

MIDWEST FLAG FOOTBALL

TOURNAMENT RULE BOOK



TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION

- ★ All players & coaches must be registered and eligible on Zorts by the Tournament Registration close date.
- ★ All players are required in all Midwest Flag Football Tournaments to have an active Zorts player card.
- ★ Once registration closes there can not be anymore roster adjustments.
- ★ **No Player Max per team (But only 12 total awards will be handed out)**
- ★ Players can play on multiple teams from the same organization as long as they meet the age requirement for each division.
- ★ The tournament will be held rain or shine. If lightning is spotted, the tournament will be paused for 30 minutes. If no lightning is spotted within that 30 minutes then the tournament can resume.

TOURNAMENT CHECK-IN DAY

- ★ Teams will be required to check in together as a team.
- ★ Players will get wristbands to show what division they will participate in. If they participate in more than one division they will get more than one wristband.
- ★ Tournament staff will check each player's flags and equipment to make sure they are approved for MFF Tournaments.
- ★ Coaches will get checked in and receive a band as well. Must be registered on Zorts.

EQUIPMENT – FLAGS & BALLS

- ★ **Flags allowed** - NFL Flags and or Sonic Flag-a-tag- **NO SHRUMZ!!** ★
- Teams are required to bring their own flags. Flags will be available for purchase on site at MFF Tent.
- ★ **Flag tails must be cut or taped to the belt or could result in Flag Guarding penalty.**
- ★ Team shorts and flags cannot be the same color.
- ★ Midwest Flag Football will provide game footballs.

GAME BALLS

- ★ All games will use the Baden balls (MFF will provide game balls)
 - Black (Pee Wee) - 6U, 7U, 8U
 - Red (Junior) - 9U, 10U
 - Blue (Youth) - 11U & up

- ★ If your team moved up division you will be playing with the football that is designed for that division.

Age Scale

- ★ Divisions are based on birth year. The 2024 Age Scale is below.. Players can play up divisions but can **NOT** play in a younger Division. The number of Divisions may differ per tournament.

5U 6U 7U 8U 9U 10U 11U 12U 13U 14U
2018 2017 2016 2015 2014 2013 2012 2011 2010 2009

GAME FORMAT

- ★ The game is played with five (5) players. However, a minimum of four (4) players must be on the field always.
- ★ If a player is found playing on a team illegally, the coach, illegal player, and/or team may be removed from the event.

PLAYER UNIFORM

- ★ Teams are NOT required to provide light and dark shirts or jerseys, but are strongly recommended.
- ★ Players are designated as home or away based on the schedule. During bracket play, the highest seed will be the home team.
- ★ The away team will wear the light side of the shirt/jersey if they have one and the home team will wear their dark side if they have one.
- ★ Mouthguards are required during game play.
- ★ Shirts/jerseys must be tucked in always. If a shirt/jersey is hanging out, flag guarding may be called.
- ★ Metal Cleats are NOT allowed
- ★ Jewelry can NOT be worn during games. Hats with a brim, may be worn backwards only.
- ★ Shorts and pants can NOT have open pockets. All open pockets must be taped.

COACHES

- ★ Teams may **ONLY** have **2 coaches on the sideline**. These coaches must be identified on the team roster to be an official coach.
- ★ **All coaches must remain on the sideline at all times for Divisions 8u and older. Coaches entering the field will be called for unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on your team..**
For 6U & 7U divisions one coach may remain on the field during play on **offense only**.
- ★ NO Coaches allowed on defense for any division.
 - ★ Coaches are responsible for having a rulebook, knowing their schedule, and cleaning up their sideline.

GAME FIELD DIMENSIONS

- ★ The Game field may be different per tournament location.
- ★ Fields Length will be anywhere from 65 yards to 75 yards
- ★ Fields Width will either be 25 yard or 30 yards

GAME TIME

- ★ The referee may stop the clock at their own discretion.
- ★ Games are played with **two 12-minute running halves** and one-minute half-time.
- ★ Teams get three 30 second timeouts per game.
- ★ Clock stops for timeouts or if injury happens.
- ★ In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.

SCORING

- ★ A touchdown is equivalent to 6 points.
- ★ If a team is winning by 28 points the game is over.
- ★ Safety is 2 Points

EXTRA POINTS

- ★ Following a touchdown, the offensive team is given an opportunity to score an extra point.
- ★ 1 Extra Point is attempted five yards out from the goal line. **This is a "NO RUN ZONE" This applies to 8U & older Divisions.**
- ★ 2 Extra Point is attempted 10 yards out from the goal line.
- ★ Extra Points that are returned equals 2 points.

POSSESSIONS

- ★ At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
- ★ The Winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or to defer.
- ★ The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 downs with a 4th down option to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
 - If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
 - If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
 - Offensive Teams MUST declare 4th down intent or snap the ball prior to the expiration of the 25 second Play Clock.
 - Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

Pool Play

- ★ The number of Pool play games may differ per tournament location.
- ★ Pool play games will determine Division Standings and Playoff seeding.
- ★ No Overtime in Pool Play
- ★ Division Tie Breaker
 - Head to Head
 - Total Points Allowed
 - Total Points Scored
 - Coin Toss

OVERTIME

- ★ There is no overtime in Pool play Round Play.
- ★ If the score is tied at the end of regulation during Bracket Play, teams move directly into overtime.
- ★ Coin toss determines possession. The home team will call the coin toss.
 - If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
 - The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
 - Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own. **Example:**
Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
- ★ If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
- ★ Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line
 - ★ Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5 yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.
 - ★ Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored for each team
 - All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
 - There are no timeouts.
 - ★ Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points.

Playoffs

- ★ Playoffs are single elimination.
- ★ Depending on the tournament some tournaments all teams make playoff bracket and some might have only so many that make the tournament bracket.

NO RUN ZONES

- ★ "No Run Zones" **Apply to 8u & older** Divisions in Tournament play
- ★ "No Run Zones" are 5 yards from the Goal line & 5 yards from the first down line.
- ★ Whenever within the "No Run Zone" the offense must pass.
- ★ A handoff is allowed in a "No Run Zone" but the runner must pass the ball before going over the line of scrimmage.
- ★ If a run play occurs while inside the "No Run Zone", the play is immediately dead and will result in loss of down.

OFFENSE

- ★ **NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT** of any kind is permitted.
- ★ Possessions will start on the 5 yard line unless there was Interception.
- ★ Downfield blocking is illegal. Any offensive player who continues **running AND impedes** the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull the ball carrier's flag will be called for illegal blocking.
- ★ All offensive players must start with their mouth pieces in, shirts/jerseys tucked in, flag belts on, and flags properly secured at the hips with flag sockets facing outwards.
- ★ The ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start a play. Shotgun snaps are allowed.
- ★ There is a **25-second play clock**, which starts when the ball is spotted on the line of scrimmage.
- ★ Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage. A motion player does NOT need to stop, prior to the snap of the ball.
- ★ Laterals of any kind anywhere on the field are not allowed.
- ★ **The ball will be spotted at the location of where the ball was when the flag was separated from the belt.**

PASSING GAME

- ★ QB has a seven (7) second "pass clock."
- ★ If the pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is ruled dead, with a loss of down. The ball is placed at the original line of scrimmage.
- ★ If the ball is handed off, the seven-second pass rule is no longer in effect.
- ★ Passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, including feet. Failure to comply, results in a loss of down.
- ★ Only one forward pass per down. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- ★ Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

RECEIVING GAME

- ★ All players are eligible to receive passes, including the QB, but only if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage first.
- ★ A receiver must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
- ★ A receiver is down where his or her flag belt is pulled.
- ★ If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off, even without contact from another player, that player is ruled down at the spot the flag fell off.
- ★ If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off prior to receiving the ball and later in the same play catches the ball without replacing the flag, the receiver will be down immediately at the point of reception.
- ★ If a simultaneous catch occurs the receiver will get credit for the catch.
- ★ A receiver cannot willingly run out of bounds and then come back in bounds to catch a ball.

RUNNING GAME

- ★ Only “direct” handoffs (player to player, hand to hand) behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff. **Pitches or laterals are not allowed**
- ★ **Center sneak NOT** allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
- ★ There is no limit to the number of handoffs that can be performed by the offense in a single play, so long as the ball never crosses the line of scrimmage.
- ★ The QB can run the ball only if he/she has first handed the ball off behind the line of scrimmage and then taken a “direct” handoff back from another player before the ball has ever crossed the line of scrimmage.
- ★ The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball, if he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage first.
- ★ Once the ball has been handed off all defensive players can rush.
- ★ **Spinning/Jump cuts are allowed.**
 - a. **Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.**
- ★ **Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.**
- ★ **No Blocking** or screening is allowed.

DEFENSE

- ★ **INTENTIONAL CONTACT** of any kind is not allowed.
- ★ Defensive players cannot pass the line of scrimmage, until the ball is handed off.
- ★ Defenders must only attempt to grab an offensive player's flags when trying to get them down.
- ★ If a defender attempts to pull an offensive player's flags and inadvertently grabs their jersey, the defender must immediately and completely release the jersey before they can reattempt to pull the flag. Failure to do so will result in a holding penalty.
- ★ All defensive players must give the offense a one-yard cushion prior to the snap of the ball.

FLAG PULLING/GUARDING

- ★ **Flag Guarding** is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder or covering the flags with the football jersey.
- ★ A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier touches the ball.
- ★ Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- ★ It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- ★ A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- ★ The flag belts (not the flags themselves) must be secured to ensure they do not hang appearing to be a flag. If the belt is hanging, flag guarding may be called.
 - ★ Shirts/jerseys must be tucked in always. If a shirt/jersey is hanging out, flag guarding may be called.

INTERCEPTIONS

- ★ Interceptions are returnable during offensive possession for 6 points.
- ★ Interceptions are returnable during extra point try for 2 points.
- ★ Interceptions are returnable during overtime play for 2 points.

RUSHING OF THE QUARTERBACK

- ★ You may only rush the quarterback in the **8U & older Divisions**.
- ★ The rush marker will be designated by the referee **Seven yards** from the line of scrimmage.
- ★ Any number of players may rush the quarterback if they are beyond the rush marker at the time the ball is snapped.
- ★ If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, that rusher(s) **CANNOT** rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the hand off or passed ball.
- ★ The rusher must take an angled path to the QB. If this path is crossed AND contact is made involving the rusher and any offensive player, then an offensive impeding penalty will be assessed.
- ★ Once the rusher angle is set, he/she cannot change their path to the QB. If the path is changed, they will lose right of way privileges. This means that if any contact is made, it will be called against the initiating player.
- ★ The rusher **CANNOT** run straight into the center. The center has the right of way so long as the center remains in his/her original spot at the time the ball was snapped.
- ★ If contact is made with the center by the rusher who has not taken an angle to the quarterback, a defensive impeding penalty will be assessed.
- ★ Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage.
- ★ The rusher may attempt to block the pass, but it is a penalty to contact the quarterback's arm
- ★ **The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the path or line is occupied by the moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**

FORMATIONS

- ★ Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The QB must be off the line of scrimmage.
- ★ Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for atleast 1 second. Only one player can go in motion.

INADVERTENT WHISTLE

- ★ If there is an inadvertent whistle during a play, the offense has the choice of either the result of the play at the **point** the whistle was blown or replaying the down.
- ★ If there is an inadvertent whistle during a passing play and the ball is in flight, the down is replayed.
- ★ The half or game cannot end with an inadvertent whistle. This would be an untimed down.

DEAD BALLS

- ★ A play is ruled dead when the ball carrier's flag is pulled, the ball carrier's flag inadvertently falls off, the ball carrier steps out of bounds, any part of the ball carrier's body other than hands touch the ground, the ball carrier lets the ball hit the ground, a penalty occurs, QB runs out of time or after a touchdown or extra point is scored.
- ★ If a fumble occurs the play will be blown dead and the ball will be spotted where the ball was fumbled and loss of down.

RULES CHALLENGE

- ★ **A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.**

SAFETIES

- ★ A safety occurs when one of the following happens; the QB or ball carrier is downed in his/her end zone, the QB or ball carrier runs out of bounds inside his/her end zone, the quarterback or ball carrier fumbles the ball in his/her end zone, a bad snap resulting in the ball landing in offensive end zone, and an offensive penalty occurring inside the offensive end zone.
- ★ If a safety occurs, the team that scored the safety will be awarded 2 points and will receive the ball on their 5-yard line.

FORFEITS

- ★ To keep the tournament on schedule if a team is not ready to start the game on the scheduled time that team may result in a forfeit, an exception will be made if the team just finished a game on another field.
- ★ The Tournament Director, not field officials, will make that determination.
- ★ Teams are required to have a minimum of four players to play a game; if a team is unable to field at least four players the game will be forfeited.
- ★ A forfeit will result in a 28-0 result.

GENERAL PENALTY INFORMATION

- ★ Only head coaches may approach the referee. Judgment calls cannot be argued.
- ★ A game or half will not end on any accepted live ball defensive penalty or inadvertent whistle.
- ★ Any offensive penalty in your own end zone results in a safety (2 points).
- ★ A second defensive penalty on an extra point, will equate to the number of points the offensive team

was attempting and be awarded.

Offensive Penalties	
Offsides/ False Start / Procedure	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Pass Interference	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Illegal Motion / Illegal Substitution	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Delay of Game	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Taunting	5 Yards from LOS & Loss of Down
Unsportsmanlike	10 Yards & Loss of Down
Unnecessary Roughness	10 Yards & Loss of Down
Screening, Blocking	SPOT FOUL-5 Yards & Loss of Down
Charging	SPOT FOUL-5 Yards & Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	SPOT FOUL-5 Yards & Loss of Down

Defensive Penalties	
Offsides	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Illegal Rush	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Illegal Flag Pull	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Illegal Substitution	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Roughing the Passer	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Taunting	5 Yards from LOS & Auto 1st Down
Unsportsmanlike	10 Yards & Auto 1st Down
Unnecessary Roughness	10 Yards & Auto 1st Down
Pass Interference	SPOT FOUL & Auto 1st Down
Holding	SPOT FOUL 5 Yards & Auto 1st Down
Stripping	SPOT FOUL 5 Yards & Auto 1st Down

WARNINGS

- ★ At the official's discretion a warning may be given in place of a penalty to a player or coach for any of the stated rules. Coaches and players should not expect to receive more than one warning if any.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT -

★ FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!

- ★ If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered.
- ★ Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- ★ Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- ★ Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- ★ Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- ★ Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well: ○ Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
- ★ Keep comments clean and profanity free.
- ★ Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
- ★ The Tournament Director, Field Monitor and or Referee may Eject and player, coach or spectator if they deem necessary.
- ★ The Tournament Director may hand out an unsportsmanlike conduct if he or she deems necessary because of the way the fans, coaches or players are displaying their conduct.
- ★ Midwest Flag Football operates under a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

Midwest Flag Football will always strive to produce safe, fun and competitive tournaments.