



Texas Flag Football Association YOUTH 5V5 STANDARD RULES

The following 5v5 non-contact youth flag football rules for boys and girls are TFFA approved rules.

RULE 1. OVERVIEW

SECTION 1. THE FIELD

Article 1. Standard dimensions of the field are 60 yards long by 25 yards wide with 7-yard endzones. Approved field sizes may fluctuate from 53-64 yards long when necessary, or 23-30 yards wide. Endzones should not be shorter than 5 yards.

SECTION 2. THE GAME

Article 1. Game Time is FORFEIT TIME.

Article 2. Minimum 3 players to start a game. May only have up to 5 players on the field at any one time.

Article 3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has four plays to cross mid-field. On 4th down, teams have 5 seconds to declare to go for it or punt. Once a team crosses mid-field, they have three plays to score. If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field, the ball changes possession.

Article 4. If the offense does not score, the ball changes possession. All drives start from the 5-yard line except for an interception or failed 4th down conversion, where defense takes over at the spot.

Article 5. No blocking is allowed. No intentional contact is allowed.

SECTION 3. EQUIPMENT

Article 1. Approved football sizes:

- 8U and below: Pee-wee size footballs allowed
- 10U-12U: Junior size footballs allowed
- 14U: Youth size football

Article 2. Teams must wear Youth Shruumz or Sonic Flag-a-Tag flags (if custom flags are worn, they must be of equal dimensions as Sonic flags). NO NFL FLAG BELTS. Flags will not be allowed that have been altered (cut, taped, etc.). Mushroom Flags are not allowed for youth. The flags cannot be the same color as a player's shorts.

SECTION 4. COACHES

Article 1. Coaches are volunteers whose role it is to help young people learn to play and enjoy football. Parents are encouraged to always support their youth and their coach.

Article 2. Coaches (1 Coach per Team) in the 8U and under divisions are permitted on the field to assist players with their position alignment and mentoring on offense only (no coaches allowed on the field while on defense). At the snap, on-field coaches must be 5 yards behind the quarterback and are not allowed to continue instructing or coaching until the play ends.

Article 3. Coaches of all other age divisions may not come on to the field of play during a game unless a player is injured. Coaches who come on the field of play anytime during a game will be penalized. One sideline warning per game will be issued after which the following penalties will result:

- Coach on the field during live action = unsportsmanlike conduct
- Coach on the field during a dead ball = delay of game

Article 4. Only two coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines. ONLY THE HEAD COACH CAN ADDRESS THE GAME OFFICIALS.

SECTION 5. GAME CLOCK FORMAT

Article 1. Game clock is 45 minutes long. Two 20-minute halves and a 5-minute halftime.

Article 2. Each team has two 1-minute timeouts PER GAME. If a time out is called after a TD the clock will not run until the change of possession and the offense snaps their ball.

Article 3. The play clock is 25 seconds from the end of the previous play.

SECTION 6. FIRST HALF CLOCK

Article 1. The clock will run continuously during the 20 minutes of the first half unless a team timeout is used or play is stopped by an official (e.g. dealing with an injury, challenge, referee conference, game management purposes, etc.)

Article 2. The head official will give a verbal two-minute warning (for rule specific changes inside 2 minutes)

Article 3. The clock will run during point-after-touchdown attempts (PATs) in the first half unless either team opts to use a team timeout.

SECTION 7. SECOND HALF CLOCK

Article 1. In the second half the clock will run continuously for the first 19 minutes unless a team timeout or an official's timeout is used.

Article 2. The one-minute warning will stop the clock in the second half if the score difference is 8 points or less.

Article 3. The head official will give a verbal two-minute (for rule specific changes) and one-minute warning as close as possible to the actual marks but will not interrupt a live play.

Article 4. At the one-minute warning officials will use a 'stop' clock mechanic for the remainder of the contest.

RULE 2. OFFENSE

SECTION 1. RUNNING

Article 1. The quarterback may not run unless the ball has been thrown back, handed or pitched to him or her in the backfield.

Article 2. Teams may handoff unlimited times in the backfield. Handoffs are allowed forward or backwards when behind the line of scrimmage, and only backwards beyond the line of scrimmage. A handoff DOES NOT count as a lateral/throwback.

Article 3. Lateral rules:

- 13U and younger may lateral once behind the line of scrimmage per play but may not lateral/ pitch/handoff at any time past the line of scrimmage.

- Divisions 14U and older may execute unlimited laterals in the backfield and downfield.
- Any player who receives a handoff, pitch or lateral behind the line of scrimmage may throw the ball if he or she is not fully beyond the line of scrimmage.

Article 4. A forward pass DOES NOT have to cross the LOS to be a legal play.

Article 5. If the ball is placed on the “Back” of ANY player, the player MUST run the ball (no give and go to the QB on the back)

Article 6. No run zones are located 5 yards before mid-field and 5 yards before the end zone. You may not run the ball in the no run zone (5-yards before the first down and end zone), only forward passes are allowed.

Article 7. Ball is spotted where the ball is at the time of the flag pull. The ball must break the plane of the midfield or goal line to be considered a first down or touchdown.

Article 8. Players may NOT block down field in any form.

SECTION 2. PASSING

Article 1. The quarterback has 5 seconds to pass the ball if there is no rush. If the ball is not thrown, then the play is dead. After the ball is ruled dead, it is returned to the line of scrimmage.

Article 2. Once the ball is handed off or pitched backwards the 5 second count stops. If the defensive team rushes, then there is no 5 second count.

SECTION 3. RECEIVING

Article 1. All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the quarterback, if the ball has been pitched or handed off in the backfield.

RULE 3. DEFENSE

SECTION 1. RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

Article 1. Rushing is ONLY allowed for 8U divisions and up and is NOT allowed for youth ages 6U and below.

Article 2. Players that blitz/rush the quarterback must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

Article 3. The 7 yards will be measured off by a referee.

Article 4. Players that are not 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped may not enter into the backfield until there is a change of possession.

Article 5. The blitzer/rusher is allowed a direct lane to the line of scrimmage if he or she rushes from either side of the center or outside the bunch formation. The offense must avoid interfering with the rusher if he or she has established a lane. Officials will announce LANE or NO LANE for rushers/blitzers prior to the snap. This is a judgement call/decision based on the spacing between the players in the offensive formation.

Article 6. The rush of a blitzer must be immediately after the snap, quick and straight towards the point where the quarterback receives the snap to retain the right of way. If a blitzer is rushing late, slowly, aiming at another spot, changing direction during the rush or just does not rush the quarterback, the player loses the right of way but still can participate like any other defensive player.

RULE 4. SCORING

SECTION 1. POINTS

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Point After Touchdown:
 - (PAT) 1 point from the 5-yard line (no-run zone in effect)
 - 2 points from the 12-yard line, run, pass (outside of no-run zone)
 - Interceptions returned on PAT's are worth 2 points
- Safety: 2 points

SECTION 2. MERCY RULE

Article 1. Mercy Rule for league play, pool play and bracket play is a team up by 35 points at any point or 19 points in the final minute.

SECTION 3. PENALTIES INSIDE 2 MINUTES

Article 1. All penalties inside of 2 minutes of BOTH halves remain the same except:

- Defensive delay of game (+ 15 yards Unsportsmanlike & 1st Down)
- Leading Team – Offensive delay of game (LOD + clock stops) (only second half)
- Offensive Pre-snap penalties – yardage + LOD
- Defensive Pre-Snap – yardage + Automatic first down

GENERAL RULES

What equipment is required to play flag football?

All players must wear protective headgear, mouthguards, league provided pocketless shorts, a properly fitted flag belt with detachable flags, and non-metal cleats. Jerseys must either be fully tucked in or at least 4 inches above the waistline.

How many players can be on a roster?

Roster limits depend on the style of play:

- All 4v4 & 5v5 non-contact youth: 10 players
- 7v7 Boys Passing: 18 players

What happens if a player's flags fall off during a play?

If a player's flags fall off inadvertently, they will be downed by a one-hand touch between the shoulders and knees and that player will have to fix the flag before the next play once brought to their attention by an official.

Is diving allowed in flag football?

Ball carriers are not permitted to dive forward to advance the ball intentionally, but defensive players may legally dive to pull flags.

Are laterals allowed in flag football?

- 13U and younger may lateral once behind the line of scrimmage per play but may not lateral/ pitch/handoff at any time past the line of scrimmage.
- Divisions 14U and older may execute unlimited laterals in the backfield and downfield.

In all cases, if the ball hits the ground, the play is immediately dead.

What size football should be used?

Adult men must use a regulation-size football, while women's and coed teams may use either a regulation or intermediate-sized football. Youth size chart below:

- 8U and below: Pee-wee size football
- 10U-12U: Junior size football

- 14U: Youth size football

What type of flags are acceptable?

Flags are provided to player as part of the registration fee, typically using Shruumz, Sonic Flag-A-Tag, or Pop-style belts. Youth flags must be no less than 14” long as measured from the bottom of the popper or flag belt when there is no popper present and no less than 1 ¾” wide. All flags must be of Vinyl material, no cloth or “split” flags allowed. Always check your flags with the officials prior to your game if you are not certain they are legal.

What happens if a player wears illegal equipment?

Players wearing illegal equipment will receive a 5-yard penalty and loss of down if applicable. Officials will require immediate correction before resuming play.

Penalties & Enforcement

What is flag guarding?

Flag guarding is any intentional motion by the ball carrier to prevent the defense from pulling their flag. This includes stiff-arming, swatting hands away, or using elbows to shield flags.

What happens if defensive pass interference occurs in the end zone?

If defensive pass interference happens in the end zone, the ball is placed at the 1-yard line with an automatic first down awarded to the offense.

Can the quarterback intentionally throw the ball away to avoid a sack?

Intentional grounding is allowed.

Is flag guarding penalized if it occurs simultaneously with a flag pull?

No penalty is assessed if the flag guarding occurs at the exact moment the flag is pulled.

Can offensive players block defenders in flag football?

Physical blocking or contact is not allowed at any time.

Gameplay & Administration

How is first possession determined?

First possession is decided by a coin toss. The winning team can choose to start on offense, defense, select a goal to defend, or defer their choice to the second half.

What is the duration of a timeout and how many timeouts per game?

Team timeouts last 1-minute each and receive 3 timeouts per game.

How is overtime handled in games?

During regular season games, there is no overtime. Games ending in the same score will be marked a tie. During playoffs and/or tournaments, overtime is determined by an extra point shootout scenario.

Can coaches be on the field during gameplay?

Coaches (1 Coach per Team) in the 8U and under divisions are permitted on the field to assist players with their position alignment and mentoring on offense only (no coaches allowed on the field while on defense). At the snap, on-field coaches must be 5 yards behind the quarterback and are not allowed to continue instructing or coaching until the play ends.

Coaches of all other age divisions may not come on to the field of play during a game unless a player is injured. Coaches who come on the field of play anytime during a game will be penalized.

What are "no-run zones"?

Enforced areas near midfield and the end zone where running plays are prohibited, forcing teams to pass. These typically occur five yards before midfield or the goal line.

Can players wear jewelry or accessories during games?

No jewelry is allowed. Soft gloves, protective glasses, or soft-shell helmets are permitted.

Do all players have to wear mouthguards?

Mouthguards are required for all players.

Can a player wear a GoPro like device while playing?

No recording devices are allowed while playing.

PENALTY CHART • NON-CONTACT/SCREEN FORMATS

Penalty	Yards	Assessment	Result
Flag Guarding	5	Spot of Foul	Loss of Down
Illegal Advancement	5	Spot of Foul	Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass	5	Previous Spot	Loss of Down
Offensive PI	5	Previous Spot	Loss of Down
Defensive PI	10	10 or Spot of Foul	Automatic First Down
Personal Foul	15	Spot of Foul	Off: LOD Def: First Down
Unsportsmanlike	15	Spot of Foul or Previous	Off: LOD Def: First Down
Cool Down Period	0	No Foul	Must sit out 5 plays
Roughing Passer	10	Previous Spot	Automatic First Down
Delay & False Start	5	Dead- Previous Spot	Replay Down**
Offsides	5	Dead- Previous Spot	Replay Down**
Encroachment	5	Dead- Previous Spot	Replay Down**
Illegal Rush	5	Live- Previous Spot	Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	5	Previous Spot	Loss of Down
Illegal Shift/Motion	5	Previous Spot	Loss of Down
Stripping	5	Spot of Foul	Automatic First Down
Illegal Contact	5	Spot of Foul or Previous	Off: LOD Def: First Down
Deflagging/Early Flag Pull	5	Previous Spot	Automatic First Down
Illegal Participation	5	Previous Spot	Off: LOD Def: First Down
Illegal Blocking	5	Spot of Foul or Previous	Loss of Down
Holding	5	Spot of Foul	Automatic First Down
Charging	5	Spot of Foul	Loss of Down
Last Man Rule	15 or TD	Spot of Foul	1st down or TD (5)

** When Applicable, LOD or Automatic First down if less than 2 minutes in either half