



PORTAGE ROCKET FLAG FOOTBALL RULES (PRF 2025)

Portage Rocket Flag is an approved NFL Flag League that plays by NFL Flag rules with a few modifications.

Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start the first half with the ball. The visiting team will call the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Teams may NOT choose to defer to the second half.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its own 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield or turn the ball over on downs. Once a team crosses midfield, they then have four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
4. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or fails to score, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
5. Interceptions are live and returnable. Offense will take possession at their own 5 yard line, if defender does not score. If inside the defense's 5-yard line, offensive possession will start at the 5 yard line as well.

Terminology

- Boundary Lines: The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
- Line of Scrimmage (LOS): An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
- Line-to-Gain (mid field): The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
- Downs: There are 4 downs to reach mid-field line or score. After down 3, the ball is turned over.
- Rush Line: An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the LOS.
- Passer: The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
- Designated Rusher/Blitzer: NO Rusher for 4-6 year old division. The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/ her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass. Must start 7 yards from the LOS prior to the snap. **Must identify self by raising a hand.**
- Live Ball: Refers to the period that the play is in action.

Terminology Cont.

- Dead Ball: Refers to the period immediately before or after a play.
- Charging: An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field.
 - This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
- Flag Guarding: An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand, arm, or ball.
- Shovel Pass: A legal forward pass across the LOS underhand, backhand or hinge the ball forward.
- Lateral: A backward or sideway toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct: A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.
- Neutral Zone: All defensive players must start beyond this location prior to the snap. For 4-6 & 7-8 division, it is 5 yds from the LOS. For 9-10 division, it is 3 yds from LOS.

Equipment

1. NFL FLAG provides each player with a flag belt and NFL flag. Teams can use the football provided by PRF, or they can use the footballs provided by NFL FLAG.
2. Players must wear shoes, and football cleats are encouraged, but not required. Football cleats with metal exposed are not allowed and must be removed.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers if needed. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and kneepads.
4. Players must remove all watches, earrings, and any other jewelry that the officials may deem as hazardous. Earrings not removable must have tape covering it. Necklaces and mouthpieces with ropes that go around the players neck is not allowed.
5. Mouthpieces are required for each player.
6. Official NFL FLAG jerseys must be worn during game play.
7. Player's jerseys must be tucked into their pants if they hang below their flag belt line.
8. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped to prevent injury.
9. Pants or shorts should not be same color as flags.

Field Dimension/Rosters

FIELD

1. Dimensions will be approximately 60 yards long by 30 yards wide with approximately 8-yard end zones. (Adjustments may be necessary to accommodate available field).
2. There will be a midfield “line to gain”) (GREEN CONE) to establish the first down marker.
3. Yellow cone at each end will establish the 5-yardline drive marker, blue cone is the extra point marker.

ROSTERS

1. Home teams wear dark colored jerseys while visiting teams wear light colored jerseys.
2. Teams must start a game with a minimum of 5 players present. In the event of an injury during the game, a team with less than 5 players may play with four players on the field at one time (no less than 4).
3. Each player shall have a minimum of 8 plays per half.

Rules

1. All games are rotating between Portage West Middle, Portage Northern, & Portage Central.
2. Coaches can have their team arrive 30 minutes prior to game time for warm-ups, etc.
3. Each half is 25 minutes running clock, half time is 2 minutes long.
4. There will be no playoffs/tournament, scheduling adjustments may be made after week 4 to encourage overall fair play.
5. Each time the ball is spotted, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive a warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
6. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
7. The official will determine the line of scrimmage, designated rush line (7 yards) and also the neutral zone (non-rush defense line) that is 5 yds for 4-8 yr old division and 3 yds for 9-10 yr old division.
8. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on offense or defense enters the neutral zone before the snap.
9. The officials may give each team a “courtesy warning” for any neutral zone infractions.
10. A player who gains possession of the ball, while in the air, is considered in-bounds if one foot comes down in the field of play.

Rules Continued

11. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offense players while the quarterback is calling out the signals to start the play – 1st offense = warning; 2nd offense = 5 yd penalty.
12. Substitutions may occur on any dead ball.
13. If a player's flag (S) FALL(S) out – then the 2-hand touch rule is in affect to rule an offensive player down.
14. Play is ruled dead when: A. The ball hits the ground. B. The ball carrier's flag is pulled. C. The ball carrier steps out of bounds. D. A TD, PAT or safety occurs. E. The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground. F. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flags (missing one or both) G. Inadvertent whistle
15. There are no fumbles – the ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble. The offensive team retains possession of a fumble, even if it is “recovered” by the defensive team.
16. In the case of an interception, the ball is live to return and score. The intercepting team will take over possession at their own 5 yard line. If the interception occurs in between the 5-yard line and the goal line, or in the end zone and flag is then pulled – the ball will be placed at the intercepting teams 5-yard line.
17. If the score is tied at the end of the 2nd half – the game ends in a tie, there are no overtimes. (Playoffs will adhere to CFB OT Rules, each team has one possession and gets one play from the ExtraPt cone)
18. No Run Zones – Within 5 yards from midfield and endzone for 7-8 & 9-10 year old divisions, team must complete a pass play (no designed runs plays). If a blitz is declared, then the QB can run.

Scoring

1. Touchdown = 6 points
2. PAT (point after touchdown) (run) = 1 point, (pass) = 2 points
3. All PAT's are attempted at the 7-yard line
4. Safety = 2 points
5. Interception conversion return are 2 points.
6. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his or her own end zone. They will be called down when their flag is pulled by a defensive player, if their flag falls out while in their own end zone, and are touched with 2 hands by a defender, if they step out of bounds in the end zone, or they hit the ground with their knee or arm while in the end zone.
7. In an event of a safety, the team that was on defense when the safety occurred, is awarded 2 points, and possession of the ball at their own 5-yard line.

Coaches

1. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct and assist players according to need and division.
 - a. 5–6-year-old division: 1 coach on each side of field prior to and when ball is snapped. Each coach must move back away from the play prior to the snap.
 - b. 7–8-year-old and 9/10-year-old division: Offensive coach (1) may step back from huddle for the snap of ball. Defensive coach (1) must return to sideline prior to snap of ball.
2. Coaches are expected to adhere to the Portage Rocket Football coaching philosophies and codes of conduct.

Formations

1. The offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and can have a maximum of 4 players on the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
2. The QB must be off the line of scrimmage.
3. Lateral motion prior to the snap of the ball is allowed by only one offensive player.
4. Forward motion by a player prior to the snap of the ball will result in a false start.

Offense

RUSHING

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled. Example, stretching the ball out across midfield or endzone does count. Emphasis for ref's will be on the players ball breaking the plane prior to the flag being pulled.
2. The QB is the offensive player that received the snap directly from the center.
3. QB Run Rules –
 - a. 4-6 year old division: QB runs allowed
 - b. 7-8 & 9-10 year old divisions: QB can only run when a blitz occurs (declared rusher crosses 7 yd rusher line). If there is no blitz declared, there is a 7 second pass clock and the QB must pass or transfer the ball to another player or else the play is ruled an incomplete pass.
4. Pitches, tosses and laterals are allowed and use multiple handoffs in one play is allowed.
5. The “center sneak” play is NOT allowed.
6. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Spinning is allowed, ballcarriers may leave their feet for spinning, jump cuts.
8. Runners may leave their feet only if there is clear indication that they have done so to avoid a collision with another player without the flag guarding penalty being enforced.
9. FLAG OBSTRUCTION: All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Ensure that any other part of the flag (strap) is tucked in and not appearing as a flag.

Offense Continued

PASSING

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward or directly parallel with the QB.
2. An incomplete pass that is thrown backwards from the QB, but behind the line of scrimmage (WR screen that appears backwards) is a dead ball.
3. Shovel passes are allowed.
4. For 7-8 & 9-10 year old divisions: There is a 7 second pass clock. If no blitz is declared, the QB must pass or transfer the ball to another player in 7 seconds, or else, the play is ruled and incomplete pass.
5. For 7-8 & 9-10 year old divisions: Within 5 yards of midfield and endzone, pass play is require (no run play).

RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB once the ball has been handed off from the QB).
2. A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception.
3. In the case of simultaneous possession by the offensive and defensive players, possession is awarded to the offense.
4. Interceptions are returnable.

Defense

1. For 7-8 & 9-10 divisions: There is one designated pass rusher/blitzer on each play – this player must raise a hand for identification and line up 7 yards off the LOS and in front of the center. He/she is the only one that can rush past the LOS to pursue the QB. **No rusher for the 4-6 yr old division.**
2. Neutral Zones: For 4-6 & 7-8 year old divisions, all (non-rusher) defenders must line up 5 yards from the LOS prior to the ball being snapped. For 9-10 year old division, the (non-rusher) defenders must line up 3 yards from the LOS.
3. Non-Rush defenders may approach the LOS, when the ball is snapped, but cannot cross until there is an athletic move by the QB to run or the ball is handed off.
4. Once the ball is transferred from the QB to another player or a QB athletic move to run, the defense can cross the LOS.
5. The referee will designate / mark the 7 yard rush line and the division specific defensive line (3 or 5 yards) from LOS.
6. A penalty will be called if the designated rusher crosses the 7 yard rush line OR if a non-rush defender crosses the defense line (3 or 5 yard) prior to the snap of the ball.
7. The offense cannot impede the defense by blocking (Intentional movement mirroring the defensive player).
8. The offensive routes or patterns must have minimal incidental contact.
9. A “sack” occurs if the QB’s flag is pulled behind the LOS. The ball is placed where the flag was pulled.
10. When inside the opponents 5-yard line – the defense can line up on the goal line and there is no longer a designated rusher.

Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders cannot dive to pull flags, cannot tackle, 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. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the 2-hand touch rule then goes into effect.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags from a player, who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder, or intentionally covering their flags with their football jersey.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the field director or referees witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind, a penalty will be enforced, and the player will be warned.

If the player commits a second offense in the same game, the player will be ejected from the game and possibly suspended from the next game. Repeated offenses in subsequent games may result in the player being removed from PRF for the remainder of the season.

2. Ball carriers must attempt to avoid defenders with an established position.

3. Defenders are not allowed to run THROUGH the ball carrier when pulling flags.

4. Any questioning of a call by any coach is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed, and a warning will be given to that team. If this occurs a 2nd time, the coach is immediately removed from the team for the remainder of the season.

Rules, Penalties, & Other Points of Emphasis

1. The referee (or Field Director) will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. ALL PENALTIES ARE 5 YARDS and will depend on if they are a spot foul, or from the original LOS.
4. A game cannot end on a defensive penalty.
5. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal when inside the opponents 5-yard line.

Rules, Penalties, Or Other Points of Emphasis

6. Penalties are, but not limited to:

- a. Defensive or offensive pass interference deemed by the official
- b. Holding or blocking – this includes putting arms out and/ or hindering the defense in any manner.
- c. Stripping or attempting to cause a fumble at any time.
- d. Offensive or defensive encroachment – as defined in this rule book.
- e. Charging – as defined in this rule book – no attempt to get out of the defender's path.
- f. Flag guarding - as defined in this rule book.
- g. Illegal rush – crossing the 7 yard rush line or the (non-rush) defense line (3 or 5 yard) prior to the snap.
- h. Illegal forward pass (passing the ball forward once past the original LOS)
- i. Illegal flag pull (pulling the flag before the receiver or runner has the ball)
- J. Offensive or defensive unnecessary roughness, taunting or delay of the game as deemed by the field officials.
- k. Hindering the ball carrier in any manner, holding them, wrapping your arms around them even if no contact is made, contacting the runner in any manner other than pulling their flags