



EASTMONT METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT

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7-On-7 Flag Football Rules

1. Team Requirements

- 1.1 A team shall consist of seven players. A team can play with a minimum of 6 players. A maximum of 16 players is allowed on the roster.
- 1.2 The offensive team must have 4 players within 1 yard of the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
- 1.3 All players must have checked in with the scorekeeper and be recorded on the game sheet before they are allowed to participate.
- 1.4 Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time-outs.
- 1.5 All games shall be played on the date and hour scheduled. BE AT LEAST 15 MINUTES EARLY.

2. Game, Field, Players, and Equipment

- 2.1 Length of the field shall be 80 yards by 40 yards with 10 yard end zones, yard markings every 20 yards.
- 2.2 All players must wear shoes.
- 2.3 Rubber cleated shoes will be allowed. No metal screw-in cleats, open toe, open heel or hard soled shoes will be allowed.
- 2.4 Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pockets(s) or exposed drawstrings. A player may not turn his/her shorts inside-out or tape his/her pockets in order to play.
- 2.5 All jewelry must be removed before participating.
- 2.6 Towels may not be worn; a towel may be kept behind the play.
- 2.7 Equipment such as helmets, billed hats, pads or braces worn above the waist, leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances, or casts is strictly prohibited. Knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other

hard substances covered with at least 2 inch of slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed.

- 2.8 Each player must wear a one piece belt, without any knots, at the waistline with three flags permanently attached. Flags must have a spring loaded clip. Teams must use flags provided by the Parks Department.
- 2.9 Teams must wear similar colored shirts. Shirts must be tucked in the player's pants or cut off a minimum of 4 inches above the top of the flag belt.
- 2.10 The official ball will be one supplied by the home team and approved by the visiting team.
- 2.11 Time will be kept by the official and a scorekeeper must be provided by the home team.
- 2.12 Two discs will be used to mark the offensive and defensive scrimmage line. There will always be a 1 yard neutral zone on all plays.
- 2.13 The field is divided into 4 zones of 20 yards each and 2 end zones of 10 yards each.
- 2.14 A team shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line-to-gain (and earn a first down).
- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 A new series of downs will be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty.
- 2.17 Each team shall designate a captain to act as team spokesperson and make decisions. Only the captain may talk to officials. Team representatives including players, spectators, team managers, coaches, and group members subject to the rules.
- 2.18 The use of dangerous equipment is prohibited.
- 2.19 Kicking tees may not be in excess of 3 inches thick. When the foot is used as a tee, the toe must remain on the ground.

3. Start of Game, Timing, Substitutions

- 3.1 Toss of the Coin - Three minutes before the start of the game, the referee will conduct a captain's meeting in which he/she will designate which captain shall call the toss of the coin. The captain winning the toss shall have choice of options for the first half or shall defer their option to the second half. The options for each half shall be:
 - A. To choose whether his/her team will kick or receive.
 - B. To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.

- 3.2 Games will consist of two 20 minute halves with a 3 minute half-time. Timing will be continuous for the first 18 minutes of each half. Only team and official time-outs can stop the clock.
- A. During the final two minutes of each half the clock will stop for:
- a. Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass - starts on the snap.
 - b. Out of bounds - starts on the snap.
 - c. Safety - starts when the free kick is legally touched.
 - d. Team time-out - starts on the snap.
 - e. First downs - dependent on the previous play.
 - f. Touchdowns - starts on the snap (after the try).
 - g. Penalties - dependent on the previous play.
 - h. Touchback - starts on the snap.
 - i. Inadvertent whistle - starts on the ready.
 - j. Either team awarded a new series - starts on the snap.
- 3.3 Mercy Rule: If a team is ahead by 17 points at the two-minute warning in the second half, the game is over.
- 3.4 A free kick begins each half of a game. The ball shall be put into play by a place kick on the 20 yard line. The ball may be placed on a tee or placed on the ground or holder's toe.
- After the start of each half there will be no free kicks. The ball will be put into play by a series of downs at the appropriate spot:
- A. After a touchdown--15 yard line.
 - B. After a safety or touchback--15 yard line.
 - C. Overtime--10 yard line.
- 3.5 Each team is allowed two (2) timeouts per half (1-minute time-outs); time-outs not used in the first half are not carried over into the second half. The clock will stop during time-outs.
- 3.6 Free substitution is allowed after any whistle provided the substitution does not delay the game. However, no offensive substitute may enter unless he joins the huddle and is part of the huddle at the time when it breaks.
- 3.7 The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after referee signals "ready for play." Penalty: 5 yards.
- 3.8 Tie Games: Ties will be broken by the "Texas Tie Breaker"
- A. Play will begin on the 10-yard line and teams will have 4 plays each.
 - B. A coin toss will precede "Tie Breaker". The team winning the toss has 3 options: Offense, Defense, or Direction. The opposing team then has the remaining choice.
 - C. The object is to score a touchdown and subsequent extra point (1 or 2 points). After team A scores, team B then has 4 plays within which to score. If no team has scored after their respective plays the process is repeated.
 - D. When a pass is intercepted the defense becomes the offense and begins their series of 4 plays. If the interception is returned for a touchdown, the game is over.

- E. Penalties are assessed similar to the regular game. A team shall be given a new series of 4 plays when an automatic first down penalty is accepted. Dead ball penalties after a touchdown are penalized on the extra point attempt. Live ball penalties committed by either team after team B gains possession during an attempt or an overtime shall be enforced at the succeeding spot. Dead ball penalties following a successful attempt will be penalized from the succeeding spot, the team B 10-yard line, if accepted.

4. Flag Belt Removal

- 4.1 When the flag belt is taken from the runner, 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 ball carrier is considered de-flagged when the clip of the flag belt becomes detached, not where the belt falls to the ground.
- 4.2 If a flag belt inadvertently falls off, a one hand tag between the shoulders and the knees constitutes a capture.
- 4.3 A player may leave his/her feet to remove a flag.
- 4.4 In an attempt to remove the flag belt from the ball carrier, defensive players may contact the body of an opponent with his/her hands. A defensive player may not hold, push or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.
- 4.5 A defensive player may not remove an offensive player's flag when the offensive player does not have the ball. Similarly, the defensive player may not remove the quarterback's flag after the ball has been thrown. Penalty: Illegal flag belt removal, 10 yards.
- 4.6 A defensive player may not remove an offensive receiver's belt prior to the receiver touching the ball. Penalty: Defensive pass interference, 10 yard and automatic first down.
- 4.7 A player may not fasten his flags to his uniform or belt other than prescribed in the rules. Penalty: 10 yards

The official will check the flags of each person who scores a touchdown or PAT. If a player removes their flag belt prior to one of the officials checking the flag belt, the score will be disallowed.

- 4.8 All players on the field must wear flags. Failure to do so will result in a five yard penalty, if noticed prior to the ball being snapped. If noticed after the ball has been snapped, then the player without a flag belt must be touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees (after the ball has been snapped, a penalty cannot be assessed).
- 4.9 Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to remove the flag:
 - A. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.

- C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging. Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards.
- D. An offensive player may not stiff arm to ward off an opponent. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

5. Definition of Playing Terms

- 5.1 Removal of flag belt: When the flag belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag belt above his head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred. A player may dive to remove a flag belt as long as no contact is made with the opposing team.
- 5.2 The position of the ball when a player is deflagged determines the spot of the next line of scrimmage.
- 5.3 A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock down the ball carrier in an attempt to remove the flag, nor shall an offensive player hold, block, or run through a defensive player trying to remove the flag belt.
- 5.4 When a runner loses his/her flag belt, either accidentally or inadvertently, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner.
- 5.5 Scrimmage line: The scrimmage line for team A is the yard line and its vertical plane which passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. The scrimmage line for team B is the yard line and its vertical plane, which passes one yard from the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. A colored puck will signify each.

6. Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-Of-Bounds

- 6.1 A live ball becomes dead:
 - A. When it goes out-of-bounds.
 - B. A legal de-flagging occurs by the defense.
 - C. The ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet (ball is part of hand).
 - D. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try is made.
 - E. A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
 - F. Whenever the ball hits the ground.
 - a. A fumble.
 - b. A snap from the center touches the ground (dead at the spot where it hits the ground).
 - c. When a muff of a punt strikes the ground.
 - d. When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down.
- 6.2 The sideline and end lines are considered out of bounds. (Only one foot needs to touch in bounds in order for a pass to be complete).
- 6.3 Once an offensive or defensive player steps out of bounds, that player is no longer eligible to touch the ball. Penalty: 5 yards and replay the down.

7. Series of Downs, Number of Downs

- 7.1 In a series of 4 downs, the ball must be advanced forward into the next zone in order for a new series of downs to be awarded. Yardage lines are considered part of the forward zone.

8. Kicking the Ball

- 8.1 Punts must be announced before the ball is ready for play. The kicking team must have 4 players on their line of scrimmage. Punts must be snapped from the center. The punter must be at least one yard off the line of scrimmage upon receiving the snap and must punt the ball immediately. There will be no movement by the offensive players until the ball is kicked. Penalty - 5 yards.
- 8.2 Defensive players may not enter the neutral zone until the ball is kicked. Penalty: encroachment, 5 yards.
- 8.3 Defensive players may jump to block the kick, but may not build a pyramid or support each other in any manner in order to block or attempt to block a kick. Penalty: 5 yards from the previous spot.
- 8.4 The ball may be run back if it touches the ground before hitting a player.
- 8.5 A fumbled punt is dead where it touches the ground.
- 8.6 Quick kicks and fake punts are illegal. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards.

9. Snapping, Handling, and Passing the Ball

- 9.1 The center, after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may not move nor change the position of adjusting the ball, may not move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion, not necessarily between the center's legs. The player receiving the snap must be 2 yards off the ball for a scrimmage play and for a punt. Penalty: Illegal procedure. Direct snaps are illegal.
- 9.2 The ball may be snapped between the legs or to the side of the snapper.
- 9.3 The player who receives the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are always illegal (under center).
- 9.4 It is defensive pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a forward pass attempt.
- 9.5 During the interval between downs, when 2 or more consecutive encroachments are committed by the same team, the penalty will be 10 yards for the second encroachment foul.
- 9.6 The offensive team must have a minimum of four players on the line of scrimmage.

- 9.7 All offensive players must be momentarily within 15 yards of the ball. It must be clear who the seven offensive players are on each play. The intent of this rule is to eliminate all sleeper or hideout plays. Penalty: 10 yard penalty for illegal participation.
- 9.8 Only one offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap. This motion must not be toward the opponent's goal line. (If two or more players go in motion before the snap, then this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap).
- 9.9 All players are eligible for a forward pass. The passer may pass from anywhere behind the LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.
- 9.10 The passer shall not intentionally ground the ball in order to avoid a sack. Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down
- 9.11 For a legal catch the pass receiver:
- A. Must come down with at least one foot in bounds.
 - B. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception.
 - C. A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception.

10. Backward Pass and Fumbles

- 10.1 A runner may pass the ball backwards or lose player possession by a fumble anytime.
- 10.2 Fumbles are dead when the ball touches the ground.
- 10.3 The ball is put into play by the offensive team at the point where the ball first touched the ground.
- 10.4 A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted in flight by any player and advanced
- 10.5 A backwards pass or fumble into the offensive team's own end-zone will result in a safety. If the ball is fumbled into the opponent's end-zone the result is a touchback (opponent's ball on their 15 yard line).

11. Scoring Plays and Touchbacks

- 11.1 It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player behind the opponent's goal line and when runner advances so that the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the goal line. The body does not have to cross the line.
- 11.2 Touchdown Verification: The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one good pull, and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified, and it is a foul. Penalty: 10 yards from the previous spot and a loss of down.
- 11.3 There shall be an opportunity to score 1 point from the 3 yard line or 2 points from the 10 yard line by running or passing. If the defense should intercept a pass, they may return it for a score. A score will equal two points, regardless of whether or not the attempt is for one or two points.

- 11.4 Play after safety. After a safety is scored, the team that is awarded 2 points will automatically gain possession at their own 15-yard line. (No kick will take place)

12. Players' Conduct

- 12.1 No player shall commit the following acts: Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified.
- A. Intentional kick the ball.
 - B. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player.
 - C. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player.
- 12.2 Prohibited acts: Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified.
- A. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
 - B. Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
 - C. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game.
 - D. Fighting an opponent
- 12.3 Personal Fouls: Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified.
- A. Punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possessions.
 - B. Trip an opponent
 - C. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
 - D. Throw the runner to the ground.
 - E. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
 - F. Clip an opponent.
 - G. Tackle the runner.
- 12.4 Roughing the passer. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear that the ball has thrown and may not make contact with the throwing arm. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic first down, tack on the end of the play (if positive yards have been gained), if not, 10 yards from the original spot and automatic first down.
- 12.5 Guarding the flag belt. Ball carriers shall not guard their flags by blocking, with arms, hands or ball, the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 12.6 The defensive player shall not (intentionally or accidentally) hold, grasp, or obstruct forward progress of a ball carrier when in the act of removing the flag belt. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 12.7 The flag belt removal. Intentionally pulling or removing a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player is illegal. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 12.8 Offensive screen blocking. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the arms, elbows, legs, or knees to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her feet in order to gain position before, during and after screen blocking. Penalty: 10 yards.

- 12.9 Blocking, as in regulation tackle football, is prohibited.
- A. A screen block shall take place without contact. The screen 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 a screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking. There will be no screen blocking past the line of scrimmage. Penalty - Personal foul, 10 yards.
 - B. Charge, a runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his/her path nor attempt to run between two opponents unless the space is such to provide reasonable chance for him/her to go through without contact. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards
- 12.10 Blocking and interlocked interference. 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. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 12.11 Use of hands or arms by the defense. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used to grab or push the opponent aside. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A rusher may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 12.12 There shall be no bumping, checking, or other intentional contact between a defender and an offensive pass receiver. Both offense and defense are limited to screening an opponent.
- 12.13 If a player attempting a diving flag removal trips the ball carrier there is a penalty of 10 yards from the spot of the foul.

13. Clarification

- 13.1 Any contact with the quarterback is considered roughing the passer. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic first down.
- 13.2 Pushing a receiver/defender is not allowed. Penalty: Illegal use of hands, 10 yards.
- 13.3 Any dead-ball penalty on the defense occurring during a touchdown or a successful PAT will be assessed on the next play from scrimmage at the 15 yard line.
- 13.4 When an inadvertent whistle is blown by an official, the ball is dead at the point when the whistle was blown. The team against which the inadvertent whistle was blown dead has the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.
- 13.5 Spiking, taunting, and any intentional antagonizing of the opposing team will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Penalty: 10 yards.
- 13.6 The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball to an official at the line of scrimmage. However, the offensive team may bring the ball into the huddle in an attempt to keep the ball dry.
- 13.7 Each member of a team is eligible to receive a pass unless the player voluntarily goes out of bounds during the play.

- 13.8 No player shall attempt to steal the ball, trip an opponent, contact an opponent who is on the ground, make unnecessary contact with an opponent, deliberately dive or run into an opponent or tackle the ball carrier or push the ball carrier out of bounds to stop the play. Penalty: Personal foul, 10 yard (flagrant offenders will be ejected).
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Good sportsmanship is a requirement of all participants. Players and coaches are to conduct themselves properly at all times. The Recreation Office reserves the right to suspend or disqualify individuals or groups for unsportsmanlike conduct. The team captain assumes full responsibility for the conduct of the team and spectators.

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes actions which are unbecoming to an ethical, fair, and honorable individual; it consists of acts of deceit, disrespect or vulgarity and includes taunting.

Team must have a cumulative 2.5 sportsmanship rating average in order to be eligible for the playoffs.

The officials and recreation staff will have absolute control of the game. Teams are responsible for keeping their players and spectators under control. Misconduct of players, coaches, or spectators, can result in assessment of a penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain in the area designated by the recreation staff. The supervisors will have the power to make decisions on any matter or questions not specifically covered in the rules.

Summary of Fouls and Penalties

Loss of 5 Yards:

1. Required equipment worn illegally.
2. Delay of game.
3. Illegal snap.
4. False start.
5. Encroachment.
6. Illegal procedures.
7. Illegal forward pass (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).
8. Intentional grounding (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).
9. Helping the runner: the runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate.
10. Unfair tactics.
11. Offensive player not within 15 yards of ball.
12. Illegal Shift.

Loss of 10 Yards

1. Delaying the start of either half.
2. Two or more consecutive encroachments during same interval between downs. The initial encroachment is a 5 yard penalty.
3. Illegal participation.
4. Offensive pass interference. (Loss of down).

5. Defensive pass interference. (Automatic 1st down).
6. Illegally secured belt on touchdown. (Revoke touchdown and loss of down).
7. Unsportsmanlike conduct.
8. Spiking the ball or not returning the ball to the official during the dead ball.
9. Attempt to steal the ball from the carrier.
10. Hurdling.
11. Unnecessary contact of any sort.
12. Roughing the passer (Automatic 1st down).
13. Defensive use of hands.
14. Guarding the flag belt (and stiff arming).
15. Illegal batting.
16. Illegal flag belt removal.
17. Personal foul.
18. Flagrant Unsportsmanlike conduct. (Disqualification).
19. Flagrant personal fouls. (Disqualification).
20. Intentionally tampering with flag belt. (Disqualification).