

2023 ACYFL Rule Book



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OVERVIEW

The following 7v7 non-contact flag football rules for youth in participating community programs.

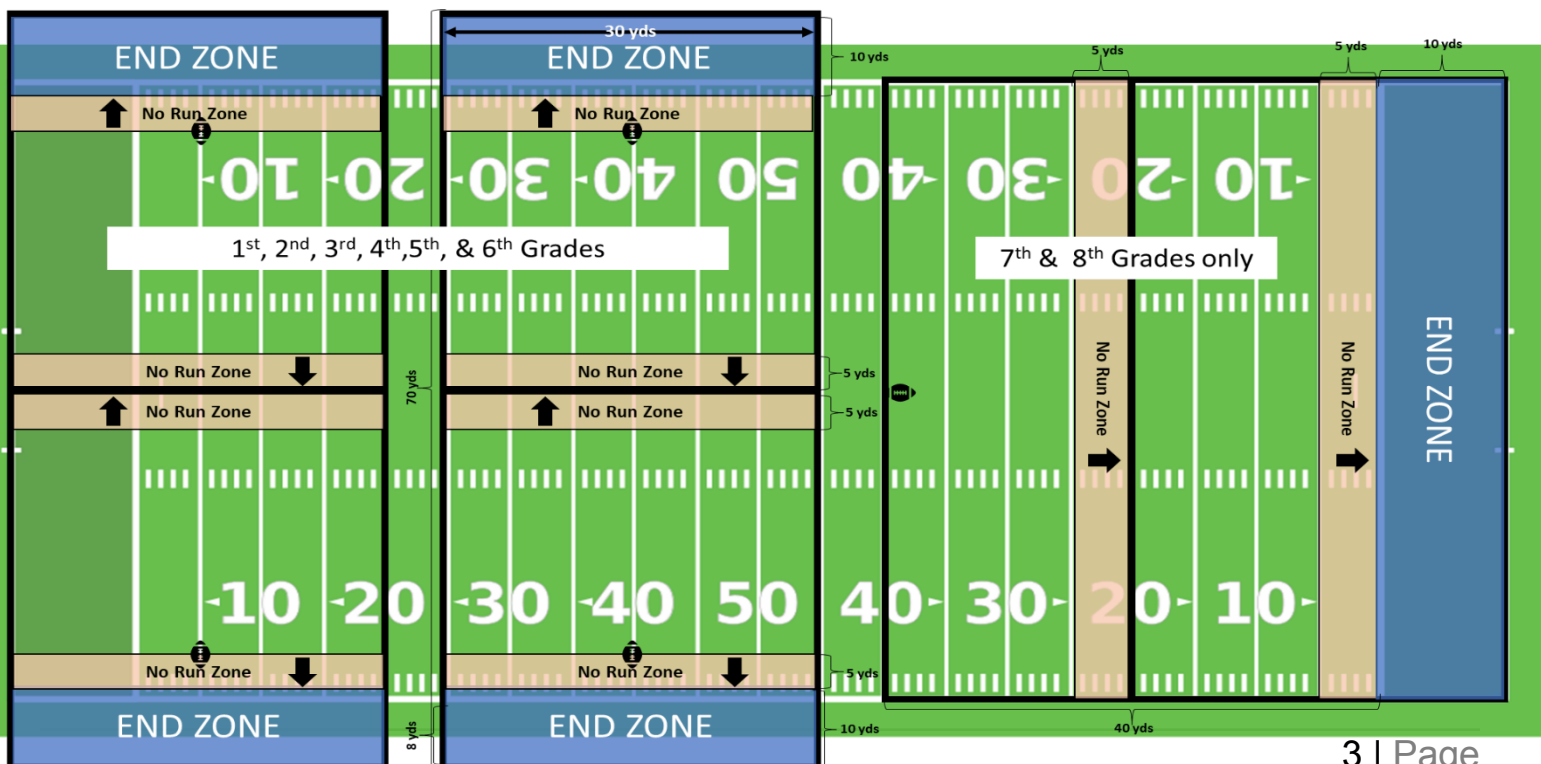
Participating communities are

- Grayslake North – Black and Gold
- Johnsbury – Blue and Gold
- Stateline – Maroon and Gold
- Westosha – Maroon and Silver
- Wilmot – Red, White, and Black

THE FIELD

- 1.1 For 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th grades the flag football field is shorter than a standard tackle field at 30 yards wide and 70 yards long, with two 10-yard end zones and a midfield line-to-gain. To prevent power football in tight spaces, no run zones are located 5 yards before the end zone and on each side of the midfield line-to-gain. If the ball is spotted on or inside the no run zone, the offense must use a pass play to get a first down or touchdown. This is illustrated in the field model on the left of the illustration.
- 1.2 For 7th and 8th grades the field is 53 yards wide and 50 yards long with one 10-yard end zone and a midfield line-to-gain. To prevent power football in tight spaces, no run zones are located 5 yards before the end zone and on 5 yards of the midfield line-to-gain. The ball is spotted on 40-yard line opposite the end zone as illustrated below. When inside the no run zone, the offense must use a pass play to get a first down or touchdown.

Figure 1 - Field layout and dimensions



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PLAYER UNIFORM

- 1.3 Teams are required to be a uniform/same team color and differ from the opponent. If both teams are wearing the same color, there will be a coin toss, and the losing team will need to change into a different color. Failure to provide a secondary uniform or unwillingness to change will result in a forfeit.
- 1.4 All jerseys are to be always tucked in.
- 1.5 All players must wear mouthguards while on the game field.
- 1.6 No hats will be worn, an exception for knit hats during cold weather events provided nothing is dangling from the hat that can be inadvertently grabbed.
- 1.7 No sunglasses will be allowed unless prescribed by a doctor.
- 1.8 No hoodies are allowed to be worn while on the field of play.
- 1.9 No jewelry will be worn on the field of play. In the case of earrings, they must be covered with tape.
- 1.10 Cleats must be worn on the field of play. No metal cleats are allowed.

PLAYER FLAGS

- 1.11 All flags must be worn around the waist outside any clothing of the player.
 - 1.11.1 Two flags, one on each hip must be worn.
 - 1.11.2 Flags are not to be wrapped around the belt.
 - 1.11.3 Flag type to be used are pop type flags.
 - 1.11.4 Only flags should be dangling from the belt.
 - 1.11.5 Flags should not extend past the knee of the player wearing the flag
 - 1.11.6 Extra belt should be cut or tucked away so as not to be exposed and possibly pulled.

GAME BALLS

- 1.12 All game balls will be age-appropriate composite or leather balls.
- 1.13 The following game ball size will be used for each grade level.
 - 1.13.1 K – 4th grade - Peewee sized
 - 1.13.2 5th – 6th grade – TDJ sized
 - 1.13.3 7th – 8th grade – TDY sized

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REFEREES

- 1.14 Hosting communities are required to provide at least one referee per game.
 - 1.14.1 Referees can be under the age of 18 but no younger than 15 as long as they demonstrate a level of professionalism and knowledge of the rules.
- 1.15 A maximum of four referees are allowed.
- 1.16 All referees will wear striped shirts or a safety type vest and a ball cap style hat. The lead referee must be identified by a white hat. Other referees will wear a black hat.

GAME CLOCK FORMAT

- 1.17 All games are 55 minutes divided as shown:
 - 1.17.1 First Half = 25-minutes
 - 1.17.2 Halftime = 5-minutes
 - 1.17.3 Second Half = 25-minutes
- 1.18 The clock will run continuously during the 25 minutes of the first and the second halves.
- 1.19 The play clock is 25 seconds from the end of the previous play.

GAME START

- 1.20 A minimum of 10 players across both teams must be present to start a game, 5 on offense and 5 on defense.
- 1.21 A maximum of 14 players are allowed on the field at any one time, 7 on offense and 7 on defense.
- 1.22 Two Coaches are allowed on the game field for K – 4th grade during play.
- 1.23 No coaches are allowed on the game field for 5th – 8th grade during play.
- 1.24 A coin toss determines 1st possession.
 - 1.24.1 The winner can elect to have offense/defense, defer or direction.
 - 1.24.2 The loser can select the next option, followed by the winner selecting the final option.
 - 1.24.3 1st choice in the 2nd half will be awarded to team who deferred or loser of coinflip if no defer.
 - 1.24.4 Each coach will present their ball at the time of the coin flip to the head referee to ensure the ball used during game time complies with the appropriate game ball requirements.

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OFFENSE

No blocking, screening, or running along with the ball carrier will be allowed. No intentional contact is allowed. An offensive player must try to avoid getting in the line of a defensive player trying to make a defensive play for a flag.

1.25 Snapping

- 1.25.1 All snaps must be done starting from the ground.
- 1.25.2 The ball must be snapped between the legs or from the side.
- 1.25.3 When snapping from on the side, if the snapper's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage, no penalty will be assessed.
- 1.25.4 When the ball is snapped from the side, the snapper may be crouched on the ground.
- 1.25.5 A failed or mishandled snap that hits the ground will be considered a dead ball. The ball will be set at the point that the ball hits the ground.

1.26 Running

- 1.26.1 The quarterback may not run unless the ball has been thrown back, handed, or pitched to him or her in the backfield. (No give and go to the QB)
- 1.26.2 Teams may handoff, pitch, or throw back in the backfield.
 - 1.26.2.1 K – 4th - UNLIMITED laterals, handoffs or throwbacks behind the LOS are allowed.
 - 1.26.2.2 5th – 8th – only one running play is allowed per the set of downs.
 - 1.26.2.3 The same player cannot run the ball twice during the set of downs.
- 1.26.3 Pitching (backwards/laterally) is allowed downfield (unlimited).
- 1.26.4 Handoffs are allowed forward or backwards when behind the line of scrimmage, and only backwards beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 1.26.5 A handoff DOES NOT count as a lateral/throwback.
- 1.26.6 No run zones are located 5 yards before mid-field and 5-yards before the end zone. You may not run the ball in the no run zone (5-yards before the first down and end zone), only forward passes are allowed to advance the ball past the line of scrimmage.
- 1.26.7 "Flea Flicker" handoffs are allowed when caught behind the line of scrimmage, but the ball cannot be run past the line of scrimmage.
- 1.26.8 Ball is spotted where the ball is at the time of the flag pull.
- 1.26.9 The ball must break the plane of the midfield or goal line to be considered a first down or touchdown.
- 1.26.10 Fumbles are "dead balls" and will be placed at the spot of the fumble where it hits the ground.

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1.27 Passing

- 1.27.1 The quarterback has a limited time to pass the ball. If the ball is not thrown, then the play is dead. After the ball is ruled dead, it is returned to the line of scrimmage.
 - 1.27.1.1 K – 4th – 7 seconds
 - 1.27.1.2 5th – 6th – 5 seconds
 - 1.27.1.3 7th – 8th – 4 seconds
 - 1.27.1.4 A forward pass MUST cross the LOS to be a legal play.
- 1.27.2 If ANY part of the players body is behind the LOS, it is a legal pass
- 1.27.3 Once the ball is handed off or pitched backwards, the time count stops. If the defensive team rushes, then there is no limited time count.
- 1.27.4 There is no arm in motion, if the ball is in hand when the quarterback's flag is pulled then it will be ruled a sack.
- 1.27.5 Interceptions are a turnover and may not be advanced.
- 1.27.6 The rusher may not have any contact with the QB (no hitting the QB arm or knocking the ball out of the QB hand).

1.28 Receiving

- 1.28.1 All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the quarterback, if the ball has been pitched or handed off in the backfield.
- 1.28.2 Players must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.

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DEFENSE

1.29 Rushing the Quarterback

- 1.29.1 Players that blitz/rush the quarterback must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- 1.29.2 The 7 yards will be measured off by a referee and marked by a flat rubber/plastic marker on the defense side of the ball, in the middle of the field as measured from sideline to sideline.
- 1.29.3 Players that are not 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped may not enter the backfield until there is a change of possession.
- 1.29.4 The blitzer/rusher is allowed a direct lane to the line of scrimmage if the player rushes from either side of the center or outside the bunch formation. The offense must avoid interfering with the rusher if the player has established a route to the QB.
- 1.29.5 The rush must be after the snap and can only be rushed by the player(s) that were seven yards back at the time of the snap. If a blitzer is rushing late or just does not rush the quarterback, the player can still participate as any other defensive player.

1.30 Pass Coverage

- 1.30.1 Contact with a receiver(s) is not allowed.
- 1.30.2 Pass interference normally occurs above the waist; entangled feet are not considered pass interference. Incidental contact is not considered pass interference.
- 1.30.3 A player may “find” their opponent by reaching out and placing a hand on them as long as touching does not delay, impede, twist, or turn their opponent. This is not considered pass interference.
- 1.30.4 A player may use their arms or hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver’s view (face guarding) of the ball without turning their own head to play the ball as long as noteworthy contact is not made with the receiver.
- 1.30.5 If defensive pass interference occurs in the end zone the ball will be placed on the one-yard line, automatic first down.
- 1.30.6 Interceptions may not be returned and will be considered a turnover.
- 1.30.7 Contact away from the direction of the pass is not considered pass interference but may be considered illegal contact.
- 1.30.8 Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference. The benefit of the doubt is given to the receiver.

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- 1.30.8.1 Examples of pass interference include:
- 1.30.8.2 Shoving or pushing off to create separation.
- 1.30.8.3 Playing through/over the back.
- 1.30.8.4 Hook and turn grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.
- 1.30.8.5 Arm bars, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.
- 1.30.8.6 Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched, commonly seen through “pick plays”.

SCORING

1.31 Points

- 1.31.1 Touchdown: 7 points
- 1.31.2 Safety: 2 points

MERCY RULE

- 1.32 If a team is up by 28 points or more during regular game play, score will stop being taken and the game will continue in a manner that avoids demeaning the lesser scoring team. Good sportsmanship at the youth level includes empathy for an opponent.
- 1.33 All penalties inside of 2 minutes of BOTH halves remain the same except:
 - 1.33.1 Defensive delay of game (+ 15 yards Unsportsmanlike & 1st Down)
 - 1.33.2 Leading Team – Offensive delay of game (LOD + clock stops)
 - 1.33.3 Offensive Pre-snap penalties – yardage + LOD

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PENALTY CHART

Penalty	Yardage	Penalty Assessment	Result
Flag Guarding	5	Spot of foul	Loss of down
Illegal Advancement	5	Spot of foul	Loss of down
Illegal Forward Pass	5	Previous spot	Loss of down
Offensive Pass Interference	5	Previous spot	Loss of down
Defensive Pass Interference	10	Previous spot	Automatic 1st down
Personal Foul/Unnecessary Roughness	15	End of the play or previous spot	By the Offense: Loss of down By the Defense: Automatic 1st down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15	End of the play or previous spot	By the Offense: Loss of down By the Defense: Automatic 1st down
Roughing the Passer	10	Previous spot	Automatic 1st down
Delay of Game	5	Dead ball – Previous spot	Replay down**
False Start	5	Dead ball – Previous spot	Replay down**
Offsides	5	Previous spot	Replay down**
Illegal Rush	5	Live ball – Previous Spot	Automatic 1st down
Encroachment	5	Dead ball – Previous spot	Automatic 1st down
Cool Down Period	0	No foul	Player must sit out 5 plays
Illegal Shift or Illegal Motion	5	Previous spot	Loss of Down
Stripping or Attempted Stripping	5	Spot of the foul	Automatic 1st down
Illegal Contact	5	Previous spot	By the Offense: Loss of down By the Defense: Automatic 1st down
Early Flag Pull	5	Previous spot	Automatic 1st down
Illegal Participation	5	Previous spot	By the Offense: Loss of down By the Defense: Automatic 1st down
Illegal Blocking	5	Spot foul	Loss of down
Holding	5	Spot of the foul	Automatic 1st down
Impeding the rusher	5	Previous spot	Loss of down
Charging	5	Spot of the foul	Loss of down
Last Man Rule	15 or TD	Spot of the foul	Automatic 1st down or TD if inside the 5-yard line

** LOD, if 2 min or less in either half