



NEXT LEVEL FLAG FOOTBALL

OFFICIAL 5-ON-5 RULE BOOK

I. THE GAME

Coin Toss

- Team captains will meet at midfield before the game.
 - The visiting team will call the coin toss.
 - The winner of the toss may choose:
 - Offense
 - Defense
 - Defer to the second half
 - The loser of the toss chooses the direction of play.
- If the winner defers, they receive first choice at the start of the second half.

Starting Possession

- Each offensive possession begins at the team's own 5-yard line.
- The offense has three (3) downs to reach midfield for a first down.
 - Teams may elect to go for it on 4th down.
- If a team chooses not to go for it on 4th down ("punt"), the opposing team will begin at its own 5-yard line.
 - If the offense goes for it on 4th down and fails, possession changes at the spot of the ball.
 - Once midfield is crossed, the offense has three (3) additional downs to score.

Change of Possession

Possession changes when:

- The offense fails on 4th down.
 - An interception occurs.
- The offense fails to score after crossing midfield.

Following a change of possession, the new offense begins at its own 5-yard line unless otherwise stated.

Halftime

- Teams switch directions at halftime.
 - The team that began the game on defense starts the second half on offense.
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II. GAME TERMINOLOGY

Boundary Lines – Sidelines and end lines.

Line of Scrimmage (LOS) – Imaginary line running through the football.

Line-to-Gain – Line the offense must reach for a first down.

Rush Line – Imaginary line 7 yards behind the LOS on the defensive side.

Offense – Team in possession of the ball.

Defense – Team defending against the offense.

Passer – Offensive player throwing the ball.

Rusher – Defensive player attempting to rush the quarterback.

Live Ball – Ball is in play.

Dead Ball – Play has been stopped.

Charging – Illegal contact initiated by the ball carrier.

Flag Guarding – Using hands, arms, ball, or body to prevent a defender from pulling a flag.

Shovel Pass – Legal forward underhand pass.

Lateral – Backward or sideways pass.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Disrespectful behavior, taunting, profanity, or actions deemed inappropriate by officials.

III. EQUIPMENT

Flags

- All players must wear Next Level approved Schruumz Mushroom Flags.

Footwear

- Cleats and athletic shoes are permitted.
 - Metal cleats are prohibited.

Protective Equipment

Allowed:

- Soft-shell helmets
 - Gloves
 - Knee pads
 - Elbow pads
- Athletic braces without exposed metal

Prohibited Equipment

- Jewelry
- Watches
- Hard casts
 - Hats
- Do-rags

Winter beanies are permitted during cold weather.

Uniform Requirements

- Jerseys must remain tucked in at all times.
- Shorts and pants may not have pockets or exposed belt loops.
 - Pocketed shorts must be taped closed before play.
 - Flag color may not match shorts or pants color.

Football Sizes

6U (Pre-K/K): Mini Football

8U (1st–4th Grade): Pee Wee or K2 Football

10U & 12U: Junior Football or NFL Flag Blue Ball

IV. FIELD DIMENSIONS

- Field Size: 30 yards wide x 70 yards long
 - End Zones: 10 yards deep

No-Run Zones

No-run zones are located:

- 5 yards before midfield
- 5 yards before the goal line

All plays inside a no-run zone must be passing plays.

Exception: 6U divisions may run inside no-run zones.

V. TEAM ROSTERS

- Home Team: Dark Jerseys
- Visiting Team: Light Jerseys

Roster Size:

- Minimum: 5 players
- Maximum: 10 players

A team may continue with 4 players due to injury but may not play with fewer than 4.

VI. GAME CLOCK & OVERTIME

League / Tournament Games

- 36-minute running clock
- Two 18-minute halves

Halftime

- 1-2 minutes

Play Clock

- 25 seconds from the referee's signal to snap the ball.

Timeouts

League / Tournament Play

- 2 timeouts per game
- 30 seconds each

Clock Stops

Only for:

- Timeouts
- Injuries
- Official's discretion

Mercy Rule

A game ends immediately when a team leads by 28 points.

VII. SCORING

Touchdown: **6 Points**

PAT from 5-Yard Line: **1 Point**

- Pass only
- 6U (PreK - K) may run or pass,

PAT from 10-Yard Line: **2 Points**

- Run or Pass

Safety: **2 Points**

Defensive Return on PAT: **2 Points**

Forfeit Score: **28-0**

VIII. LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL

The ball becomes live on the snap.

The play is dead when:

- The ball carrier's flag is pulled
- The ball carrier goes out of bounds
 - A touchdown is scored
 - A safety occurs
- The ball carrier's knee, elbow, arm, or body touches the ground
 - The ball hits the ground
 - The ball carrier loses a flag
- The 5-second pass clock expires
- An inadvertent whistle is blown

If an inadvertent whistle occurs, officials will determine replay or spot placement.

If time expires during a live-ball penalty, the offense receives one untimed down.

IX. RUNNING RULES

- The ball is spotted where the ball is located when the flag is pulled.
- The quarterback may not run immediately after receiving the snap.
 - Direct handoffs are allowed behind the LOS only.
 - Laterals are legal.
- Running is prohibited inside no-run zones (except 6U or PreK - K).
 - Ball carriers may spin or use jump cuts.
 - Ball carriers may NOT:
 - Dive
 - Hurdle
 - Leap
 - Leave their feet to avoid a flag pull

Blocking

- No blocking is permitted.
- No screening is permitted.
- Offensive players must avoid impeding defenders.

Once the ball crosses the LOS, offensive players not carrying the ball must stop and avoid interference.

X. RECEIVING RULES

- All offensive players are eligible receivers.
- Only one player may be in motion before the snap.
 - Motion must be parallel to the LOS.
- Receivers must have at least one foot in bounds to complete a catch.
 - Simultaneous possession belongs to the offense.
- Interceptions on PAT attempts may be returned for 2 points.

XI. RUSHING THE PASSER

- Rushers must begin 7 yards behind the LOS.
 - The rush line will be marked by officials.
- Defenders may not cross the rush line before the snap.

Illegal Rush

Penalty:

- 5 yards
- Automatic first down

Once a handoff occurs, all defenders may cross the LOS and pursue the ball carrier.

Quarterback Sack

A sack occurs when the quarterback's flag is pulled behind the LOS.

A sack occurring in the offense's end zone results in a Safety (2 points).

Pass Clock

- Quarterbacks have 5 seconds to throw.
- If a legal rush occurs, the pass clock is waived.

XII. FLAG PULLING

- Flags may only be pulled from a player in possession of the ball.
 - Defenders may not:
 - Tackle
 - Hold
 - Push
 - Wrap up
 - Strip the football

If a player's flag falls off naturally, the player is down at the spot where possession is established.

Pulling the flag of a player without the ball is a penalty.

Flag guarding results in a penalty.

XIII. OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS

- The center is the only required player on the LOS.
 - Up to four players may align on the LOS.
 - Only one player may be in motion at the snap.
 - Motion must be parallel to the LOS.
 - The center must snap the ball between the legs in one continuous motion.
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XIV. PENALTIES & ENFORCEMENT

- Officials have final authority on all rulings.
 - Only head coaches or team captains may request rule clarification.
- Penalties are enforced from the Line of Scrimmage unless otherwise specified.
 - Defensive penalties cannot end a game unless declined by the offense.
- Any penalty exceeding half the distance to the goal line will be enforced as half the distance.

Final Two Minutes

Offensive Offsides or False Start:

- 5-yard penalty
- Loss of Down

Sportsmanship

Unsportsmanlike conduct may result in:

- 10-yard penalty
 - Ejection
- Suspension from future games

Next Level Sports reserves the right to remove any player, coach, or spectator whose behavior is detrimental to the league, officials, or participants.