

NJFL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

1. Team Requirements

- A team shall consist of 7 players or more. Minimum 5 players must be present to be eligible for play.
- The offensive team must have any 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
- Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time outs.
- All players must be recorded on the roster and waiver form (with personal signature) before they are allowed to participate..
- There may be one coach on the field per team but must be 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage and must maintain a distance of 5 yards or more from all players during play.
- On field coaches may participate in the huddle and continue to coach players up until offense becomes set, prior to the snap of the football.
- On field coaches are not allowed to coach during a play, i.e., from the snap of the football until the end of the play.
- On field coaches may temporarily approach the line of scrimmage to assist players to line up correctly, but promptly return to 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- Coaches that fail to comply with these rules will be subject to the following:
 - 1st offense: Warning.
 - 2nd offense: Illegal Participation Penalty, Coach is removed from on field coaching for the remainder of the series.
 - 3rd offense: Illegal Participation Penalty, Coach is removed from on the field coaching for the remainder of the game..
- Spectators are not allowed in the team area.

2. Equipment and Facilities

- All players must wear designated flags and team jersey. Shorts or sweat pants, and designated flag football helmet are optional.
- Rubber spiked shoes will be allowed. No open toe, open heel, hard soled, metal or detachable cleats allowed.
- Pants and/or shorts with belt loops and/or pockets are strictly prohibited. A player may not turn his or her shorts inside out or tape his or her pockets in order to play.
- Towels may not hang from a participant's waist or otherwise interfere with the removal of a flag.

- Covering Flags: A team will get 2 warnings, then a 10-yard penalty will be assessed. (No Warnings will be given)
- All flag belts must be free of knots. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct and ejection from the game.
- Flag Football: Will use a rubber, synthetic leather, or leather covered football. Acceptable footballs are commonly labeled as official “Peewee” size versions of NFHS approved footballs.
- Equipment such as billed hats, bandana's, pads or braces worn above the waist, leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances, casts and all jewelry are strictly prohibited. Knee braces made of hard, yielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other hard substances covered with at least 1/2 inch of slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed.
- Shirts must be tucked in the pants or cut off a minimum of 4 inches above the waistline. Shirts may not have pockets and may not be tied in knots. No hooded sweatshirts...if wearing a hooded sweatshirt this will result in an illegal equipment penalty...10 yards.

3. Start of the Game and Timing

- Toss of the Coin-Three minutes before the start of the game, the referee will conduct a captain's meeting in which he or she will designate which captain shall call the toss of the coin. The captain winning the toss will have a choice of options for the first half or shall defer his/her option to the second half:
 - to choose whether his or her team will start on offense or defense.
 - The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.
- Two time-outs a half are allowed per team.
- The ball must be put into play no more than 25 seconds after the official has placed the ball.
- Games will consist of two 20-minute halves with a three-minute half time. Timing will be continuous for the first half and the first 18 minutes of the second half except when a team or official calls a time-out, after a touchdown, or after a turn-over (on downs, fumble or interception) .
- Approximately two minutes before the end of the second half the referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the time left on the clock. The clock will restart on the snap.
- **2-minute Warning**
During the final two (2) minutes of the second half the clock will stop for a:
 1. Incomplete legal or incomplete illegal forward pass – clock starts on the snap.
 2. Out-of- bounds – clock starts on the snap.
 3. Safety – clock starts on the snap.
 4. Team time-out - clock starts on the snap.

5. First down – dependent on the previous play.
6. Touchdown - clock starts on the snap (after the Try).
7. Penalty and administration – dependent on the previous play.
(EXCEPTION: Delay of game – clock starts on the snap).
8. Referee's time-out – clock starts on his/her discretion.
9. Touchback – clock starts on the snap.
10. Team A (offense) is awarded a new series – dependent on the previous play.
11. Team B (defense) is awarded a new series – starts on the snap. (i.e. Interception)
12. Team attempting to conserve time illegally – clock starts on the ready.

***PLAY:** Team A, losing, is de-flagged with 10 seconds remaining in the game. They line up quickly and snap the ball prior to the Referee making it ready for play. There are 2 seconds on the clock. **RULING:** Delay of game penalty. The Referee will start the game clock on the ready as Team A is attempting to conserve time. Prior to sounding the whistle, the Referee will inform Team A captain that the game clock will start on the ready.*

13. Team attempting to consume time illegally – clock starts on the snap.

***PLAY:** During the second half, Team A leads Team B 14-12 with the game clock running. Player A false starts with 50 seconds remaining on the game clocks. **RULING:** Enforce false start, if accepted. The Referee will order the game clock to start on the snap due to Team A attempting to consume time.*

14. Inadvertent whistle – clock starts on the ready.

Excessive Score Rule:

- a) A margin of victory of 35 points or more constitutes a violation of the excessive score rule.
- b) Each week the League Vice President will prepare a report of excessive score occurrences and provide it to all Franchise Presidents and League Officials.
- c) It is the responsibility of head coach to control the scoring to prevent a winning margin of 35 points or more by effectively managing players, playing time, positions and play selection.
- d) Excessive score violations will result in the following disciplinary actions:
 - i. First offense – The head coach will be suspended immediately for one full week from all team practices and activities including the next game.
 - ii. Second offense – In the event of a second violation during a season, the head coach will be suspended immediately for the

remainder of the season from all team practices, activities and games.

- iii. Third offense – In the event of a third lifetime violation, the head coach will be suspended immediately and permanently from the Northwest Junior Football League.
- e) Excessive score violations, especially repeat violations may result in the League President and the Board of Directors taking additional action(s) against an individual(s) or franchise(s). Additional actions can include, but are not limited to, suspension, removal, forfeiture of a game(s), loss of standing.

4. Game Rules

- A new series of downs will be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone.
- For a legal catch, a pass receiver must come down with at least one foot in bounds.
- Flag Removal
 - When the flag is taken from the runner, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. The spot of the ball is determined at the point where the clip of the flag becomes detached, not where the flag falls to the ground.
 - If a flag inadvertently falls off, a one hand tag between the shoulders and the knees constitutes a capture.
 - A player may leave their feet to remove a flag.
 - The ball becomes dead when:
 - a legal de-flagging occurs.
 - the ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet.
 - a fumble hits the ground.
 - a snap from the center touches the ground. Officials discretion on the call.
- Running plays are acceptable.
- There is no blocking or intentional screening allowed.
- There is no tackling allowed.
- The quarterback has five seconds to throw the ball or will be considered down.
- There will be no rushing the quarterback.
- The defense must stay behind the line of scrimmage during a pass play.
- The quarterback has 5 seconds to either throw or handoff the football and is considered down if time elapses.
- The quarterback cannot run past the line of scrimmage with the football or is considered down.
- The defense may come across the line of scrimmage if the ball is handed off to a running back and attempt to pull the flag from the running back.

- Each member of the offensive team is eligible to receive a pass unless the player voluntarily goes out of bounds during the play.
- The center, after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may not move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion, not necessarily between the center's legs, from the spot designated by the ball marker. The ball may be moved with approval by the official due to poor field conditions.
- The quarterback-center exchange may be direct, pistol or shotgun.
- Quarterback sneaks are prohibited in all situations.
- Before the snap, all offensive players must come to a complete stop for at least 1 full second. Only one offensive player may be in motion, and may not be moving towards the opponent's goal line at the time of the snap. If two or more players go in motion before the snap, then this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap.
- Each play must include three offensive linemen – a center and two guards, one on either side of the center.
- Guards are required to play from a two-point stance. There are no three-point stances.
- The center may only have his or her snapping hand down on the ball.
- The distance between a guard and center may not exceed three feet (1 yard) but may be closer.
- The offense must have four players on the line of scrimmage. No more, no less. The fourth player can be a tight end or split end.
- No trips formations are allowed.
 - For purpose of Flag Football, Trips is defined as any three players outside the guard-to-guard box on the same side of the ball.
- The defensive lineman must line up at least 1 yard from the line of scrimmage. This is true even when the offensive team is less than one yard from the end zone or the zone line to gain.
- Defenses may only have two defensive lineman unless an offense formation includes a tight end. In that case, a third defensive player may line up over the tight end.
 - A tight end is defined as a player on the line of scrimmage and within three feet (1 yard) of a guard.
- Players in an outside shade must always have one foot aligned inside the stance of the opposing guards
 - With the exception of the players covering the guards, the defense is not required to have additional players on the line of scrimmage but has the option to do so. If not aligned on the line of scrimmage, a player must be a minimum of four yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- The defense must have one player at least 10 yards off the line of scrimmage.
- The remaining four players can be deployed at the coach's discretion but must be four yards off the line of scrimmage unless covering a tight end.

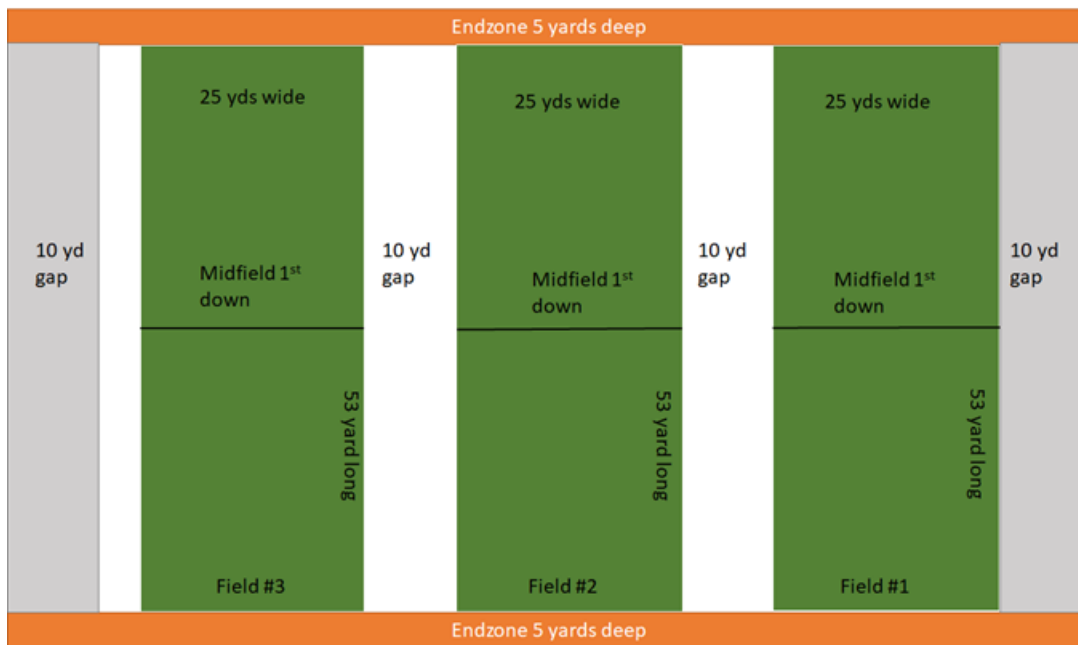
- Defensive linemen must be in a two-point stance.
- Defensive linemen over guards must be aligned in a head up or outside shade position.
- All offensive players must be momentarily within 15 yards of the ball. It must be clear who the seven offensive players are on each play. The intent of this rule is to eliminate all sleeper or hideout plays. These plays will result in a 10-yard penalty for illegal participation.
- Fumbles
 - Fumbles are dead when the ball touches the ground.
 - The ball is put into play at the point where the ball first touched the ground.
 - Any passed or fumbled ball that does not touch the ground may be advanced by the offensive player catching the ball.
 - A ball fumbled into the end zone will result in a safety.
- The ball is placed on the goal line after a touchback. The team puts the ball into play with a series of downs.
- Extra Point Attempts- A try for three points will be taken from the 20-yard line. A try for two points will be taken from the 10-yard line. A try for one point will be taken from the 3-yard line. If the defense should intercept a pass, they may return it for a score. A score will equal three points, regardless of whether or not the attempt is for one, two, or three points.
- Tie score at the end of regulation during the playoffs-The field captains shall be brought together and a coin toss will be conducted. During the regular season, NO overtime periods shall be played. During the playoffs, the overtime format will be repeated until a winner is declared. The winner of the toss shall be given the option of either offense or defense. If additional overtime periods are necessary, captains will alternate choices. Each team will start from the 20-yard line to score a touchdown. Conversion attempts will be held as in regulation play. Each team is entitled to one time out per overtime period.

5. Flag Removal

- In an attempt to remove the flag from the ball carrier, defensive players may contact the body of an opponent with his or her hands. A defensive player may not hold, push or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.
- No player shall attempt to steal the ball, trip an opponent, contact an opponent who is on the ground, make unnecessary contact with an opponent, deliberately dive or run into an opponent or tackle the ball carrier. Penalty: personal foul, 10 yards (flagrant offenders will be ejected from the game and possibly suspended for the remainder of the season).

6. Clarification

Field Set-Up



6.0 As discussed each team will have 4 downs to get the ball across midfield for a first down and then 4 downs to score. If there is a turnover or turnover on downs the offense will start from your own goal line.

6.1 A defensive player may not remove an offensive player's flag when the offensive player does not have the ball. Similarly, the defensive player may not remove the quarterback's flag after the ball has been thrown. Penalty: Illegal flag belt removal, 10 yards.

6.2 A defensive player may not remove an offensive receiver's flag prior to the receiver touching the ball. Penalty: defensive pass interference, 10 yards and automatic first down.

6.3 A defensive player must avoid running into the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer's hand or arm, whether or not he or she touches the ball, it is roughing the passer. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic first down.

6.4 A player may not fasten his or her flags to his or her uniform or belt other than prescribed in the rules. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic disqualification. The official will check the flags of each person who scores a touchdown or conversion. **Following a touchdown or conversion, if a player removes their flag belt prior to being checked by the official the score will be nullified.**

6.5 Pushing or chucking a receiver/defender is not allowed. Penalty: Illegal use of hands. 10 yards.

6.6 An offensive player may not dive or hurdle over, through or into an opponent who is on their feet.

6.7 Any dead-ball penalty occurring after a touchdown will be assessed on the extra point. Any dead ball penalty occurring after a conversion will be assessed on the next play from scrimmage at the 15-yard line.

6.8 An offensive player may not stiff arm or guard his or her flags by blocking them with their hands or the ball.

6.9 When an inadvertent whistle is blown by an official, the ball is dead at the point when the whistle was blown. The team against which the inadvertent whistle was blown has the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.

6.10 All players on the field must wear flags. Failure to do so will result in a five-yard penalty, if noticed prior to the ball being snapped. If noticed after the ball has been snapped, then the player without a flag belt must be touched with one hand between the shoulders and the knees (after the ball has been snapped, a penalty cannot be assessed).

6.11 Spiking/Kneeling the ball is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Penalty: 10 yards.

6.12 The 25 second clock begins when the official signals "ready for play."

SUMMARY OF FOULS AND PENALTIES

Loss of 5 yards:

1. Required equipment worn illegally.
2. Delay of game.
3. Illegal Snap.
4. False start.
5. Encroachment.
6. Illegal Procedure.
7. Illegal forward pass
8. Intentional grounding

9. Helping the runner: the runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate.

Loss of 10 yards:

1. Delaying the start of either half.
2. Two or more consecutive encroachments during same interval between downs. The initial encroachment 5 yards.
3. Illegal participation.
4. Offensive pass interference. (Loss of down)
5. Defensive pass interference. (Automatic 1st down)
6. Illegally secured belt on touchdown. (Revoke touchdown and loss of down)
7. Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
8. Spiking the ball or not returning the ball to the official during the dead ball.
9. Attempt to steal the ball from the carrier. 2nd offense is unsportsmanlike conduct (disqualification).
10. Hurdling.
11. Unnecessary contact of any sort.
12. Roughing the passer. (Automatic 1st Down)
13. Blocking or screening
14. Guarding the flag (and stiff arming).
15. Illegal batting.
16. Illegal flag removal.
17. Personal foul.
18. Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct. (Disqualification)
19. Flagrant personal fouls. (Disqualification)
20. Intentionally tampering with flag. (Disqualification)