

# OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## MEN'S LEAGUE RULES

### ROSTER SIZE & REGULATIONS

Each team shall field seven male players. Teams that are not able to field a complete team may play with a minimum of six players. A maximum of three drop-in players will be permitted only when a team does not have enough of its own players present to field a team. Teams that are not able to field at least six players may play a legal game with the consent of the opposing captain. It is illegal for a team to have more than seven players on the field of play. Teams with coaches and/or additional players who enter the field of play without entering the game will be penalized for illegal participation.

Team rosters and player waivers release forms must be completed and submitted prior to the first scheduled game of the season. Any team that has not submitted these forms by that time will have its scheduled games declared a forfeit until all forms are received. If a player fails to submit their player waiver release form, all liability and legal issues will be the responsibility of the team captain. The Fredericksburg Field House will not be responsible for players that do not submit a player waiver release form.

Players may be listed only on one teams roster per season throughout the league. For a player to be considered playoff eligible (eligible to participate in the playoffs), he must be listed on a team's final roster (to be submitted by Week 4).

Any team that does not have a full roster submitted to the League Director by Week 4 will not be eligible for the playoffs. No exceptions will be made!

### NO POCKET/FLAG BELT RULES

Due to safety reasons, players cannot wear any article of clothing that contains pockets (shorts, pants, jackets, sweatshirts, hand warmers, etc). If a player wears an article of clothing with pockets, the player's team will be assessed an Unsportsmanlike Penalty (15 yards). Players are not allowed to tape or staple their pockets.

If a player (other than the QB) begins the play without a flag belt, the player will be marked down at the spot where the ball was caught. There is no additional penalty because the player has no opportunity to gain additional yardage. If the QB begins a play without a flag belt, they are down as soon as they receive the snap, and loss of down.

### FOOTBALL SIZE REQUIREMENTS

For all plays, the ball used must be a regulation NFHS/NCAA/NFL sized football.

### GAME TIME/PLAY CLOCK

The game will be divided into two 25-minute halves. Each team is allowed two 1-minute timeouts **per game**. The offensive team will have 30 seconds to snap the ball once the referee

# OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

has made the ball ready for play. The official game clock will be maintained by a referee and will run continuously except for time-outs or serious injury—following an injury timeout, the game clock should resume following the ready-for-play whistle. The clock will stop during the final minute of each half for the following occurrences:

- Incomplete pass
- Player advancing the ball goes out of bounds
- Change of possession
- Either team scores. (The clock will not continue until the opposing team snaps the ball after the PAT attempt. The clock does not run during extra points.)
- Penalty
- Time Out

If a team is leading by 17 points or more, the clock will run continuously during the last two minutes of play. In this scenario, the team that is winning will not be allowed to use any timeouts that is has left if they are on offense.

## **BEGINNING OF THE GAME**

Teams must be lined up on opposite benches on the sideline. Before the start of the game the referee will toss a coin in the presence of opposing captains, after first designating which captain shall call the toss (HOME captain will call). The team that wins the coin flip at the start of the game must choose one of the following:

- Offense
- Defense
- To defer the choice of the above options to begin the second half
- The team that loses the coin flip shall select the direction for the 2nd half.

There will be a maximum five-minute grace period before each game. The game will be deemed a forfeit thereafter at the discretion of the Referee.

## **FREE KICKS/KICKOFFS**

A kickoff begins each half of a game, and begins play following a touchdown, field goal, or safety. The ball shall be put in play by a kickoff from some spot on the kicking teams restraining line: the 7-yard line, or from the goal line following a safety. The receiving teams restraining line will be the mid-field line. Stands or holders are allowed during kickoffs.

No player of the kicking team may touch a free kick before it reaches the receiving teams restraining line. Thereafter, all players of the kicking team are eligible to touch, recover, or catch the kick. No player of the kicking team may interfere with the receiving team's opportunity to catch the ball. A free kick touched by a player of the kicking team which then touches the ground is dead at the spot at which it touches the ground. If first touched before reaching the restraining line of the receiving team, it belongs to the receiving team. If first touched after reaching the restraining line of the receiving team, the ball belongs to the kicking team. A free kick touched

# OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

by a player of the receiving team, which then touches the ground, is dead at the spot at which it touches the ground and belongs to the receiving team.

A kick caught or recovered by a player of the receiving team continues in play; if caught or recovered by the kicking team, the ball becomes dead.

## **PUNTS**

A punt must be declared and cannot be fakes. The referee shall notify the defensive team prior to the ball being made ready-for-play.

- Punts must be snapped just like all other plays from scrimmage.
- Punts must be kicked and cannot be thrown.
- The kicking team may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
- Downfield blocking is not permitted.
- The receiving team may not raise hands or jump to block a punt.
- The kicking team may down the punt, but may not recover a punt.
- A punt through the end zone will be spotted at the 15-yard line. If a player drops the ball in the end zone, the ball is spotted at the 15-yard line and is not counted as a safety.

## **SNAPPING THE BALL INTO PLAY**

To begin each play, the ball must be snapped by a center to the QB who is lined up behind the center. The ball can be snapped with a verbal or nonverbal command—silent counts / snaps are legal. Players may shift and change formations prior to the snap of the ball, but must be stationary at the time the ball is snapped. One player is allowed in motion at the time the ball is snapped, but cannot be moving towards the line of scrimmage. A snap from center is required on declared punts. A minimum of four players must be lined up (set) at the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball.

## **FORWARD PASS**

All players are eligible to receive a forward pass. During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided some part of the passer's body remains behind the line of scrimmage.

The offense may make as many forward passes as desired from in or behind the neutral zone. Once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage (run or pass), all subsequent forward passes during that down, are illegal. The ball may be thrown across only once during the down.

## **INADVERTENT WHISTLE**

Should an inadvertent whistle be blown, the team in possession of the ball at the time of the whistle will have two options: take the result of the play with the ball declared dead at the spot where the whistle was blown, or replay the down from the original line of scrimmage. If an inadvertent whistle is blown during a pass play while the ball is in the air, the play will be declared dead and replayed from the original line of scrimmage.

# OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## **OVERTIME**

There will be no overtime during the regular season. In the playoffs, overtime will consist of each team having one offensive possession starting at the opponents 15-yard line. A second coin toss shall determine order and direction. The team winning the coin toss shall have the option to elect offense first, defense first, or select the end to be used for the overtime period(s). Both teams shall go the same direction on offense for the entirety of overtime. (College Rules)

The offensive team will have 4 un-timed downs to score a touchdown (all regular penalties will apply during the overtime period). If a touchdown is scored the offensive team will have the same conversion options that applied in regulation. If teams are tied after the 1st overtime period, the process will be repeated until a winner is determined. Starting with the 3rd overtime period, teams will be required to attempt a 2-point conversion upon scoring a touchdown.

## **FORFEITS**

If a game is deemed a forfeit, it will be scored 21-0.

## **CONTACT/BLOCKING**

There is limited blocking and contact; however, there will be no tackling permitted in the league. Players acting as offensive linemen can use their hands to block defensive rushers (between their shoulders and waist) when protecting the quarterback. Offensive linemen can position their bodies at any angle to direct the rushers to a particular area and can use their hands to protect the QB.

No downfield blocking/tackling is permitted. Illegal contact includes tripping, contact with the QB, any intentional contact by an opposing player, and contact with an opposing player after a ball is tipped. Also note that rough play may result in an unsportsmanlike penalty. Anyone in violation of this rule is subject to penalty, suspension and/or expulsion from the league.

We have a 1-Pace Rush Line that only allows defensive players who are behind this line to rush the QB. **IT IS ILLEGAL FOR DEFENSIVE RUSHERS TO RUN THROUGH AN OFFENSIVE BLOCKER TO PURSUE THE QB.** All defensive players must make an attempt to run around the offensive linemen.

Violation of this rule is a 10-yard penalty/previous spot/replay down.

This restriction gives defensive rushers 2 options:

1. Do a speed rush, but must run around the offensive blocker to pursue the QB
2. Run towards the line-of-scrimmage; slow down when approaching an offensive blocker; engage contact; and then use legal means to pursue the QB

A legal block consists of contact with open hands (with palms facing the opponent) to the area between the waist and shoulders. Blocking is restricted to at or behind the line-of-scrimmage. These contact rules apply to both offensive blockers and defensive rushers.

# OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Illegal blocks consist of any of the following:

- Contact below the waist or above the shoulders
- Blocking in the back (excluding a momentum block on a pursuing defensive lineman)
- Blocking using forearms, elbows, shoulders, hips, legs, or anything besides open hands
- Holding
- Blocking past the line-of-scrimmage (this will be penalized as downfield blocking)

Illegal blocks will result in a 10-yard penalty/previous spot/replay down. For offensive players, there is NO downfield blocking.

Please keep in mind that we are allowing LIMITED contact in this league. Any excessive and/or intentional contact is subject to a personal foul and/or expulsion from the league.

## **CONTACT DOWNFIELD**

For defensive players, bump-and-run/jamming of receivers is allowed within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage, and is defined as open hands to the chest/shoulders.

Any contact beyond 5 yards will result in:

- A Defensive Holding penalty (5-yard penalty/previous spot/auto 1st down), or
- An Illegal Contact penalty (10-yard penalty/previous spot/replay down).

## **FIRST DOWNS**

Each team shall have four downs to earn a first down or score. A first down is achieved when a team cross mid-field based on its original field position. Offensive teams may elect to punt on fourth downs. All punts are live and may be fielded after bouncing on the ground. However, if a receiving player muffs (touches) the ball and it hits the ground, the play is dead. If a team does not punt, fails to score or earn a first down the opposing team will obtain possession at the previous spot.

## **SCORING**

The scoring shall be assigned as follows:

- Touchdown: All touchdowns will be awarded 6 points
- Extra Point(s):
  - Play from the 3-yard line (blue line) – 1-point
  - Play from the 15-yard line (top of red arc) – 2-points
- Safety: All safety's will be rewarded 2 points

The defense may return an interception for two points on a play-for-extra point conversion attempt.

## **PASS RUSH**

# OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Once the line of scrimmage has been marked, the referee will walk off one (1) pace in the direction the offense is going and place another marker. This 1 pace marker is the RUSH LINE. Only defensive players that are behind this marker when the ball is snapped may cross the line of scrimmage to rush the QB. No players lined up within this zone, may rush the QB. If the QB pitches the ball or hands-off to another offensive player, any defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage no matter where they were lined up before the snap. If the line of scrimmage is between the goal line and the one-yard line, the RUSH LINE will be the goal line. The rush line can never be placed inside the endzone.

**Note:** The RUSH LINE will not be applicable when the QB is lined up directly behind the CENTER to receive the snap of the ball; that is, when the CENTER hands the ball to the QB at the snap. In such situations, defensive players lined up in front of the RUSH LINE may rush the QB.

## CONTINUANCE OF PLAY

Play shall continue until:

- Ball carrier has flag-belt pulled by an opponent (see flag specifics for the few exceptions/additions concerning flag pulling)
- Ball carrier leaves the field of play
- Ball carrier scores
- Ball carrier's knee or elbow touches the ground
- Ball touches the ground

## SPOT OF THE BALL

The ball will be spotted where the ball is at the time the ball carrier's flag is pulled. The ball's spot will be based on the spot of the player's hips at the time of the flag pull. For a touchdown to count, the ball carrier's hips must cross the goal line for a touchdown to count.

## TUNROVERS

A change of possession (not after a score) can only occur due to downs or an interception. A fumble is not a turnover and the play is considered dead at the point of the fumble. A lateral may be intercepted and returned by the opposing team.

## FLAG GUARDING

Flag guarding is not allowed. Flag guarding is defined as any action that is made with the arms, hands, or legs that prevents a player from being able to pull another player's flag. A player engaging in flag guarding will be penalized at the spot of the infraction. It is illegal to pull the flag of a player who does not have possession of the football. Throwing flag belts after making a pull is not allowed, and can be penalized as a personal foul.

## FLAG BELTS

# OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Flag belts must be fastened outside of all clothing with nothing obstructing them. If, during a play, any clothing obstructs the defenses ability to grab a flag (shirt is hanging over the flag belt), then the player will be called down at the first instance that the defense had a chance to pull the flag. A ball carrier whose flag-belt falls off inadvertently during a play will be considered down upon a one-handed touch. However, if any player gains possession of the ball without properly secured flags, then they will be down as soon as they touch/catch the ball. It is a penalty for a ball carrier to stiff-arm, charge into, or deliberately try to knock over a defensive player. In addition, a ball carrier may not dive (diving is defined as a player leaving their feet without returning to their feet) in an attempt to gain extra yardage.

## UNSPORTSMANSHIP CONDUCT

Any player/coach using profanity will be subject to ejection from the game.

Any player/coach who is guilty of fighting, touching an official, threatening other players or officials, and/or flagrantly attempting to injure another player will be suspended from the league for the remainder of the season. Shoving another player is unsportsmanlike behavior and may be reason for game expulsion.

If a player is suspended for any other unsportsmanlike reason other than those listed above, he will be suspended for the remainder of that game and may be subjected to a multiple game suspension. All suspensions are facility suspensions. If you are removed from a game, you must exit the facility immediately. Field House Management has final say on the length of any suspension, and Field House Staff will notify the appropriate coaches concerning whether or not the person(s) involved will be allowed to return for the remainder of the season. In the event a player deviates from this ruling, it will constitute a forfeit and the team not at fault will receive credit for a win.

A player that is suspended 2 times during a season will be suspended for the remainder of the current season. The Field House Management Team will determine whether a suspended player may ever return to play again.

NOTE: If a player is ejected, he will be required to leave the field area and the facility for the rest of the day. Failure to leave the field area and the facility in a timely manner (no more than 5 minutes) will result in his team forfeiting the rest of the game.

## GAME CANCELLATION

The Field House will work to ensure that all games happen as scheduled. In the event of inclement weather, the Field House will notify team captains as soon as a cancellation is made. The League Director will attempt to reschedule all cancelled games, if possible. Additional tentative time slots can be built into the schedule to be used for cancelled games.

## FORFEIT FEES

Any team that forfeits a game without notifying the Field House staff by 7pm the night prior to the game will be charged a \$50 forfeit fee. This fee must be paid in-full before the team will be

## OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

allowed to play their next scheduled game. If a team forfeits two weeks in a row, the League Director can use discretion to remove the team from the league.

### NO JEWELRY POLICIES

At the Referees sole discretion, any player may be required to remove jewelry deemed unsafe for play. Failure to comply could result in a suspension and game forfeit.

### PENALTIES & ENFORCEMENTS

<b><u>OFFENSIVE FOULS</u></b>	<b><u>PENALTY</u></b>	<b><u>ENFORCEMENT SPOT</u></b>	<b><u>DOWN</u></b>
Flag Guarding	5 Yards	Spot Foul	Next Down
Off Sides	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Downfield Blocking	10 Yards	Spot Foul	Next Down
False Start (*Dead Ball Foul)	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Illegal Contact/Pick (Pre-Pass)	10 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Illegal Contact/Pick (Post-Pass)	10 Yards	Spot Foul	Next Down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Loss of Down
Illegal Motion	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Illegal Participation	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Illegal Formation	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Offensive Pass Interference	15 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Loss of Down
Diving	5 Yards	Spot Foul	Next Down
<b><u>DEFENSIVE FOULS</u></b>	<b><u>PENALTY</u></b>	<b><u>ENFORCEMENT SPOT</u></b>	<b><u>DOWN</u></b>
Illegal Rushing	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Off Sides	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Illegal Contact	10 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
Pass Interference	15 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Auto 1st Down
Roughing the Passer	15 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Auto 1st Down
Holding (on Run Plays)	10 Yards	End of Run	Next Down
Holding (on Pass Plays)	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Auto 1st Down
Illegal Flag Pull	5 Yards	Spot Foul	Next Down
Illegal Stripping	5 Yards	End of Run	Next Down
Illegal Participation	5 Yards	Previous L.O.S.	Replay Down
<b><u>GENERAL FOULS</u></b>	<b><u>PENALTY</u></b>	<b><u>ENFORCEMENT SPOT</u></b>	<b><u>DOWN</u></b>
Arguing w/ Official	15 Yards	End of Play	Next Down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15 Yards	End of Play	Auto 1st Down



## OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Defensive Excessive Contact / Rough Play	15 Yards	End of Play	Auto 1st Down
Offensive Excessive Contact / Rough Play	15 Yards	End of Play	Loss of Down

### Defensive Penalty Clarifications:

- Holding = Replay the down if the penalty occurs on 4th down or inside the 10-yard line
- Illegal Contact is defined as:
  - Tripping
  - Contact with the QB
  - Any intentional contact by an opposing player (referee discretion)
  - Contact with an opposing player after a ball is tipped
  - Rough play may result in an unsportsmanlike penalty
- Illegal Stripping = It is illegal to bat or strip a ball from a player's hand.
- A game cannot end on a defensive penalty even if time expires. One un-timed down will be required to complete the game.

### Offensive Penalty Clarifications:

- Illegal Contact is defined as:
  - Pushing Off
  - Any other intentional contact by an offensive player on a defensive player in the field of play

### General Penalty Clarifications:

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct
  - Any unsportsmanlike conduct (towards players, referees, league staff, coaches, sidelines, spectators) = 10 yards/Possible Ejection & Automatic 1st Down
  - Excessive Contact/Rough Play
- If official determines that contact was initiated with intent to harm, the offending player will be ejected from the game. The player must leave the field of play immediately. If the player does not leave the field his/her team may be charged with a forfeit for the game regardless of score or time remaining. Any player ejected from a game may not play in any other games that day.
- The ejected player may not play in future games without league approval.
- An official may call a forfeit for unsportsmanlike conduct. Even if the game has ended, an official may call a forfeit.
- The League has the authority to suspend and/or expel a player or team from the league and/or future game(s) at its discretion with no refund of monies for such acts.
- Fighting:
  - Automatic ejection from the game
  - Once ejected, a player must leave the field. If the player does not leave the field his/her team may be charged a forfeit for that game, regardless of score or time

## OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

remaining. Any player ejected from a game may not play in any other games that day.

- The ejected player may not play in future games without league approval.
- An official may call a forfeit for unsportsmanlike conduct. Even if the game has ended, an official may call a forfeit.
- The League has the authority to suspend and/or expel a player or team from the league and/or future game(s) at its discretion with no refund of monies for such acts.

### GENERAL LEAGUE POLICIES

- Team Captains are responsible for the complete payment of all league fees
- A Captains Meeting will be held prior to the start of the season. Captains, or a team representative, are required to attend. League rules and procedures will be discussed at that time
- League fees must be paid before the first game. Failure to make payment before this time may lead to expulsion from the league
- Team Rosters must be completed and submitted via email at time of registration. Additions and changes to the Roster are permitted up until Week 4 of the season.
- All rostered players must have a current waiver signed and on-file with the Field House.
- If a team is not prepared to play at its designated game time and/or does not have the minimum number of players at the designated game time, the game will be declared a forfeit. There will be a five-minute grace period prior to a forfeit being declared
- A maximum of three drop-in players will be permitted only when a team does not have enough of its own players present to field a team. These players cannot be on another team's roster.
- If a game is stopped due to dangerous/inclement weather conditions before the 10 minutes remaining mark of the second half, the game will resume at the spot of stoppage. The game will be rescheduled to a future date. If a game is stopped due to inclement weather anytime after the 10 minutes remaining mark, the game will be called and will count at the top of stoppage.
- Any excessive verbal or physical activity will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. This rule applies to players, managers and coaches on the field and on the sidelines
- Fighting or obscene language will result in an automatic ejection from the league with no refund of payments. Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated
- **ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR DRUG USE ARE ALLOWED ON THE FIELD.** Any player using drugs or alcohol in the playing area, the parking lot, before, during or after games will be ejected from the league with no refund of payments. **THIS RULE WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.**

These rules & policies are designed to make the league run as smoothly and safely as possible, and provide continuity for its participants. Each player in the league is responsible for this information: please advise your team of these rules / league policies and thanks for playing.

# OUTDOOR FLAG FOOTBALL RULES