

St Ephrem FLAG FOOTBALL

RULES OF PLAY

Revised 8/22/19

A coin toss determines the first possession of the game and the goal that each team will defend. The team that wins the coin toss will choose to either receive the ball to start the first half, to receive the ball to start the second half, or the goal that they will defend to start the game. The opposing team will then choose between the remaining possible choices.

There will be two 20-minute halves, running time; the game clock does not stop!

Exception: The game clock will stop **in the final two minutes of each half** whenever there is an incomplete pass, whenever the ball carrier goes out of bounds, during PAT attempts and during change of possession. When there is a penalty called in the last 2 minutes of a half, the game clock will stop until the ball is spotted and the referee signals "ready to play"; at which point the game clock will restart.

There will be 7 players on the field from each team at any time, if either team cannot field a full squad, the game can be played with 6 or 5 players; in which case the opposing team is allowed to field 1 more player than the team that is deficient. If a team cannot field at least 5 players an attempt will be made to reschedule. If both teams, and the league, can not agree on an acceptable rescheduling time, the team that could not originally field at least 5 players will forfeit the game and the other team be given the win. If both teams can not field at least 5 players and a make up time cannot be mutually agreed to, the game will be declared a tie.

All players in attendance **MUST** play at least ½ of all of the plays.

The offensive team takes possession of the ball on its own 7-yard line and has 4 downs to either score a touchdown, or to reach midfield. If the offense reaches midfield the next play is considered a new 1st down and they will be allowed to attempt up to 4 downs to score a touchdown. If the offensive team fails to score a touchdown, or make a first down, the opposing team will take over possession at the spot of the last play's termination.

Before any snap, the offensive team can elect to voluntarily turn the ball over to the opposing team at the defensive team's 7-yard line.

A Touchdown will score 6 points; a Point After Touchdown (PAT) will be scored either 1 or 2 points depending on the spot of the ball prior to the play; a Safety will be scored 2 points.

In the both the Pee-Wee & Novice Divisions, after a touchdown is scored, the scoring team will attempt a 2 point PAT from the defensive 7 yard line. In the Bantam Division, the scoring team will have the option of attempting a PAT from either the 3½ yard line, or the 10½ yard line. A successful 3½ yard attempt will score 1 point. A successful 10½ yard attempt will score 2 points. On the PAT, the same rules of play will apply as for any offensive play

An intercepted PAT attempt can be advanced, and if the play results in a score it will count the number of points of the original attempt.

After the PAT attempt (regardless of its outcome), the opposing team will take over possession on its own 7-yard line.

Exception: Within the final 5 minutes of the game, if the team that is behind scores a touchdown and is still trailing, they may choose to retain possession of the ball, with the following restrictions:

- 1) They will take position on their own 7 yard line.
- 2) They will be given 1 down to advance the ball past midfield.
 - a) If they succeed in advancing the ball past midfield, they will be given up to 4 additional downs.
 - b) If they do not successfully advance the ball past midfield, the opposing team will be given possession of the ball at the point of the conclusion of the previous play.

All other rules of play will be in effect.

After a safety is scored, the team that scored is awarded the ball at its own 7-yard line.

Each team will be allowed three 20-second time outs per half.

If the scores of both teams are the same at the end of the second half of play, an additional 10 minute period will be played (overtime). All of the rules of play will remain the same, with the exception that the game will end when either team scores in any way; the scoring team will be declared the winner of the game (sudden death). During the regular season and in the preliminary rounds of the playoffs, if neither team scores any points in the allotted 10 minute over time period, the game will be declared a tie. During the Championship game, the teams will play successive 10 minute overtime periods until there is a winner. These overtimes will always be in the “sudden death” format. Each overtime period will begin with a coin toss.

Offensive teams will be given up to 30 seconds from when the ball is spotted to start its next play. A warning will be announced when 10 seconds remain on the “play clock”.

The defense cannot rush until the referee has counted to 5, except when the ball is handed off, lateralled or pitched.

Play begins, along with 5 count, when the Center moves the ball off of the ground. The Center must pass the ball to another player behind the line of scrimmage, this can be done in any manner that he/she chooses, it does not have to be snapped between the legs

The player receiving the ball from Center cannot run past scrimmage without first giving up the ball, and then getting it back (Illegal Run).

Offensive players must be set (cannot move) for at least 1 second prior to the start of the play (Illegal Motion). One player is allowed to go in motion prior to the snap of the ball. Motion must be lateral to, or away from, the line of scrimmage, not forward (Illegal Motion).

Only 1 forward pass is allowed per play. A forward pass is any movement of the ball in the direction of the opposing team's goal line that leaves the hand of the thrower. A legal forward pass must originate from behind the line of scrimmage. A forward pitch or lateral is considered a forward pass.

All players are eligible receivers.

A player must have at least 1 foot in bounds for a pass reception to be complete.

On all pass attempts, both offensive and defensive players have equal right to the ball; neither can obscure the others view or path to the ball without **making a play on the ball themselves**, players must play the ball, not the opponent! (Pass Interference).

Interceptions can be advanced

The player receiving a hand off must be beside or behind the player giving him/her the ball. Forward hand offs are not permitted (Illegal Touching). Touching the ball, but not taking a hand off, is not allowed (Illegal Touching).

If a player should not have his/her flags in the proper location, or if a player should not have both of his/her flags attached, the play will be considered over and the ball dead at the spot that that player gains possession of the ball.

Play will stop and the ball ruled dead when the:

- ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out, or are not aligned properly on either hip
- ball carrier steps on or over the sidelines
- ball carrier touches the ground with any part of his body except the feet or hands
- ball touches the ground

Placing the hands or arms over the flags to hamper the other team's ability to grasp the flags, is **NOT** allowed (Flag Guarding).

There will be NO blocking, picks or tackling (Illegal Contact).

It is the responsibility of the offensive player to attempt to avoid the defensive player. Failure to do so will be a "charging penalty". Blatant disregard of this rule will be considered "Unsportsmanlike Conduct".

There will be no leaping or diving.

A player that goes out of bounds cannot be the first player to come into contact with the ball after his/her return (Illegal Touching).

Players are not permitted to force the opposing team's players out of bounds (Illegal contact). Once possession is established, there can be no attempt to strip the ball loose (Illegal Contact).

A player cannot hold, or in any other way restrain another player (Illegal Contact).

Players must wear the official jersey, shorts and socks of the league to participate. Failure to do so will result in an "Improper Attire" penalty for each occurrence, as well as the player's removal from the game until the "improper attire" is corrected.

Two "Unsportsmanlike Conduct" penalties in the same game, will result in the player, or coach's, expulsion from the game, plus an additional 1 game suspension.

If a team is called for more than 1 delay of game penalty, and the head referee determines that that team is purposely stalling, an "Unsportsmanlike Conduct" penalty can also be called. This will result in a total loss of 15 yards and the loss of a down.

Games cannot end on an accepted defensive penalty

Penalties

Defensive Offside	5 yards, replay down
Defensive Pass Interference	Offensive possession at point of penalty, first down if play originated on opposite side of midfield, replay down if play originated on same side of midfield. If penalty occurs in the end zone the ball will be spotted on the 1-yard line
Defensive Illegal Contact	10 yards & replay down if play resulted in a loss or no gain, 10 yards from end of play if play resulted in a gain
Offensive Charging	10 yards from spot of foul & loss of down
Offensive Pass Interference	10 yards & loss of down
Offensive Illegal Contact	10 yards & loss of down
Illegal Motion	5 yards, play stops, replay down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 yards & loss of down
Illegal Run	5 yards & loss of down
Flag Guarding	10 yards from spot of foul & loss of down
Delay of Game	5 yards, replay down
Grounding	10 yards & loss of down
Leaping or Diving	10 yards from spot of foul & loss of down
Improper Attire	5 yards, replay down
Improper flag placement	Ball dead at spot of reception
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards & loss of down (ejection on second foul in the same game + an additional 1 game suspension the next week).
Illegal Touching	5 yards & loss of down

Rule clarification can be directed to the attending Flag Football administrator; his decisions are final and non-reviewable.