



## RULES & EQUIPMENT

**"FRIDAYNIGHT LIGHTS" (FNL)** Flag Football is a 6 on 6 game filled with fun and action. The offensive team plays for a first 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 pulls flags to make "tackles". It is intended to be a **"non-contact"** sport

## THE BASICS

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5 yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield for a 1<sup>st</sup> down. 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 offensive team takes over on its 5 yard line..
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5 yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offenses 5 yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned
- Teams change sides after halftime. Possession changes to loser of coin toss, unless the winner of the coin toss deferred to start the game.
- For divisions K, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade 1 Coach is allowed on field per team. That coach must remain behind the deepest defender and deepest offensive player prior to the snap of the ball.
- There are no protests of game results. All games are final on Friday night.

## **PLAYERS/GAMES**

Teams must field a minimum of 5 players at all times. Most Teams consist of a maximum of 8 players - 6 on the field, with 2 substitutes. **ALL PLAYERS MUST PLAY A MINIMUM 3 OUT OF THE 4 QUARTERS (EVERYONE SITS ONE FULL QUARTER). SUBSTITUTIONS ARE ONLY ALLOWED AT THE QUARTER BREAKS UNLESS THERE IS AN INJURY.**

**9 PLAYER RULE:** For teams with 9 players.

Players must play in all quarters.

Everyone has to play on at least one side of the ball every quarter.

Everyone has at least one quarter both ways.

Everyone has at least one quarter of just offense and at least one quarter of just defense.

**10 PLAYER RULE:** For teams with 10 players.

Players must play in all quarters. In each quarter:

4 play offense only, 4 play defense only and 2 play the whole quarter. Players must rotate between Offense & Defense and All-downs. No player can play both ways in more than one quarter.

**11 PLAYER RULE:** For teams with 11 players.

Players must play in all quarters. In each quarter:

5 play offense only, 5 play defense only and 1 plays the whole quarter. Players must rotate between Offense & Defense and All-downs. No player can play both ways in more than one quarter.

**12 PLAYER RULE:** For teams with 12 players.

Players must play in all quarters. In each quarter:

6 play offense only, 6 play defense only. In quarter 2, the same 6 players that were on offense, now play defense, and vice versa for the 6 that played defense. Quarters 3 & 4 would be played just like quarters 1 & 2.

**PLAYER ADVANTAGE RULE (8 OR MORE vs 7)**

If one team has 8 or more players and the other team has 7 players The coach with 7 players, must notify the Referee prior to the start of game that he only has 7 players. The referee will then notify the other coach who then has the OPTION to identify which of the 7 players MUST sit one quarter. The 7 player team's coach will decide which quarter this player will sit. If this is not identified prior to the start of the game, for whatever reason, and later recognized during the game the 8 player team's coach can still identify the player that must sit. It is both the Referee and 7 player Coaches responsibility to recognize and identify this prior to the start of the game.

## **TIMING/OVERTIME**

Games are played with 10 minute running quarters (40 minutes), 30 second water break between quarters and a 1 minute halftime. If the score is tied at the

end of 40 minutes, **the game ends in a tie**. For playoffs, overtime will be in effect for all grade divisions. The following tie-breaker system will be used for all overtime games.

- Coin flip determines possession
- Ball is placed at Midfield
- After 3 plays, the referee will mark where the ball ended up (cone, flag, etc)
- Opposing team will now take over at Midfield run their 3 plays going in the same direction.
- Whichever team gains the most yards on 3 plays wins the game
- If both teams are tied after 3 plays, we do it again until there is a winner.
- Negative net yards on offense will count against you. Other team must still run their 3 plays.
- If ball is intercepted and returned for a touchdown, game is over.
- 1 timeout per team in OT

Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams **may** receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.

2 timeouts/team, per half and they do not carry over to 2<sup>nd</sup> half if unused.

## **SCORING**

**Touchdown** = 6 points

**Extra Point: (None in Kindergarten division)**

1 point (played from 5 yard line) or  
2 points (played from 12 yard line)

**2 points for interception  
and return to end zone on  
Extra Point attempts**

**Safety** = 2 points

## **RUNNING**

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- Handoffs, laterals and pitches are allowed as per NFL rules.
- **NO CENTER SNEAKS!!**
- No-Running zones located approx. 5 yards from each end zone (as marked) and approx. 5 yards on either side of midfield (as marked) are designed to avoid short yardage, power-running situations. (None for Kindergarten division)
- All passes occurring in the No-Run zone must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The player who takes the handoff, lateral or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, lateraled or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed and Players CAN LEAVE THEIR FEET.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

- Player running with the ball must make an effort to avoid **INTENTIONALLY** running over or initiating aggressive contact on the defensive player. Penalty, if called, is unsportsmanlike conduct.

## **RECEIVING**

All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB, if the ball has been handed off, lateraled or pitched behind the line of scrimmage as per NFL Rules). As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time. A player must have at least **one foot inbounds** when making a reception.

## **PASSING**

- The QB has a seven second "pass clock". If the QB does not get rid of the ball within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven second rule no longer is in effect.
- Shovel passes are allowed
- Interceptions may be returned.

## **DEAD BALLS**

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, OR off to one side for Girl's divisions, to start play.
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
  - Ball carrier's flag is pulled
  - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - Touchdown or safety is scored
  - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
  - Ball carrier's flag falls out
  - Ball carrier's flags are not positioned on the side of the hips (slide to back side by tailbone). This is very subjective and up to the ref to determine the severity of the issue. Warnings **MAY** be given instead of dead ball. It is Coach & Players responsibility to check this throughout the game.

**\*\*NOTE: THERE ARE NO FUMBLES (therefore NO STRIPPING OF THE BALL). THE BALL IS SPOTTED WHERE THE BALL HITS THE GROUND\*\***

**\*\*NOTE: BALL IS NOT DEAD IF BALL CARRIERS HAND TOUCHES GROUND**

## **RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK**

All players who rush the QB must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage (as marked by ref) when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the QB. Players not rushing the QB may defend on the line of scrimmage only until the ball leaves QB hands.

Once the ball is handed off, the seven - 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 seven yards from the line of scrimmage. **Remember, NO BLOCKING, TACKLING, OR STRIPPING OF THE BALL IS ALLOWED.**

## **SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING**

If the field Official/Referee or Commissioner witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or **ANY** unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player/coach or fan may be ejected from the game. The penalty if called is a dead ball at point of infraction and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down. If penalty is against the offense, then 10yds + loss of down, from original line of scrimmage. It will **ALWAYS** benefit the other team.

**\*\*FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED\*\***

Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee **may** give one warning and if it continues, the player(s), coach's and fans will be subject to ejection from the field and premises. The game will not continue **until** the ejected party has left the premises. If they do not leave, the ref will forfeit the game immediately and award the Win to the opposing team.

Anyone ejected from a game (player, coach, fans), for any reason, will not be allowed on the premises for the next game. If they are ejected a 2<sup>nd</sup> time during the season, they will not be allowed on the premises for the next **TWO** games and are subject to dismissal from the league with **NO REFUND**.

## **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT BY ANYONE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!!**

### **PENALTIES (ALL PENALTIES CAN BE DECLINED)**

All penalties will be called by the referee.

#### **DEFENSE:**

##### **Offsides:**

5 yards and automatic 1st down

##### **Interference:**

10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

##### **Illegal Contact:**

(Holding, blocking, etc)

10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

##### **Illegal Flag pull**

(before receiver has ball)

10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down

##### **Illegal rushing**

(starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) 10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup>

down.

### **"Last Man Standing"**

(last defender tackles ball carrier instead of pulling flag or intentionally pulls flag early to prevent a TD)

Automatic Touchdown+ potential unsportsmanlike penalty and ejection from game.

## **OFFENSE:**

### **Illegal motion**

(more than one person moving, false start, etc.) 5 Yards and loss of down

### **Illegal forward pass**

(pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage) 5 yards and loss of down

### **Offensive pass interference:**

(Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) 10 yards and loss of down

### **Blocking:**

(Intentional contact with the defender) 10 yards and loss of down

### **Screening:**

(A no-contact foul for running with the ball carrier OR impeding the defensive rusher) 10 yards and loss of down

## **MERCY RULE**

Any team up by 40 or more points will not receive an offensive possession. The losing team will retain possession and will continue to reset the ball back to the 5 yard line should they not gain a first down. The defense is prohibited from rushing the passer AND they cannot advance an interception.

### **Flag guarding**

10 yards (this is a spot foul if beyond the line of scrimmage and loss of down)

### **Charging (Intentionally running over defender)**

10 yards and loss of down

### **Delay of Game**

Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All **penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage!!**

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.

### **PLAYOFF ADDENDUM – PLAYER ADVANTAGE RULE**

If a team is playing with a lineup of 7 and the opposing team has 8 or more players, the coach with 8 or more has the option to pick up to 4 kids to sit out, one in each quarter.

On Championship Friday only: If a team is playing with a lineup of 6 and the opposing team has 8 or more players, the coach with 6 must sit one player for one quarter (can be any of the 4 quarters, and for that quarter the team will play with 5).

### **STANDINGS**

Official league standings and playoff seedings\* are determined based on the following:

- 1) Win/Loss Winning PCT (All games are included)
- 2) Head to Head (ALL TIED TEAMS MUST HAVE PLAYED EACH OTHER)
- 3) Fewest Avg Pts. Allowed per game
- 4) Coin Flip

\*NOTE - For playoffs, all 1<sup>st</sup> place teams get top seeds, then rule above is applied.

### **ATTIRE**

Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections will be made. **All players must wear a protective mouthpiece: there are no exceptions!!**

Players cannot wear hats (i.e. baseball cap) while on the field during the game.

Only FNL logo flags are allowed. The FNL logo must face outwards, otherwise the flag belt is on backwards.

Official FNL Team jerseys and FNL Flags must be worn during play. **Flags must be of a different color than the shorts.** Shorts must be of a solid color. **No stripes or pockets are allowed on the shorts.** FNL commissioners and/or referees will determine if there are any uniform violations. Any violation of the attire rule should be rectified ASAP. If violation continues the Head Coach is subject to a 1 game suspension and game is subject to forfeit as determined by the FNL Commissioners.

**NOTE: THERE ARE NO KICKOFFS. AND NO BLOCKING IS ALLOWED**

**COACHES COACH - PLAYERS PLAY - REFEREES REF- FANS CHEER**