

Back to the Roots Flag Football Rules 2023 Season

Game Format

- All divisions will be played 6 on 6
- At the start of each game both teams will have a captain and coach meet on the field for rock, paper, scissors.
- The winner of rock,paper,scissors has the choice of receiving the ball (the ball will be placed on the 5 yard line) or deferring the ball until after half time,
- The team that does not win rock, paper, scissors has the choice of direction.
- The offensive team will take possession of the ball on the 5 yard line and has three downs to get to mid field for a first down. Once a team gets to mid field for a first down they have three downs to get a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on their 5 yard line.
- Fumbles (which hit the ground) result in a dead ball and will be spotted where the player fumbles the ball. If the ball is fumbled and a player recovers the ball in the air without hitting the ground, the ball changes possession and is returnable.
- After halftime possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- Pylons will identify the goal lines and the fields will be lined.
- There are no run zones on the field. (While the offensive team has the ball) These no run zones are the 5 yards heading towards the direction of midfield and the 5 yards before the end zone. This means on offense if you are 5 yards or closer from the 1st down (midfield) you can only pass the ball. The same thing if you are 5 yards or closer to scoring a TD, you may not run the ball. The QB can still hand the ball off as long as the ball is still thrown and the person(s) getting the hand off does not cross the line of scrimmage. (RB fake run pass, or as they call it a Philly special)
- You can blitz on defense while the offense is in the no run zone. If the offense is blitzed then they can run with the ball for a gain and not be penalized. The offense cannot just hand the ball off for a run play in the no run zone. (pitch, direct hand off, reverse, etc..) if you teach the kids to shovel pass that is allowed.
- A shovel pass is a short pass thrown from the QB to a RB or WR by either pushing the ball forward or tossing it underhand in a forward direction.

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- All games must be finished to the last buzzer and the clock hits all zeros. You can do victory formation to end the game if you have the ball and within the three downs you will expire the clock.
- Trick plays are allowed as long as they follow all the rules of play.

Uniforms

- We must have the jerseys tucked in at all times. The jersey cannot hang over the belts or flags. This can cause defenders to grab the jersey and not the flag. After each time your flag is pulled do the best you can to keep the jersey tucked in.
- Flags must be worn at all times while in play and they must make sure the flag is on each side of their hips.
- The extra length of the belt must be taped or tied up so the belt does not interfere with flag pulling.

Rosters

- Teams should have at least 8 players. In the event that a team has a shortage of players it will be coach's discretion on how to proceed. Example play 4v4 5v5 6v6. You may also use players from the other team or 2nd grade kids can come up from the younger division only as a last resort.
- No outside kids can be brought in for the playoffs to any team for any reason.

Timing

- Games will be played in two 20 minute halves on a continuous clock with 5 minutes for halftime.
- The clock stops only for timeouts or injuries. An injury timeout is for an injury of a player on the field. This is not for a substitution just to stop the clock.
- A timeout will be 40 seconds long and each team has 2 timeouts per half.
- Each time the ball is spotted the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- Teams will be issued one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced as a 5 yard penalty.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. If both coaches agree to stop the clock it will account as an official timeout. This may be to talk to the

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referee or to let both team coaches talk with each other if there is not a referee present.

Scoring

- Touchdowns are 6 points
- After the TD the offense can go for a 1 point conversion from the 5 yard line. If the offense chooses on a 1 point conversion you can only pass from the 5 yard line.
- After the TD the offense can go for a 2 point conversion from the 10 yard line. If the offense chooses a 2 point the team may run or pass the ball in.
- Interceptions and air fumbles can be returned for a touchdown.
- A safety results in a loss of down for the younger division.
- A safety results in a loss of possession for the 3rd-6th grade division. The team that scores a safety is awarded 2 points and the ball back at their 5 yard line.
- The team that scores a touchdown must declare 1 point or 2 point conversion. This decision cannot be changed.
- Interceptions or an air fumble can be returned on the point after TD for a score. If the offense is going for a one point conversion, then the defense can only return it for 1 point. If the offense is going for a 2 point conversion then the defense can return it for 2 points.

Coaches

- Coaches are volunteers from the community helping the players learn and enjoy the game.
- Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all times.
- One offensive coach is allowed on the field behind the formation to coach and direct players.
- In the younger division of football a coach can be on the field of play on defense as well to help the kids get into the correct position.
- Defensive coaches must move to the sidelines before the start of the play in the older divisions.
- Coaches have the right to stop play if the crowds are getting out of control. This could result in parents or spectators being asked to leave the field. WE MUST REMEMBER THIS IS FOR THE KIDS TO HAVE FUN AND LEARN SPORTSMANSHIP.

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Ball in Play

- The ball is considered live at the snap of the ball from the center and remains live until the official blows the whistle.
- The neutral zone cannot be crossed by any defensive player otherwise this is counted as a blitz. The neutral zone is 3 yards from the spot of the ball.
- Play is ruled over when the whistle is blown. This can result from a flag being removed, the ball hits the ground, a player goes out of bounds, there is a score, the ball carrier takes a knee or if a player falls to the ground touched or untouched.

Running Game

- Direct handoffs and tosses, player to player behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff or toss.()
- A player must completely let go of the ball to be considered a legal handoff
- There will be no limit to how many times you hand off behind the line of scrimmage.
- The QB will be allotted two runs per game unless they are being blitzed.
- The QB can also run with the ball if they hand the ball off to an offensive player and then receive a second handoff back. This will not be counted as a QB run.
- The QB may also receive a pass after they hand the football off.
- The QB is defined as the first person offensive player that receives the ball from the snap.
- If the QB exceeds two runs it is a loss of downs and the ball is spotted back at the line of scrimmage.
- There will be no blocking or pick setting when running the ball. This will result in a loss of down and placed back at the line of scrimmage.
- The ball is spotted where the ball is at when the flag is pulled. You can extend the ball out to reach for a first down or a touchdown.
- It is the offensive team's responsibility to return the ball to the line of scrimmage and give the ball to the referee after a play is done.
- The 30s play clock will start as soon as the play is whistled dead.
- Jumping or diving is allowed only if there is not a player in the direction you are jumping. You cannot hurdle any player at any time. For the safety of the players we do not encourage jumping but it is legal to do.

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Receiving

- All players are eligible to catch the ball.
- The QB can also receive a pass as long as it is handed off first.
- A completed pass is considered in play as long as one foot is in bounds.
- A player must have possession of the ball at least 2 seconds to be considered a completed pass.
- If the offensive player and defensive player has possession of the ball at the same time, the possession goes to the offense.
- Jumping or diving is allowed only if there is not a player in the direction you are jumping. You cannot hurdle any player at any time. For the safety of the players we do not encourage jumping but it is legal to do.

Passing

- All forward passing must be from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed
- Direct pitches or tosses are allowed behind the line of scrimmage.
- The QB has 7 seconds to get a pass off.
- If the QB does not pass the ball within the allowed time it will be whistled dead and it is a loss of downs.
- Interceptions are a change of possession and are returnable for a TD.
- A screen pass is a pass period.

Rushing the Passer

- All players can rush the passer as long as they are 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- Defensive players must be three yards from the line of scrimmage.
- If a player passes the 3 yards from the line of scrimmage it will be considered a blitz and/or be penalized.
- Only 3 blitzes are allowed per game per team.
- As soon as the QB hands the ball off or passes the ball behind the line of scrimmage a Defensive player can rush the ball handler without it costing them a blitz.
- If any player leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off then the player may continue without a blitz being used.
- Any defensive player that crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped is offside and there will be a 5 yard penalty. The

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offense will have free play. The offense can either take the penalty or the play.

Flag Pulling

- Defenders may dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold onto, or run through a ball carrier when pulling the flags.
- If a player's flag falls off during the play, the player is an illegal receiver and the ball will go back to the line of scrimmage and a loss of downs will occur. This also counts if the player does not have any flags on.
- Any player may not pull a flag before the player catches the ball.
- Early flag pulling will be considered pass interference and spotted where the receiver catches the ball.

Flag Guarding

- Any player with the ball in possession may not obstruct anyone from pulling a flag.
- Flag guarding is any attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the hand to the flag, or intentionally covering the flags.
- Judgment will be used if it is the player's natural running and swinging of the arms.

Formations

- Offense must have one player on the line of scrimmage.
- The QB must be off of the line of scrimmage.
- The ball must be snapped between the legs to the QB. The ball must remain on the ground until the center snaps the ball to the QB through the legs in all divisions.
- Shotgun snaps are allowed.
- All motion must not go towards the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. The player can face the line to get set prior to the ball being hiked. **MUST BE SET!!!**
- Only one player in motion at a time.
- A player cannot jump off sides before the ball is snapped. The player must get back to behind the neutral zone on defense. If the offense

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is offside it is a false start. A referee can tell the player to back up behind the line.

Overtime

- If the score is tied at the end of the game then the game will go for a tiebreaker. This will be played as a college style format with both teams getting an opportunity to score.
- The OT will start off at the midfield and the teams will have three chances to score. Both teams will go in the same direction. The team who wins rock, paper, scissors gets the choice of ball first, the loser will get to pick the direction to play.
- If the first team after the rock, paper, scissors scores a TD and then the point after (1 or 2) the opposing team has the same opportunity to score a TD and choose to go for the point after to tie the game.
- If the first possession team does not score the TD then the second team has a chance to score a TD to win the game. They will also start from midfield.
- Both teams will go the same direction in OT.
- If both teams fail to score a TD then the regular season will be considered a tie game.
- In the playoffs we will continue the college style format until we have a winner of the game.

Weather Delays

- IF THERE IS LIGHTNING PRESENT A 15 MINUTE DELAY WILL BE PLACED ON ALL GAMES. CLEAR THE FIELD AND SEEK SHELTER IN A VEHICLE.
- If the weather continues to be hazardous then the game will be played at a later date.
- League commissioner and staff will make the final judgment on all weather calls.
- If weather is bad there must be a two hour notice before the games on game day to cancel. If one team shows up and the other team cancels, the canceling team forfeits. Remember there are going to be parents traveling an hour early to these games.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

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- If the field's monitor or referee witnesses any acts of malicious tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, fighting, tripping, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player and/or coach will be ejected from the game.
- The 1st incident will be a warning to the coach and the player.
- The 2nd incident will result in ejection from the game.
- After the 3rd incident for the same conduct we will sit down with the player, coach, commissioner, and parents. Then we will decide on what could happen from there.
- If the same player, coach, spectator continues after multiple warnings/ or ejections the person(s) could be removed from the league.
- Foul play will not be tolerated
- Offensive or confrontational language is illegal by players, staff, and spectators.
- No intentional contact of any kind will be tolerated.
- Repeat offenses by players, coaches, or spectators will result in removal from the league.
- NO TAUNTING IS ALLOWED AT ANYTIME. This is unsportsmanlike and will be penalized. Celebrating a TD with your teammates is ok and recommended. There is a difference.
- Yelling at the referee will not be tolerated by coaches, players, or spectators.

Player, Coach, and Spectator code of ethics

- I WILL PLACE THE EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING AHEAD OF THE PLAYERS AHEAD OF A PERSONAL DESIRE TO WIN.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development.
- I will take reasonable measures to honor all commitments to all the athletes.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all players, coaches, officials, parents, and staff.
- I will provide a sports environment that is drug free, tobacco free, and Alcohol free. I will refrain from their use at all youth sports.

Penalties

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Defensive Infraction

- Off Sides
- Pass Interference
- Illegal Contact
- Illegal Flag Pull
- Illegal Rushing

Penalty

5 steps
Spot of Foul
5 steps from foul
see rule above in P.I.
5 steps from L.O.S.

Offensive Infraction

- Stiff Arm
- Blocking
- Hurdling, charging, diving into a player
- Illegal Motion (false start)
- Illegal forward pass
- Offensive pass Interference
- Flag Guarding
- Delay of game
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Penalty

5 steps
10 steps
10 steps
5 steps
5 steps & loss of down
10 steps
5 steps from spot of foul
5 steps
15 steps and/or ejection

1. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it
2. If a player, coach, or spectator is ejected they are to leave the grounds
3. If the ejected person does not leave the game will be stopped and coaches, parents, league commissioner will escort that person(s) off the grounds before the game will resume.
4. REMEMBER THIS IS NOT THE NFL. THE KIDS, PARENTS, AND COACHES ARE TO MAKE THIS FUN FOR THE KIDS. Try not to use profane language to the kids, parents, spectators, and etc.
5. THIS IS AN ESCAPE FOR KIDS ALSO FROM DAY TO DAY LIFE. THEY WANT TO PLAY WITH THEIR FRIENDS.
6. THIS IS NOT ABOUT US ADULTS AND WINNING EVERY GAME. TEACH THE KIDS THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FOOTBALL AND SPORTSMANSHIP. YELLING AT KIDS OF THESE OR ANY AGE GROUP WILL NOT GET THEM TO STICK TO SPORTS.