

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

RULES, POLICIES AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This league is meant to be a fun, empowering and safe learning environment with healthy competition! We invite all women to support each other and come away with confidence and pride through teamwork and sportsmanship. We are all in this together!

Rules are an adaptation of the NFL Flag League Rules and NYSPHSAA Section 1
Flag Football and are subject to change pending safety and skill level
development.

Event Rules and Policies: All spectators and participants must uphold sportsmanship and positivity for all. There shall be no heckling of participants or officials. Any violation of these rules will result in spectators or players being asked to leave.

Officials: Officials will be present at every game. They are also there to help provide instruction and to clarify rules, if necessary. They will have full discretion to call penalties.

Arguing with officials by players, coaches or spectators will not be tolerated. We will implement a warning and then a 5 yard penalty (that will be embarrassing).

Minimum Player Requirements and Injuries: All teams must have 5 players present to play in order to start a game. If a team only has 5 players and a player becomes injured without any available substitutes, the team with a player deficit has the option to:

- 1. Play with 4 players versus the opposing team's 5 players.
- 2. Forfeit (with the option of continuing in a scrimmage in a 4 vs. 4 format)

*If the team chooses to play with a deficit in a 4 vs 5 match up and experiences another player injury (being left with only 3 players) this will result in an automatic forfeit/cancellation.



Spectator viewing: Spectators must sit in the bleachers. Only coaches and an individual keeping stats will be permitted on the sidelines.

Absolutely NO ONE (especially children) are permitted on the turf. Absolutely no ball playing of any kind on the turf, track or surrounding area. We have experienced injuries to children, players and officials. We are not willing to compromise anyone's safety.

Playoff Eligibility: Subs must play at least half (3 out of 7) of the games preceding playoffs to qualify for playoffs.

Equipment: All participants must wear a **Mouth Guard**. Any player who does not have one will not be eligible to play.

NO JEWELRY ALLOWED!

Head Protection: Soft Shell Helmets or Headband are STRONGLY recommended. If you choose NOT to purchase either, you will need to sign a waiver.

<u>Injuries</u>- when there is an injury, all players should take a knee, the game will stop until the injured player is safely off the field. The game will immediately resume from when the time was stopped. If necessary, half time will be cut short to make sure the second half has as much time as needed to complete the game. If the injury happens in the second half, the second half may be shortened so the game does not compromise the following time slot.

<u>Officials calls and Video Footage:</u> Use of video footage will <u>NOT</u> be permitted in questioning an official's call. Once the call is made, it is the final call. Arguing with a referee could result in a penalty.

Coaches: Coaches are permitted on the sidelines, Coaches are NOT permitted on the field. Quarterbacks must run to the sideline to receive a play if need be. Coaches must upload the same sportsmanship expectations and standards as players.

Speaking Captains: Teams will choose one speaking captain to talk to officials during the games. You must have one designated speaking captain on the field.

- Please report injuries to League Director
- NO JEWELRY allowed
- Only SOFT SHELL Headgear is allowed.
- **NO DOGS ALLOWED AT THE HS TURF** (We LOVE doggies but sorry they aren't allowed at the HS)



THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS ALLOWED ON THE FIELD. Anyone that is seen doing this will be disqualified from the league. Please do not do this before the games. DO NOT put yourself or anyone else at risk.

SAVE IT FOR AFTER THE GAME.

GENERAL

- All players must be ready 10 minutes before game time.
- Game is 5 vs 5 including quarterback
- The ball is spotted in the middle of the field.
- The starting team begins on 5-yard line
- The official ball is a Wilson Pee Wee. Teams **must use league provided balls** for games. Teams are not allowed to use their own balls.
- The offense has 4 downs to cross midfield to get a first down and then 4 downs to score. If the offense fails to cross midfield or fails to score after 4 downs from midfield, the opposing team takes over possession at their own 5 yard line.
- **Blocking**: There is **NO** blocking in this league behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Screen blocking is obstructing an opponent without initiating contact with her with any part of the body. Offensive players must stand still once the ball is distributed. This includes not running with the ball carrier to get in the way.

A 5 yard penalty will be assessed where the contact was made and the ball being placed where the infraction took place and whistle was blown. Unless the infraction happens before the ball is distributed, the down will then be repeated.

RULE FOR JOINT POSSESSION: on a pass play if the offensive and defensive players are in joint possession of the ball, the ball will be awarded to the offensive team. A defensive player would have to clearly intercept the ball before the offense, in order to rule it as an interception.



FLAGS

- Tucking in jerseys is MANDATORY. Flags must be OVER Jerseys. Suggestion to wear pocketless shorts over leggings to make sure jerseys can be tucked.
 Leggings must be pocketless
- Excess flag belts MUST BE CUT and tucked to prevent accidental pulling. Flags must be positioned on the hips (a defens ive player that pulls a hanging flag belt strap will automatically result in a down per the referee's discretion).
- If a defensive player is unable to grab the flag due to offensive ball carriers flags not being positioned on the hip, a penalty will be called. **Five yard penalty on the spot of the foul.**
- If a ball carrier's flag falls off while running, the defense must touch the runner at the shoulder or below, with one hand to stop the play.

COIN TOSS

- Every game begins with a coin toss to determine which team will start with the ball (there's no kickoff).
- Teams change sides after the first half, possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

TIMING

- Games are (2) 22 minute (running time) halves, 2 minute half time and the clock only stops for injuries and time outs.
- Time outs: Each team will get 3 Timeouts Total PER GAME. Timeouts may be used at any point throughout the game. Each time out is 30 second.
- OFFICIALS TIMEOUT: Officials may call a timeout for injuries if applicable, otherwise the clock is always running.
- There are no timeouts in overtime.

SCORING

- A touchdown is 6 points.
- *THE BALL SCORES:* The ball must cross the goal line to score, if the ball crosses the goal line before the flag is pulled a touchdown will be awarded.
- Extra Points are worth 1, 2 or 3 points depending on what yard line the offense chooses.



• TIE GAMES: Games ending in a tie will only go into overtime in playoffs and not during regular season play. SEE PAGE 4 for OVERTIME FORMAT

OFFENSE

- To start each play, the center will snap the ball to the Quarterback. Snap can be between legs or sideways
- All passes that can be thrown forward can be thrown underhand or overhand behind the line of scrimmage. Pitch-outs/Laterals:: may be received **behind** the line of scrimmage, not down field. *See page 6 for definition as it pertains to our league*.
- The ball is dead when it hits the ground, the ball carrier's flag is pulled from their belt, the ball-carrier steps out of bounds, or the ball-carrier's body (aside from their feet) touches the ground
- Midline: An offensive player who extends the ball across the midline will be awarded a first down before the flag is pulled.

RUNNING THE BALL

- Offense can run the ball an unlimited amount of times.
- A player is allowed to run the ball anywhere on the field <u>EXCEPT THE NO RUN ZONE</u> which is between the goal line and the <u>5 yard line</u> marked by a BLUE cone (THE BLUE LINE).
 - FOR SAFETY REASONS: IN THE NO RUN ZONE: NO HAND OFFS, BACKWARD PASSES OR BLITZING- IT MUST BE A PASS.
- NO BLITZING ZONE: Defense is NOT allowed to blitz once the ball is at the 5 yard line.
- Defense is NOT allowed to blitz or run on extra points worth 1 point at the 5 yard line.
 - This rule is in effect for safety reasons as the space is limited with 9 players in a five yard end zone.
- You ARE allowed to blitz on extra points worth 2 and 3 Extra Points and the
 offense is allowed to run.
- The **BALL** must cross the line to score a touchdown. Consistent with this rule, a first down is achieved if the ball crosses midfield even if the flag is pulled.
- A play is dead if the player's knee hits the ground. A player may put their hand down and still legally run.
- On a Blitz: Offensive players must steer clear of the rusher and may not get in her way.



- No flag guarding or stiff arming. There will be a <u>loss of down</u> at the point of the infraction. (See Penalties)
- In order to make a completed catch, <u>ONE</u> foot must remain in bounds.
- Feet may NOT leave the ground when carrying the ball to avoid flag pulling. The only time it is permitted is to avoid a collision or injury. However, a ball carrier must attempt to cut around a defender to avoid a collision otherwise it will be an offensive penalty of 5 yards from the spot of the foul.
- When the ball carrier receives the ball (either by hand off or pass) teammates should remain stationary and may not interfere with the play.
- There are no fumbles in flag football
- Fumbles: There are NO Fumble recoveries in Flag Football. When a ball carrier drops the ball while running after a catch is made and then hits the ground, the ball will be spotted at the point where the ball carrier lost control of the ball, not at its resting place. Possession will not transfer to the defense, yet the down will be advanced accordingly.
- If a ball is in the air by way of bobbling or being tipped, it is considered a **LIVE BALL** and possession may be obtained by either the offense or defense. If a live ball is obtained without touching the ground, by the defense, it is considered an INTERCEPTION.
- Failure to execute the snap to the quarterback if the ball is dropped by the quarterback or any player, will result in a loss of a down and will start at the spot where the ball hit the ground.
- If an offensive player goes out of bounds anywhere in the field and comes back in the field of play and is the first to catch the ball, it is illegal: *Penalty*: loss of down at previous spot
- **MOTION IS NOT ALLOWED** in this league. Offensive players must be set before the center snaps the ball. Any player that moves before the snap will be called for a warning first and then a penalty will be assessed for subsequent infractions (see penalties).
- You may do reverse plays, HOWEVER you must be confident that your team can execute to avoid collisions, do not try this for the first time in a game. Once the ball is distributed any defender may cross the line of scrimmage.
- Helpful Tip: Do not stop running until the whistle is blown.

Extra points

- Teams have the opportunity to go for 1, 2 or 3 extra points. 1 point will be from the 5 yard line (marked with a blue cone) 2 points will be from the 10 (marked with a yellow cone), 3 points will be from the 15 yard line (orange cone).

 Extra Points are RETURNABLE and if scored they will receive 2 Points. If they are not returned for a touchdown, the ball starts on the team's own 5 yard line.
 - Please Penalties Section for Live Ball Fouls on Extra Points.
- If Team A (offense) has a penalty and they score, the down will be replayed at the previous spot after the enforcement on penalty (5 yards). If A scores, and there is a foul



- on B (defense) the penalty is declined, points are awarded. If B fouls and A does not score, offense will go to the previous spot and replay the down after the enforcement of the penalty.
- Interceptions are returnable for a touchdown worth 6 points. An interception on an extra point if scored, is worth 2 points. If it is not scored, the ball goes back to the 5 vard line.

Quarterbacks

- Quarterbacks can run the ball an unlimited amount of times with the exception of when the ball reaches the five yard line. *Note: Our league is meant to be empowering for all,* we expect that our QBs will not run the ball every time to ensure maximum participation of teammates.
- A quarterback's entire body may **not** cross the line of scrimmage when throwing the ball. This will be an illegal forward pass penalty. The official will place a bean bag on the line of scrimmage every time the ball is placed. Quarterbacks may only cross the line of scrimmage if they are running the ball or pass/hand off the ball **behind** and become an eligible receiver. See penalties.
- The quarterback has a **seven-second pass clock to get rid of the ball.** The referee will count out loud as soon as the ball is snapped. If the ball is not distributed by 7 seconds, it will result in a loss of a down at the previous spot. It will be considered an incomplete pass.
- Huddle time should be kept to under 30 seconds (if it is excessive, the referee will issue a warning and if it frequently occurs, it may result in a loss of a down).
- Illegally conserving time in the huddle or at the line of scrimmage: DELAY OF GAME PENALTY IF EXCESSIVE (over 40 seconds) -See penalties

 The quarterback's entire body cannot advance beyond the line of scrimmage unless they are running the ball.
- Pitch-outs/Laterals: are permitted **BEHIND** the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is distributed, the offensive player may run or pass the ball. Note the Quarterback is an eligible receiver. NO LATERALS DOWN FIELD. For definition, see glossary below, as it pertains to our league. For example: No Hook and ladder plays downfield
- Once the ball is placed on the line of scrimmage, the center is the only player allowed to touch the ball at the point of when they are ready to snap. No other player is allowed to pick up the ball once it is placed by the officials.
- Cadence: Please make every effort to have a short, loud and clear cadence.
- Teams cannot score a safety in this league. When a quarterback is sacked in the opposing team's end zone or runs out of bounds, it will go back to the previous spot.
- Flea Flickers are not permitted



DEFENSE

- Woman to woman OR Zone defense. See definition in Glossary
- No contact allowed. This includes tackling, blocking, and pulling clothing and flag belt extension. Instead, players wear flag belts. To "tackle" the person in possession of the ball, the opposing team needs to pull a flag off.
- If you attempt to swat the ball out of the ball carrier's hand, it will be a 5 yard penalty added to the end of the run. If the run ends in a touchdown the penalty is declined (See Penalties)
- BLITZ: ONLY ONE PLAYER MAY BLITZ
- Each team gets 1 per series of 4 downs (5 yds to midline and midline to 5 yard line)
 One player who rushes the passer must line up 5 yards or more away from the line of scrimmage.
- Any unlimited amount of players may line up 5 yards away from the line of scrimmage but only one may blitz
- <u>IMPORTANT</u>: As this rule/definition pertains to our league: A BLITZ is a rusher that crosses the line of scrimmage with a deliberate attempt to sack the quarterback. If the ball is distributed after the rusher crosses over the line of scrimmage and makes an attempt to sack BUT is unsuccessful, that will count as their 1 blitz
- Blitzing is *only permitted* on extra points worth 2 points at the 10 yard line and 3 yards at the 15 yard line.
 - Once the offense scores a touchdown, the blitz limit resets and defense can blitz on the extra point at the 10 yard line. NOT AT THE FIVE YARD LINE FOR 1 EXTRA POINT

An illegal blitz will result in a 5 yard penalty and added to the end of the run

- Illegal Blitzing:
- 1)Any player who is less than 5 yards away (no run zone)
- 2) Any player who drifts less than 5 yards from the line of scrimmage
 - 3) A player that fakes a blitz
- 4) When a team blitzes more than the allotted amount per series. **See penalties**

If a player blitzes in the no run zone, and a quarterback runs, the penalties will be offset and the down will be replayed.

If a player blitzes in the No run zone and the quarterback completes a pass, the touchdown will be awarded



If a player blitzes in the No run zone and the quarterback completes a pass that does not result in touchdown: the down will be replayed and the offense has a choice of tacking on five yards to the run or replaying from the previous spot.

Illegal blitz on extra points: if a player blitzes on an extra point worth 1 point(no run zone)the extra point will be replayed.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

- Tackling: 10 yard penalty tacked on to the end of the run
- Pass interference: 10 yard penalty from previous spot and automatic first down
- Holding a jersey or excessive flag belt: 5 yards tacked onto the end of the run or previous spot.

FLAG PULLING

- After pulling the flag, please HOLD IT UP (happy and proud) so the official can mark where the flag was pulled, please don't walk with it until the official can get there.
- PLEASE DO NOT THROW THE FLAG ON THE GROUND. Wait for the ball carrier to come to YOU to retrieve the flag after the spot is marked by the official.
- Once the ball is distributed behind the line of scrimmage, any defender may cross to attempt to grab the flag. (This does not count as a blitz).
- Interceptions are returnable for a touchdown worth 6 points. An interception on an extra point if scored, is worth 2 points. If it is not scored, the ball goes back to the 5 yard line.
- Interceptions that are not ruled a touchdown will be spotted at the point where the flag was pulled.
- A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt. It will result in a defensive holding penalty (5 yards from spot)
- Interceptions that are scored will be 6 points
- NO SAFETIES (when a quarterback is sacked in the opposing team's end zone, no points will be awarded and the ball will be placed back at the 5 yard line).
- **Premature Flag Pulls**: A defensive player must wait for a receiver to have possession of the ball before she can pull the flag. If the defender pulls the flag prior to possession, it will be an illegal procedure penalty. The penalty will be a replay of the down and five yards tacked on to where the flag was pulled.



PENALTIES

LENIENCY OF PENALTIES INCLUDE

Warning for offsides Warning for Illegal motion

ENFORCED PENALTIES

10 YARDS

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT and UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul

ROUGHING THE PASSER: Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into the passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown, also there should be no attempts to hit the player's arm during a throwing motion. **10 yards + automatic first down**

PASS INTERFERENCE:

Offense: 10 yards from the previous spot

Defense: 10 yards from the previous spot and an automatic first down

(or decline penalty and take the result of the play (whichever is more advantageous))

5 YARDS

ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS: Spot foul, 5 yard penalty, loss of a down.

ILLEGALLY CONSERVING TIME: DELAY OF GAME - Excessive -5 yard penalty

ILLEGALLY BLOCKING/ILLEGAL PICK: 5 yard penalty (offense and defense)

TRIPPING A RUNNER -deliberately use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent including the runner below the knee. Spot -5 Yard Penalty and Replay down.

REMOVING A FLAG BEFORE A PLAYER HAS POSSESSION OF THE BALL -A player must wait for a receiver to have possession of the ball in order to pull the flag. If the defender pulls the flag prior to possession, it will be an illegal procedure penalty. 5 yard penalty and replay the down

PENALTY: replay of the down and five yards tacked on to where the flag was pulled, if the player had possession. If she does not have possession, the ball goes back to the previous spot.

HOLDING A JERSEY: 5 yards tacked onto the end of the run or previous spot **ILLEGAL SWATTING OF THE BALL:** 5 Yard penalty added to the end of the run

ILLEGAL MOTION: Live ball foul- 5 Yards from previous spot

BLITZING PENALTIES: An illegal blitz will result in a 5 yard penalty and added to the end of the run

ANY DEFENSIVE FOUL for the series: the blitz is not repeated until a new series is awarded ANY OFFENSIVE FOUL for the series: during a blitz, the defensive team will be able to use their allotted blitz once again when the penalty is accepted or declined.

Loss of Down Only

FLAG GUARDING: Spot foul and loss of a down, no yardage assessed



INELIGIBLE PLAYER OUT OF BOUNDS- loss of down, ball at previous spot

Live Ball Fouls on Extra Point Attempts:

Defense: If there is a live ball foul on Team B(defense) the penalty is accepted, the down is replayed and there is enforced from the spot or the previous spot of the foul (depending on the foul).

If Team B-(Defense) intercepts the ball, and there is a penalty after the interception on the run (Such as an illegal block, stiff arm, flag guard etc) during the return, the extra point is not replayed and the play is over, no points will be scored.

OVERTIME FORMAT ONLY FOR PLAYOFFS

- Starting with a coin toss, the winner of the toss will decide -offensive or defense. Each overtime is to be thought of as an inning (there is a top and a bottom).
- Each team will get one possession from the 10 Yard line (4 downs to Score).
 OFFENSE: RUNNING IS LEGAL UP UNTIL THE FIVE YARD LINE
 DEFENSE: BLITZING IS LEGAL UP UNTIL THE FIVE YARD LINE
 Extra Points will be attempted after a score and rules are consistent with regular play above.
- BLITZING AND RUNNING ARE NOT PERMITTED ONCE THE BALL IS AT THE 5 YARD LINE.
- At the start of the <u>3rd overtime</u>, the ball will be moved to start at the <u>5 yard line</u>.

NOTE: If there is an interception on the first possession and it is a Pick 6, the game is OVER.

- To keep it balanced: after the first "inning" the last team on offense to score will stay on offense to start the top of the next "inning"
- Repeat until we have a winner.



MERCY RULE

While we do not have a formal mercy rule, we expect players/coaches to keep in mind that this is intended to be a fun league. Players/coaches are to be mindful if/when games become unbalanced. Please make every effort to control the score to avoid blow-outs, e.g., take your strongest players out and give your other players more playing time, allow someone else to try quarterbacking, etc.

SPORTSMANSHIP

We are here to support each other, please be mindful to make every woman a part of the equation. Highlight what they are good at and promote playing and winning (or losing) as a team. PENALTIES WILL NOW BE ENFORCED FOR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT and UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS (10 yards).

OTHER

- No metal cleats on the turf
- Eye black and team spirit are encouraged
- Touchdown dances performed should not be unsportsmanlike, will not result in a penalty but are meant to be fun, make others laugh and celebrate together.
- **MOST IMPORTANT** -*Our rules and format are for self preservation and safety!* We all need our bodies! We encourage a thorough warm up before each game as you will find your muscles may not fire in this way from not playing flag football regularly. Many of our rules are based around preventing injuries, please take care of yourselves and each other!

Please always communicate any concerns or suggestions as we are always looking to improve our league!!



FLAG FOOTBALL GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Blitz: When a defensive player advances across the line of scrimmage and rushes the quarterback in an attempt to block the pass or pull her flags. One blitz is allowed per 4 downs and player blitzing must line up 5 yards or more away from the line of scrimmage

Center: This player is responsible for lining up on the line of scrimmage and snapping the ball to the quarterback, either through the legs or from the side.

Dead Ball: This refers to the period of time directly before or after a play when the ball is not in motion. Examples of a dead ball are: ball touches the ground, the ball carrier's flag is pulled, the ball carrier steps out of bounds (please refer to *Parameters* for *Out of Bounds on each side of SSA above*), the ball carriers body (outside of their feet) touches the ground, the pass is incomplete, the ball carrier's flag falls off or the receiver has one or no flags when catching the ball.

Downs: A down is the period after the ball is snapped and the team is attempting to advance down the field. In our indoor league, (due to space) we have four downs to get to the end zone. If you do not score after 4 downs, the possession changes and the other team takes the ball at their own 5 yard line.

Flag guarding: When the ball-carrier prevents a defender from pulling down their flags. For example, the player may cover their flag with their open hand, or lower their elbow. It is illegal and results in a penalty.

Flea flicker: (Not allowed) A trick play to fool the defensive team into thinking that a play is a run instead of a pass. The quarterback laterals the ball to another player who laterals back to the quarterback who attempts to pass downfield.

Fumble: When the ball carrier loses control of the ball after the catch is made.

Line of Scrimmage: The imaginary line separating offense and defense at the beginning of the play. The center must line up on the line of scrimmage where the referee stands. Any offensive player that crosses over this line before the quarterback yells hike will be considered offsides but will get a warning to move back (for now). After a play, wherever the ball is placed by the official, is the line of scrimmage.

Live ball: This is the period of time when the ball and play is in motion. A live-ball penalty is one that occurs while a down is in progress and is enforced on the following play. To add, it is generally a "spot foul" which means the penalty will be enforced at the spot where the foul took place.

Motion: Motion refers to the lateral movement of an offensive player prior to the snap, behind the line of scrimmage. Motion is a part of the game of football but will not be instituted in this league yet.



Passer: The passer is the person throwing the ball. This flag football term is more common in flag football because the passer doesn't necessarily have to be the quarterback.

Pick Six: An interception that results in a touchdown

Pitch out/Lateral (Defined as it pertains to our league): A backward or sideways, underhand toss of the ball behind the line of scrimmage. However the ball carrier must then run with the ball and are not allowed to throw or distribute to another player. No laterals or pitches down field.

Quarterback: the offensive player who lines up behind the center, receives the snap and directs the offensive plays for the team. Quarterbacks can run an unlimited amount of times

Running backs: an offensive player that the ball is handed off to and then runs

Rusher: The defensive player assigned to rush/blitz the quarterback to prevent her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or blocking the pass. *Offensive players must steer clear of the rusher*. However if the ball is handed off, any defender may rush. Rusher must be 5 yards off the line of scrimmage.

Rush line: An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage. In other words, any defensive player who is positioned seven yards off the line of scrimmage is eligible to rush. Anyone blitzing must be behind this line as well before the blitz.

Safety: NO SAFETIES in this league: when a quarterback is sacked in the opposing team's end zone, no points will be awarded and the offense will start back at the 5 yard line

Safety position on defense: Defensive player that starts furthest from the line of scrimmage. Usually the last line of defense on the field.

Wide receiver: an offensive player with the principle role of catching a pass from the quarterback

Woman to Woman Defense: the defensive coverage where players are assigned to a specific woman to cover, not an area of the field.

Zone Defense: the defensive coverage where players are assigned to specific areas of the field, not a specific person.

