

NHFFL

New Hampshire Flag Football League OFFICIAL RULES

GAMEPLAY

- Game is played 5 on 5.
- The offense takes possession at its 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 3 plays to score. If the offense fails to cross midfield or fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over at their own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes start at the 5-yard line with the exception of interceptions. Interceptions may be returned.
- There are NO fumbles. Play is dead and ball is spotted where players hips at the point of the fumble. Ball can not be fumbled forward.

OFFENSE

- 1 offensive coach is allowed on the field in the huddle. Once the ball is snapped, the coach on the field can no longer communicate, coach, or direct the players in any way. If coach chooses to get off the field after the huddle breaks, there are no restrictions.
- Ball must be snapped thru the legs.
- Quarterback can be under center or in the shotgun.

Running the Ball

- Quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. There are no pitches or laterals.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage.
- “No Running Zones” are located 5 yards from the endzone and 5 yards from midfield.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball.
- Ball is spotted where the ball carrier's hips are when the flag is pulled – not where the ball is.
- There are no “stiff arms” or flag guarding permitted.
- Ball carrier must avoid contact. Can not run through defensive player. Must run around.
- There is no diving or jumping forward - Jumping side to side or backwards is permitted - spinning is acceptable - airborne while spinning is acceptable.
- Handoffs to the center are legal as long as it is not handed back between the center's legs and the center is still behind the line of scrimmage.
- Only 1 player may possess the ball at a time. This means 2 players Can Not have their hands on the ball at the same time. Example - Run Pass Option. Play will be blown dead - ball placed back at line of scrimmage - loss of down.
- The play where multiple players come into a huddle formation and one player breaks away with the ball referred to as the "Huddle Play" is illegal due to the high probability of contact.

Receiving

- All players are eligible to catch a pass. (including Quarterback assuming the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.)
- Receiver must have possession and at least 1 foot inbounds when making a reception. If both feet land simultaneously with 1 foot in bounds and 1 foot out of bounds, the pass is ruled incomplete.
- Only 1 receiver is allowed in motion at the time of the snap.

Passing

- All passes must cross the line of scrimmage. Ball can be thrown underhand or in any manner as long as it passes the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a “Seven Second Clock”. If a pass is not thrown within seven seconds, play is dead, next down.
- Once the ball is handed off, the “seven second clock” no longer applies.

DEFENSE

- 1 defensive coach is allowed on the field but must leave the field when the offense breaks huddle.
- The referee will mark a “blitz line” 10-yards from the line of scrimmage. All players who start beyond the “blitz line” are eligible to rush the passer. There is no blitz allowed in the 5-6 division.
- Any number of players are allowed to rush the passer, as long as they start beyond the blitz line.
- Once the ball has been handed off, the blitz line no longer applies and all defensive players are allowed to cross the line of scrimmage. (except 5-6 Division. Players are not allowed to cross line at any time)
- There are no fumbles. Ball is dead when it is fumbled. You are not allowed to strip the ball - Stripping the ball will result in an illegal contact penalty.

SCORING

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Extra Point = 1 point (From 5-yard line, must be a pass)
- = 2 point (From 10-yard line, run or pass)
- Safety = 2 points
- If the defense intercepts the pass on a conversion attempt and returns it all the way for a score the defense will be awarded 2 points.

GAME TIME / CLOCK STOP

* Games consist of (2) 20 minute running time halves.* Each team has 2 timeouts per half. Timeouts do not carry over.* The clock does not stop at the 2 minute mark in each half. It will stop inside the 2 minute mark in each half when:

- Pass is incomplete.
- Ball carrier runs out of bounds.
- Team scores.
- Clock will not run on conversion attempts inside the 2 minute mark.* Referee can stop clock at any time at his discretion.

PENALTIES

* All penalties are 5 yards except defensive pass interference, illegal contact, and defensive holding which are spot fouls (these penalties also result in an automatic first down for the offense) If a penalty occurs, the opposing team has the option to decline the penalty and take the result of the play or accept the penalty and replay the down.* Trash talking or cheap play will not be tolerated. It will be at the referee’s discretion. Warning - Penalty - Ejection may occur.* Game can not end on a defensive penalty unless it is declined by the offense.

Offensive- yardage replay the down (Defense can take result of play or penalty)

* These penalties are marked off from line of scrimmage.

- Off Sides – Play starts with player lined up over the line of scrimmage.
- False Start - Player leaves early towards line of scrimmage prior to snap. ***This is the only penalty that cannot be declined.***
- Illegal Motion – More than one player in motion at same time at the snap of the ball. It is legal to reset the formation at any time up to the snap of the ball. The penalty occurs when more than one offensive player is moving at the snap of the ball.
- Illegal Forward Pass – Player passes ball beyond line of scrimmage.
- Offensive Pass Interference – Pick play or pushing off a defender.
- Delay of Game – Teams have 30 seconds to get off the play when the referee spots the ball and signals the start of the 30 second clock. Warning may be given prior to penalty being called.

* These penalties are marked off from the spot they occurred. ***Yardage loss of down***

- Flag Guarding – Ball carrier guards his flags by knocking or blocking defender hands away.
- Blocking / Shielding – Offensive player impedes defender’s route to ball carrier.

- Charging - If a defender has established area, the ball carrier must make adjustment to avoid contact. Ball carrier can not run through the defender.
- Intentional Grounding – pass does not cross line of scrimmage and passer is under pressure. NOTE: Intentional grounding in end zone will result in a safety.
- Impeding the blitzer - An offensive player can not intentionally interfere with the defensive blitzer. This penalty is called when the referee deems the offensive players intent was to impede the blitzers path to the QB

Defensive- yardage plus replay down (Offense can take result of play or penalty)

* These penalties are marked off from line of scrimmage.

- Off Sides – Play starts with player lined up over the line of scrimmage.
- Illegal Rush – Player starts rush inside 10 yard blitz line. Ineligible defender crosses line of scrimmage before handoff. Referee will mark 10 yard blitz line. Defender may ask referee for confirmation that he is behind blitz line.
- Roughing the Passer – Any contact with the QB when he is in throwing motion regardless of whether the defender hits the ball or not.

* These penalties are spot fouls and automatic 1st down:

- Holding / illegal contact – Defender grabs ball carriers shirt, shorts, etc.or in any manner that impedes the ball carrier.
- Pass Interference – Defender interferes with offensive receiver.
- Illegal Contact - Flag Football is a non contact sport. Players must control their momentum. Referees discretion depending on severity and intent. Offending player may be given warning or possibly ejected from game.
- Diving is illegal only when contact is made. A defensive player may dive to grab a flag. It becomes an illegal contact penalty when contact is made. It makes no difference if the flag was pulled.

Last Man Standing Rule - Player is heading for a score with only 1 defender to beat. If the lone defender holds or illegally contacts the offensive player in an effort to stop the player from scoring, the score will be awarded. Note- the offending player may be ejected from the game.

Mercy Rule

* If a team gets up by 35 points in a game, the score is considered final. The game will continue but the team that is up by 35 points is no longer allowed to blitz on defense or pass on offense. This rule is not optional.

Tips for Success

Instruct players to stay on their feet as much as possible as leaving feet may cause illegal contact/penalty and a higher risk of injury.

Blitzer – Ask if they are in correct position to blitz. Same for players on line of scrimmage.

Promote good sportsmanship, hand the flag back to the player they pulled it from.