

# 2014 Official Elementary Flag Football Rules

## 9 vs. 9

### Playing Area

- 1) The playing field will be 60 yd long and 35-40 yd wide (approx). Reduce by 5 yards when playing down to 7 or 8 players.
- 2) There will be two 10-yard end zones.
- 3) Field will be divided into four 15-yard zones.

### Equipment

- 1) Ball will be junior size.
- 2) Home team supplies ball. Visiting team may use their own ball.
- 3) Tennis shoes or soccer cleats are permitted, no screw-on or metal cleats.
- 4) Shirts and excess belt straps must be tucked into players shorts.
- 5) Players may not wear anything making it difficult for defense to grab flags.
- 6) No wrapping flags around belt. (Flag Guarding)
- 7) Belts must be outside clothing.
- 8) Strap from belt tucked in.
- 9) Players wearing glasses must have protective eyewear covering them or sports glasses.
- 10) Following not allowed:
  - jewelry, watches, earrings, posts, bandanna or hats.
- 11) Flags must be placed on hips. Flags in wrong place will result in play being called dead.
- 12) Players may wear a cast if it is sufficiently padded. (Referees judgment & discretion)
- 13) Football, Golf or batting gloves are allowed.
- 14) Knee, and elbow pads can be worn, *shoulder and forearm pads are forbidden.*
- 15) Home team in charge of keeping track of play count.
- 16) Teams will line up before games for equipment check by referees.
- 17) ***Protective mouthpiece is mandatory: players without mouthpiece will not play, no exception.***

### Players

#### OFFENSE

- 1) Nine players play at a time:
  - 5 players must be on the line of scrimmage
  - Center, not eligible
  - 2 guards/tackles, not eligible
  - 2 ends, eligible and must line up on the line of scrimmage and one on either side of the guards/tackles. Ends can be split or tight.
  - 4 backfield, eligible and must line up one yard off the line of scrimmage.

## DEFENSE

- 1) Nine players play at a time.
  - Only three players, the “designated rushers” can rush (cross the line of scrimmage) when the quarterback is in the pocket (within 3 yards to the left or right of the center)
  - The designated rushers must line up head up to or inside to the guards/tackles.
  - The designated rushers must wear a vest.
  - Once the ball is either handed off, pitched out, lateralled underhand or passed overhand to another player, all players may rush (cross the line of scrimmage)
  - Once the QB leaves the pocket (official’s judgment call defined as one yard in either direction of the Guard/tackles) to attempt to scramble or run the ball, all players may cross the line of scrimmage.

## Scrimmage Line

- 1) There must be 5 players on the line of scrimmage on offense, one second before the ball is snapped.
- 2) All eligible nine players must be at least 5 yards inbounds from the sidelines at the snap of the ball.
- 3) Huddles are not required.
- 4) All defensive players must be at least 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.
- 5) One offensive player can be in motion at any given time as long as he is moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.

## Length of Game

- 1) There will be a total of 15 plays per quarter, counting kick-off and extra point attempts. (15 total plays, not per team)
- 2) A game will consist of 60 plays with teams changing direction every Quarter.
- 3) If there are not enough plays left in the game for a team to catch up the referee may end the game.
- 4) Tied score will not be played off.
- 5) On live ball penalties, the play shall not be counted unless the penalty is accepted. On dead ball situations, the play will not count.

## Fumbles

- 1) All fumbles and loose ball are dead and not playable.
- 2) If the ball is dropped while carrying it, the ball is dead where the fumble occurs, not where the ball touches the ground.
- 3) Balls dropped on the kick-off and punts are ruled dead unless in the discretion of the referee the opposing team is at least 15 yards away and picking up the ball is safe.
- 4) If the ball is hiked over the head of the quarterback, the ball is marked where it lands.
- 5) If the ball is hiked or dropped in the end zone, it will be ruled a safety.
- 6) If the ball is fumbled into the air without touching the ground, the opposing team may intercept the ball.
- 7) Players cannot attempt to strip the ball. If a ball is stripped, it is ruled a fumble and a dead ball with the offense retaining possession.

## Kickoffs

- 1) The kicking team kicks off from the 30-yard line.

- 2) The ball must not be higher than 2 inches on the tee or ground.
- 3) A kickoff can be downed in the end zone for a touchback and is placed at the 15 yd. line.
- 4) If the kick goes out of bounds, the team is penalized 5 yards. If the second kick goes out of bounds, the ball will be put into play at mid-field.
- 5) There are no on-side kicks.
- 6) The receiving team must have 5 players on their 15 yard line.
- 7) Kickoffs will take place at the beginning of the game and at the start of the second half.
- 8) Home team kicks off to Visitor in the first half and Visitor to Home team in the second half.

## Punts

- 1) All punts must be declared. No quick kicks are permitted.
- 2) The defensive team must be given enough time to put their players in position.
- 3) The defensive team must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage.
- 4) No player offense or defense may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
- 5) If an offensive player touches the ball first, the ball is dead at the spot.
- 6) If a member of the defensive team blocks the ball legally (from his side of the line of scrimmage) the ball is dead where it first touches the ground.
- 7) The ball should not be snapped but only held by the punter who should be at least 5 yds. back from the line of scrimmage.

## Scoring

- 1) A touchdown counts as six points.
- 2) The ball will be placed 3 or 8 yards out for the extra point attempt.
- 3) The extra point from 3 yds. counts as 1 point.
- 4) The extra point from 8 yds. counts as 2 points.
- 5) A SAFETY counts as two points (on a safety, the receiving team must line up on their own 30 yard line and the team must kick or punt from their own 15 yard line).

## Passes

- 1) A forward pass may be thrown from anywhere behind the line of scrimmage.
- 2) A player who catches a pass without flags may not advance the ball from where it was caught and it is ruled incomplete.
- 3) A pass interference penalty is a first down where the penalty occurs.
- 4) Pass interference will not be called on uncatchable passes.
- 5) Eligible receivers must have flags.
- 6) Only one forward pass is legal including if the first pass is behind the line of scrimmage.

## Penalties

- 1) 5 Yard Penalties will be:
  - offside
  - illegal motion
  - too many players on the field prior to the snap
  - players closer than 5 yards from the sidelines
  - too many players in the backfield or on the line of scrimmage
  - players, coaches, or spectator not 5 yards from the sidelines
  - grounding the ball (ball is thrown to avoid a sack, from the pocket not to a player or does not cross the line of scrimmage)
  - defensive holding (5 yard penalty & first down)

- too many players on the field in play
- 2) 10 Yard Penalties will be:
  - offensive holding
  - illegal rush (defensive player other than designated rusher crossing the line of scrimmage before a hand off, pitch, lateral, or QB leaves pocket.
  - Illegal Forward Pass
  - holding, grabbing, or pulling another player
  - Charging. This occurs when the ball carrier intentionally runs thru the tackler/defender with out trying to avoid the contact. (Penalty is from the spot of the foul)
  - Attempting to Strip the ball.
- 3) 15 Yard Penalties will be:
  - leaving feet while blocking: no cross body blocking permitted (second offense will result in expulsion)
  - clipping
  - tackling (second offense will result in expulsion)
  - illegal use of hands on offense
  - deliberately pushing a person out of bounds (second offense will result in expulsion)
  - holding up a flag that does not belong to the ball carrier
  - faking a pulled flag
  - unnecessary roughness (second offense will result in expulsion)
  - lowering head to block
  - swinging at another player with forearms
  - unsportsmanlike conduct (15 yard penalty and expulsion)
- 4) Additional penalties
  - hurdling (if not jumping over a fallen player), ball is dead on the spot
  - flag guarding-ball is dead on the spot
  - straight arms-ball is dead on the spot
  - forward pass ahead of the line of scrimmage results in loss of down and dead ball

## Notes on Penalties

- 1) The players and coaches are restricted to stay between the two 15 yard lines.
- 2) When a penalty is inside the 30-yard line, the full distance of the penalty is marked off.
- 3) When the penalty is inside the 15-yard line,  $\frac{1}{2}$  the distance to the goal line will be marked off.
- 4) If a player is going for a touchdown and in the judgement of the officials, the player is clear of everybody and a fake flag pulling occurs, the team with the ball shall receive 6 points.
- 5) No game or half can end with a penalty on the defensive team. The offense shall be given one additional play.
- 6) If a touchdown is scored on the last play of the half or of the game, the scoring team will be given one additional down to convert the extra point try.
- 7) No coaches are allowed on the field of play.

## Time Out

- 1) Two 1-minute times out per half.
- 2) Half time is 3 minutes in length.

## Legal Block

Players MUST block opposing team with open hands.

- 1) No intentionally pushing or shoving opposing player to the ground.
- 2) Player may not use a clenched fist.
- 3) Player may not lead with a shoulder or forearm block
- 4) No blocking from behind or below the waist.
- 5) Blocking technique is *Open* hand with bent arms.
- 6) No canning of the center.
- 7) No canning of an engaged player. (Use of explosive arm action)

## Referees

- 1) A minimum of one referee is required for all games. Two may be used.
- 2) Referees must be from an official association or ASA or the two coaches may mutually agree to a parent.