

Flag Football Rules: Updated 8/4/08

1. Playing time – two 20 minute halves with a 5 minute half-time and 30 seconds between plays (begins at the spot of the ball). Each team receives 2 one-minute time-outs per half.

a. During the last two minutes of 2nd half, the clock will stop in the following situations:

aa. The play ends as a result of an incomplete pass.

bb. The play ends as a result of the player with ball control going out of bounds.

cc. The play ends after having a change of possession.

dd. The play ends with a touchdown.

ee. An accepted penalty.

NOTE: If one team is ahead of another team by 20 or more points, the clock will not be stopped the last two minutes of the game.

b. The referee will keep the time and can stop the clock at their discretion.

c. GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME and the forfeiting team will lose the game by a score of 21-0. If both teams do not field enough players to start a game, it will be a forfeit on both teams (a loss) and a 0-0 score will be given.

d. Two minute warning – the two minute warning will be given to both team's captains in both halves.

e. The RMCAA Flag football league is a men's league only.

Rules of the Game General Rules

f. Penalties: 5-yard penalties, 10-yard penalties, and 15-yard penalties will be enforced.

g. Teams: Seven players on the playing field for each team. A player cannot play on multiple teams.

h. Teams must start with 6 players and can end a game with 5 players. There is free substitution between downs (all players in the huddle must be involved in the following play...Illegal substitution penalty: 5 yards from the previous spot).

i. Players must be at least 16 years old. 16-18 year olds must have a signed consent from their parent(s). Teams must be at the center of the playing field with flags 5 minutes before game time, if no game is in progress.

j. Playing field: 80 yard field, divided into fourths (20 yards) to note first downs needed, with two 10 yard end-zones. Total length of the field is 100 yards.

k. Officials: Minimum of two referees for all league games.

l. Player's Equipment: Knee braces, if all the hard surfaces are properly covered and with no metal in front of the knee, are considered legal. Knee pads are legal but, they may not be made of the following materials: Sole leather, plaster, metal, or other hard substance. All clothing must be tucked in so that flags and belts are visible. Shirts must not interfere with a player's flags. Each player's pants pant trim, or shorts must contrast with the flags (flags are red and yellow). Multi-colored

or flowered apparel will not be permitted. Final judgment will be left to the game officials. If a player wears a “half shirt”, the shirt may not touch his flag belt. No jewelry is allowed unless taped to the body. Wedding rings and religious or medical medals will be allowed if properly covered with tape and declared safe by an official.

aa. NOTE: Equipment Penalty – Each team gets one warning for the entire game. After the warning a 5 yard penalty from the previous spot will be assessed. The whistle will be blown when the ball is snapped and play will be stopped.

m. Only tennis shoes and soft rubber cleats are permitted as footgear. The molded type of soccer shoe is allowed. No metal-cleat football shoes, golf or track shoes, work or cowboy boots, or bare feet will be allowed.

n. Gloves are permitted providing they contain no metal, no padding, and no abrasive materials. No pads or padding below the elbow.

o. All equipment will be inspected by game officials and approved/disapproved accordingly. (Items must be checked before each game).

p. Captains: Only one captain on the field may be designated to talk to the officials and to make decisions. Captain’s choice of any option is final. There will be a maximum of three captains allowed and they must check-in with officials prior to game time.

q. All players are required to wear a set of flags. In case of an inadvertent detached flag:

aa. NOTE: When a runner or receiver loses his flag either accidentally or inadvertently, play continues. The de-flagging occurs by a one hand tag between the shoulders and the knees.

bb. On a pass play, a potential receiver who drops his flag then catches the ball will be de-flagged by a one-handed tag between the shoulders and the knees.

cc. If a defensive player is caught pulling the flag off of an offensive player before receiving the ball, a pass-interference penalty will be assessed.

dd. Player legally de-flagged without the ball who then again becomes a legal ball carrier must be tagged with one hand between the shoulders and the knees.

ee. If a player is missing a belt from the initiation of the play and has been involved in a play (touching the ball, blocking, passing, or running), an equipment penalty will be assessed.

r. The ball is dead when it touches the ground and will be spotted where the ball initially touches the ground. Exception: A punt before it’s touched.

Neutral Zone

- a.** The neutral zone is from the forward point of the football, two yards to the defensive line of scrimmage and extended to each sideline. It is established when the ball is ready for play. The official will mark the forward point of the football with an orange cone and mark the defensive line of scrimmage with an orange cone.
- b.** The ball will be spotted no closer than 2 yards from the goal line when the ball or play is downed within 2 yards of the goal line.

Scoring

- a.** A touchdown is 6 points.
- b.** Point After Attempt: 1 or 2 Points. 1 point is from the 2 yard line and a two point conversion is from the 5 yard line. P.A.T.s may be advanced by the defense to their end zone for 2 points.
- c.** Safeties: 2 points, plus the defense gets the ball on their 20 yard line. If ball is snapped and lands in the end zone, it is an automatic safety. A penalty committed by the offense in their own end zone will result in a safety.
- d.** Tie Games: Each team will get 4 chances to score from the 20 yard line. If a team scores then the other team must score to continue play. If both teams do not score then play continues until a winning team emerges. A pass can be intercepted and returned for a touchdown and count in the final score. There is a 2OT limit in the regular season. The game can end in a tie. In playoffs if an overtime game goes more than 3 overtimes, then there will be a 5 minute break offered to both teams. This will continue in increments of 3.

Playing Rules – Offense

- N.** Spinning is allowed but is not an excuse for running over a defender.
- O.** Eligible receivers: All players are eligible to receive passes.
- P.** There must be 5 men on the line of scrimmage, with one center. The ball can be hiked from the side if desired.
- Q.** A team can have a player in motion before the ball is snapped. This player cannot move forward before the snap of the ball. The player in motion can be one of the original 5 men on the line of scrimmage, as long as they are set on the line of scrimmage when the quarterback goes into his count. (5 yard penalty) The running back is allowed to take one step forward to start in motion.
- R.** All players must be in the huddle to be involved in the following play...Illegal substitution penalty: 5 yards from the previous spot
- S.** The ends may reset their position, but must be set for one complete second before the ball is snapped.
- T.** Legal forward pass (A team may make one forward pass during each down provided the pass is thrown from a point BEHIND the line of scrimmage.)When one offensive player deflects the ball and a defensive player touches the ball and deflects to second offensive player.
- U.** One foot must be in bounds for a legal catch.

V. When one offensive player deflects the ball and another offensive player catches it.

W. Illegal forward pass: A forward pass is illegal (a) if thrown by a player who is **BEYOND** the line of scrimmage or (b) if it is the second forward pass during the same down.

X. Lateral / Lateral pass: A backward or even pass/toss. (Only one forward pass is allowed on each play). No forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage. Penalty for an illegal forward pass is 5 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.

Y. There are no kickoffs. All play begins at the respective 20-yard line.

Punts:

Z. Offensive players must stay behind the line of scrimmage and cannot begin moving forward until the ball is kicked. No fake punts. The kicker's plant foot cannot cross the line of scrimmage (5 yd offside penalty).

AA. Defense cannot rush the punt.

BB. You can let a punt hit the ground and then field it and run with it.

CC. Fair catch: Receivers of a punt must signal by extending arm overhead and waving. Kicking team must allow punt returnee a two yard cushion to catch the ball. (Halo violation of 10 yards from the spot of the punt returnee)

Ball kicked into end zones: Ball can be run out of the end zone. If ball is dropped in the end zone, it is a touchback. If a player is de-flagged in the end zone, it is a touchback.

2. No offensive player may screen block on the defensive side of the line of scrimmage on a pass play until after the pass is caught. Penalty: Offensive pass interference = 10 yards from the previous spot.

3. While blocking an offensive player cannot lead with the head or with the shoulders. Penalty: Illegal block = 10 yards from the previous spot if behind the line of scrimmage or 10 yards from the spot of the foul if beyond the line of scrimmage.

4. Any excessive contact from an offensive player will result in a tackling penalty (Personal Foul = 15 yards from the previous spot).

Playing Rules – Defense

1. Flagrant impeding of the runner will be enforced when a defensive player makes an attempt to stop a runner's forward momentum without attempting to de-flag the runner – 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul or taking the result of the play. Minor impeding will result in a 5 yard penalty.

2. Roughing the passer will be defined as ANY contact with the passer. Whether intentional or not this will result in a Personal Foul 15 yard penalty from the previous spot and an automatic first down.

3. Any of the following will be considered defensive pass interference: (Spot foul and automatic 1st down):

a. If a defensive player has any contact with an eligible receiver who is beyond the offensive line of scrimmage.

b. Face guarding (interfering with a receiver's vision of the ball while not playing the ball).

- c.** If defensive pass interference takes place in the end zone, the ball will be placed on the 1 yard line and an automatic first down will be awarded.
 - d.** Defensive back holding a receiver or potential receiver.
 - e.** If an eligible receiver is de-flagged prior to touching the ball on a pass.
- 4.** Defensive players must stay two yards away from the offensive line of scrimmage (marked by a set of cones). The defense can rush as soon as the ball is snapped into play. The penalty is 5 yards for a neutral zone infraction.

Penalties:

- a.** All blockers (on the offensive line and anytime during play) must have their arms behind their back and hands clinched. Any use of the arms, elbows, or legs or leading with the shoulder/head to initiate contact is illegal. It is a 10 yard penalty (holding) if hands become unclenched or offensive player initiates contact as stated above. A blocker may use arms and hands to break a fall or retain balance. Holding on or behind the offensive line is 10 yds from the line of scrimmage. Holding beyond the offensive line is 10 yds from the spot of the foul.
- b.** Tripping: No tripping of any player. Personal foul penalty: 15 yards.
- c.** Use of hands or arms by the defense: Defensive players must go around the offensive player's block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A blocker may use arms or hands to break a fall or retain balance. Contact will be made if an offensive player jumps in front of a rusher. Depending on the contact, this contact will result in a no-call. 10 yard penalty from the previous spot. The defense is not allowed to "bum rush" or "run through" an offensive lineman or any other player to get to a ball carrier or passer. You must make an effort to avoid contact. Penalty: 15 yards from the end of the play and automatic first down. If a touchdown results in the play, the personal foul will be fully assessed after the PAT. Therefore, the team in violation will begin their offense on the 5 yard line.
- d.** Tackling (Personal Foul: 15 yards from the end of the play and automatic first down):
 - aa.** An attempt to encircle the body of an opponent with hands or arms, thus bringing them to the ground.
 - bb.** Tackling or pushing a ball carrier that is running near a sideline for the purpose of knocking him out of bounds. Ball carrier's progress can be stopped only by de-flagging.
 - cc.** Diving: No diving from any offensive player is allowed once possession is obtained. Stumbling head-first is not considered diving. Judgments call. 15 yard personal foul from the spot of the infraction.
- e.** Clipping: Running or driving into the back, or throwing or dropping the body across the back of the leg or legs of an opponent, or pushing an opponent in the back. Personal foul penalty from the previous spot. Unless it is on a punt return where a line of scrimmage has not been established, then it will be assessed from the spot of the foul.

f. Flag-Guarding: The ball carrier shall not protect his flags by blocking with arms or hands, to stop an opponent from pulling or removing flags. No stiff arms. Penalty: 5 yard penalty from the spot of the foul – cannot lose a first down

g. Intentional Grounding: 5 yards and loss of down from the line of scrimmage.

aa. Note: grounding the ball to stop time is not a penalty.

h. Butting or lowering head: By offensive runner is illegal. Offensive runner may not run over the defensive player. The runner must attempt to run around him. Personal foul from the previous spot.

i. Illegal procedure: Interior lineman – center, guards, and tackles are eligible to receive passes but are not classified as ends. Ends are allowed to readjust their stance or position after being set. Ends must be set after shifting for one full second before the ball is snapped. 5 yard penalty from previous spot.

j. Inadvertent Whistle: The team in possession at the time of the inadvertent whistle has the choice to accept the play at that spot (when whistle is blown) or to replay the down.

Personal Fouls:

a. A player can receive one personal foul. After that foul he must sit out a total of four downs. If the same player gets another personal foul, that player is ejected for the rest of that game. If so desired, the player can play in another game. A Personal foul can be given for excessive and aggressive play, language, grandstanding, arguing with the referees, and any others as listed in the rules. If a line of scrimmage has already been established, all personal fouls will be assessed from the line of scrimmage. If a line of scrimmage has not been established, the penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul. All personal fouls will be assessed. If a personal foul is committed during play, the offense gets the choice of accepting the 15 yard penalty or the result of the play. In both circumstances, the offending player must still sit for the required four plays.

b. No taunting or harassment of referees or players. No trash talking. Referees have the right to determine offensive language. Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to referees, opposing players, teams, or spectators. A personal foul will be called. Two personal fouls, the person are ejected. Three personal fouls and the game is forfeited by the team that player is associated with. If there is anything your team would like to bring to the attention of the referees, the team captain must come forward and speak for the team.

c. All other rules go along with the NCAA football rules.

d. Referee's call is final!

ACCOUNTABILITY RULE

Our leagues try to encourage the least amount of contact possible so to encourage good sportsmanship among Christians. At times play can become physical and attitudes towards other players can turn negative. This defeats the purpose of our league. We are asking all members of the teams to hold each other and other team's players accountable when on the field / court. If language, grand standing, verbal abuse, and negative play continue, the referees will stop the clock and bring both teams together in the center of the field. We will take that time to refocus ourselves on the purpose of our being together...to be in fellowship with other Christians and that God may be glorified through our actions. We will have a prayer and then play will continue. If the tension between two teams continues and Christian principles and values are not being displayed on the playing field, the referees have the authority to call the game. If the game is called because of unsportsmanlike and unchristian like behavior between *both* teams, each team will forfeit the game (thus, each team will have another loss in the loss column). If the unsportsmanlike and unchristian like behavior is exhibited by one specific team and after all other attempts to rectify the situation have taken place, that team will forfeit the game. We understand the competitive nature of the sport, but we also understand the Christian principles and values for which we stand as Christians. We ask that teams and players hold each other accountable for their actions on the field /court. If you have to sit a player then do so. Not only for his/her benefit and the team's benefit, but also for the integrity of the RMCAA league we are trying to run.

LEAGUE STANDINGS

The scores will be posted every week on the RMCAA website...www.rmcaa.net
Final standings for the playoffs will be decided by following in case of a tiebreaker:

1. Division record or Head to Head record
2. Common Opponent record
3. Point differential with common opponents
4. Point differential for the season
5. Coin toss

SPECTATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Spectators are to refrain from unsportsmanlike behavior and verbal abuse of other players and referees.
2. Spectators need to realize that referees are a part of the game and they do their best for the Lord and the RMCAA. Referees are the closest to the game and call plays as they see them.
3. Spectators are to present opinions and criticism to the RMCAA in writing.
4. Should spectators break these League Rules, the following actions will be taken: 1st warning.....the team captain will be directed by the referee to warn the offending party to cease their behavior.
2nd warning.....the offending party is asked to leave the property.
3rd warning.....the team the offending party is associated with will forfeit the game.