

RVA NFL Flag Football Flag Rules Summary



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Flag Football is a popular game filled with fun and action. In this game, the offensive team plays for a 1st 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 the rules on the following pages.

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Section 1 - General Information

Age Eligibility

Boys and girls, ages 5 to 16 years old can play. The age eligibility is determined by the age of a player as of April 1st of the current year.

Attire

1. Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made prior to play. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
2. Players must have the flag belt unobstructed by attire.
3. Players who are on the field without mouthpieces will be sent off the field until a mouthpiece is found and the team will receive a 10 yard penalty. If the offense is guilty of the equipment violation, they will lose a down.
4. Official flag jerseys must be worn during play. Players who forget their jerseys must have their alternate uniform approved by the head coach of the opposing team before the start of the game or they will not be allowed to participate.

Player Participation

The player participation policy is that each player shall play the entire game, either on offense or defense, except in case of an injury or sickness. The purpose of this rule is to allow every participant to play the entire game.

- At the change of any possession, all players on the sideline must enter the game.
- If there are 16 players then and they are playing 8 on 8, 8 must play defense and 8 must play offense. No substitutions allowed for 16 players unless injured or sick.
- If you have 15 players or less and playing 8 on 8 then all who are on the sideline during the possession change must come in the game with one additional player. Substitutions are not allowed for the original 7 that were on the sidelines but the one player who joined them can be substituted.
- If there are 14 players and you are playing 7 on 7, 7 must play defense and 7 must play offense. No substitutions allowed for a team with 14 players unless injured or sick.
- If you have 13 players or less and playing 7 on 7 then all who are on the sideline during the possession change must come in the game with one additional player. Substitutions are not allowed for the original 7 that were on the sidelines but the one player who joined them can be substituted.

Full compliance with the participation rule is mandatory. Coaches found guilty by the league for not complying with this policy will be disciplined. Specific sanctions may include forfeiture of games, suspension of coaches, exclusion from league post season competition, and expulsion from the league by the Board. All complaints shall be filed in writing through the league president.

Section 2 - Playing the Game

Field Dimensions

The dimensions on the field are 30 yards by 70 yards, two 10-yard end zones with a midfield line-to-gain. "No-Run" zones are preceded by a line-to-gain by 5 yards. However, field size can vary based on field availability for each league.

The Basics

1. *Games may be played 5 on 5, 6 on 6, 7 on 7 or 8 on 8. Game numbers will be determined by the league.*
2. A coin toss determines the first possession.
3. **There are no kickoffs.**
4. **No blocking or tackling is allowed.**
 - *Once the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, players can't run with the runner down the field. If the offensive player impedes a defensive player from pulling a flag, as determined by the referee, a penalty will be called.*
5. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 3 plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new opposing team takes over on its 5-yard line.
6. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
7. All possession changes, except interceptions and Slaughter Rule situations, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
8. Interceptions may be returned.
9. Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes of play. Possession changes to loser of the coin toss unless deferred and the clock does not stop.



Section 3 - Timing/Overtime

1. Games are played at 40 minutes running time.
2. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive 1 warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
3. Each team has two 60-second and one 30-second time-out in the first half.
4. Each team has two 60-second and one 30-second time-out in the second half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. Final 2 minutes - during the final 2 minutes of regulation time, the clock will stop on incomplete passes, after all scoring plays, turnovers, turnover on downs and a ball carrier getting out of bounds.

7. In overtime, there will be a coin flip to determine who will have the ball first. Teams will each have 1 possession and the ball spotted on the 12-yard line. They will have 3 downs to score. After a score, they may elect to go for 1 or 2 points for the point after attempt.
8. There is only 1 possession for each team during the regular season. Games may result in a tie. If overtime is needed during the playoffs, there is no limit to possessions. There are no ties in the playoffs.

Section 4 - Scoring

- Touchdowns: 6 points
- Extra Points:
 - 1 point (played from the 5-yard line)
 - or
 - 2 points (played from the 12-yard line)
- Safety: 2 points and change of possession

Section 5 - Coaches

Only one (1) coach is allowed on the field to direct players in the 5 to 8 division. The coach must move before the snap of the ball. All others divisions, coaches must remain on the sidelines.

Section 6 - Dead Balls

1. The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play unless you are in the 5-8 division.
2. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
3. Play is "dead" when:
 - i. Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - *If one of the carrier's flags falls out without being pulled, the runner is not down until he is tagged with two hands by a defensive player.*
 - ii. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - iii. Touchdown or safety is scored
 - iv. Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
 - v. There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. The only exception is in the 5 to 8 year old games during the snap of the ball. Snaps that hit the ground are live and play will continue.

Section 7 - Running

1. *The quarterback cannot run with the ball unless it has been established that he/she is a runner/quarterback by change of possession. He/she cannot simply have another person touch; tap the ball or player to establish possession.*
2. Offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage.
3. "No running zones," located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.

4. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
5. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
6. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
7. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
8. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind are allowed beyond the line of scrimmage.

Section 8 - Passing

1. Shovels passes are allowed.
2. The quarterback has a 7 second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the 7 seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off or passed, the 7 second rule no longer is in effect.
3. Interceptions may be returned.
4. No lateral passes beyond the line of scrimmage.

Section 9 - Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Section 10 - Rushing the Quarterback

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 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.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.

Section 11 - Sportsmanship/Roughing

1. If the field monitors or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game and a 15 yard penalty enforced. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Trash talking, "show- boating" and taunting is illegal. Officials have the right to determine what offensive language is. Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators. If trash talking, "show-boating" or taunting occurs, the referee will give one (1) warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game and a 15 yard penalty will be enforced.

Coaches who engage in unsportsmanlike behavior risk forfeiture of the game and their actions may be reviewed by flag officials.

Section 12 - Slaughter Rule

If at any point of the game, one team holds a 28 point (cap 32 points) advantage over another team, the opposing team will have possession of the ball spotted on the 49 yard line until they score. No team shall win a game by more than 28 points. The team that trails by 28 points or greater will continue to have possession until they have closed the point gap to 27 points or less.

Section 13 - Penalties

All penalties will be called by the referee.

Offense and Defense

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

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

Offense

<i>Blocking/running down field</i>	<i>5 yards and loss of down</i>
Delay of game	Clock stops, loss of 5 yards – defense may not decline
Flag guarding	10 yards (from spot of the foul) and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)	5 yards and loss of down
Illegal motion (more than 1 person moving, false start, etc.)	5 yards and repeat the down
Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)	10 yards and loss of down

Defense

Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.) occurs when the ball is in the air, the defender cannot go through the receiver to get the ball	10 yards and automatic 1 st down
Illegal flag pull (before receiver has the ball)	10 yards and automatic 1 st down
Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7 yard marker)	10 yards and automatic 1 st down
Interference	10 yards and automatic 1 st down
Offsides	5 yards and repeat the down

Appendix: Glossary

Dead Ball – period of time when the ball is no longer in play.

Defense - squad trying to stop the opposing team from scoring.

Down – offensive squad is given three (3) downs to move the ball to or beyond the next line of scrimmage.

Flag Guarding – when the ball carrier prevents a defender from pulling his/her flags.

This occurs by lowering an elbow or head, stiff arm, or blocking the runner's flags with a hand or arm.

Fumble Ruski – classified as a “sneak play”, is where the center snaps the ball and the quarterback merely touches it (*the center has not established a change of possession*). Then the center takes proceeds to run with the ball. This is **only legal** when the quarterback has established a change of possession by physically taking the ball and it is then repossessed by the center. *The quarterback touching the ball and then the center running is not legal.*

Lateral – a toss made backwards or sideways by the ball carrier.

Line of Scrimmage (LOS) - an imaginary line that runs the width of the field through the football. It is the location in the field where the play begins.

Live Ball - period of time in which the ball is in play.

Offense - squad that is attempting to score against the defense.

Passer - an offensive player throwing the ball. It is not always the quarterback who passes the ball.

Referee - often referred to as an official, is responsible for monitoring the game, players, coaches, and spectators. In addition, they enforce the rules of the game.

Rusher - defensive player whose only assignment is to prevent the quarterback from passing the ball.

Safety – when an offensive player is downed in his/her own end zone.

Warning – notice given to coaches, players and/or spectators for unsportsmanlike conduct prior to being ejected from a game.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – is considered rude comments, offensive/rude behavior or language towards another person.