

PCRD

2023 Flag Football Rules and Regulations

I. Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball.
2. The winner of the toss will have choice of first possession or defend a goal.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has three plays to reach or cross midfield. Once a team reaches or crosses midfield, they receive three more downs in order to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to reach midfield or score, the ball changes possession and the opposing team receives the ball at their 5-yard line.
5. All possession changes, except interceptions, begin at the offense's 5-yard line.
6. Teams change sides after the first half. First possession of the 2nd half belongs to the team that started the game on defense.

II. Terminology

- **Boundary lines** – the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and the rear end zone lines.
- **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 offensive team 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** – team with possession of the ball.
- **Defense** – team opposing the offense and attempting to prevent them from advancing.
- **Passer** – the offensive player that throws the ball (may or may not be the quarterback).
- **Rusher** – the defensive player assigned to rush the QB to prevent him/her from passing by pulling his/her flag or blocking the pass.
- **Downs (1-2-3)** – the offensive team has three attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. They must reach or cross the line-to-gain or score.
- **Live Ball** – the period of time from the snap to the end of the play.
- **Dead Ball** – the period of time between the end of the play and the snap.
- **Whistle** – sound made by officials to stop play.
- **Inadvertent whistle** – a whistle blown in error. If the ball is loose, replay the down. If the ball is in possession, team in possession may take the ball there or replay the down.
- **Charging** – the movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, or use of a shoulder, chest or forearm to move the defender away.
- **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 blocking access to the runner's flags with hand or arm.
- **Shovel Pass** – a legal pass attempted behind the LOS 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 carrier.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

III. Eligibility & Roster

1. All children who will be entering grades 1-6 in August of the current year are eligible. Children who are entering kindergarten may request to “move up” if the parent desires.
2. All participants **MUST** be registered with the Payette County Recreation District to practice or play with a team.
3. Five-on-five is recommended for each game. Teams must field a minimum of four players to begin a game. Teams may agree to play 6-on-6 or 7-on-7 if numbers of participants on each team will allow.

IV. PLAYING TIME

- **This is a *RECREATION* program - ALL players in uniform **MUST** play a minimum of half of each of the first 3 quarters of each game. At or near the midpoint of the 1st, 2nd & 3rd quarters, each coach will be allowed a 30-second officials time-out to enter their substitutes that will play for the remainder of each quarter.**
- **Only players who are injured, become ill or **CHOOSE** to remove themselves from play can be substituted for. Players who have fulfilled their playing time minimum in the first half of a quarter may be substituted for by another player who has fulfilled their minimum in that quarter. Free substitutions are permitted in the 4th quarter only.**
- **If disciplinary action that reduces playing time is deemed necessary, the following steps must be taken prior to the start of the contest:**
 - ❖ **Notify the parents**
 - ❖ **Notify PCRD**
 - ❖ **Notify the opposing team**
 - ❖ **Notify the officials**

V. Equipment

1. Each team receives 2-3 footballs and three flags for each player. 1st thru 4th grade leagues will use the “Pee Wee” size ball. 5th-6th grade teams will use the junior size football. Reversible jerseys must be purchased at the PCRD office and must be worn. Undershirts **MUST** be tucked in to their pants/shorts.
2. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed but may not have exposed metal.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Again, no exposed metal.
4. Jewelry or other accessories deemed to be potentially hazardous to the participant or others by the game officials must be removed to participate.
5. **MOUTH GUARDS** are highly recommended, but not required.

VI. Field

1. The recommended field size for 5th-6th grade is 30 yards by 70 yards w/ a 10-yard end zone at each end of the field. 1st thru 4th grade will play on a 50-yard field. It should also include a midfield line and no-run zone lines preceding each end zone and each side of the midfield line.
2. No Run Zone lines are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. All plays that begin with the football touching or in these zones, must include a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. Stepping on the boundary lines is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No Run Zones in each drive (one zone five yards preceding the midfield line and one preceding their end zone).

VII. Timing

1. Games consist of four 10-minute quarters. One minute between quarters and five minutes at half time.
2. Clock stops for time-outs, injuries, and official time outs.
3. Teams have 30 seconds to snap the ball after it has been spotted by the official.
4. Each team has one (1) 60-second time out per half.
5. If the score is tied at the end of the game, the game remains a tie.

VIII. Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (Point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line). 1-point PAT is pass only, 2-point PAT is run or pass.
3. Safety: 2 points. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her end zone. They can be 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. A safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
4. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line), a 2-pt conversion (from the 12-yard line) or a 3-pt conversion from the midfield line. Any change, once a decision has been made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions can be returned for 2 pts.
5. Mercy Rule: After a team is winning by twenty eight points or more, the losing team will begin possession at midfield and will retain possession of the ball until they score or time expires.

IX. Coaches

1. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need. Coaches may stay on the field during play but MUST be completely out of the way. DO NOT physically move players on the field. Verbal direction only.
2. Coaches should set an example of sportsmanship and fair play at all times. Disagreements with the officials should be kept to a minimum and any discussion in regards to rule interpretation should be brief and done as quietly as possible.

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 or the play ends by rule.
2. One official will be placed at the Line of Scrimmage and the other will stand at the "Rush Line."
3. Players from either team may not enter the neutral zone. This infraction could cost the offending team a five-yard penalty. Officials may choose to talk players out of neutral zone infractions and issue warnings instead depending on the number of infractions and the level of play.
4. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
5. The defense may not mimic the offensive signals.
6. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
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 touches the ground.
 - f. The ball carrier's flag falls off.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball with less than three flags on his jersey.
 - h. An inadvertent whistle is blown.
8. A team is allowed to use a time out to question a rule interpretation. If the interpretation is in favor of the team using the time out, they retain the time out for use later in that half.

XI. Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
2. The quarterback may not take the snap and run the ball across the line of scrimmage. The original quarterback MAY run the ball if the ball has been handed or passed back to him/her.
3. Handoffs and laterals must be completed behind the line of scrimmage. Offense may use multiple handoffs. A completed handoff requires that the ball change possession completely from one player to another.
4. Teams are allowed one lateral or backward pass behind the line of scrimmage per down.
5. The player who takes the handoff or receives a lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off or lateraled by the QB, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping is considered flag guarding.
8. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.

9. No blocking or “screening” is allowed.
10. Offensive players may not interfere with the defense’s opportunity to pull the flag of the ball carrier at any time. No running with the ball carrier.

XII. Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage. Only one lateral/backward pass and one forward pass are permitted per down. All forward passes must be received beyond the line of scrimmage, including shovel passes.
2. There is NO 7-second “pass clock.”

XIII. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage.
3. In the case of simultaneous possession, the offensive team shall retain the ball.
4. Interceptions are returnable, including PAT’s. Interceptions are the only instance that a series of downs does not start on the 5-yard line.

XIV. Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the LOS **when the ball is snapped**. Any number of players may rush the QB. Players not rushing the QB may defend on the LOS. **1st-2nd grade league:** Players who choose to rush the QB must wait until there is a 3-count before passing the rush line. Players who rush early may not cross the LOS until the ball is handed off or passed laterally or backward.
2. Once the ball is handed off or lateraled, all defenders may rush.
3. Teams are NOT required to rush the QB.
4. Players rushing the QB may attempt to block the pass, but may not make forceful or unnecessary contact with the QB regardless of whether the pass is blocked or not. This is a judgment call by the official.

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 thru the runner.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the carrier’s possession.
4. If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off, the player is down upon possession.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flag of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

XVI. Formations

1. Offensive and defensive players excluding the center may be in motion at the snap.
2. The center must snap the ball between the legs to a player in the backfield. The ball must completely leave the hands of the center. Shotgun formations are allowed. Handoffs to the center **MUST** be from the side.

XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. Any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, blocking, etc., will not be tolerated. The game will be stopped and the offending player will be ejected for the remainder of the contest.
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not permitted. Officials may warn once or eject immediately depending on the severity of the act.
3. Players and/or coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent or official.
4. Fans are required to exemplify good sportsmanship as well. Applaud and cheer on all players, regardless of which team they are on.

Penalty Administration

All penalties will be called by the officials.

Defense:

Offsides - 3 yards and automatic first down

Interference – Spot foul with an automatic first down. If the foul is in the end zone, place ball just outside the NO RUN zone, first down.

Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.)

Spot foul and an automatic first down unless the spot is behind the original LOS

Illegal FLAG pull (before receiver has ball)

Spot foul and automatic first down unless the flag pull is behind the original LOS

Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) automatic first down

Offense:

False start or illegal motion – Previous spot and loss of down

Illegal forward pass (pass thrown from beyond line of scrimmage)

Spot foul and loss of down

Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)

Previous spot and loss of down

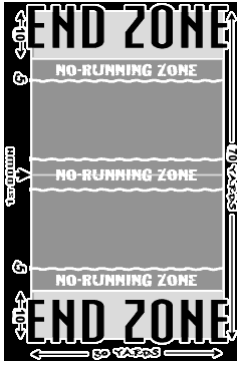
FLAG guarding - Spot foul and loss of down

Delay of game (Clock stops) Previous spot and loss of down. Clock stops last two-minutes of the game and starts on the snap unless the foul is against the losing team.

Referees 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 or coach may ask the officials questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Judgment calls are not up for discussion.

Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.



FIELD DIAGRAM