

# 2015 NFL FLAG RULES (ETS)

## THE BASICS

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- Home team will call coin-toss to start game.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 15-yard line and has four plays to cross the first down line at mid-field and the next 15 yd line. Two first downs may be gained.
- If on fourth down conversion, offense fails to get a first-down or score... The opposing team will take possession of the ball on their 15 yd line.
- On 1st, 2nd & 3rd down teams may go for 3 pts (After crossing mid-field)
- On 4th down teams may choose to punt.
- If offense chooses to “Punt”, the opposing team will get the ball on their 5 yd line.  
*(Off. still has to cross mid-field for first-down.) (4&5 No punting)*

## TIMING

- Games are played two 20-minute halves (running clock).
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has :25 seconds to snap the ball. *(Teams will receive (1) warning before a Delay of Game penalty is enforced.)*
- Last (2 minutes) of each half:
  - The clock will stop on all scores and will resume on the first down snap.
  - Clock will stop on time-outs, change of poss., scores and on the discretion of referee.
- Clock will start on the “ready to play” whistle.
- If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime...

## TIME - OUTS

- Each team shall have **2 time-outs** per half.
- Time-outs will be **60 seconds** in length.
- Time-outs may be called by any coach, or player that participated in the last play and is on the field of play.
- If a team exceeds time-out limit in either half, they will receive a penalty *(Delay of Gm.)*

Additional time-outs may be called by the officials at their discretion

During a team's charged time-out, a team representative may confer with their team either on the field or at the sidelines.

Each team will be allowed only (1) time-out during Over-Time.

*Note: Clock does not run during Over-Time... See Over-Time Rules.*

## SUBSTITUTIONS

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Each child on the team needs to play equally, regardless of skill set. Coach to plan his rotation accordingly.
- *Discuss player(s) missing practice...*
- If you have a player(s) on the sideline during your offense set, he/she needs to play your next defensive set, and vice-versa.
- Players need to get equal playing time... **EVERYONE PLAYS!!!**

## GENERAL OFFENSE

- NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT of any kind is permitted.
- **Downfield blocking** is illegal. Any offensive player who continues running AND impedes the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull the ball carrier's flag will be called for illegal downfield blocking.
- All offensive players must start with their shirts/jerseys tucked in, flag belts on, and flags properly secured at the hips of each player.
- The ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start a play. Shotgun and Direct snaps are allowed.
- **Motion** – Two player may be in motion prior to the snap, Although, one player must be set for at least one (1) second before the ball is snapped. *Only one player is allowed in motion at the snap.* All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
- **Spinning** is permitted. (Contact is on the ball carrier).
- **Diving** to ADVANCE the ball is illegal. However, an offensive player may jump over a defensive player on the ground to avoid a collision. Jumping or diving to catch a pass is permitted.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs, laterals or pitches.
- Teams may use a variety of formations. Players may line up anywhere on their side of the line of scrimmage.
- Only one forward pass is allowed per play.
- **Stiff-arming** while running with the ball is not permitted.
- **Flag Guarding:** Is the attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff-arming, dropping of hand, arm or shoulder, intentionally covering flags with football or jersey. *The ball will be spotted where the penalty occurs.*
- **On fourth down**, teams may go for a conversion or may decide to punt the ball, which automatically brings the ball to the opposing team's 5 yard line.
- If fourth down conversion fails, the opposing team receives possession of the ball at their own 15 yard line.

### 3 Point Play (3 Point Play / Field Goal)

- Note: You will not physically kick the ball.
- On 1st, 2nd, & 3rd down... And offense has successfully crossed mid-field. Team may choose to go for 3 Pts...
- Ball will be place on the 15 yd. line (Only one attempt) \* *Penalties will apply...*  
Offense – QB, Center and (2) Receivers ONLY.  
\* *Center will snap the ball ONLY... Is not an eligible receiver.*
- Defense – (2) Defenders ONLY.
- QB will have (5) seconds to throw ball.
- Successful score will be awarded 3 Points.

## PASSING GAME

- The QB has a seven-second “Pass Clock.” If a pass (or hand-off) is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down.
- If the ball is handed off, the “seven-second pass rule” is no longer in effect.
- Half-Back passes are legal (**Except in “No-Run” zone**)
- Only one forward pass per down.

Intentional Grounding shall constitute an illegal forward pass. This is when a quarterback throws the ball away to avoid a sack and there is not a receiver in the area. This results in a 5 yard penalty and loss of down.

## RECEIVING GAME

- **All players are eligible** to receive passes, including the QB, but only if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage first.
- If a player's flag falls off during a play inadvertently, the defenders must touch the ball carrier to make the play dead.
- A receiver must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
- In the event that a receiver and defender both catch the ball at the same time and both retain possession to the ground, then the tie would go to the receiver, with receiver being down at the point of the tied reception.

## RUNNING GAME

- The QB can run with the ball, **ONLY If The QB Is Rushed.**  
*In the 4&5 - The QB is not permitted to run... (4&5 No Rushing).*
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. All players are eligible to receive passes including the original quarterback.

*Once the ball has been handed off or leaves the QB hands, all defensive players are eligible to rush.*

- The center is not eligible to receive hand-offs under the legs.
- “Center Sneak” play – *The ball must completely leave the center’s hands on the snap and he/she must step backwards off the line of scrimmage in order to receive a direct hand-off from the QB before advancing the ball.*
- Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff. There is no limit to the amount of handoffs that can be performed by the offense in a single play.
- Spinning is permitted... *See spinning rule.*
- It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. (*Referee’s Discretion*)  
*Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.*
- Jumping or diving to ADVANCE the ball is illegal. However, an offensive player may jump over a defensive player on the ground to avoid a collision.

## “NO-RUN” ZONE

- “No Run” Zones: Located 5 yds before mid- field and 5 yards before the end zone.
- “No Run” zones are designed to avoid short yardage power run situations, and create forced passing situation.
- When in the “No Run” Zone the Offense Must Pass until crossed through the zone. (No hand-offs or pitches/laterals)
- ONLY the Quarterback may take the snap from center and attempt the pass. (*Whoever receives the snap is declared the QB.*)
- NOTE: If the QB is rushed while in the “No Run”, He may run the ball. Although, at this point QB still cannot hand-off.

## NO DOWN FIELD BLOCKING

- After the ball has been handed off or run/passed across the LOS, all OFFENSE players NOT in possession of the ball (or not the Ball Carrier) must stop running. Teammates cannot run alongside, in front or behind the “Ball Carrier” in order to interfere with the defense having a clear opportunity to pull Ball Carrier’s flag.

## GENERAL DEFENSE

- NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT of any kind is permitted.
- Defensive players cannot pass the line of scrimmage, until the ball is handed off or leaves QB hands. (Unless rushing)
- Defenders must only attempt to grab an offensive players flags when trying to get them down.
- If a defender attempts to pull an offensive player’s flags and *inadvertently* grabs their jersey, Defender **MAY** be called for holding... *Referee’s discretion.*
- All defensive players must give the offense a one-yard cushion prior to the snap of the ball.
- Diving after a flag is not allowed.

*Diving: Both feet leaving the ground in a horizontal position ... Referee’s Discretion.*

- Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.
- If holding or illegal contact is called when a defensive player is the “last man” or “last attempt” between the ball carrier and the end zone, a touchdown will be called.

## FLAG PULLING

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- If the ball carriers flag falls off accidentally during the run of play, that ball carrier must be touched anywhere.  
(*note: illegal flag pull is the pulling of a flag during run of play when player does not yet have possession of the ball.*)
- Defenders Can Not: Dive to pull flags, tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier’s possession at any time.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

- **Flag Guarding (Offense)** is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder or covering the flags with the football jersey.
- **A legal flag pull** takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball, however, once the receiver touches the ball, his flag may be pulled... Once the receiver makes full possession of the ball, the ball will be spotted where the flag was originally pulled. This will avoid a player bobbling the ball down the field.
- \* **When defender pulls flag...**  
**He/she needs to immediately stop and hold flag straight up.**

## INTERCEPTIONS

- **Interceptions may be returned** from anywhere on the field of play, including the end zone. (If interception is downed in the end-zone...Ball comes out to the 15 yd line).
- In the event of an interception, all other defenders on the field must stop and cannot block or impede the offensive players from pursuing the ball carrier.
- In the event interception is made during an extra point and defense returns interception for a score, the defense will receive the points (1 or 2) that the offense was trying for.
- In the event interception is made during a 3 Pt. Play and returned for a score...**Def. will be awarded 6 Pts. and may attempt PAT for 1 or 2 pts.**
- Neither team score – Def. takes possession on 15 Yd. line

*4&5 Will also run back interceptions (Rev. 2015).*

## RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK (Revised 2014)

- The rush line will be from the line of scrimmage.
  - Players who rush the passer must wait (4) seconds before they cross the LOS.
  - The Head Referee (Located behind the QB) will count out loud.
  - Only (2) players may rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the LOS.
  - Once the ball is handed off, the "(4) second count" rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
  - Rushing The QB – Cont.
  - Defensive players (Rushers) should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
  - **A legal rush is:**
    - Any rush from the LOS after the "4 second count".
    - A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the QB.
- If rusher leaves the rush line early... They will be flagged and penalized - Off-Sides.

A penalty may be called if:

- The rusher crosses the LOS before "4 second count.
- *Illegal Rush (5 yards from LOS and replay down).*

### Special Circumstances:

- Teams are not required to rush the Quarterback, (Seven second clock in effect.)
- Teams are not required to identify their rusher(s) before the play...

However, only two defenders may rush, before ball has been handed off.

- Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass, however, NO contact can be made with the Quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a Roughing the Passer penalty.

**“Impeding The Rusher”**- The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the Quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap.

If the “path or line” is occupied by a *moving* offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher.

- Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an “Impeding the Rusher” penalty
- IF the offensive player (Center or Lineman) does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
- The rusher CANNOT run straight into the center. The center or lineman has the right away so long as the center remains at/or in his/her original spot at the time the ball was snapped.
- If contact is made with the center by the rusher who is has not taken an angle to the quarterback, a *defensive impeding penalty will be assessed*.
- Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the “4 second count” rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- A sack occurs if the Quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage.
- Dead Ball
- **A play is ruled dead** when the ball carrier’s flag is pulled or touched (if no flag), the ball carrier steps out of bounds, any part of the ball carrier’s body other than hands touch the ground, the ball carrier lets the ball hit the ground, a penalty occurs, or after a touchdown or extra point is scored.

### DURING THE SNAP:

- QB touches the ball, then the ball touches the ground.
- Rusher beats QB to the ball and touches while on the ground...  
Ball is spotted at point of contact.

**Flag guarding:** Down at point of infraction... *No loss of yardage.*

**There are no fumbles...**The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground after touched by an offensive player.

## SCORING

- **Touchdown: 6 points**
  - **Extra Points:**
    - Run/Pass from **5 yard line = 1 point.**
    - Run/Pass from **12 yard line = 2 points.**
  - **3 Point Play / Field Goal = 3 points**
  - **Safety: 2 points.**
  
  - If an interception is returned for a score on an extra point conversion or field goal, the scoring team (defense) will receive the point value the offense was attempting.
- Safety**
- A safety occurs when one of the following happens; the QB or ball carrier is downed in his/her end zone, the QB or ball carrier runs out of bounds inside his/her end zone, the quarterback or ball carrier fumbles the ball in his/her end zone, a bad snap resulting in the ball landing in offensive end zone...after being touched by QB or rusher, and a offensive penalty occurring inside the offensive end zone.
  - If a safety occurs, the team that scored the safety will be awarded 2 points and will receive the ball on their 15-yard line.

## MERCY RULE

- **1<sup>st</sup> Half – Team up by 28 points – Game called.**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Half – Team up by 35 points – Game called.**

## OVERTIME RULE

- If the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams move directly into overtime.
- There will be NO Clock in overtime.
- Each team will have (1) timeout... Time outs from regulation, do not carry over.
- In overtime teams will play for yardage. The team that gains the most yards in three possessions will be declared the winner.
- A Coin toss determines first possession. (*Visiting team calls*)
- Team receives the ball on the 15-yard line and has (3) possessions.
- Points are not given if a team crosses the goal line, and there will be no extra point... Only yards gained.
- Interceptions will be considered as an in-complete pass.. No yards gained or lost.
- Final Score will end in a tie...Winner determined by most yards gained.

## GENERAL PENALTIES INFORMATION

- If the offense throws an interception and commits an infraction after the interception, when the opposing team takes offensive possession they will get an additional 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- **Only Head Coaches may approach the Referee. Judgment calls cannot be argued.**
- A game or half will not end on any accepted live ball defensive penalty.
- Any offensive penalty in your own end zone results in a safety (2 points).

## PENALTIES

- The Referee will call all penalties.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
- **Only Head Coach** may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.
- ***Coaches cannot question judgment calls.***
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- Live Ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered completed.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- Live ball penalties will be assessed from the spot of the infraction once the play is over.

## SPOT FOULS

- If a first down is still gained AFTER the penalty is assessed, a first down will be granted.
- **Flag guarding:** Down at point of infraction... *No loss of yardage.*
- **Charging:** 5 yards from LOS & loss of down
- **Defensive Pass Interference:** 5 yards from point of infraction & automatic first down.
- **Defensive Holding:** 5 yards from POI & automatic first down.
- **Stripping:** 5 yards from POI & automatic first down
- **Unnecessary Roughness:**
  - 15 yards from LOS & loss of down (Offense)
  - 15 yards from LOS & automatic first down (Defense)
- **Roughing the Passer :**
  - 15 yards from LOS & automatic first down.
- **Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier:**
  - 5 yards from LOS & loss of down



## OTHER DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

*Offensive team may elect to decline any penalty and accept the result of the play.*

- **Offside:** 5 yards from the LOS & replay the down
- **Illegal Contact** (Holding, blocking, etc.):
  - 5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down
- **Illegal Flag Pull** (Before receiver has ball):
  - 5 yards from the POI & automatic first down
- **Illegal Rushing** (Starting rush before “4 second count”):
  - 5 yards from the LOS replay down.
- **Roughing the Passer:**
  - 15 yards from the LOS & automatic first down

## OTHER DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

**Defensive team may elect to decline any penalty and accept the result of the play.**

- Any Off. penalty on an **EXTRA POINT or Field Goal:** Loss of Down
- **Illegal Motion** (More than one person moving at snap, false start, etc):
  - 5 yards from the LOS & replay down
- **Illegal Forward Pass-** (Pass received behind the line of scrimmage (No Run Zone) (Throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage):
  - 5 yards from the LOS & loss of down
- **Offensive Pass Interference** (Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender):
  - 5 yards from the LOS & loss of down
- **Delay of Game** (1<sup>st</sup> time - warning then 10 seconds to snap ball):
  - 5 yards from LOS & replay down
- **Offside:** 5 yards from the LOS & replay down
- **Impeding the Rusher:**
  - 5 yards from LOS & loss of down

## SPORTSMANSHIP PENALTIES

- Any unsportsmanlike or roughing behavior: 15 yards from the LOS and loss of down or automatic first down depending on offender.
- First occurrence MAY come with warning...**But Probably NOT!!!**  
And further occurrence results in player or coach ejection from game.
- Anyone ejected for any reason will serve a minimum 1 game suspension.  
(SEE: SPORTSMANSHIP/ ROUGHING)
- Taunting: 15 yards from the LOS & First Down

**\*\* ANY RULING FROM A LEAGUE DIRECTOR IS FINAL!!!**

# THIS IS YOUR WARNING !!!

## SPORTSMANSHIP - PLAYERS

### FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

- Remember, no blocking, screening, or tackling is allowed.
- If the Referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game.
- Any player ejected for any reason will serve a minimum 1 game suspension.
- Trash talking is illegal. Referees have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- Any player ejected for any reason will serve a minimum 1 game suspension. Fighting will result in immediate expulsion from the league.
- After each game, both teams MUST line-up at mid-field and shake hands while saying “Good Game”

## SPORTSMANSHIP - COACHES

### THIS IS YOUR WARNING!!!

- **BEGGING A CALL:**

During a play, if a possible infraction occurs and players or coaches from either team, either on the field or sidelines begin yelling out (Begging A Call), a penalty can be tacked onto the end of the play.

This penalty will be marked off as a Dead ball Foul, even if it occurred while play was in progress.

**Penalty Results In:**

Offense -15 yd & Loss of down.

Defense - 15 yds Automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down.

- **Reviewing Referee’s Call**

The **Head Coach** has the right to ask the Referee to explain a call- ***Do Not Debate!***

- If the Referee and the Head Coach disagree on a call, based on the ***interpretation*** of a rule. Concern will be heard by a League Director.
- League Director will not *Hear* or *Overturn* a “Judgment Call”.  
*Or call based on what the Referee saw or did not see.*
- All concerns must be heard / discussed before the next play is ran.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

### **GAME TIME – Do Not Call !**

**Check the website and/or Facebook.**

*If weather conditions warrant cancelation,  
It will be posted on the website and/or Facebook*

- Rain Policy - If it is a light rain, show up at your scheduled game time. The League Director(s) will make the call on site if conditions warrant postponing games until weather lets up. It is very important that all coaches communicate with his/her players in order to know what has been decided concerning the weather / rain schedule.

### **Practices -**

***Rain & Lightening – Do Not Take Chances!!!***

**The first sign of lightening... Stop / Cancel Practice!**

*Temperature & Heat – Do Not Take Chances!!!*

***Hydrate & Breaks...***

***Do not get your players over-heated.***

***If player(s) request a break... Give it!***

***If player(s) request water... Give it!***