

Whitefish Bay

Flag Football

Rule Book



Whitefish Bay Recreation Department Flag Football Rules

- At the start of each game, coaches and captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The home team calls the toss. Home Team is the team listed second on the schedule. Home team provides the ball.
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
- Kick-off will be 15 paces from the goal line. The ball must be kicked from the tee. On a kick-off out of bounds, the receiving team has the option of taking the ball where it went out of bounds or at their own 10-yard line. No second kicks are allowed unless there is another penalty. On-side kicks are not allowed.
- First down at Mid Field.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield they must declare a punt or play before the snap on the 4th down. If Punt is declared the kicking team cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped and the receiving team cannot rush
- All possession changes, except punts and interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- Teams operate from one side of the field where only players and coaches are allowed. All spectators must be on the opposite side of the field.
- Practices will be held one half hour before each scheduled game. Informal practices may be held but are not mandatory for participation.
- Each player must play half of a game.

Timing and overtime:

- Each game will consist of 2 twenty-minute halves with the clock running. The clock will stop for the last two minutes of the game only for a dead ball or an out of bound situation. Five minutes will be allowed between halves. At that time teams will change ends of the field.
- Two time-outs of one minute is allowed for each team per game.
- If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format is as follows:
 - A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
 - Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
 - Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
 - Both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line starting with the third round of overtime.
 - The final points earned by the winning team in the final overtime will be added onto the winning team's total score. The losing team will not receive any additional points.
 - Example: End of regulation time, score is 14-14. Team A scores one point and Team B score two points. Team B wins with a final score of 16-14. Points are only added to total score from final round of overtime.
 - All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
 - There are no timeouts.

Scoring:

- A TD is worth 6 points. A PAT from the 5 is worth 1 point and a PAT from the 10 is worth 2 points. PAT can be Run or Pass.
 - A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
- Safety: 2 points
 - A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.

Live/Dead Ball:

- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.
 - It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
- A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
- The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Any official can whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
 - b. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out.
 - g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - h. From Scrimmage, A Dropped or muffed ball is dead. From Scrimmage A Dropped or muffed ball in the end zone is a safety.
 - i. Inadvertent whistle.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.

- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
 - Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

OFFENSE

RUNNING

- The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball-carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
- Only direct handoffs and pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
- "Center sneak" play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
- Absolutely NO laterals of any kind.
- Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- Spinning is not allowed. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
- No blocking or "screening" of flags allowed at any time.
- Blocking by Linemen is permitted within five yards of the line of scrimmage. The blocker must have his hands extended with his elbows bent. Blocking down field from behind or outside your shoulders is illegal. Blocking or contact above the neck and below the waist is illegal. Down field blocking after 5 yards from scrimmage is illegal.
- Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

PASSING

- All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
- The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

RECEIVING

- Only the Wide Receivers, Running Backs, and Quarter backs are eligible to receive a pass.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
- Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

FORMATIONS

- Offenses must have the following formation to start the play. A Center, 1 guard and 1 receiver on each side for a total of 5 players on the line. There may only be the quarterback and an additional player in the backfield for a total of 2 players in the backfield.
 - The ball must be covered by the center and guards
 - One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs or to the side to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.
- Teams will have 30 seconds from the placement of the ball to run their next play.

DEFENSE

Rushing the Passer:

- Defenses must line up 3 yards off of the goal line. Offensive linemen can block within 5 yards of the goal line.
- Rushing is prohibited in 1st and 2nd grade league.

Flag Pulling:

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
- If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- 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 the flags with the football jersey.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- If the Site Supervisor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
- Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
 - Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
 - Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
 - Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents off the field and in the sideline viewing area opposite the teams.
 - Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans and please don't forget to recycle.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
 - Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
 - Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

PENALTIES

- The referee will call all penalties.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
- Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
- Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

i. Defensive spot fouls

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding	Automatic first down
Stripping	+10 yards and automatic first down

ii. Offensive spot fouls

Charging	-10 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-10 yards and loss of down

iii. Defensive penalties

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

iv. Offensive penalties

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Flag Guarding	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down