



Allison Sports Town

NFL Flag Rulebook

1. Game

- **At the start of each game, Refs will check each team's equipment and Roster check if needed. Then captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss or Captains will play Rock Paper Scissors to determine who starts with the ball.**
- **The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. There is no option to defer. Possession changes to start the second half for the team that started the game on defense.**
- **The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has Four (4) downs to score a touchdown.**
- **If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elects to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition start its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.**
- **Any time prior to making the ball, 'Ready for Play' the referee MUST ask the offensive teams head coach to declare 'Punt or Play'. The coach MUST answer at that time or risk a delay of game penalty at the referee's discretion.**
- **Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.**
- **If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration.**
- **If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team start at the spot of the turnover.**
- **Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.**

2. Equipment

- All players must wear official NFL FLAG belts and flags. All players **MUST** always wear mouth guards while on the field. Game balls should be age specific. Games will be played with the ball provided by Sports Town unless both teams agree to play with a personal ball.
- Players must wear shoes. Rubber cleats are permitted. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- Players must remove all jewelry and hard billed hats. Winter beanies are allowed.
- Players may wear soft shell helmets, halos and sunglasses but they must be always secure while on the field. Prescription glasses are permitted without a strap.
- Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
- Players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up
 - pockets.
- Participants must bring their own official NFL FLAG belts and mouth guards to the field.
- Extra belts and mouth guards are available for purchase at the front desk.
- NFL FLAG footballs will be provided.

3. Field

- Field Dimensions are 25 Yards Wide by 70 Yards long with 10 Yard Endzones.
- No Run Zones are 5 Yards before the first down and 5 Yards before the endzone.

- 1 point conversion is 5 yards- 2-point conversion is 10 Yards.
- Spectators need to be 2 Yards away from game field during the game.

4. Timing and Overtime

- Regular Season Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two 20-minute halves, unless one team gains a 35-point advantage which will end the game unless teams agree to continue without changing the score. The clock stops for halftime, injuries and the Officials' discretion.
- Halftime is 2 minutes.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- Each team has three 60-second timeouts per game.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- At 2-minute warning- The officials will adjust to 4 final plays- Instead of the final 2 minutes.
- During these 4 final plays – Extra points do not count as a play. If team with the ball during the final 4 plays of the game is up 2 possessions- Official can conclude the game.
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format, when applicable, is as follows:
 - Captains play Rock Paper Scissors to choose to be on Offense or Defense first
 - 1st Overtime- Offensive team will choose to go for a 1 point or 2-point conversion. After the conclusion of the play the other team will get a chance to go for a 1 point or 2-point conversion.

- **2nd Overtime-** Team who was on Defense 1st for the 1st overtime will now be on Offense. They must go for a 2-point conversion- then the other team will get a chance to convert a 2-point conversion.
- **Starting with the 3rd overtime,** each team will get 1 play from the 5-yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.
- **Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points.**
- **Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over.**
- **Interceptions advanced in the third overtime period; the game is over.**

5. Scoring

- **Touchdown: 6 points**
- **PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)**
 - **Note: 1 point PAT is pass only; 2-point PAT can be run or pass.**
- **Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions or overtime are worth two points**
- **Safety: 2 points**
 - **Safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.**
- **A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.**
- **After one team is winning by 35 points or more, the game is over. TEAMS may elect to continue but no additional points scored will be added.**
- **Forfeits are scored 35-0 for the winning team. Playoff games are scored 28-0 .**
- **The coaches, officials and scorekeeper must verify the score sheet. If a coach does not verify the score sheet before leaving the field, the scorekeeper will note on that score sheet and the score will be FINAL.**

8. Coaches

- Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
- Coaches are permitted to coach on the sideline
 - All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. are required and must remain a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the designated league viewing area.
 - Coaches, this is your responsibility to keep your fans and any other team associated members in the designated areas.
- Only two coaches are permitted on the sidelines to coach.
- K-3rd, 4-6th Girls, and 7-9th Girls Coaches can be on the field during the play.
- 4th-8th Coaches must remain on the sidelines.
 - Coaches can have a huddle toward their Sidelines, but the play clock will not stop. If both coaches agree to being on the field that is Allowed. (Regular season only)
 - Coaches must remain on the sideline except to attend to an injured player.
- Subs are allowed- Players must be submitted to program coordinator 2 hours before the game.

9. Live Ball/ Dead Ball

- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. Regarding the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
- A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds if the first foot or body part other than the hand contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. Other unfair acts would be not returning five (5) eligible players to the field of play after halftime, a team or official's time out prior to the 'Ready to Play' signal by the referee. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Any official can whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.

l. If the ball hits the ground because of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hits the ground.

b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.

c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.

d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.

e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.

f. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.

g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).

h. The 7 second pass clock expires.

i. Inadvertent whistle

j. Ball-carriers leave their feet diving or hurdling a player.

- **Fumbles are dead balls- if a player fumbles next play will be from that spot**
- **If inadvertent or erroneous whistle occurs the offense has two options:**
 - **A) take the ball where the whistle blew, and the down is consumed**
 - **B) replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.**
 - **If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.**
- **A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged with a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged, and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call to give each team the full benefit of each call.**
- **Officials should all agree to change a call on the field that is in dispute**

10. Running

- **The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.**
- **The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center directly, or in shotgun formation.**
- **Direct handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead by the official. The ball should be placed in the spot's possession and was lost for the succeeding play.**
 - a. **"Center sneak" play is NOT allowed. The QB may NOT handoff, pitch or lateral the ball FIRST to the center.**
 - b. **Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.**
 - c. **Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occurred, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated, and all defensive players are eligible to rush.**

- Definition of a “Legal Handoff” - Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive play to another. Screen plays are considered run plays.
- No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
- No Run Zones DO NOT apply to K-3rd grade.
- Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the official’s judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead, and ball spotted where it was when they left the ground.
- Ballcarriers may leave their feet, and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB’s passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, contact is made unnecessary roughness, or an illegal contact penalty may be enforced by the official.
- Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.
- Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the current ball-carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.

11. Blocking

- Blocking is not allowed.
- There cannot be “fullback” in front of player running the ball.
- Offensive players are allowed there positioning on the field. How ever if they stop there must be room for defenders to go around them. (At least a yard).
- Offensive Players can’t run behind defenders and set a basketball screen.
- The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, if center stays behind LOS during a play- must be still.

12. Passing

- Only 1 forward pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage is permitted each offensive play. The ball must be out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Passes may be thrown forward or backwards behind the line of scrimmage.
 - b. There is no intentional grounding.

- c. All passes, except backwards passes, that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - d. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be forward from behind the line of scrimmage and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, the 7 second rule is still in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).
 - b. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.
- In the No Run Zones- QBs are the only players allowed to throw the ball.
 - a. Running backs and Wide Receivers are not allowed to throw in no run zone.

13. Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. Players **MUST** be off the line of scrimmage at least one (1) yard. All motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage, and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- 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.

14. Formations

- Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap if they are set for at least 1 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.
- 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.

15. Snapping

- Centers can snap either between their legs or they can toss the ball to the QB.
 - a. While snapping center must start their snap with the ball placed on the ground.
- K-3rd Grade offense will receive 3 mulligan snaps a half.
- 4th-8th, 4-6th Girls, and 7-9th Girls will receive 1 mulligan snap a half.
 - 4th-8th, 4-6th Girls, and 7th-9th Girls, no mulligan snap during playoffs.
- No Mulligan snaps will be allowed during overtime.

16. Rushing the Passer

- Starting in 4th Grade, players can rush the Quarterback.
- There can be up to 2 Blitzers. / Referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the LOS.
- The Blitzers must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Rushers must identify themselves with the REFEREE by raising their hand/ or checking with the referee before the snap.
- Rushers MUST rush the passer immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is NOT permitted, by rule.
 - a. If Defender starts rush and does NOT cross the Line of Scrimmage – they are not required to rush.
 - b. If Defender does cross the Line of Scrimmage- they MUST rush the Quarterback.
- Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

- **A penalty may be called if:**

- i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, pitch, lateral or pass – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
- iii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down). Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, pitched, lateraled or handed off – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- iv. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty for the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff, pitch, lateral or passed ball.

- Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty
- A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage.
- The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.
- Blitzing is allowed on Extra points. Still must be 7 yards away.

17. Flag Pulling

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
- If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
- If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

18. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
- Offensive or confrontational language is **NOT** allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.
- Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- Ball-carriers **MUST** try to avoid defenders with an established position. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags. Offensive players may **NOT** initiate contact at the line of scrimmage with defenders, in the official's judgement. **ROUGH PLAY ISN'T TOLERATED**
- Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
 - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - c. Compliment **ALL** players, not just one child or team.
- Fans are required to keep fields safe and friendly and adhere to requirements for seating:
 - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
 - b. Dispose of **ALL** trash in designated trash cans.

19. Penalties

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
- Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
- Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding/Illegal Contact	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening or blocking	-5 yards and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-5 yards and loss of down
Holding/Illegal Contact	-5 yards and loss of down

iv. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside / illegal substitution	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

v. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start / illegal substitution	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Taunting	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

20. Warnings and Ejections

- Celebrations are allowed if they: Do not taunt the opposing team • Occur after the play • The ball is given to the referee after the play.
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct will be called if celebrations violate these rules. If the penalty occurs on a touchdown: The opposing team may choose to enforce the penalty: On the extra point attempt, OR on the next offensive drive Officials should inform coaches of this option before the game.
- Players will receive:
 - First offense – Warning
 - Second offense – Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty (player must sit out the next play)
 - Third offense – Player ejected from the game.

- **Coaches will receive:**
 - **First offense – Verbal warning**
 - **Second offense – Ejection and removal from coaching sideline.**
- **If a coach is ejected: Another coach must take over. If the team does not have another coach- A parent must step in.**
- **If no one is available: The team forfeits the game. Forfeit Score: 21–0.**
- **All coaches are expected to model sportsmanship, respect officials, players, spectators, and fellow coaches, and uphold the standards of Allison Sports Town and NFL Flag. Behavior inconsistent with these expectations will not be tolerated.**
- **Events that can lead to a suspension or worse:**
 - **Unsportsmanlike conduct Penalties or Ejections.**
 - **Encouraging aggressive or physical behavior from players.**
 - **Arguing with other coaches/ refs/ parents/ or spectators**
 - **Being under the influence**
 - **Adding players to your team who have not registered and paid with the league.**

21. Tie Breakers

- **2-Team Tie**
 - **1. Head-to-head**
 - **2. Win versus highest seeded team**
 - **3. Point Differential**
 - **4. Coin Flip**
- **3 + Team Tie**
 - **1. Combined record versus tied teams**
 - **2. Win versus highest seeded team**
 - **3. Point Differential**
 - **4. Coin Flip Once a 3-way tie is broken, if 2 teams are remaining, they will go through the 2-team tiebreaker**