



6TH-8TH GRADE FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

GENERAL INFO

1. There will be 7 players on the field for each team. The minimum number of players to start a game will be 5.
2. Team will be given 5 minutes from the official start time to field a team for the 4pm game only. "Game Time" is forfeit time for the 5pm and 6pm games. If a forfeit is declared, game officials are not permitted to officiate "pick-up" or scrimmage games.
3. Both teams must line up 5 minutes prior to game time for uniform and flag check.
4. Games will not be rescheduled. There are no protests of games in the After School Sports Program.
5. All players must be registered and on the roster in order to participate. A player can only be added prior to the 2nd league game and the player must attend the school of the team he/she wishes to play for (exceptions must be approved by League Coordinator.)

GENERAL GAME RULES

Field/First Downs

1. The playing field is 80 yards in length and 40 yards in width, including two 10 yard end zones.
2. First downs will be determined when a team reaches or passes the First-to-Gain line (15, 30, and 15 yard lines.)
3. The offense will have 4 plays to reach each first to gain line.

Game Structure

1. The game consists of 60 plays, 30 plays per half, **including** extra point attempts. Teams will change directions at halftime. An extra play will be allowed for an extra point if the 30th play of a half results in a score.
2. There will be no break at 15 plays. The referee will announce the number of plays left.

Coin Toss

1. The coin toss determines first possession and the direction in which the teams will be defending.
2. The visiting team calls the toss.
3. The team that wins the coin toss can choose to receive or defend first.
4. The team that loses the toss has the choice of which side of the field they wish to defend or start from.
5. The ball shall be placed at the 15 yard line to start the possession.

Scoring

1. Touchdown - 6 points
2. Extra points - Yardage determines points (Run or Pass)
 - a. 3 Yard Line - 1 point
 - b. 8 Yard Line - 2 points
 - c. Interception of an extra point can be returned for 2 points.
3. Safety - 2 points
 - a. The ball will be placed on the receiving team's 15-yard line after a safety.

OFFENSIVE RULES

Line of Scrimmage

1. Offense must have a minimum of one player on the offensive line (the center) and up to four. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least one second before the ball is snapped.
 - b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
2. Movement by a player who is set, or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion, is considered a false start.
3. Huddles are not required.
4. All defensive players must be AT LEAST ONE YARD OFF THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE. The offensive line is not required to be in a 3-point stance.

Snapping

1. On all offensive plays (except punts), the ball must be snapped directly through the center's legs in one continuous motion to any player standing behind him.
2. The center cannot double pump the snap – this will result in a **false start** penalty.
3. Once the offensive line is set, the center may not move the ball except to put the ball into play.

Blocking

1. Offensive players on the line of scrimmage are not allowed to block rushers. Offensive players must steer clear of the rusher and may not get in his/her way.
2. There is **no down field blocking of any kind**; once a ball carrier or receiver gains possession of the ball and starts their advance.

Pace of Play

1. At no time does the offense have to wait for the defense to be set. Once the ball is placed by referee on line of scrimmage, the offense has 30 seconds in order to begin the play, regardless of where the defense is. Referee will keep time.

Passing

1. **A seven second passing clock will be enforced.** The quarterback must release the ball at the end of the seven second count. If the ball is held past seven second count a **passing clock delay of game** penalty will be called.
2. All forward passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.
 - a. All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.
 - b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
4. No more than one **backwards pass** (overhand) behind the line of scrimmage is permitted. Any player that is beyond the line of scrimmage is no longer eligible to throw a pass.
5. Players that receive a **direct handoff** are **not eligible** to throw a **forward pass**.

6. Players that receive a **pitch** (underhand) from the quarterback are allowed to throw either a backwards or forwards pass, or run.
7. **Once the ball leaves the quarterbacks hands the seven second count will end.**
8. **The quarterback is not allowed run UNLESS rushed by the defense.**

Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been **pitched/passed** behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.
6. The catch is considered legal if the receiver has control of the ball and the receiver has at least one foot or one knee in bounds at the point of reception. A player cannot go out of bounds and re-enter the playing field to catch a pass.
7. A player who catches a pass without one or both flags may not advance the ball. The ball will be called dead at the spot of the catch.

Ball Carriers

1. Ball carriers will be marked down where their flag is pulled, with the **exception of the goal-line**. Once the **ball crosses the goal-line** it will be deemed a touchdown. Players are allowed to extend the ball to break the plane.
2. The ball carrier may not initiate contact with a defender. Running into or over a player will result in a **charging penalty**. All players must make an effort to avoid collisions.
3. Any player, while in the act of catching the ball, shall be allowed reasonable movement without a charging penalty.
4. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to spin into a defender, or make contact with a defender after coming out of a spin.
5. If, in the referee's opinion, the charging was purposely done and/or is flagrant, the player can be assessed an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty and/or ejected from the game.
6. A ball carrier may not stiff arm, place hands on a defender, dive or hurdle to avoid having a flag pulled. To avoid injury a runner is allowed to jump over downed players but the runner cannot make contact.

Flag Guarding

1. A player may not shield their flag in any way. If the defender cannot pull the ball carrier's flag with ordinary effort, **flag guarding** or an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty may be called. Ball carriers shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag. Flag guarding can be called in the following instances:
 - a. The runner slaps the defender's hand when trying to pull his flag.
 - b. The runner holds the ball on or over his belt or flags.
 - c. The runner ties his/her flag or makes it so the flag does not come off in a normal manner.
 - d. The ball carrier runs with his/her hands below his waist.

- e. The ball carrier pushes a defender away when trying to pull his/her flag.
 - f. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner, which places the arm over the flag to prevent an opponent from pulling his flag.
2. In any of the preceding instances, if a defender is not within 3 yards of the runner, flag guarding will not be called.
 3. After a player scores a touchdown the referee may request to pull his flag. If the flag does not come off with ordinary effort, an **unsportsmanlike conduct** will be called and the play will be nullified. The penalty will be assessed from the original line of scrimmage.

Laterals and Fumbles

1. The ball is dead at the spot where the ball hits the ground.
2. There is no limit to the number of laterals.
3. If the lateral is intercepted by the defense, it is treated as an interception.
4. Any attempt to slap or strip the ball from a ball carrier is not permitted and will result in an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty.

DEFENSIVE RULES

Defensive Line of Scrimmage

1. Defensive players that are not rushing the passer must line up at least ONE YARD from the offensive line of scrimmage.

Rushing

1. Any players who intend to rush the passer must be a minimum of 5 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the 5 yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
4. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**
5. The quarterback is allowed to become a runner once rushers cross the line of scrimmage.

Encroachment

1. An **encroachment** penalty should be called if any defensive player to go beyond his/her line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped.
2. Defensive players may jump back on sides before the snap and not be penalized unless contact is made with the offensive player.

Dead Ball

A dead ball is declared when the following happens:

1. The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
2. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
3. A touchdown, extra point, or safety is scored.
4. Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
5. The ball touches the ground after being touched or handled by any player.

Flag Pulling

1. Once the flag of the ball carrier is pulled, the ball carrier is considered down and play is stopped.
2. The location of the ball at the time the flag is pulled, determines where the ball is marked for the next play.
3. If a player's flag falls off during the play, the player is still eligible to catch the ball but is down at the spot of the catch.
4. If the player's flag falls off, the play is stopped, and ball is down at that spot.
5. Deliberate flag pulling by the defense of a potential ball carrier's flag will result in an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty.
6. Once a defender pulls a flag, they should hold the opponent's flag above their head for easy view by the referee. The player should hold their position so that referee knows the spot of the flag pull.
7. Holding up a flag not belonging to the ball carrier will result in an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty.
8. **Diving for a flag is allowed**, however if the defender makes contact with the ball carrier, an **illegal contact penalty** will be enforced

Pass Interference

1. An offensive player is not allowed to run a pattern that interferes with a defensive player who is rushing or in a set position.
2. A defensive player cannot physically interfere with a potential receiver and must play the ball.
3. An offensive player may not interfere with a defensive player in position to intercept a pass.

Tackling

1. Tackling, whether incidental or flagrant, is illegal in flag football and could result in an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty if deemed intentional.
2. If a player is tackled and the referee, in their opinion, thinks the player would have scored, the referee may award a touchdown to that team.
3. If a team consistently tackles opposing players, the referee has the right to eject those players.

Tripping

1. Tripping, whether incidental or flagrant, is not allowed in flag football and could result in an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty if deemed intentional.
2. If a player is tripped to avoid him scoring a touchdown, the referee, at their discretion, may award a touchdown to that team if he thinks the trip was the only thing that prevented the touchdown.
3. If a team consistently trips opposing players, the referee has the right to eject those players.

Holding

1. Grabbing shorts, shirts, belt, or any other part of the player is illegal.
2. A defender may not hold an offensive player to slow him down, so they can catch up to the offensive player.
3. Contact by the DB may be made within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage (between the hips and shoulders). After 5 yards, a penalty will be assessed on the defense.

Sacking the Quarterback

1. Players rushing the quarterback may not attempt to block a pass; players should make an attempt to pull the quarterbacks flags. See **Roughing the Passer**.
2. If the quarterback's arm is in forward motion as the flag is pulled the play continues.
3. If the quarterback's arm is not in forward motion as the flag is pulled, the play is ruled dead on the spot.

Roughing the Passer

1. Roughing the passer is defined as:
 - a. The rusher makes contact with the passer in the act of throwing the football.
 - b. Hitting the passer's arm.
 - c. Running into the passer.
 - d. Knocking the passer down.
 - e. Hitting the football while in the hand of the passer.
 - f. The rusher cannot make any attempt to block or knock down a pass while the quarterback is attempting to throw. The rusher must go for the flags only. Any attempt made to block the pass will be considered illegal contact and will result in a 5 yard penalty and first down.

SPECIAL TEAM RULES

There are no kickoffs – See Coin Toss rules for start of half possessions.

Punts

1. The team must announce that they are punting and give the defensive team time to get into position.
2. Both teams remain on their side of the line of scrimmage until the punt is made.
3. No member of the offense is allowed to cross the line of scrimmage until after the ball is punted.
4. The punter must kick the ball from behind the line of scrimmage in line with the spot of the ball (No lateral movement is allowed.) **No rushing the punter.**
5. If a punt is dropped or muffed, the play is dead.
6. If a player on the kicking team touches the ball, play is dead at the point of the touch.
7. If a punt is not fielded on the fly, the ball is dead at the spot the ball touch the ground (not where stops).
8. Blocking the punt is not allowed.
9. The only way the Offense can change their decision to punt is to call a time out, or if a penalty is called prior to or during the down and the down is to be replayed. **No fake punts.**
10. The ball does not need to be snapped. The punter may hold and kick the ball without a snap. If the ball is snapped to the punter and the ball is dropped, the ball can be picked up and punted.

MISC. RULES

Flags

1. Flags must be properly worn at all times - one flag on each side.
2. If improperly worn equipment is found prior to the snap, there will be a warning by the referee. If the infraction continues, a penalty may occur.
3. Flags that un-snap from waist when they are pulled are not allowed.
4. Belts must be worn with the flag connectors facing outwards. Any improper securing of the flags will result in an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty.
5. If the tips of a player's flags are cut illegally, the player may be disqualified and ejected from the game.
6. Coaches are responsible for making sure that any excess portion of the belt does not dangle from the waist and interfere with the flags.

Time-outs

1. Each team has two 60-second time outs per half.
2. Only coaches may go out on the field during a time-out. Unused time-outs will not be carried over to the second half. Coaches or captains may call a time out.

Delay of Game

1. After the referee has whistled play to begin, if the play has not been started within 30 seconds, a delay of game will be called.
2. Delay of game can be called on the defense for slowing down the tempo purposely or delaying the referee's spotting of the ball.

Spiking

1. Spiking the ball any time is illegal and may result in a **delay of game** or **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty if spiked in anger and/or to taunt an opponent.
2. Spiking a pulled flag is also not allowed and it carries an **unsportsmanlike conduct** penalty.

Mercy Rule

1. If a team is ahead by 18 points or more, with eight plays left in the second half, the game will end.

Overtime

1. In the event of a tie ending any regular season, playoff, or championship game, the overtime period will be played as follows:
 - a. There will be a coin toss to determine possession.
 - b. The offensive team shall put the ball in play at the opposing teams 15-yard line and shall have four downs to score. The series can be terminated by a score, interception, or if the team fails to score. If a touchdown is scored, the extra point must be attempted from the 8 yard line (2 points).
 - c. After the team with the first possession completes its series, the other team becomes the offensive team and will similarly put the ball in play at the same 15-yard line. If they fail to score, or score and fail to score the extra point, the game is over.
 - d. **A-C is repeated until a winner is declared.**

- e. One time-out will be given. No carryover of time outs remaining after regular play or any overtime period shall be permitted.

PLAYING TIME RULES

Each player must play a minimum of 5 plays per game. Coaches will be responsible for tracking playing time.

1. It is the coaches responsibility to ensure playing time requirements are met.
2. Plays include - offense, defense, extra points and punts.

PLAYOFFS

1. The top four (4) teams in each league, based on record (winning percentage) will qualify for the playoffs.
 - a. Single elimination
 - b. Matchups - 1 v 4 and 2 v 3
2. In leagues with three (3) teams, all 3 teams will make the playoffs with the top team receiving a bye.
3. In leagues with more than nine (9) teams, the League Coordinator will determine the amount of playoff teams and format based on field availability.
4. In the event of a tie in regular season play, the higher seed will be decided in the following order:
 - a. Head to Head Competition (in Division, if applicable).
 - b. Point Differential if the teams have played each other twice.
 - c. In the event of a 3 way tie, Head to Head competition then point differential among the three teams will be used to decide the higher seed. If (2) teams are still tied; head to head competition will determine the higher seed.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Uniforms

1. Players must wear their team uniform.
2. Shorts with pockets and/or belt loops are not recommended. Sweats are allowed.
 - a. Players cannot wear shorts/sweats that are the same color of their flags.
3. Wrist watches, earrings, plastic hair clips, beads or other jewelry may not be worn during the game.
4. Jerseys must be tucked in at the referee's discretion.

Equipment

1. Appropriate shoes must be worn in order to play.
 - a. Athletic shoes are recommended.
 - b. Shoes with all-purpose molded rubber cleats or round plastic screw-on cleats are acceptable.
 - c. No metal spikes or cleats allowed.
2. Soft elbow and/or kneepads are permitted.
3. Mouthpieces are recommended, but not mandatory.
4. No hard surface padding such as hip pads, shin guards, shoulder pads, helmets, etc., are allowed.
5. Players are not allowed to play with any type of casts.

PENALTIES

Offensive

1. 5 YARD PENALTIES
 - a. Delay of Game - repeat down
 - b. False Start - repeat down
 - c. Illegal Motion - repeat down
 - d. Flag Guarding - loss of down
 - e. Too Many Players - repeat down
 - f. Illegal Forward Pass – loss of down
 - g. Illegal QB Rush – loss of down
 - h. Passing Clock Delay of Game – loss of down

2. 10 YARD PENALTIES
 - a. Screening - loss of down
 - b. Chop Blocking - loss of down
 - c. Charging - loss of down
 - d. Diving - loss of down
 - e. Holding - loss of down
 - f. Illegal Use of Hands - loss of down
 - g. Illegal Participation (player not on roster) - loss of down
 - h. Pass Interference - loss of down

3. 15 YARD PENALTIES
 - a. Unnecessary Roughness - ejection if warranted
 - b. Unsportsmanlike Conduct - ejection if warranted

Defense

1. 5 YARD PENALTIES
 - a. Encroachment
 - b. Delay of Game
 - c. Illegal Contact - auto 1st down
 - d. Too Many Players - Repeat down
 - e. Roughing the Passer
 - If flagrant: 10 yds, auto 1st down, ejection if warranted

2. 10 YARD PENALTIES
 - a. Holding
 - b. Illegal Use of Hands - auto 1st down
 - c. Illegal Participation - auto 1st down
 - d. Stripping of the Ball
 - e. Tackling - auto 1st down, ejection if flagrant
 - f. Tripping (Incidental) - repeat down

3. 15 YARD PENALTIES

- a. Tripping (Intentional) - auto 1st down
- b. Unnecessary Roughness - auto 1st down, ejection if warranted
- c. Unsportsmanlike Conduct - auto 1st down, ejection if warranted
- d. Pass Interference - auto 1st down

Ball is placed at 1 yard line if foul is in the end zone except for any extra point or two point conversion. The penalty enforcement on two point or one point conversion is from the line of scrimmage, half the distance to the goal and replay of down.

CONDUCT

1. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, parents and fans.
2. Only players and coaches are allowed on the immediate sideline, and must stay within the 15-yard lines of each side of the field designated by the flat cones.
3. Coaches are not allowed on the playing field except for injury, time-out, or invitation by the referees. Any coach who goes on the playing field to protest is subject to a charged time out, unsportsmanlike conduct, or ejection. Any coach ejected from the game is automatically suspended for a minimum of one game.
4. Prior to every game, a sportsmanship talk will be given by a scorekeeper. All players and coaches must be present for the talk. The purpose of these talks is to reinforce our expectations for players, coaches and spectators.
 - a. "Respect, good sportsmanship, and have fun"
 - b. "Let the players play, coaches coach, the officials officiate, and the spectators be positive"
5. Any player receiving a foul, for conduct deemed inappropriate (i.e. profanity, fighting, tripping, pushing, shoving, throwing elbows, etc.) towards another player, referee, scorekeeper or fan, may be ejected from the game and suspended for a minimum of one game. If this situation occurs for a second time, the player will be removed from the league.
 - a. Ejected participants must leave the field immediately or the game will be forfeited.
 - b. Any coach ejected from a game is subject to a minimum one game suspension.
 - c. The League Coordinator has the authority to determine the length of the suspension based on the severity of coach's actions that resulted in the ejection.
 - d. A coach that has been suspended is not allowed to be at the facility during any league game in which his/her team is playing for the length of the suspension.
6. If a parent or spectator becomes unruly or disrespectful to the teams, officials, scorekeepers or coaches, he/she may be ejected from the game by the officials, League Coordinator, or the scorekeeper (after discussion with officials). Play will not resume until the person has left the facility.

Thank you for coaching and making a positive impact for the youth of Redwood City!

