YOUTH 5v5 STANDARD RULES

The following 5v5 non-contact flag football rules for men and women are USA Flag approved.

Read through the General Rules first, as they apply to every style we offer, then also make sure and check out the style-specific rules below that are unique to this format.

RULE 1. OVERVIEW

SECTION 1. THE FIELD

Article 1. Standard dimensions of the field are 60 yards long by 25 yards wide with 7 yard endzones. Approved field sizes may fluctuate from 53-64 yards long when necessary, or 23-30 yards wide. Endzones should not be shorter than 5 yards.

SECTION 2. THE GAME

Article 1. Game Time is FORFEIT TIME – upon approval by an USA Flag director.

Article 2. Minimum 3 players to start a game. May only have up to 5 players on the field at any one time.

Article 3. A coin toss determines 1st possession. The team can elect to have offense, defense, defer or direction. Choice in the 2nd half will be awarded to the team that did not have the choice 1st half.

Article 4. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has four plays to cross mid-field. On 4th down, teams have 5 seconds to declare to go for it or punt. Once a team crosses mid-field they have three plays to score. If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field, the ball changes possession.

Article 5. If the offense does not score, the ball changes possession. All drives start from the 5-yard line with the exception of an interception or failed 4th down conversion, where defense takes over at the spot.

Article 6. No blocking is allowed. No intentional contact is allowed.

SECTION 3. EQUIPMENT

Article 1. Teams also must have the same color shirts and have an alternative color (one dark color/one light color). They do not have to be official uniforms. 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.

Article 2. Approved football sizes:

- 9U and below: Pee-wee, junior, and youth size footballs allowed
- 10U-13U: Junior and youth size footballs allowed
- 14U: Youth size football (with option of using regulation high school sized ball)

Article 3. Teams must wear Youth Shruumz or Sonic Flag-a-Tag flags (if custom flags are worn they must be of equal dimensions as Sonic flags). NO NFL FLAG BELTS. Flags will not be allowed that have been altered (cut, taped, etc.). Mushroom Flags are not allowed for youth. The flags cannot be the same color as a player's shorts.

SECTION 4. COACHES

Article 1. Coaches are volunteers whose role it is to help young people learn to play and enjoy football. Parents are encouraged to support their youth and their coach at all times.

Article 2. Coaches (1 Coach per Team) in the 8U and under divisions only are permitted on the field to assist players with their position alignment and mentoring on offense only (no coaches allowed on the field while on defense). At the snap, on-field coaches must be 5 yards behind the quarterback and are not allowed to continue instructing or coaching until the play ends.

Article 3. Coaches of all other age divisions may not come on to the field of play during a game unless a player is injured. Coaches who come on the field of play anytime during a game will be penalized. One sideline warning per game will be issued after which the following penalties will result:

- Coach on the field during live action = unsportsmanlike conduct
- Coach on the field during a dead ball = delay of game

Article 4. Only three coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines. ONLY THE HEAD COACH CAN ADDRESS THE GAME OFFICIALS.

SECTION 5. GAME CLOCK FORMAT

Article 1. Tournament clock is 25 minutes long. Two 12 minute halves and 1-minute halftime.

Article 2. Each team has two 30 second timeouts PER GAME. If a time out is called after a TD the clock will not run until the change of possession and the offense snaps their ball.

Article 3. The play clock is 25 seconds from the end of the previous play.

SECTION 6. FIRST HALF CLOCK

Article 1. The clock will run continuously during the 12 minutes of the first half unless a team timeout is used or play is stopped by an official (e.g. deal with an injury, challenge, referee conference, game management purposes, etc.)

Article 2. The head official will give a verbal two-minute warning (for rule specific changes inside 2 minutes)

Article 3. The clock will run during point-after-touchdown attempts (PATs) in the first half unless either team opts to use a team timeout.

SECTION 7. SECOND HALF CLOCK

Article 1. In the second half the clock will run continuously for the first 11 minutes unless a team timeout or an official's time out is used.

Article 2. The one-minute warning will stop the clock in the second half if the score difference is 8 points or less.

Article 3. The head official will give a verbal two-minute (for rule specific changes) and one-minute warning as close as possible to the actual marks but will not interrupt a live play.

Article 4. At the one minute warning officials will use a 'stop' clock mechanic for the remainder of the contest.

RULE 2. OFFENSE

SECTION 1. RUNNING

Article 1. The quarterback may not run unless the ball has been thrown back, handed or pitched to him or her in the backfield.

Article 2. Teams may handoff unlimited times in the backfield. Handoffs are allowed forward or backwards when behind the line of scrimmage, and only backwards beyond the line of scrimmage. A handoff DOES NOT count as a lateral/throwback.

Article 3. Lateral rules:

- 13U and younger may lateral once behind the line of scrimmage per play, but may not lateral or pitch at any time past the line of scrimmage.
- Divisions 14U and older may execute unlimited laterals in the backfield and downfield.
- Any player who receives a handoff, pitch or lateral behind the line of scrimmage may throw the ball as long as he or she is not fully beyond the line of scrimmage.

Article 4. A forward pass DOES NOT have to cross the LOS to be a legal play.

Article 5. If the ball is placed on the “Back” of ANY player, the player MUST run the ball (no give and go to the QB on the back)

Article 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. The no run zone does not apply to the 6U division.

Article 7. Ball is spotted where the ball is at the time of the flag pull. The ball must break the plane of the midfield or goal line to be considered a first down or touchdown.

Article 8. Players may NOT block down field in any form.

SECTION 2. PASSING

Article 1. The quarterback has 7 seconds to pass the ball if there is no rush. 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.

Article 2. Once the ball is handed off or pitched backwards the 7 second count stops. If the defensive team rushes, then there is no 7 second count.

Article 3. 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.

Article 4. Interceptions may be returned.

Article 5. The rusher may not have any contact with the QB (no hitting the QB arm or knocking the ball out of the QB hand).

Article 6. If ANY part of the players body is behind the LOS it is a legal pass

SECTION 3. RECEIVING

Article 1. All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the quarterback, if the ball has been pitched or handed off in the backfield.

Article 2. Players must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.

RULE 3. DEFENSE

SECTION 1. RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

Article 1. Rushing is ONLY allowed for 8U divisions and up and is NOT allowed for youth ages 7U and below.

Article 2. Players that blitz/rush the quarterback must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

Article 3. The 7 yards will be measured off by a referee.

Article 4. Players that are not 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped may not enter into the backfield until there is a change of possession.

Article 5. The blitzer/rusher is allowed a direct lane to the line of scrimmage as long as he or she rushes from either side of the center or outside the bunch formation. The offense must avoid interfering with the rusher if he or she has established a lane. Officials will announce LANE or NO LANE for rushers/blitzers prior to the snap. This is a judgement call/decision based on the spacing between the players in the offensive formation.

Article 6. The rush of a blitzer has to be immediately after the snap, quick and straight towards the point where the quarterback receives the snap in order to retain the right of way. If a blitzer is rushing late, slowly, aiming at another spot, changing direction during the rush or just does not rush the quarterback, the player loses the right of way but still can participate as any other defensive player.

SECTION 2. PASS COVERAGE

Article 1. Contacting receivers is not allowed

Article 2. Pass interference normally occurs above the waist; entangled feet are not considered pass interference. Incidental contact is not considered pass interference.

Article 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.

Article 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.

Article 5. If defensive pass interference occurs in the end zone the ball will be placed on the one-yard line, automatic first down.

Article 6. Interceptions may be returned. Interceptions in the end zone that are not returned to the field of play will result in a touchback and the ball will be spotted on the 5-yard line.

Article 7. Contact away from the direction of the pass is not considered pass interference but may be considered illegal contact.

Article 8. Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on pass interference. The benefit of the doubt is given to the receiver. Examples of pass interference include:

- Shoving or pushing off to create separation.
- Playing through the back.
- Hook and turn: grabbing the torso and turning an opponent before the pass arrives.
- Arm bars, hooking, restricting, grabbing wrists, or turning a receiver.
- Blocking downfield before the ball has been touched, commonly seen through “pick plays”.

RULE 4. SCORING

SECTION 1. POINTS

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Point After Touchdown:
    - (PAT) 1 point from the 5-yard line (no-run zone in effect)
    - 2 points from the 12-yard line, run, pass (outside of no-run zone)

    - Interceptions returned on PAT's are worth 2 points
- Safety: 2 points
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SECTION 2. POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN (PAT)

Article 1. Following a touchdown, once the scoring team has informed an official of which point conversion choice they want to attempt, the decision cannot be changed unless the scoring team uses a team timeout.

Article 2. If a penalty occurs during an extra point attempt, the penalty will be assessed but the extra point value remains the same.

Article 3. Decisions cannot be changed after a penalty. For example, if the offense attempts a 1-point PAT and is penalized five yards for a false start, they cannot change their mind and go for a 2-point PAT. They will still be attempting a 1-point try even if they call a timeout.

Article 4. Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct, personal fouls, or roughing penalties during a successful touchdown attempt will be assessed at half the distance to the goal during the PAT attempt (e.g., 2-point PAT attempts will be spotted at the 6-yard line, 1-point PAT attempts will be spotted at the 2.5-yard line). All other defensive penalties may be declined by the offense and the score will stand.

Article 5. Dead ball fouls committed by the offense that do not carry a loss-of-down penalty (false start) may result in penalty yardage assessed and the down replayed.

Article 6. Fouls by the offense during a successful PAT attempt that carry a loss-of-down penalty (flag guarding, illegal advancement, illegal forward pass, etc.) will result in the PAT being no good.

Article 7. Fouls committed by the offense in unsuccessful PAT attempts will be declined by the defense and the PAT will be "no good" and will not be replayed.
Article 8. Fouls by the defense during an unsuccessful PAT attempt will result in a retry after the options are administered.

Article 9. If the PAT-attempting team throws an interception and then commits a flagrant foul after the interception during the attempted return (physically contains the ball carrier; bear hugs, aggressively holds, tackles, etc. without making a clear, legal attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag, the ball carrier will be awarded two points.

SECTION 3. OVERTIME EXTRA POINT SHOOT-OUT

Article 1. A coin flip determines first possession, 1 timeout per OT period

Article 2. Teams will go in reverse order if more then 1 OT is required

Article 3. Teams can elect to go for 1 or 2 points

Article 4. Winner will be determined once the value of the extra point exceeds the other team's attempt.

SECTION 4. MERCY RULE

Article 1. No Mercy Rule during pool play games. If a team is up by 28 points or more during bracket play at any time, the game will be over.

SECTION 5. PENALTIES INSIDE 2 MINUTES

Article 1. All penalties inside of 2 minutes of BOTH halves remain the same except:

- Defensive delay of game (+ 15 yards Unsportsmanlike & AFD)
- Intentional Offensive delay of game (-15 yards Unsportsmanlike & LOD + clock stops)
- Offensive Pre-snap penalties – yardage + LOD + clock stops

RULE 5. PENALTIES

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 or spot foul	10 from Previous spot or spot foul (whichever the offense chooses)	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 or spot of the foul	**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 or from previous spot if behind LOS	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*