

Official Forest Hills Flag Football Rules

General

- A coin toss determines first possession. The visiting team captain calls heads or tails. The winner of the coin toss can choose to receive the kickoff at the start of the game or the start of the second half. The team that loses the coin toss picks which end zone to defend.
- Pee Wee Division will play with the Pee Wee sized football. Junior and Senior Division will play with the junior sized football.
- The offense must have a center to snap the ball to the QB between the legs. The center is eligible to go out for a pass but cannot stay into block as there is no blocking.
- The offense takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to get a first down at midfield.
- Each time the ball is spotted by the Referee, the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- If the offense fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- There are no kickoffs or punts.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line. Interceptions on an extra point attempt are dead balls.
- The Red Zone is defined as the area from the 5-yard line to the goal line. Running plays are not permitted within the Red Zone.
- There are no fumbles. Lost possession by a ball carrier, dropped hand-offs or laterals are dead balls and will be spotted where the ball was lost or hit the ground with the offense keeping possession.
- One coach per team is allowed on the field. The coach on defense must move to the sideline and off the field of play by the time the ball is snapped.
- Illegal Player Rule: Substitutions or additions of players that either have not registered or from eliminated teams will not be permitted to play – no exceptions. This type of player is referred to as an illegal player. If a team is caught adding an illegal player at any time during the regular season or the playoffs that team will automatically forfeit the game on first offense. If the same team commits the same offense again (second offense) that team will forfeit all the remaining games of the regular season and not permitted

to play in the playoffs. The head Referee, the coach of the opposing team, and the league should be notified of the infraction before the end of the game.

Sportsmanship / Roughing

- Good sportsmanship and fair play are the pillars of this league, and football at the youth level should always be fun.
- Coaches are expected to instill these qualities in each and every player and all players are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior on the field.
- Coaches should also make every effort to give all players equal playing time.
- Parents, coaches, and spectators are expected to promote good sportsmanship among all participants. All parents and spectators will treat officials and staff with respect. Please remember that many of them are volunteers and you are providing an example to your children when you are in attendance at practices/games.
- Tackling, blocking, unnecessarily aggressive or rough play or any other acts which may endanger the safety of any players are not permitted and will not be tolerated. However, at times contact will occur and the Referee will determine whether the contact was incidental or intentional (a penalty).
- If the Referee witnesses any such acts of tackling, unnecessarily aggressive play, tripping, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Inappropriate language, taunting or trash talking by any player or players to any opposing team players, coaches, spectators or the Referee is not permitted.
- If any such conduct or behavior takes place, the Referee has discretion to issue a warning, assess a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct against the player or players in question and/or eject such player(s).
- Each player must properly wear and display his or her flag. Flags cannot be hidden under jerseys, tied, knotted or otherwise manipulated to interfere with the proper flag pulling by the opposing team. If the Referee determines that a player is improperly wearing his or her flag, the Referee may exercise discretion to issue a warning, assess a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct and/or eject the player from the game.

Players / Game Schedules

- All games will be played 6 on 6. A team can play with 5 players. Each team must field the same number of players on either side of the line of scrimmage. See Forfeit Rule below.
- Schedules will be arranged and emailed by the league. Any changes to the schedule must be coordinated with the league.
- Forfeit Rule: Through all divisions each team must field a minimum of 5 legal players at the start of the game and throughout the game. There is a 15 minute grace period to allow each team time to field the appropriate number of legal players. Failure to field the appropriate number of legal players within the allotted time will result in a forfeit. See Illegal Player rule under the General section.

- Forfeit scores are always reflected as 6 points for the team receiving the forfeit win and 0 points for the forfeiting team.

Timing

- Games are played to 44 minutes running time with two 22-minute halves.
- If the score is tied at the end of 44 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. See overtime section.
- 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.
- Each team will have one 30-second timeout per half.
- The final two minutes of the second half are subject to stop clock rules, e.g., incomplete pass, out of bounds, defensive penalty or change of possession.

Overtime

- Home team calls the coin toss
- Pee Wee will be given a set of downs to score from the 15-yard line. Juniors and Seniors will start at the 10-yard line
- Unlimited runs or passes are allowed in overtime.
- Red Zone rules within 5 yards from the goal line still apply (pass only).
- Each team gets 1 time out in overtime.
- If a team scores, it may elect to go for a 1-point or 2-point conversion.
- After each team has had a possession in overtime, the team with the highest score wins.
- In the regular season, if the teams are still tied after the first round of overtime, the game will end in a tie.
- See the Playoff section for modification to this rule as it applies to the playoffs only.

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra Point Conversions (pass only for both):
 - from 5-yard line = 1 point
 - from 10-yard line = 2 points
- Safety: 2 points

Mercy Rule

- Except for the last 2 minutes of the second half of the game, if a team is losing by more than 20 points at any time in the game, the losing team will get an additional down and run in the second half.
- The additional down and run will be removed once the losing team is back within 20 points of leading team
- If a team is losing by more than 20 points at the 2-minute warning of the second half, the referee may elect to end the game.

Running

- The offense is allowed one (1) run play for every set of downs in the Junior and Senior division and two (2) run plays for every set of downs in the Pee Wee division.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. The offense may use multiple handoffs in one play (for example, “reverses,” “double-reversals” etc.).
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Pitches and laterals are also permitted. Shovel passes are also allowed but will be considered a run if the pass is caught behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off or pitched back (or delivered by a shovel pass behind the line of scrimmage), all defensive players are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage and rush.
- **The quarterback is NOT allowed to rush / run with the ball (no QB options or designed QB runs).**
- Flag shielding or stiff arming by the ball carrier is not permitted.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot jump or dive to avoid a defensive player.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s lead/front foot is when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- There is no blocking. Once the ball has been handed off, teammates of the ball carrier must stop running; they cannot set picks, run downfield, alongside the ball carrier, or otherwise interfere with or obstruct the defense’s pursuit of the ball carrier. See Sportsmanship / Roughing below.

Passing / Receiving

- All players, including the center, are eligible to receive passes. The quarterback may also receive a pass if the ball has been handed off or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage.
- Only one player on offense is allowed to be in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception.
- The QB must throw the ball or handoff the ball by the “Sixth Mississippi” called out by the Referee. If the QB fails to do so by that time, the play will be ruled dead (e.g., a sack) and the ball will be spotted at the ball carrier’s last spot.
- Once a receiver catches the ball, all other players on offense are no longer part of the play and must stop running; they cannot interfere with the defense’s pursuit of the ball carrier. Creating a screen or wall for the ball carrier will be considered a block.

To remove any ambiguity, laterals, handoffs, and passes BEHIND the line of scrimmage will be considered a run if there is not a forward pass made.

Rushing the Quarterback

- Rusher must announce themselves to referee and is required to rush the quarterback
- All players who rush the passer must be 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- A special marker placed by the Referee will designate the pass rushers starting point seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
- The Referee will count “Three Mississippi’s” before the rusher can rush the quarterback.
- The rusher must rush the quarterback – no exceptions
- During the first “Three Mississippi’s,” the rusher can also mirror the quarterback’s lateral movement so long as he or she does not go beyond the 7-yard distance of the line of scrimmage.
- Only one rusher can rush the quarterback so long as it is after the “Three Mississippi” count and beyond 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, pitched, or shovel passed the 7 yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier.
- Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

Red Zone

- The Red Zone is marked at the 5 yard line.
- An offense with the ball on the 5 yard line or closer to the end zone is not permitted to run. There are no run plays permitted within the Red Zone.

Dead Balls

- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled

- o Ball carrier steps out of bounds
- o Touchdown or safety is scored
- o Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
- o Ball carrier's flag is pulled off (if flag falls off, the one-hand touch rule applies)
- o Ball carrier fumbles, drops or otherwise loses possession of the ball
- o The Referee blows the whistle
 - If inadvertent or erroneous whistle occurs the offense has two options: A) take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed B) replay the down from the original line of scrimmage. If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

Penalties

- Penalties are assessed by the assigned referee who will use their best judgment and interpretation of the rules. In the case where a game features multiple referees, the head referee for that game will make the final call and can override the other referee(s) initial call.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage unless otherwise stated.
- Players cannot question judgment calls by the Referee.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct:
 - o Defense: 15 yards from scrimmage and automatic first down. Penalty will be assessed from the end of the play or the spot of the foul.
 - o Offense: 15 yards from scrimmage and loss of down
- All the foregoing penalties will be enforced half the distance to the goal line when appropriate.

Defense:

- Offsides: 5 yards from scrimmage (offense plays the down over or accepts the result of the play)
- Pass Interference: Spot foul and an automatic first down
- Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.): 5 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down
- Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball): 5 yards from spot of foul automatic first down
- Illegal rushing (rushing from inside the 7 yard marker or rushing before "Three Mississippi"): 5 yards from scrimmage (offense plays the down over or accepts the result of the play)
- Illegal procedure (too many players on the field): 5 yards from scrimmage (offense plays the down over or accepts the result of the play)

Offense:

- Illegal motion or false start: 5 yards from of scrimmage (no loss of down)
- Delay of game: 5 yards from scrimmage (no loss of down)
- Illegal procedure (too many players on the field): 5 yards from scrimmage (no loss of down)

- Flag shielding (this includes stiff arming, swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt, carrying the ball in a position that protects the flag, lowering the shoulders to place the arms over the flag belt, and/or batting a player's hand away from the flag belt): 5 yards from spot of foul
- Blocking / Pushing: 15 yards from spot of foul (see Unsportsmanlike Conduct)
- Illegal forward pass (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage): 5 yards and loss of down
- Illegal QB Run (QB runs before defender rushes or crosses the line of scrimmage): 5 yards and loss of down
- Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender): 10 yards from scrimmage and loss of down
- Flag Tying / Manipulation: 15 yards from line of scrimmage, loss of down, and possible ejection (see Unsportsmanlike Conduct)

Attire / Gear

- All players must bring their Flag Football team jersey, a flag belt, proper footwear (cleats recommended) and a mouthpiece (optional).
- Cleats may be worn, except for metal spikes. The Referee may inspect any player's cleats at any time and require the player to replace his or her footwear if the cleats are inappropriate.
- All jerseys must be tucked into one's shorts / pants, and flags must be properly worn and displayed

Standings

- Coaches should confirm with the head Referee the final score of the game before leaving the field.
- The head Referee of the league will receive all scores from the various Referees and report the scores to the commissioner of the league.
- In case of a forfeit, the team receiving a win will receive 6 points in the points for column and the forfeiting team will receive 0 points. See Players / Game Schedule section above.
- In case of a tie in the standings the league looks to winning percentage, head-to-head competition, runs allowed

Playoff Information

- The Playoffs will follow a single-game elimination format.
 - If a team wins, they move to the next round.
 - If a team loses, they are eliminated from the tournament.
- Playoff games consist of 22-minute halves, 2 timeouts per half, and all other regular season rules apply.
- The Championship game consists of 24 minute halves, 2 timeouts per half, and all other regular season rules apply.
- Please note that in case of a tie in the standings the tie breaking order are:
 - winning percentage
 - head to head record
 - points allowed
- Overtime in the playoffs and Championship game will be played as follows:
 - Home team calls the coin toss
 - Each team will be given a set of downs to score from the 15 yard line.
 - Red-zone rules within 5 yards from the goal line still apply (pass only).
 - Each team gets 1 time out in overtime.
 - If a team scores, it may elect to go for a 1-point or 2-point conversion.
 - After each team has had a possession in overtime, the team with the highest score wins.
 - If the teams are still tied after each team has had a possession, the referee will start a new round and continue in this fashion until there is a winner. After each team has had possession at least once, the game will end on the first scoring play.
 - If the referee and/or the league determines that there is not enough time to continue in this fashion (i.e., lights will turn off), each team will be given one play from midfield and the longest play from scrimmage will determine the winner.
- Each player must have the allotted team NFL jersey and league flag belt.
- There will only be a forfeit if one of the teams does not have at least 5 legal players. Unless it is a forfeit, the opposing team must play with the same number of kids as the other team.