

City of Duluth Flag Football Rules – 2019

Gameplay:

- A coin toss determines first possession. The loser of the coin flip will select which end zone to defend.
- Each team should select two captains to be present at the coin toss; a visiting team captain (listed first on the schedule) shall call the coin in the air.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its own 5-yd line and has four plays to cross midfield. After crossing midfield, the team has four plays to score a touchdown.
- If a team fails to cross midfield or score a touchdown after four tries, the opposing team takes possession of the ball at its own 5-yd line.
- All possession changes, with the exception of interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yd line.
- There are no kickoffs, punts, tackling, or blocking.
- Each game is composed of two halves. Each half is 25 minutes long, running time (with some exceptions). Possession will change at half.
- Teams shall switch sides at halftime, there will be a 5-minute break between halves.

Players, Uniforms, Officials, and Game Scheduling:

- Team rosters are assigned by the City of Duluth
- Teams must field a minimum of six players to start a game.
- All games are played at the Wheeler Athletic Complex in West Duluth (35th Avenue & Grand). Games are scheduled at 5:30 and/or 6:30pm.
- All players must receive equal playing time.
- Uniforms, flag belts, and footballs are provided by the City of Duluth.
- Jerseys MUST be tucked in to avoid interference with flag pulling.
- Only shoes with rubber soles or molded, non-removable cleats are allowed.
- All players must wear a protective mouthpiece.
- Game officials are assigned by the City of Duluth.
- Any concerns about officiating should be directed to Nick Budnik at 730-4314, nbudnik@duluthmn.gov
- Any coach, parent, or player verbally or physically abusing a referee will be ejected from the game, and suspended from league play for the remainder of the season.
- Cancellations will be announced by 4pm on game days. Please call the league line at 218-730-4321 for information.

Game Timing:

- Games are played to 50 minutes, running time, with the following exceptions:
 - o Team or official timeout
 - o Player injury
 - o Halftime
 - o After PAT plays within the second half two-minute warning.
- The halftime clock stoppage only allows the teams to switch sides without the clock running. The clock will begin running at the first snap of the second half. Teams may not use this time as they would a timeout.
- Each team has one 60 second and one 30 second timeout per half.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- There is no overtime.

Scoring

- The following point values are assigned to scoring plays
 - o Touchdown: 6 points
 - o PAT by running: 1 point
 - o PAT by passing: 2 points
 - o Safety: 2 points
- A player may return an interception for a touchdown, interceptions on a PAT can be returned for 2 points.
- PAT plays shall be spotted at the 5-yd line.

- A game official will keep score of the games. However, no standings are kept. Only coaches should request the score from the official.

Running

- The quarterback may only run the ball if they are rushed. No QB sneaks or draws are allowed.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage.
- Laterals and pitches are allowed in the 4/5th and 6/7th GRADE DIVISION ONLY. These are allowed anywhere on the field.
- “No Running Zones” are located inside 5-yds from the goal line and midfield. These are designed to avoid short-yardage, power running situations. Only Exception is if the Quarterback is rushed.
- Any player who takes a hand-off behind the line of scrimmage may attempt a forward pass, as long as it is made behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players may not leave their feet to avoid their flag being pulled. They may dive for the ball to catch it.
- The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

Receiving/Passing

- All players are eligible to receive forward passes, including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- Before the ball is snapped, only one offensive player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot in bounds, with possession, to record a catch.
- Shovel passes are allowed.
- The QB has a 7 second passing clock. If the pass is not thrown within these 7 seconds, the play is blown dead with loss of down. The ball should be spotted at the previous line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7 second clock is no longer in effect.
- Interceptions change ball possession and can be returned.

Defense:

- All pass rushers must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the play begins. A referee shall be stationed 7 yards out so players can see where they are allowed to be.
- Any number of players may rush the QB.
- Players not rushing the QB may defend at the line of scrimmage.
- No tackling or blocking is allowed.
- If a ball is fumbled and a defensive player catches it before it hits the ground, the defense shall take possession of the ball.

Dead Balls:

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to the side, to start play.
- A play is dead in the following situations:
 - o Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - o Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - o A touchdown or safety is scored
 - o Ball carrier's flag falls off
 - o Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
 - o The ball is fumbled and hits the ground (there is no possession change on fumbles).

EXCEPTION: A snap that hits the ground before it gets to the QB or a fumbled snap shall not stop play, OR a ball is fumbled and caught before the ball makes contact with the ground.

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

Sportsmanship

- The following unsportsmanlike conduct may be cause for the offending player to be ejected:
 - Tackling
 - Intentional, aggressive elbowing/shoving
 - Cheap shots
 - Trash talking
- Officials should use their best judgment in determining unsportsmanlike conduct. Players/coaches are entitled to one warning, then a penalty and/or ejection, unless it is a flagrant foul, in which case the ejection should take place immediately.
- Point of emphasis: It is important that referees do not issue more than one warning. Penalties should be issued after the first warning.
- Celebrating a touchdown is NOT a penalty unless the opposing team is intentionally being taunted.

Officiating and Penalties:

All penalties shall be enforced from line of scrimmage.

- Offense
 - False start: 5 yards – no loss of down.
 - Illegal motion: 5 yards – replay down
 - Illegal advancement (forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage or diving to avoid flag being pulled) – 5 yards, loss of down.
 - Delay of game: 10 yards – no loss of down
 - Flag guarding: 10 yards – loss of down

- Pass interference: 10 yards – re-play down
- Blocking/holding: 10 yards – re-play down
- Intentional grounding: 10 yards – loss of down
- Unsportsmanlike conduct: 15 yards – no loss of down.

- Defense

- Encroachment prior to play: 5 yards – replay down (automatic first down when the assessed yards bring offense past mid-field).
- Offsides at snap: 5 yards – automatic first down
- Illegal rushing: 10 yards – automatic first down
- Pass interference: Foul spot – automatic 1st down
- Illegal contact: 10 yards – automatic first down
- Illegal flag pull: 10 yards – automatic first down
- Unsportsmanlike conduct: 15 yards

- Notes

- Penalties occurring on PATs will be enforced by allowing a replay of the PAT and appropriate loss/gain of yards due to penalty.
- Referees should use their best judgment when determining penalties and incidental contact.
- Only coaches may ask referees for rule clarifications.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless it is declined by the offense.
- Penalties cannot move an offensive team more than halfway to their opponent's goal line.
- On plays where both teams commit penalties, they offset and the down is played over again.
- In the event of an accidental whistle, the play shall be dead and the offensive team may choose to play the down over or take the spot where the whistle was blown.