



2018 CABOT PARKS & RECREATION FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

GENERAL RULES

1. The game should be played between 2 teams of 7 players each. Five players are required to avoid a forfeit.
2. The game will be played under the supervision of 2 paid officials
3. A speaking captain must be selected to make all decisions and shall be the only one who addresses the officials.
4. Roster may have up to 14 players and no changes after 7/5/18.
5. Showing good sportsmanship is a must at all times. **NO PROFANITY ALLOWED.**
6. Any player/spectator ejected at any time must sit out the next scheduled game. If a player/spectator is ejected for a second time in the season, they will be suspended for the remainder of the year.
7. **Rules are subject to change throughout the season. (updated 6/15/18)**

THE FIELD

1. The field will be a standard sized football field (80 long x 50 wide)
2. End Zones will be standard 10 yards deep
3. Zone lines (or first down markers) will be marked on field every twenty yards
4. There will be two hash marks on each zone to gain yard line,
5. Each goal line will be within the confines of the end zone. Thus, if a ball carrier breaks the plane of the goal line, he or she has entered the end zone.

THE GAME

1. A team has 3 downs to reach a zone-line-to-gain (first down marker, 20 yards) in order to receive a first down. Teams may pass or run (including QB) at any time (only if rushed), at any location on the field, except in **NO RUN ZONES**.
2. **NO RUN ZONES**, a location on the field marked that teams are not allowed to call a running play, must pass. These areas will be on each 5-yard line (going in to the end zone and at midfield, only).
3. **The quarterback cannot run the ball unless they are rushed by the defensive team.**
4. **When rushing the quarterback, all players must be lined up 5 yards back from the line of scrimmage if you going to rush.**
5. **NO KICKING, or PUNTING!**
6. Touchdowns are worth 6 points. After a touchdown is scored, the offensive team may elect to try for 1 extra point (from 5-yard line) or 2 extra points (from the 10-yard line). After a touchdown, the ball will be put in play on the scored upon team's 20-yard line. After a safety, the ball will be put in play at the 20-yard line of the team now in possession of the ball. If a team intercepts a pass on an extra point conversion, they can run it back for 2pts.

TIMING

1. Playing time will be 40 minutes total, broken into (2) 20-minute halves. Running clock except for the last 2 minutes of the second half.
2. Half time will be 5 minutes.
3. Each team is awarded 2 time-outs per half. Unused time-outs in the first half **DO NOT** carry over to the second half. Time-outs will last 1 minute. If a timeout is called by any team after a scoring play, the extra point conversion will be an un-timed down and the clock will start when the ball is snapped from the 20-yard line when play resumes after the outcome of the extra point conversion.
4. The referee may declare a time-out for any situation he/her deems necessary.
5. Game time is forfeit time.
6. Captains Choice and Pennies – The first team on the listed on the schedule is the home team and then we will have a coin-flip, winner of the flip will decide either first half or the second half (either a 20-yard line start or defense). Whichever team chooses to start on offense or defense, the other team chooses the direction.
7. 2-Minute Warning - Approximately 2 minutes before the end of each half the Referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in that half. The Back Judge will announce to the captains the remaining time and status of the clock after every play during the final 2 minutes.

8. **Tie Game** - In case of a playoff game ending in a tie score, (regular season does not have over time) the officials must bring all players and coaches of both teams to the center of the field. They will discuss the tiebreaker procedures and answer all questions prior to the coin toss. After this meeting the field captains will stay while the remaining players and coaches return to their respective sidelines.
 - A. A coin will be flipped or odd/even choice by the captain will determine the options as in the start of the game. The winner of the toss shall be given the options of offense, defense, or direction. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. Each overtime period begins with a coin toss or odd/even choice.
 - B. **ALL OVERTIME PERIODS ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE.**
 - C. Unless moved by penalty, each team will start 1st and goal from the 20 yard line. The object will be to score a touchdown. An overtime period consists of one possession by each time. If the score is still tied after one period, they go to a second period or as many as needed to determine a winner. If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, the opponent still has a chance to win the game. If the defense intercepts the pass or fumble and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will belong to the defense, as the offense did not convert their chance. They must convert to win or another period starts. Each team in entitled to one time-out per overtime period.
 - D. **Penalties** - The offense should be awarded a new series of 3 downs when the penalty for defensive pass interference or roughing the passer is accepted. Dead ball fouls following a successful try will be penalized from the succeeding spot.

During the final 2 minutes of the second half the clock will stop for the following:

- Incomplete pass.....Starts on Snap
- Out of Bounds.....Starts on Snap
- Team Time-out.....Starts on Snap
- Score.....Starts on Snap
- First Down..... Starts on Snap
- Penalty..... Starts on Snap
- Change of Possession..... Starts on Snap

Game and Player Equipment (Legal)

1. **Football** - The official ball will be a Wilson GST (College/High School) ball and must be **USED BY BOTH TEAMS.**
2. **Jerseys** - Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys or t-shirts.
3. **Pants / Shorts** - Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s) or exposed drawstrings. The pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags.
4. **Flag belt** - Each player (not lineman only if not enough flags are available) must wear a one-piece belt at the waistline with two flags permanently attached, one flag on each side.
Penalty: Dead Ball Foul - Failure to have flag belt legally attached prior to the snap, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.
5. **Gloves** - Players may wear gloves which must consist of a soft, pliable and nonabrasive material
6. **Headwear** - Players are not permitted to wear bandanas. Players may wear knit stocking caps, or elastic headbands. Hats may not have a bill.
7. **Shoes** - Shoes with cleats must be made of soft pliable plastic or rubber. No exposed metal cleats are permitted. (See illegal player equipment)

Game and Player Equipment (Illegal)

1. A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play. This applies to any equipment, which, in the opinion of the Referee, is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment or substances which shall always be declared illegal include:
 - A. Headgear containing any hard, unyielding, or stiff material, including billed hats.
 - B. Jewelry
 - C. Pads or braces worn above the waist.
 - D. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats. Any team found wearing illegal equipment will be penalized 15 yards, and the second warning results in a forfeit.
 - E. Shirts or jerseys, which do not remain, tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt, which does not remain tucked in.
 - F. Pants or shorts with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s) or exposed drawstring(s).
 - G. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges overlapped, and any other hard substance is covered with at least 1/2 inch of closed cell slow recovery rubber or other material of similar thickness and physical properties.
 - H. Towels attached at the player's waist (flag only).

2. An official time out shall be declared to permit prompt repair of equipment, which becomes illegal or defective through use (except for illegal shoes).

DEFINITIONS OF PLAYING TERMS

Catch - A catch is an act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight.

Clipping - Clipping is running or diving into the back or throwing or dropping the body across the back of the leg or legs of an opponent, or pushing an opponent in the back.

Encroachment - Encroachment is a term to indicate a defensive player is illegally in the neutral zone. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until he/she is on his/her team's side of the neutral zone.

Hurdling - Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over a player who is on his/her feet.

Interception - A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble in flight is an interception.

Live Ball - A pass or fumble, which has not yet touched the ground, is a live ball in flight and therefore can be caught and advanced by either team.

Neutral Zone - The neutral zone is the area between the offensive and defensive line of scrimmage that has been established by the spot cone markers and extends to each sideline. It is established when the ball is ready for play.

Pass (Forward and Backward) - A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. A backward pass that hits the ground is ruled the same as a fumble. It will be dead at the spot where it strikes the ground.

Screen Blocking - Screen Blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without initiating contact with him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body.

Tagging - Tagging is placing one hand anywhere between the shoulders and knees of an opponent with the ball. The tagger may leave his/her feet to make the tag. Pushing, striking, slapping, and holding are not permitted. If a player trips the runner in his/her attempt to make a diving tag, it is a penalty.

Tripping - Tripping is the use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent, including the runner, below the knee.

SERIES OF DOWNS, NUMBER OF DOWN, & THE TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

1. Each team receives three (3) downs to pass the zone-line-to-gain or endzone.
2. The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.
3. A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the opponents moves the ball into the next zone; or an accepted penalty against the opponents involves an automatic first down; or either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, free kick, protected scrimmage kick, touchback, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.
4. If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated.
Exception: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul was not prior to the final change of possession and it declines all penalties for its opponent's fouls, other than unsportsmanlike.

SNAPPING, HANDLING, PASSING, RECEIVING, RUNNING THE BALL

Prior to the Snap

1. Following the ready for play and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or in any other way interfere with them. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals, or shifting through the zone. After the snapper has placed his/her hands on the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball.
Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Encroachment, 5 yards from the previous spot.
2. The snapper, after assuming position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play until it is snapped. An infraction of this provision may be penalized, whether or not the ball is snapped, and the penalty for any resultant encroachment or contact foul by an opponent shall be cancelled.

Position and Action during the Snap

1. The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot

2. All offensive players must be within 15 yards of the ball.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot

3. One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line.

Penalty: Illegal Motion, 5 yards from previous spot

4. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot

5. In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, arms for at least one full second before the snap.

Penalty – Illegal Motion, 5 yards from previous spot

Passing and Receiving

1. There is no diving while running with the ball. A receiver may dive to catch a ball. A defensive player may dive for to try to remove a flag.

2. A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at anytime except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or to avoid being deflagged/tagged.

3. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the last team in possession unless lost on downs.

4. A backward pass or fumble that goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out-of-bounds spot. If out-of-bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.

5. If an offensive player fumbles the ball prior to reaching the end zone and the ball lands in the end zone, the offensive team shall retain possession at the spot of the fumble.

6. All players are eligible to catch a pass.

7. A forward pass is illegal:

A. If the passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage.

B. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.

C. If there is more than one forward pass per down.

8. The line of scrimmage remains throughout the play. A team may advance the ball across the line of scrimmage by laterals or runs, and then lateral the ball behind the line for a forward pass attempt.

9. If a player attempts a catch or intercept while in the air, the player must contact the ground inbounds with the ball in his/her possession prior to touching out-of-bounds, unless an opponent's contact causes him/her to first touch out-of-bounds.

A. If one foot first lands in-bounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception although a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.

B. A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception.

10. A player may, while jumping in the air to attempt a catch, may pass (tip) the ball forward provided he/she has not touched the ground yet.

11. Pass Interference - Contact that interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the line of scrimmage is pass interference unless it occurs when 2 or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged/tagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage.

A. **Offensive Pass Interference** - after the ball is snapped, and until a receiver has touched it, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the line of scrimmage.

Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from previous spot, loss of down

B. **Defensive Pass Interference** - after the pass is thrown, and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the line of scrimmage while the ball is in flight.

Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from previous spot, automatic first down

12. **Roughing the passer** – Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into the passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown, also there should be no attempts to hit the player's arm during a throwing motion.

Penalty: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards, automatic first down

Running and Flag Belt Removal

1. **Flag Belt Removal** - When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

A. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be de-flagged.

B. When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The de-flagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees.

C. In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play.

D. A defensive player intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal.

The official shall warn the team, any further penalty will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct.

E. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal.

F. A player may leave his/her feet when trying to remove the flag.

2. **Contact** - In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.

Penalty: Defensive Holding, 10 yards from spot

3. **Flag Guarding** - A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. A player may use a spin move, however; must keep their arms away from their flag to avoid flag guarding.

Penalty: Flag guarding, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty.

4. **Face Guarding** - A defensive player may not use their arms and hands to intentionally obstruct the receiver's view of the ball.

Penalty: Face guarding, 10 yards, automatic first down.

5. **Stiff Arm** - A runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with an extended hand or arm which includes the use of a "stiff arm" to flag guard

Penalty: Stiff Arm, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty

6. **Helping the runner** - A player shall not grasp, pull, push or aid any teammate runner.

Penalty: Helping the Runner, 5 yards from spot of the penalty.

BLOCKING

1. **Offense Blocking** - The offensive blocking shall take place without contact. The blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive block is illegal.

Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from the spot of the penalty

2. **Interlock Blocking** - Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.

3. **Defensive Rush and Use of Hands** - Defensive players must attempt to go around the offensive blocker. Defensive players must not use any part of his/her arms, hands, elbows, or any part of the body to contact the offensive player.

Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from previous spot

Mercy Rule

1. If a team is 24 or more points ahead with 5 minutes to go in the second half, the game shall be officially called.

2. If a team scores during the last 5 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 24 or more the game shall end at that point.

3. The team can still play if they want. (Service to participate)

CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. No player shall commit non-contact acts during a period or intermission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

A. Any acts of unfair play.

B. Using disconcerting acts or words prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offense's signals or movements.

C. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player.

D. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player.

2. Dead Ball Player Fouls

A. Intentionally kicking the ball.

B. Spike the ball into the ground.

C. Throw the ball high into the air.

3. Prohibited Acts - There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches or others subject to the Rules. Examples include, but are not limited to:

A. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.

B. Disrespectfully addressing an official.

C. Indicating objections to an official's decision.

D. Holding an unauthorized conference, or being on the field illegally.

E. Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.

F. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game by person's subject to the rules.

Personal Fouls

1. No player shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. No player shall:
 - A. Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
 - B. Trip an opponent.
 - C. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
 - D. Throw the runner to the ground.
 - E. Hurdle any other player.
 - F. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
 - G. Make any contact with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary of any nature including using fists, locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to Flag Rules.
 - H. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
 - I. Clip an opponent.
 - J. Tackling the runner.

ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

1. **Captain's Choice** - When a foul occurs during a live ball, the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains. The referee shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding the rights of penalty acceptance or declination and shall indicate to him/her the number of the ensuing down, distance to be gained, and status of the ball for each available choice. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. If the penalty is declined or if there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. A captain's choice of options may not be revoked.
2. **Live Ball Fouls** - Any live ball foul is penalized according to the all-but one enforcement principle, except:
 - A. A foul that occurs simultaneously with the snap or free kick is penalized from the previous spot.
 - B. A non-player foul, unsportsmanlike foul, or dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.
3. **Dead Ball Fouls** - When a foul occurs during a dead ball either between downs or before a snap or free kick, the officials shall not permit the ball to become live.
4. **Establish Zone-line-to-gain** - On a live ball foul mark off the penalty yardage first, then establish the zone line to gain. However, with a dead ball foul, establish the zone line to gain first, and then mark off the penalty yardage.
5. **All-But-One Principle** - Enforcement philosophy is based on the fact that a team is given the advantage of the distance that is gained without assistance of a foul. It is assumed that the only foul that would give this aid is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot. Therefore, all fouls but this one, that is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot, are penalized from the basic spot. This one foul is penalized from the spot of the foul.
6. **Loose Ball Play** - If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot either the spot of the snap or the free kick.
7. **Running Play** - If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends.
8. **Half the Distance** - A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.
9. **Safety / Goal Line** - If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from or behind its goal line which is now the basic spot, it is a safety. For a defensive team foul, if the enforcement spot that is now the basic spot is on or behind the offended team's goal line any measurement is from the goal line.
10. **Foul on a Score** - If there is a player foul by the offensive team other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a player foul by the defensive team, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try, the penalty is automatically declined.
11. **Foul Prior to a Try** - When a foul occurs after a touchdown and before the ball is ready for play for the try, the enforcement is at the succeeding spot where the ball will be next snapped for the try, usually the 3 or 10 yard line.
12. **Double Foul** - It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer, during the same live ball period in which:
 - A. There is no change of possession.
 - B. There is a change of possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to final change of possession.
 - C. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

In all three the penalties cancel, and the down is replayed.

EXCEPTION: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent's foul(s), other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer.

13. **Multiple Live Ball Fouls** - When 2 or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team, one penalty may be chosen except when a foul(s) for unsportsmanlike or nonplayer conduct occurs. In such cases, the penalty/penalties for the unsportsmanlike conduct or nonplayer fouls are administered from the succeeding spot as a dead ball foul.

14. **Multiple Dead Ball Fouls** - Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. Dead ball fouls are not coupled with live ball fouls or other dead ball fouls to create double or multiple fouls. Penalize all unsportsmanlike and nonplayer fouls separately.

