



**Neighborhood  
Boys & Girls Club**  
For Better Men & Women

NBGC FALL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

1.

### GAME FORMAT

- Anything not listed in the rules will be subject to the referee's discretion.
- Games will be played in two 20-minute halves.
- Games for all leagues will have up to a 5-minute halftime.
- Substitutions must be made as follows:

	1 <sup>st</sup> Half	2 <sup>nd</sup> Half
Rival League	Every 5 minutes	Every 5 minutes until "Free Subs" is called (last 5 minutes of second half)
Gridiron League	Every 5 minutes	Every 5 minutes until "Free Subs" is called (last 5 minutes of second half)
Elite League	Every 5 minutes	Every 5 minutes until "Free Subs" is called (last 10 minutes of second half)
Legends League	Every 5 minutes	Every 5 minutes until "Free Subs" is called (last 10 minutes of second half)

- The clock will run continuously throughout the game unless a time stoppage is indicated by a referee for a timeout or another reason.
- Each team will have two 30-second time outs per half.
- There is a 30-second play clock between the ball/play being called dead and the subsequent snap.
- Each game will start with a coin toss to determine who gets possession. The "away" team (listed first on schedule) will make the call and the coin-toss winner will choose whether to start the game on offense or defense. The other team will decide their desired starting direction.
- The first team on offense will take possession at the 5-yard line and has 4 downs to cross midfield. They have 4 more downs to score a touchdown.
- Rival and Gridiron leagues:
  - Must run a play on 4<sup>th</sup> downs.
  - A "turnover on downs" gives the opposing team possession at their 5-yard line.
  - An interception will be called dead and will give the team on defense the ball at the site of the interception.
  - A fumble will be called dead and will give the team on defense the ball at their 5-yard line.
- Elite and Legend leagues:
  - Have the option to "punt" on 4<sup>th</sup> down which gives the defense team possession at their 5-yard line.
  - A "turnover on downs" gives possession to the defense at the line of scrimmage of the previous play.
  - An interception will be played as a live ball.
  - A fumble will be called dead and will give the team on defense the ball at the site of the fumble.
- Teams will change sides after the first half. Possession of ball after halftime goes to team that did not start the game with the ball.
- If the game is tied at the end of regulation, the game will be recorded as a tie. Overtime will only be played for playoff games.

### TERMS TO KNOW

- Boundary lines – the outer perimeter lines of the field
- Line of scrimmage – imaginary line running across the length of the field through the football at the snap.
- Passer – the offensive player throwing the ball
- Rusher – defensive player(s) assigned to rush quarterback
- Live ball – The period of time that the play is in action
- Dead ball – the time before a play has started or after a play has ended.
- No run zone – the area 5 yards before midfield and the endzone in which rushing plays are not allowed (Elite, Legends leagues)

- Down(s) – The term assigned to each play attempt
- Inadvertent whistle – a whistle blown in error
- Neutral zone – the imaginary area, bounded by the nose and tail of the ball, extending from sideline to sideline. Before the snap, no player may enter the neutral zone.

### SCORING

- Each touchdown is worth 6 points. Teams may attempt a 5-yard conversion for 1 point or a 10-yard conversion for 2 points. The 5-yard conversion is in the no-run zone.
- Safeties are worth 2 points and the ball is given to the team that earned the safety at their 5-yard line.
- An interception on a conversion can be returned for the same amount of points that the conversion would have been worth. The ball is then given to the returning team (Elite, Legends). For Rival & Gridiron Leagues, an interception on a conversion is called dead.

### EQUIPMENT

- Players must wear a flag belt with exactly 3 flags. One on the left side, one on the right side, and one behind.
- Players' jerseys must be tucked in if the bottom extends below the belt
- Jersey and belt color cannot match.
- Each player must have the "tail" of their flag belt wrapped around their belt or tucked into their shorts. A tail that is out and is pulled will count as a flag pull and the carrier will be "down" at that spot.

### DEAD BALLS

- The ball is "live" at the snap and remains live until official whistles it dead.
- The official will indicate line of scrimmage
- The ball is dead once a player in possession of the ball goes out of bounds.
- The play is dead when:
  - Ball hits the ground (if the ball hits the ground on a bad snap, the ball is placed where it hits for the next play)
  - Ball-carrier's flag is pulled
  - Ball carrier steps out of bounds or their flag falls off
  - Touchdown occurs
  - Receiver catches ball without flags
  - Inadvertent whistle (ball is placed where it is, or down can be replayed)
  - Any part of ball carrier besides hands or feet touches the ground.

### RUNNING

- Ball is spotted where runner's foot last made contact with the ground when flag is pulled
- Quarterback cannot run with ball (cross the line of scrimmage) unless "pressured" by more than 1 defensive player. "Pressure" is applied when a defensive player has crossed the line of scrimmage with intent to sack.
- Handoffs are allowed only behind line of scrimmage
- Handoffs are not allowed if line of scrimmage is in the "no run zone" (5 yards ahead of goal line and 5 yards ahead of midfield)
- A player that receives a handoff behind the line of scrimmage CAN throw the ball
- The ball cannot be snapped directly to a running back. The player who receives the snap is designated the quarterback for that play and they cannot run unless pressured by more than 1 rusher.

### FORMATIONS

- Offense must have at least one player on the line of scrimmage.
- Only one offensive player at a time can be in motion behind the line of scrimmage.
- Players must be set for 1 second before the snap

## RUSHING THE PASSER

- Rushers must start from at least 7 yards away. Any other player may not sack.
- Besides the rusher, defense cannot cross the line of scrimmage until a handoff has occurred or to defend a receiving opponent. Any player starting from less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage may not sack.
- Teams may send more than one rusher (Elite & Legends Leagues) as long as all rushers start from beyond 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage.

## PASSING

- If the quarterback throws the ball and catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.
- There is no intentional grounding
- All passes from the quarterback must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage
- All passes must cross the line of scrimmage. This means pitches and lateral passes behind the line of scrimmage are prohibited.

## PENALTIES

- All penalties unless otherwise indicated will result in the loss of 5 yards and a down, or the gain of 5 yards and a 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- The offended team is given the opportunity to accept or reject the penalty assessment.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal if a penalty would put the ball in the endzone.
- Spot penalties are assessed from the location of the foul.
- “Other penalties” are assessed from the line of scrimmage.

## SPOT PENALTIES

- **Defensive** pass interference (the defense significantly hinders an eligible receiver’s opportunity to catch the ball) is awarded 5 yards and a 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- **Defensive** holding (if a player grabs another player’s body or clothes) is awarded 5 yards and a 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- **Defensive** stripping (removing the ball that an offensive player controls) is awarded 5 yards and a 1<sup>st</sup> down.
- **Offensive** screening/blocking (a player stands in the way of another to prevent a flag grab) is penalized by the loss of 5 yards and a down.
- **Offensive** charging (running into a defensive player instead of avoiding them) is penalized by the loss of 5 yards and a down.
- **Offensive** flag guarding (physically preventing defensive player from grabbing flag through contact, jumping, or spinning out of control) is penalized by the loss of 5 yards and a down.

## OTHER PENALTIES

### **DEFENSIVE PENALTIES**

- Illegal rush (starting rush from inside 7 yards)
- Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)
- Roughing the passer (unnecessary contact with quarterback)
- Offside

### **OFFENSIVE PENALTIES**

- Pass interference (physical contact by the offense to catch the ball)
- Holding (holding a defensive player)
- Offside/false start (crossing the line of scrimmage before the snap). No loss of down.
- Illegal pass (a pass thrown after crossing the line of scrimmage or a pass that doesn’t cross the line of scrimmage)
- Delay of game (the ball is not snapped before play clock expires). No loss of down.
- Impeding the rusher (preventing the rusher from getting to the quarterback)
- Illegal motion (more than 1 player moving at a time before the snap)

## **OFFENSE & DEFENSE**

- Taunting
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Unnecessary roughness

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

- Players are expected to act in a sportsmanlike manner and not cause any issues for either team or the officials.