



2026 5v5

RULES

General Rules

Size of the Field

- The standard playing field is 30 yards wide by 50 yards long, with two 7-yard end zones, resulting in a total field length of 64 yards.
- There is one first down, located at midfield.
- Field dimensions may be adjusted based on available space; however, the field shall not be smaller than 25 yards wide by 40 yards long, with two 7-yard end zones.

Ref Equipment & Uniform Checklist

- Football is regulation size (exception: Coed/Women's can be 1 sizes down)
- Team jerseys/shirts match color
- Flag belt worn with 2 flags (one per hip)
- Flag belt fully visible and worn outside uniform
- Flags contrast with shorts/pants
- No clothing/body covering flag belt
- Billed hats worn backward

Team Captains & Rosters

- Only designated team captain(s) may communicate with referees regarding calls.
- Players may ask brief clarifying questions; however, disrespectful or unsportsmanlike conduct toward officials by any player may result in penalties or ejection. Continued misconduct may lead to game termination and a forfeit, regardless of score.
- A team must have at least six (6) players to start a game; failure to do so will result in a forfeit.
- Teams must maintain a season roster of 7 –12 players.
- All players must be listed on the official online roster and must complete the required waiver before the season begins.
- To be playoff-eligible, a player must participate in at least four (4) regular-season games.
- During the playoffs, players may compete on only one team per division (no team jumping).

Substitutions

- Substitution requests must be submitted by Friday at 12:00 PM to be eligible to play.
- All substitutions must comply with division rules and cloned team guidelines.
- Substitutes may be added only if a team has six (6) or fewer active players available.
- When using substitutes, a team may have no more than seven (7) total players, including substitutes.
- If a substitute participates in more than three (3) games, the substitute must pay the full registration fee prior to playing any additional games and will then become playoff-eligible.
- Teams are responsible for proper roster management to ensure fairness and rule compliance.

Scheduling & Forfeits

- Teams that provide less than 48 hours notice of their inability to play will receive a forfeit for that game.
- A **\$20** fine per forfeited game will be assessed, and the team will receive a loss in the standings.
- Teams will be ineligible for playoffs until all fines are paid in full.
- Teams are expected to be considerate of other participants and must notify league officials as early as possible to allow sufficient time to schedule a replacement team or reschedule the game to a different week.

Length of the Game

- Each game consists of two 20-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime break.
- The game clock will start at the scheduled game time immediately following the coin toss.
- The clock will only stop during the final minute of each half for all dead balls, out-of-bounds plays, changes of possession, and incomplete passes.
- A period or half may be extended by an untimed down only if, during the final timed down, one of the following occurs:
 1. A touchdown is scored, and the extra point is attempted as part of the same half.
 2. An inadvertent whistle occurs, and the down is to be replayed within that half.
 3. A defensive penalty is committed at the expiration of the half.

Mercy Rule – Second Half Adjustments

- If a team leads by more than 35 points at any time in the second half, the following rules will be enforced:
- The leading team must switch quarterbacks.
- The leading team is no longer allowed to rush the quarterback on defense.
- The 5-second rush count is suspended.
- These restrictions will remain in effect until the point differential is reduced to 35 points or less, at which time standard gameplay rules will resume.

Coin Toss

- The team that wins the coin toss may choose to:
 1. Receive the ball first,
 2. Pick which goal to defend
 3. Defer their choice to the second half.
- The team that loses the coin toss chooses from the remaining options.

Time Outs

- Each team is allowed **three 30-second time outs per half**. Teams may call **consecutive time outs if desired**.

Play Clock

- The offensive team has **25 seconds between plays** to snap the ball. Following any **pre-snap penalty** (e.g., false start, delay of game), the play clock is **reset to 15 seconds**. Referees will provide a 10-second and 5-second warning as a courtesy.

OFFENSE

Formation

- The offensive team must have at least five (3) players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
- In a bunch formation, players' feet must be within six (6) inches of each other, ensuring no excessive gaps between teammates.

Offensive Possession

- Play begins at the 5-yard line, with the offense granted four (4) attempts to reach midfield for a first down.
- After reaching midfield, the offense receives four (4) additional attempts to score a touchdown.
- Once a team earns a first down, it may not earn the same first down again in that series due to yardage loss.
- If a team gains a first down but is penalized on the same play, the penalty is enforced first, and officials will determine whether the first down still stands.

Motion

- Only one offensive player may be in horizontal motion at the time of the snap.
- The player may not turn upfield before the snap.
- All other offensive players must be set for at least one second prior to the snap.

Turnovers

- If the offense fails to achieve a first down or touchdown, the opposing team begins its drive at its 5-yard line.
- Interceptions are spotted at the point where the interceptor is ruled down.
- Following a safety, the team resumes play from the 15-yard line.

Touchdown

- A touchdown is scored when any part of the ball, legally possessed by a player in bounds, breaks the plane of the opponent's goal line, provided the play is not ruled a touchback.

Extra Points

- Following a touchdown, the offense may attempt:
 - a one-point (1) conversion from the 5-yard line, or
 - a two-point (2) conversion from the 10-yard line.
- Standard offensive rules apply during all extra point attempts.
- If the defense gains possession on an extra point attempt, they may return it for 2 points.

Field Goal

- A team that has crossed midfield may attempt a field goal on any of its four downs. • The attempt is one play from half the current distance to the goal line, and a successful attempt scores 3 points.
- If the attempt fails, the defense takes possession from the original line of scrimmage.
- If the attempt succeeds, a normal change of possession occurs.
- Field goal attempts are conducted like a normal play, not like an extra point or onside kick: The game clock runs.
- The defense may return an interception for 6 points (touchdown).
- Spot foul penalties by the defense are assessed at half the distance, and the field goal is replayed.
- Once a team has attempted a field goal, they may not switch to a touchdown attempt after a penalty has been assessed.

Forward Passes

- Only one forward pass per down is allowed.
- A forward pass does not need to cross the line of scrimmage.
- An illegal forward pass occurs only if the passer's entire body has crossed the line of scrimmage prior to throwing.

Second QB / Running Back Rules

A team may utilize a second quarterback or running back in the backfield, subject to the following rules:

Eligible Actions

- Laterals and backward pitches or passes behind the line of scrimmage remain eligible for a forward pass
- The player receiving a lateral or backward pitch may run the ball
- Handoffs are permitted and are considered running plays

Restrictions

- The original player who receives the snap may not run the ball
- Once a forward handoff occurs, the play is considered a run:
 - No forward pass may be thrown on that down

Clarifications

- A lateral or backward pitch does not count as a forward handoff
- Only one forward pass is allowed per play
- All laterals/pitches must occur behind the line of scrimmage to retain passing eligibility

No-Run Zone

- Running plays are prohibited inside the 5-yard line of the first down marker and within the end zone.
- Any running play in the No-Run Zone is immediately dead, resulting in a 5-yard penalty and loss of down.

Offensive Pass Interference (OPI)

Offensive pass interference is called when a receiver gains an unfair advantage over a defender.

OPI includes:

- Pushing off or creating separation with contact
- Initiating contact to block a defender before the ball arrives
- Downfield blocking on a pass that has not yet been caught

Laterals / Fumbles

- The ball may be lateraled any number of times, provided the ball does not travel forward.
- All fumbles are dead at the spot where the ball hits the ground, including muffed snaps.

Receiver and Catch / Recovery Rules

- A receiver is considered in bounds with one (1) foot inbounds at the time of possession.
- A receiver has possession once the ball is caught and secured, including when the ball contacts the ground, provided control is maintained throughout the process of the catch.
- If the receiver loses control of the ball upon contact with the ground, the pass is ruled incomplete.
- Simultaneous possession with the ground does not automatically make the pass incomplete; officials will determine whether the receiver maintained control.

Ball Spotting / Flag Pulling

The spot of the ball is determined by the position of the ball at the moment a player is ruled down.

Ball Spotting

- The ball is spotted at the **location of the ball** when the flag is legally pulled
- A play is ruled dead when a defender **legally removes the ball carrier's flag**
- If a player is **bobbles or juggling the ball** and a flag is pulled after initial contact but before full possession:
 - The ball is spotted at the **location of the first flag pull**
 - This prevents intentional bobbling for advantage
- If a player's flag is pulled **before touching the ball**:
 - The player is **not down**
 - The play continues until the player is legally touched or the flag is pulled again after possession
- If a player's flag **falls off without defensive contact**:
 - The player is ruled down upon **one-hand touch** by a defender

Downed Player:

- A player is considered down if any knee, leg, elbow, or body part other than hands or feet touches the ground. Defensive contact is not required.

Flag Guarding & Ball Carrier Conduct

Ball carriers must avoid actions that create an unfair advantage or introduce unnecessary contact.

Flag Guarding

- Ball carriers may **not guard their flags** using hands, arms, or the ball
- This includes:
 - Swiping a defender's hand away
 - Covering or shielding the flag
 - Lowering the ball or body to protect the flag

Blocking

- **No blocking is allowed**
- Offensive players may act as **stationary screens only**:
 - Players must be completely still
 - No movement to initiate or create contact

Contact Restrictions

- Stiff-arming is prohibited
- Lowering the head or shoulder to initiate contact is illegal
- Offensive players must avoid all unnecessary contact
- Deliberate collisions will result in a penalty

Legal Moves

- Spinning to evade defenders is permitted
- Ducking to avoid a flag pull is permitted
- Ball carriers may move laterally (side-to-side) to avoid defenders

Jumping & Diving Rules

- No high knees, hurdling, or jumping through defenders to gain yardage
- Ball carriers may jump or dive only to avoid injury or contact, not to advance the ball
- Lateral jumping is allowed as long as the player does not elevate knees or body excessively

Quarterback Exception

- Quarterbacks may jump to throw the ball, provided:
 - No high knees are used

Onside Kick

- After a touchdown and immediately following the extra point, a team may declare an onside kick. This must be declared before the referees mark the change of possession.
- The onside kick is one play (untimed down) from the midfield line.
- If the onside kick is successful, the team retains possession and starts on their own 5 yard line.
- If the attempt is unsuccessful, the defense takes possession from midfield.
- If the defense intercepts the ball, the play is dead.
- Onside kicks are only permitted for teams that are losing in the second half.

Defense

Pass Rush

Rusher Alignment:

- The designated rusher must start seven (7) yards behind the line of scrimmage and declare their rush status by raising their hand before the snap.

Lateral or Handoff:

- If the offense executes a lateral, backward pass, pitch, or handoff, the 7-yard rush rule is nullified, and any defensive player may rush the passer, regardless of starting position.

Non-Rushers:

- Defensive players who do not start seven (7) yards back may not cross the line of scrimmage until a lateral or handoff is made.

Early Rush:

- If a rusher starts early, they may reset to seven (7) yards back without penalty, provided they do not cross the line of scrimmage before the snap.

Offensive Responsibility:

- The offense must avoid running into the rusher, and all offensive players must run legal routes. Shielding, mirroring, screening, or blocking the rusher is prohibited.

Rusher Conduct:

- Rushers must avoid impeding the center or other receivers. Changing direction to initiate contact will not be considered interference on the offense. Rusher may block the pass by hitting the ball but can not hit the quarterback's hand or arm.

Mercy Rush Rule:

- If a team has a nineteen (19) point or greater lead, the trailing team may rush the passer without the seven (7) yard restriction. Once the lead is reduced to eighteen (18) points or fewer, the standard 7-yard rush rule is reinstated.

Incidental Contact:

- If the quarterback's arm or hand unintentionally contacts a defender who is not actively attempting to block the pass, the contact is ruled incidental and will not be considered a penalty.

No Rush:

- If a team does not identify and send a rusher the QB has 5 seconds to get rid of the ball or the play is dead.

Illegal Contact Ball Carrier

- Defensive players may not hold, grasp, push, or tackle the ball carrier.
- If a defender grabs clothing, it must be released immediately, or a penalty will be assessed.
- If the defender committing illegal contact is the last line of defense, the play results in an automatic touchdown

Pass Interference (PI)

Pass interference occurs when a player **illegally contacts or restricts an opponent**, impacting their ability to make a play on the ball while it is in the air.

- Early contact **before the ball arrives**
- Holding, grabbing, or restricting the receiver
- Running through the receiver without attempting to play the ball
- Face guarding (defender does not turn to locate the ball and obstructs receiver's vision)

Extra Point Defense

- If the defense gains possession of the ball during an **extra point attempt**, they may **return it for two (2) points**.

Sportsmanship Policy

Player Ejection

- A player who commits two unsportsmanlike penalties in a single game will be automatically ejected.
- Fighting, or touching, belittling, or demoralizing referees, will result in immediate ejection.

Team Ejection

- Entire teams may be ejected at the referees' discretion.
- Teams disqualified or ejected from the league will forfeit their entrance fee.

Disciplinary Review

- All ejections are reviewed by the board and commissioners.
- Further disciplinary action may include fines or suspension for multiple games or the entire season.
- Excessive taunting or "trash talking" may result in game disqualification.

Unsportsmanlike Minor Penalty

- Applies to excessive complaining, belittling or degrading referees, inappropriate language, or other unsportsmanlike behavior.
- Enforced as a 10-yard dead ball penalty and redo of the down.
- Multiple unsportsmanlike minor penalties may result in player ejection.

Offensive Penalties

Penalty	Yardage / Enforcement	Additional Notes
Delay of Game	-5 yards	Replay down
False Start	-5 yards	Replay down
Illegal Motion (2+ players in motion at snap)	-5 yards	Replay down
Illegal Formation (less than 5 on line of scrimmage at snap)	-5 yards	Replay down
Offensive Pick Play	-5 yards	Replay down
Impeding or Running into Rusher	-5 yards	Replay down
Jumping, Lowering Shoulder, or Diving to Advance Ball	-5 yards from spot	Down counts; on 4th down & extra points: 5 yards from original line of scrimmage & replay down
Flag Guarding / Stiff Arming	-5 yards from spot	Down counts; on 4th down & extra points: 5 yards from original line of scrimmage & replay down
QB Flag Guard / Stiff Arm	Spot of infraction	Loss of down; on 4th down & extra points: 5 yards from original line of scrimmage & replay down
Illegal Forward Pass / Second Forward Pass	-5 yards	Loss of down
Blocking / Illegal Pick	-5 yards from spot	—
Offensive Pass Interference	-5 yards from original line	Loss of down
Illegal Run (running play in no-run zone or first QB run)	- 5 yards	Loss of down
Illegal Participation (player out-of-bounds first to touch ball)	Incomplete	Loss of down
Flag Tying	-10 yards from original line	Possible ejection & loss of down

Defensive Penalties

Penalty	Yardage / Enforcement	Additional Notes
Illegal Rush (stripping/ pulling a player's flag away from ball)	5 yards	Replay down
Holding Ball Carrier / Ball Carrier's Clothes	5 yards	Assessed at end of play
Not Going for Flags / Pushing Ball Carrier Down or Out of Bounds	5 yards	Assessed at end of play
Last Defender Penalty (holding / pushing if last defender)	5 yards	Assessed at end of run; if last defender, results in touchdown
Holding QB's Clothes	5 yards	Replay down
Defensive Holding (DB holding receiver before ball is thrown)	5 yards	Automatic first down
Illegal Bump / Contact Downfield by Defender	5 yards	Automatic first down
Tackling	10 yards	From end of play
Contact with Center Before Standing Up	10 yards	Replay down
Roughing the Passer	5 yards	Added to end of play; automatic first down
Defensive Pass Interference / Push Off	Spot of infraction	Automatic first down; face guarding is not a penalty unless the receiver returns to the ball and contact occurs without defender turning to look for the ball

Other / Conduct Penalties

Penalty	Yardage / Enforcement	Additional Notes
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards	Dead ball penalty
Personal Foul (Unnecessary Roughness)	10 yards	From spot of foul
Taunting / Trash Talking	10 yards	Possible ejection
Fighting	—	Ejection and possible disqualification; mandatory 1-game suspension for throwing a punch, even if it does not connect; possible legal action
Touching, Belittling, or Demoralizing Referees	—	Ejection + 1 game suspension; possible legal action
Begging the Call / Excessive Complaining	Progressive	Only team captains may address referees, respectfully and in the form of a question. Penalties enforced progressively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st team infraction: warning • 2nd team infraction: 5 yards • 3rd team infraction: 10 yards • 4th+ team infractions: 15 yards Dead ball penalties, enforced after the play. Repeated infractions by a player may result in sitting out plays, series, a half, or ejection.