



FIYA FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Effective as of August 1, 2021

Rules in **black** apply to both Boys 7 v 7 and Girls 5 v 5

Rules in **red** apply only to Girls 5 v 5

Rules in **blue** apply only to Boys 7 v 7

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OVERVIEW

- The boys' game is played between two teams of seven players.
- The girls' game is played between two teams of five players.
- All players are eligible pass receivers.
- A boys' team may begin a game with six players but cannot play with less than six at any time.
- A girls' team may begin a game with four players but cannot play with less than four at any time.
- Field goals, kickoffs, & punts are not permitted.
- Prior to game, both teams meet at midfield to recite FIYA Sportsmanship Pledge.

FIELD

- The field shall be 80 yards by 40 yards, with two end zones of 10 yards each.
- The field shall be divided into four 20 yard zones.
- Players and coaches must remain in between the twenty-yard lines at all times.
- No unauthorized personnel may be on the sidelines without direct permission from the game officials.
- Note - Field sizes may need to be adjusted based on facility being used.

BALL

- Division 1 Boys games shall use a youth size 7 football (one size below official high school ball).
- Division 2 Boys shall use a junior size 6 football (two sizes below official high school ball).
- Girls shall use a junior size 6 football (two sizes below official high school ball).
- FIYA reserves the right to provide a game ball.

OFFICIALS & SCOREKEEPERS

- FIYA will provide all officials & scorekeepers.
- Each team should be prepared to provide a competent adult (18 and older) to operate the down marker if needed.

EQUIPMENT

- No pads, gloves, casts, jewelry, or any hard surface material, with the exception of athletic supporter and cup, are permitted.
- Grip enhancing substances are prohibited.
- Metal and/or screw on cleats are prohibited.
- Uniform shorts or pants MAY NOT contain pockets, belt loops or rivets.
- FIYA will provide all flags. Flags not issued by FIYA cannot be used in FIYA games. Flag belts are attached by Velcro and there are 3 flags that should be oriented on the sides and in the back.
- Shirts must be tucked in so that flag belt is visible.
- A mouthpiece is highly recommended but not mandatory.
- Permission to wear any equipment not specifically mentioned above will be allowed at the discretion of the game officials and/or FIYA officials on a case by case basis.

GAME PROCEDURES

- The ball shall be placed at the middle of the field for all downs.
- The offensive team has four downs to advance the ball to the next zone.
- Any ball that hits the ground is dead.

TIME

- The game shall be two 22 minute halves with running time.
- Except as noted below, the clock stops ONLY for timeouts.
 - **Exception: If the score margin is 16 points or less AND there is 2 minutes or less remaining in the 2nd half only, the clock stops for the following:**
 - incomplete passes;
 - running out of bounds;
 - penalties;
 - change of possession; and
 - scores (touchdowns and PATs)
 - The clocks resumes following a timeout or for the above listed exceptions when the center snaps the ball.
- Except as noted above, the game clock runs after a touchdown. There is a normal 30 second play clock to snap the ball for the PAT.
- Except as noted above, the game clock runs after the point after touchdown play and there is a normal 30 second play clock once the referee places the ball on a 25 yard line for the offense.
- Intermission is at the discretion of game officials but may not exceed four (4) minutes between halves.

SCORING

- A touchdown is worth six points
- **Point(s) after touchdown may be attempted as follows:**
 - One point from the two yard line.
 - Two points from the five yard line.
- Safeties are worth two points.
- The Defense CANNOT score on PATs.

OVERTIME

- A coin flip shall be held and the coin flip winner has the choice to play offense or defense first.
- The offense shall choose to either attempt a one or two point conversion.
- The defense will then go on offense and have the same choice on whether to attempt a one or two point conversion.
- The game continues until the tie is broken after each team has had an equal number of offensive downs.
- Teams will alternate who begins on offense for each overtime period. There will be a MAXIMUM OF THREE (3) OVERTIME PERIODS DURING THE REGULAR SEASON.

TIMEOUTS

- Each team gets three (3) thirty second time outs per half which may not be carried over to the second half.
- No additional timeouts will be granted for overtime but any timeouts remaining from the second half may be used.

MERCY RULE

- If a team leads by 25 points at the ten minute mark of the second half or any point thereafter the game shall be ended with the leading team declared the winner.
- **The game may continue at the mutual agreement of the coaches providing:**
 - Substitutes must be used.
 - Score may not be kept.
- Officials and/or site supervisors may shorten or end a game in which the mercy rule had been invoked at their discretion if:
 - Games are behind schedule.
 - Poor sportsmanship is being displayed by players, coaches, or spectators.
- Playoff games will end immediately when the mercy rule is invoked. That is, there is no opportunity to continue 'friendly' play.

KICKS

- **Kickoffs**
 - o For safety concerns and for game efficiency, there will be NO KICKOFFS.
 - o The offense will start with the ball on its own 25 yard line.
- **Punts**
 - o For safety concerns and for game efficiency, there will be NO PUNTS.
 - o On 4th down, if the ball is at midfield or past midfield closer to the offensive end zone, the offense MUST go for it on 4th down.
 - o On 4th down, if the ball is within the defensive zone (less than midfield), the team may either (A) go for it or (B) elect to forfeit the ball. If the team elects to forfeit the ball, the referee will move the ball forward ten yards from the spot and the defensive team will take over on offense.

BLOCKING

- **Girls:**
 - o NO Blocking is allowed. OFFENSIVE BLOCKING is a 10 YARD penalty from the spot and loss of down. Offensive players purposefully screening or impeding a defender's path is considered BLOCKING and shall be penalized in accordance with the rule. "Purposefully" is a judgment call by the officials.
- **Boys:**
 - o Blocking is allowed.
 - o A teammate of a runner may block with any part of the hands, shoulder, or outer part of the arm provided the blocker's hands are:
 - in advance of the elbow.
 - inside the frame of the opponent's body.
 - between his shoulders.
 - apart and never in a locked position.
 - open with the palms facing the frame of the opponent.

- never used in a striking motion.
- above the waist and below the neck of the opponent.
- not in the back of the opponent.
- o Arms may not be bent at the point of contact and then extended.
- o A blocker must have one foot on the ground.
- o Downfield blocking on a passing play is not permitted until the ball is caught or is thrown behind the line of scrimmage.

SNAPPING THE BALL

- **A legal snap occurs when the:**
 - o snapper has his/her shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - o ball travels between the snappers legs.
 - o ball is released by the snapper in a continuous backward motion.
 - o ball is not lifted for adjustment.
- One player may be in motion during the snap provided he is moving parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- QB cannot give immediate handoff to the center after the snap.
- **Girls:** No defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage until 3 seconds after a snap. The referee will hold arm up and count to 3. Once 3 seconds is called, defense may cross the line of scrimmage. Exception to the 3 second rule: If QB makes a direct handoff to another player, then defensive players may cross the line of scrimmage.

THE BALL CARRIER

- **Girls:** QB cannot run the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. Only exception: QB receives a direct handoff from another offensive player behind the line of scrimmage.
- The ball carrier must attempt to avoid the defense using his/her agility.
- **Boys:** The ball carrier may not steer his blockers using physical contact
- **Boys:** The ball carrier may not run up the middle. See Running Up the Middle below.
- The ball carrier may not guard his/her flag.
- The ball carrier may leave the ground to avoid a flag pull but in doing so may not charge into a defensive player.
- The ball carrier may not dive to advance the ball.
- If the flag falls off the ball carrier the play will be dead where the flag fell off.
- If the flag falls off a player and the player subsequently receives the ball (with no flags), the reception of the ball is valid but the play is dead at the spot of reception.
- If a ball carrier loses possession of the ball unintentionally and it is caught before it hits the ground by either team the ball is live.
- In order for a ball carrier to enter a zone he/she must have his/her foot and/or flag and ball on or over the line he/she is attempting to cross.

RUNNING UP THE MIDDLE

Boys:

- For purposes of this rule, the “Middle” is a rectangular area as follows: The width of the rectangle is 1 yard on either side of the football as it lays on the line of scrimmage. The length of the rectangle is 8 yards from the line of scrimmage to the offensive backfield.
- In general, running up the middle is NOT ALLOWED. The main purpose of the rule is to protect the center from immediate contact on the snap exchange. Similarly, defensive players may rush up the middle so long as they do not make immediate contact with the center.

- An offensive player may run up the middle under a delayed action. For purposes of this rule, what constitutes a ‘delayed action’ is ultimately at the sole discretion of the referee. For guidance purposes only, a delayed action means approximately three seconds after the snap. In other words, an offensive player may run up the middle if the player’s initial and immediate movement is not toward the middle. For example, a quarterback drops back to pass and then decides to run up the middle. This delayed action is acceptable and not considered Running Up the Middle.
- In addition, it is not considered “Running Up the Middle” when the football leaves the Middle as defined after the center snap. That is, the quarterback receives the ball from the center and gives the ball to another offensive player outside of the Middle or the quarterback receives the ball from the center and moves laterally outside of the Middle. Once the ball goes outside the Middle, the Running Up the Middle is no longer in effect. Moving the ball outside the Middle as defined in this rule is equivalent to a delayed action.

PASSING & RECEIVING

- A complete pass occurs when a player has possession of the ball and one foot in bounds.
- If both feet are off the ground and a defender causes the receiver to go out of bounds the pass is considered complete
- A receiver who goes out of bounds on his/her own accord is ineligible.
- An offensive player may not intentionally ground the ball.
 - Exception: In the last two minutes of the game an offensive player who receives a direct snap from the center may ground the ball to stop the clock.
- A defensive player may not make unnecessary contact with the passer or ball while the ball is in possession of the passer.
- If the contact is caused by the passer’s forward motion there is no infraction.

Boys:

- A receiver may be bumped at the line of scrimmage until he makes a move in either direction.

- A team may make multiple forward passes provided they are all from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball passes the line of scrimmage no further forward passes are permitted.

Girls:

- Only one forward pass per play.
- All passes must be forward and must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Absolutely NO laterals, pitches or screen passes of any kind are allowed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Only direct handoffs (unlimited as long as behind the line of scrimmage) allowed.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- All players are eligible to receive a pass (including the QB if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage)
- Once the ball is advanced beyond the line of scrimmage, the current ball carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.
- Once the ball is advanced beyond the line of scrimmage, the remaining offensive players cannot impede the defense from attempting to pull the offensive player's flag.

DEFENSE

- **Boys:** A defensive player may use his hands.
- **A defensive player may not:**
 - o strike a player on the head.
 - o hold an opponent.
 - o push a teammate into another player.
 - o push the ball carrier.
 - o pull a flag prematurely.
 - o touch the offensive center until the center stands up or takes a snap.

- o pull an opponent's shirt provided the shirt is not hindering the pulling of the flag.
- o strip or attempt to strip the ball.
- o cross the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
- If the last defensive player with a chance to make a play on the ball carrier commits a penalty on the ball carrier the play will be ruled a score.
- **Boys:** A defensive player may rush up the middle so long as the defensive player does not make any immediate contact with the offensive center.
- A ball intercepted in the end zone may be run out or downed.

ASSESSMENT OF PENALTIES

- **Five yards from original line of scrimmage, repeat down:**
 - o Delay of Game
 - o Offsides
 - o Running up the Middle
- **Five yards from spot of foul, loss of down:**
 - o Flag Guarding
 - o Charging
 - o Illegal Forward Pass
 - o Intentional Grounding

Note: If foul occurs after first down is gained, first down stands.
- **Ten yards from original line of scrimmage, repeat down:**
 - o Clipping
 - o Holding

Note: If foul occurs after first down is gained, first down stands.

- **Ten yards**
 - **Holding Ball Carrier**
 - From spot of foul, repeat down or result of down.
 - Note: If the foul occurs behind the line of scrimmage administer from the line of scrimmage.
 - **Offensive Pass Interference**
 - From line of scrimmage, loss of down
 - **Defensive Pass Interference**
 - From line of scrimmage, automatic first down
 - **Passing or running after a declared punt**
 - From line of scrimmage, loss of down
 - **Roughing the Passer**
 - From line of scrimmage, automatic first down
 - **Stripping the ball from the runner**
 - From spot of foul
 - **Pushing the ball carrier**
 - From spot of foul

- **15 yards from original line of scrimmage**
 - Unnecessary Roughness
 - Unsportsmanlike Conduct
 - Flag Altering

- No distance penalty shall exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.
- When a live ball foul is followed by a dead ball foul the penalties are administered separately and in order of occurrence.
- An inadvertent whistle when a player has possession will result in either replay of the down or possession at the spot it was blown dead, by choice of the team in possession.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO THIS YEAR'S FLAG FOOTBALL SEASON WITH YOU!

All current season schedules, standings, playoffs, and more will be updated throughout the season on our Flag Football page at:
onfiya.org/sports/flag-football/



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