



9v9 Flag Football Rules

All rules used will be following the 2026 edition TEXAS UIL

RULEBOOK

Quarters

Flag – Will have (4) 12-minute quarters. Running clock

A. Between quarters & halftime.

- a. 1 minute will be given between quarters.
- b. 5 minutes will be given between the 1st and 2nd half.

Play Clock / Game Clock

A. Play Clock

Flag will have a 45 second play clock.

B. Game Clock stops / starts.

- a. To complete a penalty.
- b. Inadvertent whistle
- c. At referee's discretion

C. Game Clock starts/stops on the ball.

- a. Timeout be either team.
- b. Change of possession
- c. End of a period
- d. Last 2 minutes of a half – Incomplete pass / Out of bounds.

D. Game Clock runs.

- a. The game clock shall run during a XP attempt.

Inadvertent Whistle

A. In case of this the team with the ball has 2 options:

- a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
- b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

Mercy Rule

A. Once the game has a 28+ point difference the clock will remain running unless the following occur:

- a. The losing team takes a timeout.
- b. The team that is up by 28 points or more may not use any timeouts while the point margin is 28.
- c. The point differential falls below 28 then we will go back to regular clock and winning team may use timeouts again.
- d. An injury occurs on the field (once player is up and to sideline the clock will restart).
- e. A referee deems fit for clock to stop.

B. Once the game has reached a 50-point difference in margin of score the game will end.

Extra Points

A. Extra point values are as follows: (must be successful scoring attempts)

- a. Run – 1 point
- b. Backward Pass – 1 point
- c. Forward Pass – 2 point
- d. Kicking of extra point – 2 point

Defensive Scores

A. Interceptions by the defense can be returned for a touchdown during regulation play only.

B. THERE ARE NO FUMBLES IN FLAG.

Overtime

A. Coin Toss will occur.

- a. Winner of coin toss chooses offense or defense.
- b. The loser of toss will choose which end to defend/advance.

B. 1st Overtime

- a. Ball is placed on the 20-yard line.

C. 2nd Overtime

- a. Ball is placed on the 20-yard line.

D. 3rd Overtime & going forward.

- a. Ball is placed on the 20-yard line.
- b. Starting in this overtime teams must throw for the extra point conversion.
- c. During the regular season, if both teams are tied after 3 overtimes the game will end in a tie.

E. Regardless if the offense scores or not, the team that was on defense first, now become the offense; and the team that was on offense, now is on defense and the procedure is repeated. If neither team scores, or both score the same amount of points, the process is repeated. The team that scores the most points wins.

F. Interceptions cannot be advanced in overtime. If one occurs, it ends the offensive series.

G. Only 1-timeout is given to each team per overtime.

Offensive Plays

A. Sneaks

a. Quarterback sneaks are not allowed if the QB takes the snap from under the center. The QB must start the play in shotgun formation, 2 yards behind center, in order to run through the "A" gaps.

- b. A QB under center can run to any other spot.

B. Center

- a. The center can snap the ball one of the following ways:
- b. Traditional Style – through the legs of center.
- c. Sideways Style – Center can hand it off or toss it to the Quarterback.
- d. Center sneaks are not allowed in P5SL

C. Offensive Formations

- a. The offensive team may have no more than 4-players in the backfield or they will be penalized.

D. Pre-snap movement

- a. Offensive Audible (change of play) is allowed but all players must become set, before the snap or a player starts their motion sequence (motion sequence – must be run parallel to the line of scrimmage.)

E. Ball Carrier

- a. The ball carrier is not allowed to stiff-arm to any part of the defender's body, if it is done it will be penalized with Flag

Flag Guarding

- A. The ball carrier cannot use their arms or hands to protect their flags from being pulled. If it is done it will be penalized with
- B. The ball carrier is not allowed to spin or hurdle in order to prevent a defender from pulling their flags. If it is done it will be penalized with Flag Guarding – 10 yards from Line of Scrimmage.
- C. The ball carrier is not allowed to dive for a first down, touchdown, or any other reason.
 - a. This rule does not apply to diving in order to make a catch.
- D. The ball carrier is not allowed to intentionally make contact with a defender. i.e. – lowering shoulder. If it is done it will be penalized with Charging – 5 yards from Line of Scrimmage.

Fumbles

- A. **There are NO FUMBLES in flag.**

Muffs

A. QB Under Center

a. Ball is dead where the ball hit the ground.

b. QB Shot Gun

c. In shot gun formation, muff snaps or bad snaps are allowed to be picked up and advanced from any player in the backfield.

B. If a defender gets too close to the offensive players before the muff ball is picked up, the referee can whistle the play dead. – Due to safety concerns for the players. ** This is a judgement call from the referee and will vary. **

Punts

A. The offensive team **must** declare to the referee and to the opposing coach whether they are punting or they are going for it. Once this is declared a team cannot change their mind, unless either team takes a time-out. The ball will then be marked off 30 yards for change of possession.

Downs and Lines

A. Each team will have 4 consecutive downs from the point on the field they take possession to advance the ball over the next zone line or to score a touchdown. First downs occur when the nose of the football touches or passes a zone.

B. Once a team touches or passes the next zone line, it is 1st down and Zone to Go. If a team fails to reach the next zone, that team loses possession. The opposing team will then take possession at that point where the ball is declared dead and begin its series 1st down and Zone to Go.

C. When an offensive team is within the last zone and has a 1st down, it will be 1st and Goal.

D. The referee will mark the ball according to UIL rules.

E. Once a team gains possession of the ball, they cannot gain a 1st down by crossing a zone line they were pushed back over by penalty or any other reason.

Defensive Formations

A. Center

a. The Defense cannot be lined up directly over the center, or in the “A” Gaps (1 yard in either direction of ball) once the ball is snapped.

b. If a defender is over the center, they must be 3 yards back off the line of scrimmage.

B. In the box

a. The defense may have a maximum of 5 players in the box (Offensive Tackle to Tackle). All other players in the box must be 3 yards off the line of scrimmage.

C. Outside the box

a. Any defensive player outside the box may be on the line of scrimmage.

CI. Violation

a. Any defensive that violates above flag rules pertaining to center, in the box, and outside the box will be flagged for illegal formation – 5 yards from line of scrimmage.

Stripping

A. Stripping of the ball is not allowed in flag. Any occurrence of this that is seen to be done on purpose by the referee will be penalized with a personnel foul – 15 yards from Line of Scrimmage.

Flagging

A. Tackling is prohibited and penalize with a personnel foul – 15 yards from the line of scrimmage.

B. The ball carrier is considered down if one of the following occurs:

a. Knee touches the ground or player falls down.

b. Flags are removed by a defender.

c. Flags accidentally fall off.

d. If the defender is clearly pulling the flag and it is not coming off and or the defender is pulling the clothes and flag in same hand and is not coming off the official may blow the play dead at that spot. **This call will only be made by the officials.**

C. A defender cannot push the ball carrier out of bounds. Penalized with a personnel foul – 15 yards.

D. **A PLAYER CANNOT DIVE TO GET A FLAG**, if this is done it is penalized with Illegal Procedure –5 yards from line of scrimmage.

Coaches on the Field

A. Two eligible volunteer coaches from each team may be permitted on the field.

a. Once the snap occurs, the coach must back away outside the team's formation (formation defined as - no players to the left, right, or behind the coach.)

b. Any coach not outside the team's formation or in the Referee's opinion will be flagged for interference (Defense flagged - Automatic 1st down for offense) (Offense flagged Loss of Down)

c. Coaches may not physically assist a player while the play is in motion. If occurs, the coach will be flagged for interference. (Defense flagged - Automatic 1st down for offense) (Offense flagged – Loss of Down).

d. Coaches cannot run down the field during the play. They must follow behind the play as to stay out of the play. Any coach that runs down field with the play or in the Referee's opinion was determined to have entered into the field of play during a long run will be flagged for interference (Defense flagged - Automatic 1st down for offense) (Offense flagged – Loss of Down)

e. If any coach is caught yelling at the opposing team's players in order to confuse them, the coach will be flagged for interference. (Defense flagged - Automatic 1st down for offense) (Offense flagged – Loss of Down)

f. Coaches may not argue or talk trash to the opposing team's coaches or players while on the field. If this happens, the referee may flag them for unsportsmanlike conduct. After two unsportsmanlike conduct the coach must leave the game.

g. Coaches will be given one warning for arguing with officials while on the field. After the second incident the coach will be asked to leave the field and another coach will be allowed to take his place on the field.

Kickoffs, Punts, and Punt Returns

A. Kickoffs

a. There are NO kickoffs in flag. The ball is placed on the 20- yard line; 1st and Zone to Go.

B. Punts

a. The offensive team **must** declare to the referee and to the opposing coach whether they are punting or going for it. Once this is declared a team cannot change their mind, unless either team takes a time-out. The ball will then be marked off 30 yards for change of possession.

Flags and Flag Belts

No Velcro flags allowed. The flag belts with pop sockets like used with USA Football will be used for all teams. Flags cannot be the same color as the team shorts. No ribbed or mushroom cups allowed. No specific brand required.

Flag Types

