



Jersey Elite Flag Football Rules Overview

Game

- At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Teams may not choose to defer to the second half.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they have three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except **interceptions**, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

Field

- The field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-Run Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards. However, field size may vary based on field availability for each league.
- No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No-Run Zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.

Rosters

- Home teams wear dark color jerseys; visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
- Teams must consist of at least five players, with a maximum of ten players.
- Teams must start a game with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field, but no fewer than four.

Timing and Overtime

- Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock with two twenty minute halves. The clock stops only for timeouts.
- Halftime is one minute long.
- 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.
- Each team has one 60-second time out per half.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game should be determined a tie. (However, some leagues may decide to institute an overtime period).
- In tournament or playoff situations, an overtime (OT) Period will be used to determine a winner. OT format is as follows:
 - a. Each team is allowed a minimum of one possession. The only exception is if the first offensive team throws an interception. In this case, the game ends with the intercepting team winning.
 - b. First possession choice goes to the winner of regulation coin toss.
 - c. Each team gets a minimum of one possession.
 - d. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
 - e. There are no time-outs.
 - f. Each team will be scored based on yardage gained or points scored:
 - g. Yardage gained – each team will be given one complete series to drive the field as far as they can. The yardage gained will be noted by the official. The team with the most yards gained wins. If both teams score touchdowns and complete the same amount of points in conversions, the process is repeated.
 - i. In the case of an interception, the ball will be marked at either the line of scrimmage or the point where the defender's flags were pulled, whichever is the more advantageous spot to the defense.
 - ii. If Team B intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, Team B wins.
 - h. Scoring – Same as regulation. The team with the most yards gained wins.
 - i. Winning through yardage is equivalent to winning by 6 points for tie breaker purposes.
 - i. Change of Possession:
 - j. Change of possession takes place when Team A's forward progress is halted on downs or scores a touchdown.
 - k. Team B takes possession on the same 5 yard line as Team A and advances in the same direction. Team B begins on the 5 yard line regardless of whether or not Team A's possession ended in an interception.
 - l. Multiple OT periods:
 - m. First OT period – shown above:
 - i. Scoring teams can go for 1 or 2 point PAT.
 - n. Second OT Period:
 - i. First possession goes to loser of regulation coin toss.
 - ii. Scoring teams must go for 2 point PAT.

Scoring

- **Touchdown:** 6 points
- **PAT (Point After Touchdown)** 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line) Note: 1 point PAT is pass only, 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
 - a) A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 12-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
- **Safety:** 2 points
- A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
- **Mercy Rule:** After one team is winning by twenty eight points or more, the losing team gets one offensive series to continue regulation play. If they do not score, the game goes into scrimmage mode playing up to the fifteen minute mark in the second half if time allows. After the fifteen minute mark, the game is over.
- **Scrimmage Mode:** The losing team gets the ball for up to three possessions. Each possession lasts until the team scores or fails to achieve the Line-To-Gain. Points do not count in final score. After three possessions the game is over.

Passing

- The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect.
 - a) If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
- A player must have a least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
- Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

Rushing the Passer

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.

- 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.
- A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
 - a. A legal rush is:
 - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7 yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback.
 - b. A penalty may be called if:
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS and first down).
 - c. Special circumstances:
 - i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, seven second clock in effect.
 - ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before they play, however, if they do send a rusher, the rusher must verify with the official that they are in the correct position.
 - iii. If rusher leaves the 7-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as defender with no offside penalty enforced.
- Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.
- The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
- A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
 - a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

Formations

- Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
- One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
- Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion.
- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.

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

Penalties

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (spot fouls)
- Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question judgment calls.
- Games may not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

