

# ADULT FLAG FOOTBALL OUTDOOR RULES

## **Introduction**

The purpose of The Rules is to help players and spectators become familiar enough with the rules of Flag Football to play or enjoy the game.

The following rules were established to create a fun game where talent prevails over brute force.

Although Flag Football can be safer than tackling, there will still be incidental contact, which could result in serious injury.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **1. The Ball:**

Each team will bring their own ball to use while they are on offense. The ball must be to NFL standards. A Youth ball cannot be used.

### **2. Postponed/Rescheduled Matches:**

The Fredericksburg Field House (FFH) will make every effort to contact coaches and players if the games are postponed. We will only close in cases of severe weather to protect the safety of our guests and employees. Such closings will be announced on our website and teams for the night will be notified. Games canceled due to weather and other various reasons will be rescheduled at the Sports Director's discretion. Games are NOT guaranteed to be rescheduled.

### **3. Players:**

A. All players must be 18 years of age or older to play in the adult league. Exceptions are given at the Sports Directors discretion. Any team found to have used an underage player during a game will forfeit that game.

B. A game is played with no more than 8 players on the field at a time.

C. 5 players from a team's roster must be present to start the game. 6 players total are required to start a game.

D. Rosters must be solidified by Week 3. Those players listed on the final roster will be eligible for playoffs. Players added after week 3 will need permission from the Football Coordinator with good reason.

E. If a player gets injured or ejected from the game, whose team started the game with 6 players, the game may be completed with fewer than 6 players. The requirements for having 4 players on the line of scrimmage are therefore waived (rule 9b. 1). The team that has less than 5 players SHALL have as many players as possible on the line of scrimmage as needed. The requirement for defense having 2 players on the line of scrimmage is still in effect and these are STILL the only two players eligible to rush the quarterback from the line of scrimmage.

F. A team has five minutes past the start of game time to field their 6 players. Failure to do so results in a forfeit. After a forfeit is declared, a game may be played on a pickup basis between the teams and any other players that may be picked up free of charge (officials will not be used).

G. Only one player is designated as the captain or coach. This is the only player that may have a discussion with the officials on the field about a questionable call (clock will continue to run unless stopped by the officials).

H. Interpretation of any rule and conversations of those rules are encouraged to NOT take place during dead ball periods of the game but at half time or at the end of the game.

I. All players must be listed on the roster. Players MUST check in with the Fredericksburg Field House staff for that game with a valid photo ID. Failure to do so is considered using an illegal player and will result in an automatic forfeit for that game.

J. Injured players may be replaced during the regular season at the League Directors discretion. A replacement player is not permitted for postseason play unless a player is injured within our league and the League Director makes an exception. Credit will be reviewed by management for that injured player and the replacement player will pay for the remainder of the league. THERE WILL BE NO CREDIT SWAPPING

K. Once a player participates with a team, he/she may not change to a team within the same league/division unless it is approved by the League Director.

L. Players can play on teams in other divisions within the Fredericksburg Field House. Limitations are given to lower divisions based on the Football Coordinator Discretion to keep league integrity intact.

M. Only rostered players are permitted on the field at all times, and only the current teams playing are permitted in the bench area. All other spectators must remain outside the fence.

N. NO PLAYER IS PERMITTED TO PLAY FOR MULTIPLE TEAMS IN THE SAME DIVISION

#### **4. Player Equipment:**

A. All players must wear shoes and are able to wear molded rubber cleats, however the following styles of cleats are NOT permitted: Screw in cleats; Metal cleats of any sort and Ceramic cleats. NO EXCEPTIONS.

B. All players will wear the official flag belt with the flags attached in the proper locations. Outside flags of different lengths are not permitted unless approved by the Fredericksburg Field House Flag Football Coordinator. Each player must wear pants or shorts WITHOUT any belts, belt loops, pockets, exposed drawstrings or staples. Pockets and or Loops are not allowed to be taped.

C. Flag belts can be purchased from the Fredericksburg Field House for \$10 if needed.

i. Team jerseys must be similar in color. Every player must bring both a light and a dark jersey; the home team will be required to change color if the colors are too similar.

ii. Shirts must be tucked inside your pants and in no way cover or protect the flags. Flags must not be the same color as the shorts or the same color as the strip down the shorts should you have one.

#### **5. Illegal Equipment:**

A. Headgear containing any hard, unyielding or stiff material, including billed hats or headgear that is not recognized as athletic head gear. Billed hats may be worn backwards.

B. Jewelry of any kind that can dangle from your body. Stud earrings should be taped for safety but not required.

C. Shirts or jerseys, which do not remain tucked in. Any hood or pocketed coat, sweatshirt, or shirts with pockets is not permitted.

D. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges unexposed. Any other hard substance should be covered with at least ½ inch of closed cell slow recovery rubber or other materials of a similar thickness and physical properties.

E. Any team found wearing illegal equipment is an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. That unsportsmanlike penalty does not count towards the two required for an automatic ejection.

## **6. Forfeits:**

A. Any team that forfeits 2 games during the season may be ineligible for the playoffs.

B. There will be no refunds or reimbursements of league fees to any team that forfeits out of the league or to any player that is suspended.

C. Forfeits are scored 21-0.

## **7. Possession:**

A. Home team selects whether they want to kick off or receive in the 1st half. Whichever they choose, the opposite will happen at the start of the 2nd half. Note: For the playoffs, the higher seeded team will choose who kick and who receives.

## **8. Game Clock:**

A. Games will be two 25-minute halves with a 2-minute half time. Game times may be shortened to stay on schedule.

B. A team is allowed 2 time-outs for the entire game. All time outs are 30 seconds each. The clock will stop during all timeouts, unless the 17-point rule is in effect.

C. The game is played under a running clock: there are no stoppages for change of possession, incomplete passes, etc. The following exception applies – under 1- minute remaining in the 2nd half only, the clock will stop on incomplete passes, penalties, and first downs.

D. The following exceptions apply, during the final (1) minute of the game (2nd half only) the clock will stop on incomplete passes, a penalty or a change of possession. The clock will also stop when first downs are achieved (after the referee sets the ball for play – the clock will start again) **The clock will not stop if the 17-point rule is in effect, even during timeouts.**

## **9. Game Play:**

A. At the start of the game, or after a touchdown, the kicking team will kick to the receiving team as so:

i. The kicking team will line up on the goal line while the kicker will place the ball on the 5-yard line to be kicked. Once the ball is kicked, the kicking team may advance to pull the returning team's flag.

ii. The returning team will set up with 4 men on the half field line. These 4 players cannot move until the return ball has passed them or if the ball is kicked close enough for them to return it. The remaining 4 players will set up behind the initial 4 to return the kick. Once the returning team secures the ball, they will advance. There is no blocking down field and those who do not have ball will either stand in place or move out of the way for the play to advance. If the ball is fumbled and hits the ground at any time during the return, the ball is dead where it hit. Receiving players may move behind the returner for pitches or reverses. Play is dead when a flag is pulled or player goes out of bounds.

**B. Line of scrimmage:**

i. On offense, you must have a minimum of 4 men on the line of scrimmage, except in the situation outlined in rule 3e.

ii. On defense, you must start with 2 men on the line (Except for punts).

C. Players may advance the ball by either running the ball forward, lateraling to a teammate or by the quarterback passing to a teammate who is behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.

D. To make a first down, the ball must be advanced to or beyond mid field, regardless of where the series originated. You have 4 downs to cross midfield. If the spot of the foul is beyond the 1st down and the penalty brings the line of scrimmage behind midfield, the 1st down should be awarded, but the line to gain should be the goal line. (1st and Goal).

E. The ball must be hiked between the legs of the center to the quarterback. The center may not run with the ball but is eligible for a pass or can stay and block. 2 linemen may also position themselves next to the center to block (No more than 2 linemen next to the center). Blockers may also line up within the Tackle Box at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage with the Quarterback to assist with blocking. Teams may run a spread option but must ensure they have at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage.

F. All players are eligible to receive a pass.

G. A pass receiver may receive and advance the ball, or a defensive player may intercept a ball even though his or her flags have dropped off. A ball carrier that loses their flags while carrying the ball must be tagged with one hand anywhere on the body between the shoulder and knees, including the hand and arm. It is at the sole discretion and

judgement of the official whether a player is tagged or is deemed to have their flags out of position, i.e., not placed about the shirt on both hips, the player may be downed by a one hand tag as above. If the flags are knocked out of position by the defense during the down, the one hand touch rule does not apply.

H. The ball carrier is down at the spot where the “tackler” pulls off his/her flag. Tacklers should hold up the flag as soon as it is pulled off. For first downs and touchdowns, the ball carrier’s hips with ALL FLAGS attached must cross the line. (Unless the one hand touch rule is in effect).

I. The ball carrier must run to avoid tacklers, not over or through them (This means no lowering the shoulder). It is the ball carrier’s responsibility to avoid collisions. The ball carrier may not stiff-arm an opponent. The runner may, however, attempt to maneuver between or around tacklers when trapped along the sidelines but cannot hurdle a player to avoid a defensive player. Juking, spinning and other natural running motions are permitted. Jumping is permitted as long as the runner is not hurdling a player. The runner MAY NOT DIVE to advance the ball.

J. The defensive team must have two (no more, no less) players anywhere on the line of scrimmage. These are 2 of the 3 players eligible to rush the quarterback. The two rushers may move laterally but not forward or backwards during the count prior to the snap. Once the quarterback leaves the pocket, (the pocket is defined as the tackle box. The official has final say on this), all players on defense are allowed to rush. Both lines must assume a two-point stance. The offensive linemen may not move once they have taken their set positions for one full second before the snap. The Defense may have another player rush from anywhere on the field. The 3rd rusher may not line up on the Line of Scrimmage and MUST be at least 1 yard behind the Line of Scrimmage at the snap. NO BULL RUSH ALLOWED.

K. After a play is whistled dead and the official sets the ball for play and blows the whistle, a team has 25 seconds to get the next play off. It is the responsibility of the offense to get the ball back to the line of scrimmage. If the defense interferes with the return of the ball to the line of scrimmage, the official may penalize the defense for delay of game.

L. A fourth down incomplete pass or run that fails to get a first down or touchdown will be turned over to the defense wherever the refs spot the ball. Teams do have the option to punt or throw the ball on 4th down instead of going for it.

M. Extra points will be executed for 1-point or 2-points. The offensive captain will need to declare before the attempt so the ball can be spotted by the ref. There is no kicking extra points outside.

N. Kickoff following a score. The ball will be placed on the 5-yard line and as stated earlier, the scoring team will kick off. The scoring team will have no more than 40 sec after scoring/failing the extra point to execute a kickoff before receiving a delay of game penalty. In the event of a safety, a punt from the end zone will be executed by the team committing the safety.

### **10. No Contact down field:**

A. Illegal Contact-Down Field Defense: If the illegal contact occurs during the play when the offense is advancing the ball, the penalty will be marked off 5 yards from the end of the run or spot of the foul. If this occurs during a pass play, when the ball is incomplete, the penalty will be marked off 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. This means pressing the receiver is NOT allowed.

B. Illegal Contact-Down Field Offense: If illegal contact is made by the offense, the penalty will be marked from the end of the run or the spot of the foul, whichever hurts the offense the most.

### **11. Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Game Play Behavior & Suspensions:**

A. Any player who receives 2 unsportsmanlike penalties during one game will be ejected for the remainder of that game. It is at the referee's discretion to eject a player from one unsportsmanlike penalty. All ejections will result in an automatic one-week suspension.

B. A 15-yard penalty will be assessed for any player/coach using profanity and can be subject to ejection from the game.

C. Taunting the other team will be an unsportsmanlike penalty of 15 yards. Anything said directly towards another team that is deemed disrespectful will result in a penalty. This includes vulgar acts directed towards another team or player.

D. Any player/coach who is guilty of fighting, physically confronting an official, threatening other players or officials, and/or flagrantly attempting to injure another player will be suspended from the league for a period determined by the Director of the League. Shoving another player is unsportsmanlike behavior and is subject to ejection. Additionally, on top of the suspension, players are subject to a fine of \$50 for verbal abuse of officials, staff or other players and physical altercations. Any fine imposed will be determined by the League Director. This fine must be paid before the player is able to return to the facility.

E. If a player is suspended for any other unsportsmanlike reason other than those listed above, he/she will be suspended for the remainder of that game and is subject to a one-week suspension.

F. All suspensions are facility suspensions. If you are removed from a game, you must exit the facility immediately. During this period of his/her suspension, the Fredericksburg Field House will determine and 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.

G. The Fredericksburg Field House will determine whether a suspended player may return.

H. If a player is ejected, he/she will be required to leave the facility for the rest of the day. Failure to leave the field will result in his team forfeiting the rest of the game.

H. The official has absolute charge of the game. His/her decision will be final and is not to be disputed by any member of either team. The official rules on all situations not specifically covered in these rules.

## **12. Challenge Rules:**

A. There are no challenges to the officials' ruling on the field. Teams may email the Fredericksburg Field House (football@fredfieldhouse.com) if they feel the referee has not performed his/her responsibilities fairly or adequately. Fredericksburg Field House staff will review these reports and take any action if necessary.

## **13. Rushing/Blocking:**

A. Defensive rushers/MUST attempt to run around OFFENSIVE players, not through them. Defensive rushers first contact must be with their hands and must attempt to run around offensive players, not through them. Players may not leave their feet to block an opponent. However, defensive players may dive for a flag.

B. No "bull rushing" or violent blocking is allowed.

i. Bull rushing is defined as contact initiated by a defender with his shoulder, forearm, or closed/clenched hands that drives the blocker back or knocks the blocker to the ground and is deemed excessive and potentially harmful to the blocker by the covering official.

C. No player may hit or slap any player in an aggressive manner when blocking or rushing. The covering official makes the determination as to what is considered aggressive.

D. There will be no down field blocking on any play.

E. Only stationary screens, like a pick in basketball, may be carried out.

F. Offensive and defensive players must run to avoid each other, not run over or through each other.

G. Defensive players may not “jam” receivers on the line of scrimmage.

#### **14. Passes/Laterals:**

A. Balls touching the ground at any time are considered dead balls EXCEPT: on declared punts (which shall be a thrown/punt ball).

B. The ball may be passed forward no more than twice BEHIND the line of scrimmage.

C. The ball may be passed backward or laterally as many times as desired on any one play until the ball is whistled dead.

D. An offensive player may NOT run across the line of scrimmage, then run back behind the line of scrimmage and throw a forward pass.

#### **15. Rushing the Passer**

A. The passer may be rushed, but no body contact is allowed.

B. You may jump to block a pass; you cannot follow through and make contact with the quarterback’s arm.

C. You may not slap or hit the ball out of the hands of the ball carrier.

D. Illegal contact with a passer will be determined by the officials.

#### **16. Offsides:**

A. If an offensive or defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball, the play will be whistled dead and the infraction will be penalized.

#### **17. Fumbles:**

A. All grounded fumbles are considered a dead ball.

B. The defensive team may not recover or advance a grounded fumble.

C. A ball fumbled into the air is called an “air fumble” and may be intercepted and advanced by a defensive or offensive player.

D. Fumbles go back to the spot where the ball was lost, unless the ball is fumbled forward or backwards into the endzone. That will result in a safety or touchback, depending on the circumstances.

E. You may not slap, stirp, or hit the ball out of the hands of a runner or a pass receiver who has already established possession. This will be called impeding the runner. If a runner is in the clear with no one between them and the end zone when this occurs, the official has the option to award a touchdown.

### **18. Punting:**

A. ALL PUNTS must be declared a kick or a throw.

B. The ball is considered LIVE until;

1. The kicking team touches the ball and it hits the ground.
2. The ball becomes motionless on the ground.
3. The receiving team touches the ball and the ball touches the ground.

C. The offensive team may punt on any down after announcing the kick before the down starts. Once a punt is announced and ready for play has been acknowledged by the official, the only way a team can change out is by using a timeout.

D. After such an announcement, the punt/throw must be made, and neither team may cross the line of scrimmage until after the punt.

E. The punt/throw must be made within the 25 second play clock.

F. A dropped punt will be called a fumble and result in a dead ball at the spot that it hits the turf. If this occurs in the end zone, the ball will be placed at the 5-yard line (a touchback).

### **19. Administration of Penalties:**

A. The offense and defense have the option to accept or decline penalties.

### **20. 15 Yard Penalties: (refer to rule 19a)**

A. Offensive pass interference – 15 yards from the original line of scrimmage and loss of down.

B. Defensive pass interference – 15 yards from the original line of scrimmage and loss of down. (No longer a spot foul).

i. Defensive pass interference in the end zone – Ball given to the offensive team on the 1-yard line, and an automatic 1st down.

C. Tackling – If a defensive player tackles the ball carrier, the penalty will be assessed from the point of infraction. If a defensive player tackles an offensive player, who is not carrying the ball, the penalty will be assessed from the end of the run/pass or the line of scrimmage, whatever helps the offense more.

D. Roughing the passer – Automatic 1st down. Assessed from the line of scrimmage or from the end of the play.

E. Intentional or flagrant foul – 15 yards and you run the risk of being ejected.

F. Fighting – 15 yards, you will be ejected, and it is up to the League Director when you can return to the facility.

H. Leaving feet on a block – If an offensive player leaves their feet to block a defensive player behind the line of scrimmage, the penalty will be assessed from the point of the infraction. If the infraction occurs at the line of scrimmage, the penalty will be assessed from the line of scrimmage. There should be NO downfield blocking. However, if this infraction is committed by the defense, the penalty will be assessed from the end of the run/pass. If this penalty occurs by the offense, the penalty will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

## **21. Ten Yard Penalties: (refer to rule 19a)**

A. Illegal use of hand, forearms or elbows – penalty will be assessed from the end of the play.

B. Offensive Holding – If offensive holding occurs behind the line of scrimmage, the penalty will be assessed from the point of infraction. If offensive holding occurs down the field, the penalty will be assessed from the end of the run/pass.

C. Defensive Holding – If defensive holding occurs behind the line of scrimmage, the penalty will be assessed from the line of scrimmage. If defensive holding occurs down field, the penalty will be assessed from the end of the run/pass.

D. Flag Guarding – The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

E. Stiff-arm, wedge blocking, clipping – 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

F. Impeding the runner – Spot Foul

G. Offensive diving – Spot Foul

## **22. Five Yard Penalties:**

A. Offsides

B. Delay of Game – Any team that purposely delays the game in attempt to run the clock out at the end of the game, the official will stop the clock and the offense or defense will be given a delay of game warning. The second infraction will result in a 15-yard penalty, stoppage of the clock and a loss of down.

C. Illegal Procedure

D. Illegal Passes

E. Illegal Stance

F. Illegal flags, illegal equipment or uniform.

## **23. Scoring:**

A. Touchdown = 6 points. Touchdowns are scored when a team passes or runs the ball across the opposing team's goal line.

B. Point after Attempts (PATs): The offensive team decides if the ball will be placed on either the top of the 5-yard line (1), or from the Red arch (2).

C. Safety = 2 points. A safety occurs when the defensive player pulls his/her flags from an offensive player in his/her own end zone. Offense will then punt/throw the ball from the end zone.

D. Returned/Intercepted PAT = 2 points

## **24. Other Rules:**

A. The Fredericksburg Field House will refer to the NFHS Football Rule Book for any rules not covered here.

B. There are 3 main Divisions at the Fredericksburg Field House League: Division 1. Division 2 and Division 3.

C. Division Placement can be requested when signing up a team but the Flag Football Coordinator will have the final say what Division you team will play in

D. Basic Division Rules:

1. Cross Play will take place if Divisions do not have enough teams
2. Only 2 Division 1 and 2 Skilled players may play on a division 3 team.  
(Blockers are not considered skilled players)
3. Flag Football Coordinator can move teams up or down a Divisions come playoff time if needed.
4. Division Winners will automatically move up a division when they win their respected division.

## **25. Seasons or Tournament/Standings:**

A. Each team will be scheduled games based on the number or weeks available during the season and at least 1 post-season game. Tournament games will be predetermined when the tournament is set-up by League Coordinator. Depending on the league size, each team may not play all other teams in the league or tournament.

B. Playoff seeding is determined by:

- i. Overall record
- ii. Head to head competition (unless multiple teams did not play each other then it will automatically revert to Point Differential)
- iv. Point differential

C. ALL PLAYOFFS ARE RUN USING A BRACKETED FORMAT (FFH DOES NOT USE NFL FORMAT)

## **26. Flag Football Payments**

- A. League Dues are based on the number of games to be played in that season.
- B. Payments for the league are always due before the first game of the season or before the first game of a tournament played.
- C. Payment Plans are an option for Season play only and with customers of good standing.
  - i. Credit Card is required to be on file to make a payment plan
  - ii. NO CASH PAYMENT PLANS

D. Half payment Week 1 and Half Payment week 2 is permitted for cash paying customers.

**Modified March 28, 2025**  
**Mark A. Frederick**  
**Flag Football Coordinator**