

Fall Football 2024 Rules & Guidelines

Edited August 6, 2024

FAIR PLAY AND EQUAL PLAYING TIME:

We are here to teach the game of football. Every child should be given the opportunity to play on offense and defense. Constant rotation throughout the course of the game with equal playing time and sitting out time should be the standard.

GENERAL INFO:

- Flag football is intramural, 7 on 7
- Games will be held at the fields of participating programs.
- The intent is to provide introduction to organized football to participants.

ELIGIBILITY:

Kids must meet age requirements and play on team for whatever age they HAVE TURNED by 9/1 of the current year

- Teams will be broken down in to 6U, 8U, 10U, 12U and 14U co-ed teams AND 6th to 8th grade (11 to 14 years olds) all girls teams
- Age ranges per level include:
 - Age 4-6 (6U)
 - Age 7-8 (8U)
 - Age 9-10 (10U)
 - Age 11-12 (12U)
 - Age 13-14 (14U)

ATTIRE:

Players are to be in issued game jersey in order to participate in said game.

Mouth guards are HIGHLY recommended but requirement at the discretion of each program for their players

Football or soccer or baseball (plastic or rubber) cleats are allowed. Metal cleats are not allowed.

Pop Flag belts must be outside of game jersey, 2 flags are required (one on each hip, stationary). If 2 flags aren't an option 3 are okay .

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Casts are permitted as long as they are padded:

Casts are allowed for players with injuries, under the condition that they are sufficiently padded to prevent injury to both the wearer and other players. The padding must be soft and thick enough to absorb impacts effectively. The entire cast must be covered with no less than 1/2 inch (approximately 1.25 cm) of closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding or an equivalent material that offers similar protection. This requirement is to ensure that the hardness of the cast does not pose a risk during physical contact. All edges of the cast must be rounded and covered, with no exposed hard surfaces or sharp edges. Before participation, the padded cast must be inspected and approved by the game official or a designated safety officer to confirm it meets these safety standards. Players with casts that do not comply with these guidelines, or those deemed unsafe by officials, will not be allowed to participate in the game. This policy is intended to balance the inclusion of players recovering from injuries with the overall safety of all participants

For clarification, illegal equipment consists of:

- Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots.
- Pads or braces worn above the waist that is not for medical purposes.
- Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges overlapped with a soft material.
- Any slippery or sticky foreign substance on any equipment or exposed part of the body.
- Exposed metal on clothes or person.
- Towels attached at the player's waist.

An official time out shall be declared to permit prompt remediation of equipment which becomes illegal or defective through use.

COACHES:

Teams may have up to four designated coaches who are able to coach on the field or sidelines.

A maximum of 2 (6U and 8U) coaches and 1 coach (10U, 12U, 14U, and 14u Girls) per team are allowed on the field during play.

REFEREE:

A field host may provide high school players as referees. If a dedicated referee is not available, the game should be managed by the coaches according to the rules.

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All coaches are responsible for the enforcement of said rules (referee) during play, if one is not provided, and shall be allowed use of a whistle and game clock (stopwatch) for such. Coaches of both teams are expected to work together to ensure the safety of the players, fair play, and an environment respectful of the game, players and families.

Coaches and referees should provide positive guidance to players with the intent to teach.

If a team does not have 7 players at the start of, or any point during the game they have several options for play:

1. Borrow players from their own organization of the same age.
2. Play with less players, example 5v5 or 6v6
3. Borrow players from another team/organization of the same age

It is highly recommended that coaches have a printed version of the Flag Football Rules available at the game for reference if needed.

THE GAME:

No kickoffs or punting. Away team starts with the ball. Home team shall have choice of goal to defend for the first half.

7 on 7 (6U & 8U) - The playing field is 53 yards in length with end zones 5 yards in from the end line includes and 30 yards wide. Field dimensions may vary according to available space and field conditions. 7 on 7 games will start with the visiting team having possession of the ball first, on their own goal line. Home team shall start the second half with possession at own goal line after a change of field direction. There will be goals on both ends of the field and teams will play both ways.

Teams have 4 downs to cross the midfield for a first down. Once a team crosses the midfield line, no additional first downs can be made and it will be 1st and Goal. Turnover on downs results in the ball spotted at the goal line of the team gaining possession.

7 on 7 (10U, 12U, 14U & 14u GIRLS) – The playing field will be from the 40 yard line into the end zone using full width of the field. Games will start with the visiting team having possession of the ball first, on the 40 yard line. Home team shall start the second half with possession at own “40”.

Teams have 4 downs to cross the 20 yard line for a first down, and another 4 downs to score. Turnover on downs results in the ball spotted at the 40 yard line with the opposing team gaining possession.

Dead ball when:

- The flag(s)/belt is pulled. The ball shall be spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when a flag(s)/belt was pulled.
- Ball carrier goes out of bounds, or when a knee touches the ground.

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- The ball is fumbled. No turnovers shall result from a fumble, and line of scrimmage is where the ball hits the ground. In the event the ball is advanced due to a fumble the line of scrimmage is where the ball carrier last had possession.
- The ball is NOT dead if the flag belt falls off. Player will be considered down in this case with one hand touch.
- QB does not release the ball within the designated time allowed for each level. See passing for designated times

CLOCK:

Game duration is a “running clock” consisting of two halves at 25 minutes each, with a 5 minute halftime.

Teams are encouraged to snap the ball in a timely manner (45 seconds after ball is spotted); however, only excessive and repeated delays of game are to be penalized with a loss of down. The objective is player development NOT running out the clock.

Teams are not allowed any time-outs.

The referee shall declare an official penalty after one warning when a team is illegally consuming time.

SCORING:

Flag football is intended to be a developmental experience and should remain the main focus during the regular season. Scores will be kept and reported for playoff tournament seeding. After each game, coaches should report the Win/Loss to their flag director to track in a shared document

Each touchdown is 1 point or a “score”. No “extra points” will be attempted.

Interceptions will result in a turnover and the intercepting team will start on offense at the 40 yard line (10U, 12U, 14U & 14U GIRLS) or goal line (6U & 8U)

SPORTSMANSHIP:

A team ahead by 3 scores shall forfeit possession of the ball to the opposing team until said deficit is less than 3 scores. Offense shall start at midfield, and have 4 downs to score. In lieu of turnover on downs, the ball is re-spotted at midfield, and a new set of downs is awarded.

DEFENSE:

Defense may not cross line of scrimmage until ball is handed off on a run play or the Quarterback throws the ball on a passing play. Blitzing is not allowed.

Once a Quarterback gets rid of the ball behind the line of scrimmage and another player possesses the ball, rushing past the line of scrimmage to attempt to pull a ball carrier’s flag is allowed. If the ball carrier’s flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage, the ball should be spotted at the same spot of the previous snap so there is no loss of yardage.

Any defensive player intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. The official shall warn the team, and repeated infractions will result in unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. (10 yards)

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In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally, the ball carrier shall be allowed to advance the ball and not considered down until a defender gets one hand on the ball carrier (one hand touch).

In circumstances where a flag belt falls off accidentally, while the ball carrier is running and without being touched by a defensive player, the ball carrier shall be allowed to advance the ball and not considered down until a defender gets one hand on the ball carrier (one hand touch).

OFFENSE:

Any number of linemen allowed. All offensive players are eligible for a pass or handoff.

No blocking is allowed (warning, loss of down penalty thereafter).

- Blocking is defined as: no offensive player extends any part of his or her body as an attempt to impede a defender's progress.

The same offensive player may not advance the ball past the line of scrimmage two (2) consecutive plays in a row if both of those plays are running plays. An offensive player may possess and advance the ball past the line of scrimmage for up to (2) consecutive plays in a row if those 2 plays consist of a running play and a receiving play (catching a pass from the QB).

RUNNING:

Anyone running with the ball is allowed to spin but NO stiff arms or guarding of flags is allowed. Said infractions will result in runner being called down at spot of infraction.

Quarterback cannot run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage unless a previous ball exchange, not counting the center snap, has taken place.

No limits on running the ball, meaning a team can run the ball as much as they choose during a game.

12U and 14u are not allowed to run. Passing only

***Exception to above rule: 14u girls can run EXCEPT within 5 yards of the end zone and 5 yards of the 1st down**

PASSING:

The center may snap the ball either between the legs or offset to one side of the ball. Shotgun snaps are also allowed. A missed snap (shotgun included) is still a live ball and play should continue.

The Quarterback must take possession of the ball from the center. No center sneaks.

Multiple handoffs, pitches, laterals, etc. are allowed, provided they occur behind the line of scrimmage.

No running past line of scrimmage by Quarterback (loss of down) unless a legal pass or handoff to another player has occurred first. Passes are allowed to be behind line of scrimmage (i.e. screen pass).

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An incomplete pass is any pass attempt not caught by any player, regardless of the pass being forward, or lateral.

If a player is in the air attempting to catch a ball, the player must contact the ground with at least one foot in-bounds with the ball in their possession prior to going out of bounds, unless contact by an opponent causes the player to first touch out-of-bounds.

If possession of the ball is lost simultaneously when player hits the ground, it is not a catch.

If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball is dead at that spot and belongs to the team that snapped the ball.

No limits on passing the ball, meaning a team can pass the ball as much as they choose during a game.

QB has the following to release the ball:

- 6U – 8 seconds
- 8U – 6 seconds
- 10U, 12U, 14U & 14U GIRLS – 5 seconds

PASS INTERFERENCE:

Any contact that, in the view of the official, interferes with the attempt to catch a pass (offensive or defensive player) is pass interference unless it occurs when two or more eligible players make a simultaneous attempt to reach, catch, or deflect a pass. Hindering an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, intercept or deflect the ball is pass interference, even though no contact was made.

Should a receiver be illegally de-flagged prior to a catch, said receiver shall be allowed to advance the ball and not considered down until another flag is removed and/or a defender gets one hand on the receiver.

Defensive pass interference results in 10 yard automatic 1st down. Offensive pass interference results in loss of down.

These penalties may be declined by the opposing team with respect to the result of the play.

PERSONAL FOULS:

Any act listed below or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. Players shall not:

- Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- Trip an opponent.
- Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
- Throw the runner to the ground.

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- Contact an opponent either before the ball is put in play or after the ball is declared dead. • Make any contact with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary.
- Deliberately drive or run into another player.
- Deliberately and aggressively, tackle the runner.
- Intentionally delay the game.
- Interfere with the spotting of the ball by referee.

Roughness and foul play from players and coaches will NOT be tolerated. This includes, but not limited to tackling, elbowing, “cheap shots”, trash talk, arguing with referee, etc.

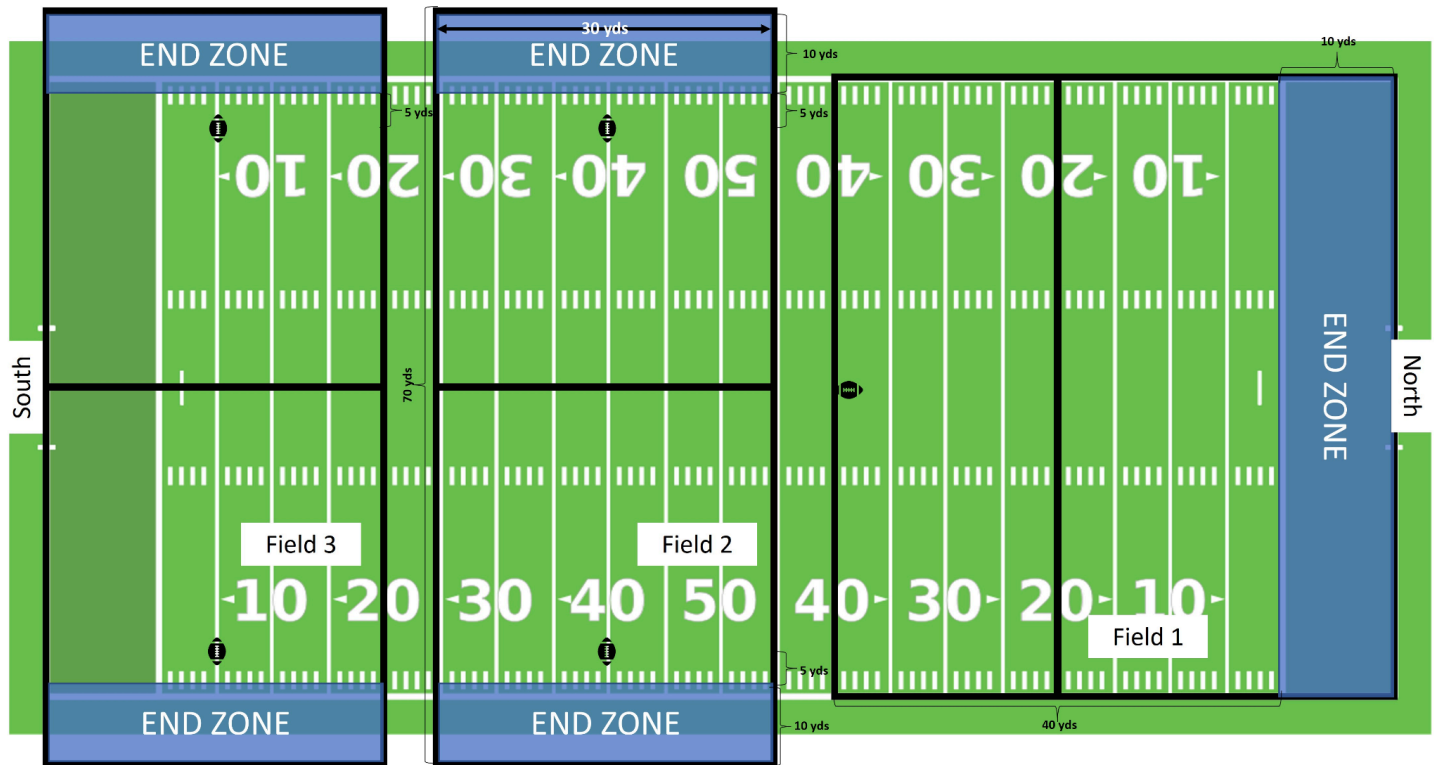
It is the referee’s discretion to penalize with an automatic first down after first warning to offending team, and 10 yards with automatic first down thereafter.

PRACTICE:

Practice is based on team and program.

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CANCELLATIONS:

Game cancellations, rescheduling of practices or games, and forfeits of games are determined by each organization. Notification of any changes in game schedules will be communicated by the host site to the designated representative of each organization who will then be responsible for communicating to their teams.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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GAME/HOST FIELDS:

- Grant Jr. Bulldogs (Ingleside) / Field of Dreams, 26725 Molitor Rd., Ingleside, IL
- Lake County Stallions (Mundelein) / Behm Park, 22222 E. Peterson Rd., Grayslake, IL
- Round Lake Spartans / Harts Hill, 761 Hart Rd., Round Lake, IL
- Antioch Vikings / Osmond Sports Complex, 38 Depot St., Antioch, IL
- Lake Villa / Loffredo Park, 485 N. Milwaukee Ave., Lake Villa, IL
- Johnsburg Jr. Skyhawks / 5200 Skyhawk Ln., Johnsburg, IL
- Westosha Falcons (Salem, WI) / Westosha Central High School, 24617 75th St., Salem, WI
- Grayslake Junior Knights (Grayslake North)/Grayslake North High School, 1925 N IL 83, Grayslake, IL