

PORTAGE ROCKETT FLAG FOOTBALL

2020 OFFICAL RULE BOOK



GAME DAY

1. GAME – 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 three (3) plays to cross midfield or turn the ball over on downs. Once a team crosses midfield, they then have three (3) play 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 takes over at spot of flag pulled unless defender scores. If inside the defense's 5 yard line, offensive possession will start at the 5 yard line.
6. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

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 3 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: 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.

Live Ball: Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used regarding penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.

Dead Ball: Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.

Inadvertent Whistle: Official's whistle that is performed in error.

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: Located 5 yards from the LOS and all defensive players must start beyond this location prior to the snap.

ELIGIBILITY

Additionally, player's legal guardian(s) must fill out the PRF registration form, which includes agreements to the code of conduct policy, parent pledge, player contract, return to play waiver, and concussion information sheets before their child will be allowed to participate.

EQUIPMENT

1. NFL FLAG provides each player with a flag belt and NFL flag powered by USA Football jersey. Teams can use the football provided by their league, 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. Equipment braces with exposed metal are not allowed.
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 are not allowed.
5. Mouthpieces are required for each player.
6. Official NFL FLAG powered by USA Football jerseys must be worn during game play.
7. Players 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

1. The field dimensions will be approximately 45 yards long by 25 yards wide with approximately 8 yard end zones.
2. There will be a midfield "line to gain" to establish the first down 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, but no less than 4.
3. Each player shall have a minimum of 8 plays per half.

RULES

1. All games are at Ramona Park, except championship week.
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 10 minutes long.
4. 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.
5. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead
6. The official will determine the line of scrimmage, designated rush line (7 yards) and the neutral zone (defense must be 5 yards off the LOS).
7. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on offense or defense enters the neutral zone before the ball is snapped.
8. The officials may give each team a “courtesy warning” for any neutral zone infractions.
9. 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.
10. 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 – this will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
11. Substitutions may occur on any dead ball.
12. Any official can whistle a play dead.
13. If a player’s flag (S) FALL(S) out – then the 2-hand touch rule becomes 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 the spot of the ball when the flag is pulled unless returned for a score. 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. In case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has 2 options:
 - a. Take the spot of the ball, at the time of the whistle, and the loss of down.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
18. If the score is tied at the end of the 2nd half – the game ends in a tie, there are no overtimes.
19. There is no questioning an official’s decision.

SCORING

1. Touchdown = 6 points
2. PAT (point after touchdown) (throw or run) = 1 point
3. All PAT's are attempted at the 5 yard line
4. Safety = 2 points
5. 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, their flag falls out while in their own end zone, and then 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. 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
6. Team advantage is 28 points or more, the game ends as is. The remaining time will be played out as a scrimmage.

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 safely back away from the play prior to the snap.
 - b. 7-8 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 NFL FLAG powered by USA football, and Portage Rocket Football coaching philosophies and codes of conduct

OFFENSE

RUSHING

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled. Example, stretching the ball out across midfield does count. Same goes with the endzone. 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. The QB can directly run with the ball. QB sneaks, bootlegs, options are all legal.
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, but players must not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
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.

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.

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. There is one designated pass rusher on each play – this player must line up 7 yards off the line of scrimmage and be in line with the oppositions center.
2. Once the ball is snapped, designated rusher can pursue the offense (rush to stop the run, or rush to sack the QB).
3. All other defenders (non-rushers) must line up 5 yards off the LOS prior to the ball being snapped.
4. Non rushing defenders may approach the line of scrimmage, when the ball is snapped, but may not cross until there is an athletic move by the QB to run or the ball is handed off.
5. Once the ball is handed off from the QB to another offensive player or a QB athletic move to run, the defense may go behind the offenses side of the LOS.
6. The referee will designate / mark the 5 yards behind the LOS for the defensive players as well as the 7-yard rush line.
7. A penalty will be called if any defensive player crosses the 5-yard defensive line or if the designated rusher crosses the 7 yard designated rusher line before the ball is snapped.
8. The offense cannot impede the defense by blocking (Intentional movement mirroring the defensive player).
9. The offensive routes or patterns must have minimal incidental contact.
10. A “sack” occurs if the QB’s flag is pulled behind the LOS. The ball is placed where the flag was pulled.
11. When inside the opponents 5-yard line – the defense can line up on the goal line and there is no longer a designated rusher. Once ball is handed off or athletic move by the QB, then the defenders can rush.

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

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.

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, OR 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.
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 – leaving the designated 5-yard defensive line prior to the snap of the ball
 - 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