

East Liverpool Flag Football 2023



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General Rules

1. Playing Time

- a. All players should receive a fair amount of playing time
- b. All players should feel as if they were a part of all victories and feel some responsibility for all losses.
- c. Our number one goal in this league is to get kids to love PLAYING football.

2. Game Mechanics

- a. Games are played with five players from each team on the field.
 - i. Teams must have a minimum of four players on the field at all times.
- b. At the start of each game, captains meet for a coin toss/ ball flip. The visiting team calls the flip
 - i. Winner of the toss chooses offense or defense.
- c. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40 yard line and has 4 downs to cross the 20 yard line. If the offensive team fails to gain a first down, the defensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40 yard line.
- d. Once a team crosses the 20 yard line, they have 4 downs to score a touchdown. If the offensive team fails to score, the defensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40 yard line.
- e. The team that started the game on defense will get possession of the ball first in the second half.

3. Timing

- a. Each game will consist of two 20 minute halves with a 5 minute halftime.
 - i. Each team will receive one 60 second timeout per half. The time outs do not carry over from the first half to the second half.
 - ii. The clock will also stop during a one possession game for plays that end out of bounds, changes of possession, scoring plays and extra point attempts.

4. Scoring

- a. A touchdown is worth 6 points
- b. Following a touchdown, the offensive team is given the opportunity to score an extra point.
 - i. A 1 point try can be attempted from the five yard line. This is a No Run Zone play.
 - ii. A 2 point try can be attempted from the ten yard line.

- iii. If the defensive team intercepts a ball on an extra point, they can return it past the 40 yard line for a 2 point safety.
 1. The intercepting team will take possession of the ball on the 40 yard line following a safety, provided that there is time on the clock.

5. Equipment

- a. Players are designated as home or away based on the schedule. The away team will wear the white side of the jersey and the home team will wear the colored side.
- b. Players are required to wear protective mouthpieces at all times during both games and practices.
- c. Players must wear the official NFL jersey provided by the league for games. If a player arrives at the game without his/her jersey, he/she may not be permitted to play.
- d. Jerseys must be tucked in at all times. If a jersey is hanging out, lag guarding may be called.
- e. All players must start with their mouth pieces in, jerseys tucked in, lag belts on, and lags properly secured at the hips of each player with the lags pointing outward.
- f. If a player cannot tuck in their jersey due to size, or the jersey will not stay tucked, the player may continue to play with the jersey untucked, provided that the flag belt is worn over top of the jersey.
- g. Molded cleats are permitted. No metal cleats are allowed.
- h. No jewelry, or hand warmers are permitted during the games. Hats with a brim, may be worn backwards only.
- i. Towels are not permitted on the waist of players.
- j. Shorts and pants cannot have open pockets. All open pockets must be taped.

6. Game Balls and Flags

- a. The league will provide each team with its NFL jerseys, lags, and football. Coaches may elect to use a different ball of an equivalent size.
 - i. 8U- Blue Ball or K2/ Pee Wee
 - ii. All others- Brown Ball or Junior Size
- b. Flags must be NFL FLAG sanctioned. Only yellow or green flags provided by the league are permitted
 - i. Team shorts and flags cannot be the same color, i.e. if your flags are yellow, you cannot wear yellow shorts or pants.

7. Coaches and Officials

- a. Coaches and officials must remember that they are the role models for the players in the league
- b. All coaches must be on the sideline at the beginning of each play
 - i. In 8u, one coach from each team is permitted on the field during the play
- c. Only the head coach may approach the referee. Judgment calls cannot be argued.
- d. Protest Rule
 - i. A coach has the right to protest one rule interpretation per game. The head coach **MUST** show the rule in question to the head official and call a "Protest Time Out". The protest must take place before the next play starts. The official must stop the clock and read the rule in question. If no agreeable solution is determined, then an event liaison may arbitrate and will have the final say. If a team protests a rule interpretation and is proven wrong, the team will be charged a timeout. If the team doesn't have a timeout then that team will be penalized for delay of game. Note; you cannot protest a judgment call. A judgment call is at the official's discretion.
- e. At the official's discretion, a warning may be given in place of a penalty to a player or a coach. At this point, the official will explain the rule to the player or coach. Any further instances will draw a penalty flag.
 - i. Warnings should **NOT** be expected by players and coaches, but can be used for instructional purposes.
- f. If there is an inadvertent whistle on a play, the offense has the choice to take the result of the play when the whistle was blown, or replay the down.
 - i. If there is an inadvertent whistle while a pass is in the air, the offense may take the result of the play where the ball is caught, or replay the down.

8. Flag Guarding

- a. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to their flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder, or covering up the flags with their jersey.
- b. Shirts/ jerseys must remain tucked **OR** underneath the flag belt at all times
 - i. Shirts covering a player's flags may be called flag guarding.

9. No Run Zones

- a. No Run Zones come into effect only when the offensive team is approaching a first down or the end zone.
- b. Whenever the offense is in the No Run Zone, they must attempt a pass. If a run play is attempted in a No Run Zone, it is considered an incomplete pass.
- c. No Run Zones do not exist in 8U.

10. Overtime

- a. If a game is tied at the end of regulation, an overtime period will be played.
 - i. The captains will again meet for a coin toss, with the visiting team calling the toss.
 1. The winner of the toss may elect to play offense or defense first.
 2. The team that loses the toss will have the choice in the second overtime period, and subsequent even-numbered periods afterward.
 - ii. The overtime period will be divided up into alternating extra point tries, with each team choosing to go for a one or two point extra point try.
 1. Regular scoring rules apply.
 2. If a team is ahead after both teams have attempted an equal number of tries, that team is declared the winner.
 - iii. In a regular season game, the game is considered a tie if there is no winner after the third overtime period.
 - iv. In a tournament game, the process is repeated until one team is ahead after each team has had an equal number of tries.

11. Mercy Rule

- a. A game shall be considered complete when a team achieves a 35 point lead in the second half
 - i. Every attempt should be made by both coaches to try to avoid a mercy rule outcome.

Offense

12. General Offense

- a. No intentional contact of any kind is permitted and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct/ unnecessary roughness penalty.
- b. Downfield blocking/ screening is illegal. Any offensive player who continues to run with the ball carrier and impedes the defender in any way will be called for an illegal block/ screen.
- c. The ball must be snapped between the center's legs at the beginning of each play.
- d. There is a 45 second play clock between each play

- e. Ball carriers are permitted to spin to avoid flag pulls, but cannot jump or dive to advance the ball. Jumping over a player on the ground to avoid a collision is permitted. Jumping or diving to catch a pass is permitted.
- f. Ball will be spotted at the end of each play where the ball was when the flag was separated from the belt.
 - i. Spots cannot be challenged.
- g. To achieve a first down, touchdown, or extra point, the ball must cross the plane of the line to gain before the ball carrier's flag is detached.

13. Passing

- a. Passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage with one hand, and must cross the line of scrimmage.
- b. Only one forward pass per down.
- c. QB has a seven second pass clock to get the pass off.
 - i. Failure to release the ball within 7 seconds is considered an incomplete pass.
 - ii. If the QB hands the ball off, the 7 second clock is no longer in effect.
- d. Shovel passes are legal, but must be thrown across the line of scrimmage.

14. Receiving

- a. All players are eligible receivers, including the QB if they hand the ball off.
- b. A receiver must have possession of the ball with one foot in bounds for a completed catch.
- c. A receiver is down where their flag is detached from their belt.
- d. A player whose flag is detached may still catch a forward pass, but is marked down at the spot of reception.
- e. If a receiver and defender catch the ball at the same time and both retain possession to the ground, the pass is complete to the offensive receiver and the ball placed at the spot.
- f. A receiver cannot run out of bounds and return to play to catch a pass.

15. Rushing

- a. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff.
- b. There is no limit to the number of handoffs on a play, provided they all happen behind the line of scrimmage.
- c. Any player who receives a handoff may throw a forward pass, provided that they do not cross the line of scrimmage.
- d. It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid contact with defenders in their path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier tried to

avoid the contact. Failure to avoid contact will be considered a charging call. The official may escalate a charging call to unsportsmanlike contact if the ball carrier has committed a previous charging penalty.

Defense

16. General Defense

- a. No intentional contact is permitted.
- b. Defensive players cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is handed off, or they execute a legal pass rush.
- c. Defenders may only try to pull the flags of the player in possession of the ball.
- d. If a defender attempts to pull an offensive player's flag and inadvertently grabs the jersey, the defender must release the jersey completely before they attempt to pull the flag. Failure to do so will result in a holding penalty.
- e. Defensive players must give the offense a one-yard cushion (neutral zone) prior to the snap of the ball.
- f. Diving to pull a flag is permitted, provided that it does not create contact with the offensive player.

17. Flag Pulling

- a. A legal flag pull takes place when a defender detaches the flag of an offensive player in full possession of the ball.
- b. A defensive player may NOT intentionally pull the flag of a player not in possession of the ball.
- c. Defenders may jump or dive to attempt to pull a flag, but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- d. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from a ball carrier's possession at any time.

18. Rushing the Quarterback

- a. The rush marker will be designated by the officials 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- b. Any number of defenders may rush the passer provided that they are behind the rush marker at the snap of the ball. Any rusher that crosses the rush marker before the snap cannot legally rush the passer.
- c. The rusher must establish an angled path to the passer. If an offensive player crosses that path and impedes the rusher, it will be considered an illegal screen.

- i. Once the rush angle is set, the defender loses the “right of way” if his path changes. Any contact will result in a penalty against the player who initiated it.
- d. The rusher cannot run straight into the center. The center has the right of way in his pass route provided he does not cross the established angled rush path.
- e. The rusher may attempt to block a pass or pull the passer’s flag, but cannot make contact with the passer in any way, including stripping the ball from the passer’s hand.

19. Interceptions

- a. Interceptions can be returned for scores.
 - i. A defensive score will occur when the intercepting player returns the ball past the 40 yard line without their flags getting detached.
 - 1. Interceptions that are returned for a score on a scrimmage play are considered a touchdown. Interceptions that are returned for a score on an extra point will be considered a safety.
 - ii. If an interception return does not result in a score, the intercepting team will gain possession of the ball on the 40 yard line.

Penalties

Penalties are called by officials when warranted. A list of infractions and the penalty for each can be found at:

<https://nflflag.com/coaches/default/flag-football-rules/flag-football-penalties>