

E.F.A.F.

EUROPEAN
FEDERATION
FOR
AMERICAN FOOTBALL

**OFFICIAL
5vs5
FLAG FOOTBALL RULE BOOK**

FLAG FOOTBALL

The Flag Football Code

Only the highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. There is no tolerance for unfair tactics, unsportsmanlike conduct or maneuvers deliberately designed to inflict injury.

The Code of Ethics states:

- a. The Flag Football Code shall be an integral part of this code of ethics and should be carefully read and observed.
- b. To gain an advantage by circumvention or disregard for the rules brands a coach or player as unfit to be associated with flag football.

Rules alone cannot accomplish fair play. Only the continued best efforts by coaches, players, officials and all friends of the game can preserve the high ethical standards set by the game of football. Therefore, as a guide to players, coaches, officials and others responsible for the welfare of the game, the committee publishes this following code:

COACHING ETHICS

Deliberately teaching players to violate the rules is indefensible. The coaching of intentional holding, feigning injury, interference or intentional roughing will break down rather than aid in the building of character of players. Such instruction is not only unfair to one's opponent but is demoralizing to the players entrusted to a coach's care and has no place in the game. The following are unethical practices:

- a. Changing numbers during the game to deceive the opponent.
- b. Using non therapeutic drugs in the game of football. This is not in keeping with the aims and purposes of amateur athletics and is prohibited.
- c. Shifting in a way that simulates the start of a play or employing any other unfair tactic for the purpose of drawing one's opponent offside. This can be construed only as a deliberate attempt to gain an unmerited advantage.
- d. Feigning an injury for the purpose of gaining additional, undeserved time for one's team. An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules. Such tactics cannot be tolerated among sportsmen of integrity.
- e. Kicking oversized slick footballs to your opponents with the sole purpose of making it difficult to handle properly.

TALKING TO AN OPPONENT

Talking to an opponent in any manner that is demeaning, vulgar, abusive or "trashy" or intended to incite a physical response or verbally

put an opponent down is illegal. Coaches are urged to discuss this conduct frequently and support all officials' actions to control it.

TALKING TO OFFICIALS

When an official imposes a penalty or makes a decision, he/she simply is doing their duty as they see it. They are on the field to uphold the integrity of the game of flag football, and their decisions are final and conclusive and should be accepted by players and coaches. For a coach to address, or permit anyone on the bench to address, uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the progress of a game, or to indulge in conduct that might incite players and spectators against the officials, is a violation of the rules of the game and must likewise be considered conduct unworthy of a member of the coaching profession.

CONTACT

THIS SPORT IS NON-CONTACT, BLOCKING AND TACKLING ARE NOT ALLOWED. Any contact or an attempt of it is unfair play, eliminates skill and does not belong in the game. All coaches and players should thoroughly understand the rules of proper offensive and defensive play. It is important to emphasize the severity of the penalty.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The football player who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike conduct; and whether they escape being penalized, they bring discredit to the good name of the game, which is their duty as a player to uphold.

Rules Summary

- A coin toss determines first possession. The winner of the coin toss has possession of the football. Losers of the coin toss have choice of end zone to defend.
- The team that loses the coin toss gets possession at the beginning of the second half starting at its own 5-yard line.
- There are no kickoffs.
- 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 midfield, it has four (4) 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. An automatic first down by penalty will overrule the other requirements regarding four (4) plays to make either a first down or score.
- 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.
- Teams change end zones after the first 20 minutes.

Number of Players and sex

- Team can consist only players of same sex. Exception (U15, U13 and school teams were co-ed teams are allowed.)
- In official competitions teams consist of ten players (5 on the field with 5 substitutes) **unless otherwise mentioned at tournament regulations.**
- Teams may play with a minimum of four (4) players (due to injuries).
- If less than 4 players are available, the game is forfeited by the side that is unable to field a team.

Timing/Overtime

- Game length is 40 minutes. (2 x 20 minute halves)
- The time is running time except the last two minutes of each half will be "official timing". If the ball carrier is out of bounds, the game clock will stop, if a pass is incomplete, the clock will stop – time will NOT stop after every play.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- In the event of a tied game, overtime will be played. The period between the end of the game and the start of the overtime period will be 2 minutes. There will be no time outs granted during the overtime period.
 - In EFAF competitions the team winning the coin toss starts with the ball on the midline. Each team has 4 attempts to score after which the other team gets 4 attempts from the midline. If the score is still tied after each team has used their attempts, both teams start again from the midline and try to score. Extra-points after the score are played as in regulation time. Except when the score is tied after 2 attempts by both teams, they have to play their extra point tries from the 12-yard line. Turnovers end the team's attempts and can be returned for a score.
- Each time the ball is spotted the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- Each team has two 60-second timeouts per half. These cannot be carried over to the second half or overtime.
- Timeouts can be called by Head Coach and on field players only.
- Clock will stop for the length of the timeout.

- Clock will stop to warn teams that there are two minutes left to play in each half (no time out is given).
- Period for half - time will be 2 minutes.
- The clock will start at the snap after it has been stopped.

Scoring:

Touchdown: 6 points.

Extra point: 1 point. (played from midpoint of 5-yard line only)

Extra point: 2 points (played from midpoint of 12-yard line only)

Safety: 2 points.

Note: An Interception return to opponent's end zone on any extra point play by the defense will result in the defense scoring 2 points plus possession for next series at its 5-yard line.

Running:

- To start the play, the ball must be snapped between the legs of the snapper.
- The center is the player who gives the ball to the quarterback via a snap.
The center cannot take a direct hand off back from the quarterback (no center sneak play).
- The quarterback is the player who receives the ball directly from the snap.
- The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage, unless he has handed the ball off, tossed or pitched, and it has been returned to him.
- An Offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Only backward & lateral handoffs are allowed during the down.
- Tosses or sweeps behind the line of scrimmage are allowed and are running plays.
- Once the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage the ball cannot be handed off, tossed, pitched or passed in any way.
- "No-running zones," are located 5 yards in front of each end zone. When the ball is on or inside the 5-yard line going towards the opponent's end zone, the offense cannot run.
- The player who takes the handoff, toss or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- All defensive players are eligible to rush once the ball has been handed off or tossed, or there is a play action fake or fake handoff.
- Spinning is allowed, but the ball carrier cannot dive forward or jump to avoid a defensive player or gain yardage (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are placed when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

Receiving:

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off or tossed behind the line of scrimmage).
- As in tackle football, one player may be in motion, but not in motion towards the opponent's end zone at the snap.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing:

- Only players starting 7 yards from the line of scrimmage can rush the passer.
- The quarterback has seven seconds to throw the ball. If a pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is dead, with a loss of down and the ball is spotted at the previous line of scrimmage.
- Only one forward pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage is allowed in a down.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball.
- Interceptions can be returned by the defense.
- On Interceptions that occur and remain in the end zone, the ball will become dead and will result in the ball belonging to the intercepting team at its 5-yard line.

Should an interception occur in the end zone and the ball carrier leave the end zone, the ball will belong to the intercepting team at the spot the ball becomes dead. However should the ball carrier return to the end zone and be deflagged or the ball becomes dead, except in a case of premature whistle, the result would be a safety for the other team.

Dead Balls:

- Substitutions may be made only when ball is dead.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - An official blows his whistle.
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled or becomes illegal.
 - Points are scored.
 - When any part of the ball carrier's body, other than his hand or foot touches the ground.
- If a ball carrier's flag falls off, the play will be whistled dead and the ball will be spotted at the spot where the flag fell off.
- Players are ineligible to catch a pass or receive the ball by hand off toss or pitch, if their flag has fallen off.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball will be spotted where the ball left the ball carrier's hand(s). If the ball is fumbled during the snap, the ball will be placed at the line of scrimmage

Rushing the Quarterback:

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 is handed off or tossed, or there is a play action fake or fake handoff, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or a game official, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

REMEMBER, BLOCKING AND TACKLING ARE NOT ALLOWED.

Sportsmanship/Roughing:

If the referee witnesses any acts of flagrant contact, tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the tournament.

FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Trash talking is illegal. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

Penalties:

- **All penalties are 5 yards.** The down will be repeated unless otherwise noted, and will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- All penalties may be declined, except a false start and penalties regarding players outfits (dead ball fouls).
- Penalties will not exceed half the distance to the opposing team's goal line from the line of scrimmage.
- Game officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the team captain and Head Coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players and Coaches cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- Penalties after an interception shall be assessed after the return is over and/or the play is blown dead.

Defensive Penalties:

- Offside — 5 yards.
- Substitution fouls — 5 yards. (player enters field after ball is blown ready for play, i.e. to deceive the opponents, or 6 men on field)
- Disconcerting signals — 5 yards. (signals to distract / simulate offensive signals prior to snap)
- Interference with opponent or ball at the snap — 5 yards.
- Illegal rushing — 5 yards. (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)
- Interference —5 yards and automatic first down.
- Illegal contact — 5 yards and automatic first down. (holding, blocking, etc)
- Illegal flag pull — 5 yards and automatic first down. (before receiver has ball)

Offensive Penalties:

- Flag guarding — 5 yards.
- Delay of game — 5 yards.
- Substitution fouls — 5 yards.
- Illegal motion — 5 yards. (more than one person moving, etc.)
- False start — 5 yards (cannot be declined).
- Illegal snap — 5 yards.
- Illegal shift or failure to pause for 1 second — 5 yards.

- Offensive holding — 5 yards.
- Diving/Jumping - 5 yards
- Player out of bounds — 5 yards. (if player goes out of bounds, player cannot return to the field and catch ball)
- Illegal forward pass — 5 yards and loss of down. (a second forward pass or after ball has crossed the line of scrimmage)
- Offensive pass interference— 5 yards and loss of down. (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
- Running inside a no running zone is a loss of down at the previous spot.
- Objectionable conduct

Tournament tie breaker system:

1. Head to head results.
2. Head to head net point differential.
3. Total net point differential.
4. Most touchdowns scored
5. Coin toss

Attire:

No padding or headwear shall be allowed.

Cleats are allowed, but must be rubber. Inspections must be made.

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

Official tournament jerseys must be worn during play.

Equipment

Teams may use their own football during the game, or if they agree, one game ball may be used by both teams. Each league or tournament can set its own specifications regarding the dimensions and type of football to be used based on the age and skill of the participants. No team or player is permitted to make alterations to the natural surface of the ball being used. Teams doing so will be penalized five yards for objectionable conduct.

In Ladies and in U15 competitions, teams are recommended to use ball size Wilson TDY or similar and in U13 Wilson TDJ or similar.

Players are not permitted to use adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or on a player's person, clothing or attachments that affects the ball or an opponent. (exception: eye shade). Players who do so will be penalized five yards for objectionable conduct and will be removed from the game until it is removed.

Players are not permitted to wear caps, bandanas or other head wear. Sunglasses are not permitted unless prescribed by a medical doctor.

If two teams are using similar jerseys, the winner of the coin toss has the option to change sweaters. Uniforms cannot contain any equipment that would cause injury to any player. The referee will be the final authority on equipment that may be injurious to participants or on any equipment or devices that are not covered in the rules.

Jewelry must be removed prior to the start of the game. If it is not possible to remove the jewelry it must be covered up completely. Medical bracelets may be worn but they must be fastened securely so as not to cause injury. The referee will have the final decision as to the acceptability of equipment.

Players may wear cleated shoes, but shoes with heels are not acceptable. Spikes or similar sharp pointed type shoes such as track spikes, metal baseball cleats, or golf shoes are not permitted. If cleated shoes are worn, there is no minimum or maximum number of cleats to be worn, but the cleats must be a part of the natural design of the shoe and in good condition.

If a player is wearing unacceptable equipment or shoes, the player must leave the game for at least one play and remove the equipment before returning. If the player returns to the game with the unacceptable equipment, the team will be penalized for objectionable conduct and the player will be ejected.

If a participant has incurred a wound that is bleeding, or if there is enough blood on a participant, or on the participant's uniform to such an extent that it may be transferred to another individual, the participant must leave the playing field until the problem is resolved to the satisfaction of the referee.

Players must not wear shorts or pants that have pockets, press studs or clips of any kind. Players cannot tape or secure their shorts or pants to meet this regulation.

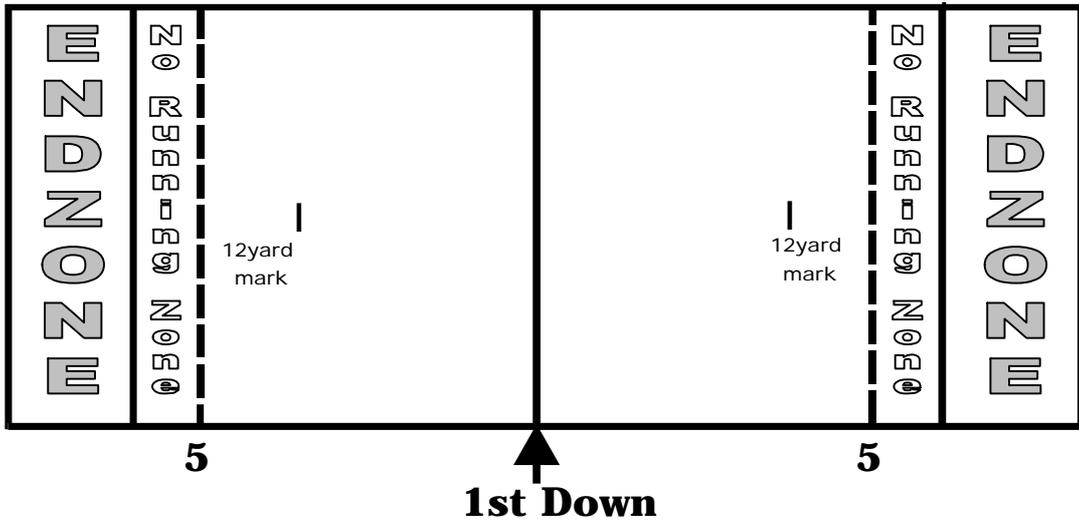
Only flag belts with sockets with 2 flags on players' hips can be used at any sanctioned flag football event. Every effort must be made to keep one flag on each hip. These flags must not be altered or cut, and the sockets must not be glued or changed in any way. Players caught with a tampered belt of flags, will be ejected from the game. They will also face possible further discipline from the tournament organizing committee. The flag belts and flags must be clearly visible and must not be covered in any way by the players' uniform.

Note:

The referee will decide on any on-field ruling which is not covered by this Rule Book.

Minimum Field Markings:

FIELD DIAGRAM



Field Dimensions:

Length: 60 (or 80) yards

Width: 30 (or 20) yards

End Zones: Maximum 10 yards deep, minimum 7 yards deep.

No Running Zones: These must be marked 5 yards from each goal line.

Although countries may make minor modifications, these are the rules that will govern all EFAF Flag Competitions as of May 15th, 2006. School competitions have their own rules that are used in that tournament.