



Bad Axe

Back to the Roots

Flag Football League

RULES

Updated April 2, 2025

# Bad Axe Back to the Roots Flag Football League 2025 Season Rules

## BOARD MEMBERS

- Chris Partaka “Kasey” (President)
- Brian Essenmacher (Trustee)
- Kari Probst (Trustee)
- Nate Keller (Trustee)
- Kyle Arntz (Trustee)
- Brandon Kozfkay (Trustee)
- Jeremy Siewert (Trustee)
- Rick Beaver (Treasurer & VFW Rep)
- Dallas Valentine (Website Manager)

**ON GAME DAYS ...** Board members that are also coaches are **OFF-LIMITS**. There are 6 other days of the week to talk to them. On game days, their focus should be on coaching the kids; not settling petty arguments.

**ON GAME DAY ...** If there is a disagreement, Jim McLane (Referee Crew Chief) has the final word ... If you can't explain the situation to Jim calmly and respectfully, Jim will **REQUIRE** both sides to take a 30-minute cool down period ... Any issues that cannot be resolved will be brought to the attention of the Board on **SUNDAY** for a decision.

**AFTER EVERY GAME ...** both Coaches will put their nomination for the other team's Player of the Game on the back of the Referee card and sign it.

## Game Format

- Teams compete 6 on 6.
- At the start of each game, both teams have a player acting as captain and their coach meet at midfield for rock, paper, scissors.
- The winner of rock, paper, scissors chooses whether their team starts as the offensive team, or he/she can choose to be the defensive team and defer being offense until half time.
- The team that does not win rock, paper, scissors have the choice of which direction they will play for the 1<sup>st</sup> half.
- To start the game, the defensive team throws the ball from the “No Run Zone” (K-2 from Mid-Field). The ball must go past the 2-point conversion line. If the ball goes out of bounds, the next play begins where it went out of bounds. If the ball goes out of bounds between the 2-point conversion line and the goal line, the ball is set at the 2-point conversion line. If the offense catches the ball, they can run it. If the offense catches the

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ball in the end-zone, the player is to take a knee for a touchback. If the ball hits the ground, the whistle will be blown, and the next play begins where it hits. If the ball goes past the goal line, the next play begins at the 5-yard line.

- The offensive team has 3 downs to get to mid-field for a first down. Once the offensive team gets to mid-field, they have 3 downs to score a touchdown.
- If the offensive team does not score a touchdown, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on their 5-yard line.
- **ONLY THE REFEREE CAN SPOT THE BALL ... NOT COACHES, PLAYERS OR PARENTS.** When the referee blows the whistle, he/she will “spot” the ball by putting the red bag 3 yards from the line of scrimmage and the yellow bag 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. The referee will “spot” the ball where the ball was when the whistle was blown, NOT WHERE THE PLAYER WAS!
- If a player fumbles and the ball hits the ground, it is a dead ball and will be spotted where the ball hits the ground. If a player fumbles the ball and it is still in the air, any player (including a defensive player) can recover the ball and advance to score a touchdown.
- To start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the game, the team that was on offense to begin the game will be the defensive team and throws the ball from the “No Run Zone” (K-2 from Mid-Field). If the offensive team catches the ball, they can run it. If the ball hits the ground, the whistle will be blown, and the next play begins where it hits. If the ball goes past the goal line, the next play begins at the 5-yard line.
- Pylons will show the goal lines, and the field lines will be painted white.
- There are “No Run Zones” on the field while the offensive team has the ball. These “No Run Zones” are 5 yards heading towards the direction of midfield and 5 yards before the end zone. Example: On offense, if you are 5 yards or closer to midfield (1<sup>st</sup> down) or 5 yards or closer to the endzone (TD), you CANNOT run the ball; You can only pass 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 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/WR by either pushing the ball forward or tossing it underhand in a forward direction.
- 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

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expire the clock.

- Trick plays are allowed, as long as they follow all the rules of play.

## Uniforms

- Jerseys must be tucked in at all times. The jersey cannot hang over the belts or flags. This is a safety issue, because defenders could grab the jersey instead of the flag. After each play, double check that your shirt is tucked in.
- Flags must be worn at all times. After each play, make sure the flag is on each side at the hip.
- Any extra length of belt must be taped or tied up, so it does not interfere with flag pulling.

## Rosters

- Teams should have at least 8 players. If a team is short players, the coaches will decide how to proceed. Example: Play 4 on 4, 5 on 5, etc. You may use players from other teams. 2nd grade kids can come up from the younger division, but only as a last resort.
- No substitutes are allowed for playoffs games – NO EXCEPTIONS!

## Timing

- Games will be played in two 20-minute halves on a continuous clock with 5 minutes for halftime.
- THE CLOCK ONLY STOPS FOR TIME-OUTS AND INJURIES.
- An injury time-out is for an injury of a player on the field, NOT JUST TO STOP THE CLOCK FOR A SUBSTITUTION.
- If the clock is stopped for an injury, the injured player MUST sit out for the next play – NO EXCEPTIONS!
- A time-out will be 40 seconds long and each team has 2 time-outs per half.
- Each time the ball is set by the referee, the whistle will be blown, and the offense has thirty (30) seconds to snap the ball.
- Teams will be issued a warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced as a 5-yard penalty.
- If a team incurs a penalty in the last 2 minutes of the game, the clock will stop and will restart when the referee sets the ball.
- If both coaches agree to stop the clock, it will be counted as an “official” time-out and not counted against either team. This may be to talk to the referee or to let both team coaches talk with each other.

## Scoring

- Touchdowns are 6 points.



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- The team that scores a touchdown must declare a 1-point or 2-point conversion. This decision cannot be changed.
- After the TD, the offense can choose either:
  - 1-point conversion – Pass the ball from the 5-yard line.
  - 2-point conversion – Run or pass the ball from the 10-yard line.
- Interceptions and air fumbles can be returned for a touchdown.
- The team that scores a safety is awarded 2 points and the ball back at their 5-yard line.
- An interception or air fumble during a conversion can be returned for a score. If the offense is going for a 1-point conversion, then the defense can return for 1 point. If the offense is going for a 2-point conversion, then the defense can return for 2 points.

### Coaches

- Coaches are **VOLUNTEERS** from the community and are here to help the players learn and enjoy the game.
- Parents are **EXPECTED** to support the coach at all times.
- On the field:
  - One offensive coach is allowed on the field behind the formation to coach and direct players. (3-6)
  - Defensive coaches must move to the sidelines before the start of the play. (3-6)
  - 1 coach can be on the field during the entire game to help the kids get into & stay in the correct positions. (K-2)
- Coaches have the right to stop the game if the crowds are getting out of control. This could result in parents or spectators being asked to leave the field.
- WE ARE ALL HERE FOR THE KIDS TO HAVE FUN AND LEARN SPORTSMANSHIP!

### Ball in Play

- The ball becomes live at the snap of the ball from the center and stays live until the official blows the whistle.
- The neutral zone cannot be crossed by any defensive player, otherwise it is considered 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, there is a penalty, the ball carrier takes a knee or if a player falls to the ground.

### 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.

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- Once the ball is handed off, the team has 7 seconds to get the ball across the line of scrimmage. If the team doesn't get the ball across the LOS 7 seconds, the referee will blow the whistle, and it will be considered a dead ball.
- There is no limit on how many times you can hand off the ball behind the line of scrimmage, as long as it's within the 7 second time limit.
- The QB is defined as the 1st offensive player that receives the ball from the snap.
- The QB will be allowed two runs per game unless they are being blitzed.
- If the QB exceeds two runs, it is a loss of downs, and the ball is spotted back at the line of scrimmage.
- The QB can also run with the ball AFTER they hand the ball off to another player and then receive the ball back. This will not be counted as a QB run.
- The QB may also receive a pass after they hand off the ball.
- There will be no blocking or pick setting when running the ball. This will result in a loss of down and the ball placed back at the line of scrimmage.
- The referee spots the ball with the red bag where the ball is when the flag is pulled (NOT WHERE THE PLAYER IS). 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 referee after a play is done.
- The 30-second play clock will start as soon as the referee blows the whistle for a dead ball on the previous play.
- Players CANNOT hurdle another player. While jumping and/or diving is allowed, it is not encouraged. The player MUST be sure that there is not another player in the direction he/she is jumping, otherwise a hurdling penalty will be assessed.

### 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 1 foot is in bounds.
- A player must have possession of the ball for at least 2 seconds to be considered a completed pass.
- If an offensive player and a defensive player both have possession of the ball at the same time, the possession goes to the offense.

### 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.

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- The QB has 7 seconds to get a pass off. At 7 seconds, referee will blow the whistle for a dead ball and there will be a loss of downs.
- Interceptions are a change of possession and are returnable for a TD.
- A screen pass is a PASS.

### Rushing the Passer

- Any player can rush the passer if they are 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- Defensive players must be 3 yards from the line of scrimmage. If the player is closer than 3 yards from the line of scrimmage, it will be considered a blitz and/or be penalized.
- Only 3 blitzes are allowed per team per game.
- 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, 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 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 considered 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.
- Players will NOT pull a flag before the player catches the ball. Early flag pulling will be considered pass interference; a penalty will be assessed, and the ball will be spotted where the receiver catches the ball.

### Flag Guarding

- The player with possession of the ball may not obstruct another player 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 need to be used to decide 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.

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- The ball must remain on the ground until the center snaps the ball through his/her legs to the QB.
- Shotgun snaps are allowed.
- Any motion before the ball is snapped **MUST NOT CROSS** the line of scrimmage. The player can face the line to get set prior to the ball being hiked.
- Only one player in motion at a time.
- If the defense crosses the line of scrimmage, they will incur an offside penalty. If offense crosses the line of scrimmage, they will incur a false start penalty. A referee can tell the player to back up behind the line without penalty.

### Overtime

- If the score is tied at the end of the game, a tiebreaker will begin. The tiebreaker will be played in college style format with each team getting 3 chances score.
- The OT will start off at 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 has the choice of ball first, the loser will get to pick the direction to play.
- If the first team scores a TD (and 1-point or 2-point conversion), the opposing team has the same opportunity to win or tie the game.
- If the first team does not score the TD, the second team has a chance to score and win the game.
- In regular season play, if both teams do not score a TD, the game will be considered a tie.
- In the playoffs, OT will continue in the college style format until there is a winner.

### Weather Delays

- If **LIGHTNING** is seen, a 30-minute delay will be place on all games. **CLEAR THE FIELD AND IMMEDIATELY SEEK SHELTER IN A VEHICLE.**
- Each time lightning is seen, the 30-minute clock restarts.
- If the weather continues to be hazardous, the game will be cancelled. The board will decide if/when the games will be rescheduled.
- The league board will make the final judgment on all weather calls.
- If the weather is bad and the board has not cancelled the games, coaches must give 2-hour notice before the games on game day to cancel. If a coach does not give 2-hour notice, their team forfeits all their games for that day. Please remember that we are all traveling from different areas and no one wants to go out in bad weather for no reason.



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## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- If the referee, coaches or board members 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 1<sup>st</sup> incident will be a warning to the coach and the player.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> incident will result in ejection from the game.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> incident will result in a sit-down meeting with the player, coach, parents and 2 board members. If a disciplinary decision cannot be made at this meeting, the board will make the final decision.
- Repeated offenses by a player, coach, parent, or spectator continues after multiple warnings and/or ejections the person(s) will result in being banned from the league.
- Foul play WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Offensive or confrontational language by players, parents, coaches, referees, board members, and spectators WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Intentional contact of any kind WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- NO TAUNTING IS ALLOWED EVER.
  - 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.



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## Penalties

### Defensive Infraction

Offside

Pass Interference

Illegal Contact

Illegal Flag Pull

Illegal Rushing

### Penalty

5 steps

Spot of foul

5 steps from foul

See Pass Interference rule above

5 steps from Line of Scrimmage

### 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

REMINDER - Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

REMINDER - Try not to use profane language on the grounds.

If a player, coach, parent, or spectator is ejected they are to leave the grounds. If the ejected person does not leave, the game will be stopped, and the coaches, and/or board members will escort the person(s) off the grounds before the game will resume.

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# REMEMBER

## THIS IS NOT THE NFL!

We are here so the kids can have fun.

To the kids, this is an escape from their day-to-day life and a chance to play with their friends.

This is not about us, as adults and parents.

It is not about winning every game.

Yelling at the kids will not help them and, in fact, will probably make them want to quit.

This IS about teaching the kids the fundamentals of football.

This IS about teaching the kids about teamwork.

This IS about teaching the kids about sportsmanship.

This IS about giving the kids a safe atmosphere to learn & have fun!

# PLAYER, COACH & SPECTATOR

## CODE OF ETHICS

- 1) I will place the emotional and physical well-being of the players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- 2) I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development.
- 3) I will take reasonable measures to honor all commitments to all the athletes.
- 4) I will lead by example, demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to players, coaches, officials, parents & staff.
- 5) 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.