

**G.M.A.A.  
FLAG FOOTBALL RULES 2022**

**It is important to remember that many coaches and players are learning the game. When applying the rules, whenever possible try to explain and warn before throwing a flag.**

### **Duties of the Host School**

Host school must provide safety pads for the goal posts which can be properly secured. No game may begin unless these pads are in place. The pads should be approximately 6 feet high and with a reasonable degree of thickness. Penalty is default of game. Please be **ABSOLUTELY** rigid with this. **No exceptions.** If there are issues with the field that renders it dangerous, use your judgment concerning the suitability of play.

On soccer fields where the goal posts cannot be moved, have netting or are deemed to be a danger in some way, the solution is simple. Make the 18-yard box (outer box) as the goal line for the ENTIRE game. The back of the end zone will be the 6-yard line (inner box). Have kickoffs from the 35-yard line (10 yards closer to the kicking team's goal line from the soccer circle. No more moving it out/in for a few plays etc. There should be no discussion on this.

### **Equipment**

Jewelry must be removed prior to the start of the game. If it is not possible to remove the jewelry it must be covered up completely. Medical bracelets may be worn but they must be fastened securely so as not to cause injury. The Referee will have the final decision as to the acceptability of equipment.

Spikes or similar sharp pointed type shoes such as track spikes, metal baseball cleats or golf shoes are not permitted. Please do not allow metal cleats.

### **Start of Game**

If the whole team is not there wait 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time. The team is allowed to use 15 minutes grace. Referee not obliged to force team to start with a minimum of 7 players. No delay of game penalty but the team will lose their choice. Only the visiting team is allowed to use 15 minutes for an incomplete team.

The game is played 7 against 7. A team must have a minimum of 7 players to start the game but may finish with 6. Not having the minimum to start or less than 6 to finish will result in a forfeit.

**Flip of the coin. Visitor captain chooses. Winner of the flip can choose to receive, kick, choose a side or defer to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.**

### **Length of Game**

4 downs are played. 1st & 3rd quarters **15 minutes** running time - . 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters **12 minutes** running time + 5 plays. If a kickoff occurs during the 5 plays, it does not count as a play nor does the convert. Taking the result of a penalty nullifies the previous play. i.e. With 4 plays left, the offense is offside and the defense takes the penalty, there remains 4 plays. If they take the result of the play, then there are 3 plays left. If the defense is offside, the offense takes the penalty so there are still 4 plays left.

Half-time is 5 minutes.

### **Timeouts**

Each team is allowed 2 -60 second timeouts per half. After the timeout, all offensive players must return to their huddle. Penalty - 5 yards for Illegal Procedure

### **Mercy Rule**

Mercy rule can be used at the losing coach's discretion if 28 point difference after 3rd quarter.

## **Overtime (both regular season and playoffs)**

Because of the short season and difficulty to schedule tie breakers, regular season games cannot end in a tie. Breaking Ties- Each team will be awarded 3 convert attempts (the team may choose a 1 or 2 pt convert) Total Points wins. If the teams are still tied, each team will be awarded 1 convert attempt until the tie is broken. Choice of 1 or 2 points.

## **SCORING:**

Touchdown: 6 points. Team scored upon has the option of kicking-off or receiving.

Convert: 1 point from 5 yards; 2 points from 10 yards.

Safety: 2 points. Team scoring has option of taking the ball on their own 35 or receiving a kick-off from the opponents 35.

Single: 1 point. Ball is scrimmaged from the 35.

## **Discipline**

Swearing is prohibited. The player will be warned twice by the officials; if he/she repeats his/her actions for a third time in the game, he/she will be ejected from the game. Please write on the gamesheet. For objectionable conduct you can send a player for a "Cooling off" period: It should be for no longer than 5 minutes.

## **Uniforms**

Each school shall be represented by players in uniform colour and type of dress. Uniform tops must be worn by all players. In the event that two teams have similar coloured uniforms, the home team must use different coloured jerseys or pinnies. Don't go crazy about uniforms. **Shorts/sweats with pockets are prohibited.**

## **Flags**

Must be able to see the white (or other colour) part of the flags at all times even if a shirt is tucked in. If you cannot see the white and the ball carrier is being threatened by a defender, blow the play dead once the ball carrier is touched. The flag should not be the same or similar colour as the shorts. If they are, then the players must change flags. If there are no other flags, then this player plays without flags and must be tagged to stop a play.

Every effort must be made to keep one flag on each hip. The flags must be flat, must not be altered or cut, and the sockets must not be glued or changed in any way. The flags must be clearly visible and must not be covered in any way by the players' uniforms. If a ball carrier's flag falls off by itself or is inadvertently knocked off by the ball carrier, the play will continue and the ball carrier should be touched.

When the ball carrier gets her shirt taken out of her pants by a defender, play keeps going until another defender makes a clear attempt at touching the ball carrier. Play is whistled dead at the touch. **Keep in mind that a player cannot grab a runner's shirt and stop their progress in an attempt (purposely or not) to deflag the runner. That is a 10-yard holding penalty applied from the point of foul.**

**Flag guarding, blocking and jumping to avoid being deflagged are all whistle plays in flag**, there is no foul on these plays. Shirts that are not tucked in all the way around is also flag guarding. Stiff arming is a roughing penalty.

## **Ethical Play in Flag**

It is customary in flag football when a player removes an opponent's flag to end a play, the player must first hold up the flag to show the referee and hand the flag back to the respective opponent. To toss a flag aside or to the ground for the opponent to pick up is considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

## **KICKOFF**

All kickoffs must go 20 yards. If not a 5-yard penalty is applied or option of taking the ball where it was touched.

## Offside

Members of the kicking team must stay behind the kick off line until the ball is kicked. Failure to do so results in a five-yard **offside** penalty **or** decline and take the ball at the dead ball spot. The kicking team need **NOT** be stationary when the ball is kicked. They can be running towards the ball as long as they don't get in front of the kicker/ball before it is kicked. The return team must be a minimum of 20 yards from the kicking line until the ball is kicked. Penalty is 5 yards rekick or from point ball dead.

## Out of Bounds

If the ball goes out of bounds on a kick off, it is a 5-yard illegal procedure penalty against the kicking team. The receiving team has the option to have the ball re-kicked at a point five yards back from the point of the last kick, to take possession of the ball 25-yards up from the point of the last kick or take the ball at the point it went out of bounds.

**The receiving team is allowed one forward pass on the kick off.** As any other situation, laterals are always allowed. The first person to touch the ball is allowed 5-yard immunity (15-yard penalty). The forward pass can be intercepted by the kicking team to gain possession of the ball.

Mechanically, the deep official should follow the returner, and stop at the point of the pass. If incomplete, mark dead at point of pass. If complete, proceed downfield, continuing coverage.

## Touching the ball but no recovery

In the air or on the ground, whistle immediately if a player, in an attempt to catch it, touches the ball but fails to hold on to it. Ball is placed where receiving team touched the ball. 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 receiving team. It does not matter if it goes backwards, if it touches anyone at any time then it is whistled dead.

## No Yards

Players on the kicking team who are within 5 yards are penalized for "no yards". All no yards are **15-yard** penalties.

## Live Ball/Dead Ball

If it is a kickoff and the ball hits the goal post in flight the ball is placed at the receiving team's 25-yard line. If it hits the goal post after striking the ground or a player of the receiving team, it will be placed on the receiving team's 10-yard line.

## SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

To get a first down a team needs 2 completed passes beyond the line of scrimmage and gained 10 yards, before a first down can be awarded. **In Juvenile Boys, it is 3 completed passes and 15 yards.**

### Ball placement for snaps.

The ball is **NOT** to be placed ahead of the bag. It should be parallel to or behind the bag. The bag should be somewhere in between the snapper legs. Please warn frequently. **The offensive team must have at least one player on the line of scrimmage on either side of the center closing the line.** Any offensive player must be at least 2 yards from the center.

The center puts the ball in play by snapping it between the legs in a continuous movement. The QB must be at least 5 yards from the center when she receives the ball. That means the QB probably should be lined up at least 6 yards from the line of scrimmage. A warning should be given first but please enforce this because it gives a running QB a distinct advantage. If the snap doesn't go 5 yards or if the QB drops the snap, then it is a dead ball and loss of down where it touched the ground.

## **Rusher/Line of scrimmage**

To maintain a clear and direct path to the QB the rusher must line up one yard from the feet of the opposing centre not directly in front of that player and 5 yards from the ball. The rusher cannot be 2 yards outside of the snapper for him to have the unobstructed lane. Please use some judgment in applying the 2 yards. Once the centre sets the ball on the ground for the snap, the rusher is not permitted to change sides and maintain rushing privileges with the centre; unless, the quarterback goes in motion prior to the snap of the ball.

On a run play where the QB hands the ball to a player behind her, the rusher must have an unobstructed path to the ball. Penalty for rusher interference is 10 yards down repeated.

All defensive players must take a position at least one yard from the line of scrimmage on the opposite side. Opponents are not permitted to line up within 3 yards directly in front of the center. If the rusher jumps offside, she can go back from beyond 5 yards and then go over the line of scrimmage. If the rusher doesn't retreat but never crosses the Line of Scrimmage, then there is no penalty.

A huddle is compulsory after every change of possession. Use your judgment, especially with the younger players. If the defensive team is clearly ready, allow the offensive team to go. The team on offense has 25 seconds to put the ball in play.

## **Protection of QB**

The rusher will be called for a roughing penalty if they make any kind of contact with the QB's throwing arm or hand or above the QB's shoulders while the QB is attempting to make a pass or is in his/her follow through.

## **RUNNING PLAYS**

All defensive players are eligible to rush once the ball has been handed off or tossed, or there is a play action fake or fake handoff. They can only cross the line of scrimmage once the rusher has crossed.

**Extension** Players are not allowed to extend the ball using their arms, to gain additional yards while the play is live. There is a five yard penalty for doing so and the ball is considered dead at the point the extension began. Players who have possession of the ball are not permitted to dive forward in an effort to gain additional yards. The penalty is 15 yards and the ball is considered dead at the point the dive began. Spinning is allowed, but the ball carrier cannot jump to avoid a defensive player or gain yardage. One foot must remain in contact with the ground.

The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's hips are when the flag is pulled not where the ball is.

**Offensive Charge.** It is up to the ball carrier to avoid contact with the defender. If a defender has position to deflag, and the ball carrier makes no attempt to slow down or change direction and runs right into the defender, then it is an Offensive Charge – 10-yard penalty.

## **PASS PLAYS**

**Lateral Passes:** The number of lateral passes on the same play is unlimited. One or more lateral passes may be followed by a forward pass provided all lateral passes were executed behind the line of scrimmage. If the lateral pass touches the ground or goes out of bounds, the play is dead at that point and belongs to the team that had possession before it became dead. If the lateral pass is fumbled or goes out of bounds in the end zone, the play results in a safety or single as the case may be.

Only one forward pass per down is permitted and must be made from behind the line of scrimmage. A second forward pass will result in the play being whistled dead, and the ball will be placed at the point where the second pass was thrown, but will not result in a loss of down. All offensive players are eligible receivers. If a forward pass is blocked by a rusher and the QB manages to catch the ball they may run with the ball but may not throw a second pass. In this case, it will be considered an offside pass and the ball is spotted at the point of the 2nd pass, loss of down.

**Completed Pass:** The forward pass is considered to be complete if:

- a) It is caught inbounds by a member of the offence (complete) or the defence (interception) before it touches the ground, goal post, or referee.
- b) A pass caught simultaneously by players of both teams will be granted to the offensive team.
- c) A player must have at least one foot in bounds for the pass to be completed. If in the opinion of the referee, the player was pushed out of bounds but otherwise would have landed in bounds, the pass would be considered complete.
- d) A player who bobbles the ball and is deflagged by an opposing player is considered deflagged if and when the player gains control of the ball. The play is dead where the ball carrier has been deflagged.
- e) If Team A tips a pass forward and another Team A player catches it, they can keep running. **BUT**, if you feel it was a designed play, then whistle it down. Pass complete at first tip. It has to be obvious to whistle it down. (Not likely)

**Incomplete Pass:** A pass is considered incomplete if:

- a) The ball touches the ground, goal post, referee or goes out of bounds.
- b) A player catches the ball in the air and lands out of bounds without having been pushed out by an opponent.

**Intentional Grounding:** Will result in the following unless the defensive team declines the penalty and accepts the result of the play. In the field of play: Will be penalized with a loss of down at the point where the ball was released. In the end zone: Will result in a safety.

**Pass Interference** If the defense commits it in the target zone, the ball is awarded to the offense at the point of the foul or ten yards in advance of the point of last scrimmage and an automatic first down is awarded to the offense. Doesn't matter the down. No need for a second completed pass. For example: 4th and 10. The offence needs to complete 2 passes. We have pass interference. Automatic 1st down.

**If the offense commits it in the target zone and the penalty is accepted, the defense is awarded the ball at the point of the foul or if on third down at the point of last scrimmage.**

Only one forward pass per down is permitted and must be made from behind the line of scrimmage. A second forward pass will result in the play being whistled dead, and the ball will be placed at the point where the second pass was thrown, but will not result in a loss of down. All offensive players are eligible receivers.

If team A gains yards downfield on their last down but doesn't score and has not completed the required number of passes, they are entitled to the gain. Loss of ball at Point Ball Dead.

Mechanically, the referee lines up like in tackle football and the back official lines up on the wide side in the middle of the secondary. If the required number of passes is not yet met but the yards required are gained, leave the first down bean bag on the ground until the number of passes is met (unless yards have been gained by a long margin and losing yards back past the original line to gain is extremely unlikely. In that case, pick up the first down bean bag and bring it with you to keep things moving.)

If team A scores, it doesn't matter if they completed the required number of forward passes.

## **PUNT PLAYS**

Offensive players must remain immobilized on the line on a punt, otherwise it's a procedure, L5 PLS or option. They can run downfield once the ball has been kicked. A minimum of 5 players must be stationary on the line. If the punter crosses the line of scrimmage, then offensive players may already be downfield.

**Ex: The punter runs to the right like a fake punt... all team A players run downfield. After running 5 yards, the punter realizes she won't make it to the first down. She punts the ball. No procedure will be called. However, if she doesn't cross the line of scrimmage and punts, then it's a procedure.**

In the air or on the ground, the player attempts to catch the ball but fails to but she/he touches the ball and it falls to the ground. Whistle immediately. Ball to be placed where receiving team touched the ball. 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 receiving team

Players on the punting team who are within 5 yards but are making an attempt to give 5 yards and do not make a play on the ball will not be penalized for “no yards”. All no yards are 15 yard penalties.

**Question.** *Team A is punting. The center who has snapped the ball stands erect and gets the ball punted directly at her back grazing her and continuing down field. The ball travels approximately 15 yards and is picked up by the receiving team. Should the officials let the play go or should they have called it dead at the spot of contact by the punting team's center and if so, should they have then given a 15 yard no yards penalty?*

A punt is considered blocked by the opposing team when a player of that team strikes the ball and the ball travels in the direction of, or parallel to, the punting team's dead ball line and hits the ground or is touched by a player of the punting team. The play is ruled dead and the non-punting team will take possession of the ball at the point the ball was blocked. If a punt is blocked or tipped by the receiving team inside the end zone of the kicking team, and the ball does not cross the goal line or goes out of bounds inside the end zone, the receiving team scored a safety.

If a ball lies motionless on the ground for three seconds and there is no attempt to play the ball, the play shall be whistled dead.

If a kicked ball hits the goal posts in flight, the ball is whistled dead. The receiving team has 2 choices. Take the ball on their 35 and award the kicking team with one point. **OR** Take the ball on the 10 yard line, no point.

### **Fumbles**

No such thing in that as soon as a player loses control of the ball and it falls to the ground the play is dead. Still in control of the team with the ball. The only way we can have a change in possession is on an interception or punt. Or if a player loses control of the ball and it goes up in the air and the opposing team recovers the ball before it touches the ground.

### **Bobbled Ball**

A player who bobbles the ball and then gains control of the ball is considered dead and the play dead where the ball carrier has been deflagged.

### **Knee Down**

If a ball carrier falls to the ground it is an automatic dead ball/whistle play.

### **Blocking**

Blocking for the ball carrier is not allowed. That includes running interference and getting in the way of the defender. Especially with the girls, the running with ball carrier can happen frequently. Before giving a penalty, warn the players unless the interference was so obvious and it allowed a long run to be completed.

**Application:** 10 yards from point of foul if yards gained or back to point of last scrimmage.