

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

Read more about NFL FLAG rules below. Regional and national tournament games will follow these rules closely, although there may be some modifications. Please note that while the rules may be adopted to suit your local needs, they must remain non-contact.

Mission Statement for Ladera Football League (LFL)

Ladera Football League is a developmental flag football league designed for participation and competitive fun for our youth. The goal is to allow the boys and girls to participate, have fun, and learn skills and sportsmanship in a competitive environment.

Point of Emphasis: Sportsmanship

The coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the game of football, and strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct. The coach shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, and shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

Point of Emphasis: Contact

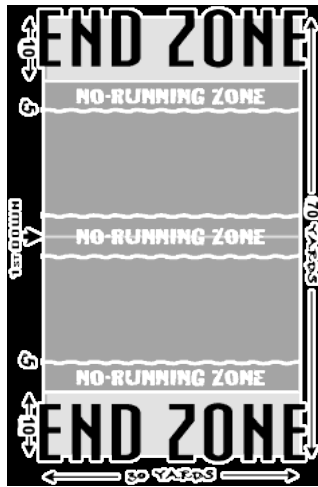
If a player conducts any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or unsportsmanlike acts, the game shall be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. Foul play will not be tolerated.

Officials may determine that incidental contact may result from normal football action.

The Basics

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense’s 5-yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes. Possession changes to loser of coin toss unless deferred and the clock does not stop. Halftime is 5 minutes

Rule 1 – The Game, Field, Players and Equipment



Section 1 – The Game, Field and Players

Article 1. The field shall be marked according to the diagram, 70 yards long by 30 yards wide, with 10-yard end zones and the proper markings for the no running zones. Dimensions are subject to change dependent upon field availability.

Article 2. Teams must field a minimum of five players at all times.

Article 3. The referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

Article 4. The ball shall meet the approved NFL requirements for the specific age groups. Each team may provide a game ball.

Article 5. The team box is defined at the area on the sideline between the 5-yard line and midfield. Coaches and players on the sideline must not enter the opposition team box, and may not go past their own 5-yard line. Failure to do so is a penalty.

Penalty: 5 yards

Section 2 – Equipment

Article 1. Official NFL FLAG jerseys must be worn during play.

Article 2. Official NFL flags must be worn during games.

Article 3. Each team will wear the league issued shorts.

Article 4. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.

Article 5. Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes.

Article 6. Headgear is not allowed. This includes hats, beanies, headbands, etc.

Rule 2 – Definitions of Playing Terms

Article 1. Participation: Each player must play a minimum of 2 quarters, and must sit out one quarter. Exception: If a team has 6 players or less.

Article 2. Substitution: May occur only between quarters. At the end the 1st and 3rd quarter, all players not currently in the game must be substituted into the game. If the clock is stopped for an injured player, the player must sit out a minimum of one play. If the injury occurs with less than 2:00 remaining in the half or game, the opposing coach may choose the substitute. Maximum playing rules apply to injury substitutions.

Article 3. Coaches: One coach may be on the field to call plays.

Article 4. Neutral Zone/Line of Scrimmage: is the vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line.

Article 5. Blocking Interference/Shadow Blocking: is illegal non-contact blocking designed to interfere and prohibit the defender from getting to the ball carrier.

Article 6. Live Ball Foul is a football act that occurs during play.

Article 7. Dead Ball Foul is a foul that occurs between downs.

Article 8. Unsportsmanlike fouls are treated as dead ball fouls.

Article 9. The Ready for Play signal is the signal the official gives after the ball has been placed and the official has determined that the next down shall occur. It consists of the sound of the whistle and a chopping signal.

Rule 3 – Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

Section 1 – Timing

Article 1. Games are played 40 minutes running time.

Article 2. The game shall consist of four 10 minute quarters, with a 5 minute halftime.

Article 3. If the score is tied at the end of the 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. Overtime shall consist of each team having one possession (3 downs) from midfield. If a team scores, they have the option of going for 1 or 2 points on the try. The winner of the coin flip will have the choice of playing offense or defense first. The other team will choose the end of the field that both teams will play towards. If the game is still tied after one overtime period, the game ends in a tie (exception: playoffs).

For overtime games in the playoffs, the game continues if the teams are still tied after each overtime period. Beginning with the 3rd overtime, the teams must go for 2 points on the try. Only one coin flip will occur. Beginning each overtime period, the choice of "offense or defense" or the end of the field will alternate, based on the winner of the initial coin flip for the 1st overtime. The coaches and officials will quickly make the decisions for subsequent overtimes, without the need to have the captains come out each time.

Section 2 – Clock and Time-Outs

Article 1. The running time will begin with the snap to start each quarter.

Article 2. Each team has one 60 second and one 30 second time-out per half.

Article 3. Officials can stop the clock at their own discretion.

Article 4. The clock will stop for injuries.

Section 3 – Ready For Play and Delay

Article 1. 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.

Penalty: 5-yards.

Rule 4 – Ball in Play, Dead Ball and Out of Bounds

Section 1 – Putting the Ball in Play

Article 1. Each half will start with the offensive team taking possession of the ball at its 5-yard line.

Article 2. The ball will always be spotted in the center of the field.

Article 3. The ball is spotted at its furthest point when the play is dead.

Section 2 – Ball Becomes Dead

Article 1. Runner's Flag is pulled

Article 2. Runner steps out of bounds

Article 3. Touchdown or safety is scored

Article 4. When any body part of the runner except the foot or hand touches the ground.

Article 5. If the runner's flag falls out accidentally, the runner may continue to advance, and the defense may pull the other flag, or simply have a "one-hand touch". NOTE: If a defender reaches and pulls a flag that does not immediately fall off, but falls off later in the run, the runner is to be determined down at the point the flag falls off.

Article 6. There are no fumbles. When the ball is fumbled in the air or touches the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at that location.

Article 7. When a backwards pass is caught by the offense. (no backwards passes)

Article 8. When a forward hand-off occurs BEYOND line of scrimmage.

Article 9. At line of scrimmage, if quarterback runs the ball directly without a hand-off.

Article 10. At the spot of a second forward pass.

Rule 5 – Series of Downs

Section 1 – Series of Downs

Article 1. The offensive team has three plays to cross midfield and gain a first down. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.

Article 2. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.

Article 3. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.

Rule 6 – Kicking the Ball

Article 1. There are no kickoffs.

Article 2. There are no punts.

Rule 7 – Snapping, Handing and Passing the Ball

Section 1 – Snap

Article 1. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start the play.

Penalty: Illegal Snap – 5 yards

Article 2. Following the ready for play and after the snapper has placed hand(s) on the ball, offsides occurs if any other player breaks the plane of the neutral zone.

Penalty: Offsides – 5 yards

Article 3. Following the ready for play, if an offensive player makes an abrupt movement to simulate the start of a play, the play shall be whistled dead immediately.

Penalty: False Start – 5 yards

Article 4. The offense may not snap the ball until the official sounds the ready for play signal.

Penalty: Delay of Game – 5 yards

Section 2 – Formation and Position at the Snap

Article 1. All players on offense are eligible receivers.

Article 2. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. Once the ball leaves the hand of the quarterback, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

Penalty: Illegal Rushing – 10 yards, previous spot and automatic first down

Article 3. Only one player is allowed in motion at one time.

Penalty: Illegal Motion – 5 yards

Section 3 – Handing the Ball and Running

Article 1. The quarterback (one who receives the snap) cannot run the ball.

Article 2. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.

Article 3. Offense may use multiple handoffs.

Article 4. “No Running Zones” located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power running situations. The “Zone” applies to going into a zone, and not coming out of a “Zone”.

Article 5. The player who takes a handoff may throw the ball forward from behind the line of scrimmage.

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

Article 7. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).

Article 8. Runner may not lower head into defender or initiate contact (charging).

Section 4 – Passing

Article 1. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches (backwards pass) of any kind are allowed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.

Article 2. A backwards pass is dead where caught.

Article 3. A Forward Pass is determined by the initial direction of the pass. A forward pass may be overhand or underhand. Shovel passes are allowed. Only one forward pass per down.

Article 4. Both feet of the passer must be in or behind the neutral zone when the ball is released.

Article 5. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock”. If a pass is not thrown within seven seconds, play is dead, next down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule is no longer in effect.

Article 6. Interceptions may be returned. (Except: In the age 7-8 group, the ball is dead and belongs to the defense at the spot of the interception.)

Article 7. All players are eligible to receive passes, including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.

Article 8. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception. If the receiver is airborne, any part of the body must land inbounds first, with the ball in firm possession, to complete the catch.

Rule 8 – Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points

Extra point:

- 1 point – (played from the 5 yard line – must pass – “No Run Zone”) or
- 2 points – (played from the 12 yard line)

Safety: 2 points

Examples: In the end zone; snap falls to the ground, backwards pass is caught, flag is pulled, runner steps out of bounds, etc.

Rule 9 – Conduct of Players

Section 1 – Contact - Offense

Article 1. Charging, diving, roughing, holding, blocking, blocking interference, offensive pass interference, illegal pick play (which requires contact)

Penalty: 10 yards, previous spot and loss of down

Article 3. FLAG guarding.

Penalty: 10 yards, spot foul and play will resume with the next down.

Note: If the runner has advanced for a first down and commits flag guarding, if after assessing the penalty, the offense may still obtain a first down.

Section 2 – Contact – Defense

Article 1. Pass interference (requires contact).

Article 2. Includes illegal contact, roughing, holding, blocking, etc. It is also considered illegal contact for the defense to hit or strip the ball from the runner.

Article 3. Roughing the Passer: Due to the nature of the league, the quarterback shall not be touched at all during the passing motion. Any contact, in the slightest, above the waist, shall be roughing. It is roughing to touch the ball or the hand and arm of the quarterback while in the throwing motion. The defender may reach for the flag and make contact in the waist (flag) area.

Article 4. Illegal Flag Pull (before the runner or receiver has the ball)

Penalty (Articles 1-4): 10 yards, previous spot and automatic first down. Pass interference by offense, carries a loss of down.

Section 3 – Non-Contact Fouls

Article 1. Unsportsmanlike conduct for players includes any act that attracts attention or degrades an opponent or official. This may include excessive celebrations, throwing the ball in celebration, or at an opponent or official, gestures, fighting, offensive language or trash talking. Trash talking is illegal, and is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.

Penalty: 15 yards

Additional Penalty for Fighting: automatic ejection.

Article 2. Unsportsmanlike conduct for coaches includes the same provisions as that of a player. A coach on the sideline shall not enter the field to question officials.

Penalty: 15 yards

Article 3. It is an Unsportsmanlike foul against the head coach if illegal substitution occurs.
Penalty: 15 yards

Note: If a player or coach receives a second Unsportsmanlike penalty in the same game, he will be ejected for the remainder of that game.

Section 4 – Last Man Rule

Article 1. If a runner/receiver has a clear chance at the end zone to score, and the last possible defender illegally tackles or trips the runner, **the official will award a score.**

Rule 10 – Enforcement of Penalties

Article 1. Any foul may be declined.

Article 2. The half or game cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Article 3. If multiple live ball fouls occur on the same play, the penalties will offset and the down will be replayed.

Article 4. If a live ball foul and a dead ball foul occur on the same play, both fouls will be enforced in the order of occurrence.

Article 5. Live ball fouls by opponents of the scoring team are declined by rule and do not carry over to the extra point of the next possession.

Article 6. Dead ball fouls by the scoring team or opponents of the scoring team will be enforced on the next play. (e.g., fouls on a touchdown will be enforced on the extra point, and fouls on an extra point will be enforced on the next possession).

Article 7. Contact fouls against the defense are enforced at the end of the run. Exception, if the offense loses yards on the play, contact fouls against the defense will be enforced from the previous spot.

Article 8. In the event of an ejection, the player or coach may not participate for the remainder of that game, and must sit out the following game.

Rule 11- Special League Rules

Section 1. Mercy Rule

Article 1. In the 2nd half, if ahead by 25 points or more, future scores will not count. If the team behind by 25 points or more scores and closes the margin to 24 or less, the team ahead may count future scores, until the lead increases beyond 25 points or more.

Article 2. In the 2nd half, if ahead by 25 points or more, interceptions may not be returned.

Article 3. Coaches should use discretion in allowing others to participate, throw and catch in a mercy situation. Failure to do so, may result in league action, removal from the next game, or the league.

Section 2 – League Commissioner

Article 1. A league commissioner or representative will be on site at all times.

Article 2. Coaches may not approach the league commissioner. The on field officials may choose to do so, or the commissioner may choose to intervene.

Article 3. Any ruling with regard to uniforms, substitutions, injuries, rule enforcements and ejections made by the league commissioner is final.

PENALTY SUMMARY

5-yard Penalties

Delay of Game – Rule 3.1

False Start – Rule 7.1.3

Illegal Snap – Rule 7.1.1

Illegal Motion – Rule 7.2.3

Offside (Offense or defense) – Rule 7.1.2

10-yard Penalties

Flag guarding – Rule 9.1.3 (spot foul)

Illegal Contact, Offense – Rule 9.1.1 (also loss of down)

Illegal Contact, Defense – Rule 9.2.2 (also automatic first down)

Illegal Flag Pull – Rule 9.2.4 (also automatic first down)

Illegal Rushing – Rule 7.2.2 (also automatic first down)

Pass Interference, Defense – Rule 9.2.1 (also automatic first down)

Pass Interference, Offense – Rule 9.2.1 (also loss of down)

Roughing Passer – Rule 9.2.3 (also automatic first down)

15-yard Penalties

Unsportsmanlike – Rule 9.3.1 and 9.3.2 (possible ejection for fighting, and ejection for the second such foul on the same individual)

Last Man Rule

Official may award a score (touchdown or try)