



RAW.

JR. CARDINALS

FLAG FOOTBALL

RULEBOOK

Presented by RAW Sports

GAME SETUP AND FLOW

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.

The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offence or defence. Teams will automatically switch sides of the field at halftime and the team that started the game with possession will begin the 2nd half on defence.

The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has another four (4) downs to score a touchdown.

If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team will start a new possession from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team crosses the mid field marker, a new set of downs (4) will begin from where the play has ended.

After crossing midfield, if the offence fails to score after 4 downs are completed, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts at its 5-yard line.

A team will have 40 seconds from the time that the play is blown in by the referee to the time of the snap occurring. Failure to get a play off in the allotted time will result in a delay of game penalty.

EQUIPMENT

1. All players must wear official NFL FLAG belts and flags. All players MUST wear mouth guards at all times while on the field. Game balls should be age specific.

Players must wear shoes. Cleats may not be allowed at certain locations. This will be specified by your league organizer or site director. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.

2. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
3. Players must remove all jewelry and hats. Headbands or winter beanies are allowed.

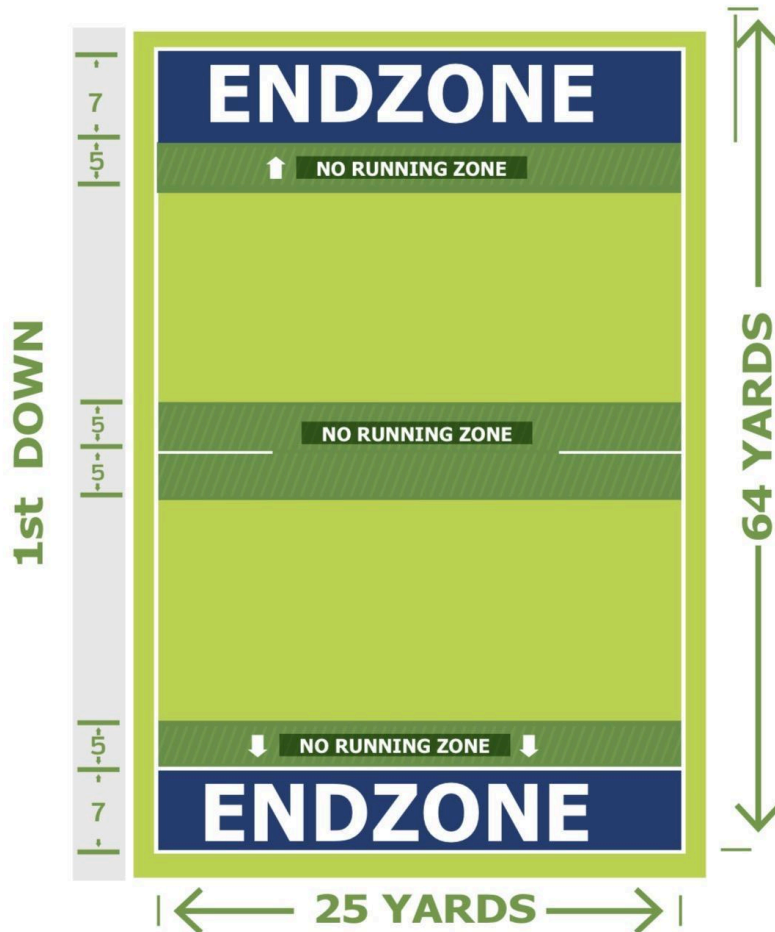
Players may wear soft shell helmets, halos and sunglasses but they must be secured at all times while on the field. Prescription glasses are permitted without a strap.

4. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants, if they hang below the belt line.

We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets or belt loops. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape their pockets.

5. Participants must bring their own official NFL FLAG belts and mouth guards to the field. Extra belts and mouth guards may be available for purchase.
6. NFL FLAG footballs will be provided.
 - Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as the player's shorts or pants.

FIELD LAYOUT



TIMING

Regular Season Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with 2-20 minute halves. If time allows we will have a 2 minute halftime. At the discretion of the league, we may forego halftime in order to stay on schedule. There will however be two distinct halves regardless of whether there is a halftime observed.

SCORING GUIDE

7. Touchdown: 6 points
8. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)
 - A 1 point extra point is pass only; 2 point extra point can be a run or pass.
9. 1pt and 2 pt. extra point conversions or overtime interceptions returned are worth 2 points.
10. Safety: 2 points
 - A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/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, their 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.
11. The coaches, officials and scorekeeper must verify the score sheet. If a coach does not verify.

LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL REGULATIONS

12. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
13. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on offence enters the neutral zone.
14. The game officials may give teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
15. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds, as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand, contacts the ground in the field, while maintaining possession.
16. Substitutions may be made during any dead ball period.
17. The defence may not simulate the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This would be an unsportsmanlike penalty.
18. Any official can whistle the play dead.

Play is ruled “dead” when:

- The ball hits the ground.
 - If the ball hits the ground as a result of a snap, backwards pitch or lateral, the ball will be placed where the ball hit the ground.
- The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
- The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.

- A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
- The ball-carrier's knee, shin, leg, forearm or arm hits the ground.
- The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
- The receiver catches the ball while in possession of 1 or 0 flag(s).
- The 7 second pass clock expires.
- Inadvertent whistle.
- Ball-carrier leaves their feet to dive, jump or hurdle a player.

(Exception: A PLAYER CAN DIVE TO CATCH A PASS OR PULL A FLAG)

NOTE: Fumbles / loss of possession: Ground contact must be made for the play to be dead at that spot.

- A fumble is loss of possession by a player, resulting in the ball contacting the ground.

19. If an inadvertent whistle occurs, the team in possession has two options:

- Take the ball where the whistle blew and the down will count.
- Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

If an IW occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offence will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

20. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced.

RUNNING GAME

21. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

22. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the Line of Scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under centre directly or in shotgun formation.

23. Direct handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place, after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead by the official.

24. The ball shall be placed at the spot possession was lost for the next play.

- “Center sneak” play is allowed as long as the centre crosses the line of scrimmage and the ball is exchanged from the QB to the centre in the air. The QB may NOT handoff the ball to the centre.
- Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

- Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occurred, the 7-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.

25. Definition of a “Legal Handoff” – Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive play to another.

26. Teams are not allowed to run in the 'NO RUN ZONES' - (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

(Exception: U6, U8 will be allowed to run any play within the 'NO RUN ZONES')

27. Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials' judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead and the ball spotted where the jump, leap or hurdle occurred.

28. Ball carriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player. The play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, illegal contact is made, a penalty may be enforced by the official.

29. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.

30. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.

31. 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.

32. Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the current ball carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.

PASSING

33. Only 1 forward pass, thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, is permitted each offensive play. The ball must be released prior to crossing the line of scrimmage. There can be unlimited backward passes behind the line of scrimmage.

- There is no intentional grounding. The quarterback may throw the ball anywhere across the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack.
- All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. All forward passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

34. Shovel passes are allowed and must be a forward pass, from behind the line of scrimmage, and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
35. The quarterback has a 7 second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down counts and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, the 7 second rule is no longer in effect.
 - 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 (LOS) and it will be the next down.
 - If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

RECEIVING

36. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
37. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
38. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offence.
39. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions.

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

40. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. 1 rusher must identify themselves in order to receive an unobstructed path to the QB by raising their hand before the snap. Rushers MUST rush the passer immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is NOT permitted. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend the line of scrimmage.
41. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled backwards behind the line of scrimmage, all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to defend and pull the flag.

A special marker, or the game official, will designate a rush line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

A legal rush is:

- Any rush by the rushers, 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.

- A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off, pitched thrown backwards or a fake by the player receiving the snap.

A penalty may be called if:

- The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, pitch, lateral or pass – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Encroachment (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
- Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, pitched, lateraled or handed off – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- If the offence draws the identified rusher(s) across the 7 yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, the rusher(s) CANNOT legally rush. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to a handoff, pitch, lateral or forward pass.

Teams are never required to rush the quarterback with the 7 second clock in effect.

42. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.
43. The offense cannot impede the rusher's PATH to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offence'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 avoid contact.
44. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is when the flag is pulled.
 - A 2-point Safety is awarded if a flag pull takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

FLAG PULLING

45. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
46. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
47. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.

48. If a player who has one or no flags on their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
49. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flag(s) off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
50. 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, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

FORMATIONS

51. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the centre) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
52. Movement simulating the snap, by a player who is set, is considered a false start.
53. The centre 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.

****Only one player is allowed in motion when the ball is snapped. The player MUST be in motion, off the line of scrimmage. All motion must be parallel or backwards to the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.**

****Players may shift positions on offence at any time, all players must still reset for 1 second, prior to the snap.**

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

54. If the field monitor or game officials' witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the game officials' discretion. No appeals will be considered.

*****INTENTIONAL PHYSICAL PLAY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED!*****

55. Offensive or confrontational language is NOT allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials' will penalize for unsportsmanlike conduct and determine if an ejection is warranted.
56. Players or Coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or game official.
57. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
58. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags. Offensive players may NOT initiate contact at the line of scrimmage with defenders.

59. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:

- Fans should cheer on their players only, not harass officials or opposing team.
- Comments must be clean and profanity free.
- Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
- Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly and adhere to league requirements for the field.
- Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.
- Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.

60. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:

- Defensive penalty +10 yards from the dead ball spot and an automatic first down.
- Offensive penalty -10 yards from the dead ball spot and a loss of down.
 - Two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties on any player or coach in a game result in a disqualification and may lead to additional discipline.

PENALTIES

61. The game officials' will administer all penalties.

- The officials will determine incidental contact that may result from the 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.
- Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offence 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.
- Spot fouls administered in the end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down) / Offensive (Safety).

ii. Defensive spot fouls

Penalty	Penalty Result
Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down

Penalty	Penalty Result
Holding / Illegal Contact	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

iii. Offensive spot fouls

Penalty	Yardage	Down Loss
Screening or blocking	-5 yards	Loss
Charging	-5 yards	Loss
Flag guarding	-5 yards	Loss
Holding / Illegal Contact	-5 yards	Loss

iv. Defensive penalties

Penalty	Yardage Penalty	Automatic First Down
Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards	Yes
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards	Yes
Offside / illegal substitution	+5 yards	Yes
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards	Yes
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards	Yes
Roughing the passer	+5 yards	Yes
Taunting	+10 yards	Yes

v. Offensive penalties

Penalty	Yardage	Down Loss
Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards	Loss
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards	Loss
Offside / false start / illegal substitution	-5 yards from line of scrimmage	Loss

Penalty	Yardage	Down Loss
Illegal forward pass	-5 yards from line of scrimmage	Loss
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage	Loss
Illegal motion	-5 yards from line of scrimmage	Loss
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage	Loss
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage	Loss
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage	Loss
Taunting	-10 yards from line of scrimmage	Loss