



2023

Millard United Sports

NFL Flag Football

Girls NFL Flag Football

REV 09212023

Millard United Sports Reserves the Sole Right to Modify These Rules at its Sole Discretion



2023 Rule Book

Millard United Sports NFL Flag RULES

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I. Game

1. **NFL Flag is a “non-contact league”. Blocking is NOT allowed under any circumstance.**
2. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet for a coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss. The winner of the toss has the choice to start the game on offense or defense. Possession to start the second half is awarded to the team who started the 1st half on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40-yard line (goal line if we are utilizing a full field) and has a series of four (4) downs to cross midfield (20-yard line). Once a team successfully crosses midfield, they have four (4) additional downs to score a touchdown.
 - i. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after 4 downs, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts a new offensive series from the 40-yard line (goal line if we are utilizing a full field).
 - ii. If the offensive team successfully crosses midfield but then fails to score a touchdown after 4 downs, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts a new offensive series from the 40-yard line (goal line if we are utilizing a full field).
 - iii. **If any defensive player intercepts an offensive player’s legal pass during any play from scrimmage, they may attempt to return the interception to the 40-yard line (goal line if we are utilizing a full field) for a score.**
 1. **If the interception is returned for a touchdown, the return team will have the opportunity for an extra point. They may choose to go for 1-point or 2-points.**
 2. If the return of an interception fails to reach the 40-yard line (goal line if we are utilizing a full field) the intercepting team starts a new offensive series from the 20-yard line with 4 downs to score a touchdown.
4. **If at the end of regulation time the score is tied (regular season and play offs), an overtime procedure will be played to determine the game’s winner.**

II. Terminology

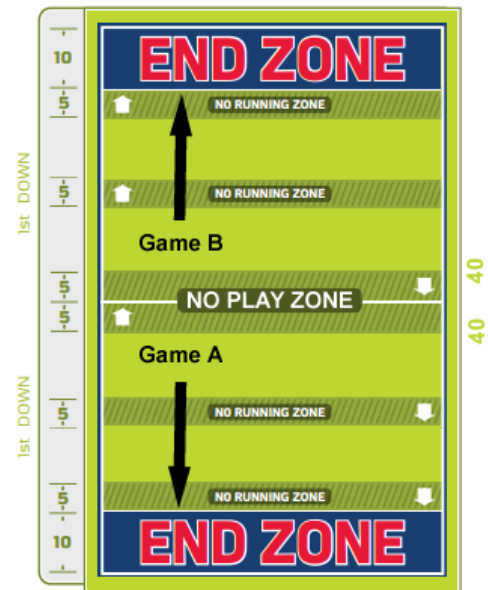
1. **Boundary Lines** - the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and back of the end zone lines.
2. **Line Of Scrimmage** - (LOS) an imaginary line running through the forward point of the football and across the width of the field.
3. **Line-To-Gain** - the line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
4. **Rush Line** - an imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
5. **Offense** - the squad with possession of the ball.
6. **Defense** - the squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
7. **Passer** - the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
8. **Rusher** - the defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
9. **Downs (1-2-3-4)** - the offensive squad has four attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. They must cross the line to gain another set of downs or to score.
10. **Live Ball** - refers to the period that the play is in action. Generally used regarding penalties, live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
11. **Dead Ball** - refers to the period immediately before or after a play.
12. **Whistle** - sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, half time, or the end of the game.
13. **Inadvertent Whistle** - official's whistle that is performed in error.
14. **Charging** - the movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, contacting the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
15. **Flag Guarding** - an act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm.
16. **Shovel Pass** - A legal forward pass across the LOS underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward with a 1-hand release.
17. **Lateral** - a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
18. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** - rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.
19. **Unnecessary Roughness** – any action that is beyond the normal physical play, per referee's judgement.
20. **Pass Interference** – Contact with receiver that impedes catch.

III. Equipment

1. **All players must wear the official NFL jersey and NFL flag belt they received from the league in advance of the season.**
 - i. **The jersey must be tucked into the pants/shorts if they hang below the belt line.**
 - ii. **The flag belt must be worn over the hips with the flags elbowed out from the hips.**
 - iii. **The unused portion of the flag (the tail) must be tucked into the players pants/shorts, so it is not mistaken for the flag.**
 - iv. **The color of a player's pants/shorts can NOT be the color of his/her flag belt/flags.**
2. **All players must wear a mouthguard at all times while on the field.** If a player is found NOT to have a mouthguard, they will be removed from the field for 1 play or until they locate their mouthguard.
3. Players must wear shoes. Molded cleats are allowed. Due to safety concerns, NO METAL cleats are allowed.
4. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
5. Players may wear a wrist coach and/or sweat bands. The wrist coach and/or sweat bands must be worn on the wrist or arm only. Wrist coaches are not allowed to be worn around the waist.
6. Players may wear soft shell helmets and sunglasses, but they must be secured at ALL times.
7. Players must remove all watches, earrings, bracelets, and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
8. Teams can choose to use their own football, or the MUS provided game ball. 2nd grade through 4th Grade and Girls teams will use the "Pee Wee" sized ball; 5th Grade and older will use the TDJ sized ball. **If a team chooses to use their own game ball, they will be responsible to bring it out onto the field for each offensive series. The ball must be the appropriate size for their age group.**

IV. Field

1. The field dimensions for the 2nd & 3rd grade divisions will be 32 yards wide by 40 yards long with a 7-yard end zone, and a midfield line-to-gain.
2. The field dimensions for all remaining divisions will be 44.33 yards wide by 50 yards long with one 10-yard end zone, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Run Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards. However, field size may vary based on field availability for each league.
3. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No-Run Zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be passing plays, even with a handoff.
4. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
5. Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
6. All coaches and players on the sidelines must be 2 yards off the sideline, extending the entire length of the field. The allowed coach box will be the 40-yard line to the 5-yard line.
7. All fans, family members, or anyone not participating in the game as an athlete or coach must be away from the playing surface, in the stands during games.



V. Rosters

1. 2nd grade through 8th grade play 7v7 & Girls play 5v5.
2. Home teams wear dark colored jerseys, visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
3. Teams must start a game with a minimum of six players (4 players for girls). In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with six players on the field, but no fewer than six. [Minimum for 5v5 games is four players].

VI. Timing and Overtime

1. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two twenty-minute halves. The clock stops only for timeouts.
2. Halftime is 3-minutes long.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. At the snap of the ball, the quarterback has a 7-second play clock. They must either attempt a forward pass across the line of scrimmage or hand the ball off prior to the 7 seconds expiring. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second play clock is no longer in effect. If the quarterback does not hand the ball off or throw a pass within the 7-second clock, the down is consumed.
5. Each team has (3) 30-second time out per game. The game clock will start with the snap of the next play. This includes extra points. If a team is not ready to play once the initial whistle sounds, the team may be charged with their full complement of timeouts.
6. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
7. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
8. **If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game will continue into overtime. (Regular season and playoffs).**
9. **Overtime procedure (regular season and playoffs).**
 - i. There will be a coin toss to decide who will begin the overtime period on offense and defense.

1. If a second or additional round of overtime must be played, we will continue with the teams alternating who is on offense or defense to start during every round of overtime. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
- ii. 1st Overtime Period:
 1. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
- iii. 2nd Overtime Period (only if the game remains tied after the first round):
 1. Both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line.
- iv. 3rd Overtime Period (only if the game remains tied after the second round):
 1. Each team will get 1 play from the 5-yard line going out from the goal line. The team with the most yards will be awarded one point and declared the winner.
 2. If there is a sack by both teams, the team who is sacked for fewer yards wins. For example, Team A is sacked for a 3-yard loss on their possession. Team B was sacked for a 2-yard loss. Team B wins the game as -2 is better than -3. Team B will be awarded 1 point.
- v. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- vi. There are no time-outs.
- vii. Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points.
- viii. Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over.
- ix. If an interception is advanced in the third overtime period, the game is over.
- x. Each team will be scored based on points scored (same as regulation).

VII. Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (Point After Touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line) Note: 1 point PAT is pass only, 2-point PAT can be run or pass.
 - i. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 10-yard line).
3. **Mercy Rule: Once a team is winning by twenty-eight (28) points or more at any point, the game is over.**
4. Safety: There are NO safeties. If a player's flag is pulled behind the 40-yard line (or in the endzone if utilizing a full field), the down will be consumed, and we will proceed with the next down.
5. **Interceptions: Interceptions are returnable for a touchdown. If returned for a score (past the 40-yard line or to the opposite endzone if playing on a full field) during regular game play, they will be awarded 6-points, 2-points if returned during conversions and/or overtime. The defensive team will have the opportunity for an extra point.** They will be allowed to go for 1-point or 2-points.
6. If the defensive team does NOT return the interception for a score, they will start their offensive series at the 20-yard line.
7. **It is the responsibility of the coaches to verify with the officials after the game the final score. Once the officials submit their scorecard, the game will be considered final, and no changes will be made.**

VIII. Coaches

1. Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to always support the coach.
2. **In the 2nd/3rd Grade NFL Flag & all Girls NFL Flag, one coach is allowed on the field to call plays only. Prior to the ball being snapped, the coach must move to the sideline prior to the snap. A defensive coach is allowed to come on the field as well but must return to the sideline prior to the ball being snapped.**
3. **4th-8th Grade – Coaches remain on the sidelines.**
4. Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines, and codes of conduct.
5. There is a maximum of 3 coaches/adults allowed on the field.

IX. 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.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. Regarding the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - i. The ball hits the ground. (Incomplete pass)
 - ii. The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - iii. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - iv. The ball carrier loses possession of the ball. There are NO fumbles.
 - v. A touchdown or PAT is scored.
 - vi. The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - vii. The ball carrier's flag falls off.
 - viii. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - ix. The 7 second clock expires.
 - x. Inadvertent whistle.
 - xi. Ball-carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning or to avoid a downed player on the field of play. Diving is NOT allowed by the ball carrier.
7. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - i. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
 - ii. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
8. All calls by the official are final. While the head coach may ask for a rule clarification (explanation) any further challenging of an official's call is an automatic "unsportsmanlike" penalty and may result in an ejection.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball will be spotted where possession is lost. Ball cannot be fumbled forward.

X. Running

1. The center must either hand or toss the football between their legs to the quarterback who is waiting to receive the football.
2. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap. They cannot directly run with the ball.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - i. "Center sneak" plays are not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
 - ii. **Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. All forward passes must be beyond the line of scrimmage.**
 - iii. **Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the 7-second passing clock is eliminated, and all defensive players are eligible to rush.**
4. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind.
5. "No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before the end zone and 5 yards prior to midfield (25-20-yard line) are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run if the ball is spotted within this designated area. (Reminder: Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run Zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
6. **No blocking, "screening", or setting picks is allowed at any time. No impeding the defensive players attempting to get to the ball carrier. No running with the ball carrier. If a player is judged to be running with a player or causing interference, an illegal screen penalty will be enforced. All offensive players must come to a complete stop, or at a minimum, their movement must be away from the ball carrier,**

or they are at risk of a penalty. The defense must be given the opportunity to have a clear path to the ball carrier.

7. Flag Obstruction – **All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins.** The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.
8. The ball is spotted at the foremost point of the ball when the flag is pulled.

XI. Passing

1. **All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.**
2. **Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.** A legal forward pass is considered a pass across the LOS underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward with a 1-hand release.
3. **The quarterback has a 7-second "clock."** If a pass is not thrown within the 7-seconds or a handoff does not occur, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.

XII. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, as long as the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. **Only one player is allowed in motion at the time of the snap. All remaining players must be set for 1-second prior to the player going into motion and the ball being snapped.**
3. All motion must be **behind and parallel** to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
4. A player must have at least 1-foot inbounds when making a reception.
5. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
6. **Interceptions are returnable for a touchdown. If returned for a score (past the 40-yard line or to the opposite endzone if playing on a full field) during regular game play, they will be awarded 6-points, 2-points if returned during conversions and/or overtime. The intercepting team will have the opportunity for an extra point.**
7. If the defensive team does NOT return the interception for a score, they will start their offensive series at the 20-yard line.

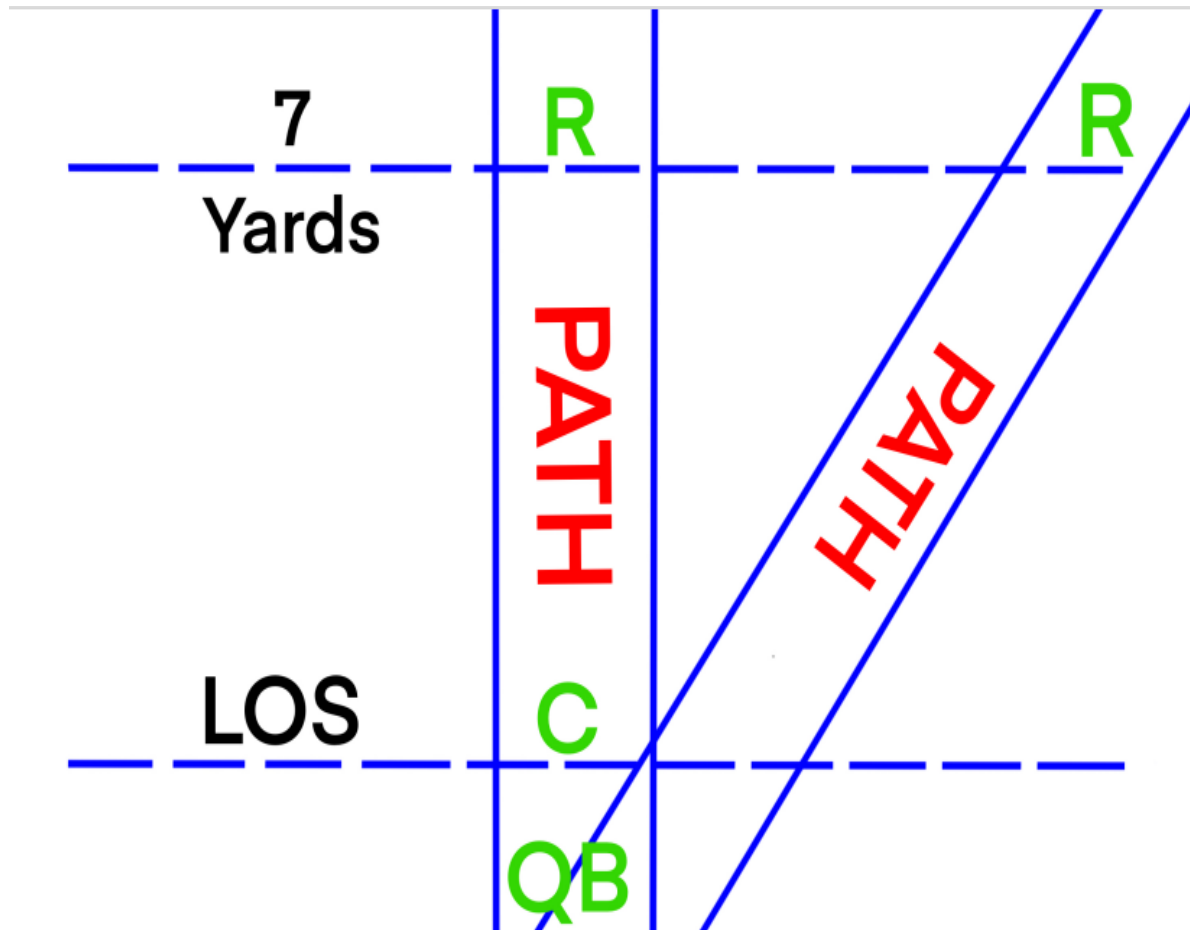
XIII. Rushing the Passer

NOTE: 2nd Grade NFL Flag ONLY– The defense is NOT allowed to rush until the quarterback hands the ball off. If the quarterback attempts a pass, **NO RUSH IS ALLOWED.** The 7-second clock remains in play.

ALL Other Age Groups:

1. Before each play, an official will mark off the 7-yards from the LOS.
2. **The defense is allowed to rush as many players as they choose as long as they are behind the officials' 7-yard mark when the ball is snapped.**
3. **If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), the rusher may NOT return to the rush line, reset, and legally rush the passer.**
4. Any interference by the offense to impede his or her path will be considered impeding.
5. **Players not rushing the passer may defend on the line of scrimmage but may not enter the backfield unless the ball is handed off. Once the ball is handed off, ALL defensive players are allowed to rush.**
6. Players rushing the passer may attempt to block the pass, however NO contact can be made with the QB in any way, unless ruled incidental by the officials.
7. If the offensive player or players hold their position post-snap, the rusher must go around the players to the QB.
8. The rusher has a clear path to the passer.

9. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB and does not move once the QB rolls out. (SEE DIAGRAM BELOW)
10. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be placed at its location when the quarterback's flag is pulled. If the flag is pulled behind the 40-yard line (or endzone on a new series) or the ball is dropped, they play will be ruled DEAD and the down is consumed. The ball will be spotted NO worse than the 40-yard line or goal line.



XIV. Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders **may** dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.
7. Pulling the shorts will result in a penalty.

XV. Formation

1. The offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center).
2. **All offensive players must be set for one second before the ball is snapped AND before any player goes in motion.**
 - i. One player may go in motion behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
3. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

XVI. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If an Official witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, taunting, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player may be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player, players or coach will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Two UNSPORTSMANLIKE penalties will result in an ejection. Any ejection will result in a 1-game suspension and will be reported to MUS by the officials after the game. This goes for coaches and players.
5. Ball carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
6. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.

XVII. Penalties

1. General
 - i. The referee will call all penalties.
 - ii. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
 - iii. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
 - iv. Only the head coach may ask the **Referee** questions about rule clarifications and interpretations. **Players and assistant coaches may not question judgment calls.**
 - v. The 1st half or game may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
 - vi. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
 - vii. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
 - viii. The offensive team may not be retreated beyond the 40-yard line, however loss of downs will continue to be enforced, if applicable.

Offensive Penalties (ALL Offensive Penalties Result in a Loss of Down)	
Offsides/ False Start / Procedure	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Pass Interference	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Illegal Motion / Illegal Substitution	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Delay of Game	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Taunting	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Screening, Blocking	SPOT FOUL -5 Yards & Loss of Down
Charging	SPOT FOUL -5 Yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	SPOT FOUL -5 Yards & Loss of Down
Unsportsmanlike	10 Yards & Loss of Down
Unnecessary Roughness	10 Yards & Loss of Down

Defensive Penalties (ALL Defensive Penalties Result in an Automatic 1 st Down)	
Offsides	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Illegal Rush	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Illegal Flag Pull	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Illegal substitution	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Roughing the Passer	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Taunting	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Pass Interference	SPOT FOUL & Auto1st Down
Holding	SPOT FOUL 5 Yards & Auto1st
Stripping	SPOT FOUL + 5 Yards & Auto 1st
Unsportsmanlike	10 Yards & Auto 1st Down
Unnecessary Roughness	10 Yards & Auto 1st Down

XVIII. Fan / Spectator Expectations

1. Fans must adhere to good sportsmanship.
2. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
3. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
4. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
5. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
6. If provided, Fans / Spectators should be sitting in the stands. Folding chairs of any type are NOT allowed on ANY artificial turf surface.
7. If no stands are provided, fans will sit on the side of the field opposite the teams. All spectators will be required to stay behind a barrier line. This area will be designated as a clear space to help ensure the health and safety of the players, officials, and spectators. Failure to stay clear of this area will result in a team warning. Any future infraction of the same nature WILL result in a 10-yard unsportsmanlike penalty being assessed onto the offending team.
8. At the end of your game, you are responsible to Dispose of ALL trash on your sideline in designated trash cans.