



VSL 5v5 Flag Football Rules

Game day and time: Saturdays 9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 12:00 pm

Game times will alternate weekly

Games will be played in a 5v5 format

Players will be provided with flag belts/flags, balls, field and officials

5 on 5 Player Requirement (4 players needed to avoid a forfeit, must play)

Substitutions: In the event a team does not have an adequate number of players, they are allowed to use substitute players. The substitute must complete a liability waiver with the VSL coordinator. Substitutes are allowed to play in a playoff or championship game only if they have played and signed into a regular season game. Substitute eligibility should be confirmed with the VSL coordinator prior to a playoff or championship game. Substitutes may only participate in a game in the event a team does not have the minimum number of players to start the game. If paid players arrive after the start of game time, they take priority to a substitute. Subs are permitted to play in 3 regular season games only. If a substitute player is eligible and needed to play in a playoff game, they are only eligible to play with one team.

Equipment:

Football: Adult: NFL "Wilson", NCAA Leather Football, Official Flag Football provided by VSL.

Flags: Provided by VSL

Scoring: Touchdown = 6pts.; Safety = 2 pts.; Extra Points: 5-yard Line = 1 pt. or 12-yard Line = 2 pts.; Return of Extra Point try = 2 pts.

Extra Points are declared, a time out must be called to change the play.

Basic Rules of Play

Coin Toss to begin Game: Choices are – 1) Offense, 2) Defense, 3) Designate Goal

Ball Spotted on 5 yard line to begin play.

3 Downs to cross mid-field and then 3 downs to score TD

Receiving: Everyone Eligible, Control and one foot in bounds for a reception. Interceptions are live.

No Run Zones: Short Yardage Plays including the 5 yards before the first down and end zone.

Game Clock Format

Each game is played in two 20-minute halves. A running clock format is used. In the second half, after the 20 minutes is up, the official will declare the start of "4 plays". Once the "4 plays" has begun, the game will end after 4 plays have been made. "4 plays" are made only if the score is 8 or less.

Each team receives two timeouts per game.

The game clock does not run during extra-points after a time out has been called.

There will be a 5-minute break at halftime and 10 between each game for warm-ups.

Offensive has 25 seconds from the time the ball is set by the official to snap the ball.



Scoring

Touchdowns: 6 points; Safety: 2 points

Extra Points **5 yards** out: 1 point – no run zone; **10 yards** out: 2 points – running play allowed.

If an extra point is intercepted and returned for a touchdown 2 points will be awarded.

Drives

All drives begin on the five-yard line with the exception of interceptions.

Interceptions may be run back for a 6-point touchdown, if the player is downed before the endzone: the drive will begin where the player's flag is pulled.

Interceptions on an extra point attempt that are not returned for two points will begin on the 5-yard line, unless there is a defensive penalty during the run back, in which case the ball be spotted at the point of infraction.

First Downs

5 on 5: The offense has 3 plays to advance the ball beyond mid-field for a first down.

After the offense crosses mid-field, they have 3 plays to score.

3 downs to cross mid-field and 3 downs to score a touchdown.

Centering the Ball

The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start each play.

A five-yard penalty will be assessed for delay of game.

Officials will warn teams when there are 10 seconds left.

The ball must be snapped from the line of scrimmage.

Any location on the line of scrimmage is acceptable for ball placement

In Game Substitutions

Players may substitute during a dead ball but must be off the field before the next play is snapped.

The offense may not have one player step off the field and another player step onto the field to confuse the defense.

Running Plays

There is no limit to the number of handoffs made behind the line of scrimmage.

The quarterback does not have to be lined up behind the center.

There is no limit of laterals in one play.

If the pitch is forward, the recipient must run the ball.

The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball as long as they do not pass the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, all defensive players are allowed to rush even if they aren't behind the 7-yard rushing marker.

“No Run Zone”

The “No Run Zone” is designated to avoid short yardage power running. It is located five yards from the mid-field first down marking and the end zone.

In the “No Run Zone” the offense may only advance the ball by throwing the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.

Handoffs are allowed in the “No Run Zone” however the player receiving the handoff may not run. He must pass the ball.

Receiving



All players are eligible to receive passes, including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.

A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.

Passing

Shovel passes are allowed.

The quarterback will have a five-second-pass clock if no defensive player's rush. If a pass is not thrown within those five seconds, the play is dead and treated as an incomplete pass.

Interceptions may be run back.

If a lateral, pitch, or backwards pass is batted down the ball will be spotted where it first touches the ground.

Rushing the Quarterback

All players that rush the quarterback must be a minimum of 7 yards beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

However, once the ball has been handed off, all players are eligible to rush from anywhere in front or beyond the 7-yard marker.

Any number of players can rush the quarterback providing they are behind the seven-yard marker at the start of the play.

Officials will designate 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.

If the rusher enters the 7-yard neutral zone before the snap, he must get back before the ball is snapped to rush.

A rusher must go for the quarterback's flags.

The rusher may attempt to block the pass, but it is a penalty to make contact with the quarterbacks' body or arm even if the ball is deflected.

If no one rushes, the quarterback will have 5 seconds to release the ball.

The rusher has a direct line to the quarterback provided they do not rush from up the middle.

The center and receivers must avoid contact with the rusher.

The offense must avoid the rusher even if the quarterback rolls out or hands off.

If the rusher changes direction for any reason they must avoid contact with the center and receivers.

Only players who start behind the 7-yard mark may cover receivers in the backfield.

Defensive players who are not behind the 7-yard mark when the ball is snapped may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has left the quarterback's hand.

5 second count is not in effect if rushed.

Dead Balls

Play is ruled over when:

The ball hits the ground

The defense pulled the ball carrier's flag.

The defense has touched a player who either:

started the play without a flag

inadvertently had the flag fall off

Note: if the defense intentionally pulls the flag prematurely, they must touch them.

When the ball carrier's knee touches the ground

When the ball carrier steps out of bounds

If there was an inadvertent whistle.

Note: If there is an inadvertent whistle the offense has the choice of accepting the ball where it was whistled dead or replaying the down.



Overtime

Overtime only exists in a declared playoff or championship game.

Coin toss determines first possession.

Overtime is an extra point shootout from the 5-yard line. If the first round of the extra point shootout is a tie, a second round will commence.

If a tie results from the second extra point shootout, each team will have one play starting at their 5-yard line to obtain the greatest number of yards.

If the first team scores, then the second team will have an opportunity to tie the game.

If the second team scores first, the game is over.

Each team will receive one time out.

Penalties

Referees determine incidental contact, which may result from normal run of play.

Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.

Players cannot question judgment calls.

All interactions with captains and referees should be made in a sportsmanlike manner.

The end of the half or game cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Defensive Penalties

Off-sides

Pass interference / Illegal contact – the defense may not play bump and run.

A defensive player shall not make ANY contact with an offensive player.

Holding – the defense may not hold on to the rusher or the flag belt to assist in pulling the flag.

Holding will not be a defensive penalty if the offensive player with the ball has pockets in his/her shorts. If the defensive player holds the offensive player on purpose or excessively, through the discretion of the referee, the penalty may still be called.

It is not a penalty if the flag belt is pulled off instantaneously.

Illegal rush – players that are not lined up seven yards off the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped may not enter into the backfield until the ball has left the original quarterbacks' hands.

Roughing the quarterback – the rusher may not contact the quarterback's throwing hand or arm or hit the ball while it is in the quarterbacks' hands.

*All defensive penalties are 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down except holding which is marked off from the point of infraction.

Offensive Penalties

False start – Movement by the offense that simulates a snap.

Illegal pass – passing the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, or 2 forward passes.

Offensive pass interference

Pick – receivers may not set a pick to free up other receivers.

Flag guarding

Illegal block / screen

Charging – Running through a defender who has established position

Impeding the Rusher / Hurdling / Diving – Hurdling over a player on the ground or diving to advance the ball.

Delay of Game – Offensive exceeding the 25 second play clock.

Equipment Infraction - The Quarterback and Center must have both flags on their hips before the ball is snapped.



*All offensive penalties are 5 yards from the line of scrimmage except flag guarding which is marked off from the point of infraction. All offensive penalties result in a loss of down except illegal motion / false start & Delay of Game. Note: If the offense crosses midfield and commits a penalty after crossing midfield which when assessed puts them behind midfield, it will be first and goal from where the ball is placed.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

VSL offers recreational sports leagues and will not tolerate unsportsmanlike conduct. Players displaying unsportsmanlike conduct with an official or player will first receive a verbal warning. If the player displays inappropriate behavior again, they will be suspended from the next scheduled game of the season. Depending on the severity of the conflict, season suspension may be enforced by the VSL coordinator. All warnings will be communicated by the official and via email by the VSL coordinator. Please note that officials serve the right to eject players from the game or place suspensions.

Fighting

Fighting can result in a minimum of 2 season suspension or permanent suspension. The VSL Manager has ultimate discretion regarding the suspension length.

If a fight is started between teams during the course of the game, the referees may call the game.

The score at when the referees had called the game, will be placed into the standings

The referees will fill out a report to determine who started the fight.

If both referees agree to (a) specific player(s) who started the fight, their consequence will be determined by the VSL Manager.