



Flag Football League Rule Book

Dear Team Managers and Players,

On behalf of the City of Spokane Parks and Recreation Department, I would like to welcome you as a participant in our 2018 Flag Football League.

Our goal is to offer quality sports programming at affordable prices and to see that each participant has an enjoyable experience.

Registration is two step process: Enroll your team, build and manage your team roster at <http://www.teamsideline.com/sites/spokane/home>. Next, register your team online at <https://my.spokanecity.org/recreation/sports/flag-football/> or by contacting My Spokane at 509.625.6200. All fees must be paid in order for your team to be officially entered into the league. Feel free to contact me directly at aeva@spokanecity.org or by calling 509.625.6625 if you have questions.

Separate flyers and e-mail notifications with upcoming registration information, fee information and rule updates will be sent to you as they become available. You can also visit our department's web site at for additional information as well.

Please read the rulebook at your first opportunity to familiarize yourself with our league's rules and regulations.

Again, welcome to our program and we wish you and your team a very enjoyable and successful season.

Sincerely,

*Adriano Eva
Athletics Supervisor
Parks and Recreation Division*

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SPECIAL EMPHASIS Spring 2018

1. UNIFORMS

All uniforms/jerseys MUST MATCH! They must be the same color and style. Before the start of the next play, all jerseys must be tucked in. It is discouraged to wear jerseys that stop at the belt line AND jerseys tied in the back.

2. LANGUAGE

Profanity heard by an Official will be a 15 yards.

3. FORFEIT TIMING

Game time is forfeit time. Teams not present by game time will forfeit. Teams missing player cards by game time will be forfeit. Teams may start games with 4 players on the field, but no less. NO EXCEPTIONS.

The team that forfeited the game due to a no-show is disqualified from the post season playoffs, unless they buy their way back into the playoffs. The "buy back" fee is the equivalent to the referee fees, and the rental of the field during that season (\$90 per occurrence).

Teams may also have a game forfeited if they are using an illegal player (player not on the roster at the moment that the game is being played) or an intoxicated player (Player Code of Conduct). In this case, the team is NOT disqualified from the playoffs.

Forfeited games: If game is forfeited even before it starts, the winning team will be awarded the average of points scored (by the winning team) that season as the points for that game.

4. INADVERTENT WHISTLE

Inadvertent whistle: Offense chooses result of the play **at the time the wistle is blown** or replay the down, unless whistle is after a turn over.

5. CAPTAINS & TEAM MANAGER'S MEETING

Attending the Captains & Team Managers meeting is mandatory. An additional \$50 fee will be required of all teams that do not send a representative to the meeting.

THE GAME

1. THE GAME

The game will be played between two (2) teams of five (5) players on a field measuring 75 yards x 70 yards.

The game will be played under the supervision of two (2) Game Officials. The Officials' positions/roles are:

- Referee
- Line Judge

Team representatives, including players, team managers, coaches, and group members, are subject to the rules of the game and will be governed by the decisions of the Officials assigned to the game. **The Referee's decision is final.**

2. LENGTH OF GAME

The game will consist of two halves, each made up of a **20 minute running clock**. **Teams will have two (2) timeouts per half.** The game clock will stop with approximately one (1) minute remaining in the second half only. The clock will then start on the snap. In the last minute of the second half the clock will stop for: incomplete forward passes, out of bounds, time-outs, injuries, first downs, penalties, scores, inadvertent whistles, and change of possession only.

3. TEAM AND PLAYER DESIGNATION

A. Offense and Defense

The Offense is the team which puts the ball in play by a snap; the Defense is the opposing team.

B. Snapper

The snapper is the offensive player who snaps the ball.

C. Quarterback

The quarterback is the offensive player who first gets possession of the ball after the snap.

D. Passer

The passer is the offensive player who throws a legal pass.

E. Runner

The runner is a player in possession of a live ball.

F. Blitzler

The blitzler is a defensive player who crosses the scrimmage line while the ball is live and before the quarterback has released the ball. Blitzlers can get the right of way, **if they raise one hand clearly above the head before the snap remaining up until the snap is complete.** The rush has to be immediately after the snap, quick and straight near to the point where the quarterback receives the snap. If a blitzler is giving an invalid signal, rushing slow, aiming another spot or changing the direction during the rush, he loses the right of way.

G. Player Out of Bounds

A player or ball is out of bounds when it touches anything out of bounds.

H. Disqualified Player

A disqualified player is one who is declared ineligible for further participation in the game.

I. Home Team

If both teams are away from home or at tournaments (more than 2 teams), first mentioned team will be the home team, second mentioned team will be the visiting team.

4- DOWN, SCRIMMAGE AND PLAY CLASSIFICATION

A. Down

A down is a unit of the game that starts with a legal snap after the ball is ready for play and ends when the ball next becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead. A play is the action between the 2 teams during a down.

B. Scrimmage Line

The scrimmage line for each team, when the ball is ready for play, is the yard line and its vertical plane that passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line and extends to the side lines. A player has crossed the scrimmage line if one part of his body has been beyond his scrimmage line.

C. Forward Pass Play

A legal forward pass play is the interval between the snap and when a legal forward pass beyond the scrimmage line is completed or intercepted. Also any forward pass from behind the scrimmage line becoming incomplete or touched by the defense is considered as forward pass play.

D. Running Play

A running play is any live ball action other than that during a legal forward pass plays. Passes completed behind the line of scrimmage are legal and are running plays.

4. Handling of the ball

A. Handoff

Handoff is successfully transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing.

B. Pass and Fumble

A pass is any intentional act to throw the ball in any direction. A pass continues to be a pass until it is completed by a player or the ball becomes dead. A fumble is any act other than passing or successful handing that result in loss of player possession. A pass (or fumble) can only occur after a player gains possession of a ball. For the status of the ball it will be no difference, if the possession is lost intentional (pass or handoff) or unintentional (fumble), a live ball in flight will be considered as pass.

C. Possession

Possession means the firmly holding or controlling of a live ball.

D. Batting

Batting the ball is intentionally striking it or intentionally changing its direction with the hands or arms.

E. Kicking

Kicking the ball is intentionally striking the ball with the knee, lower leg or foot and is illegal.

5. Passes

A. Forward and Backward Pass

A forward pass is determined by the point where the ball first strikes anything beyond the spot of the pass. All other passes are backward passes, even if it is a lateral (parallel to the scrimmage line). A snap becomes a backward pass when the snapper releases the ball, even if it slips from the hand of the snapper.

B. Crosses Scrimmage Line

A legal forward pass has crossed the scrimmage line when it first strikes anything beyond the scrimmage line inbounds.

C. Catch/Interception

A catch is an act of firmly establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. A catch of an opponent's pass is an interception. A player who leaves his feet to make a catch or interception must have the ball firmly in his possession when he first returns to the ground inbounds with any part of his body to complete a pass.

6. Holding, Blocking, Contact and Tackling

A. Holding

Holding is grasping an opponent or his equipment and not releasing it immediately.

B. Blocking

Blocking is obstructing an opponent without contact by moving into his way. An offensive player moving in the line between a defensive player, and the runner or in the way of a blitzer is blocking. A player standing still (with the right of place) is not blocking, even if he is in between the runner and the opponent or in the way of a blitzer.

C. Contact

Contact is touching an opponent with impact. Touching without an effect is no contact.

D. Flag Pull

Flag pull is taking away one or more flags of an opponent with hand(s).

E. Flag Guarding

Flag guarding is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by covering the flag with any part of the body (hand, elbow or leg) or with the ball. Flag guarding is also leaning the upper body forward (diving) or stretching out a hand, with or without the ball, towards the opponent to make it more difficult for the defender to reach the flag.

7. Jumping, Diving, Spinning

A. Jumping

Jumping is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by gaining extra height compared to regular running.

B. Diving

Diving is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by leaning his upper body forward with or without jumping.

C. Spinning

Spinning is an attempt of the runner to avoid a flag pull by turning his body at the vertical axis. Spinning is legal.

8. Right of Place (RoP) and Right of Way (RoW)

A. Right of Place

Right of place is given to a standing player and opponents have to avoid contact. Standing means to remain at the spot and not moving in any direction, to make a move or jump for throwing or catching a pass at this spot does not give up the right of place.

B. Right of Way

Right of way is given to a moving player and opponents have to avoid contact. The right of place is more worth than the right of way.

I. Snapping and Passing the Ball

The Scrimmage

A. Ball Ready for Play

a. No player shall put the ball in play before it is ready for play. *PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.*

b. The ball shall be put in play within 25 seconds after the referee has declared the ball ready for play. *PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.*

B. Starting With a Snap

After the snapper touches the ball, the snapper may not lift the ball, move it forward or simulate the start. Before the snap, the long axis of the ball must be at right angles to the scrimmage line. A legal snap is handing or passing it backward from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous backward motion of the hand or hands and actually leaving the hand or hands in this motion. **The snap need to be between the snapper's legs.**
PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.

C. Offensive Team Requirements

There is no minimum number of players at the line of scrimmage.

i. After the snapper touches the ball and before the ball is snapped all players must be in bounds and behind their scrimmage line.

ii. All players of the offensive team must come to an absolute stop and remain stationary in their positions for at least 1 full second before the ball is snapped or a motion starts.

iii. No offensive player shall make a false start or make a movement that simulates the beginning of a play.

iv. When the snap starts, one player may be in motion, but not in motion toward his opponent's goal line.

PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.

- v. The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage, unless he has released the ball and it has been returned to him.
- vi. When the ball is on or inside the 5-yard line going towards the opponent's end zone (no-running-zone), the offense has to make a forward pass play. If the quarterback or runner gets de-flagged behind the scrimmage line before a forward pass play has happened, it is no penalty for a run play within the no-running-zone. *PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the scrimmage line.*
- vii. The quarterback has **5 seconds** to throw the ball after receiving the snap. If this limit is exceeded the ball becomes dead at the scrimmage line. *PENALTY - Loss of down at the scrimmage line.*

D. Defensive Team Requirements

- i. Before the ball is snapped all players must be in bounds and behind their scrimmage line.
- ii. After the ball is declared ready for play no defense player may touch the ball.
- iii. No player shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play. *PENALTY - 5 yards.*
- iv. At the snap, all blitzers have to be 7 or more yards away from their scrimmage line. All other defensive players have to stay behind their scrimmage line until the ball has been handed off, faked handed off, or passed from the quarterback.
- v. A maximum of 2 blitzers can ask for the right of way. If more players raise their hand simultaneously, all of them lose the right of way and it is an illegal signal. There is no need for them to rush, it is only a request for the right of way. On the other hand, there is no need for an ask to be allowed to rush without the right of way.
- vi. A player who is less than 7 yards away from their scrimmage line cannot raise his hand to simulate being a blitzer. *PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line.*

E. Handing the Ball

An Offense may use multiple hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage.

- i. No player may hand the ball to a teammate except an offense player who is behind his scrimmage line.
- ii. No snapper may receive a forward hand-off. *PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.*

Passes

A. Backward Pass

A runner may pass the ball backward at any time.

B. Complete Pass

Any pass caught by an eligible player touching the ground in bounds is completed and the ball continues in play unless completed in the opponent's end zone.

C. Incomplete Pass

Any pass is incomplete if the ball touches the ground when not firmly controlled by a player. It also is incomplete when a player leaves his feet and receives the pass but first lands on or outside a boundary line. When a forward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the previous scrimmage line; this is the dead ball spot. When a backward pass is incomplete, the ball belongs to the passing team at the spot of the ball hitting the ground; this is the dead ball spot.

D. Illegal Touch

All inbound players are eligible to touch, bat or catch a pass. The quarterback is only allowed to catch a pass if the ball has been touched by any other player before. No offensive player who goes out of bounds by himself during a down shall touch a pass in bounds or while airborne. If an offensive player is forced out of bounds and immediately returns to the field of play, he is still eligible. *PENALTY - Loss of down at the scrimmage line.*

Forward Pass

A. Legal Forward Pass

A player may make one forward pass during each scrimmage down before team possession changes, provided the pass is thrown from a point behind the scrimmage line.

B. Illegal Forward Pass

A forward pass is illegal:

- i. If thrown by an offense player who is beyond the scrimmage line when he releases the ball.

- ii. If thrown after a runner has gone beyond the scrimmage line.
- iii. If it is the second forward pass by the offense during the same down.

C. Pass Interference

Pass interference rules apply only during a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the scrimmage line. Physical contact is required to establish interference. Pass interference is contact that interferes with an opponent player when the ball is in the air. It is the responsibility of the defensive players to avoid the opponents. It is not pass interference when 2 or more eligible players are making a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to touch, bat or catch the pass. Eligible players of either team have equal rights to the ball. *PENALTY - Offense pass interference: 10 yards from the previous scrimmage line and loss of down.*

Defensive Pass Interference: Automatic first down at the spot of foul. If the spot of foul is in the end zone of the defense, the ball will be spotted at the 2 yard line.

Note: Contact on a pass play before the pass has been thrown or if the pass does not cross the scrimmage line, is a contact foul.

II. Fouls

Contact Fouls

A. Initiating Contact

- i. No player or coach shall contact an opponent or official.
 - ii. No player may step, jump or stand on another player.
 - iii. No player may hold another player.
 - iv. All players have the right of place. Opponents have to avoid contact.
 - v. The runner is in charge to avoid contact with the opponent players.
 - vi. All offensive players have the right of way as long as the ball has been thrown or a runner crosses the scrimmage line. Defensive players have to avoid contact. When the ball is in the air all players have the right to play the ball, but not by targeting (playing through) the opponent.
 - vii. All eligible blitzers, with legal signal, have the right of way and offensive players have to avoid contact.
- Note: If there is no contact, it still could be a block by the offense player. *PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot.*

B. Targeting an Opponent

- i. Even with the right of way no player shall target an opponent and contact him.
- ii. No player shall try to attack a ball in possession or take away the ball from the runner. *PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot.*

C. Game Interference

- i. No substitute or coach may interfere in any way with the ball, a player or an official while the ball is in play. *PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot.*

Noncontact Fouls

A. Unsportsmanlike Acts

- i. Use of abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning.
- ii. If a player is neither returning the ball to the next spot nor leaving it near the dead ball spot. *PENALTY - 10 yards, enforced from the basic spot.*

B. Unfair Acts

- i. No player shall block an opponent. *PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.*
- ii. No runner shall jump or dive. *PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down if by offense before team possession changes, enforced from the spot of foul.*
- iii. No runner shall commit flag guarding. *PENALTY - 5 yards, also loss of down if by offense before team possession changes, enforced from the spot of foul.*
- iv. No player shall pull a flag from an opponent other than the runner or an opponent who fakes to be the runner. *PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.*

- v. No player shall kick a pass. This foul does not change the status of the pass. *PENALTY - 5 yards, enforced from the basic spot.*
- vi. Participation by 6 or more players is illegal participation. *PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line, enforced from the basic spot.*
- vii. Coaches and substitutes may not be outside the team area during a down. *PENALTY - 5 yards, spot of foul is the scrimmage line.*
- viii. No player wearing illegal equipment or missing mandatory equipment shall be permitted to play. A player with a bleeding wound must leave the field. Players have to leave the field immediately after ordered to do so by an official. *VIOLATION - Charged timeout. Penalty – 5 Yards, if no timeout left.*

Penalties

AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN (AFD)

Defensive pass interference (at the spot of foul)

LOSS OF A DOWN (LOD)

Delay of pass
Illegal touch
Illegal backward pass [also 5 yards]
Illegal forward pass [also 5 yards]
Jumping or Diving [also 5 yards]
Flag guarding [also 5 yards]
Offensive pass interference [also 10 yards]

LOSS OF 5 YARDS

Illegal kick by runner
Illegal snap
Delay of game
Illegal snap
Encroachment
False start
Illegal motion
Illegal run play
Offside
Disconcerting signals
Illegal blitz
Illegal blitzer signal
Illegal handoff
Illegal backward pass [also LOD]
Illegal forward pass [also LOD]
Blocking
Jumping or Diving [also LOD]
Flag guarding [also LOD]
Illegal Flag pull
Illegal kicking a pass
Illegal participation
Side line interference
Illegal Substitution

LOSS OF 10 YARDS

Offense Pass interference [also LOD]
Illegal contact
Targeting
Game interference
Unsportsmanlike

CHARGED TIMEOUT

Player with wearing illegal equipment not leaving field

Player with missing mandatory equipment not leaving field
Player with bleeding wound not leaving field

