



RULES OVERVIEW

Refer to the full Gridiron Rulebook (V3.9.23) for further details



Game & Field

- Games are 40 minutes long- Two 20 min halves with a continuous clock. A 2 min warning will be announced in the 2nd half. A pro clock will be used in the last 2 min of the game.
- 25 sec play clock.
- Overtime- 1 play playoff- choose 1 or 2 points. 2nd team possession must match to continue to the next overtime or beat them to win. 2nd (and future overtimes) will be 2 pts only until a winner is decided.
- 25 yards wide x 50 yards plus endzones.
- 4 downs to cross midfield for a first down. If you get a first down- 4 downs to score.
- Punts- the opposing team will start on the 5 yard line.
- Interceptions are returnable during regular game play- worth 6 pts. PAT's are returnable and are worth 2 pts (in overtime the conversion play interceptions are not returnable for points)
- Fumbles, or any ball passed backwards, dropped, or a bad snap that goes backwards is dead when it hits the ground. The new spot will be marked where the ball landed.
- Teams may provide their own game ball but they must meet these specifications and are subject to the game official's inspection and discretion. Footballs must be pebble-grained leather or rubber-covered and meet these sizes:
 - *Pee-Wee Sized Ball: 5th Grade and below*
 - *Junior Sized Ball: 6th grade through 9th grade*
 - *Youth Sized Ball: 10th-12th grade*
- For the following divisions you may have one coach on the field and they must be ten yards deeper than their deepest player.
 - **K-1st Grade**
 - **2nd-3rd Grade**

Offense-Passing

- QB has a 7 sec passing clock.
- Only one forward pass allowed per down.
 - Must be thrown from behind the LOS.
- Shuffle passes are allowed- must be past LOS.

Offense- Running or Receiving

- No pitches or laterals BEYOND the LOS. Behind the LOS is allowed but must go backwards.
 - No run zones- (PreK & K-1st Grade do NOT have a no run zone). 5 yards before a first down & goal line.
 - No run zone- no runs no matter what, even if blitzed. An illegal run is defined by the ball carrier crossing the line of scrimmage. You can hand off, pitch, etc behind the LOS but as soon as they cross the LOS it's illegal.
 - Penalties do not remove you from the no run zone. The only way to get out of the no run zone is if the result of the play is a loss of yards that is outside the no run zone.
 - QB's can not scramble. They may run if the blitzer crosses the LOS and they are not in a no run zone.
 - Once the ball is handed off, defenders can cross the LOS.
 - For the ball to be considered as a hand off it must clearly leave the QB's hands and go into the running backs hands. If the QB puts the ball into the running back's chest/stomach and pulls it back that is NOT a handoff. There needs to be "daylight" between the QB's hands for it to be legal. If a play is run where the QB quickly hands it to the RB and he hands it back there must be clear and obvious daylight between the hands of the exchange.
 - Runners may not leave their feet, jump forward, jump to split defenders, or dive.
 - Runners may not lower their shoulder, invoke contact, stiff arm, or any other form of physically breaking free from a defender. This will be a penalty for illegal contact.
 - Only one player in motion at a time. Must be parallel or backwards motion. No forward motion.
 - Receiver must have at 1 foot in bounds to be a successful catch.
 - Flag guarding- a ball carrier may not obstruct the defense from pulling their flag. Ball carriers cannot swat a hand away, stiff arm, or cover up their flags at any time.
 - Snaps must be made between the center's legs.
 - "Center Sneaks" are not allowed. The ball must completely leave the center's hands. The center must take at least two steps backward to receive a handoff.
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Defense

- Blitz line is 10 yards- must be fully behind the 10 yard indicator to be an eligible rusher.
- Offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. Must be given a clear path. Officials will be looking for intent. If the defense showed intent to block the path, they will call the penalty.
- After a flag pull the ball will be **spotted at the players hips- NOT where the ball is. This has been corrected to ensure player safety.**
- The defense may leave their feet to dive for a flag but if they make contact with the ball carrier that will be flagged as illegal contact.
- Defensive players are not allowed to strip the ball from the ball carrier's hands.
- Any player who makes an intentional tackle will be considered for immediate disqualification from the game (official's judgment). 2 tackles in the game by the same player is an automatic disqualification.
- Intercepted passes remain live and may be returned for points.
- Intercepted passes during Point After Touchdown (PAT) attempts may be returned for 2 points.
- If a ball carrier's flag inadvertently comes apart or falls off during the play, the ball carrier will be ruled down where the flag belt is detached. If a receiver has an incomplete or missing flag belt when he catches the ball the play will be called dead where the receiver caught the ball.
- Last Player Rule-If the last defensive player physically contains, pushes the ball carrier out-of-bounds, tackles, attempts to tackle, etc. **without making a clear, safe and legal attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag the offensive team will be awarded a touchdown- IF** the officials reasonably believe a foul is the **only** thing that prevented the ball carrier from scoring.
- Any defensive player who removes the flag from an offensive ball carrier is encouraged to show good sportsmanship and hold the flag above his head (for the official) and then hand the flag back to the ball carrier.

Additional Game Rules

- Onside Kick
 - This option is only available to the team behind in score during the final two minutes of the game and only immediately after the trailing team has scored a touchdown and completed their PAT attempt.
 - After the trailing team has scored and completed the PAT attempt, the team coach of the trailing team must inform the game officials they intend to attempt an onside play.
 - The ball is placed at the offensive team's 5-yard line, going out.
 - The one play is treated exactly like a fourth down play including the assessment of penalties.
 - The offense must advance the ball to or past midfield after all live ball penalties have been assessed in order to retain the ball.
 - If the offense retains the ball, the next zone-line-to-gain will be established (i.e., goal line) and clock operations will go back to normal stop clock procedures.
 - If the offense is unsuccessful with its onside play attempt, the defense will take possession of the ball at mid-field unless the attempt ends up as an interception returned to the end zone for six points and a PAT attempt.
- Mercy Rule
 - The mercy rule will be invoked if the score differential is 27 or more points in the second half.
 - When this occurs, the final score will be recorded as the score at the time the mercy rule was invoked. No more score recording will be done.
 - If both coaches agree, the game may continue as a "scrimmage" and a running clock will be used.
 - Once the Mercy Rule is invoked and coaches agree to continue the game as a scrimmage, the trailing team will begin their possessions at mid-field for the remainder of the game.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE

- **Mutual Respect & Rule Clarifications-** The culture of this league is built around mutual respect. This is how we expect our officials and coaches to interact with each other. We want every coach and every official to introduce themselves to each other until they are on a first name basis. From that foundation of respect, if you don't agree with a rule, it should be a simple respectful question to the official for clarification. In turn, we expect our officials to have customer service and respectfully explain and clarify a call or no call. Simple as that.
- **If there are any vulgar or offensive remarks, gestures, etc from either side- the individual will be removed from the game. The 2nd offense will result in a suspension and the third offense will be a permanent ban from the league. This code of conduct policy includes spectators. Coaches, you must control your sidelines and expect the same level of respect from all spectators. Spectators are not allowed to address officials. The only person who can address an official is the coach.**