

# 5 on 5 Brookline Flag Football 2021

## Official Rules and Regulations

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## **I. The game**

1. At the start of each game, captains from each team will meet at center field and will conduct a best of 3 "Rocks, Papers, Scissors" game to determine who shall start with the ball.
2. The winner has the choice of offense or defense. The loser has the choice of direction. Possession of the ball and direction of play will be switched at the start of the second half.
3. The offense 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.
4. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
5. 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.
6. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
7. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

## II. Terminology

**Boundary Lines** the outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and back of the end zone lines.

**Line Of Scrimmage (LOS)** an imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field. This will be marked by an orange marker.

**Line-To-Gain** the line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.

**Rush Line** an imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.

**Offense** the squad with possession of the ball.

**Defense** the squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.

**Passer** the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.

**Rusher** the defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.

**Downs (1-2-3)** the offensive squad has three attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.

**Live Ball** refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties, live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

**Dead Ball** refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.

**Inadvertent Whistle** official’s whistle that is performed in error.

**Charging** the movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.

**Flag Guarding** an act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm.

**Shovel Pass** a legal pass attempted beyond the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot put type manner.

**Lateral** a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct** a rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

### **III. Eligibility**

1. All players' legal guardians must agree to the online waiver form at NFLFLAG.com for their specific league before participating.

### **IV. Equipment**

1. The league provides each player with a flag belt and NFL FLAG powered by USA Football NFL jersey. Teams will use the football provided by their league.

2. Players must wear shoes. Football cleats are encouraged; however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.

3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.

4. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.

5. Official NFL FLAG powered by USA Football NFL jerseys must be worn during play.

6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.

7. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped.

## **V. Field**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive squad approaches only TWO No-Run Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

## **VI. Rosters**

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

## **VII. Timing and Overtime**

1. Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock with two twenty minute halves. The clock stops only for timeouts.
2. Halftime is one minute long.
3. 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.
4. Each team has one 60-second time out per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, there will be a two (2) minute sudden death overtime. Possession will be determined by RPS, the first team to score wins.

## **VIII. Scoring**

1. **Touchdown:** 6 points

2. **PAT (Point After Touchdown)** 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-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 10-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.

3. **Safety:** 2 points

a. 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.

## **IX. Coaches**

1. This is a self-coached sport. Players are responsible for coming up with their own plays. They are also responsible for subbing in and out of the game.

2. Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all time.

2. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and division. Coaches must move to the sidelines before the snap of the ball.

3. Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG powered by USA Football philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.

## **X. Live Ball/Dead Ball**

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - a. The ball hits the ground.
  - b. The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
  - c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
  - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
  - e. The ball carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
  - f. The ball carrier’s flag falls out.
  - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
  - h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
  - i. Inadvertent whistle.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.

8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
  - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
  - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
9. A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official’s rule interpretation. If the official’s ruling is correct, the team will be charged a time out. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

## **XI. Running**

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field, but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
  - a. "Center Sneak" play – The ball must completely leave the center's hands on the snap and he/she must step backwards off the line of scrimmage in order to receive a direct handoff from the QB before advancing the ball.
4. Laterals are allowed, but they must be tossed backwards. If the ball hits the ground it will be ruled dead.
5. "No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive squad 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).
6. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning is allowed, but players may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball, while attempting to avoid a flag pull, is not allowed. Lateral moves to the left or right are permitted.
10. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
11. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
12. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.
13. 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.



## **XII. Passing**

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

## **XIII. Receiving**

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. 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.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. 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.
6. Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

#### **XIV. Rushing the Passer**

1. All players who rush the passer must count outloud to 7 seconds. This must be outloud and can be done by saying MISSISSIPPI. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.

2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

a. A legal rush is:

i. Any rush after the 7 second count from the defensive line of scrimmage.

ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by 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

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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

## **XV. Flag Pulling**

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down once the defender tags them with one hand. (One hand touch)
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. 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, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

## **XVI. Formations**

1. The quarterback can "self snap" or have the center snap the ball to them.
2. 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.
3. 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.

## **XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

1. If the field monitor or referee 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 referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered.

**FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.

4. Ball carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.

6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship, as well:

- a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
- b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
- c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:

- a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
- b. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.