

FRANKFORT FALCONS FLAG RULES

(Revised 08-02-08)

I. The Basics

A. The Field

1. Size: 50 yards (goal to goal) x 50 yards wide with 10-yard end zones.

B. The Players:

1. Players:

- a) 6&7 yr old league: **10 players** on the field at a time.
- b) 8&9 yr old league: **9 players** on the field at a time.
- c) If the opposing team has fewer players, members must rotate players to sit out plays to make the sides equal. The same person cannot be rotated out continuously.

2. Any number of substitutions may enter the game either team when the ball is dead.

3. Players must be registered in the program and may not participate if they are older than the specified age/grade group.

4. All players shall get equal playing time. Each player must either start the First or Second half. All players should have the opportunity to play several different positions throughout the season. *Coaches found not adhering to this rule will be subject to a 1 game suspension at the discretion of the Board of Directors.*

C. The Equipment:

1. The ball shall be a peewee size ball.
2. All participants must wear belts provided. Flags must be worn on the sides and back. The belt is to be clipped in front. Shirts must be tucked in pants to avoid obstructing them. Officials may whistle a ball carrier down immediately for deliberately placing flags in an illegal position.
3. All players must wear: Issued helmet, mouth guard, tennis shoes or rubber molded/ plastic cleats, white football/ baseball pants, and issued jerseys. NO pads are allowed.

D. Referees:

1. A volunteer from each side shall be a referee. This can be a parent or coach.

E. Coaches:

1. Three coaches from each team are allowed on the field at the same time.
2. Coaches must be at least 3 yards behind the deepest player on their team at the snap of the ball.
3. All coaches must remain silent one the quarter back is under center.

II. The Game:

A. Play Clock

1. The game consists of two halves, each 25 minutes in length. Half time shall be 5 minutes in length. Each team is allowed one time out per half. Each time out will be one minute in length.
2. Time runs continuous for each half except for legal time outs during the last one minute of both halves when the clock will stop on all dead ball situations.

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3. The clock will continue to run in the first 24 minutes of each half, unless a timeout has been called or if the official stops the clock (injury, etc.).
Approximately one minute before the end of each half, the official shall call time (at the end of a play) and notify the coaches of the time remaining.
4. Dead Ball Situations: Dead ball will occur only with less than 1 minute of each half. The clock will restart as soon as the ball is hiked.
 - a) Ball travels or is carried out of bounds
 - b) After an incomplete pass
 - c) After a score
 - d) Change of possession
 - e) After a penalty has been called
 - f) During a time out
5. If time for any period expires during a down, play shall continue until the end of the down.
6. Delay of Game: 45 seconds is allowed between plays. Any more time will result in a five-yard penalty and same down. (Officials should use their best judgment on this call and call only when it affects the outcome of the game “intentional stalling”.)
7. Each Team is allowed 1 timeout per half.

B. Scoring

1. A touchdown shall count as 1 point (a touchdown will be scored if the ball breaks the plane of the goal line).
2. A safety shall count as 1/2 point.

C. Tie Game

1. Tie Games: There will be no overtime. A tie score remains the same.
2. Flag Bowl Exception – A tie breaker will be utilized in the Flag Bowl. Each team will get 4 downs from the 10-yard line; both teams utilize the same end zone. A team must score in fewer downs than the previous team did. If both teams end with the same amount of downs, they each get another set of downs. No points scored on the interceptions. Defense cannot score in overtime; it just ends the offensive series.
3. There will be no game clock, but the 45 second play clock is enforced.
4. Each team gets 1 time out. Unused timeouts do not carry over from regulation play.
5. A coin flip, called by the home team, will determine the choice of offense / defense or end of field choice.

D. Regular Play

1. A coin toss will determine which team receives the ball first.
2. The Home team, as designated by the schedule, calls the coin toss. The winner can decide whether they want the ball or which goal to defend.
3. The other team gets the ball first at the start of the second half.
4. The ball is placed on the 10 yard line at the start of each half and after a touch down.

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III. Offense

A. Line of Scrimmage

1. A minimum of 5 offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage: Center, 2 Guards, 2 Tackles. The line must be down in 3 or 4 point stances, with no more than 1 yard splits. Two additional players may line up in the Tight End position on opposite sides. No more than 7 players may be on the offensive line.
2. The offense and defense cannot enter neutral zone until the ball is hiked. The neutral zone will be from 1 foot in front of one end of the football to 1 foot behind the other end (approximately 1 yard).
 - a) An infraction of this rule is off sides. Any player breaking or lining-up in the neutral zone will be flagged with an immediate whistle (play is called dead for ANY offside infraction).
 - b) This penalty cannot be declined. Penalty: 5 yards from previous spot or half distance to goal line – down remains the same.

B. Offensive Backfield

1. The back field will consist of 1 Quarterback, 2 Running Backs, and 2 Receivers. The Running Backs and Receiver may line up in the backfield, as wide outs, or as split ends. They also may line up as Tight Ends. Split ends or Wide Receivers are allowed on either side of the Tackles or Tight End, but must be at least 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.
2. Motion is NOT allowed.

C. Snap

1. The offense must be set and stationary before the QB begins his count. Any movement prior to the snap is considered off sides (see above).
2. The Defense must be ready when the Center puts his hands on the ball.
3. There is a MAXIMUM of a 3 cadence count before the ball is snapped (i.e., “Ready, Set, Down”). Silent counts are NOT allowed.

D. Advancing the Ball

1. To advance the ball after the snap, the team may run or pass. The Center cannot advance the ball. It must be snapped to the backfield.
2. The offense must hike the ball into play within 45 seconds of the time the official places the ball on the line of scrimmage.
3. The offense must huddle. No huddle offenses are not allowed.
4. The Center must:
 - a) Hike under the legs to a teammate behind the line of scrimmage.
 - b) Shotgun formation is allowed.
5. Offense has 4 downs to advance 10 yards for a 1st down.

E. Punting

1. The offense may punt on 4th down. The offense must announce their intentions to punt and fake punts are not allowed.
2. After the snap the punter may walk the ball 5 yards back and punt.
3. The offense and defense will remain still until the ball is punted.
4. A fielded punt may be advanced. The punt return team retains possession of a miss-fielded punt.
5. The play is dead where the ball hits the ground.

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F. Fumbles

1. If a ball carrier drops the ball, it is dead at that spot where it hits the ground. Offense keeps possession and advances to the next down.
2. EXCEPTION – During the first 4 games -- Center/ QB exchange: If the ball is dropped between the Center and QB it will be dead and the down will be replayed. Just line up and re-snap the ball. During the last 4 games, a drop between the Center/ QB will be considered a fumble resulting in a dead ball and loss of down.

G. Running Plays

1. The QB may run with the ball, hand off, or lateral to any of the Running Backs or Receiver behind the line of scrimmage.
2. All handoffs or laterals must be to the rear of the passer beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. If dropped, the ball is dead at that spot (fumble).
4. Stiff-arms or covering the flags in any manner: are illegal (considered guarding the flag). Down at the spot of the infraction.
5. No jumping, leaping, hurdling to gain forward progress. Down at the spot of the infraction. Exceptions: jumping over a player lying on the ground.

H. Passing Plays

1. Only the Backfield or Tight Ends are eligible to catch a pass.
2. The Receiver must have one foot in bounds.
3. A dropped pass is considered a dead ball resulting in loss of down and replayed from line of scrimmage.
4. The offensive player may not push off a defensive player to catch the ball. Penalty for offensive interference results in a ten-yard penalty and a loss of down.
5. Interceptions may be advanced.

I. Blocking

1. Blocking: Any player blocking must keep their hands/arms in the frame of their body, not hold, trip, or block players in the back. Holding WILL BE PENALIZED 5 YARDS.
2. No player shall leave his feet while blocking. Blocking below the waist, cross body, and crab blocking are illegal and will result in a 15-yard penalty.
3. Unnecessary Roughness – The official shall call unnecessary roughness when any player, whether offense or defense, uses rough tactics considered by the official unnecessary in the accomplishment of their legitimate purpose. 15-yard penalty
4. Illegal Use of Hands on Offense: Offensive players may not use their hands to hold, grasp, hit, or slap defensive players. Hands must remain open and extended from their bodies. Penalty: 5 yards and same down.
5. Clipping is: Penalty: 10 yards and same down.
 - a) Charging or falling into the back of the legs of an opponent who is not the ball carrier.
 - b) Pushing by use of the hands or arms on an opponent's back.
 - c)

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IV. Defense

A. Line of Scrimmage

1. A MINIMUM of 4 players may be on the line and MAXIMUM of 6 players when opposite Tight Ends.
2. No players are allowed over the Center or uncovered.
3. Linemen must line up opposite an offensive lineman.
4. Linemen must be in a 3 or 4 point stance.
5. Linemen **must make head on contact** with the offensive linemen. **No shooting gaps or stunting. Shooting gaps penalty: 5 yards and replay of down**

B. Defensive Backfield

1. The backfield maybe any combination of linebackers, safeties, or corners.
2. The backfield CANNOT blitz. The backfield may cross the line scrimmage to meet a ball carrier outside the tackles. Blitzing Penalty: 10 yards and replay of down.
3. Defensive backs or linebackers may line up across a tight end, receiver, or split end at least 3 yards from line of scrimmage.

C. "Tackling" – legally pulling the flag belt.

1. A ball carrier is considered tackled when an opponent pulls the flag belt.
 - a) A tackler may not put his arm around or in front of the runner or hold the runner in any manner. Only the flags may be grabbed.
 - b) Stopping the ball carrier in any other manner is to be considered holding, tackling or unnecessary roughness and WILL BE ENFORCED!
 - c) The penalty is 10 yard from the point of infraction and automatic 1st down if it is a tackle. Inside the 15 yard line its half distance to the goal an 1st down.
2. If a player makes contact with the ground (knee), he will be considered down at point of contact. This is not a dead ball situation.
3. If a player's flag belt unintentionally falls off, the play will be dead at that point and the down will be replayed from original line of scrimmage.
4. Intentionally throwing flag is delay of game. Flags should be given back to the player, a coach, or referee.
5. A participant may not punch, strike, strip or attempt to steal the ball while a player is in possession. Unsportsmanlike conduct may apply.

D. Pass Interference

1. No contact with the receiver is allowed beyond the first five yards from the line of scrimmage, unless it is a simultaneous effort by both players to get the ball. Only one bump within the first 5 yards is allowed. PENALTY: Point of Infraction / Automatic first down. OFFICIALS note: "defensive holding" if ball is not in the air.
2. Defensive Pass Interference: Defensive players may not block or push the receiver in any way to prevent him from catching a pass. If personal contact is made, it must be made in an honest effort to intercept the pass.
 - a) Penalty for defensive pass interference is placing the ball where the violation occurred and automatic first down.

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- b) Defensive interference in the end zone will result in the ball being placed at the 1-yard line, automatic first down.
3. Intentionally pulling of an opponent's flag before they have possession of the ball will be deemed Defensive pass interference.

E. Defense (Use of the hands)

1. Defensive holding will be penalized 5 yards same down.
2. Illegal Use of Hands by Defense: Defensive players may not use their hands on the heads of the opponents. They are permitted to push the offensive man out of the way by placing the open hands on his shoulders or trunk. They may not hold the offensive man. Penalty: 5 yards and same down.
3. There will be NO striking with the fist or elbows
4. No defensive player may touch the offensive center in any manner until he has passed the ball and moved both feet from his original position and becomes a blocker. Penalty: 5 yards and same down.

F. Conduct & Roughness

1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Poor behavior and/or Language.
 - a) Penalty: Offense – 15 yards/same down.
 - b) Penalty: Defense – 15 yards/Automatic 1st down
 - c) 2nd offense: Ejection.
2. Unnecessary Roughness: Any player's tactics that are unnecessarily rough and any tactics that are endangering the safety of the participants should be penalized. This includes holding or tackling the ball carrier before tagging, stiff-arming by the runner, putting head down for butting purposes and unnecessary roughness in forcing a runner out of bounds. Clipping and roughing the passer would be included also.
 - a) Penalty: Offense – 15 yards/same down.
 - b) Penalty: Defense – 15 yards/Automatic 1st down
 - c) 2nd offense: Ejection.

V. Penalties

A. Penalty enforcement:

1. A penalty may be accepted or rejected by the coach of the team against whom the foul was committed. If the coach refuses penalty, the ball remains at the succeeding spot and play just completed counts as a down.
2. Violations of regulations are penalized by moving the ball a specified distance toward the goal of the team committing the foul. The distance, which the ball is moved, varies according to the violations.

B. Rules Not Specified

1. Neither a player, nor a non-player may interfere with the play by any act, which is not specifically provided for in these rules. PENALTY: The referee enforces any penalty he considers justified.
2. Any other violations and penalties will be made at the discretion of the officials.
3. All official's decisions are final and there will be no protests. In a situation that an official might have a bad judgment call, you as a coach may ask him a question to clarify.

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4. If you as a coach keep “riding the official” then the official has the right to penalize your team for 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct.
5. Unsportsmanlike conduct from coaches, players, parents, spectators can result in a 15 yard penalty at the discretion of the referee. Continued unsportsmanlike conduct can result in ejection for the park.
6. Sportsmanship and the ability to accept the official’s decisions are important to the success of the program.
7. Remember coaches -- this program is for the kids. You are expected to act as role models.
8. Sportsmanship and good conduct is expected from all participants, coaches, parents and referees at all times.

Youth Flag Football Penalties

Flag Guarding (by any means)	Down at point of infraction
Knee touch the ground	Down at point of infraction
Jumping, Diving to Gain forward Progress	Down at point of infraction (spot where feet left the ground, not position of the ball)
Off Sides (Blow whistle immediately)	5 yards and same down
Illegal Procedure/ No Huddle/ Motion	5 yards and same down
Delay of game (> 45 seconds)	5 yards and same down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 yards and loss of down
Intentional grounding	5 yards and loss of down
Illegal use of hands	5 yards and loss of down
Holding	5 yards and same down
Offensive Pass Interference	10 yards and loss of down
D-Line Shoot Gaps/ Stunting	5 yards and replay of down
Defensive Blitzing	10 yards and replay of down
Tackling automatic 1st down (possible ejection)	10 yards from point of infraction and
Clipping	10 yards same down
Defensive Pass Interference	Point of infraction and automatic 1st down
Major Blocking Foul (Below waist, leaving feet, cross –body, crab block, dropping shoulder, winging, tripping)	15 yards same down (possible ejection)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15 yards and same down (possible ejection)
Unnecessary Roughness	15 yards and same down (possible ejection)
Inadvertent Referee Whistle	Play is down at the spot where the whistle was blown; offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or replaying the down from the original line of scrimmage.