



Flag Football Rules

GENERAL

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

- All participants must agree to the [Waiver of Liability](#).
- The waiver can be accepted on each participant player's dashboard.
- A waiver must be signed for each league that is participated in.
- All participants in the league assume the risk of injury. The PSL, its volunteers, and employees shall not be liable for injury to person, loss or damage to personal property arising from or in any way resulting from participation in the league.

COVID PROTOCOLS

- All participants must sign and acknowledge our [Covid-19 Waiver and Hold Harmless Agreement](#)
- It is recommended that all players:
 - Wear Masks
 - Social Distance
 - Avoid gathering in large crowds before or after your games
 - Sanitize Often
 - Conduct daily symptom assessments. Anyone experiencing symptoms or has come into contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 14 days must stay home.
- All participants must check-in with an official at each game with proof of identity that matches your roster name.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.
- Any behavior that is deemed violent, harassing, and/or inappropriate in any way, as witnessed by the umpire, referee, or PUMP/PSL staff, will result in the actions outlined in our [Sportsmanship Policy](#).
- A player who is ejected from a game must leave the premises immediately. Play will not resume until the ejected player has left.
- Officials reserve the right to end a game at any point if the overall sportsmanship is out of line.

- Captains are to be the team liaison to discuss any call or rule with an official during game play.

ROSTERS & PLAYERS

SUBMITTING A ROSTER

- Each team must submit a roster with a minimum of 8 and maximum of 15 players.
- No player may register for more than one (1) team within the same league without prior approval from the PSL.
- Rosters must be submitted and a waiver form must be signed before any player may take the field.
- Rosters must be submitted by the date outlined in your registration email.
- All rosters must be finalized and no changes are allowed after the 2nd week of play. Any changes after your first game must be emailed to PSL staff.
- No player who is not on your roster and signed a waiver form may play in the league.
- Only rostered players will be eligible for playoffs.

PLAYERS

- A team consists of 5 players (2 women minimum).
 - As per our [Inclusivity Statement](#), players should register and play in the way that most closely aligns with their gender identity.
- A team can start play with a minimum of 4 players (2 women minimum).
 - If 2 women are available then 2 women must be on the field at all times.
- Teams may pick up a maximum of one (1) player from another team in the league to avoid forfeit.
- Teams may not pick up a player from the opponent they are scheduled to play that day.
- Teams cannot pick up substitute players for playoffs.
- No substitute player may enter during a down.
- Between downs any number of eligible subs may replace players.
- All players must be within 5 yards of the huddle before every play.

GAME SCHEDULE

START TIME & FORFEITS

- All games will start at their scheduled time.
- If a team does not have enough players to start the game by 5 minutes after the scheduled start time, they will forfeit.
- If enough players to start the game arrive between 5 and 10 minutes after the scheduled start time, the game will be officiated and played as a scrimmage but will still be recorded as a forfeit.
- Once 10 minutes after the scheduled start time has passed, the game is still recorded as a forfeit and the teams are allowed to use the remaining time to practice or organize a pickup game. Officials are not required to stay and officiate.
- Teams forfeiting one (1) or more times during the regular season will be ineligible for playoffs.

Updated: 11/2022

- Teams must submit a [forfeit notification](#) when they are unable to make a scheduled game.
 - Teams who submit a forfeit notification three (3) or more hours in advance of their game will receive a 14-0 loss.
 - Teams who submit a forfeit notification one to two (1-2) hours in advance of their game will receive a 21-0 loss.
 - Teams who submit a forfeit notification with less than an hour before their game begins will receive a 28-0 loss.

GAME LENGTH/GAME CLOCK

- Regulation game length is 40 minutes broken down into two 20-minute halves.
- Halftime is 3 minutes long.
- The clock will run continuously except for the following reasons:
 - Team time-outs
 - Officials' discretion
 - Player injury
 - 10 seconds will run off the clock in the last minute of the game if the injured player is on the offensive team
 - After the conversion attempt following a touchdown
- The referee will keep the clock.
- The clock will stop for the 1-minute warning in the first and second half.
- During the last minute of the first half and the last minute of the game, the clock will stop for:
 - Incomplete passes
 - When a player carries the ball out of bounds
 - Change of possession
 - After a touchdown
 - After the conversion attempt following a touchdown
 - Team timeout
 - Official's timeout
 - Player injury (10 seconds will run off the clock if the injured player is on the offensive team)
- The clock does not stop on a fumble.
- The clock will not run during the point of conversion.
- When the clock is stopped, it will restart upon the snap.
- Mercy Rule: when a team is up 25 or more points, the clock will not stop for any reason unless the point differential goes back under 25 points.
- Each team will receive two 1-minute timeouts per half.
- Any game that is canceled once it has started will be considered final if there is less than 10 minutes remaining in the 2nd half.
- Any game that has more time left when play is called will be made up from the beginning regardless of score.
- The play clock will begin when the ball is spotted, and teams will have 20 seconds from the time the ball is spotted to start the next play.

OVERTIME

- During the regular season games can end in a tie and there will be no overtime.
- Rules for the playoffs will be the same as during the regular season, except games cannot end in a tie. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game will go into overtime. A coin toss will determine who will have first choice of the following:

offense, defense, or goal to defend. The losing team will choose from the remaining options. Once a goal has been established for overtime play, we will not switch sides of the field for any reason. Each team will receive the ball on the 6-yard line and they will have 4 plays to score. If they score, they must go for a two-point conversion. This is how play will continue until a winner is decided.

RULES

PLAYING FIELD

- The playing field is 50 yards long and 30 yards wide.
- There will be 2 first down markers on the field, one at each 1/3 length of the field.
- Since we cut the field in half, the penalties will also be halved.
 - Something that was a 15 yard penalty will now be a 7 yard penalty, and something that was a 10 yard penalty will now be a 5 yard penalty.

GAME PLAY

- There are no kickoffs; initial possession is determined by a coin toss.
- All possessions start from the 6-yard-line in the offensive team's end of the field.
- For the 2nd half, the teams will switch sides, and the team that did not receive the initial possession shall receive possession to begin the 2nd half.
- When a flag belt is pulled, the ball will be placed at that location and not the location of the ball.
- If a player accidentally loses their flag belt during play, or starts a play without their flag belt, and comes into possession of the ball, that player is down at the point of possession.
 - If the player without their flag belt comes into possession of the ball behind the line of scrimmage that player is considered down at the line of scrimmage.
- There is no punting.
- On 4th down, the offensive team may elect to try for a first down or score or give the opposing team the same spot 15 yards away from the line of scrimmage.
 - These 15 yards will be given in lieu of a punt.
- Diving is illegal to advance the ball or to block.
- Jumping to advance the ball is illegal.
- A player hurdling over another individual to advance the ball is illegal.

OFFENSE

- The offensive team must start with at least 2 players on the line of scrimmage, anywhere across the entire width of the field.
- Once the center has placed their hands on the ball, no offensive player may enter the neutral zone.
- Only 1 player may be in motion at the snap, and he/she/they may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
- The ball must be snapped from the ground at the start of each play.
- The snap must go BACKWARDS not sideways or diagonal as determined by the referees.
 - It doesn't have to be snapped between your legs, just from the ground and directly backwards.

- A man cannot quarterback two successive downs during a single possession.
- A woman is allowed to pitch or hand the ball to a man behind the line of scrimmage who can then pass it; however, in this situation, the defense is allowed to rush as soon as the ball is pitched or handed off. The man will not be able to advance past the line of scrimmage to avoid the rush.
- A woman must either run the ball or receive a pass attempt every 4 downs.
 - A first down, loss of possession, or a score resets this rule.
- Free kicks or quick kicks are not allowed.
- Any fumble that hits the ground is ruled dead at the spot. It cannot be recovered or advanced by either team.
- A player is considered down if anything but a foot or a hand touches the ground.

RUNNING

- The offensive team's MEN cannot advance the ball by running across the line of scrimmage after receiving a hand-off or pitch behind the line. Only women may advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage in this manner, and she/they must get BEYOND the line of scrimmage in order for the play to count towards 'female' INCLUSION.
- After the snap, the line of scrimmage (which is the distance between the front and back tip of the football) becomes neutral territory.
 - If a flag belt is pulled at the line of scrimmage, it is not considered female intent or a blitz.
- A man QB who receives the direct snap can advance the ball ONLY when the defense crosses the line of scrimmage with a blitz or rush.
 - If the man quarterback hands or pitches the ball to another player and then receives the ball back while still behind the line of scrimmage, he/they cannot run, even if rushed.
- A woman player may run at any time.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes, including the quarterback once the ball has been handed off.
- The receiving player must retain possession of the ball after his/her/their flag belt has been pulled or after contacting the ground for the pass to be ruled complete.
- If a player is in the air, attempting to catch a ball, the player must contact the ground with at least 1 foot in-bounds with the ball in their possession prior to going out of bounds.
 - If the receiver has possession of the ball and is knocked out of bounds by an opposing player before contacting the ground, the reception is ruled complete and the team with possession will receive the ball at the point where the flag of the receiving player went out of bounds and a 7-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike/tackling will be assessed.
- If a pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball is dead at that spot and possession is retained by the team that snapped the ball.

PASSING

- All forward passes must be made from behind the line of scrimmage.
- A forward pass is illegal if:

- The passer crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball leaves their hand
 - There is more than one forward pass
 - There is no receiver in the immediate vicinity
 - Any contact of a forward pass BEHIND the line of scrimmage by an offensive player
 - A forward pass is caught behind the line of scrimmage (to a man or woman)
- A player may not intentionally throw a pass out of bounds or at the ground to conserve time or to avoid being downed.
 - Laterals (pitching or passing the ball in a parallel or backward motion) are allowed.
 - The defense is allowed to rush if a lateral is done behind the line of scrimmage.

BLOCKING

- The offense may have as many players blocking as desired.
- Hands must be kept within the width of the body.
- A player may not extend their arms towards another player to block.
- No Bull rushing.
- A player's may not run through another player.

SCORING & CONVERSIONS

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Conversions at the one-yard line = 1 point
- Conversions at the ten-yard line = 2 points
- Conversion turnover resulting in a touchdown = 2 points
- Safety = 2 points
- After a touchdown, the team will attempt a conversion.
- The offensive team will have one play to move the ball into the end zone.
- Either a man or a woman may quarterback on the conversion, regardless of who quarterbacked the previous play.

DEFENSE

- Defensive players may line up anywhere beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Players must not be moving toward the line of scrimmage if blitzing.
- A defensive player may enter the neutral zone as long as he/she/they is clearly outside of the neutral zone at the time of the snap, and does not contact an opposing player.
- Defensive players may rush past the line of scrimmage after a 3-second count by the referee.
- Once every 4 downs, the defense may blitz (cross the line of scrimmage) before the 3-second count.
 - A first down resets this rule.
- The defense is also allowed to rush if the ball is pitched or handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- When rushing, hands must be kept within the width of the body.
- A defensive player may not contact a member of the receiving team beyond the line of scrimmage unless the offensive player has touched the ball.

- Incidental contact is allowed, but will be determined by the referees.
- A player may not hold, push, or knock down the runner in an attempt to remove the flag belt or break up a pass
- In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, a defensive player may contact the body and shoulders (incidental only), but not the face, neck, or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands.
- No player is allowed to strip the ball from an opposing player.
- No defensive player is permitted to chuck or check a receiver at the line of scrimmage.
- LAST PLAYER BACK - The last defensive player capable of making the play.
 - If a touchdown or extra point was prevented by a player (i.e. the last defensive player capable of making the play) who deliberately tackled, held or pushed the ball carrier out of bounds, the officials have the authority to rule it as a completed TD or extra point.
- Safety
 - If a player carries the ball across the goal line he/she/they is defending, and the ball becomes dead while in his/her/their team's possession, it will be ruled a safety.
 - The opposing team will receive 2 points, and will receive the ball 15 yards from where a free kick would take place.
 - A safety will also be declared if the offensive team commits a penalty inside the end zone they are defending.
 - EXCEPTION: If a player's momentum carries him/her/them into the end zone and the ball is declared dead there, the possession is given to the player making the catch at the spot where the pass was intercepted.

EQUIPMENT/CLOTHING

- PSL issued flag belt must be worn at all times.
 - The belt buckle must be in front -- middle waist of the player.
 - No part of the belt can be tucked into a player's clothing.
 - The belt CANNOT be tied.
- All players must wear like-colored shirts tucked-in, and have no clothing which could impede the removal of the flag belt.
- Cleats may be worn, but no metal spikes are allowed.
- Shorts or pants with pockets are not permitted to be worn.
- You cannot tape your pockets.
- Any player who has shorts or pants with pockets WILL NOT BE ALLOWED to play. No exceptions.
- Dangling jewelry such as hoop earrings, chains, bracelets, etc. may not be worn during game play.

PLAYOFFS

SEEDINGS

- Playoffs are based on win/loss record.
- The number of teams to qualify for playoffs will vary from season to season based on the number of teams registered.
- To find out what time each seed will play, please check out our [FAQ's page](#).

TIEBREAKERS

- All teams tied in the standings will use the following tiebreakers, in order, to determine seeding
 - Most regular season wins
 - Head-to-head
 - Least points allowed
 - Most points scored
 - Least points given up vs highest ranked common opponent
 - If teams play a common opponent an uneven number of times, the next highest common opponent is used.
 - If teams have same runs/points given up vs common opponent, the next highest common opponent is used.
 - Coin toss
- 3-way tiebreakers: When 3 or more teams are tied; all teams will be ranked on the same criteria as opposed to knocking a team out then returning to the top of the tiebreaker list. Tiebreakers will be applied until all teams that are tied can be ranked using the same criteria. If the teams did not play one another in an even number of games then "head-to-head" will be skipped.

CITY OF PITTSBURGH FIELD RULES:

<http://pittsburghpa.gov/dpw/field-permit>