

## LHP FLAG FOOTBALL RULES 2024

### **I. GAME**

- 1.1 The game is played with five (5) players. However, a minimum of four (4) players must be on the field at all times
- 1.2 All children are expected to play an equal amount of time in both the 1st and 2nd half in each game they participate in.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
- 1.5. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
  - a. 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.
  - b. Any time prior to making the ball, 'Ready for Play' the referee MUST ask the offensive teams head coach to declare 'Punt or Play'. The coach MUST answer at that time or risk a delay of game penalty at the referees discretion.
  - c. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
  - d. If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with NO option to change the declaration
  - e. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line
- 1.6. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

### **II. EQUIPMENT**

- 2.1 Teams are designated as home or away based on the schedule.
- 2.2 Players are required to wear protective mouthpieces at all times during both games and practices.
- 2.3 The belt that holds the flags (not the flags themselves) must be secured to ensure they do not appear to be a flag. If the belt is hanging, flag guarding may be called.

- 2.4 Jerseys must be tucked in at all times. If a jersey is hanging out, flag guarding may be called.
- 2.5 All players must start with their mouthpieces in, jerseys tucked in, flag belts on, and flags properly secured at the hips.
- 2.6 No metal cleats are allowed.
- 2.7 No jewelry (necklaces, earrings, watches, etc.) is permitted.
- 2.8 Shorts and pants cannot have pockets
- 2.9 Jerseys, flags, and footballs will be provided for each team. These footballs are the mandatory game used footballs for all divisions. No other footballs are permitted

### **III. FIELD**

- a. 25 yards wide by 64 yards long with two 7 yard endzones 6u-10u
- b. 12u/14u – 30 yards wide by 70 yards long with two 10 yard endzones
- c. Both with a midfield line to gain. No Run zones are located five yards prior to the line to gain and five yards prior to the endzone in the offense's direction.
- d. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
- e. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

### **IV. TIMING**

- 4.1 The ref may stop the clock at their discretion.
- 4.2 Each team is allowed one 60-second timeout per half.
- 4.3 Timeouts do not carry over into next half.
- 4.4 Games are played with two 24-minute halves and a two-minute halftime.
- 4.5 Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball
- 4.5 The clock will automatically stop at the one-minute warning of the second half, only if the game is within 8 points. During this time, the clock will stop for an incompleting, an extra point, when a first down is obtained, or if out of bounds.
- 4.6 There will be no overtime during regular season, only playoffs

### **V. SCORING**

- 5.1 A touchdown is worth 6 points

5.2 Following a touchdown, the offense is given the opportunity to score an extra point.

5.3 1 Extra Point is attempted from 5 yards from the goal line. This is a “No Run Zone” for 8U, 10U, 12U and 14U

5.4 2 Extra Points is attempted from 10 yards from the goal line.

5.5 Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth 6 points, conversions or overtime are worth 2 points

5.6 A safety occurs when the QB or ball carrier is downed in his/her end zone, runs out of bounds inside his/her end zone, fumbles the ball inside his/her end zone, a bad snap resulting in the ball landing in the offensive end zone, or an offensive penalty occurs inside the offensive end zone.

5.7 If a safety occurs, the team that scored the safety will be awarded 2 points and receive the ball at their 5-yard line.

## **VI. COACHES**

6.1 Only 2 Game day Adult Coaches are permitted on the sideline during games.

6.2 Coaches are required to wear the coach’s shirt provided for the current season. Without this shirt, coaches are not permitted on the field/sideline.

6.3 All coaches must move to the sideline prior to the snap of the ball.

## **VII. LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL**

7.1 The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.

7.2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.

7.2 a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.

7.3. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.

7.4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. Other unfair acts would be; not returning five (5) eligible players to the field of play after halftime, a team or officials time out prior to the ‘Ready to Play’ signal by the referee. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

7.5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

7.6. Any official can whistle the play dead.

7.7. Play is ruled “dead” when:

- a. The ball hits the ground. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
- b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
- c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
- d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
- e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
- f. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
- g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
- h. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- i. Inadvertent whistle
- j. Ball-carrier leaves their feet diving or to hurdle a player

7.8 If inadvertent or erroneous whistle occurs the offense has two options:

- A) take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed
- B) replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

## **VIII. RUNNING**

- a. The ball is spotted where the flag is pulled
- b. Direct handoffs, pitches and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead. The ball will be placed at the spot of possession was lost for the succeeding play.
- c. The QB may not handoff, pitch or lateral first to the center
- d. Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage
- e. Once the ball has been handed off or a backward pass or lateral/pitch has occurred the seven second pass clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush
- f. Runners are not permitted to jump, leap, or hurdle while advancing the ball. The ball will be placed where they left the ground and the play will be blown dead
- g. Ball carriers may leave their feet for spinning, jump cuts, QB passing progression or if there is a clear indication he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player. However, if contact is made, unnecessary roughness or illegal contact may be called
- h. No blocking or screening is allowed
- i. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.

- j. Once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage, the ball carrier is the only player allowed to have possession until the play is dead. No laterals or pitches once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage

## **IX. PASSING**

9.1 The quarterback has a seven (7) second "pass clock".

9.2 If the ball is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted at the original line of scrimmage.

9.2.1 If the quarterback is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7 second pass clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. It is not considered a safety.

9.3 There is only one forward pass per down. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.

9.3.1 Passes may be thrown forward or behind the line of scrimmage. There is no limit on the number of backward passes thrown behind the line of scrimmage

9.4 The passer must be behind the line of scrimmage, including feet. Failure to comply results in loss of down.

9.5 Shovel passes are allowed but must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage

9.6 If a QB throws the ball then catches it, the play is blown dead and treated like an incomplete pass

## **X. RECEIVING**

10.1 All players are eligible to catch a pass, including the QB, but only if the ball was handed behind the line of scrimmage first.

10.2 Receivers must have one foot in bounds when making a catch.

10.3 A receiver is down where his or her flag belt is pulled.

10.4 If a receiver's belt inadvertently falls off, the player is marked down where his/her belt fell off.

10.5 If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off prior to making a catch and later in same play catches the ball without replacing the flag, the receiver is down at the spot of the catch.

10.6 In the event of both the receiver and defender catch the ball and retain possession to the ground, the tie would go to the receiver.

10.7 A receiver cannot run out of bounds and come back in bounds to make a catch.

10.8 No blocking/screening/pick plays are allowed.

10.9 Interceptions are returnable – only from 10u-14u

10.10 If the score is a 21 point deficit and the winning team intercepts the pass, the ball will be spotted at the spot of the interception and not returnable.

## **XI. RUSHING THE PASSER**

11.1 Only 10U, 12U and 14U may rush the quarterback.

11.2 The rush marker will be designated by the referee seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

11.3 Any number of players may rush the quarterback as long as they are behind the rush marker when the ball is snapped.

11.4 If the offense draws the pass rusher(s) past the rush marker before the ball is snapped, the rusher(s) cannot rush that play. However, any defender still behind the rush marker may still blitz.

11.5 The rusher must take an angled path to the QB. If this path is crossed and contact is made involving the rusher and an offensive player then an offensive penalty will be assessed.

11.6 Once the rush angle is set, the rusher cannot change their path to the QB. If the path is changed, they will lose the right of way privileges. If contact is made, it will be called against the initiating player.

11.7 The rusher cannot run straight into the center.

11.8 Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage

## **XII. FLAG PULLING**

12.1 A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier has full possession of the ball.

12.2 It is illegal to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier.

12.3 A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flag of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

12.4 Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to pulling the flag by stiff arming, lowering the head, arm or shoulder, or covering the flags with the jersey.

## **XIII. FORMATIONS**

13.1 . Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

13.1a. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.

13.1b. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.

13. 2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.

13.3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

#### **XIV UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

14.1 10 yard loss and loss of down for penalty on offense

14.2 10 yards from end of the play and automatic first down for penalty on defense

14.3 Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar gestures, disrespectfully addressing any persons, illegally tripping, spiking or kicking the ball, spiking or throwing the flag, fighting or excessive celebrations. 29.3.1 This includes all team members, coaches, families and fans representing team.

14.4 FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

14.5 Depending on severity, players, coaches, or fans may be ejected.

#### **XV. PENALTIES**

15.1 The referee will call all penalties.

15.2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.

15.3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)

15.4. Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.

15.5. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

15.6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.

15.7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal

15.8 Spot fouls in then endzone: Defensive (ball at the one yard line, first down)/Offensive (safety)

**ii. Defensive spot fouls**

Defensive pass interference	Automatic first down
Holding/Illegal Contact	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

**iii. Offensive spot fouls**

Screening or blocking	-5 yards and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-5 yards and loss of down
Holding/Illegal Contact	-5 yards and loss of down

**iv. Defensive penalties**

Defensive unnecessary roughness	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside / illegal substitution	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Roughing the passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Taunting	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

**v. Offensive penalties**

Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start / illegal substitution	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion (More than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Taunting	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down