



NYGFL Condensed Rule Book UPDATED 2025

Rule 1: THE GAME, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

Section 1 General

1.1.1. In flag football, each team must begin with either 5 to 7 players but may continue with fewer players if no substitutes are available after the scheduled playing time. Each team may play with up to 7 players regardless of the number of opposing players.

Section 2 Field and Markings

1.2.1. When possible, the field will be rectangular with the preferred dimensions of 80 yards by 30 yards (which includes two end zones of 10 yards deep), although facility limitations may cause the field dimensions to be modified.

Section 3 Players and Their Game Equipment

1.3.1. Teams will provide their own footballs. Either team may use their opponent's ball at any time. The Referee may authorize substituting a non-sanctioned ball. If the field is wet, teams may have a towel with the center or quarterback to dry the ball between plays. If the teams choose to wear their towels on their waist, it counts as a 4th flag when it is pulled.

1.3.3. Each team will designate up to two players as Captains. Captains will confer with officials when necessary. If a decision is offered to a team, a Captain's first choice is final. Decisions involving penalties will be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.

1.3.4. Players on each team must wear numbered team jerseys and league approved shorts. The shorts worn must be a solid color. Shorts may not have belt loops and/or pockets. Players must not wear metal cleats.

1.3.6. Players are highly encouraged to wear an intraoral mouth and tooth protector.

RULE 2: DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

Section 5 Down and Series

2.5.1. A down is a unit of the game which starts with a legal snap or kick after the ball is declared ready-for-play and which ends when the ball becomes dead. Between downs is the interval during which the ball is dead.

2.5.2. The line-to-gain is the yard line established when a new series (1st down) occurs. Unless there is a penalty, the line-to-gain for a new series is 10 yards in advance of the ball when played for the first down of the series. If the line-to-gain extends into the end zone, the goal line is the line-to-gain.

Section 6 Out-of-Bounds

2.6.2. The offense starts a down behind the line-of-scrimmage and the defense starts the down beyond the line-of-scrimmage. The rush line extends five yards past the line-of-scrimmage on the B team's side of the ball.

RULE 3: PERIODS, TIME FACTORS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Section 1 Length of Periods (Halves)

3.1.1. The game shall be played in two periods (from now on called "half") of 22 minutes. The clock will run continuously until the 2-minute warning of each half.

3.1.2. A game shall last only as long as the time it has been allotted. A team who does not have at least four players present to play within at the scheduled start of the game shall forfeit the game. The score of a forfeit game shall be 21-0. Ten (10) minutes before the end of the allotted time, both Teams will be warned.

3.1.3. During the last two minutes of each half, the clock will run continuously with the following exceptions: the clock will stop for player's time-outs, official's time-outs, penalties, first downs, scoring plays, a change of possession, incomplete pass, and when a player is deflagged out of bounds.

3.1.4. A half may be shortened by agreement of opposing coaches and the Head Referee.

3.1.5. Games interrupted because of events beyond the control of the officials shall be continued from the point of interruption unless the teams and the NYGFL board agree to do otherwise. When weather conditions are construed to be hazardous, the officials are authorized to delay or suspend the game.

3.1.6. There may be up to a 5-minute intermission between the halves when time allows.

Section 3 Starting and Stopping the Clock

3.3.1. At the beginning of both halves, the clock shall start when the ball is hiked on the first play.

3.3.2. Each team is permitted four timeouts in the game and can use up to three per half. If a team uses no timeouts in the first half, they will have three remaining in the second half.

3.3.3. Time-outs will last 30 seconds; the ready-for-play signal will be given immediately after the time-out expires.

3.3.4. Clock starts at the ready to play whistle for the following: an official's timeout, a penalty conference.

3.3.5. Clock starts of the snap for the following: an incomplete pass (under 2 minutes in each half), out of bounds deflagging (under 2 minutes in each half), two-minute warning, touchdowns, and all change of possessions (under 2 minutes in each half)

Section 4 Ball Ready-for-Play and Delay

3.4.2. Action or inaction that delays putting the ball in play is a delay of game and will results in a 5-yard penalty. This includes:

- a. Failing to snap the ball within 25 seconds after the ready-for-play signal.
- b. Unnecessarily carrying the ball after it becomes dead or intentionally consuming time when the down ends.
- c. Non change in the ruing occurs after a coach-referee conference during which the referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule after all permissible timeouts have been used.
- d. Failure of the offense to retrieve the ball following a play.
- e. Snapping the ball before the ready-for-play-signal.

Section 5 Substitutions

3.5.1. No substitutes shall enter during a down. Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball becomes live.

Rule 4: BALL IN PLAU, DEAD BALL, OUT-OF-BOUNDS, & DEFLAGGING

Section 4 Deflagging

4.4.1. **The runner is considered de-flagged when a player clearly detaches the runner's flags. The player should hold the flags over their head at the spot of the deflagging.**

4.4.2. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down to remove the flag.

4.4.3. The runner must keep flags on each side of their body at waist level and across the posterior. Flags not in proper position will cause a runner to be considered deflagged when touched. Allowances will be made for flag position shifts because of action that occurs during the down.

4.4.4. If a runner has less than three flags and is touched by an opponent between the shoulders and waist, the runner is deflagged. The ball becomes dead at the spot where the ball was when the runner is touched.

4.4.5. A ball carrier is down where the ball is located when the flags are pulled.

Section 7 Handing and Advancing the Ball

- 7.3.1. Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.
- 7.3.2. During a down, a Team A player may hand the ball forward behind the line to a teammate. Handing off the ball forward gets charged as a QB run, and the QB is no longer able to run during that drive/possession. *Illegal Forward Handing = 5-yard penalty and Loss of down*
- 7.3.3. In each possession, Team A may use only one scrimmage running play, where the runner crosses the LOS. Any number of backward passes and hand-offs may be used before the runner crosses the LOS. If a shovel or screen pass is used, its initial direction determines whether it is a forward or backward pass. **In each possession, Team A may use one designated 1-yard running play. Example, the referee will ask the captain, our QB (when 1 yard or shorter and when team A has a run) if they would like to use their one designated run. This is not available to Team A under two minutes or at the goal line.**

RULE 8: SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACKS

Section 1 Value of Scores

8.1.1. The game is won by the team that accumulates the most points.

a. Touchdown-6 points b. Safety (points awarded to opponent)-2 points c. Successful Try-For-Point (from either run or pass) i. From the 10-yard line-2 points ii. From the 5-yard line-1 point.

8.1.2. A game may be ended early if Mercy Rules become enacted. The Mercy Rules thresholds are:

a. If a team is ahead by **25 points or more at the 5-minute mark** of the second half, the score of the game is finalized. If both captains agree, the teams will continue playing until the 2-minute mark; otherwise, the game is over.

b. If a team is ahead by **17 points or more at the 2-minute mark** of the second half, the game is over.

Section 5 Onside Play

- Onside kick alternative rule beta test: "With four or less minutes remaining in the game, any team A captain (whose team is behind in the score), following a scoring play, may make an election to attempt an "on-side" play following the try by taking a charged team time out and notifying the referee. The Referee shall stop the game clock and the "on-side" play will be attempted, if allowed by rule, following the try."
 - A team can only use this play with **4 minutes** or less remaining in the game.
 - The team must be trailing to execute after scoring a touchdown & try.
 - **A trailing team captain must use a charged team timeout after** a score and inform the referee of their intent to execute an "onside play". If the trailing team has no timeouts remaining, this option is not available.
 - The trailing team gets one play – **4th & 15 from the team's own 15.**
 - The clock will start on the snap of the 4th & 15 play.

- The trailing team cannot 'use a run' on the 4th & 15 play, but if the team succeeds in converting the 4th & 15 play, then the run is available for the rest of the team's drive.
- If the trailing team doesn't convert the 4th & 15, the leading team gets the ball at the succeeding spot.
- If a team is trailing after the touchdown is scored, but is then tied or ahead after the extra point (try) is attempted, the onside play attempt will not be available to them.
- A team captain may ask to use this play by using a charged team timeout either after the touchdown is scored or after the try is scored. If a team uses this timeout after the touchdown (with more than 2 minutes remaining in the half), then the try is an untimed down, and the clock will next start on the snap with the 4th & 15 play.
- Once the team uses the timeout to go for the 4th & 15 play, that decision is irrevocable.
- If team A is down by 8 points, scores a touchdown, and takes the timeout to declare an onside play attempt before the try – however, they convert the 2-point try and are now tied, then that team would not get their timeout back, and would now be ineligible to go for the onside kick alternative play.

Section 6 Tie Games and Overtime Procedure

8.5.1. If, at the end of a playoff game, both teams have identical scores, the tie will be resolved by one or more series of unlimited downs. All game rules apply except: Regular season games can and will end in a tie.

a. Ball placed on the 10; first and goal.

b. No try will be made if the winner of the game has been determined.

c. Only non-player, unsportsmanlike, dead ball fouls, or defensive fouls during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try-for-point are penalized from the succeeding spot.

8.5.2. When the score is tied at the end of the game, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a 3-minute intermission during which both teams may confer with their coaches. All officials and team captains will meet at midfield for the coin toss after the intermission. The winner of the toss will be given a choice of defense, offense or designating the end of the field to start the overtime. The loser of the toss will choose from the remaining options.

Note: Each team will be permitted one timeout, each team is guaranteed one possession.

8.5.3 Each possession starts at the opponent's 10-yard-line. Series alternate until one team has scored more points than the other. If after two possessions each the score is still tied, teams must go for 2 points after scoring. The possessions alternate as follows: Series 1-3-5 etc.: Team A, followed by Team B; Series 2-4-6, etc.: Team B, followed by Team A. The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime plus those accumulated in regulation play shall be declared the winner.

Note: Overtime is considered a new series. Therefore, no more than one scrimmage running play may be used per overtime series.

RULE 9 CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS

Section 9 Summary of Penalties

9.9.1. Offensive Penalties

- a. Delay of Game: 5 yards
- b. False Start 5 yards (dead ball)
- c. Offsides 5 yards
- d. Snap Infraction 5 yards (dead ball)
- e. Illegal Motion 5 yards
- f. Illegal Forward Pass 5 yards
- g. Pass interference 10 yards
- h. Rusher Interference 5 yards
- i. Illegal Pass-Play Contact 5 yards
- j. Flag Guarding 5 yards.
- k. Personal Foul 10 yards
- l. Unsportsmanlike 10 yards
- m. Illegal Participation 5 yards (Player out of bounds and/or 8 players at snap/player without flags)
- n. Holding 5 yards
- o. Illegal Block 5 yards (spot foul)
- p. Excessive Force Block 10 yards
- q. Uniform Violation 5 yards

9.9.2. Defensive Penalties

- a. Holding the runner 5 yards (added to end of run)
- b. Encroachment 5 yards
- c. Offsides 5 yards
- d. Pass interference Spot foul; first down
- e. Illegal Pass-Play Contact 5 yards
- f. Stripping the ball 5 yards (spot foul)
- g. Personal Foul 10 yards (bull rush)
- h. Bull Rush 5 yards.
- i. Unsportsmanlike 10 yards
- j. Roughing the Passer 10 yards
- k. Illegal de-flagging 5 yards
- l. Uniform Violation 5 yards