

Eastern Nebraska High School Flag Football

(National Federation of State High School Associations football rules are the base rule set with the following modifications)
(Lincoln Falcons, Omaha Eclipse, Omaha Lightning and West Omaha Wildcats) Nov. 2016

Ages -Varsity must be no older than 18 years as of Sept. 1st of the current season

Jr. Varsity must be no older than 15 years as of Sept. 1st (with opposing coach waivers for any older players)

Rule 1 Team

A team consists of eight players, five on the line and three in the backfield (including the quarterback). Backs line up at least one yard from the front line.

Rule 2 Equipment

Since no tackling is permitted, it is not necessary to use padded equipment. Soft pads may be worn on the arms, knees, hands, and thighs. Metal cleats are not to be worn; only cleats made of molded rubber are acceptable. No exposed metal is allowed, other than glasses. This includes jewelry, cleats (tips must be rubber) and splints (must be wrapped with tape). Mouth guards are mandatory. All equipment will be checked by officials prior to kickoff.

Rule 3 Flags

Flags shall be sonic, vacuum-retained socket flags. They are provided by Flag-A-Tag, Inc. Flags are to be in a color that is contrasting to uniforms (i.e. flags cannot be the same color as pants). If your team does not have a set of regulation flags, your opponents may have a set available. However, you are encouraged to order your own. **Shirts are to be tucked in, flags worn tight at the waist, and turned out.**

Rule 4 Uniforms

All teams must have uniform colors that complement each other. No blue jeans will be allowed. Numbers must be on the front and back of jerseys. Numbers should be 6" to 8" in height. It is not necessary to have two colors of jerseys, but if you do - one dark and one of a contrasting light color is needed (preferably white).

The home team has color preference; opposing team is responsible for wearing colors that contrast to that of the home team.

Shorts must be a solid (no stripes or two tones) contrasting color to the flag worn, without pockets or the pockets sewn shut. Tape over the pockets will not be allowed. Coaching shorts are permissible. However, these must be 16" long or 2" from the knees. Shorts that expose any part of the buttocks are not allowed. Regulation football pants or full length warm-ups are both permissible.

No jerseys that are faded or have badly worn numbers/letters will be permitted. All jerseys shall be of the same color and numbered 1-99. It is not necessary for players to be numbered according to position, as is the case for tackle football.

Rule 5 Game Ball

When weather conditions are favorable, a regulation leather or composite ball must be used. A regulation sized rubber ball approved for college and/or high school will be allowed if conditions are wet or muddy. Each team is to provide at least two game balls, and these balls must meet the specifications of the National Federation of High School rules and approved before games.

**Rule 6 Game Play

a. Formations – The offensive line must have a minimum of five players on the line of scrimmage at the start of each play. If the two ends are not on the line of scrimmage, an offside penalty will be imposed. Linemen are not allowed in a 3-point stance. Offensive backs can be in a 3-point stance.

- b. Backs must be at least one yard off the line of scrimmage.
- c. Eligibility for Pass – Quarterbacks, backs, ends, or the two men on the very outside of the line are eligible to receive passes. If the center is on the outside of the line and he tells the referee of the play before the play starts, he is eligible to receive a pass as well. **Trick plays are to be reported to the referees prior to the start of the game.**
- d. Ineligible Receiver – Any of the interior linemen except for the situation mentioned in Rule 6.c, when the center is on the outside of the line.
- e. Illegal Linemen Downfield – An offensive lineman must maintain his position until the ball has left the passer's hand. If he goes beyond the neutral zone before it leaves his hand, he is in violation. An ineligible receiver becomes eligible when the ball hits an offensive or defensive player.
- f. Lateral Pass – A lateral pass is any underhand or overhand pass thrown parallel to the goal line, or in the opposite direction from which the offensive team is advancing. A lateral pass that is dropped shall be considered a fumble and dead where it hits.
- g. Illegal Motion – The offensive line must remain stationary from the time the command "set" or "down" is given until the snap of the ball. Only one back can be put in motion, and he must run parallel to the line of scrimmage. A lineman on the end line can step back a yard and go in motion, but another player must step up to replace him on the line to keep 5 players on the line. Six players can be on the line, but only the outside two are eligible unless one of the outside players steps back off the line and stays set or goes in motion.
- h. Offsides – A player is offsides on defense when he is in the neutral zone before the ball is snapped. **The play will be blown dead immediately.**
- i. The ball carrier is allowed to spin but no hurdling or intentional diving (leaving their feet). The runner may not straight arm an opponent, nor can he deliberately run over a defensive man. **The ball carrier must attempt to avoid contact with the opponent.**
- j. The ball carrier may reach the ball out but must keep his feet: A runner may not jump in between or around another player to avoid a flag pull. Jump passes are permitted as long as not committed to avoid tackle.
- k. If a player loses his flag without it being pulled / influenced by an opponent and they are in possession of the ball, they will be deemed down at the spot where the player is subsequently touched by any player of the opposing team.
- l. The official will mark the down at the **location of the ball when the flag is pulled.**

Rule 7 Safety

If a flag is taken from the offensive team within the end zone, or if a fumble is made within the end zone, the defensive team is awarded two points. The offensive team will have a free kick from the 20-yard line. The kicker can punt or kick the ball from the tee.

Rule 8 Blocking

Blocking is allowed **only with open hands**. The initial block must be on the opponent's torso defined as between shoulders and waist and on their front or side. Blocking in the back will be penalized as clipping. Hands to the neck, face, back, and below the waist are not allowed.

The block must be executed in such a manner that the blow does not drive through the opponent. No part of the blocker's body, except his feet, shall make contact with the ground during the block. Any rough tactics, such as an attempt to run over, push through with hands, the use of extended fists or elbows, or any contact to the head with open hands must be penalized as unnecessary roughness.

Rule 9 Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules

Section 1. Deliberate Flagrant Fouls – Suspension from the game.

Whenever, in the judgment of any game official, the following acts are deliberate or flagrant, the players involved shall be suspended from the game:

- a. Using fists, kicking, or kneeling
- b. Using locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm
- c. Tackling the ball-carrier, as in regulation football
- d. Roughing the kicker
- e. Any other deliberate or flagrant act

Section 2. Prohibited Acts – 15 yard penalty

There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or others subject to the rules. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes the following:

- a. Abusive or insulting language
- b. Any acts of unfair play
- c. Managers, coaches, or others on the field of play at any time without permission, or their interference of any nature with the progress of the game
- d. Players leaving the field of play other than during the intermission at half-time
- e. Using a “hide out play” by placing a player or players near the side line who were not within fifteen yards of the ball at the ready-for-play signal
- f. Attempting to substitute a suspended player
- g. Intentionally pulling or removing a flag from an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player
- h. Spiking the ball, taunting opponent, or other theatrics before or after a touchdown

Section 3. Unfair Acts

If a team refuses to play within two minutes after being ordered to play by the referee, or if play is interfered with by an obviously unfair or unsportsmanlike act not specifically covered by the rules, or if a team repeatedly commits fouls which can be penalized only by halving the distance to its goal line, the referee may enforce any penalty he considers equitable, including the awarding of a score. For refusal to play or for repeated fouls, the referee shall, after one warning, forfeit the game to the opponents.

Section 4. Personal Fouls – Player Restrictions 10-yard penalty

Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul.

- a. No player shall block in a manner that would cause his feet, knees, or legs to strike an opponent. All blocking shall be done with the feet in contact with the ground.
- b. There shall be no high/low blocking.
- c. There shall be no two-on-one blocking, except as indicated by rule.
- d. There shall be no tripping or clipping.
- e. There shall be no contact with an opponent who is on the ground.
- f. The runner shall not be thrown to the ground.
- g. There shall be no hurdling. Hurdling shall be interpreted as an attempt by the runner to jump over a player with both feet or with the knees of the runner foremost.
- h. No player shall contact an opponent obviously out of the play either before or after the ball is declared dead.

If, in the judgment of the officials, fans display un-Christian behavior, it could result in the offender being restricted from game attendance and removal from premises. Any and all fans will be asked to leave the premises if they can't control themselves. Any fan's behavior that is unbecoming or un-Christlike and disruptive to the play of game will become the responsibility of the team's coach. A 15-yard penalty will be given for unsportsmanlike conduct against the team.

Rule 10 Fumble

When a fumble, misdirected snap, or dropped lateral pass touches the ground, it shall be declared dead at that point.

On a kick-off or punt return, if the ball touches the receiver and strikes the ground, it shall be declared dead at that point.

Rule 11 Touchback

A kick-off or punt becomes dead and is a touchback **if it crosses the goal line**. It will then be brought to the 20-yard line.

Rule 12 Scrimmage kicks (Punting, Field Goal and PAT's)

a. The kicker shall have the protection of two stationary players standing five yards from the line of scrimmage and two yards on either side of the kicker. These stationary players shall not move, they shall not block, may not be touched or a defensive player may not go in front of or between them.

They must stand upright with both arms fully extended above their heads. Defensive players must go around the stationary players to accomplish de-flagging of kicker.

b. During a field goal try the holder will **not** be considered as one of the stationary players. **The defensive cannot rush from the side of the holder. He must go around the pillar. He cannot touch any offensive player.**

c. If a punt is to be made, it must be declared to the officials before the start of the play

The offensive team may elect to deep snap the ball to the punter or take a direct snap and run back to a punting position. If punting team elects to deep snap and the ball is dropped by the punter, the ball will be deemed a fumble and be dead at the spot of the dropped snap. If it is on 4th down, a change of possession will occur. If it is on a quick kick, the offensive team retains possession at the spot of the fumble.

d. A quick kick is allowed on any of the first three downs. (The offensive team must declare to the official that they wish to quick kick. Then the defensive team is told not to move until the ball is kicked. Once the ball is kicked, the defense may run back and try to return the ball. Encroachment penalty will be imposed if any defensive player moves before the ball is kicked.)

e. Offside penalty will be imposed for crossing the line of scrimmage too soon.

f. Fake kicks are allowed; the stationary players will lower their arms and may assume blocking postures at the snap of the ball.

g. No player of the kicking team shall touch a scrimmage kick which is beyond the scrimmage line until it has been touched by an opponent who is beyond the scrimmage line.

Rule 13 Kick-Offs

a. Kick-off shall be executed from the 20-yard line

b. Receiving team shall have at least 3 players at 40-yard line

c. The clock shall not start until the ball is touched by a member of the receiving team. No onside kicks are allowed. **The kicking team cannot gain possession of a punt or a kick off by recovering the football.**

d. If there is inclement weather in which visibility is blocked due to fog, rain, snow, etc., the ball will be put to play at the 20-yard line.

e. If ball is kicked out of bounds on the kick-off, the receiving team will have the option of taking the ball at the spot where the ball went out of bounds or at their own 30 yard line.

Rule 14 Tie Game

a. A coin toss determines which side shall attempt to score first, and at which end zone the scores shall be attempted.

b. Each team in turn will receive one possession, starting with first-and-goal from the 10

c. The game clock does not run during overtime; the play clock, however, is enforced.

d. A team's possession ends when it scores (touchdown or field goal), misses a field goal, or turns over

the ball (either on downs or by the defense otherwise gaining possession). As usual, a touchdown by the offense is followed by a try for one or two points.

e. The defense is allowed to score if it gains possession. Regardless of the position of the ball at the end of the play, the team assumes offense and will begin at the 10, if there was no score.

f. Each team receives one charged time-out per overtime procedure

g. If the score remains tied at the end of the overtime procedure, an additional overtime procedure is played. The team with the second possession in one overtime procedure will have the first possession in the next overtime procedure A two point conversion must be tried if a touchdown is scored.

h. If the score remains tied at the end of the second overtime procedure a final overtime will be played. In the third overtime the teams will do alternating two point conversions until one team fails to convert.

Rule 15 Holding

a. Any action against the runner, other than pulling his flag, is considered holding.

b. If a. defender forcing the ball-carrier out-of-bounds is by judgment of the officials is found to be intentional and is the last man between ball carrier and goal, a score will be awarded.

Rule 16 Hacking

Offensive:

It shall be illegal for the ball-carrier to hack, punch, or stiff-arm any defensive player (10-yard penalty from point of foul and loss of down).

Defensive:

The defensive player must play for the ball carriers flags, he's not allowed to try to slap at or strip the football. (10-yard penalty from point of foul)

Rule 17 Miscellaneous Penalties

a. Illegal use of flags – 10 yards

b. Illegal use of offensive backs – 10 yards

c. Offsides – 5 yards

d. Pushing ball-carrier out-of-bounds – 10 yards from point of infraction

e. Ineligible man down field – 5 yards

f. Illegal procedure – 5 yards

g. Delay of game – 5 yards

h. Illegal forward pass or intentional grounding – 10 yards from point of infraction

i. Unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind – 15 yards

j. Pass interference – **10 yards from the line of scrimmage**

k. Unnecessary roughness – 10 yards

l. Hurdling into any player is prohibited in any form – 10 yards from point of infraction (the down counts)

m. Clipping – 10 yards from point of infraction (the down counts)

n. Tackling – 10 yards added to end of run

o. Charging (when offensive man deliberately runs over defensive man) – 10 yards from point of infraction (the down counts) **If the defense player is set, the offensive player must attempt to avoid contact.**

p. Offensive holding – 10 yards

q. Offensive Pass Interference – 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

r. Encroachment – 5 yards

Rule 18 Officials

State, high school or college-approved officials that referee regulation tackle football games will be used. All 8-man games will have 3 officials.

Rule 19 Scoring

- a. Six points for a touchdown
- b. Three points for a field goal
- c. Two points for running or passing extra point (3-yard line)
- d. One point for kicking extra point
- e. Two points for safety

Rule 20 Fair Catch

- a. When a player makes a fair catch, the ball becomes dead where it is caught and belongs to the receiving team at the spot.
- b. A valid catch signal is the extending of one arm at full arm's length above the head and waving the hand from side to side of the body more than once.
- c. A muffed fair catch shall be declared dead when the ball makes contact with the ground.

Rule 21 Playing Field

- a. The playing field shall be eighty yards in length from goal line to goal line. (If available)
- b. Each end zone shall be ten yards in length.
- c. Coaches and players are restricted to sideline area between 20 yard markers
- d. The field shall be forty yards in width from sideline to sideline.

Rule 22 Time

- a. 12-Minute quarters running clock.
- b. 25 second play clock will be used
- c. One minute between 1st and 2nd quarters and between 3rd and 4th quarters
- d. Eight-minute half-time between 2nd and 3rd quarters (five-minute for bad weather and late games)
- e. Three time-outs per team per half
- f. Correctable error is charged to the officials. If ruling stands, time-out charged to team inquiring.
- g. Running clock.
 - a. During the running clock portion it will stop on time-outs, change of possessions, penalties and after **the extra point after a touchdown. There is 1 minute between the score and the kick off.** The clock will start according to official high school rules.
 - b. Two Minute Warning – Clock will be stopped and a warning given to each team captain before the end of the half.

In the last two minutes of the half and the game, regulation time is kept. The clock will stop on out-of bounds, incomplete pass, scores, first downs, change of possessions, and penalties. The clock starts on the ready for play whistle, after officials' time out, first downs, change of possessions, and penalties. For time outs, out-of-bounds and incomplete passes, it starts on the snap of the ball.

P L E A S E T A K E N O T E . . . Any situation not covered in these rules should be brought to the attention of the Team director.

6-Man Exceptions

Rule 1: A team will consist of 6 players, 3 on the line and 3 in the backfield.

Rule 3: Velcro flags are acceptable.

Rule 6: Only three players need to be on the line.

Rule 13: Only 2 players need to be on the 40 yard line during the kickoff.

Rule 18: Only 2 Officials are required.