

8-Man Adult Flag Football Rules & Policies

(last updated: 9/11/11)



You are playing in a football league without pads, a very competitive football league without pads, a league with blocking, running, etc. and no pads. By definition you are playing in a situation that is nearly impossible to referee, nearly impossible to devise rules for. As a player, you must realize this and work on not being so nit-picky about the small rules; the one rule we want everyone to be nit-picky about is the sportsmanship rule. You **cannot**, as a player, do something that is unsportsmanlike. This even includes legal activities, for example, a hard block with 7 seconds to go in a 30 point win to a player who is caught off guard. Yes, it is completely legal but unsportsmanlike. Any unsportsmanlike act can be an ejection even if the referees do not catch the play (director on grounds or videotape). New Rule 2011: Mouth guards are required equipment; the one exception is the QB does NOT have to have a mouth guard.

Suspensions: The league will **suspend** based on best information obtained from referees. Player input will be factored in at about 10% total. Videotape is your only way to appeal. The league will penalize the instigator typically as hard as or harder than the retaliator. The league will simply do it's best to make the best judgment and those judgments will not be perfect. Errors will stand. The only way to guarantee the correct description gets to the director is with videotape.

You are down where your body is located (hips above ground) when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is located (since diving is illegal). Flag Guarding Starting the down without flags will not be a penalty and referees need not delay the game if the snap is forthcoming. The player is simply down upon any touch (one hand).

What Rules Are We Playing Under?

The best description of our rules is to say that we play basic high school rules with an AFA emphasis. The following pages are the rules, in order of importance.

RESTATED: The rules that stand out (the ones you need to know about) are on the first few pages, while rules that are not specific to this league (more general to any football game) are on the last pages. Also, it is important to note that in this league, the referees decide which rules they are playing under and how to enforce those rules. It is the desire of the league that this manual will result in every referee calling the game under the same rules; until that time, the referees still have the final say on all rules.

Players may play on 2 teams:

Players may play on 2 teams during the season, but no more than 2 teams. With 3 games left on your schedule, it is too late to add players. For a player to be eligible in the playoffs, that player must have played at least 3 season games with that team. To be eligible to play on 2 teams in the playoffs, you must have played at least 3 season games on both teams.

Players CANNOT play on 2 teams in the playoffs in the same division. Players who play on 2 teams that end up in the same playoff division must notify the league which team they are playing on during the playoffs.

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Rainy Weather:

During the winter season, WE MOVE GAMES under a specific condition. If a combination of a rainy day with already soggy fields exists, the league will move the grass field game(s) to a synthetic field if possible or the game(s) would be rescheduled for a later time. The later time allows for the few players that cannot be reached to get to the game(s) that have been moved on time. Further, the information about moved games due to weather will be on a hot line at 503-493-9335 and the website will be updated every Sunday morning. You can give that number to your players to call any Sunday morning in question. As of 2009 most games, if not all, are played on synthetic turf.

What size is the synthetic field if 2 games are being played at once, due to the move?

We reserve the right to move games from a wet, rainy field to a synthetic field; when this happens, the synthetic field that has 1 game scheduled will be divided into 2 fields (2 games at once). As of 2009, all most all games are on synthetic turf.

The good news is that the width will be full width (no compromises).

The bad news is that the length will be only 58yards, instead of our usual 100 yards. Keep in mind though, that a standard AFA Flag Football field is only 80 yards, so you are only losing 10 yards, and with our special 'split field rule'- you will might not lose any yardage, in fact you might gain a few... that special 'split field rule' is such- wherever you take over possession, the referees back the ball up 15 yards. It is a '15-yard change of possession rule', which will lengthen the field back to normal dimensions.

Unfair and Unsportsmanlike Acts:

No player will commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Whenever, in the judgment of any game Official, the following acts are deliberate or flagrant, the players involved will be ejected from the game:

- No player will block in a manner that would cause his feet, knees, or legs to strike an opponent (all blocking will be with the feet in contact with the ground and must be "***open hand blocking***")
- There will be no hurdling or diving to advance the ball (A player may dive, jump or hurdle to avoid contact or injury)
- There will be no contact with an opponent who is on the ground
- The runner will not be thrown to the ground
- There will be no unnecessary roughness of any nature
- The ball carrier will not deliberately drive or run into a defensive player
- The defensive player will not deliberately drive or run into a ball carrier
- The center may not be touched until he has begun his pass pattern or stood up to block; ***must be "open hand blocking"***
- ***Listed below: Automatic First Down Plus Yardage Penalty***
- Abusive or insulting language
- Pushing a player out of bounds
- Any acts of unfair play
- Managers, coaches, subs, or others on the field of play at any time
- Players leaving the field of play other than during the intermission at half time

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- Non-players, (subs), interfering with a player or any play while the ball is live
- Using a "sleeper" play, by placing a player(s) near the sideline who were not within the 9 yard-marks at the time of the ready-for-play signal
- The punter delaying the kick
- Attempting to substitute a suspended player will result in forfeiture of the game
- Intentionally pulling or removing flags from players without the ball. Either offense or defense. The penalty is from the "Spot of the Foul", 15 yards
- Roughing the kicker, quarterback, center, or holder. Automatic First Down, in addition to the 15 yard penalty
- Any other flagrant, deliberate, or violent act
- Fighting
- Using locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to rule
- Tackling the ball carrier as in tackle football

Penalty: 15 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be ejected

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. The Referee may award a touchdown when B tackles A on a breakaway or inside of B's 20-yard line. For refusal to play, or for repeated fouls, the Referee will, after one warning, forfeit the game to the opponents.

Forfeiture of Game:

Repeatedly committing fouls in an attempt to delay the game. Forfeiture of game is not a penalty, but an edict by the Referee. Any flagrant foul, in addition to the yardage penalty, results in disqualification. Any fighting will result in ejection of the combatants and a possible suspension.

Any player who touches or threatens an official, an employee or staff member is automatically suspended for a two (2) year period, pending further review; the offender can be banished for life from all events, not just flag football.

Illegal Contact:

In an attempt to remove a flag, both offense (A) and defense (B) are responsible for avoiding head on collisions. B (defensive player) may contact the body and shoulders of A with their hands, but B cannot contact A's face or any part of the neck or head. B may not hold, grasp, push, knock the ball carrier down, or obstruct forward progress in an attempt to remove the flag. B may not knock the ball loose after A has possession. B may not push out of bounds.

Penalty: 10 yards.

Offensive Interference:

We use basic high school rules regarding offensive pass interference. After the ball is snapped, and until a receiver has touched it there will be no offensive interference beyond the five-yard zone while the ball is in flight. The pass does not have to be catchable (to an extent, referee discretion). **Penalty:** 15 yards and loss of down

Blocking Fouls:

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Teammates of a runner or passer may run interference for him by using "open hand blocking", but **will not** use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any matter. **Penalty:** 15 yards

The offensive block will take place with the blocker's arms extended and palms facing the opponent. The block must be initiated on opponent's chest or on either side. Any other block will be illegal. Contact that begins from behind, above the shoulders, (block in the back), or below the waist, (clipping), is illegal. If the person being blocked presents their back to the blocker after a legal block was initiated, no foul shall be called. A blocker may use his hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his balance. A player must be on his feet before, during, and after blocking. No two on one blocking, (double-team). **Penalty:** 10 yards

The offensive runner and team mates will be prohibited from obstructing an opponent with extended hand or arm, (stiff arm). This includes the use of a "stiff arm" extended to ward off an opponent attempting to pull the flags. Stiff arming is never allowed in Portland Football leagues.

Penalty: 10 yards

Defense, (new rule 2011), may block/chuck an "eligible receiver" up until 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. NO contact after 5 yards on eligible receivers.

Flags:

Each player on the field must wear a 'Triple Threat One Piece Belt' with 3 flags, unaltered in any way. The flags must be of contrasting color to the pants. To order, contact the League office and they will sell them at cost, \$3.50 per belt.

Capture of Flag:

If a flag inadvertently falls to the ground, a one-handed tag between the armpits and knees constitutes capture. It is up to the discretion of the officials as to whether a flag fell off or came off by being pulled, you are reminded to play until you hear the whistle. A player while in possession of the ball who touches the ground with any part of his body other than his hands or feet is down at the spot of such touching. **You are down** where your body is located (hips above ground) when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is located (since diving is illegal).

Points:

The following methods will be used in scoring a game:

Touchdown **6 points**

Field Goal **3 points**

Safety **2 points**

Forfeited Game **6 points**

Successful Try-For-Point (P.A.T.) **2 points** – Try is from the 3 yard line

Running, passing or kicking from 5 yards **1 point**

Running or passing from 10 yards **2 points**

There is no mercy rule. In the final 2 minutes, if the score is 18 points or more, the timing rule will be running clock

Try-for-Point:

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An opportunity to score one or two points, if time runs out, will be granted a team scoring a touchdown if score is a **factor**. There will be one scrimmage play unless changed by penalty. A team is given one choice, which cannot be changed, even if a penalty should occur. Example: If a team declares they are going for two points, the ball is placed at the 10 yard line, and even if a penalty should occur, the team will only be able to run or pass, and if successful, (no matter from what distance), the value of the try is two points. The point(s) will be awarded if the try results in what would have been a touchdown or field goal under rules governing play at other times.

If an offsetting foul occurs during the down, the down will be replayed. When Team B incurs a distance penalty during a successful try, Team A will accept the score with enforcement of the penalty from the **30**-yard line. After a successful try for point, the next play will be from the **30**-yard line, unless a penalty on Team A is accepted. No kickoffs in flag football; play starts at the 35 yard line.

Muffed Snaps:

When the ball hits the ground during the snap to the QB the ball is blown dead and the down counts.

Exception: the ball may skip on a "field goal attempt or try via kicking"; however the holder must not take any other action other than holding for the kicker.

During Kicking Game:

Punts

Both teams must have **five** players on the line of scrimmage during any kicking play. Both teams must maintain at least **five** players on the line of scrimmage until the kick is made. Players on the line of scrimmage must remain motionless until the ball is kicked.

Players will be allowed to return punts. Receiving team may block during the kick, but NO blocking is allowed beyond 10 yards of the line of scrimmage and/or once the receiving player touches the ball. If a player attempts to catch a punt and drops it, the ball will be dead where it hits the ground.

A linesman may not raise his arm to distract the kicker. **Blocking is not permitted. Penalty:** 5 yards from previous spot

Kickoffs.

There will be **NO** kickoffs in 8-man league. Instead the ball will be placed on the 30-yard line, and it will be 1st and 10 going out.

The Clock During 'Running Clock':

The clock will start when the ball is legally snapped for the first down of the game; each half consists of 26 minutes running time. In the "first half" the clock will run **continuously** for 25 minutes and then the **last minute** will be regular High School Football "stop time" rules. For the second half of the game, the clock will run continuously until the 2-minute mark, (24 minutes running time). At the 2-minute mark, basic high school timing rules will stop the clock. The only exception to these rules is when the spread on the score is 18 points or higher. When the spread is 18 points or higher the clock will run non-stop (except on a called timeout). Note: the clock **stops** on a "team time-out or an official's time-out".

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The Clock: Unfair Tactics:

The Referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever a team is trying to either conserve or consume playing time by tactics that are obviously unfair. Referees decision is final.

Penalty: 5 yards for first offense and 15 yards for each subsequent offense.

Official Time Out:

The Referee may declare an Official's time out for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules.

Changes in Playing Time:

Referees do not have the discretion to lessen playing time.

A period may be extended by an un-timed down, only when during the last timed down, one of the following has occurred:

A touchdown was scored; the try-for point is attempted as a part of the same half

There was an inadvertent whistle and the down is to be replayed

The penalty from a foul by the defense was accepted

There was fair catch interference and the offended team accepts an awarded fair catch

If there was a deliberate foul by the kicking team and the penalty is not declined

Jogging Tracks:

Respect other park users and stay off of jogging tracks. Please do not park on city grounds.

Please respect the field we are at, as you would your own yard. Please pick up litter after your games.

Having two footballs available:

Offensive teams should have 2 footballs (for when PAT's go over a fence or down the hill, since the clock is running)

Scrimmage:

All plays from scrimmage must be started by a legal snap from a point between the inbound lines, unless the rules provide for a free kick. An Official will mark the line of scrimmage. **You are allowed to skip the snap on an announced punt.**

Entry for Substitutes:

No substitute will enter during a down. Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players. Replaced players must be off the field before the ball is next snapped. **Penalty: 5 yds. Illegal Substitution or 15 yds. Illegal Participation.**

The Ball:

The official ball will be pebble-grained leather or rubber covered and will meet the recommendations for size and shape for a regulation football. The Referee will be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his discretion. During the game each team must use a legal ball of its choice when it is in possession. **Illegal Ball Penalty: 10 yards**

Tie Game:

In our league, because our games are very long we do end with ties.