

Pasco Recreation Services
Eight-Player, Non - Contact Flag Football Rules
2023 Rules

National Federation of State High School Association Football Rules will govern play with the following variations listed below.

I. Field and Equipment

- A. Every member of a team must wear flag belts provided by the Pasco Parks and Recreation Department. Belts and flags must be exposed. Failure to do so is subject to an eight (8) yard penalty.
- B. Teammates will be required to have similar colored jerseys by first scheduled game. If two teams have similar colored jerseys the visiting team will wear scrimmage vests.
- C. Helmets, shoulder pads, thigh pads, or the use of any hard substance is prohibited.
- D. Footwear - Cleats must be plastic, nylon, or molded rubber. Screw-in cleats are permitted with at least 1/2" in diameter and a maximum of 3/4" in length. No metal cleats allowed. Players wearing illegal shoes will be ejected from the game.
- E. No "stick-um" or other foreign substances are to be used on hands by any player. Exception: Players may wear gloves.
- F. The official length of the field shall be eighty (80) yards, which includes ten (10) yard end zones. The width of the field shall be fifty (50) yards.
- G. The official league game ball is an **intermediate size football**. Teams may provide their own game balls while on offense. If teams do not have a game ball one will be provided.

II. Player Requirements

- A. Roster is limited to fourteen (14) players; all must have graduated from high school or their class must have graduated from high school.
- B. The Team Manager/Coach/Player is responsible to supply proof of team roster and player additions (e.g. copy of roster or receipt) in the event of team/player eligibility questions.
- C. The game shall be played between two teams of eight (8) players each. If at any time a team drops below seven (7) players the game becomes a forfeit. NO GRACE PERIOD.
- D. A player may play on only one (1) team in the Pasco Parks and Recreation Adult Flag Football League. No pick-up players. If a player is found to have played on two teams ***both games*** played in will be forfeited and the player will be suspended one game. ***If an illegal player is found to have participated in a game, the team they represented will forfeit the game.***
- E. All players will be required to carry picture I.D. (i.e. driver's license with picture). Players must be able to produce I.D. if requested by game official, field supervisor, or league coordinator. If a player's identity and proper identification is not available, player will be ejected from the game.

III. Rules of Play

- A. **Only team captains who are so designated before the game begins may speak to the officials during the game.** The game will start with a coin toss between team captains. The team who wins the coin toss may choose to take the ball to start the first half or defer and take the ball at the start of the second half of play. Any player besides the captain or designated captain who speaks to the official will receive a personal foul of 8 yards. The second time this violation occurs any member of either team will be dismissed from the game and will have two minutes to leave the complex. If the person fails to leave the complex within the two minutes his/her team will forfeit the game.
- B. Proximity of players to sideline - At the start of each play, no players may attempt to deceive the defense. Players must position themselves in such a manner that is easily distinguished as a player.
- C. The ball will be put into play at the offensive team's ten (10) yard line.
- D. All players are eligible to receive a pass.
- E. First downs may be gained by advancing the ball into the next twenty (20) yard zone.
- F. Once the ball is passed over the line of scrimmage, it may not be brought back over and passed. Play will be allowed to continue until play is dead. If intercepted play stands. All other cases-next down, no penalty will be assessed. Penalties will be enforced from the line of scrimmage.
- G. A forward pass that is received behind the line of scrimmage may be passed again.
- H. If the ball is advanced over the line of scrimmage by any other means than passing, the play is dead. No yardage penalty. **EXCEPTION:** If a forward pass is completed behind the line of scrimmage, ball carrier may advance over the line of scrimmage by running.
 - a) **Clarification:** If player "A" receives the ball from a forward pass or a forward pitch behind the line of scrimmage only player "A" can advance the ball by running over the line of scrimmage. If player "A" chooses to lateral the ball to player "B" before crossing the line of scrimmage, then player "B" becomes a quarterback and the ball must be passed prior to crossing the line of scrimmage.

You must be a receiver from a forward pass or forward pitch (includes multiple passes) behind the line of scrimmage to be able to run across line of scrimmage. No Exceptions.

 - b) **Clarification:** A forward pass received across the line of scrimmage may be lateraled back across the line of scrimmage and advanced by running ball only. The ball cannot be passed when lateraled back. **Play will be allowed to continue until play is dead.** If intercepted play stands. All other cases-next down, no penalty will be assessed.
- I. Screening in the backfield for the quarterback and downfield for the ball carrier is legal but the player setting the screen must give defensive players a chance to avoid the screen. If contact is made, a penalty will be assessed.
- J. Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players, provided having the replaced players off the field before the ball is snapped completes the substitution. Players must report to their team's side of the field. Substitutions may not be used in any manner to deceive your opponents.
- K. The last down in either half will be replayed if there is a penalty by either team (offense or defense) and it is accepted by the other team (offense or defense).

- L. Non-playing team members and spectators must remain inside the team box, which is the distance between the twenty (20) yard lines and two (2) yards outside the sidelines.
- M. The offensive team is responsible for returning the ball to an official or the line of scrimmage promptly. This includes attempt during fourth (4th) down.
- N. For a player who is bleeding, or has an open wound or found to have an excessive amount of blood on his/her clothing. This player **MUST** leave the field to:
 - 1. Cover the wound;
 - 2. Stop the bleeding;
 - 3. Change soiled clothing.

IV. The Clock

- A. **Length of Game**
The game shall consist of two (2) halves, each being twenty-five (25) minutes of running time, with the clock stopping with one minute remaining in the first half on incomplete passes and two minutes remaining in the second half on incomplete passes. The clock will only stop during time outs. The timekeeper shall alert the teams at the twenty- minute mark of each half.
- B. The game is divided into two (2) halves. There will be a two (2) minute half-time intermission.
- C. **Each team may have one (1) time out per half. A time out is one (1) minute. Teams can accumulate timeouts and use both in second half.**
- D. **The ball must be put into play within 25 seconds of placement at the line of scrimmage by the referee when teams are ready to play.** The referee will blow his/her whistle when the 25 seconds is to begin.
- E. If a team fails to put the ball into play within 25 seconds, it will be a five (5) yard penalty. Any other delay-of game infractions during the same possession will result in loss of down and five (5) yards.
- F. If, in the judgement of the game officials, a team is delaying in an effort to run down the clock, the team will receive one warning and then receive an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. (See IX Penalties, A.3) Continued infractions could result in a player or team being disqualified and the game forfeited.

V. Line of Scrimmage

- A. **Players on the line of scrimmage:**
 - 1. **The offensive team must have at least (4) players on the line of scrimmage to begin a play.**
 - 2. **Three point stances are allowed on either offense or defense.**
 - 3. **Defensive line must be three yard off the ball.**
- B. Only players lined up behind the line of scrimmage may be in motion; limit one player in motion each play. Player in motion must move parallel to or away from line of scrimmage.
- C. **All fumbled balls are dead immediately. Exception: When offense has declared a punt, the punter may fumble or muff the ball until a legal punt has been made.** (Refer to Rule VII.)
- D. **Muffed Balls: All muffed balls will be put into play at point of contact with field except a ball fumbled forward - ball will be placed where player lost possession.**

- E. **Forward handoffs are only allowed behind the line of scrimmage. Player in control of the football is now the quarterback.** (See Rule III.H.)

VI. Ball Handling

- A. Open field tackling: If the ball carrier is tackled in the open field, it will result in an automatic first down for the offense.
- B. Bumping-Out on the sidelines is not permitted, unless in the judgment of the referee:
1. No block was thrown.
 2. Unnecessary roughness is not employed.
 3. An attempt to pull the flag is made.
- C. If the ball carrier's flag inadvertently falls off, they may be downed by a one-hand touch by the defense. If any member of the defense pulls flags from offensive players not in possession of the ball intentionally, the offensive team shall be awarded a major penalty. (See IX Penalties, C.7)
- D. Tackling and carrying ball: The ball carrier may not run through a defensive player (they may not charge) and must attempt to evade the defense whenever possible. The defense may not hold or run through a ball carrier, but must "play the flag" rather than hold the player. In contact between the ball carrier and the defense when both are the aggressors, the ball shall be dead at the spot of contact. The official shall decide those situations just as a basketball referee rules on charging versus blocking. May result in unnecessary roughness and/or ejection.
- E. **The ball carrier will be allowed to spin to elude the defense. Runner must have at least one foot on the ground.**
1. **A ball player running with the ball may not hurdle, dive or jump in order to score or avoid having flags pulled. Penalty - Loss of eight (8) yards.**
 2. A runner may not intentionally guard flag with arms or hands to prevent them from being pulled.
Penalty - Loss of eight (8) yards from point of infraction. (If a player has altered the flag belt in any way to prevent an opposing player from successfully pulling off the belt, they will be ejected from the game. (See X. Player Suspension, item A.)
- F. **Quarterbacks will be protected from any contact after they have thrown the ball even if the ball has been tipped.** The quarterback in flag football should be treated like the basketball player shooting the ball. Contact is not allowed even after the quarterback releases the ball. Penalty for contact will be an eight (8) yard illegal use of hand or arm penalty and automatic first down - roughing the passer. *Quarterback will be considered down when flag is pulled before the ball is released.*
- G. Touchbacks - the ball will be put into play at the offensive team's ten (10) yard line. (Interceptions may be advanced out of the end zone.)
- H. The center-snapper may adjust the ball and/or pick it up to dry off prior to the snap.
- I. An offensive player who is bumped out of bounds by a defensive player does not lose eligibility to receive the ball. Penalty will be assessed to the defense for illegal use of hand or arm.
- J. If an offensive player goes out on own accord then back into play to catch a pass. No catch-loss of down, no yardage penalty.

- K. The defense cannot cross the line of scrimmage before the snap. It is encroachment for any player to cross the neutral zone. (See IX Penalties, B.10.)

VII. Punting

- A. The offensive team must notify the defense whenever they want to punt. Neither team may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. **The defense must maintain three players on the line of scrimmage and they may not attempt to block the punt.**
- B. Teams may return punts from the end zone provided the ball was not muffed. Otherwise ball will be put into play at the offensive team's ten (10) yard line.
- C. After a punt, the ball may be picked up (off the ground) and advanced provided the ball was not muffed.

VIII. Scoring

- A. Scoring shall be six (6) points for a touchdown and one (1) point for the extra point conversion from the five(5) yard line and two (2) points for extra point conversion from the ten (10) yard line.
- B. Two (2) points will be awarded to the defensive teams returning the ball for a touchdown if they intercept the ball while the offense is attempting extra point conversion.
- C. When the flag is pulled, the position of the runner's hip shall determine placement of the ball (the hips must cross the goal line to score).
- D. Forward motion of the ball carrier into the end zone after flag has been pulled is not counted as a touchdown. The ball is downed at the point where the flag is pulled free.
- E. A safety is scored only when the team defending the goal causes a live ball to go back over the goal line. Two (2) points are scored on a safety if the ball becomes dead in the end zone in their possession.
- F. Following a safety, the team scored against must punt the ball to the other team. (Punting from ten (10) yard line.)
- G. A forfeited game will be recorded as 14 – 0.
1. If the team ahead causes the officials to forfeit the game for any reason, the score will be recorded as a 14 – 0 win for the opposing team.
 2. If the team behind causes the officials to forfeit the game for any reason, the score will stand.

IX. Penalties

- A. Loss of down and yardage for the following violations:
1. Illegal forward pass - 5 yards
 2. Offensive pass interference - 8 yards
 3. Unsportsmanlike conduct - 8 yards
- B. Loss of 5 yards:
1. Delay of the game
 2. Illegal substitution
 3. Offside
 4. False start or any illegal act by snapper

5. Free-kick infractions
6. Illegal forward pitch - point of infraction
7. Not enough players on the line of scrimmage
8. Illegal motion
9. Team box violation – 1st offense
10. Encroachment
11. Illegal team/personal action or conduct

C. Loss of 8 yards:

1. Persons illegally on field
2. Illegal use of hand or arm
3. Striking, kicking, kneeling, clipping, tackling or tripping
4. Illegal blocking
5. Charging
6. Pushing ball carrier
7. Intentionally de-flagging
8. Team box violation - 2nd offense
9. Flag guarding
10. Pass interference
11. Official interference
12. *Casual Profanity (not directed at official or another player)*

Any of the preceding fouls or any foul not covered herein: If in the judgement of the game officials the foul is flagrant and/or deliberate, player shall be ejected from the game.

- F. Any distance penalty shall be no greater than half the distance to the goal line.
- G. Offensive penalties occurring in the offenses' own end zone, if accepted will result in a safety.
- F. No blocking by the offense or using hands by the defense. **This is a non-contact league.**

Screen Blocking

A. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blockers shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the arms, elbows, torso, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal; this applies to the offensive as well as defensive players. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking. Penalty: Personal Foul.

B. A player who screens shall not:

1. *When he/she is behind a stationary opponent, take a position closer than a normal step from him or her.*
2. *When he/she assumes a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent, make contact with him/her.*
3. *Take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take his/ her stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.*
4. *After assuming his/her legal screening position move to maintain it, unless he/she moves in the same direction and path as his/her opponent. If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, he/she has committed a personal foul. Penalty: Personal Foul.*

5. Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense-Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. Penalty: Personal Foul.

- G. Illegal team/personal action or conduct penalty...The intent of this penalty is to warn players/coaches that their action(s) are escalating towards unsportsmanlike conduct.

X. Player/Coach Suspension

- A. A player who is ejected will be suspended a minimum of one (1) game. ***League Coordinator will decide on length of suspension.*** End of the season suspension will carry over into the following season.
- B. Players or coaches ejected from the game will leave the park immediately or automatically forfeit the game and face possible expulsion from the league.
- C. Any player or coach ejected from a game for physically abusing an official or player will be suspended from the league for a minimum of one (1) year.
- D. ***Any player (s) involved in any physical altercation will be automatically suspended for one year. It does not matter if you started the altercation or not.***
- E. Players and coaches are responsible for the actions of their spectators. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will be assessed against the team the spectator(s) represents. The spectator(s) will be asked to leave the park immediately or the team will automatically forfeit the game.
- F.
 - 1. Two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties in one game, on one player, shall result in an automatic ejection. Each additional unsportsmanlike penalty on any player shall result in an ejection for that player.
 - 2. An accumulation of two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties on an individual player during the season shall result in an automatic suspension from all remaining games including playoffs.
- G. Any player suspended cannot accompany the team to any scheduled games during the suspension including playoffs.

XI. Team Suspension

Teams accumulating two (2) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties during the season will be automatically suspended from all remaining games including playoffs.

XII. Protests

Protests will not be allowed – all decisions made on the field are final.

XIII. Tie Games

In the event that a game is tied at the end of regulation time, an overtime period will be played. ***Please see letter E below for the explanation of overtime possessions.***

- A. An additional coin toss will be held. The winner of the coin toss will choose either offense or defense, or which end of the field overtime will take place. The loser will have the choice of the remaining options.
- B. Each team will be granted 1 time out per overtime period. Time outs will not carry over from

regulation or previous overtime periods.

- C. To start overtime, the offensive team shall put the ball in play, 1st and goal, on the defensive teams twenty (20) yard line. The first offensive team shall have a series of four (4) downs. The series will end if: 1. Offensive team scores. 2. Defensive team gains possession. 3. Offensive team fail to score after four (4) downs.
- D. If the offensive team scores a touchdown, it will be entitled to its extra point, unless the game is already won with the score. ***If defensive team gains possession extra point try is complete.***
- E. After the first team on offense has completed its series of downs, the first defensive team will become the offensive team. ***There shall be no more than two overtimes in any game. (Each team possessing the ball one in overtime). If the game is tied after each team has possessed the ball on offense in overtime the game shall end in a tie.***
- F. If the game is still tied after overtime, the procedure shall be repeated until a winner is determined.
- G. The loser of the first overtime coin toss will now be given first choice of options. If additional overtimes are required, then first options are alternated, no coin-toss.
- H. All points scored in overtime(s) will count as part of the final score.

XIV. Tie in League Standings

If a tie exists at the end of the league, the following methods will be used to break ties:

- A. The team that won the league game(s) between tied teams will be awarded the higher position.
- A. If a tie still exists, point differential (difference between points scored and points against) in games between tied teams will be determined.
- B. If a tie still exists, point differential between all common competitor league games will be used.

XV. Alcoholic Beverages

Alcoholic beverages are prohibited on City facilities. Anyone violating this rule (player or spectator) is subject to penalty. Forfeiture of games and suspension of players will result.

XVI. Miscellaneous

The Pasco Parks and Recreation Department's Program Coordinator has the authority to make rulings on any and all dealings regarding this league. All decisions are final.

Updated on 9/15/23