



CITY OF FRESNO  
PARKS, AFTER SCHOOL, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY  
SERVICES

ADULT SPORTS SECTION  
FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## The Field

1. 80 yards in length with 10 yard end zones (total of 100 yards)
2. 40 yards wide
3. Zone to Gain lines at 20 yard intervals
4. Extra point marks at 3 and 10 yards for point after attempts
5. There are no hash marks; the ball is placed in the middle of the field.

## The Game

1. The game will start with a captain's meeting and coin toss. The winning team may choose offense, defense, end of field, or defer to the second half.
2. Teams must have 8 players present to start the game. Rosters are limited to 20 and must be signed before participating.
3. All games shall be 40 minutes in duration, divided into two 20-minute halves with a 5-minute half time. The running clock will only stop on injuries, timeouts or after scores. Referees are the official timekeepers and scorekeepers. The clock only stops after scores if the margin of score is 16 points or less.
4. In the final 2 minutes of the game, the clock will stop on all instances **ONLY IF** the scoring margin is 16 points or less.
5. Each team is entitled to 3 time outs per game, one minute in length.
6. Overtime: In case of a tie score at the end of regulation, one overtime period will be played. Each team will get one possession starting at the 20-yard line. In regular season play the game will end in a tie after one overtime period. In a playoff situation, additional overtime periods will be played until a winner is determined. Teams will alternate who goes on offense and defense first. There is one time out per team in each overtime period.

## Definitions

1. Procedure: A minimum of 5 players must be on the line of scrimmage for the offense. Anytime after the ball is set all players must be within 15 yards of the ball. Restrictions for defense are limited to punts only.
2. Delay of Game: A 30-second play clock will be enforced. The referee will blow the whistle to start the clock after the ball or beanbag is placed.
3. Motion: One player may be in motion, however, not towards the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped, and must be 2 yards off of the line of scrimmage.
4. Stance: Only the Center when snapping the ball can be in a 3-point stance. No other players may be in a 3 or 4-point stance at any time.
5. Blocking: Players may use their hands when blocking, but players may not throw down,

or use shoulders when blocking. All use of hands must be below the shoulder (i.e. no swimming, ripping, etc.) This includes pass blocking, run blocking, and downfield blocking.

6. Hurdling and Diving: Attempting to jump over or around an upright opponent any place on the field by the ball carrier is illegal. A runner may hurdle over a downed player only to avoid injury. If a player leaves his feet to avoid being de-flagged the ball will be spotted at the point he left the ground. A player may spin to avoid being de-flagged but must be in contact with the ground.
7. Flags: When a flag belt is removed the player should hold the belt in the air. The spot of the ball will be determined by the ball's position at the time of de-flagging. Players not wearing flags at the start of the play will be assessed a delay of game penalty for the first offense, and an unsportsmanlike conduct for any future infractions. If a player is caught with an illegal flag, the offensive team will be assessed a 10 yard penalty from the original line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
8. Tagging: If the flag belt is removed inadvertently, a one-hand tag constitutes a capture.
9. Line to Gain: The team in possession of the ball shall have 4 downs to advance the ball across the next line. Negative yardage can mean more than one line to gain for a first.
10. Fumbles: Fumbles are automatic dead balls when the ball touches the ground. The team with last possession will receive the ball at the spot where it touched the ground.
11. Point After Attempts: On a point after attempt, the offense may place the ball at the 3-yard line for a 1-point attempt or the 10-yard line for a 2-point attempt. The defensive team can intercept a pass and advance the ball to the other end zone for 2 points.
12. Blood Rule: Any time a player in the game is bleeding, he must leave the game until the bleeding is stopped and the wound is covered. Excessive blood on the uniform requires that the player change clothing.
13. Neutral Zone: The neutral zone is defined as the width of the ball and the length of the field. If either team enters the Neutral Zone prior to the ball being snapped it will result in a penalty. The defense must line up at least 1 yard off of the ball.
14. Illegal Contact: No strikes or blows of any kind are allowed above the shoulders. This includes the quarterback's arm when in a throwing motion. In addition, there is no contact of any kind allowed 5 yards beyond the defensive side of the line of scrimmage.
15. Running Backs: Ball carriers are not allowed to charge a defender, flag guard, or stiff-arm.

## **Equipment and Uniforms**

1. Shoes and Hats: Only one-piece molded rubber soles are acceptable. No removable cleats or metal cleats can be worn. No hats with a bill of any kind are allowed.
2. Jersey: The body of the jersey should be the same basic color. Trimming and style does not have to match exactly with other jerseys. Numbers are requested on the back of the uniform jersey. Please do not duplicate numbers. Pennies will be provided when needed.

3. Jewelry: All jewelry must be removed. This includes wedding rings.
4. The Ball: Teams may use a ball of their choice when on offense as long as it meets specifications and does not delay the game. The officials will spot the line of scrimmage with a beanbag and the offensive team is responsible for their own ball. Once the beanbag is spotted the 30-second play clock will begin. A game ball will be provided if needed.
5. Flag Belt: Each player on the field must wear a one-piece triple flag belt with plastic clip. No Velcro fasteners are allowed on any part of the belt. The entire flag belt comes off when pulled. No article of clothing shall cover any portion of the flag belt. The flags must be of contrasting color to the pants or shorts. Green and yellow flags are provided.
6. Protective Gear: helmets of any nature, shoulder, elbow, forearm, or knee padding of any kind are prohibited. Baseball caps are not permitted. Stocking caps may be worn if approved by the referee.
7. Pants and Shorts: No clothing with exposed pockets, belt loops, or drawstrings are allowed.

## **Kicking and Punting**

1. Kick offs will not take place. The ball will be placed on the 20-yard line at the beginning of each half, as well as after each touchdown.
2. Punting must be announced to the referee. Once announced, the kick must be attempted. A team is charged a time out or a Delay of Game if the option is changed. No quick kicks are allowed.
3. Both teams are required to have 7 players on the line of scrimmage until the kick is made.
4. The punter must be at least 5 yards behind the center when the ball is kicked.
5. If the ball is not fielded, it is spotted where it rolls dead or goes out of bounds. If the kicking team recovers the ball it is dead at the spot.
6. After a safety, the kicking team will punt the ball from their own 20-yard line. Normal punting rules apply.

## **Passing the Ball**

1. All players are eligible receivers. An unlimited number of lateral or backward passes can be made on any play. However, only one forward pass is allowed per play and must occur from behind the line of scrimmage.
2. It is considered an illegal forward pass if the passer is beyond the line of scrimmage when the pass is made. Passes cannot be made after a change of possession. Passes cannot be intentionally grounded. Once the passer crosses the line of scrimmage he cannot make a forward pass.

3. A pass caught or intercepted is legally in bounds as long as the two feet contact the ground before going out of bounds. An elbow constitutes one foot and one knee constitutes two feet.

## Scoring

Touchdowns	6 points
Safety	2 points
3 yard point after	1 point
10 yard point after	2 points
Defensive point after returned	2 points

## Penalties

### 5-Yard Penalties:

- Delay of game or illegal substitution
- Illegal equipment
- False start or any illegal act by the center
- Encroachment or offsides
- Less than 5 players on offensive line at the snap of the ball
- Illegal motion
- Illegal forward pass by offense or defense (if offense, down counts)
- Article of clothing covering the flag belt
- Illegal shift
- Illegal contact – beyond 5 yards of the line of scrimmage

### 10-Yard Penalties:

- Offensive pass interference (the down counts)
- Defensive pass interference (automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down at spot of foul)
- Holding or illegal block
- Hurdling
- Tripping
- Pushing the runner
- Illegal use of the arms/hands
- Roughing the passer (automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down)
- Intentional Grounding
- Illegal contact – blow or strike above the shoulders (can be disqualification)
- Unsportsmanlike conduct (can be disqualification)
- Flag guarding
- Obstructing the ball carrier
- Illegal participation
- Playing without flags or illegal flags

### Disqualification:

Any player disqualified for any reason will automatically be suspended for the next scheduled game. A second disqualification at any time will result in suspension for the remainder of the season.