

Flex Football Rule Book – ½ Field

This rule book outlines the playing rules for Flex Football, a limited-contact 9-on-9 football game that incorporates soft-shelled helmets and shoulder pads. For any rules not specifically addressed below, refer to either the NFHS rule book or the NCAA rule book based on what serves as the official high school-level rule book in your state.

Flex 1/2 Field Setup

- The standard football field is divided in half with the direction of play going from the mid field out towards the end zone.
- 2 Flex Football games are to be run at the same going in opposing directions towards the end zones on their respective field.
- The ball will start play at the 45-yard line - game start and turnovers.
- The direction of offensive play will go towards the existing end zones.
- If a ball is intercepted: the defender needs to only return the interception to the 45-yard line to be considered a Defensive touchdown.

Team Size and Groupings

- Each team has nine players on the field (9 on 9).
- A team can play with eight if it chooses, losing an eligible receiver on offense and non line-men on defense.
- If a team is two players short, it will automatically forfeit the game. However, the opposing coach may lend players in order to allow the game to be played as a scrimmage. The officials will call the game as if it were a regular game.
- Age ranges can be defined as common age groupings (9-and-under, 12-and under) or school grades (K-2, junior high), based on the decision of each organization. Rocksolid reserves the right to coordinate its regional/national tournaments by specific age groupings that may not conform to local rules.

Required/Recommended Equipment

- The league will provide game day footballs at the start of the season.
- In the case of inter-divisional games, each team will use the ball appropriate for its division when on offense.
- Matching team uniforms provided by the league/team must be worn.
- Organizations have the option for players to wear flags and or play two-hand touch model similar to passing leagues. All other rules still apply regardless of this decision.
- If flags are worn, each player on the field must wear league-provided flags around the waist outside of game jerseys with jerseys tucked into shorts. Flags must be centered with a flag on each hip. Improperly worn flags are subject to a flag guarding penalty.
- Flags approved by Rocksolid or USA Football's NFL FLAG are the only allowed flag types.
- Flags may not be altered in any way from their factory condition.
- Mouth guards, approved soft shell helmets and soft shell shoulder pads are mandatory and must be readily visible to the game official.
- Equipment may not be used in an offensive manner; (refer to unnecessary

roughness section).

- If applicable, all players must wear provided shorts.
- Cleats are required (no metal cleats or metal spikes)

Banned Equipment

- Metal spikes; hard casts; unapproved soft shell shoulder pads or soft shell helmets; baseball caps of any kind; jewelry: including rings, necklaces and watches; and anything that conceals the flags.
- Scrum caps, karate helmets, headbands or any other non-approved helmet is not allowed.
- Beanies and skull caps/wraps are permitted under helmet.
- Wearing any banned equipment on the field results in a delay of game penalty.
- Players wearing banned equipment are not allowed back onto the field until the banned equipment is removed.

Coaches

The following applies to all coaching staffs:

- It is strongly recommended that all coaches have a background check through a third party.
- Non-coaching parents are not allowed on the team area of the sidelines except as down marker holders.
- Each coach is expected to read and understand all stated rules in this booklet. Any questions should be directed to the league commissioner.
- All football personnel and coaches will abide by the Flex Football Coaches Code of Conduct or your organization's Code of Conduct. Any violation of these rules can result in possible expulsion from your coaching privileges.
- If any coach deliberately and flagrantly violates these rules, the league may suspend the coach without prior notice.
- The head coach shall identify himself during the coin toss by accompanying his team captains.
- The head coach has final responsibility for his/her actions as well as those of his/her assistant coaches, players, staff and parents.
- When a head coach of record is not present at a game, the assistant coach will act as head coach.
- The coach on the field is the only person allowed to speak to a game official. At the game official's discretion, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty can be called on other coaches if they continually attempt to speak to a game official during the game.
- All coaches are to be respectful to each other, players, parents and game officials before, during and after games.
- The game officials are empowered to eject any coach or parent from a game if that coach or parent is acting unsportsmanlike, using foul language or is causing a disruption to the game. Swearing at a game official because you do not agree with a call is not acceptable and will not be permitted.

Coaches on the Field - optional

- For grades K-2 (7U), a maximum of 2 coaches per team can be on the field.
- For grades 3-5 (10U), a maximum of 1 coach per team is allowed on the field.
- For 6th grade and older, no coaches are allowed on field.
- Unless helping a younger, inexperienced athlete into proper position, these coaches shall remain a minimum of 10 yards behind all participating players after approaching the line of scrimmage.
- Once the team has broken the huddle, coaches on the field cannot talk except to assist players getting into correct position. On-field coaches must be silent once the quarterback begins his cadence.
- This rule does not apply to coaches on the sideline.
- If in the opinion of the game official, the coach continues to give instructions once the QB begins his cadence or the coach becomes verbally involved in the play in any way, first a warning will be issued. Upon the second infraction, a 5-yard penalty shall be assessed.
- If in the opinion of the game official, the coach on the field makes no attempt to avoid an oncoming player or otherwise avoid interfering with a play or deliberately causes interference, a 10-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be issued and that coach will be not be allowed on the field for the remainder of the game. Another coach must replace him. If no coach is present, the coach must assist from the sideline.
- If accidental or unavoidable contact (in the officials' judgment) occurs in such a manner that effects the outcome of the play, it will immediate be blown dead and the down replayed.
- Contact by a player with an official will not result in a stoppage of play.

Down marker

The following shall apply to down marker responsibilities:

- Down markers will be on the visitor's side of the field at all games.
- It is the responsibility of the home team to supply down marker volunteers, though volunteers can come from either side if necessary.
- Down markers can be sticks or cones but must accurately mark 10 yards.
- At minimum, this duty must consist of one volunteer who places the first-down marker cone 10 yards ahead as the line-to-gain and then marks the line of scrimmage with the down box.
- The volunteers are considered part of the game officials crew. As such, they can cheer politely and engage in normal sideline conversation but must not speak negatively about players, coaches or officials and must defer to the game official for all decisions made.

Game officials

- The National Federation of State High School Associations rule book or the NCAA rule book – depending on your state – serves as the foundation for all rules and penalties unless specified otherwise below.
- Game officials will be provided by the league. If a league does not designate a head game official for the game, the game officials will determine pregame which of them will serve that role.
- There will be a minimum of two (2) game officials provided per game, though three or more is suggested, especially for older ages once passing is more prevalent.
- Game officials are instructed to identify to coaches the player who commits a penalty by name, number or position on the field.
- Game officials have the final say on-field for all matters and will apply all rules to maintain safety.
- The game officials are to be treated as professionals. If coaches have a concern with the conduct of any game official, notify the league president following the game.
- Game officials are expected to have the rule book in hand no later than two weeks before the start of the season and are expected to know its contents.
- Game officials are expected to have all necessary equipment, which includes a penalty flag, bean bag, whistle, stopwatch and notepad.
- The head game official is suggested to note each flagrant foul by a player's name or number for tracking records.
- The head game official also is suggested to write down and report any other pertinent information regarding a coach, player or parent of a team who has committed an infraction that infringes on the sanctity of the game.

Coin toss

- Before the game, the game officials will gather players – a maximum of four from each team – near the center of the field for the coin toss. Both head coaches must accompany the players and identify themselves to the game officials.
- No game will begin before the scheduled time unless both coaches are present and in agreement, regardless of when the previous game ends.
- The opening toss and the overtime toss (if applicable) will be called by the visiting team before the coin is flipped.
- The pregame coin toss winner can choose to start on offense, start on defense or defer the decision to the second half.
- If the winner of the coin flip defers, the loser of the flip must choose to begin on offense.
- The team that does not choose possession of the ball selects which goal it will defend.
- Teams switch starting on offense and defense in the second half. The team that starts on defense selects which end it will defend.

Game and play clock

1. 20-minute halves. 5-minute halftime. There is a running clock that only stops for injuries/player safety, timeouts and dead balls in accordance to the NCAA or NFHS rule books that occur within the final two minutes of the game.
2. If no scoreboard is present, the head game official – or a fellow official he designates during pregame – is the official timekeeper and scorekeeper.
3. Each team is entitled to 1 one-minute timeout per half. The clock restarts on the snap following any team time out.
4. A 30-second play clock is enforced with the play clock beginning following the spot of the ball and at the head game official's signal.
5. Dead balls that stop the clock within the final two minutes are: incomplete passes, any play that ends out of bounds, scoring plays, change of possession, timeouts. The clock will also stop for all injury timeouts and official timeouts, restarting at the head officials ready to play signal. Penalty clock stoppages are held in accordance to NCAA and NFHS rules. The clock is also stopped for the entirety of extra point tries within the final two minutes.
6. If a team is losing by 13 or more points within the final two minutes, the clock does not stop for any reason other than timeouts, injury timeouts and official timeouts. If the losing team scores to create a deficit of 12 or fewer, two minute rules apply.

Substitutions and injured players

- Free substitutions are in effect at all times between plays.
- If the offense subs in, the defense must have a chance to sub before the snap is allowed.
 - If the official delays the snap to allow the defense time to match the substitution, the delay of game penalty shall not be called on the offense.
 - If, however, the official determines the offense is substituting late to run additional time off the clock, a delay of game penalty can be assessed.
- If an injured player remains down on the field, struggles to leave the field or needs assistance, the official will signal for the clock to stop. The play clock and game clock both restart upon the player leaving the field, the ball being set and both sides being ready to play.

Procedure for injured players

- If any game official stops play for an injured player or players to be checked/assisted, the injured player must leave the field for at least one play. A team may not “buy” a player back into the game through use of a time out.
- Head injuries. Any player who receives a head injury – whether a concussion, contusion, cut or other – during practice, pregame warm-ups or in-game is not allowed to return to play until cleared by a qualified medical professional.

GAMEPLAY

- There are no kickoffs. Play starts at the offensive team's 45 yard line.
- If playing with two separate games on one traditional field:
 - Begin each game with staggered starts to allow for scrambling room and player safety.
 - When both offenses are back to back within their respective field of play and player safety is a concern. The game official on one side can call an official time out to stop the clock and let the other game progress further down the field to allow for more space in case of a quarterback scramble.
- There are nine players on each side of the ball, including a center and two guards on offense.
 - Unbalanced lines are not allowed. One guard must be on either side of the center.
- Five players are required on the line of scrimmage with either tight ends or split ends joining the three linemen. Unbalanced lines are not allowed. Two players must be on the line on each side of the center.
- All players, except for the center, must be in a 2-point stance.
- The three players who line up at center or guard cannot receive handoffs nor be the initial touch on a pass. They may, however, catch tipped passes, at which point the play is blown dead.
- The quarterback may take a direct snap from under center or in the shotgun position.
- All fumbles – defined as a loose ball touching the ground – are blown dead with the team last in possession retaining possession at the spot the ball was fumbled.

Passing

- A forward pass that falls incomplete returns to the line of scrimmage.
- A lateral pass that is thrown behind or in front of the line of scrimmage and touches the ground is blown dead and returned to the spot where the ball touched the ground.
- A pass is determined to be forward or lateral based on the direction it travels, not by how it is delivered (i.e. overhand, underhand, side arm, etc.).
- The quarterback may spike the ball to stop the clock within the final two minutes of the game, providing all offensive players are set. The two minute clock rules still apply. If players are not set, an illegal procedure penalty is enforced and the clock restarts on setting the ball.
- If your state plays by NFHS rules, intentional grounding includes any pass in which an eligible receiver is not in the immediate area of where the ball is thrown, whether the quarterback is inside or outside of the pocket.

Receiving

- Only eligible receivers and a quarterback who has first handed the ball off or thrown a legal lateral pass can be the initial receiver on a forward pass.
- Players must get one foot down in bounds for a completed pass.
- If an offensive and defensive player catch a ball simultaneously and forward progress is stopped, the ball is declared dead at that spot and awarded to the offense. No flag pull or two-hand touch is required.
- The three players lined up at center and guard may not catch a forward pass unless it is first touched by an eligible receiver or defensive player. If an ineligible receiver does take possession of a forward pass – legal or illegal – the play is blown dead at that spot.
- If wearing flags and a receiver's flag falls off prior to making a catch, it is ruled a reception, and the ball is spotted where he/she made the catch. If a defender pulls a receiver's flag before the receiver has possession, an illegal flag pull penalty is assessed to the end of the play.

Blocking

- Lead blocking on all runs is allowed.
- Pulling offensive linemen is allowed, and all blocking rules apply.
- When engaging a block, the blocker must come to balance and all initial contact must be made with the hands.
- Landing on or piling on any player on the ground results in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Blocking by initiating or leading with head, elbows, forearms, knees or shoulders – anything but the hands will result in a charging penalty.
- Blocking below the waist, cut blocks, clipping and any blindside crack back blocks – by the offense or defense – are assessed appropriate penalties and result in an automatic ejection as determined by the game officials. A player who is blocked into a low block may continue to play in the game if the officials see extenuating circumstances.

Running

- The QB cannot advance the ball during a roll out, scramble or broken play UNLESS a 3rd player, in addition to the two defensive linemen, crosses the line of scrimmage or if the defense blitzes.
 - If a zone blitz occurs in which a defensive lineman drops into pass coverage and is replaced with a blitzing second level player, the quarterback is eligible to run even though there are only two rushers since there was a "blitz".
- The QB is allowed to run for a pass beyond the line of scrimmage after a pitch or hand off.
- If the QB who received the center exchange hands off/laterals to another player and (in the game official's opinion) attempts to double pass, the non-QB player now attempting to throw the ball will be viewed as the new QB, thus he is limited to the QB running rules.
- Immediate QB sneaks in the A gap are not allowed – even with a blitzing defender.

Pre-snap alignment

- The offensive team must have five (5) players on the line of scrimmage at the point of the snap – three linemen and one eligible receiver on each side of the field aligned on the ball.
- Both guards must line up within both players outstretched arms' reach of the center.
- Eligible receivers can be tight or split at the coach's decision.
- Unbalanced offensive formations are NOT allowed
- All motion and shift rules apply as outlined in the NFHS and NCAA rule books.
- The defensive alignment rules are as follows
 - No defender can align directly over the center or in the A gap.
 - The two defensive linemen must be aligned reasonably within the body frame of the furthest offensive lineman/tight end. For example, a defensive lineman can line up from the outside shoulder of a tight end to head up over the guard.
 - The defensive team must have two players on the line of scrimmage within the tackle box.
 - There are no unbalanced defensive line alignments. One DE must be on each side of the center.
 - It is SUGGESTED that in the younger age groups: The two defensive linemen raise their hands as they line up to indicate that they are the eligible rushers and the only ones who can cross the line of scrimmage without triggering the QB run rule.

First Downs

- The offense has up to four (4) plays to reach a 10-yard first down by run, pass or penalty.
- On a series beginning from or inside the defensive 10-yard line, the offense can only achieve a first down through penalty.
- Any penalty that results in a first down starts a new set of downs with a new line to gain.

Fourth downs

- If the offense fails to make a 1st down the ball is turned over after 3 downs to the other team.
- A turnover will result the ball being placed at the 45 yard line.
- A team can only go for it on 4th down inside the red zone (20 yard line & in)

Touchdowns and scores

- When a ball carried by an offensive player breaks the plane of the defensive team's end zone or an offensive player gains control of the ball in the defensive team's end zone, it is considered a touchdown.
- Extra point tries are attempted following all touchdowns with one (1) point from the 5-yard line and two (2) points from the 10-yard line. For younger ages, it is recommended that extra point attempts be one (1) point from the 3-yard line and two (2) points from the 5-yard line.
- The clock continues to run during extra points unless the touchdown comes in the final two minutes of the game with teams within a 12-point margin.
- If a touchdown is scored as time runs out in the first or second half, the conversion will still take place as an untimed down.

Scoring values:

- Touchdown = 6 points
 - PAT = game official will ask if the scoring team will go for 1 or 2 extra points.
- If the offensive team elects to go for 1, the ball will be placed on the 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team elects to go for 2, the ball will be placed on the 10-yard line.
- For younger ages, it is recommended that one (1) point from the 3-yard line and two (2) points from the 5-yard line.
- All rules apply during an extra point the same they do during a regular play.
- In the event of a penalty on an extra point, the offense cannot change its decision to go for 1 point or 2.
- In the event of an interception or a fumble caught on the fly during a point-after try, the ball is blown dead. There is no return for 2 points.

Safety

- There are no safeties in the ½ field style of play

Ties

- During the regular season, the organization has the option to proceed with either of the following if the score is tied at the end of regulation:
 - A tie will be entered into the standings.
 - Play an overtime period.
- During the postseason, if the score is tied at the end of regulation time, overtime periods will be played until a winner is declared.
- Leagues also can set a limit on the number of overtimes allowed during a regular-season game.

Over time

- A coin toss is used to determine who gets the ball first. The coin toss winner chooses offense or defense.
- The ball is placed at the defensive team's 10-yard line.
- Overtime is structured as **3 plays** per team (no 1st downs) with both teams getting the chance to answer if within the same series
- There are no time outs, and none carry over from regulation.
- If a team turns the ball over or runs out of downs, the possession is over.
- The defense can return a turnover (turnover rules apply) for a touchdown (to the 45-yard line). However, if downed before scoring, the resulting series begin back at the 10-yard line.
- As in regulation, extra point attempts may not be returned for points by the defense.
- Both teams get possession of the ball with the team scoring more points declared the winner. If the score remains tied at the end of overtime, the teams can play another overtime.
- For all overtimes beyond the first, teams simply alternate possession and remain on the same side of the field. (AB-BA) There is no second coin flip.
- This process is repeated with teams having equal chances to score until a tie no longer exists after a complete series of AB or BA.

Blitzing/rushing rule

- Blitzing is defined as any predetermined penetration by a linebacker or defensive back.
- Blitzer/rusher must use hands and feet to defeat the block to either side of the blocker.
- Blitzer/rusher cannot throw or purposefully push blocker into the ground or into the ball-carrier.
- There is no bull rushing. The blitzer/rusher must rush the inside or outside part of a blocker's body and is not allowed to rush through the centerline of the blocker.
- The defense cannot blitz the A gap from the line of scrimmage.
 - Linebackers and defensive backs can blitz the A gap as long as they are a minimum of three yards behind the ball on the snap. Recommended for older ages.
- These rules are judgment calls by the game official.
- **The following is RECOMMENDED For ages 10U**
 - Only one blitzer is allowed per first down series. If the offense gains a first down, the defense can blitz during that down series again. For older ages, unlimited blitzers are allowed.
 - A third defender crossing the line of scrimmage will not necessarily count as a blitz if the defender crosses the line of scrimmage after the quarterback exits the tackle box or if the defender is naturally flowing to the ball. Refer to the blitzing definition.
 - Blitzing is not allowed by a team leading by 20 or more points.

Sack Mercy Rule - (RECOMMENDED For ages 10U)

- If a defense has more than 5 sacks per half, the Sack Mercy Rule takes effect.
- A sack is defined as downing the QB within the tackle box. Downing the QB outside the tackle box does not count as a sack.
- The tackle box is defined as the area between the outside shoulders of where tight ends would line up – whether or not tight ends are part of the actual formation.
- When the Sack Mercy rule is in place, no defensive player can rush past the LOS for the remainder of the half. This includes defensive linemen.
- It is the responsibility of the offensive team's coach to record the number of sacks that half and relay it to the head game official and opposing coach. The offensive coach must confirm with the game official that the sack was in fact in the tackle box.
- When the sack mercy rule is in effect, the defensive linemen can be allowed to shadow the running back or quarterback, put their hands up or drop back into coverage. If the QB breaks the tackle box on a rollout or scramble, then the defensive linemen are free to rush. No extra rushers are permitted to rush.

Center

- The center must snap the ball between his/her legs. The snap must be continuous, meaning it must pass directly and immediately from the center to another player on offense.
- Center must have both feet behind the scrimmage line with no part of his/her body beyond the forward tip of the ball.
- The center can double-team block alongside another player but must initiate block with hands, and all blocking rules apply.

Jumping and spinning

- Players may not jump or hurdle to avoid being downed.
- Players may not dive for the end zone or to gain additional yardage. This is unnecessary roughness.
- Players may not attempt short yardage "over the pile" jumps. This is unnecessary roughness.
- Any player who jumps illegally and lands on another player will be flagged for unnecessary roughness.
- A player may dive in an attempt to catch a pass but is down upon reception.
- A player may dive to pull a flag but may not tackle or dive into or through another player to do so. This is unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Quarterbacks can jump when throwing the ball.
- If flags are not worn, players may spin, as long the motion is continuous and at least one foot stays on the ground at all times.

Turnovers: Fumbles, dead balls and interceptions

- All fumbles are considered dead balls as soon as the ball hits the ground.
- If the ball hits the ground behind the player who fumbled it, the ball is placed at the point it first hits the ground.
- If the ball hits the ground in front of the player, the ball is placed at the point the player lost possession.
- A fumbled ball may be recovered in the air and advanced by either team.
- An interception can be advanced by the intercepting team.
- A player may not strip anyone of the ball. Anyone making intentional contact with the ball while it is being carried causing the ball to be fumbled will be called for stripping, a 5-yard penalty.
- If applicable, the ball is dead if a ball-carrier's flag falls on its own.
- If a ball-carrier or pass receiver has a missing flag or flags, the ball is dead at the spot where the player took possession of the ball.

Ball spotting

- Spotting the ball is at the game officials' judgment. It is up to the game officials to try and be near the spot whenever possible.
- Ball will be spotted where the ball is held when a player is downed.
- If applicable, the spot is not where the defender was standing when the flag is pulled.
 - The spot is not where the defender throws the flag on the ground.

A gap

- The A gap is the area between the center and the guards.
- Defenders on the line of scrimmage cannot line up directly over the center and may not immediately engage the center.
- The defense cannot blitz the A gap from the line of scrimmage.
 - Linebackers and defensive backs can blitz the A gap as long as they are a minimum of three yards from the LOS on the snap.
- Attempts at a center sneak by the offense is penalized as an A gap violation.
- See A gap violation under penalties section.

PENALTIES

- Any penalties not covered below are to follow NFHS or NCAA rules – based on your state's guidelines.
- Due to the ½ field play – If a penalty would otherwise move the offense back beyond their 45 yard line, the penalty will be enforced as normal except the LINE TO GAIN will be extended to reflect the enforcement of the penalty
 - For example: a 5 yard penalty is enforced against the offense when the ball was originally played at the 45 yard line to start the game. The new line to gain will be at the 30 yard line to achieve a 1st down with the ball still being played at the 45 yard line. The new down would be "1st/2nd/3rd and 15" (or whatever yards are needed to reach the line to gain)
 - The same process shall apply for a play that results in a substantial loss that would otherwise back up the LOS into the opposing game.
 - This adjustment should only be made when there is no room for the ball to be backed up.
- Because of the shorter field – all enforceable penalties of 15 yards (per your states rulebook) will be enforced as 10 yards for the purpose of the game. (exceptions below)
- The team not committing the foul gets to choose between the result of the play or the enforcement of the penalty.
- If both teams commit fouls on the same play, they offset and the down is replayed.
 - An odd number of fouls with more being assessed on one team will still offset and result in replay of down
- A live-ball foul on the offense is marked off from the spot of the penalty.
- A live-ball foul on the defense is marked off from the spot of the penalty, the original line of scrimmage or the end of the play, whichever benefits the offense the most.
- No penalty may move the ball more than half the distance toward the penalized team's goal line. When penalty yardage is greater than the distance to the goal, the maximum penalty is half the distance to the goal line.
- A half cannot end on a penalty that is accepted. If the penalty is accepted, it is marked off and a single untimed down is played. If the penalty is declined, the half is over.
- A first down will be determined after the ball is spotted at the end of a play and any applicable penalty yardage is assessed. Net yardage (forward progress plus/minus penalty yardage) must be sufficient to be awarded a first down.
- EOP – End of Play
- LOS – Line of Scrimmage
- POI – Point of Infraction

NOTE: All dangerous and flagrant fouls carry with them automatic first downs or loss of downs in addition to the penalty yardage.

****Flagrant fouls** (starred)**

- A player committing a flagrant foul – including an unsportsmanlike conduct, intentional tackling or unnecessary roughness penalty with malice – will receive a warning from the head game official and ejected upon a second flagrant foul. If the first act is determined to be severe, the head game official has the option to eject the player without the warning.
- All flagrant fouls that do not result in an ejection will be accompanied by a substitution from the field for at least one play to allow the coaches to address the situation and calm down any tempers.
- It is recommended that the league track players who commit flagrant fouls on a per game basis. The head game official will mark down on paper the guilty player (by name, number and/or team) and will turn in the information to the league director, commissioner or appropriate staff member.
- The head game official's decision on flagrant fouls are final.
- The safety of all players is the primary concern of the league. Game officials shall call unnecessary roughness when any player uses excessive force or violence during a play – even if the play is technically within the rules.

***Intentional tackling**

Defense – The ball placed at the defense's 5-yard and an automatic first-and-goal.

- Intentional tackling defined: Intentionally wrapping up to stop forward progress while taking the ball-carrier to the ground; shoulder checking/hit with the intent of knocking the ball-carrier to the ground. It is the game officials' discretion on any other attempt to use excessive force by a player to initiate a tackle.
- An automatic touchdown will be given to the team if a player is running and judged to be free with no defenders between him/her and the end zone and is deliberately tackled, tripped or restrained by clothing grab by a pursuing player (with no attempt to grab the flag) or by an individual associated with the defensive team who comes onto the field.
- Not intentional tackling: inadvertently grabbing clothing from behind in an attempt to pull the flag or unintentional contact resulting in a player falling to the ground.
- An infraction can be called when there is no effort made to pull the flag.
- If anyone (player, coach, parent, etc.) comes off the sideline to interfere with a breakaway, then a TD will be given to the team and the player, coach, parent, etc., will be ejected.
- **Unintentional contact:** 10-yard penalty. A less severe penalty will be enforced if a defender unintentionally impedes the ball carrier by grabbing a part of the ball carrier's body or clothing while attempting to pull the ball carrier's flag.

***Unnecessary Roughness**

Offense 10 yards, loss of down

Defense – 10 yards, automatic first down.

- The safety of all players is the primary concern. Game officials shall call unnecessary roughness when any player uses excessive force or violence during a play, even if the play is technically within the rules.
- All players are expected to play “in control” at all times. Players are in violation of the unnecessary roughness rule when they risk injury to themselves or to other players because of unsafe or out-of-control conduct on the field.
- Examples include but are not limited to: head butting, head slapping, throwing elbows or forearms and intentionally hitting, kicking, or tripping other players. It is the game officials’ discretion on whether these fouls elevate to flagrant fouls. Repeated or flagrant violations may result in the player being ejected from the game.
- A player may never lead with his or her head or initiate contact to the head.
- Unnecessary and overly violent contact that includes charging, bull rushing, and purposefully shoving a player to the ground will be considered unnecessary roughness.

*** Charging (offense) - unnecessary roughness**

10 yards, loss of down

- When a ball-carrier intentionally runs into a defender, lowers his/her shoulder or makes unnecessary contact with defender in an attempt to cause bodily harm.
- When an offensive player intentionally runs through or over a defensive player with a running start.
- When an offensive player intentionally engages a blocker with his shoulder with no attempt to come to balance and initiate the block first with open hands.

*** Bull rushing (defense) - unnecessary roughness**

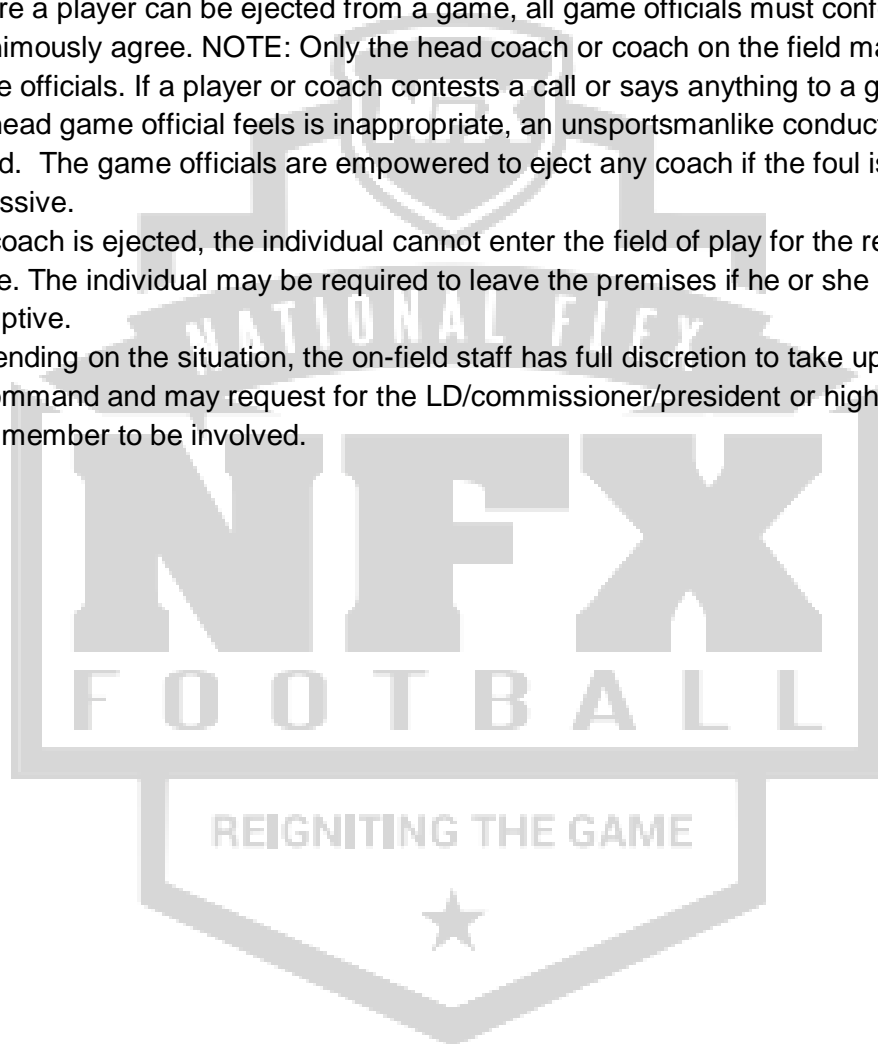
10 yards - automatic first down

- When a defender intentionally uses his/her momentum or excessive force to bull rush through the centerline of an offensive player. Defender must make the appropriate effort to go around or to a leveraged side of the blocker.

* **Ejection**

Any two (2) flagrant foul infractions by an individual player in one game or multiple single infractions across several games may result in further action, including suspension from future games or ejection from the league, subject to the league's discretion.

- The ejection process will also apply to coaches and any parents/spectators on the field or in the stands who encourage players to act in an unsportsmanlike manner.
- Any player who strikes another player or is involved in a fight will be immediately ejected from the game and be suspended indefinitely pending a ruling from the league president.
- Before a player can be ejected from a game, all game officials must confer and unanimously agree. NOTE: Only the head coach or coach on the field may speak to the game officials. If a player or coach contests a call or says anything to a game official that the head game official feels is inappropriate, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called. The game officials are empowered to eject any coach if the foul is deemed excessive.
- If a coach is ejected, the individual cannot enter the field of play for the rest of the game. The individual may be required to leave the premises if he or she becomes disruptive.
- Depending on the situation, the on-field staff has full discretion to take up the chain of command and may request for the LD/commissioner/president or higher-level staff member to be involved.



GENERAL RULES

Roughing the passer

Defense – 10 yards

Defenders may raise arms while rushing the passer so long as no contact is made with the passer. Excessive contact with passer before, during or after throwing the ball including but not limited to:

- Rushing the passer and running into him while going for passer's flags.
- Making contact with the passer's head and/or shoulders/throwing arm.

Illegal QB run

Offense – ball returns to original spot. Loss of down.

- The QB cannot advance the ball during a roll out, scramble or broken play UNLESS a 3rd player, in addition to the two defensive linemen, crosses the line of scrimmage or if the defense blitzes.
 - If a zone blitz occurs in which a defensive lineman drops into pass coverage and is replaced with a blitzing second level player, the quarterback is eligible to run even though there are only two rushers since there was a "blitz".

Unsportsmanlike conduct

Offense - 10 yards

Defense – 10 yards

All players, head, and assistant coaches are expected to follow the codes of conduct.

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse, profanity, taunting.
- Constant or repeated audible criticism of the game officials.

Game officials can eject any player, coach or spectator who violates this rule repeatedly or egregiously.

Pass interference

Offense – 10 yards from LOS

Defense – 10 yards from LOS

- In addition to normal pass interference rules, any significant physical contact after the ball arrives shall be considered unnecessary roughness. After the ball has been caught any additional attempts to dislodge it will be considered illegal stripping.
- Either receiver or defender pushing off while the ball is in the air.
- Intentionally running into a defender without the ball on a passing play.
- If a receiver's flag is intentionally pulled prior to first touching the ball, this is also considered pass interference.

Taunting

Offense - If occurring on touchdown, a 10-yard penalty will be assessed on the extra point try. If occurring in the field a play, a 10-yard penalty will be enforced.

Defense – 10 yards.

- Any flagrant acts or remarks that deride, mock or bait an opponent are considered taunting.
- Celebration, whether communal or individual, is allowed as long as it does not fall under “Taunting” definition.

Illegal blocking

Offense – 10 yards

- When an offensive player intentionally drives or “pancakes” the defender with which he is engaged. Severity could result in an unnecessary roughness and/or a flagrant foul.
- Landing or piling on a defender/player on the ground.
- Chip blocking, elbowing and knee blocking.
- Blocking by initiating or leading with elbows, forearms or shoulders - severity may result in a charging penalty or flagrant foul/unnecessary roughness.
- A crack back or any block on a defenseless defender falls under unnecessary roughness and can result in ejection if determined as intentional.

Delay of game

5 yards

- In addition to the offense not snapping the ball within the 30 second play clock, this can include:
- Too many players on the field.
- Not wearing required equipment during a play.
- Defense delays or hinders the offense from making the next snap.

Illegal formation

Offense - 5 yards

Defense – 5 yards

- Fewer than five players on the line of scrimmage for offense. These five players must be contiguous with the center. There must be one player on each side of the center (within both players arm’s length of the center) and one eligible receiver on each side of the center.
- Fewer than two players on the line of scrimmage for the defense.
- Showing blitz directly over the center or aligning any defensive player directly over the center on the LOS.

Offside

Offense – 5 yards

Defense - 5 yards

- If a defensive player enters the neutral zone before an offensive player commits a false start, the penalty is on the defense, even if no contact is made.

- NOTE: For states following the NFHS rule book, offside is called as soon as a defensive player enters the neutral zone. There is no “getting back.”

Diving

Offense – 5 yards, loss of down

- Diving forward in an attempt to gain yardage or advance the ball.
- Diving into the end zone or for a first down.
- Note: A player is allowed to dive to catch the ball or pull a flag.

Flag guarding – if applicable

Offense – 5 yards from POI, loss of down

- When a ball-carrier physically prevents a defender from reaching the ball carrier’s flags. This could be through covering, knocking hands away, slapping hands away, stiff arm etc.
- When the ball-carrier holds his/her belt or flags.
- A jersey, towel or any article of clothing that obstructs the flags.
- A ball-carrier jumping for any reason other than avoiding a player lying on the ground or a quarterback jumping to pass.
- If the ball-carrier is wearing an illegal flag (e.g., wrapped flags, improper flags, partial flags, etc.), the ball will be dead at the point where the ball-carrier takes possession of the ball.

A-gap violation

Defense or offense – Live ball foul only. 5 yards from LOS, replay down

- Any non linemen who makes LOS penetration immediately in the A-gap.
 - A blitz into the A-Gap is allowed if the non defensive lineman blitzes from at least 3 yards depth.
- Any intentional illegal handoff to an ineligible receiver (offensive lineman).
- Any QB sneak in the A-gap from under center.

Inadvertent whistle

- If the game official blows the whistle prematurely or by mistake, the ball is dead at the spot where the ball-carrier was when the whistle was blown. If the whistle occurs early during a play and the ball-carrier has not crossed line of scrimmage, then the play and down is to be repeated.

STANDINGS

- Standings will be based in order on: a) win %, then b) number of wins, then c) head to head, and then d) coin flip (to determine playoff seeding).

NFX reserves the right to modify or change these rules at any time throughout the season.
Updated as of 11/27/2018