

NMFFL RULEBOOK

NMFFL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES- Version 13.19

Rules will be custom for this league and will include a few NEW rules to enhance the game and to closely resemble the rules of professional flag football and to stay current with this growing sport!

ROSTERS

- Teams are composed of a minimum of 6 players and a maximum of 10. Any more than 10 players require the approval of the league commissioner and the coach. There are 5 players per team on the playing field at one time.
- NMFFL will have authority to move/alter teams. Players are placed on teams based on proximity to nearest team with available space or by coaching requests.
- During the game the Home team will wear the dark side of the jerseys and the away teams wear the white side of the jerseys.
- NMFFL is 5 on 5 youth flag football.
- In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field, but no fewer than four. Teams must start a game with a minimum of four players.

TEAM EQUIPMENT

Football: (The game ball will be provided by EACH TEAM for every game. Each team is allowed to use the ball they provided for OFFENSE. The provided football MUST adhere to the size requirements and colors listed below.

- 5-7 & 8-9 divisions will use the Pee-Wee size football.
- 10-11 division will use the Junior size football.
- 12-15 will use the Junior or Youth size football. (either size will be accepted)
- 15-17 divisions will use the collegiate or official size football .

If you have any questions, please contact a league commissioner.

GAME ATTIRE

- The league provides each player with an NFL team jersey and a set of NFL flags.
- NFL Team Jersey- must be worn during the game (except for Jersey Day- Dates TBD- on this day each player can wear their favorite NFL or Collegiate Players jersey)
- The Home team will wear the dark side of the jerseys and the away teams wear the white side of the jerseys. Jerseys must be tucked into the shorts/pants.
- The flag belts must be securely placed on each players hips. They must be secure enough to stay in place during game play and must remain on each side of the player
- Players are not allowed to wear the same color shorts as their flags. (Shorts may be purchased from the league itself to ensure they meet these requirements. Approved options for shorts will be available for each team)
- No pockets allowed on shorts**-This is to prevent injuries.
- Flag belts must not have slack hanging down after adjusting the size. These must be cut and taped) Please refer to league commissioner on the proper procedure.
- Players are NOT allowed to cut their flags any shorter. (If a child is short enough that the flags are dragging, please contact the league commissioner to discuss options)
- Players may wear sneakers or cleats and they must be rubber soled. NO METAL SPIKES allowed. (high ankle cleats are recommended to avoid ankle injury)
- Coaches Game Attire- NMFFL will provide league shirts but coaches are welcome to wear any appropriate attire (No Drug references, Foul Language, etc). We recommend coaches wear their team colors.

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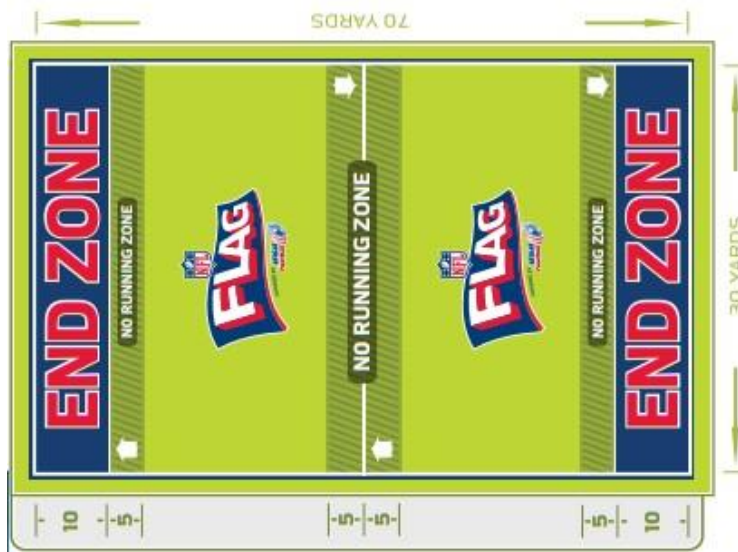
COACHES

- Coaches will be volunteers (parents, grandparents, family members, etc) who are willing to help players understand and enjoy the game.
- Coaches will be responsible for helping to shape the futures of these young athletes by giving them the opportunity to develop their self- confidence, camaraderie as teammates, improve their athletic skills, gain leadership abilities and to become more responsible for themselves and their team.
- Coaches will be responsible for team practices and games. Coaches will be allowed to have as many practices as they desire but please be understanding of peoples' schedules and accommodate the parents and children involved with your team. For example: if you elect to have up to 4 practices a week you may risk a lack of returning participants the following season. It may be difficult for most individuals to commit to such a large practice schedule.
- NMFFL will only allow qualified individuals to coach. Coaches must be qualified but do not need any experience coaching. To qualify you will be required to pass a background check (active for 2 years). You will also be required to complete an online course to receive your concussion training and certification (Valid as long as you coach with NMFFL)
- Coaches shall be well organized for games and practices. This will ensure a high-quality experience for each participant in this league.
- Coaches will have a clear understanding that this is a competitive league.
- Coaches will have a clear understanding that despite this being a competitive league you may have players with a wide variety of skill and knowledge of the game. As a coach it is your responsibility to teach and instruct each child no matter their level skill and experience with flag football. Be patient and ensure you give every child the opportunity to learn and enjoy the sport. Provide each participant an opportunity to participate and contribute to the team. (Please contact the league commissioner to discuss any issues or concerns)
- Coaches will have a clear understanding that you are a role model for these children and your actions and words must reflect this. This includes practices, games, and all team related activities. Please lead by example and show respect to all players, officials, scorekeepers, coaches, NMFFL staff, parents, spectators and anyone else involved with this league.
- Coaches will have a clear understanding of sportsmanship. You should be a positive role model and teach your players how to win humbly and lose graciously.
- Coaches should encourage parent involvement and coordinate their assistance with your coaching style and coaching goals.
- Coaches will be required to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all players, assistants and parents.
- Coaches will be allowed on the field to coach ONLY 5-7 and 8-9-year-old divisions (only one coach will be allowed on the field at a time).
 - **Coaches are not allowed to verbally or physically direct their player once the ball is in play. After the hike.**
 - **Coaches must be 7 yards back when the play begins and must be out of the way of the play or an impending penalty will be called.**
- Coaches in the 10-11, 12-14, and 15-17 divisions are NOT allowed on the field.
- Coaches will be required to sign a CODE OF CONDUCT with NMFFL (this code of conduct will include parents, assistants, and spectators. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure everyone involved with his team meets these standards). If any coach, assist, or parent is unable to adhere to this code of conduct, NMFFL reserves the right to disqualify and remove them from the league.
- Coaching code of conduct applies to assistant coaches and fans. Assistant coaches must also complete the background check and concussion test certification. (Assistant coaches are not mandatory and are selected by the head coach.)
- COACHES ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW ALL OF NMFFL RULES AND GUIDELINES. ANY POLICY OR CODE OF CONDUCT ISSUES MAY RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FROM COACHING WITH NMFFL.
- **Once the game has started the game official (s) assigned to that game have complete authority over the game. As a coach, whether you agree with the judgement calls of the officials during the game or not, there will be no review process. All questions and or concerns regarding the game officials judgement during the course of a game should be directed to the designated referee ambassador(s) and or head game official at the field. During the course of a game if a coach wishes to discuss a judgment call, he or she will be charged a timeout if the discussion impedes the progress of the game.**
- **NMFFL is a competitive league but we are not at the collegiate or professional level! As a coach you are a role model and should behave accordingly. NMFFL will not tolerate coaches who behave in a negative or abusive manner. NMFFL reserves the right to suspend or fine any coach who does not abide by our code of conduct and league expectations. NMFFL code of conduct fines start at \$50 and NMFFL reserves the right to suspend or remove any coach from the league, at any time, without reimbursement.**

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THE FIELD

- The field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield first down line. No-Run Zones precede both the first down line and end zone line by 5 yards. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. A run of less than 5 yards is not a challenge and almost inevitable to be succeed.
- In the No-Run Zone, teams cannot run the ball no matter what. All plays must be pass plays, but you are allowed to handoff behind the Line of Scrimmage. While in the No-Run-Zone, a run is not allowed even if they are being blitzed by the opposing team.
 - Only one exception is in the 5-7 division. **In the 5-7 division the No-Run-Zone does not exist.**



INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

- NMFFL monitors weather conditions prior to, and during all games. For weather conditions occurring prior to game times, we will notify everyone as soon as a decision has been made to play, postpone and/or cancel games. For weather that causes field conditions to deteriorate or is forecast to create a weather-related danger, the decision to postpone or cancel games will be made at or before 7:00am on Saturday game days. Each coach has the responsibility to notify their players and parents
 - In the event of severe weather conditions, the NMFFL has a league lighting safety plan. NMFFL plan will be in place to provide a safe environment for all games and league activities. The League Commissioner will monitor the lightning and if lightning is seen or thunder is heard we will immediately inform all coaches and officials. When a storm is approaching, and lightning is within 8 miles away, all activities will be rescheduled and may be cancelled.
 - NMFFL's Inclement Weather Policy is as follows; (this includes all practices)
 - If a storm is approaching and lightning is present, all coaches and officials will be notified. At this point the game will continue but weather will be closely monitored.
 - If lightning is present and within 5 miles, NMFFL will postpone all games by 30 min. After 30 min weather conditions will be assessed. If lightning is further than 8 miles, gameplay can continue. If lightning is still within 8 miles, games that are post-halftime will be called as is, and games pre-halftime will be cancelled and rescheduled.
 - Playoffs & Championship games may continue to be delayed ensuring games have every opportunity to continue. Games will not be as is and must be continued where they left off in the case of being rescheduled.
- The NMFFL reserves the right to use the emergency management system to facilitate the enforcement of this policy.

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PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

All players must be registered with NMFFL & NFL FLAG before participating in any league or team activities. This includes the completion of the registration form, payment, release of liability form, and complete parent and player contact information.

- A player's age must fall within the specified age range for their division. Their age on or before the age cutoff date will determine their division. The age cut off is as follows:
 - **Fall & Winter – August 1st**
 - **Spring & Summer – March 1st**
- Age verification: NMFFL is a competitive league so age verification is required. Age verification is done by the league commissioner verifying the players birth certificate or alternative forms of age verification. Please contact the league commissioner if you have any questions or concerns in regard to the age verification process.
- Coed age divisions are 5-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-14, and 15-17. All Girls Teams Divisions: 5-8, 8-10, 10-12, 12-15, and 15-18.
- A player may only play on one team per division– dual roster (competing in two separate divisions) exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the league commissioner. An example of a dual roster exception would be: a player that could play in the 8-9 division and also play up in the 10-11 division. Note: Dual roster is only allowed for players playing up. Playing down is not allowed – NO EXCEPTIONS!
- No coach, parent or player can add, change or transfer a player on any particular team once the rosters have been set. Exceptions can be made with the approval from the league commissioner. Any unauthorized changes may result in player disqualification. Please contact the league commissioner if there are any special circumstances that may warrant adjusting your roster.
- Any team playing with an unregistered player will result in an immediate game forfeiture and potential league suspension for the player and coach.

GAME

- At the beginning of each game the officials will inspect the uniforms and equipment of each player. A legal uniform consists of the following:
- Jersey – All players must wear matching jerseys during the game. It is the responsibility of each player to make sure that their jersey stays tucked in at all times.
- Shorts – Only shorts with NO POCKETS are allowed.
- Flag Belts – NFL flag belts and flags must be worn by all Players. It is the responsibility of each player to make sure that their flags are on their hips and pointing out prior to each play
- Mouthpiece – Each player must be properly wearing a mouthpiece while on the field.
- Cleats – Each player must have cleats or athletic shoes. Metal spikes are NOT allowed.
- Jewelry – Players are not allowed to wear jewelry during the game. (Stud earrings are the only exception to the rule) (please contact a league commissioner to discuss options for players with jewelry.)
- Hats or bandanas are not allowed
- Gloves – Any player may wear gloves during the game. No sticky-aid is allowed. (sole discretion of officials)
- After the equipment has been checked, the team captains and coaches will meet at midfield for the coin toss. The visiting team will call the toss. The team winning the toss will either choose to receive the ball first or to defer to the second half (they will receive the ball first after halftime) The team that lost the coin toss will make their choice of which direction they want to go or defend. Both decisions will be reversed at the start of the second half.

NOTE: Coach/Player Box- During games, all coaches and players must be 3-yards (at least 9 feet) back from the sideline (This includes fans, tents, canopies, etc). Parents/spectators are NOT allowed on the sideline (besides the 2 volunteers for the chains/blitz pole). Also, coaches and players cannot be on the sideline 5 yards before the end zone. This is to allow the chain & blitz pole volunteers and referees a clear path on the sideline. This is also for player safety and to avoid collisions.

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GAME LENGTH, TIMING & OVERTIME

- Games are played with a 40-minute continuous clock, TWO 20-minute halves.
- The clock will stop at every dead ball inside 2 minutes of each half if the score is within 10 points.
- There will be a 2 min warning (clock stops) before halftime and the conclusion of the game.
- Halftime is five minutes.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- Each team has TWO 60 second time-out per half. (Reg Season & Tournaments)
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game will go into overtime to determine a winner.
- Overtime: **Overtime** will start with a coin toss to decide who will take first possession. There will be 10 additional minutes for overtime (normal clock management will apply). NOTE: Each team has TWO 60 second time-out, timeouts do not carry over.

- 2nd Overtime- If after the 10-minute overtime, the game is still tied we will proceed to the 2nd overtime rules: NOTE: Each team has ONE 60 second time-out. Timeouts do not carry over.

Each team will have four plays starting from their opponent's 12-yard line. At the end of the first team's possession, the other team must match or beat any score. If a team scores they will also go for a 1, 2, or 3 PAT.

- 3rd & Final Overtime - If the teams are still tied after the 2nd overtime, another coin toss will take place. The winner of the coin toss will choose offense or defense and a single possession of 4 downs (Starting at Midfield) will take place. If the offensive team scores they win, if the defensive team prevents a score they win. NOTE: Each team has ONE 60 second timeout, timeouts do not carry over.

HOME & AWAY TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- The home team & away team will both be responsible for scorekeeping and stat keeping (referees will have the official score and will check with the scorekeepers periodically) Stat keeping only needs to be done for your own team. Score & Stat Cards must be turned into the main tent after each game.
- The home team will be in charge of changing the scoreboard. The officials for the scheduled game will also keep the score of the match.
- The away team will be in charge of the 7-yard Blitz Marker Chains. (2 volunteers will be needed)

Note: Each team will have their own game responsibilities. It is the coach's responsibility to find willing and capable volunteers to manage the 7 yard blitz marker chains and scoreboard. These responsibilities will be time sensitive. It is of the utmost importance that the blitz chains are set up as fast as possible to keep the game moving and allow coaches to run a "2 min offense" if desired. The inability of either team to manage their responsibilities in timely manner, may result in a delay of game penalty. Volunteers must be an appropriate age to handle the weight and the fast pace of moving the chains without causing a delay in the game. If the volunteer is unable to handle the requirements the referee will ask the coach to find an immediate replacement.

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SCORING

- Touchdown: 6 Points
- PAT (Point After Touchdown)
 - 1 Point (5 Yard line) (PASS ONLY) (5-7 division- RUN OR PASS)
 - 2 Points (12 Yard line) (PASS OR RUN)
 - 3 Points (20 Yard line) (PASS OR RUN)
- Safety: 2 Points (Down in your own End zone) Ball will be placed at your own 5 yard line. No throw-offs.
- PAT Interception- PAT Interceptions, if returned to other end zone, will results in equivalent points for the attempt. For example: If the offense is attempting a 2 pt. PAT and the defense intercepts the ball and successfully reaches the other end zone, the intercepting team will be awarded equivalent points for the PAT attempt, which in this case was 2 pts.
- Mercy Rule: If one team is winning by 28 points or more, the losing team gets ONE offensive series to continue regulation play. If they do not score, the game will go into scrimmage mode (The official will notify the losing team Coach and they may choose to accept or decline the Mercy Rule). If the score gets back to within 28 points, the game automatically comes out of scrimmage mode.
- Scrimmage Mode
 - Continuous Clock- NO DEAD BALL
 - Losing Team Offense
 - No turnover on downs, 4 tries for 1st down. If no conversion on 4th down ball will be spotted on the opposing teams 5-yard line.
 - 7 second violation is extended to 10 seconds
 - Winning Team Offense
 - 3 Downs to get 1st down and/or touchdown
 - 3 Sec to pass the ball or handoff
 - No 2 or 3 Pt Conversions
 - Winning Team Defense
 - No Blitzing
 - Interception- No returns (ball will be placed at point of interception)

SCORING CELEBRATIONS

- NMFFL allows team celebrations after scoring plays!
- Celebration must be tasteful, classy, and cannot be offensive, vulgar, or inappropriate for a youth environment. Celebrations are meant to be fun and are not meant to be used to gloat or be directed towards the opposing team.
- Celebrations must be quick and cannot delay the game. Players will not be allowed to spike the ball at anytime.
- Referees will use their discretion to decide if a celebration is offensive, inappropriate, or has delayed the game.
- CELEBRATIONS ARE NOT ALLOWED, BY THE WINNING TEAM, IF THE GAME IS IN SCRIMMAGE MODE.

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CLOCK MANAGEMENT

- The ball is LIVE at the snap of the ball and remains LIVE until the official calls the ball DEAD.
- The play is still live when a “neutral zone” infraction occurs. After the play, the team without the infraction will make a decision on whether to accept the penalty or to accept the play instead.
- A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds if they come down with ONE foot in bounds on the field of play.
- During the QB’s cadence, the defense may not mimic or copy them.
- Substitutions may be made at any time after a play is completed
 - An injured player must sit out the next play. Clock will start when player is removed.
- The ball will be considered dead when the official blows their whistle. The officials will only blow their whistles when:
 - the ball carrier is ruled down,
 - the ball is fumbled,
 - an incomplete pass is thrown,
 - a touchdown, extra point, or safety is scored,
 - a penalty is called that ends the play.
 - If an official blows their whistle without any of the above situations it will be ruled an inadvertent whistle. If there is an inadvertent whistle, the team with possession can elect to accept the result of the play or redo the down.
- There are NO fumbles in flag football. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. (if the ball progresses forward during the fumble, the ball will be placed where the player was upon fumbling. The ball CANNOT progress forward from the original LOS). If the ball hits the ground behind the player, the ball will be placed where it landed and will be considered a loss of yards. If a fumble occurs in the teams own end zone, a safety will be awarded to the opposing team.)

NOTE: In the 5-7 and 8-9 divisions- the referee will place the ball on the LOS after a play. In the 10-11, 12-14 and 15-17 division, the offensive team will place the ball on the LOS. The LOS will be marked by the referee, who will have his foot pointed to the spot where the ball should be placed.

NOTE: The away team volunteer will pull the blitz pole once the down indicator is placed on the LOS. The blitz pole location will be marked by a 7 yard chain.

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RUNNING

- The ball is spotted where the runner's FRONT foot is when the flag is pulled and NOT where the ball is when the flag was pulled.
- Quarterback sneaks are not allowed.
- In the 5-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-14, and 15-17 age divisions, the QB can run if:
 - The defense crosses the LOS when rushing from the blitz marker (7 yards from LOS) (If you're in the No-Run-Zone, you cannot run even if you are blitzed).
 - The QB may run if the ball is handed off and then handed back to the QB. Officials must see daylight or clear exchange of the football.
- All handoffs must occur behind the line of scrimmage and there are no limits on the number of handoffs executed.
- No-Run-Zones shall be 5 yards before the midfield First Down and 5 yards before the end zone.
- No handoffs shall be given between the legs of any player.
- The ball carrier is ruled down when:
 - Their flags are pulled,
 - Their flags fall off,
 - They step out of bounds,
 - any part of their body, other than the foot or hand, touches the ground,
 - If they receive a pass or handoff without both flags on,
 - If they receive a pass or handoff with his jersey covering their flags,
 - If their flags are below their waist.
- The QB cannot directly hand the ball back to the center after the snap. It will be permitted if the center takes the hand-off after rolling behind the QB.
- No blocking, screening, or contact will be allowed at any time.
- Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- Flag Guarding – Jerseys must be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and cannot be obstructed. Deliberately obstructed flags, with their hands, the football or in any other way will be considered flag guarding. (you are permitted to wear small playbooks on the front of your flags but they must not obstruct the flags in any manner)
- Laterals & Screen Passes are allowed ONLY behind the line of scrimmage. Screen Passes cannot be a forward pass, even if behind the LOS
- Once you are in the No-Run-Zone, you will stay in the No-Run-Zone, even if a penalty occurs and takes you out. If a player is ruled down, for a loss of yards (without a penalty), and they are now behind the No-Run-Zone, they can now run or pass once again.
- The player who takes the hand off can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off in front or behind the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush past the line of scrimmage.
- Runners cannot jump or lunge forward to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, lunging or jumping is considered flag guarding. Jumping is allowed if it is lateral or backwards. (if a runner leaves their feet to avoid injury or collision it will be at the discretion of the officials whether it was allowed or not)
- Spinning is allowed.

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PASSING

- All forward passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Screen passes are allowed behind the line of scrimmage (The pass must be parallel to the Line of Scrimmage or passed backwards)
- Shovel passes are allowed from behind the LOS. The ball must be passed beyond the LOS.
- From the time the ball is snapped, the QB shall have SEVEN seconds to either hand the ball off to another player or pass the ball. After 7 seconds a penalty flag will be thrown but the play continues (in case the defense intercepts the ball).
- Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
- Any player may legally pass the ball as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage
- Any player who goes out of bounds becomes ineligible to receive a pass.
- All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the QB if the ball was handed off.
- There may only be one forward pass on any down. Players may not catch a pass, run behind the line of scrimmage, and pass again.
- Defensive players must give right of way to an offensive player running their routes. This includes legal blitzers.
- Interceptions are live turnovers. Any player making an interception may return the ball until marked down. The team will begin their possession where they were ruled down.
- Intentional Grounding- There will be NO intentional grounding. The QB must throw the ball forward or out of bounds to avoid a loss of yards. Passes thrown backwards, in bounds, will be considered a dead ball where the ball lands and the ball will be placed at the spot it landed for the next down.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Before QB cadence (center holds ball ready for play), shifts are allowed. (Every player must be set before the ball is hiked)
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel or backwards of the line of scrimmage
- NO motion is permitted towards the LOS. (every player must be set before the ball is hiked)
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

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KICKOFFS/THROW OFFS & PUNTS

- After a PAT, the scoring team will proceed to do a "Throw Off". Throw offs are similar to kickoffs in tackle football but instead of kicking, one player will throw the ball to the opposing team's side of the field. The throw off is returnable.
- One player will throw the ball and all other players must be behind the player throwing the ball.
- Throw Off starting locations are as followed;
 - 5-7- No Throw Off's. Ball will be placed on their own 5 yard line.
 - 8-9- Throw off's will start from midfield
 - 10-11- Throw off's will start from the teams own 20 Yard Line (Teams own 3 pt LOS)
 - 12-14- Throw off's will start from the teams own 12 Yard Line (Teams own 2 pt LOS)
 - 15-17- Throw off's will start from the teams own 5 Yard Line (Teams own 1 pt LOS)
- During throw offs, the player receiving the ball must be allowed to catch the ball unobstructed by the opposing team. The receiver may choose to down the ball where it is (by kneeling) or attempt to return it.
- Once the receiver catches the ball, all other teammates must remain still- NO blocking!
- Once the receiver catches the ball, the play will be considered a run and the RUNNING RULES will be applied.
- **Throw offs must remain in bounds- If the throw off goes out of bounds (on the sideline), a penalty will be called and the ball will be placed at the 20 yard line. (v12.19) Only during this time will the offense will have the option of running and or passing.**
If the ball goes out of bounds in the endzone (back or side), a touchback will be awarded and the ball will be placed on the 5 yard line. (V12.19)
- For safety reasons, there are no fumbles in flag football. The throw off team may not attempt to recover the ball.
- PUNTS will be treated like a touchback and will be placed at the opposing teams own 5 Yard Line. NO THROW OFF's FOR PUNTS.
- If the receiver catches the ball in the end zone and drops the ball- it will be ruled as a touchback.
- If the ball touches an offensive player and then touches the ground it will be a dead ball and will spotted where it hit the ground.
- If a defensive player touches the ball first, it will be a dead ball and will be spotted where the defensive player touched the ball.
- If the ball bounces off of the receiver and into the arms of a defender, it will be treated like an interception.

BLITZING/ RUSHING THE PASSER

- The blitz/rush line is defined as the line parallel to and seven yards beyond the line of scrimmage. The blitzer/rusher must have their entire body entirely behind the blitz marker (held by the away team.)
- Any defensive player behind the rush line at the time of the snap is a legal rusher and is allowed to cross the line of scrimmage. The defensive team may have any number of legal rushers.
- A safety, 2 points, is awarded if a sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.
- If the QB hands the ball off, all defensive players become legal rushers from any distance.
- The rusher may raise his hands to the QB, but cannot make contact with the QB in any way.
- Once a rusher crosses the line of scrimmage, they cannot make contact with the QB and they cannot scream at the QB. (discretion of the officials)
- If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the QB.
- A penalty will be called if:
 - The blitzer/rusher leaves the blitz/rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a hand off or pass.
 - Any defensive player crossing the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped and was not behind the blitz/rush line.
- The Offense cannot impede the blitzer/rusher in any way. The blitzer/rusher must have a clear path to the QB. If any offensive player interferes and blocks the path of the blitzer/rusher they will penalized for screening. The defense may attempt to block a pass as long as they do not strike the passer.

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CHARGING

- Charging will be called if the defensive player has established his feet and the ball carrier does not attempt to avoid them and directly collides with this defensive player.

FORMATIONS

- An offensive team must have a minimum of 1 player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and can have up to 4 players on the line of scrimmage. The QB must be off the line of scrimmage.
- Once cadence begins, only one player at a time may go in motion. (One player is allowed in motion and does not have to be set upon the quarterback snapping the ball)
- No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs towards the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- The center must snap the ball with a continuous motion between their legs to the QB in the back field. If the center does not snap the ball accordingly, a false start penalty will be called. (if the center picks up/jerks the ball in a snapping motion and brings the ball back down the offense will be penalized with a false start)
- **5-7 & 8-9 on field coaches- Coaches are not allowed to verbally or physically direct their player once the ball is in play. After the hike.**
 - **Coaches must be 7 yards back when the play begins and must be out of the way of the play or an impeding penalty will be called.**

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT POLICY

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Any player, coach, or spectator committing any action deemed to be unsportsmanlike. This includes but is not limited to foul language, spiking the ball, tacking (any excessive contact), inciting violence, trash talk, or arguing with officials.
- Offensive language toward players, coaches, or officials is illegal. If offensive language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the individual will be ejected from the game.
- If a defensive player mimics a QB's cadence (such as saying "hike") an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called.
- If a coach/fan/parent is asked to leave the game because they have been unsportsmanlike and they do not leave, the game WILL BE forfeited. (Awarding the win to the opposing team regardless of the score)
- NMFFL will have a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY, in regard to any physical or verbal abuse. NMFFL is dedicated to providing a safe and fun environment for everyone involved. Abusive or offensive behavior WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- **Coaches who have violated NMFFL's code of conduct or unsportsmanlike conduct policy will be subject to League Fines of \$50. (or further action deemed necessary by league commissioners, not limited to league activities suspensions, or expulsion without a refund)**
COACHES- You will be responsible for ensuring your assistant coaches, parents and players abide by the NMFFL Code of Conduct. Any team violating the code of conduct may be subject to team discipline, suspensions or fines.

END OF SEASON TOURNAMENT SEEDING

- The end of season tournament seeding (placement within bracket) will be determined by standings (season game record) within each conference (AFC or NFC)
- In the event of a tie within the standings, the tie breaker for those 2 teams (or more), will be determined by which opponent won the game they played against each other.
- In the event where the two teams (or more) with exact records did not play each other during the season, the tie breaker will be determined by who had the most total points scored (points forced) within the regular season.

NMFFL RULEBOOK

PENALTIES

- Game officials shall have sole authority on calling all penalties. NMFFL's head official on the field will have the right to overrule a penalty called by any other official(s).
- Fighting and physical violence is strictly prohibited. Any Coach, Player, or Parent involved in fighting or physical violence will be permanently removed from NMFFL without reimbursement.
- NOTE: If there is an inadvertent whistle, the play is dead. The team on offense will have 2 options: 1) take the result of the play where it was blown dead or 2) redo the down.

Offensive Penalties and their definitions:

- 1) Delay of Game** – Failing to snap the ball within thirty (30) seconds of the official blowing the ready whistle; snapping the ball before the ready whistle; or excessive celebrations.
- 2) 7-Second Violation** – The QB failing to pass or handoff the ball within seven (7) seconds of the snap.
- 3) False Start** – Any player, after becoming set, making any motion towards the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball; the center making any movement simulating a snap without completing the snap.
Note: It is not a false start for the QB to not take the ball immediately from the center. A false start shall not be called on the center until he makes movement to put the ball back down.
- 4) Illegal Play or Run** – A ball carrier running the ball across the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped from the no-run zone; Even if there is a blitz or a pitch or lateral. No runs allowed in the no-run-zone
- 5) Illegal Forward Pass** – Any player throwing a pass from over the line of scrimmage; any player catching a forward pass behind the line of scrimmage.
- 6) Illegal Contact** – Any player intentionally initiating contact with a defender; a ball carrier not avoiding a planted defender; pushing or shoving; tackling.
- 7) Pass Interference** – Any player making contact with a defender attempting a catch without being in the action of attempting a catch himself; pushing off of a defender to make a catch.
- 8) Flag Guarding** – A ball carrier using his/her hands/arms to prevent his/her flag from being pulled; a ball carrier jumping or diving to advance the ball. Any offensive player running with the ball carrier once he/she is across the line of scrimmage. If a ball carrier flag guards in his/her own end zone, it is a safety.
- 9) Impeding the Rusher** – Purposely blocking or impeding the path of the defensive rusher
- 10) Charging** – Directly running through a defensive player who has their feet established
- 11) Shadowing/Blocking** – Any player making a movement to intentionally deter a defender from reaching the ball carrier. After the ball has crossed the LOS all players without possession of the ball must stop moving.
- 12) Offsides** – Any player standing on or over the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- 13) Illegal Shift** – Having two or more players in motion at the time of the snap. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. This will be considered a deadball penalty.
- 14) Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – Any player, coach, or spectator committing any action deemed to be unsportsmanlike. This includes but is not limited to foul language, spiking the ball, inciting violence, trash talk, or arguing with officials.
- 15) Tackling** – Any player who uses deliberate force to take a player down. This will result in unsportsmanlike and flagrant penalty. Officials discretion for ejection for tackling

NMFFL RULEBOOK

Defensive Penalties and their definitions:

- 1) Offsides** – Any player standing on or over the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- 2) Pass Interference** - Any player making contact with a receiver attempting a catch without being in the action of attempting a catch himself; any player not giving right of way to a receiver running his route.
- 3) Illegal Flag Pull** – Pulling the flag of an offensive player before they have possession of the ball.
- 4) Illegal Rush** – Any player not behind the rush line at the time of the snap that crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff; any rusher jumping once across the line of scrimmage; any rusher yelling or screaming at the passer.
- 5) Illegal Contact** – Any player intentionally initiating contact with an offensive player; moving directly into the path of the ball carrier and making contact with him; making ANY contact with the QB.
- 6) Holding/Impeding** – Any player grabbing the jersey or uniform of an offensive player; any player making contact with the ball carrier hindering his forward progress.
- 7) Stripping** - Any player going for the ball instead of the flags.
- 8) Roughing the Passer** – Any rusher making ANY contact with the passer, regardless of intent.
- 9) Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – Any player, coach, or spectator committing any action deemed to be unsportsmanlike. This includes but is not limited to spiking the flag of an opponent, tackling (taking a player to the ground intentionally), inciting violence, trash talk, or arguing with officials.
- 10) Tackling** – Any player who uses deliberate force to take a runner or receiver down. This will result in unsportsmanlike and flagrant penalty.
Officials discretion for ejection of tackling

NOTE:

- Only the head coach may call a timeout to ask the referee questions about the rule clarification and interpretations.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, UNLESS the offense declines it.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance.

NMFFL RULEBOOK

ALL offensive penalties result in a loss of down.

ALL defensive penalties result in an automatic first down.

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

Penalty	Result
1) Delay of Game	LOS-5 Yards + Loss of Down
2) 7 Second Violation	Loss of Down
3) False Start	5 Yards + Loss of Down
4) Illegal Play/Run	5 Yards + Loss of Down
5) Illegal Forward Pass	LOS-5 Yards + Loss of Down
6) Illegal Contact	LOS-5 Yards + Loss of Down
7) Pass Interference	LOS-5 Yards + Loss of Down
8) Flag Guarding	Spot Foul -5 Yards + Loss of Down
9) Impeding the Rusher	LOS -5 Yards + Loss of Down
10) Charging	Spot Foul + 10 Yards + Loss of Down
11) Shadowing/Blocking	LOS- 5 Yards + Loss of Down
12) Offsides	LOS-5 Yards + Loss of Down
13) Illegal Shift/Motion	LOS-5 Yards + Loss of Down
14) Unsportsmanlike Conduc	Spot Foul or LOS-15 Yards + Loss of Down
15) Tackling	Spot Foul -15 Yards + Loss of Down

NOTE: If there is an inadvertent whistle, the play is dead. The team on offense will have 2 options: 1) take the result of the play where it was blown dead or 2) redo the down.

NMFFL RULEBOOK

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

Penalty	Result
1) Offsides	LOS-5 Yards + First Down
2) Pass Interference	Spot Foul + 1 st Down (if penalty occurs in end zone ball will placed at 1 Yard Line)
3) Illegal Flag Pull	Spot Foul + 5 Yards + 1 st Down
4) Illegal Rush	5 Yards + 1 st Down
5) Illegal Contact	Spot Foul +5 Yards + 1 st Down
6) Holding/Impeding	Spot Foul + 5 Yards + 1 st down
7) Stripping	Spot Foul + 5 Yards + 1 st Down
8) Roughing the Passer	15 Yards + 1 st Down
9) Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15 Yards + 1 st Down
10) Tackling	Spot Foul +15 Yards + Loss of Down

NOTE: If an illegal flag pull, holding, stripping or tackling is called on the last defender, a touchdown will be awarded.

NOTE: If there is an inadvertent whistle, the play is dead. The team on offense will have 2 options: 1) take the result of the play where it was blown dead or 2) redo the down.