

FLAG FOOTBALL PLAYING RULES

4-8th Grade

(Fargo, Moorhead, & West Fargo)

No Contact!

- Please discourage contact from the start of the season. We want to avoid as many injuries as possible. Let your kids know that tackling and rough play is against the rules and will not be tolerated.

THE BASICS

- Game is played 7 on 7.
- Each team will use their own ball when on offense since each program uses different brands and the sizes don't always match up.
- At the start of each game the coach will select two "captains" to handle coin toss.
- A coin toss/paper rock scissors determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they have four plays to score a touchdown.
- Possession changes to loser of coin toss at beginning of the second half.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line. (if one team goes through their four downs the ball will be spotted at the nearest 5 yard line for the other team to start their series.)
- Games are (2) twenty-five minute halves (running time).
- Coaches are on the field with their team.
- This is a recreation league. Moorhead Parks and Recreation does not keep score.
- There are no kickoffs or punts, and no blocking is allowed.
- After a touchdown is scored, there is an extra play (mimicking a 2 point conversion) starting on the 5-yard line. It must be a passing play.

TIMING

- Each team has one 30-second time-out per half.
- Each team will have up to 60 seconds to snap the ball after the previous play ends.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion (i.e. injuries)

OFFENSE

- The offense must line up in a balanced formation, with the same number of players on each side of the Center position. You cannot overload one side of the ball.
- Shotgun formation is allowed.
- There must be a QB and at least on RB in the backfield.
- The quarterback cannot run the ball
- Direct handoffs or laterals behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- "No-running zones" located five yards from each end zone and five yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- Shovel passes are allowed, however; No shovel passes are permitted inside of the "no-running zones".
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- Players in motion cannot pass the Center before the ball is snapped; as the formation must remain balanced on each side of the Center.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

DEAD BALLS

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Touchdown or safety is scored
 - At the point of an interception (interception returns are not allowed)
 - Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground
 - Ball carrier’s flag falls out

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground and is a loss of down.

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK (2nd-8th grade only, no rushing in K-1)

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of **10 yards** back from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Before each play the referee, will designate 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. A maximum of two players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
 - Rushers can start rushing when QB has the ball in their hands, not on verbal hut or hike.
 - Once the ball leaves the QB’s possession either through a hand off or a pass, all other defensive players can cross the line of scrimmage and can pursue the ball carrier.

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

- If the referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

PENALTIES:

Defense:

- **Off sides** Five yards and automatic first down
- **Interference** 10 yards and automatic first down
- **Illegal contact** (holding, blocking, etc.) 10 yards and automatic first down
- **Illegal FLAG pull** (before receiver has ball) 10 yards and automatic first down
- **Illegal rushing** (starting rush from inside 10-yard marker) 10 yards and automatic first down

Offense:

- **Illegal motion** (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) five yards
- **Illegal forward pass** (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage) five yards and loss of down
- **Illegal contact** (holding, blocking, etc.) 10 yards and loss of down
- **Offensive pass interference** (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) 10 yards & loss of down
- **Flag guarding** 10 yards (from line of scrimmage) and loss of down.
- **Delay of Game** – five yards
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the team coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarifications and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
 - Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

ATTIRE

- Cleats are allowed except for metal spikes.
- All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
- Shoe and mouth guard inspections will be made before each game.
- Official Flag Football jerseys must be worn during play and the jerseys must be tucked into pants/shorts as to not cover the players’ belts and flags.