

Rules and Equipment

NFL FLAG Rules and Diagrams

NFL FLAG Football is a popular five-on-five game filled with fun and action. In this game, the offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone. Running and passing plays are allowed, although there are “no-running zones” at midfield and near each goal line. The defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer and grabs flags to make “tackles.”

Read more about NFL FLAG rules below. Regional and national tournament games will follow these rules closely, although there may be some modifications. Please note that while the rules may be adopted to suit your local needs, they must remain non-contact.

The Basics

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes. Possession changes to loser of coin toss unless deferred and the clock does not stop.

Players/Game Schedules

Teams must field a minimum of five players at all times.

Teams consist of 10 players – five on the field, with five substitutes.

Timing/Overtime

Games are played to 40 minutes running time. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. The first team to score wins.

Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.

Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time-out per half.

Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points

Extra point:

1 point (played from 5-yard line) or

2 points (played from 12-yard line)

Safety: 2 points

Running

The quarterback cannot run with the ball.

Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.

"No-running zones" located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.

The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.

Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).

The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind are allowed.

Receiving

All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).

As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.

A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

Shovel passes are allowed.

The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.

Interceptions may be returned.

Dead Balls

The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.

Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

Play is ruled "dead" when:

- Ball carrier's flag is pulled
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds
- Touchdown or safety is scored
- Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
- Ball carrier's flag falls out

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

Rushing the Quarterback

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

Sportsmanship/Roughing

If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

Penalties

All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defense:

Offsides

Five yards and automatic first down

Interference

10 yards and automatic first down

Illegal contact

(holding, blocking, etc.)

10 yards and automatic first down

Illegal FLAG pull

(before receiver has ball)

10 yards and automatic first down

Illegal rushing

(starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)

10 yards and automatic first down

Offense:

Illegal motion
(more than one person moving, false start, etc.)
Five yards and loss of down

Illegal forward pass
(pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)
Five yards and loss of down

Offensive pass interference
(illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
10 yards and loss of down

FLAG guarding
10 yards (from line of scrimmage) and loss of down

Delay of game
Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

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

Attire

Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.

Official NFL FLAG jerseys must be worn during play.

Note: There are no kickoffs, and no blocking is allowed.

Diagrams

