



REGULAR SEASON RULE BOOK

2019 OFFICIAL RULEBOOK FOR
COACHES, PARENTS, & PLAYERS.



XL SPORTS WORLD RULES AND
ADAPTATIONS INCLUDED.



IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR COACHES

Thank you for coaching NFL Flag Football at XL Sports World in Saco. Your help is crucial in growing the league with each passing season. ALL coaches MUST READ this rulebook before coaching any games at XL Sports World in Saco to ensure players learn the game at its full potential, while having fun at the same time. Remember, this league is for the children! We truly appreciate your support of this fun and exciting league!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	GAME	3
II.	TERMINOLOGY	3
III.	ELIGIBILITY	4
IV.	EQUIPMENT	4
V.	FIELD	4
VI.	ROSTERS	5
VII.	TIMING	5
VIII.	SCORING	6
IX.	COACHES	6
X.	LIVE BALL/ DEAD BALL/ TURNOVERS	6
XI.	RUNNING	7
XII.	PASSING	8
XIII.	RECEIVING	9
XIV.	RUSHING THE PASSER	9
XV.	FLAG PULLING	10
XVI.	FORMATIONS	11
XVII.	UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT	11
XVIII.	PENALTIES	12

I. Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the first field dot and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on the field dot *closest to the defensive end zone*.
5. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own field dot.
6. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's field dot closest to the defensive end zone.
7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

II. Terminology

Boundary Lines: The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.

Field Dot: Field marking specific to XL Sports World that helps determine no run zones, offense starting points, and PAT attempts.

Line of Scrimmage: (LOS) an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.

Line-to-Gain: The line the offense must pass to get a first down (midfield) or score.

Rush Line: An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.

Offense: The team with possession of the ball.

Defense: The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.

Passer: The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.

Rusher: The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.

Downs (1 -2-3): The offensive team has three attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.

Live Ball: Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

Dead Ball: Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.

Whistle: Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.

Inadvertent Whistle: Official's whistle that is performed in error.

Charging: An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm or the chest.

Flag Guarding: An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand or arm.

Shovel Pass: A legal pitch attempted beyond the line of scrimmage.

Lateral: A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct: A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

III. Eligibility

1. All players' legal guardians must agree to the online waiver form at nflflag.com/form/player for their specific league before participating.

IV. Equipment

1. The league provides each player with an official flag belt and NFL FLAG team jersey. Teams will use footballs provided by XL Sports World OR a preferred ball approved by both head coaches and officials.

2. Players must wear shoes or indoor soccer shoes. CLEATS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON FIELDS.

3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed. Mouthguards are highly recommended, but not required.

4. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.

5. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.

6. We recommend 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. Flag belts cannot be the same color as shorts or pants.

V. Field

1. The field dimensions are approximately 30 yards from goal line to goal line, with two 5-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones precede each line-to gain by 5 yards.

2. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (start of midfield circle up to midfield line, AND field dot closest to offense's goal line.), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
3. Sideline boards are considered out of bounds. Players may not touch the boards to advance. Play is considered dead once the ball carrier makes contact with any sideline wall.
4. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone inside midfield circle to midfield to gain for the first down, and one zone beginning at the field dot closest to the offense's end zone to the goal line).

VI. Rosters

1. Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
2. Teams must consist of at least five players with a maximum of 10 players.
3. Teams must start games with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four. Opposing team is encouraged to match a team who is short players, but is not required to do so.

VII. Timing

1. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two 20 minute halves unless one team gains a 28-point advantage, which will then end the game. Clock stops only for timeouts, or injuries. Clock will not stop for incomplete passes or changes in possession under any circumstances.
2. Halftime is one minute.
3. 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. **This rule is to be followed in 2022 at XL Sports World. Coaches must be respectful of this rule in order to keep a respectable game pace for all players on the field.**
4. Each team has one 30-second timeout per half.
PLEASE NOTE: A timeout used by the defense immediately after the offense scores a touchdown will stop the clock through the free play/Extra point. The clock will not start again until the first play of the next drive begins.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion for equipment issues (untied shoes, loose flags, untucked shirts, etc.).
6. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, a tie will be declared. **There is no overtime period.**

VIII. Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (closest dot) or 2 points (second dot).
Note: 1-point PAT is pass only; 2-point PAT can be run or pass.
b. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (first dot) or a 2-point conversion (second dot).
- 3. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.**
4. Safety: 2 points. A 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. **PLEASE NOTE: A snapped ball into the end zone will not result in a safety. It will result in the ball being spotted at the first dot closest to the defensive end zone and a loss of down.**
- 4. After one team is winning by 28 points or more, the game is over. Once a 28 or more point advantage is gained, no PAT will be attempted. The game will continue in scrimmage mode for the remainder of the game.**
5. Forfeits are scored 28-0 for the winning team.

IX. Coaches

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
2. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and division.
3. Coaches must stand in an area on the field that does not interfere with gameplay during live ball periods.

X. Live Ball/Dead Ball/Turnovers

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to 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.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play. **A player may contact the sideline wall to make a catch, and play will stop where the catch is made.**
4. 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. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled “dead” when:

- a. The ball hits the ground.
 - i. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
- b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
- c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds/touches sideline walls.
- 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.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.

- 8. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the first field dot.
- 9. Interceptions are returnable in all cases EXCEPT on conversions after touchdowns.**
- 10. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- 11. Coaches are trusted with the responsibility of maintaining honesty and respect on the field in regards to understanding rules. In a coach officiated league, all coaches are expected to work together to maintain a fair and fun playing environment**

XI. Running

- 1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball-carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
- 2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball; **NO QB SNEAKS**. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.

A good strategy to offset a blitz is for the quarterback to hand off the ball to another offensive player who can then choose to run or pass the ball. However, this allows any defensive player to rush, no matter how close they are to the line of scrimmage.
- 3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. No handoffs beyond the line of scrimmage. **ABSOLUTELY NO LATERALS OR PITCHES OF ANY KIND.**
- 4. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - a. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
- 5. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind.**
- 6. No-run Zones (see "V. Field" for details on dimensions) 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 within the midfield circle to midfield line to gain the first down and one beginning from the field dot closest to the goal line to the goal line to score TD.

6. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
10. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
11. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.
12. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.
13. 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.

XII. Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - a. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
 - b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - c. **NO PITCHES OR SCREEN PASSES**
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.”

Below explains how the 7 second “pass clock” is enforced at XL Sports World.

7 SECOND PASS RULE

- a. The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw the ball or handoff to another offensive player **ONLY if a count is performed by a defensive player.**
- b. This rule is only enforced IF the count is made by a player on the defense. If no count is performed, the quarterback has no time limit, however, the defense can begin the count at any time during the play.
- c. **A DEFENSIVE PLAYER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COUNTING 7 SECONDS.** (Different from NFL Flag Rules where an official counts; the XL Developmental league has no officials)
- d. Any defensive player may count (usually a safety will count)
- e. Counting must be done as follows: “One Ball... Two Ball...” and must be loud enough for all players on the field to hear.

- f. When the count surpasses 7 seconds, the play is whistled over and counted as a sack. The ball will be spotted at the previous line of scrimmage.
- g. 7 second rule is considered void if a handoff to another offensive player is completed.

4. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer 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).
5. All plays whistled dead due to the 7 second rule resulting in loss of down.

XIII. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. A player is allowed to make a reception while in contact with the sideline wall. Play will be whistled dead as soon as reception is complete.
5. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
6. Interceptions are returnable in all cases EXCEPT on conversions after touchdowns.

XIV. Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. **(RUSHING IS ONLY ALLOWED IN 10-12 YEAR OLD DIVISION)**
IMPORTANT NOTICE: The 7-yard rule must be fairly and strictly enforced by all coaches and officials involved. Improper enforcement/following of this rule will result in no rushing of the passer allowed for the remainder of the game.
2. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
3. 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.
4. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play. **This is only if the proper resources are available (by an assistant coach or volunteer parent).**
5. A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.

- ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the quarterback.
6. A penalty may be called if:
- i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff 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 the line of scrimmage and first down).
 - iii. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5 yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
7. Special circumstances:
- i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect. Defense is responsible for clearly counting 7 second pass clock.
 - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
8. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
9. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
10. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
- a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

XV. Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from ball-carrier’s possession at any time.
4. If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.

5. The extra belt, “third flag” MUST BE TRIMMED OR TUCKED INTO PANTS. Any pulling of the extra belt by the defense will result in the play being stopped and counted as a legal flag pull.

6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

7. 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, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey

8. It is the responsibility of all coaches/officials to fairly enforce flag guarding. Natural running form is permitted, but blatant use of hands to swat defensive players away from flags will result in a flag guarding call.

XVI. Formations

1. 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. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.

b. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.

2. 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.

3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands

XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. 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/ coaches discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!

2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.

4. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

6. 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. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:

- a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents outside of the playing area.
 - b. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.
 - c. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.
8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
- a. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
 - b. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

XVIII Penalties

A full list of penalties can be found on a separate page at the end of the rulebook. Our league focuses on the development of children learning and playing flag football, and with the games being officiated by coaches, penalties will be missed at times. The penalties we focus on the most at XL Sports World are the blatant misconduct penalties between players on the field and/or on the bench.

At full speed, accidental tripping, running into other players, or tackling due to flag pulling may occur. In any instance where a play is considered unintentionally dangerous, coaches will talk to all of their players to make sure they play safely. Coaches will monitor each play to make sure the plays are performed in a safe manner.

Any player who acts in a way that is purposefully dangerous to other players will be forced to leave the game. Further disciplinary action is at the discretion of XL Sports World.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR COACHES

We at XL Sports World greatly appreciate your help with coaching players in the NFL Flag Football league. Our coaches are expected to serve as role-models for the players they coach. All coaches must maintain the highest level of respect for others and the game they are coaching. Coaches at XL Sports World are required to work together to keep games safe and fun for their players. Any disagreements between opposing coaches must be dealt with in a respectful manner, with zero conflict, and resolved quickly. There is no tolerance for inappropriate behavior at XL Sports World.

Employees of XL Sports World reserve the right to remove any players, coaches, parents, spectators who conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the safety and well being of others on or off the field. Absolutely zero physical or verbal confrontations will be tolerated at any time on the property. Any person who violates our conduct policies will be held accountable. Disciplinary action of those who conduct themselves inappropriately will be at the discretion of management of XL Sports World. These disciplinary actions may include, and are not limited to: game suspension, ejection from the building for a specific amount of time, involvement of local law enforcement.

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding	Automatic first down
Stripping	+10 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Screening, blocking or running with the ball	-10 yards and loss of down
Charging	-10 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-10 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	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush <small>(Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)</small>	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull <small>(Before the receiver has the ball)</small>	+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	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass <small>(Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)</small>	-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 <small>(More than one person moving)</small>	-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

