



OTHG Flag Football League Rules – Fall 2026 Season

1.0 Players / Equipment / Safety

- 1.1 Players must be registered with the league to play in official games.
- 1.2 **All players must wear mouth pieces during play.**
- 1.3 All players must use league issued flags.
- 1.4 The footballs used must be Wilson “The Duke” NFL Footballs or GST College Footballs. Balls will be provided by the league for the teams if needed.
- 1.5 Players must wear league issued team jerseys as their outer layer during play. This can be waived under certain weather conditions by the head coaches of each team.
- 1.6 Jerseys **MUST BE** tucked into shorts/pants. Officials should enforce this rule.
- 1.7 **Any player that exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion should be immediately removed from play or activity. Players that have been removed from play or sustained a concussion must provide a clearance letter from their doctor to the league before they are allowed to play.**
- 1.8 **A player from each team must complete the HEADS-UP concussion training course.** <https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/communication-resources/training.html>
- 1.9 All players must agree to and sign the liability waiver prior to playing in the league.

2.0 Game Play / Forfeits

- 2.1 Games are played 5 on 5. Teams must field five (5) players unless the following:
 - 2.1.1 They only have four players (The game is then played 4 on 4)
 - 2.1.2 The fifth player is unable to play (injury, fatigue, restroom etc.) in which case the game is played 4 on 4.
- 2.2 Both teams must have at least four players to start a game.
- 2.3 If a team has less than four players, the opposing team shall provide a player(s) of their choosing to the deficient team to allow the game to be played 4 on 4, assuming they have 5 or more players.
- 2.4 The deficient team shall not be provided with more than two players. Meaning, if “Team A” has only one player, the game is forfeited by “Team A”.
- 2.5 A player deficiency can occur due to various circumstances (i.e., injury, fatigue or players having to leave because of emergency or work related)
- 2.6 If both teams only have a total of seven players, the game is forfeited by the team with the least number of players. If both teams have three or less players, the game is a tie (unless a make-up can be scheduled by the league). If a team has no players who show up, the game is a loss for that team.
- 2.7 The team manager/head coach should notify the league commissioner if they will not have at least four players for a game. They should contact the league at least 1 ½ hours prior to the game start time to allow the league to cancel referees (notify Dennis O.) without being charged a fee.



3.0 Clock Management: Game Clock/ Play Clock / Time Outs / Overtime

Game Clock Management

- 3.1 The games are 60 minutes with two 30-minute halves.
- 3.2 The game clock and play clock are kept by the two referees.
- 3.3 Halftime is 5-minutes, unless both teams agree to begin sooner.
- 3.4 Game Clock is continuously running except during the following situations.
 - The game clock stops during change of possession and after a touchdown.
 - The game clock is not run during the extra point attempt.
 - Two-minute warning: The game clock stops with two minutes remaining in the half and end of game.
 - The game clock stops for the following reasons during the final two minutes of the game only:
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Incomplete pass
 - Penalty is called
 - If game clock is under two-minutes remaining in game, a 15-second run off is enforced if there is a penalty against the team losing the game. The game clock and play clock start again upon ball placement by referee.
 - Referees can stop the game clock at their discretion. (Player is injured, discussion with coach or referees, a delay with retrieving the football or ball placement)

Play Clock Management

- 3.5 The 30-second play clock is used after the first play of the game has been run. The offense has 30 seconds (play clock) to snap the ball after it's spotted by the referee after each play. Teams will receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- 3.6 The 45-second play clock starts during change of possession. The team on offense has 45-seconds to snap the ball. The game clock starts again on the snap.

Time Outs

- 3.7 Each team has three 60-second time outs per game.

Overtime

- 3.8 There is no game clock in overtime, only a 30-second play clock. There is no 45-second play clock during change of possession.

4.0 Cancellations / Weather

- 4.1 The decision to cancel, end, or delay games due to poor weather (rain/lightning/snow) or any unforeseen circumstances, can be made by the TOB park officials or OTHG Flag Football league at any time.



- 4.2 Team managers can also cancel, end, or delay a game due to weather, if both agree to do so. Team managers should report their decision to the commissioner immediately.
- 4.3 If a game ends because of the weather, the team winning at the time is considered the winner, unless the game is tied.

5.0 Coin Toss

- 5.1 Captains from each team meet with referees at midfield for coin toss.
- 5.2 The referee selects a captain from one team to choose either heads or tails before tossing the coin into the air.
- 5.3 Unless the winner of the toss defers his choice to the second half, the team that wins the coin toss must choose from one of two privileges and the loser is given the other.
- 5.4 **Coin Toss privileges**
 - 1. The opportunity to receive ball, or to have opposing team receive ball
 - 2. The choice of goal his team will defend

To Receive or not to receive

If a team chooses to receive, they will start with the ball. If they choose not to receive then the opposing team starts with the ball.

Which goal to defend

This option determines which end zone a team defends and in which direction they must go to score.

To defer

This option allows the winning team of the coin toss to get their first choice of the coin toss options at the start of the second half. By choosing to defer, a team will wait to select their privilege until the start of the second half.

6.0 Offense

- 6.1 **NO BLOCKING OR MOVING PICKS ARE ALLOWED!!**
- 6.2 The team on offense takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line to begin the game and has four downs to cross midfield for a first down.
- 6.3 The team on offense must choose to punt or go for the first down on 4th down. The offense must communicate their decision to the referee and the opposing team **within 30 seconds**. The defense is then allowed to set up accordingly to receive punt or field their defense.
- 6.4 Failure to obtain a first down on 4th down results in a change of possession at the spot of the ball.
- 6.5 Once a team crosses the midfield (gets first down or gains possession), they get a new set of **four downs**. The offense chooses to punt or go for the touchdown on 4th down. The offense must communicate their decision to the referee and the opposing team **within 30 seconds**. The defense is then allowed to set up accordingly to receive punt or field their defense.
- 6.6 Failure to score a touchdown on 4th down results in a change of possession at the spot of the ball.



7.0 Punting

- 7.1 Punts are free kicks from the line of scrimmage. There is no rusher on defense.
- 7.2 The receiving team has one player down field to receive the punt. Punts can be returned.
- 7.3 The kicking team fields up to five players to defend against the punt return.
- 7.4 Punts that go into the end zone are considered a touchback and the receiving team takes over at the 5-yard line.
- 7.5 If the ball is untouched and allowed to bounce off turf, the ball is spotted where it comes to rest (or goes out of bounds). The punt receiver can pick up the ball before it comes to rest (before referee's whistle) and return the punt after it has hit turf.
- 7.6 If the ball is kicked out-of-bounds, it is spotted where the ball goes out. This is a judgment call made by the referees.
- 7.7 If the ball is fumbled (touched) by the receiver the ball is dead at the spot it was fumbled or touched.
- 7.8 The kicking team cannot interfere with the punt receiver or touch the ball after it has been kicked. 10-yard penalty (reference defensive penalty 15.2.14)
- 7.9 There are no fake punts.

8.0 Rushing Plays

- 8.1 The quarterback (the player who takes the snap from the center) can run with the ball. This counts as a run play.
- 8.2 The offense is allowed one run play per set of downs.
- 8.3 Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. The offense may use multiple handoffs during a play.
- 8.4 Backward laterals are permitted only behind the line of scrimmage.
- 8.5 “**No run zones**”, are located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards from midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- 8.6 The player who takes the handoff or backward lateral has the option to throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- 8.7 Once the ball has been handed off or lateraled, all defensive players are eligible to rush across the line of scrimmage.
- 8.8 Spinning while running with the ball is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet (no diving), other than the quarterback on an attempted pass.
- 8.9 The ball is spotted where the **ball carrier's hips** are when the flag is pulled, **not** where the ball or feet are.

9.0 Passing

- 9.1 The quarterback has a **six-second** “pass clock”. If the pass is not thrown (released from hand) within the six seconds, the play is dead, and results in a loss of down at the spot (sack). If the ball is handed off, the six-second rule is still in effect. The ball must be across the line of scrimmage or thrown, or the play is dead at the spot.
- 9.2 If a quarterback is sacked in their end-zone (including by the six-second pass clock), it is considered a “**safety**”. The defense is awarded two points and the offense free kicks (punts) from midfield. Punting rules apply.



- 9.3 Interceptions can be returned.
- 9.4 Intentional grounding is allowed by the Quarterback.

10.0 Receiving Plays

- 10.1 All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, assuming the ball has been handed off or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage.)
- 10.2 Only one player at a time is allowed in motion. The player must run parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- 10.3 A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception.

11.0 Rushing the Quarterback (Rusher(s))

- 11.1 Any player lined up 5 yards or more from the line of scrimmage can rush the passer **after the THREE second count** by the referee. The referee starts the count on the snap.
- 11.2 One free blitz is allowed per set of downs. Players must be 5-yards or more from the line of scrimmage to be eligible to blitz.
- 11.3 Any number of players can rush (blitz included) the quarterback if they are 5 yards or more from the line of scrimmage on the snap. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend from the line of scrimmage.
- 11.4 The referee shall indicate 5 yards from the line of scrimmage directly in front of the center, typically with a marker, where the rusher(s) must be lined up behind. The players' entire body (both feet) must be behind the 5 yards to be eligible to rush the passer.
- 11.5 **If the blitz is still “live” and any player lined up 5 yds or more from the line of scrimmage jumps before the snap it is considered a penalty for offside. The play should be allowed to continue...referees should NOT blow the play dead. The penalty can be declined or accepted by the offense. If the penalty is accepted, then the blitz is still “live” for the defense. If the penalty is declined, then the blitz is “dead” for the current series of downs.**
- 11.6 **Once any player lined up 5 yds or more from the line of scrimmage commits to the blitz by crossing the 5yd marker before the 3-second count, the blitz is considered “dead” or used.**
- 11.7 Once the ball is handed off, the 5-yard rule no longer is in effect, and any defender can go behind the line of scrimmage.
- 11.8 The center must move left or right immediately after the snap creating a path for the rusher lined up on the marker. Failing to move that results in contact with the rusher is considered an **illegal block** on the offense; (-)10 yards – replay down and **blitz is still live**. The defense has the option to decline the penalty based on the result of the play. (Note: the referee should NOT blow the play dead)
- 11.9 The rusher must be lined up on the marker directly in front of the center for the illegal block penalty to apply. This is a judgement call by the referee.
- 11.10 Contact by the rusher with the center after the snap while the center moves left or right is considered an illegal contact penalty on the defense (+5 yards – replay down).



12.0 Dead Balls

- 12.1 The ball must be snapped between the legs to start a play, ***not off to one side***. The player who receives the snap is considered the quarterback.
- 12.2 Player substitutions may be made during any dead ball, from the player's side of the field.
- 12.3 Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Touchdown or safety is scored
 - Any part of the ball carrier's body hits the ground
 - Incomplete pass or six second sack
 - The ball is fumbled
- 12.4 If the ball carrier's flag falls off, one hand touch is in effect.
- 12.5 There are **no fumbles or ball stripping**. If fumbled, the ball is spotted at the location of the ball carrier's hips when the ball was fumbled. This is a judgment call by the referee!

13.0 Sportsmanship/ Roughing

- 13.1 **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. PLAYER EJECTION IS A JUDGEMENT CALL BY THE REFEREES OR OTHG FF LEAGUE COMMITTEE.** Penalties will be called as necessary.
- 13.2 Defenders cannot tackle the ball carrier or hold their jersey.
- 13.3 If the referee (or OTHG Committee) witnesses any acts of tackling (even if considered unintentional or while diving for the flag), elbowing, cheap shots, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped. The referees (or committee) make the decision whether to eject the player from the game.
- 13.4 Trash talking is not permitted. Referees have the right to determine if offensive language was used. (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(s) will be ejected from the game. ***THIS INCLUDES THE "F" WORD!*** Please keep it clean.
- 13.5 Physically assaulting an official or player, or outrageous verbal abuse will result in automatic suspension for the remainder of the season or indefinitely from the league. This will be at the discretion of the OTHG Flag Football commissioner and committee. (Legal action may also be taken).
- 13.6 A defender cannot blatantly push the ball carrier out of bounds. They must try to go for the flag.
- 13.7 The ball carrier cannot lower their head/shoulder to run over the defender.



- 13.8 The ball carrier cannot use a stiff arm to block defender.

14.0 Scoring

- 14.1 Touchdown: 6 points
- 14.2 Extra point: 1 point (Played from 5-yard line)
- 14.3 Extra points: 2 points (Played from the 12-yard line. Run is live)
- 14.4 Interceptions can be returned for **2-points** during 1-point and 2-point conversion attempts.
- 14.5 Safety: 2 points

15.0 Penalties

- 15.1 Penalties are called by the referees.
- 15.2 The ball is placed on the one-yard line if the penalty yardage would result in the endzone. (There is no half the distance to the goal)
- 15.3 The offense/defense can accept or decline a penalty based on the result of a play.
- 15.4 **Defensive Penalties**
 - 15.4.1 Offside; +5 yards – repeat down.
 - 15.4.2 Defensive Pass Interference: Spot of foul – (If in End Zone, ball is placed on 1-yard line) – **Automatic first down if the original line of scrimmage was before mid-field, otherwise replay down.**
 - 15.4.3 Illegal contact / holding by defense; +5 yards from scrimmage – **Automatic first down if the original line of scrimmage was before mid-field, otherwise replay down.**
 - 15.4.4 Illegal flag pull (before receiver catches the ball) (play is still live and the receiver must be touched by defense); +10 yards added to end of play. The down counts.
 - 15.4.5 Illegal rushing (Offside); Any player behind the 5-yard marker after the three second count can cross the line of scrimmage. Players inside the 5-yard marker after the three second count who cross the line of scrimmage are considered offside; +5 yards – replay down.
 - 15.4.6 Holding the ball carrier's jersey; +10 yards added to the end of the play. If penalty occurred behind the line of scrimmage and play was whistled dead, +10 yards from scrimmage. **The player's jersey must be tucked in for this penalty to apply. This is a judgement call by the referee. (Automatic first down if the original line of scrimmage is before mid-field, otherwise replay down. A touchdown can be rewarded by the referee. Reference 15.4.9)**
 - 15.4.7 Tackling; +15 yards added to end of play. If behind the line of scrimmage +15 yards from scrimmage. **(Automatic first down if the original line of**



scrimmage is before mid-field, otherwise replay down. A touchdown can be rewarded by the referee. Reference 15.4.9) (Possible ejection)

- 15.4.8 Pushing ball carrier out of bounds; +10 yards added to the end of the play. **(Automatic first down if the original line of scrimmage is before mid-field otherwise replay down. A touchdown can be rewarded by the referee. Reference 15.4.9).**
- 15.4.9 **A referee can grant a touchdown to the offense if they feel they would have scored if not for the defensive player tackling, holding the jersey or pushing the ball carrier out of bounds. This is a judgement call by the referee.**
- 15.4.10 Roughing/Hitting the arm of the quarterback when throwing; +15 yards **(Automatic first down if the original line of scrimmage is before mid-field, otherwise replay down.)**
- 15.4.11 The defense can choose to grant the offense a +5-yard advancement to award them a first down. This cannot be declined by the offense. The official can offer this option to the defense.
- 15.4.12 Interfering with the punt returner, receiving team has three options:
- +10 yards from the spot of foul or,
 - if returned, +10 yards added to end of play or
 - (-)10 yards from punting teams' scrimmage and re-kick.
- 15.4.13 Kicking team touches the ball after it has been kicked before it has come to rest or caught by receiver. +10 yards added to spot where ball was touched.

15.5 **Offensive Penalties**

- 15.5.1 Illegal Block or Hold
- **Before the pass is thrown** (-)10 yards from scrimmage – repeat down.
 - **After the pass is thrown or ball carrier crosses scrimmage**, (-)10 yards from spot of foul – loss of down.
- 15.5.2 Offensive pass interference - (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender); (-)10 yards from scrimmage – repeat down.
- 15.5.3 Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start etc.); (-)5 yards – replay down. Play is whistled dead by referees.
- 15.5.4 Flag guarding / stiff arm; (-)10 yards from spot of foul – loss of down.
- 15.5.5 Lowering the head/shoulder into the defender; (-)15 yards from spot of foul – loss of down.
- 15.5.6 Delay-of-game; clock stops, (-)5 yards. (game clock runoff may apply)
- 15.5.7 Illegal Forward Pass – Passer's whole body crosses line of scrimmage and throws pass. (-)5 yards – loss of down.
- 15.5.8 Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.



- 15.5.9 Games cannot end on an offensive penalty unless the defense declines it.
- 15.5.10 Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

16.0 Overtime

- 16.1 If the score is tied at the end of the second half, teams move directly into overtime.
- Each team is provided with one possession starting at midfield.
 - A coin toss is done with the team captains. The winner of the toss chooses one of two privileges:
 1. To receive the ball
 2. The choice of goal his team will defend
 - The offense has four plays to score a touchdown. The same scoring rules apply in OT. The team that scores a TD chooses to go for one or two extra points.
 - Extra points can be intercepted and returned for 2-points in OT.
 - The team that scores the most points is declared the winner.
 - If the teams are tied after each possession, the game ends as a tie.

17.0 Playoffs

- 17.1 All teams are eligible for the playoffs. The final standings are based on winning percentages. Number of wins divided by total games played. (tie equals $\frac{1}{2}$ win)
- 17.2 Tie Breakers:
- Head-to-head record
 - Team that allowed the least points (average points allowed per game)
 - Coin flip
- 17.3 Highest seed plays the lowest seed and so forth.
- 17.4 3-rounds: Single elimination

The 1st and 2nd rounds are played the same night.

1st round

- Top seed has a bye
- 2 seed vs 7 seed
- 3 seed vs 6 seed
- 4 seed vs 5 seed

2nd round:

- 1 seed vs 1st round lowest seed winner
- 1st round 2nd highest seed winner vs 3rd highest seed winner

Finals: 2nd round winners