



## **XL Sports World Hatfield NFL Flag Rules**

### **I. Game:**

- 1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.**
- 2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.**
- 3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.**
- 4. If the offense fails to get a first down or score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive where the 4th down failed or on its own 5-yard line if the opposing team punted.**
- 5. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.**
- 6. The game will consist of two 20-minute halves with a continuous running clock except for the second half in which the clock stops on a dead ball, out of bounds, timeout or penalty under one minute.**
- 7. Each team has one timeout per half.**

### **II. 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** - The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.

**Rush Line** - An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.

**Offense - The team with possession of the ball.**

**Defense - The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.**

**Passer - The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.**

**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.**

**Downs (1-2-3-4) - The offensive team has four attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.**

**Live Ball - Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to 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.**

**Whistle - Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or at the end of the game.**

**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 or arm.**

**Shovel Pass - A legal pitch attempted beyond the line of scrimmage.**

**Lateral - A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.**

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct - A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.**

### **III. Eligibility**

**1. All players’ legal guardians must agree to the online waiver form at [www.xlhatfield.com](http://www.xlhatfield.com) or sign a paper form in person at XL Sports World Hatfield for their specific league before participating.**

### **IV. Equipment**

- 1. The league provides each player with an official flag belt and NFL FLAG team jersey. Teams will use footballs provided by XL Sports World Hatfield.**
- 2. Players must wear shoes. Rubber cleats are allowed. No metal or screw in’s. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed. If a player has a cast on, it must be wrapped.**

3. **Players must remove all jewelry. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.**
4. **We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets will not be allowed. Pockets with zippers are acceptable.**

## **V. Field**

**1. The field dimensions are 185 ft x 85 ft with two end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones precede each line-to gain by 5 yards. There is a back line in the back of the endzone running wall to wall that is OUT OF BOUNDS.**

**2. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff. The pass must cross the line of scrimmage.**

**3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.**

**4. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain a first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).**

## **VI. Rosters**

**1. Home teams wear dark jerseys. Visiting teams wear light jerseys.**

**2. Teams must start games with a minimum of four players. The opposing team must play 4 players as well to make for an even game. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four. The opposing team may keep 5 players on the field in this instance.**

## **VII. Timing and Overtime**

**1. Games are played on a 40 minute continuous clock with two 20 minute halves unless one team gains a 21 point advantage, at which point the clock does not stop. Clock stops only for timeouts or injuries.**

**2. Halftime is one minute.**

**3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.**

**4. Each team has one 30-second timeout per half.**

**5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.**

**6. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.**

**7. 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. 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.

B. 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.

C. Both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line starting with the third round of overtime.

D. 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.

E. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.

F. There are no timeouts.

## VII. Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points

2. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)

**a. Note: 1 point PAT is pass only; 2 point PAT can be run or pass.**

**b. 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 two point conversions can be returned for two points.**

**3. Safety: 2 points**

**a. 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 touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.**

**4. Once a 21 or more point advantage is gained, no PAT will be attempted and the clock will not stop. The game will continue in scrimmage mode for the remainder of the game.**

**5. Forfeits are scored 21-0 for the winning team.**

#### **VIII. Live Ball/Dead Ball**

**1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.**

**2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.**

**a. 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.**

**3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered inbounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.**

**4. 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.**

**5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.**

**6. Any official can whistle the play dead.**

**7. 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 and the result is a loss of down.**

**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 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. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- 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.

**8. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:**

- a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
- b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

## **IX. Running**

**1. 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.**

**2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.**

**3. Only direct handoffs 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.**

**a. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.**

**4. No-run Zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).**

**5. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.**

**6. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.**

**7. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.**

**8. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.**

**a. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.**

**9. 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.**

**10. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.**

**11. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.**

**12. 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.**

## **X. Passing**

**1. All passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage.**

**2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.**

**3. Screen passes are allowed.**

**4. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.**

**a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).**

**5. The passing player may straddle the line of scrimmage. Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage it may not come back across the line of scrimmage to be thrown.**

## **XI. Receiving**

**1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).**

**2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.**

**3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.**

**4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.**

**5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception.**

**6. A batted ball may not be advanced by the player who passed it.**

## **XII. Flag Pulling**

**1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.**

**2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but 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 player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.**

**5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of 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 the flags with the football jersey.**

**7. If a flag is pulled on the goal line, the play is considered a touchdown if the lead foot of the runner AND the ball are on, above, or behind the plane of the goal line.**

### **XIII. Formations**

**1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.**

**a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.**

**2. Shifting is allowed, but if all players are not set before the snap an illegal shift will be called.**

**3. Movement by a player who is set is considered a false start.**

**4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs or from one knee to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.**

### **XIV. Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

**1. If the field monitor 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!**

**2. 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.**

**3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.**

**4. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.**

**5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.**

**6. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:**

**a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.**

**b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.**

**c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.**



**7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:**

**c. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.**

**8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:**

**a. Defense + 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down**

**b. Offense - 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down**

## **XV. Penalties**

**1. The referee will call all penalties.**

**2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.**

**3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)**

**4. Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.**

**5. Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.**

**6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.**

**7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.**

**8. Penalties against the offense will result in a loss of down. Penalties against the defense will result in an automatic first down.**

**9. There is no 10 second runoff rule.**