

SHAFTER RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

NFL FLAG FOOTBALL: RULES AND REGULATIONS

Dimensions of the Field:

30 yards wide, 70-yard length including, 2 End Zone 10 yard deep.

Football Size:

Junior

Start of the Game

1. Five (5) players. Minimum of four (4) players must always be on the field.
2. A coin toss determines which team takes first possession of the ball. The designated away team for the game will call the coin toss. The winner of the toss has the option to begin on offense or defense. The team that begins on offense in the first half will begin on defense in the second half.
3. Teams switch directions at the beginning of the second half.
4. All Coaches must coach from the East sideline.
5. Coaches are required to pick up any trash on the field left by their team.

Time Situations

1. ***The referee may stop the clock at their own discretion.***
2. **Each team is allowed one 60-second timeout per half.**
3. **Timeouts do NOT carry over into the next half.**
4. Games are played with **two 20-minute halves** and a **two-minute half-time**.
5. **The clock will automatically stop at the one-minute warning of the second half only if the score of the game is within an 8-point differential.** During this period,
  - a. the clock will also stop to set the cone (down mark),
  - b. for an incompletion,
  - c. an extra point,
  - d. when a first down is obtained or if out of bounds

**SCORING**

1. A touchdown is equivalent to 6 points.

EXTRA POINTS

1. Following a touchdown the offensive team is given an opportunity to score an extra point.
2. **1 Extra Point** is attempted five (5) yards out from the goal line. This is a “NO RUN” zone.
3. **2 Extra Points** is attempted twelve 12 yards out from the goal line.

SAFETIES

1. Play with the possibility of safeties.
2. A safety occurs when one of the following happens;
  - a. The QB or ball carrier is downed in his/her end zone,
  - b. The QB or ball carrier runs out of bonds inside his/her end zone, the quarterback or ball carrier fumbles the ball in his/her end zone,

- c. A bad snap resulting in the ball landing in offensive end zone,
  - d. An offensive penalty occurring inside the offensive end zone.
3. If a **safety occurs**, the team that scored the safety will be **awarded 2 points and will receive the ball on their 5-yard line.**

### **GENERAL RULES/POSSESSIONS**

1. For each possession the offense has three downs with a fourth down option to obtain a first down at midfield, if midfield is obtained, the offense then has three more downs to reach the end zone.
2. **Fourth down option** – On the first half of the field ONLY, a team has a fourth down decision to make. A team may either choose to “**GO FOR IT**” or to declare a “**TURNOVER**”. If a team decides to “**GO FOR IT**”, they will have one play to cross midfield. If successful with this attempt, a first down will be awarded. If not, the opposing team will take possession of the ball at the point of the failed conversion. If a “**TURNOVER**” is decided this will effectively end the drive resulting in a change of possession. The ball will be placed at the 5 yard line.
3. A **first down** is only obtained **one of two ways**:
  - a. The offense reaches midfield within three downs with a fourth down option or
  - b. A defensive penalty occurs with the result being an automatic first down.
4. If the **offense fails to reach midfield** (first down line) or **fails to reach the end zone**, the result is a **turnover**.
5. Most possession changes will start at the offensive team’s 5-yard line. **Exception: Interceptions will be placed at the spot of the interception for our 8U and 6U. Interceptions can be returned only in 14U & 10u.**
6. A **safety occurs when one of the following happens**:
  - a. The QB or ball carrier is downed in his/her end zone, the QB or ball carrier runs out of bounds inside his/her end zone, the quarterback or ball carrier fumbles the ball in his/her end zone.
  - b. A bad snap resulting in the ball landing in offensive end zone.
  - c. An offensive penalty occurring inside the offensive end zone.
7. A **5-yard (15 feet) buffer zone** is in place during all games. This buffer zone completely surrounds the playing field. This zone assists in maintaining the safety of our players and spectators during game play. Only coaches, players, and league personnel are allowed within this zone during the game. Coaches are asked to assist us with the enforcement of this rule.

### **OFFENSE**

1. NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT of any kind is permitted.
2. Downfield blocking is illegal. Any offensive player who continues running AND impedes the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull the ball carrier’s flag will be called for illegal blocking.

3. The ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start a play. Shotgun snaps are allowed. • There is a 45-second huddle clock, which starts once the line of scrimmage is marked and the ball is spotted.
4. 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. A motioned player does NOT need to stop, prior to the snap of the ball.
5. **No laterals of any kind**, anywhere on the field are legal.
6. Spinning is permitted.
7. **Jumping or diving to ADVANCE the ball is illegal.** However,
  - a. An offensive player may jump over a defensive player on the ground to avoid a collision.
  - b. Jumping or diving to catch a pass is permitted.
8. The ball will be spotted at the location of where the flag was, when it was separated from the belt.

#### PASSING

1. **QB has a seven (7) second “pass clock.”**
2. If the pass is not thrown within seven seconds, **the play is ruled dead, with a loss of down. The ball is placed at the original line of scrimmage.**
3. If the **ball is handed off**, the seven-second pass rule is no longer in effect.
4. There is **only one forward pass per down.** All passes must be **forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.**
5. **Passes must be thrown behind the line of scrimmage, including feet.** Failure to comply, results in a loss of down.

#### RECEIVING

1. **All players are eligible to receive passes, including the QB,** but only if the **ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage first.**
2. **A receiver must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.**
3. **A receiver is down where his or her flag belt is pulled.**
  - a. **Exception: To achieve a first down, or a touchdown, the ball carrier’s flag belt and ball, must cross the plane of the first down line and/or goal line.**
4. If a receiver’s **flag inadvertently falls off**, even without contact from another player, **that player is ruled down at the spot the flag fell off.**
5. If a receiver’s **flag inadvertently falls off prior to receiving the ball and later in the same play catches the ball without replacing the flag**, the receiver **will be down immediately at the point of reception.**
6. In the event that **a receiver and defender both catch the ball at the same time**, and both retain possession to the ground, **then the tie would go to the receiver, with receiver being down at the point of the tied reception.**
7. **A receiver can’t run out of bounds and then come back in bounds to catch a ball.**

## RUNNING GAME

1. **Only “direct” handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff.** A player **must completely let go of the ball**, to be considered a **legal handoff**.
2. There **is no limit to the number of handoffs** that can be performed by the offense in a single play, so long as the ball never crosses the line of scrimmage.
3. The QB can run the ball only if he/she has first handed the ball off behind the line of scrimmage and then taken a “direct” handoff back from another player before the ball has ever crossed the line of scrimmage.
4. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball, as long as he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage first.
5. It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection

## NO RUN ZONE

1. **“No Run Zones”** are enforced in all divisions. 5 yards before getting a first down & 5 yards before an endzone.
2. **“No Run Zones”** are designed to avoid short-yardage situations.
3. **“No Run Zones”** come into effect only when the offensive team is approaching a first down or the end zone. Exception: If the offensive team has already achieved a first down but has been pushed back into a “No Run Zone”, then the “No Run Zone” is no longer in effect.
4. Whenever within the “No Run Zone” the offense must pass.
5. If a run play occurs while inside the “No Run Zone”, the play is immediately dead with the consumption of a down.

## **GENERAL DEFENSE**

1. **NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT** of any kind is permitted.
2. Defensive players cannot pass the line of scrimmage, until the ball is handed off.
3. Defenders must only attempt to grab an offensive player’s flags when trying to get them down.
4. If a defender **attempts to pull an offensive player’s flags and inadvertently grabs their jersey**, the defender **must immediately and completely release the jersey before they can reattempt to pull the flag**. Failure to do so will result in a **holding penalty**.
5. All defensive players must give the offense a one yard cushion prior to the snap of the ball. Diving after a flag IS allowed.
6. Interceptions will be spotted at the point of the interceptions.

## FLAG PULLING/GUARDING

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
  - a. cannot tackle,

- b. 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. **A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.**
- 5. **Flag Guarding** is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by
  - a. Stiff arming,
  - b. Dropping the head,
  - c. Hand,
  - d. Arm,
  - e. Shoulder or covering the flags with the football jersey.

#### RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

1. **You may only rush the quarterback in the 10u & 14U DIVISION.**
2. The rusher mark (red cone) will be designated by the referee seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
3. **Any number of players may rush the quarterback** as long as **they are behind the rush marker when the ball is snapped.**
4. **If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball,** that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However,
  - a. Any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead.
  - b. Jumping the rush is not considered a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to a hand off or a passed ball.
5. **The rusher must take an angled path to the QB. If this path is crossed AND contact is made involving the rusher and any offensive player, then an offensive impeding penalty will be assessed.**
6. **The rusher CANNOT run straight into the center.** The center has the **right of way** so long as the **center remains at the in his/her original spot at the time the ball was snapped.**
7. **Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage.**
8. **The rusher may attempt to block the pass, but it is a penalty to contact the quarterback's arm.**

#### **PENALTIES**

##### OFFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of that Down

1. False start
2. Off-sides
3. Illegal motion
4. Offensive impeding
5. Delay of game
6. Attempting to run from a "No Run Zone"
7. Offensive pass interference
8. Too many players on the field

9. Improper equipment - (equipment tampering, lack of mouth guard, pants or shorts with pockets, jersey un-tucked, illegal cleats, missing or improperly placed flags)

**OFFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 Yards from the Spot of Infraction and Loss of that Down**

1. Flag guarding
2. Illegal ball advancement – (jumping or diving to advance the ball, laterals)
3. Intentional contact – (blocking, charging, tackling, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff arming)

**OFFENSIVE UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT - 15 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of that Down**

1. Unsportsmanlike conduct – (using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar gestures, disrespectfully addressing any persons, illegally stripping or attempting to strip the ball, spiking or kicking the ball, spiking or throwing flag, fighting, excessive celebrations.) This includes all team members, coaches, and families/fans representing the team.
2. Depending on severity of incident, players, coaches, family members, and/or fans may be subject to ejection.

**DEFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 Yards from the Line of Scrimmage, Automatic First Down**

1. Roughing the passer
2. Intentionally removing a receiver's flag belt before he/she contacts the ball
3. Illegally rushing the quarterback
4. Too many players on the field
5. Coach interference – (remaining on the field during a play)
6. Improper equipment - (equipment tampering, lack of mouth guard, pants or shorts with pockets, jersey un-tucked, illegal cleats, missing or improperly placed flags)

**DEFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 Yards from the Spot of Infraction, Automatic First Down**

1. Defensive Pass Interference
2. Intentional contact – (blocking, charging, tackling, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff arming)

**DEFENSIVE UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT - 15 Yards from End of Play, Automatic First Down**

1. Unsportsmanlike conduct – (using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar gestures, disrespectfully addressing any persons, illegally stripping or attempting to strip the ball, spiking or kicking the ball, spiking or throwing flag, fighting, excessive celebrations.) This includes all team members, coaches, and families/fans representing the team.
2. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
3. Depending on severity of incident, players, coaches, family members, and/or fans may be subject to ejection