



LB NFL FLAG LEAGUE RULES

Players

- Must have mouthguard in at all times when on the field.
- Flags must be a different color from jersey.
- Jerseys must be tucked in. No jerseys covering flags.
- Flags may NOT be wrapped. Flags are to be used properly. No glueing, taping, etc. NO CHEATING
- Must wear shorts with no pockets, or pockets must be taped.
- Players must remove all jewelry and hard billed hats. Soft beanies are allowed.
- No metal cleats are permitted.

Game Format

- Field is approx. 30 yards wide and 40 yards long, not including the 6 yard end zones.
- Games for all levels are either 5 v 5 or 6 on 6.
- Teams of 8-10 players
- Four 10-minute running clock quarters (1 minute break between quarters, 3 minute break at half)
- Coin flip determines choice of possession or direction (winning team can elect to defer to the 2nd half). Any team deferring means that the opposing team will automatically receive the ball to start the game, with deferring team receiving the ball to start the second half.
- Home Team is responsible for scoreboard
- Two 30-second timeouts per half
- The clock will only stop for time-outs and injuries (it does not stop for incomplete passes, out of bounds, change of possession)

- The clock will also stop in the final 2 minutes of the game if there is an offensive penalty, while the defense is trailing, or vice versa.
- If a timeout is called after a touchdown, the clock will not start until the play after the conversion attempt
- Teams switch sides at halftime

Basics

- Each possession to begin a half or after a score starts at the 5 yard line
 - 40 second play clock
 - The offensive team has 4 plays to get a first down, then 3 plays to score once they have crossed mid-field.
 - Option to punt on 4th down. If elected the opposing team starts on their 5 yard line. If team goes for it on 4th down and does not make the 1st down it is a turnover on downs. Ball is placed at spot of down.
 - Interceptions can be returned, and possession will begin where the defenders flag is pulled.
 - There are no limits on run plays, so each team has unlimited run plays.
 - No player may line up in the neutral zone. Automatic dead ball if an offensive or defensive player enters the neutral zone.
 - QB has to throw the ball within 7 seconds
 - If the QB does not release the ball before time expires, it is a sack, with the ball being placed 5 yards back from the previous spot and loss of down.
- A sack can occur in the end zone, with a resulting safety, if the ball is snapped inside of the 5 yard line. Any sack occurring on a play that starts from the 5 yard line will be placed on the 1 foot line. This does not apply at the PreK/K and 1/2 divisions, as there are no safeties in those grades. Any ball dropped in the end zone, flag pulled in the end zone, or sack inside of the 5 yard line will simply have the ball placed at the 5 yard line.

- A play will be considered a run play, when the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, or if the flag is pulled before the player throws the ball. A play in which a player takes a hand-off from the quarterback, and then throws a forward pass will be considered a pass play. A fumbled hand-off will be considered a run play. A fumbled exchange between the center and QB will not be considered a run, ball is dead.
- Shovel passes are allowed, except in the 5 yard no run zone. Any pass not thrown in an overhand manner, inside the no-run zone will be considered a shovel pass and blown dead, regardless of whether the ball is caught in front or behind the line of scrimmage.
- No rushing the QB for Divisions PreK/K and 1/2 - Defensive players cannot cross the line of scrimmage until a handoff has occurred.
- DIVISIONS 3/4, 5/6 AND 7/8: ANY AND ALL PLAYERS MAY RUSH THE QB FROM THE RUSH LINE, WHICH IS 10 YARDS FROM THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.
- No Jumping at the QB. You can jump straight up to block pass. If the defensive player makes contact with the QB it is considered roughing the passer unless the referee declares it incidental contact.
- No Direct QB Runs
- There are no runs within five yards of the midfield first down, or five yards of the goal line. Exceptions for divisions PreK/K and 1/2 where the “No Run Zone” DOES NOT APPLY
- One first down at midfield
- Ball is placed where the ball is when the flag is pulled

- The players feet determine where the ball is down, not where the ball is.
 Thus if you are reaching the ball over the goal line and the flag is pulled before the players feet cross the goal line, it is NOT a touchdown. Ball is down where the flag is pulled.
- Snapped ball has to pass between the center's legs
- Center cannot take a handoff from the QB (no center sneaks)
- Absolutely no laterals or pitches once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- All players are eligible
- No leaping (if a player dives, the ball will be spotted where the runner left his feet)
- A receiver must have one foot in bounds when making a reception.
- A player is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground in the field of play. If the players foot or other body part touches out of bounds first, the player is out of bounds.
- Only one player can be in motion at the same time
- Absolutely no tackling or blocking
- There are NO Fumbles. The ball is dead at the spot where the carrier lost possession.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both the offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- A play is dead when:
 - a. Flag is pulled
 - b. Runner's knee touches the ground
 - c. Runner steps out of bounds
 - d. If a player loses his flag
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty
- If the offense commits a penalty on the games' final possession the game is over.

COACHES

- Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
- Each team may have no more than 4 coaches (1 head coach, 2 assistant coaches and team manager) on their sideline
 - Coaches are not permitted on the field at the 7th-8th grade divisions.
 - Only 1 coach in the defensive huddle at all Divisions except 7/8 (no coaches on field), and the coach must be off the field at snap of the ball
 - Two coaches in the offensive huddle in PreK/K and 1/2 Division, only one coach at the 3/4 and 5/6 Divisions.
- Coaches, this is your responsibility to keep your fans and any other team associated members in the designated areas.

OVERTIME

If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. Overtime format, when applicable, is as follows:

- a. Home team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
- 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.

- i. 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.
- ii. 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. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line.
- d. Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5 yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.
- e. Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored for each team.
- f. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- g. There are no timeouts.
- h. Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points.
- i. Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over.
- ii. Interceptions advanced in the third overtime period, the game is over.

Mercy Rules:

- If a team is in front by 28 or more points, they cannot advance an interception. The team will take over possession at their own 5 yard line.
- If a team is up by 28 or more points they may NOT rush the QB
- If a team is up by 28 or more they only have 2 downs to get a first down.

- Any team up by 35 or more points will not receive an offensive possession. The losing team will retain possession, and will continue to reset the ball back at the 5 yard line should they not gain a first down or a touchdown.

Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)
Note: 1 point PAT is pass only; 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
3. Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions or overtime are worth two points
4. 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 or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
5. 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.
6. After one team is winning by 35 points or more, the game is over. TEAMS may elect to continue but no additional points scored will be added.

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 of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.
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.
 - i. 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. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- i. Inadvertent whistle
- j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet diving or to hurdle a player.

NOTE: There are no fumbles, ground contact does not have to be made. If the ball is fumbled forwards then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession. Loss of possession is a DEAD BALL.

8. If inadvertent 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.

9. 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.

10. Officials should all agree in order to change a call on the field that is in dispute

Running the Ball

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

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.
 - b. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - c. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
4. Definition of a “Legal Handoff” - Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive play to another.
5. Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind past the line of scrimmage
6. 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).
7. Runners are not permitted to dive or hurdle any player while advancing the ball.
8. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB’s passing progression or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to

avoid a collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, contact is made unnecessary roughness penalty may be enforced by the official.

9. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.

10. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball-carrier.

11. 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

1. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.

a. There is no intentional grounding

b. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

2. Shovel passes are allowed

3. 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).

b. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

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. All motion must be lateral to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.

Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the

quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.

*PreK/K & 1st-3rd Grade Division: Defenders may not rush the passer.

2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

a) A legal rush is:

- i. Any rush from a point 10-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
- ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.

b) A penalty may be called if:

- i. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
- iii. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
- iv. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the

rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.

c) Special circumstances:

- i. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
- ii. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.

4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.

6. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.

- a. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

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 a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
7. 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, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

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. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.
 - b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.

2. 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.

3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

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 officials will determine if a warning or immediate ejection is warranted.

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 must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

ROUGH PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

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 and adhere to league requirements for seating:

- a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs, umbrellas, etc. in the stands and off the field.
- b. Stay in the stands, not between fields.
- c. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.
- d. NO PETS ALLOWED AT GAMES

8. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:

- a. Defense + 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- b. Offense - 10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

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 team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
- 5. Games or halves 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. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down)/Offensive (Safety)

ii. Defensive spot foul

<i>Defensive pass interference</i>	<i>Automatic first down</i>
<i>Holding</i>	<i>+5 yards and automatic first down</i>
<i>Stripping</i>	<i>+5 yards and automatic first down</i>

iii. Offensive spot fouls

<i>Screening or blocking</i>	<i>-5 yards and loss of down</i>
<i>Charging</i>	<i>-5 yards and loss of down</i>
<i>Flag guarding</i>	<i>-5 yards and loss of down</i>

iv. Defensive penalties

<i>Defensive unnecessary roughness</i>	<i>+10 yards and automatic first down</i>
<i>Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct</i>	<i>+10 yards and automatic first down</i>
<i>Offsides / illegal substitution</i>	<i>+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down</i>
<i>Illegal rush (starting in front of the 10 yard rush line)</i>	<i>+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down</i>
<i>Illegal flag pull (before the receiver has the ball)</i>	<i>+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down</i>
<i>Roughing the passer</i>	<i>+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down</i>
<i>Taunting</i>	<i>+5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down</i>

v. Offensive penalties

<i>Offensive unnecessary roughness</i>	<i>-10 yards and loss of down</i>
<i>Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct</i>	<i>-10 yards and loss of down</i>
<i>Offside / False Start / illegal substitution</i>	<i>-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down</i>
<i>Illegal forward pass (passing the ball after crossing the line of scrimmage)</i>	<i>-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down</i>
<i>Offensive pass interference</i>	<i>-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down</i>
<i>Illegal motion (More than one person moving)</i>	<i>-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down</i>
<i>Delay of game</i>	<i>-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down</i>
<i>Impeding the rusher</i>	<i>-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down</i>

<i>Illegal procedure</i>	<i>-5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down</i>
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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, arm or ball.

UPSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

*IF inadvertent whistle occurs the offense has two options:

- A) take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed
- B) 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.

****League rules may be changed at any time if problems arise due to concerns with safety conditions, sportsmanship, or competitive balance.***