
BOUNDARY LINES	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
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.
DEAD BALL	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
DEFENSE	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
DOWN	The offensive team has four attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.
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.
INADVERTENT WHISTLE	Official’s whistle that is performed in error.
LATERAL	A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier. There are no legal laterals or pitches allowed in USA Football 7-on-7 Flag.
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 or score. In USA Football 7-on-7 flag, this is the midfield point.
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.
OFFENSE	The team with possession of the ball.

PASS CLOCK	Offensive teams have seven seconds to throw a pass or make a handoff once the snap is made. If the quarterback still has the ball after an official counts off seven seconds, the play is dead and the ball returns to the line of scrimmage as if an incomplete pass occurred.
PASSER	The offensive player who throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
RUSH LINE	An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
RUSHER	The defensive player(s) assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
SHOVEL PASS	A legal forward pitch attempted from behind the line of scrimmage traveling beyond the line of scrimmage.
UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT	A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.
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.

1 / POSITIONS

Offense

1. The seven players on offense consist of a center, a quarterback and five eligible receivers. Two of those receivers must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap – each positioned on opposite sides of the center.
 - a. Center. This player's sole responsibility is to snap the ball to begin the play, a critical skill at all levels of football. The center is the only ineligible player on the field. Once the center has delivered the football to the quarterback – either directly or from a pistol or shotgun formation – the center must remain in position except in the case of a turnover, when he or she is then eligible to pull the ball-carrier's flag.
 - b. Quarterback. This player receives the snap from the center and initiates the play either through a handoff or pass. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the line of scrimmage without first handing the ball off to a teammate and then receiving a second handoff back or receiving a pass.
 - c. Receiver/back. Any player who does not initiate the snap nor receive the snap is considered an eligible receiver/back and can catch a pass. Two receivers must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap – on opposite sides of the center – while the other three are at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage. No player other than the quarterback may line up within three yards of the center.
 - d. The quarterback has 3.5 seconds to pass the ball.

2 / GENERAL RULES

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 40 yards line and has four plays to cross the 20-yard line. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes into possession and the new offensive team starts on the 40-yard line.
5. If the defense intercepts the ball, the ball is dead and teams take over possession at the 30 yard line instead of the 40 yard line.

3 / EQUIPMENT

1. Each player must wear uniformed shirts and flag belts with flags attached by either Velcro/ adhesive or the ball-and-cup model. Teams will use footballs suitable for the age division.
 - a. Flag belts may not be the same color as shorts or pants.
2. Cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
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. Players are required to wear mouth pieces during practice and games.
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.

4 / TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Games are played on a 30-minute continuous clock with two 15-minute halves. The clock stops for timeouts or injuries only, though officials can stop the clock at their discretion for injury, to stop a team from delaying or other unsportsmanlike conduct.
2. Halftime is five minutes.
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.
4. Each team has one 30-second timeout per half.
5. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play and both teams are lined up ready to restart the play.
6. In playoff games only, if the score is tied at the end of 30 minutes, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. The overtime format is as follows:
 - a. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - i. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - b. Each team will take turns getting one play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of its own.
 - i. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the five-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
 - ii. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
 - c. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect
 - d. There are no timeouts in overtime.

5 / SCORING

1. **Touchdown:** Six points
2. **PAT** (point after touchdown) one point from the 5-yard line or two points from the 10-yard line.
3. **Safety:** Two points
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his or 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, a knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
4. At youth levels, after one team is leading by 28 points or more, score is no longer kept. Once a 28 or more point advantage is gained, no PATs are attempted. The game continues in scrimmage mode for remainder of the game.
 - a. All such situations are scored 28-0 for the winning team.

6 / COACHES

1. One coach is allowed on the field to call plays and direct players according to need. Once the quarterback begins his or her cadence, however, coaches can no longer speak and must be behind the deepest offensive and defensive players and out of the action.
2. Coaches can assist in the alignment of their players to facilitate a fast-paced game, but coaches on the field may not provide extra instruction or make audibles to play calls once the players are lined up. Coaches on the sidelines can provide this information to players on the field.

7/ LIVE BALL DEAD BALL

1. The ball is live at the snap and remains live until an official's whistle blows the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage by spotting the ball before each play and signaling ready for play with a short whistle.
 - 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, an official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification prior to the snap to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. The defense may not mimic the offensive team's signals by trying to confuse the offensive players while the quarterback is calling signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
4. A player who gains possession of the ball is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
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
 - b. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap,
 - c. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled
 - d. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds
 - e. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored
 - f. Any part of the body other than feet or hands touches the ground
 - g. The ball-carrier's flag falls out
 - h. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s)
 - i. An inadvertent whistle
8. 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.
9. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team is charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout is not charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.
10. A team with no time out remaining cannot challenge a rule interpretation, though officials can come together independently and reverse a call by unanimous decision.

8 RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's front foot is when the flag is pulled, not the position of the ball.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.
3. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
7. 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.
8. 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.

9 / 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. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage and be in the vicinity of a receiver.
 - c. Quarterbacks cannot spike the ball dead unless the ball travels beyond the line of scrimmage and is in the vicinity of a teammate.
2. A four-second pass clock begins upon the snap and continues until there is a pass. If the four-second clock expires while the quarterback still has the ball, the play is blown dead, a down is lost and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage as if an incomplete pass occurred.
3. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

10 / RECEIVING

1. All players – excluding the center – are eligible to receive passes.
2. A player must have at least one foot inbounds to make a legal reception.
3. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
4. Interceptions change possession. Interceptions are non-returnable. The intercepting team then get the ball at the 30 yard line instead of the 40 yard line..
5. The play is blown dead immediately if an interception is made on an extra-point try. There are no returns on that play.

11 / RUSHING THE PASSER

1. all players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
2. 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.
3. A 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.
4. A rusher who leaves the rush line early (breaks the seven yard area) may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
5. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback.
6. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
7. 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 still results in a roughing the passer penalty.
8. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where he or she lines 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.
9. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s front foot was when flag was pulled.
 - a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone – unless an exception is made for younger age groups, instead returning the ball to the offense on the line of scrimmage or 5-yard line with a loss of down.

12/ 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 the 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. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
 - a. If a defender makes a good-faith flag pull while a receiver bobbles or juggles what will be a complete catch, the ball is down where possession is made.

13/ PENALTIES

General

1. The officials will call all penalties.
2. Game officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Other players, coaches and fans may not question calls.
5. Games and halves may not end on a penalty unless the opposing team declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal line when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

Defensive spot fouls

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

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

Defensive penalties

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

Offensive penalties

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