



2026 Harrisburg Flag Football Rules

Rule modifications for 2026 are in red font.

General

1. Team Size - Teams are expected to have the following number of players on the field at all times. **If a team has one less player than required, the team does not have to forfeit the game and can still play.**
 - 1st Grade: 5 players
 - 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Grade: 6 players
 - 5th/6th Grade: 7 players
2. Footballs used will be the “pee wee” size in first through third grade divisions. The “junior” size football will be used in the fourth and fifth/sixth grade divisions.
3. Field dimensions
 - 1st & 2nd Grade – 50 yards long (including end zone) and 25 yards wide
 - 3rd & 4th Grade – 50 yards long (including end zone) and 30 yards wide
 - 5th/6th Grade – 50 yards long (including end zone) and 40 yards wide
4. Mouthpieces **MUST BE** worn at all times during participation. A player will not be able to participate during game play without a mouthpiece.
5. Players’ jerseys must be tucked in.

Game Management

1. Coin toss determines first possession.
2. Each half is 20 minutes, and the clock continues to run.
3. Normal clock rules (clock stops on incomplete passes and out of bounds) apply for the final two minutes of **each half**. There is no “extra” play after the clock expires. When the clock runs out, play ends, with the exception of untimed down situations. An untimed down will be ran if there is a defensive penalty on the play when the clock expires or on a touchdown when time expires (extra points can be attempted).
4. Each team has two timeouts per half. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
5. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
6. Overtime: Teams will get the ball at the 20-yard line. Coin flip will determine first possession. Each team will have the opportunity to score. If both teams score or don’t score, the game will go to sudden death with the next team to score winning the game. During sudden death, the first team (determined by coin toss) will get a chance to start at the 20-yard line and will get 4 plays to score. If they score they win, and the game is over. If they don’t score, the other team gets the ball and gets a chance to score. This sequence repeats until the first score is made.

General Rules of Play

1. There are no kick-offs. Offensive team gets the ball at same starting point every series—40 yard line for 5th/6th grade or the cone starting point for all other grades.
2. Offense gets four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown.
3. If a team fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over from the original starting point.
4. Interceptions may be returned for a TD, but if the team does not return for a TD, then they start at the original starting point.
5. There are no fumbles. **The ball will be spotted where it was initially lost by the ball carrier. Fumbled snaps are included in this rule.**
6. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
7. There can only be one coach on the field at any time. The coach must be next to or behind the official and avoid the offensive players.

Rushing, Passing, Blocking, & Blitzing Rules

1. NO RUNNING ZONES are located five yards from the end zone and five yards from midfield. This is to avoid short-yardage and power running situations.
 - First and Second Grade ONLY: Teams can run or pass from the 5-yard-line, ONLY on extra point attempts.
2. Quarterbacks cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage.
3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs. Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind.
4. Shovel passes and screen passes behind the line of scrimmage are not allowed in the no running zones but are otherwise allowed.
5. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
6. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
7. 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.
8. All players are eligible to receive passes, including the center and the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
 - Fifth and Sixth Grade Only: The center cannot receive the pass.
9. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
10. A blocker cannot initiate contact with a defender. Blockers are allowed to defend themselves from contact, but they cannot extend their arms or lower their shoulders into a defender.
11. Stiff arming will not be allowed.

12. All blitz attempts must avoid hitting the center or the player blocking. If a team is up by 24 points or more with five minutes or less left in the game, neither team is allowed to blitz. Blitzing is always allowed when the score difference is within 24 points.
13. The quarterback has a six-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the six seconds, play is dead, resulting in the loss of a down. Once the ball is handed off, the six-second rule is no longer in effect.
14. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of ten yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the ten-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
 - First and Second Grade ONLY: All players must start three yards off the line of scrimmage and can cross once ball is handed off or released on throw.

****The official will stand 10 yards deep on the defensive side of the ball and work his way forward once the ball is snapped. This lets both sides know where the pass rushers must start from. This also gives the official a better angle of what is going on.***

Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points

Extra Point Attempt: 1 point from the 5 yard line
2 points from the 10 yard line

Penalties

All penalties will be called by the referee. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Offsides	5 yards and repeat the down
Interference	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal Contact	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal Flag Pull (before receiver has ball)	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal Rushing	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal Motion	5 yards and repeat the down
Holding	10 yards and repeat the down
Illegal Forward Pass	10 yards and loss of down
Flag Guarding	5 yards from spot of foul and loss of down
Delay of Game	Clock stops, 10 yards, and loss of down

Personal Conduct and Good Sportsmanship

The Harrisburg Flag Football League exists for youth to learn the fundamentals of the sport, good sportsmanship, and teamwork, and to have opportunities to engage in physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. We strive for our league to provide a positive, safe, and supportive environment for all players, and we encourage all involved to respect their coaches, opponents, officials, and teammates.

Good sportsmanship is required of all players, coaches, parents, and others in attendance at games and practices. At the end of each game, each player and coach will shake hands with the opposing team. Unsportsmanlike or other inappropriate conduct, which may include but is not limited to physically or verbally abusing any player, coach, official, or any other person; arguing with officials; using inappropriate language; or disregarding or attempting to circumvent any rule at any practice or game will constitute a violation of league rules.

Poor sportsmanship by any player, coach, parent, or spectator will not be tolerated. Unsportsmanlike conduct will be determined at the discretion of the referees and league officials and will be penalized as follows:

- First Occurrence: Warning
- Second Occurrence: Removal from the remainder of the current game and the next game
- Third Occurrence: Ejected for the season

Suspensions or ejections that occur during the regular season may extend into the post-season. Any person suspended or ejected is not allowed to participate in any league activities (practices or games) until reinstated by the league officials. Refunds will not be given for any league activities missed due to suspension or ejection.