

Loveland Parks and Recreation – Flag Football Rules – Fall 2023

Game

1. A coin toss is used to begin each game. Captains from both teams meet at midfield. Away team calls the toss, heads or tails, before the coin is tossed.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice to receive or to kick (or to have receiving team start from their own 20 yard line). The other team chooses end to defend. There is no option to defer to second half.
3. Kickoff is used only at the start of each half.
4. Teams play 8 vs. 8, always maintaining an equal number of players.
5. **All levels:** The offensive team has four downs to cross the next zone line for a first down or a score. On 4th (or any other down) the offense may choose to punt, either by kicking or by having the other team begin at their own 20 yard line. **1st & 2nd Grade:** Only no-kick punts. Other team starts from their own 20 yard line.
6. All other possession changes except interceptions will start on the offense's 20 yard line.
7. Teams change sides to start the second half. The team that kicked to begin the game will receive to begin the second half. **1st & 2nd Grade:** No kickoffs.
8. One coach per team is allowed in the offensive and defensive huddles.
9. When referee calls "Play", coaches must remain silent until the play is over.

Kickoff

1. Teams kickoff only at the start of each half.
2. Kickoff is taken from their own 20 yard line.
3. Receiving team can have up to five players lined up 10 yards from kicking team.
4. Kickoff must remain inbounds and travel at least 10 yards. If the ball is kicked out of bounds or does not travel at least 10 yards, the receiving team will begin play from the spot the ball went out of bounds plus five yards (no re-kick).
5. The kicking team may not recover a fumble. The ball is live even when touching the ground after the kick and will be dead when touched by the kicking team, fumbled by the receiving team, or is blown dead by the officials. The receiving team will start where the ball was dead.
6. No onside kicks.
7. **1st & 2nd Grade:** No kickoffs. All play begins at the 20 yard line (except after an interception).

Punt

1. On 4th (or any other down) the offense may choose to punt, either by kicking or by having the other team begin at their own 20 yard line.
2. The offense must announce that it's punting.
3. The kicker has five seconds to punt the ball.
4. Neither team crosses the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. The defense may not rush the punt.
5. On a punt only, if there is a bad snap or the punter fumbles, the punter may pick up the ball and punt.
6. No fake punts.
7. The kicking team may not recover a fumble or loose ball. The ball is live even when touching the ground after the kick and will be dead when touched by the kicking team, fumbled by the receiving team, or is blown dead by the officials. The receiving team will start where the ball was dead.
8. **1st & 2nd Grade:** No punts. Play will begin at the 20 yard line.

Player Uniform

1. Youth Athletic t-shirt (home is red, away is white).
2. Players' shirts must be tucked in at all times.
3. Tennis shoes or non-metal cleats.
4. No padding or headgear shall be worn.
5. Mouth guards are recommended.
6. No jewelry. Players must remove any other items deemed hazardous by officials.
7. Masks, though not required, are encouraged.

Time

1. Games are 40 minutes – four 10-minute quarters.
2. Halftime is 5 minutes (change ends for second half).
3. Once the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
4. Each team gets two 30-second timeouts per half. First half time outs do not carry over into second half. The clock stops during timeouts.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. The clock stops for an injury and restarts after player is removed from field. After an injury that stops the clock the injured player must be removed for at least one play.
6. No overtime.

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Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points (1st & 2nd Grade: 7 points and no extra play)
2. Extra Play: 1 point (Successful from 5 yards out)
3. Extra Play: 2 points (Successful from 10 yards out)
4. Extra Play: 2 points (Interception returned for score)
5. Safety: 2 points

Offense – Formation

1. Must have at least three linemen, center plus two guards, with center over the ball.
2. Linemen splits are one yard or less.
3. Linemen may either set with hands on knees or standing up.
4. Players must set for at least one second prior to the snap, other than a player in motion.
5. Only one player is allowed in motion prior to the snap and cannot be moving towards the line of scrimmage.
6. Quarterback or other player must receive the snap.
7. Side snaps are allowed.
8. A player may play the quarterback position for a max of two quarters per game.

Offense – Blocking

1. Double magnet/low to no contact. Offensive players may not run through, push, or pull an opponent. Shadow or screen blocking only.

Offense – Passing

1. Passes must be thrown overhand from behind the line of scrimmage to a player that is either behind or in front of the line of scrimmage.
2. Laterals or pitches are allowed anywhere on the field.
3. Screen passes and shovel passes are allowed to any receiver that is at or behind the line of scrimmage.
4. On a fumble or a muffed snap the ball becomes dead when it touches the ground.
5. The quarterback is allowed to throw the ball away to avoid a sack, but the ball must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

Offense – Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive a pass.
2. A receiver must have at least one foot in bounds when making the reception.

Offense – Running

1. For safety reasons, the ball may not be run between the outside shoulder of the most exterior linemen. All running plays must be to their outside. Once outside and the line has dispersed, the ball carrier may cut back.
2. The ball carrier may not dive or jump.
3. Any number of direct handoffs are allowed as long as they are done behind the line of scrimmage.
4. A player receiving the handoff can then throw the ball while they remain behind the line of scrimmage.
5. Center sneak is not allowed. The center may not receive the first handoff of the play.
6. Flag belts must be clipped and may not be tied.
7. Flag guarding is not allowed. This is the attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flag belt by stiff arming, dropping the hand, arm, shoulder or head, or intentionally covering the flags with the football, t-shirt or other clothing.
8. On a fumble the ball becomes dead when it touches the ground.

Defense – Formation

1. Defense must have at least three players anywhere between the outside shoulder of the exterior offensive linemen.
2. All defensive players must start at least two yards off the line of scrimmage.

Defense – Rushing

1. Double magnet/low to no contact. Defensive players may not run through, push, or pull an opponent.
2. Player must always go for the flag, not the ball, including on a pass.

Defense – Deflagging

1. A legal flag pull occurs when a defender removes the flag belt from the ball carrier and holds flag belt above head standing at the spot. Do not wave flag belt.
2. No diving for flag. Defender must stay on their feet.
3. Defender may not hold, tackle, or run through the ball carrier when attempting to deflag.
4. Defenders may not strip the ball from the carrier. Go for the flag only.
5. If the ball carrier's flag belt inadvertently falls off during the play, they may be downed with a one-hand touch between the shoulders and the knees.

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Penalties – General

1. The officials will call all penalties.
2. The officials' judgment calls are not to be questioned.
3. Only team captains and head coaches may ask officials questions about rule clarification and rule interpretations.
4. All penalties will be assessed from the LOS, except for Spot Fouls.
5. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines.
6. If the distance to the goal is less than the penalty yardage, then the penalty will be assessed half the distance to the goal.
7. Loss of down means that down is used.
8. If the officials or field supervisor witness any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player, coach, or spectator will be ejected from the game. Foul play and inappropriate will not be tolerated.

Penalties – Spot Fouls

Defensive

= Automatic First Down

- Defensive Pass interference
- Holding
= 10 yards & First Down
- Stripping the ball
- Illegal rushing
= 15 yards & First Down
- Unnecessary roughness

Offensive

= 10 yards & Loss of Down

- Illegal Blocking
- Middle Rushing
- Flag guarding
- Unnecessary roughness

Penalties – Defensive

= 5 yards from LOS

- Offside
- Illegal formation
- Illegal flag pull
= 10 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
- Roughing the passer
= 15 yards from LOS & automatic 1st down
- Unsportsmanlike conduct

Penalties – Offensive

= 5 yards from LOS

- Offside / false start
- Illegal forward pass
- Offensive pass interference
- Illegal motion
- Delay of game
- Illegal Procedure
= 15 yards from LOS & loss of down
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Illegal tying of belt

Live Ball / Dead Ball

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Teams may have no more than eight players on the field at a time.
- The play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Incomplete pass
 - Ball hits the ground on a fumble or muffed snap.
 - Touchdown, extra play, or safety is scored
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
- In the case of an inadvertent whistle the offense has two options:
 - Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, the down is done.
 - Replay the down from the original LOS.