



HFL 8 V 8 Flag Football league Rule Book

*Game time is forfeit time! The winning team of a forfeited game will receive fourteen points for the point differential of that game. Teams with less than the required number of participants at the scheduled start time will forfeit the contest.

*The officiating will be done by officials who are in absolute control of the game.

*Teams are responsible for keeping their spectators under control. Misconduct of spectators, players or coaches can result in assessment of a penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain in the area designated by the officials.

*The official and or supervisor have the power to make decisions on any matters or questions not specifically covered in the rules.

*Each team is required to provide a stat keeper.

1. Team Requirements

- A team shall consist of 20 players maximum 8 on field at a time. A team can play with a minimum of 8 players.
- 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 verified before they are allowed to participate.
- The designated team area is located between the 20 yard lines, two yards off the sideline. This area is for all players and a maximum of two coaches.
- The spectator area is designated as five yards from the sideline. **Spectators are not allowed in the team area.**

2. Equipment and Facilities

- All players must wear shoes.
- Rubber cleated shoes will be allowed. Open toe, open heel or hard soled shoes will not be allowed. No metal cleats.
- 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 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 the ref will keep count internally)
- All flag belts must be free of knots. **Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct and ejection from the game.**
- Each team must provide their own football. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure and markings. Men shall use the regular size. The referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play

and may change the ball during play at his or her discretion. During the game each team must use a legal ball of its choice when in possession.

- Equipment such as helmets or braces worn above the waist, leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances, and casts are strictly prohibited. Knee braces made of hard, unyielding 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.

- All team members must wear the same color shirt. 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.

3. Start of the Game and Timing

- Toss of the Coin five 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.

- °to choose the goal his or her team will defend

- The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.

- Three 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 30 minute halves with a five minute half time. Timing will be continuous for the first half, and the first 20 minutes of the second half. Only team and official time-outs can stop the clock. 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.

- Mercy Rule: If a team is leading by 28 at halftime or 19 points or more in the final two minutes of the game, the mercy rule will be put into effect and the ball game will be over.

- 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 – clock starts once the ball has been reset if the player did not go out of bounds. If the player ran out the clock starts on the snap.

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. (ie. Interception)
12. Either team is awarded a new series following a legal punt - clock starts on the snap.
13. Team attempting to conserve time illegally – clock starts on the ready.

PLAY: Team A, losing, is deflagged 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.

1. 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.

- Inadvertent whistle – clock starts on the snap.

4. Game Rules

- Field dimensions are 120 yards by 50 yards with 10 yard endzones, yard markings every 20 yards.
- The ball will be kicked off from the 20 at Kickoff, upon returning from halftime, and after a team has scored and attempted a PAT or after a safety in which they will kick from the 10.

- A team shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line to gain (and earn a first down).
- The zone line to gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain.
- A new series of downs will be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone.
- Flag Belt Removal: When the flag belt 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 foremost point of the ball is at
 - If a flag belt inadvertently falls off, a two 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 deflagging 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.
- 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 player receiving the snap must be 2yards from the line of scrimmage during a scrimmage play and 1 yard from the line of scrimmage for a punt. Penalty: Illegal procedure.
- 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.
- For a legal catch, a pass receiver must come down with at least one foot in bounds.
- Rush-The defense 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.
- All offensive players must be momentarily within 15 yards of the ball. It must be clear who the nine 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 any player catching the ball.
 - A ball fumbled into the offensive team's endzone will result in a safety. If the ball is fumbled into the opponent's endzone the result is a touchback (opponent's ball on their 15 yard line).

- The ball is placed on the 15 yard 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 15 yard line. A try for one point will be taken from the 10 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 be given 4 downs from the same 20 yard line to score a touchdown. If the first team scores, then the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to win or tie the game. If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, the game will be over. If not, the ball will be placed at the 20 yard line to begin the series of four downs. Conversion attempts will be held as in regulation play. Each team is entitled to one timeout per overtime period.

5. Screening/Blocking

Blocking, as in regulation tackle football, is allowed. All linemen before game will be checked for game safe nail length or must have gloves if their nails are too long. Screen blocks and Downfield blocking are permitted within 10 yards of the LOS. Past ten yards players may not block running in the path of the defense, running in front of the ball carrier is illegal blocking past 10 yards. Blocking must be to the front of the player holding is not permitted.

Blocking in the back – 10yard Penalty

Illegal Blocking – 10 yard penalty.

6. Flag Belt Removal

- In an attempt to remove the flag belt 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).

7. Kicking the ball

- Protected scrimmage kicks (Punts)-NO RUSHING FROM DEFENSE!!!!!!!!!!
- Punts must be announced before the ball is ready for play. The kicking team (offensive team that is kicking the ball) must have 5 players on their line of scrimmage. Punts must be snapped from the center. The punter must be at least two yards off the line of scrimmage upon receiving the snap and must punt the ball immediately. There will be no movement by the offensive players until the ball is kicked. Penalty-5 yards.
- b. Defensive players may not enter the neutral zone until the ball is kicked.
- c. The ball may be advanced by the receiving team after it has touched the ground. However, if the ball hits any player and then touches the ground, the ball is dead at that spot.
- d. Quick kicks and fake punts are illegal.
- e. Once the ball is punted, any player on the kicking team or receiving team may block the punt. If the blocked punt is caught by any kicking team player behind the line of scrimmage, they may advance the ball. The receiving team may advance the blocked punt anywhere in the field of play.

8. Clarification

8.1 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.**

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

8.3 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.**

8.4 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. 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.**

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

8.6 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.

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

8.8 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.

8.9 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 two hands between the shoulders and the knees (after the ball has been snapped, a penalty cannot be assessed).

8.10 The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a play. The offensive team, if they choose, may bring the ball into the huddle.

8.11 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 (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).

8. Intentional grounding (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).

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. Defensive use of hands.
14. Guarding the flag belt (and stiff arming).
15. Illegal batting.
16. Illegal flag belt removal.
17. Personal foul.
18. Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct. (Disqualification)
19. Flagrant personal fouls. (Disqualification)
20. Intentionally tampering with flag belt. (Disqualification)
21. Illegal equipment.