverage and can only cross the line of scrimmage following a legal handoff by the quarterback.

3 / GENERAL RULES

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams with their head coach meet at midfield for the coin toss with the referees to determine who starts with the ball.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. For play on larger fields, the offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40-yard line and has four plays to cross the 20-yard line or score a touchdown. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. Barring a penalty, crossing midfield is the only opportunity for an offense to gain a first down within a single possession. For play on the smaller fields, the offense takes possession at its 5-yard line to start a possession outside interceptions and has 4 plays to cross midfield for a first (1st) down.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on the 40-yard line for play on larger fields and on its own 5-yard line for play on smaller field.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from the 40-yard line for play on larger fields and on its own 5-yard line for play on smaller field.
6. If the defense intercepts the ball, a defensive player can attempt to return it until down, out of bounds or possession of the ball is lost. If the defensive player fails to return the interception for a touchdown, mark the ball in relation to the defensive end-zone and the intercepting team will take offensive possession an equal distance from their endzone.
7. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the 40-yard line for play on larger fields and on its own 5-yard line for play on smaller field.
8. Teams change sides on smaller fields after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

4 / EQUIPMENT

1. Each player must wear League-issued uniform shirts and flag belts. Teams will use footballs provided by the League and suitable for the age division.
2. Cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Leg, arm, and body braces with exposed metals are not allowed. Players must wear mouth pieces during practices and games.
4. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants and the flag belt must be fully visible and unobstructed at all times during a game. Tuck any excess material from the belt into the player's shorts. The flag belt should be fastened properly and snug around a player's waist — check to make sure it doesn't slide around when the player runs. No TYING of the ends of the belt together, which will result in an Unsportsmanlike penalty.
5. We recommend players wear League-issued black shorts or pants depending upon the weather, preferably that do not have pockets. Soft hats may be worn at the coach's discretion.

5 / PLAYING FIELD

1. At the start of the season, the League will assign games and fields as well as help coordinate available practice fields and times. Space is extremely limited so please be respectful and accommodative to other team's time and priorities when entering, playing or exiting field space.
2. Practice fields and times are largely at the discretion of the head coach based on preferences and availability. Each game time and location will be solely determined by the League. All potential team scheduling conflicts need to be discussed with League Directors or Managers, and based on approvals granted, only then head coaches may modify game times or fields.
3. Fields should be inspected prior to every practice or game to ensure they are safe to play upon. Debris should be removed. Issues like holes or ruts should be photographed at that specific location and send to a League director so that they can address the issue immediately.
 - a. For player safety, game officials and coaches should help ensure that there is a 5 yard 'obstacle free' buffer from all sidelines and endzones. No parents, chairs, tents, water bottles, bikes, coach's bags, etc. that may become a hazard during the event.
4. Fields will be used and available in different weather conditions. Please bring ice, water, shade, rain cover, or other adaptations to assist your team's play accordingly. League only

cancels practices or games in extreme heat conditions or during occurrences of lightening (or potential for lightening / tornados). Other than those situations, coach's discretion is used.

5. Practices should be scheduled 1-3 hours per week beginning the last week of August. Practice days and times are determined by the individual coaches.

6. Practices will be on shared athletic fields with baseball, softball, soccer, etc. Football has been given priority on Fall field usage on the fields and facilities listed below. Be respectful to others.

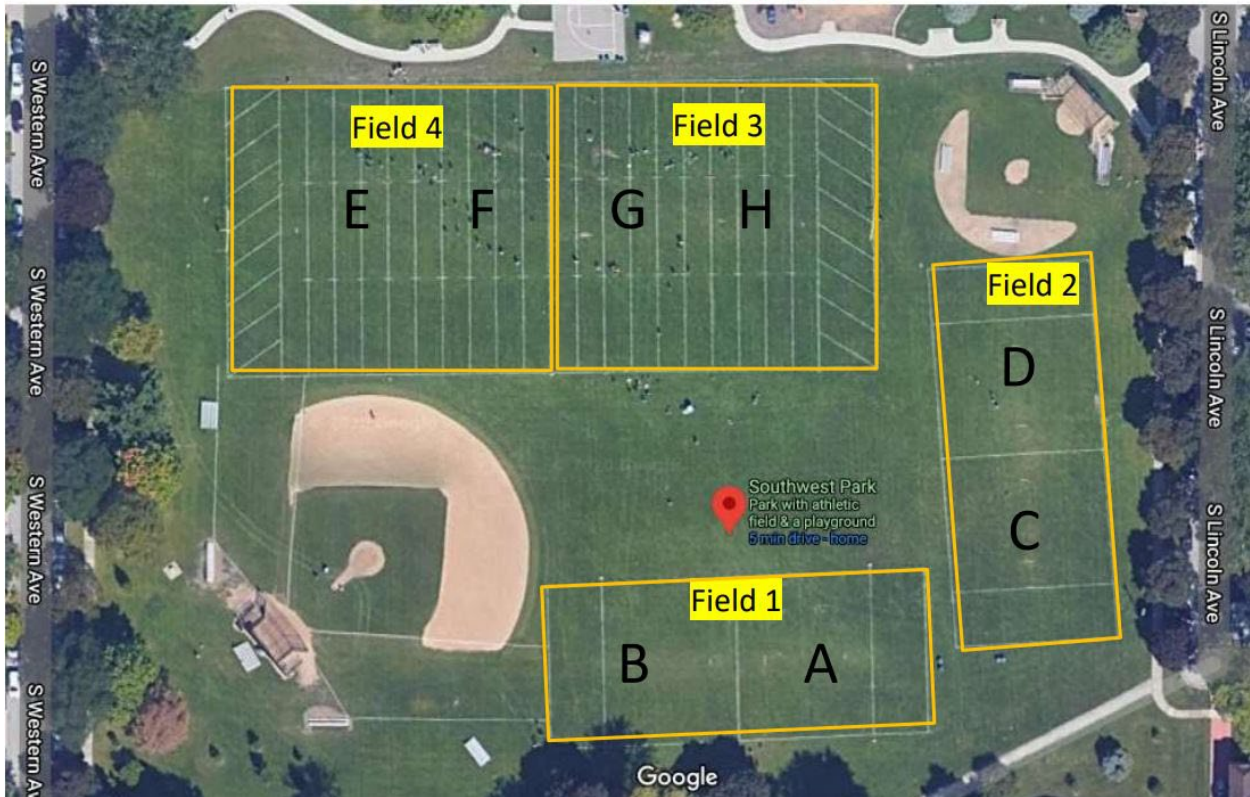
7. Games will be scheduled for the weekend after Labor Day until Halloween. Games will be played primarily on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings and early afternoons. Games may be scheduled either on Sunday afternoon or evenings or Monday evenings based on field limitation or weather conditions.

8. There are no make-up or rescheduled games during the regular season. For fun, head coaches can scrimmage the following the week, but no referees will be provided.

9. Flag Football Numbered Park Fields in Park Ridge for game schedules, where Regulation American Football fields will be used for 3rd grade and older and Standard Flag for 2nd grade and younger in almost all cases. Practices can be on either field, open areas in parks, schools, etc. List of League approved game and/or practice fields plus Southwest Park's layout below:

- 1 Hinkley AB Regulation American Football
- 2 Prospect AB Regulation American Football
- 3 South B Modified American Football (per usual)
- 4 South AB Standard Flag (overlay field B)
- 5 Southwest EFGH Regulation American Football
- 6 Southwest AB Standard Flag
- 7 Southwest CD Standard Flag
- 8 Northwest BA Regulation American Football
- 9 Northwest DC Standard Flag
- 10 Lincoln AB Regulation American Football
- 11 Lincoln C Standard Flag
- 12 Lincoln D Standard Flag
- 13 Centennial Park ABCD (weekdays only, lighted 30 x 30 yard)
- 14 Washington School ABCD (weekdays only, South of Sled Hill)
- 15 Jaycee SE Park AB (Linden Entrance & West of basketball)
- 16 North Park ABCD
- 17 Roosevelt School AB (inside track)

SOUTHWEST PARK



6 / TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two 20-minute halves. The clock stops for timeouts, injuries, or PATs only thru the first 38 minutes of play, then during the final two minutes of each half, the clock will stop after each play, though officials can stop the clock at their discretion for injury, to stop a team from delaying or other unsportsmanlike conduct.
2. Halftime is five 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, and then will call delay of game penalties thereafter (5 yards from LOS and loss of down).
4. Each team has only one (1) 30-second timeout per half, or 2 timeouts per game.
5. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play and both teams are lined up ready to restart the play.
6. In playoff games only, if the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. The overtime format is as follows:

- a. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - i. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - ii. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
- b. Each team will take turns getting one play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of its own.
 - i. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the five-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win. ii. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
- c. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect
- d. There are no timeouts in overtime.

7 / SCORING

- 1. Touchdown: Six points
- 2. PAT (point after touchdown) one point from the 5-yard LOS or two points from the 10-yard LOS.
 - a. The PAT attempt can be either a run or a throw. The only variable that determines the value is the distance of the attempt.

The team that scores a touchdown must declare prior to the snap whether it wishes to attempt a one- or two-point conversion. The clock will be stopped for the PAT. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.

- 3. Safety: Two points
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his or her own end zone, and there will be NO safeties called for teams aged 2nd grade and younger. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, a knee

or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.

b. Since there are no safeties in 2nd grade or younger divisions, if the 7 second clock expires or the ball drops in the offensive teams endzone, after the whistle blows the play dead, the ball returns to the original spot or the 5-yard line and the down is lost.

No Team should EVER be winning a game by more than 4 touchdowns. In any situation where it is apparent that there is a discrepancy of talent, coaches should stop using their best players on offense, stop rushing the QB and do whatever it takes to keep the game closer. A team that gets up by 4 TD's and then tries to take it easy-by that time it is too late to "call off the dogs."

8 / COACHES

1. No coaches will be allowed on the field to call offensive or defensive plays in 7th or 8th grade. For teams in 5th and 6th grade, one (1) coach on offense and defense may be on the field during a game for only the first four (4) games of the season. For teams in 3rd grade and 4th grade, one coach is allowed on the field to call plays and direct players according to need on offense and defense. Once the quarterback begins his or her cadence, however, coaches can no longer speak and must be behind the deepest offensive and defensive players and out of the action. For teams 2nd grade and younger, two coaches may be on the field at one time from each team.
2. Coaches can assist in the alignment of their players to facilitate a fast-paced game, but coaches on the field may not provide extra instruction or make audibles to play calls once the huddle is broken. Coaches on the sidelines can and are highly encouraged to provide this information to players on the field.
3. Coaches must be identified on the team roster in Team Snap or by the League to be an official coach, and it is recommended that all coaches wear a League-provided coach's hat during the season during games to identify yourself.
4. Coaches are responsible for having a rulebook and schedule and setting the tone for their team and sidelines by acting in a respectful and professional manner.
5. Protest Rule. A head coach has the right to protest one (1) rule interpretation per game. The head coach must show the rule in question to the assigned officials and call a "Protest Time Out". The protest must take place before the next play starts. The officials must stop the clock, read the rule in question, and then confer with all assigned officials at the game and any attending League Manager for up to 3 minutes, and then a judgement call will be made at their own sole discretion.

6. Minimum Play and Substitutes. The game is played with seven (7) starters, however a minimum of five (5) players must be on the field at all times. All players in every division must play in every game if they attend the game with their proper uniform and equipment. It is recommended that substitutions for 2nd grade and younger teams happen at halftime and by squad, and that every player is given the opportunity to start a half and play Quarterback or Running Back at least one snap during the regular season.
7. If any league personnel or official witness any act of rough housing, including but not limited to, tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, intentional contact, or any other unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and that player will be warned and could be ejected. Further disciplinary action may follow including up to League suspension.
8. After the game, team players and coaches are expected to form a line at midfield and SHAKE HANDS to congratulate the opposing team. **Good sportsmanship is required, and poor sportsmanship can lead to expulsion or suspension at League's sole discretion.**

9 / LIVE BALL DEAD BALL

1. The ball is live at the snap and remains live until an official's whistle blows the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage by spotting the ball before each play and signaling ready for play with a short whistle.
 - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, an official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification prior to the snap to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage. Additional game official assistance may be provided based on the age-level.
3. The defense may not mimic the offensive team's signals by trying to confuse the offensive players while the quarterback is calling signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
4. A player who gains possession of the ball is considered inbound as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
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. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is placed at the original line of scrimmage.
 - c. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.

- d. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds
- e. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
- f. Any part of the body other than feet or hands touches the ground.
- g. The ball-carrier's flag falls off.
- h. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s)
- i. An inadvertent whistle

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. Timeouts. Each team is granted one 30-second timeout per half. They may use this timeout during any dead ball situation. The clock will run at all other times, except for the half-time break, injuries, coach disputes, PATs, and the final two minutes of each half.

10 / RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled or where the ball carrier is ruled down.

2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.

3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must take place behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.

4. Pitches or laterals are allowed behind the line of scrimmage. No laterals are allowed past the line of scrimmage.

5. Any player who receives a handoff or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

6. Once the ball has been handed off pitched all defensive players are eligible to rush.

7. Runners 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 cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.

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 without the ball should stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. Failure to stop running with the ball-carrier and therefore directly impeding the defensive player from reaching the offensive player can result in a blocking rusher penalty.

12. Flag obstruction – All jerseys must be tucked in under the flag belt before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

13. 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 football jersey.

11 / PASSING

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.

- a. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are ineligible forward passes.
- b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage and be in the vicinity (10 yards) of a receiver.

2. For 2nd grade and younger divisions, a seven-second pass clock begins upon the snap (kept by head official) and continues until there is a handoff or pass. If the seven-second clock expires while the quarterback still has the ball, the play is blown dead, a down is lost, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage as if an incomplete pass occurred.

3. Any player who has received a legal handoff can throw the ball forward as long as the passer’s foot is behind the LOS when the ball leaves his/her hand. Shovel passes are allowed only forward and beyond the LOS.

12 / RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes.

2. A player must have at least one foot inbound to make a legal reception.

3. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

4. Interceptions change possession at the point of the catch. Interceptions are returnable except during PATs when the play will be blown dead immediately.

13 / RUSHING THE PASSER

1. Each defense can have one Pass Rusher. The Pass Rusher must be behind the Pass Rush Cone when the ball is snapped. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A cone, or the referee, will designate the pass rush area behind the line of scrimmage. The Pass Rusher may verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
4. A rusher who leaves early may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
5. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback.
6. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play, the pass rusher must simply be behind the Pass Rush Cone.
7. A Player rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass. No contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer should result either in a defensive holding or illegal contact penalty.
8. The offense cannot impede the defensive rusher in any way. The defensive rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where he or she lines 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 a blocking penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap and an official doesn't believe it constitutes either blocking or screening, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
9. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the ball was when flag was pulled.
 - a. A 2-point safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone for 3rd grade and older teams. For teams 2nd grade and younger, a safety will result in no points and game officials will return the ball to the offense 5-yard LOS & a loss of down.

14 / 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.
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. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball. If a defender makes a good-faith flag pull while a receiver bobbles or juggles what will be a completed catch, the ball is down where possession is made.
6. A defender intentionally grabbing a receiver or ball-carrier's shirt or shorts more than five yards downfield to slow progress to give them or their teammates time to pull a flag or disrupt a route will receive an illegal contact penalty.

15 / PENALTIES

1. The officials will call all penalties observed that impact the fairness of the play observed.
2. Game officials 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 under Spot fouls.
4. Only the head coach or active coaches on the field may ask the referee questions about a rule clarification or interpretations. Other players, coaches and fans should not question calls.
5. Games and halves may not end on a penalty unless the opposing team 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 line when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

Defensive Spot Fouls

All flag football penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage, except for spot fouls. Spot fouls are penalties that are assessed from the spot on the field where the foul occurred. Offensive team has the ability to decline all spot penalties.

Foul	Penalty
Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic First Down from Spot of the foul
Defensive Holding	+10 yards from Spot, replay down
Illegal Contact	+10 yards from Spot, replay down
Stripping	+10 yards from Spot, replay down

Offensive Spot Fouls

Fouls assessed from the spot on the field where the foul occurred. All of these flag football penalties result in a loss of down. But any loss of down on the third down results in a turnover, with the other team taking possession.

Foul	Penalty
Blocking	-10 Yards from spot, & loss of down
Charging	-10 Yards from spot, & loss of down
Flag Guarding	-10 Yards from spot, & loss of down

Defensive Penalties

You'll find that many defensive flag football penalties are behavior-oriented and can take on several definitions. Unsportsmanlike conduct, for example, can include any physical acts, like intentional tackling, elbows, or cheap shots, as well as verbal, such as confrontational language. Referees can also dish out a flag football penalty to fans who aren't keeping the field safe and kid-friendly, and they have sole discretion on calls and enforcement relative to fairness of play.

Foul	Penalty
Unnecessary Roughness	+10 Yards LOS, & automatic first down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+10 Yard LOS, & automatic first down
Offside	+5 Yards LOS, replay down
Illegal rush	+5 yards LOS, replay down

Offensive Penalties

Similar to defensive flag football penalties, offensive flag football penalties include infractions for unsportsmanlike behavior, whether it's physical or verbal. On offense, there are also penalties for improper movements on the line of scrimmage, such as moving before the play starts or delaying the game. Delay-of-games penalties and false start/offside penalties are traditionally enforced after at least one warning, depending on ages and likely intentions.

Foul	Penalty
Unnecessary Roughness	-10 Yards LOS, & loss of down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 Yards LOS, loss of down
Delay of Game	-5 yards LOS, loss of down, & stop clock
Illegal Forward Pass Behind LOS or Passer Beyond the LOS when Passing	-5 Yards LOS, loss of down
Illegal Motion/Illegal Formation	-5 yards LOS, replay down
Offside/False Start	-5 Yards LOS, replay down