



*Offensive starting points*

**1ST-2ND GRADES**

| <i>Situation</i>                                    | <i>Starting field position after change of possession</i> |
|---|---|
| <i>After a touchdown and extra point(s) attempt</i> | <i>Offense's 5-yard line</i>                              |
| <i>After a "punt"</i>                               | <i>Offense's 5-yard line</i>                              |
| <i>After an interception</i>                        | <i>At the spot of the interception</i>                    |

**3RD-6TH GRADES**

| <i>Situation</i>                                    | <i>Starting field position after change of possession</i> |
|---|---|
| <i>After a touchdown and extra point(s) attempt</i> | <i>Offense's 5-yard line</i>                              |
| <i>After a "punt"</i>                               | <i>Offense's 5-yard line</i>                              |
| <i>After a turnover on downs</i>                    | <i>At the spot of the defensive hold.</i>                 |
| <i>After an interception</i>                        | <i>Allowed to Return</i>                                  |

## **Clock Format**

- › Games consist of four nine-minute quarters with an eight-minute halftime.
- › The game clock stops briefly at the end of every quarter for predetermined substitutions.
- › Each team has one 30-second timeout per half. Unused timeouts do not carry over to the second half. The clock will stop during the timeout.
- › A 30-second play clock begins after the referee spots the ball as ready for play.
- › The clock will stop in the final minute of the **first half** and in the **final minute** of the game for the following situations:
  - *After an incomplete pass*
  - *After the ball carrier goes out of bounds*
  - *After a touchdown*
  - *During an extra-point attempt*
  - *On a change of possession*
  - *For an official's timeout*
  - *After an interception*
  - *During a called timeout until the ball is snapped*

## **Game Format**

- › Referees lead both teams in prayer at midfield before every game. This is a good time to give reminders about the game and to check that flags are on hips, jerseys are tucked in, jewelry has been removed, and coaches have their substitution cards prepared.
- › The visiting team (wearing the lighter-colored jerseys) calls the coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss may choose to play offense or defense first or choose which goal to defend. The other team has the choice (possession or end to defend) not made by the team winning the toss. The team that plays defense first will play offense first to start the second half.
- › Because the end of a quarter does not signal a change of possession, ***the team with possession at the end of the quarter will retain possession after substitutions take place.***
- › Teams will switch ends of the field at the half, not after each quarter.
- › Score will be kept in all divisions.
- › Standings are not kept in any division. Such standings add unnecessary pressure and intensity. ***In Upward Flag Football, there will not be a playoff system, championship tournament or a division champion thus eliminating the need for any standings.***
- › Each team will have six players on the field at a time (this may change due based on number of players on each team.)
- › Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines and encourage their players without stepping in the playing area.
- › In the 3rd-5th grade divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle for the **first two games** of the season. In the 1st-2nd grade divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle throughout the season.
- › Teams will use substitute players at the change of possession.

## Scoring

- › **Touchdown:** 6 points
- › **Extra point:** 1 point (played from the 5-yard line with a pass) or 2 points (played from the 10-yard line with a run or pass). **The 5-yard attempt is from the no-run zone.**
- › **Safety:** 2 points. The scoring team will also receive possession on its own 5-yard line. **No physical kicks will occur in Upward Flag Football.**

## **Offensive Basics**

- › A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap. **Traditional football format requires seven players on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. The three players on the line for Upward Flag Football will consist of a center and two receivers positioned anywhere along the line of scrimmage. This adds some structure to offensive sets. Note: This may change if less than 6 players on the field per team.**
- › Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped. **This is intact to keep the integrity of the game.**
- › In the 3rd-5th grade division, the ball must be snapped between the legs to begin play. 1st-2nd grade players may use the side snap. **The traditional snap can be difficult for the younger players with small hands.**
- › Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete possession of the ball. This helps clarify the center sneak play. **A possession change between the center and quarterback must occur in order to run the play.**
- › A low-profile field cone or beanbag may be used to mark the line of scrimmage. There are many ways to accomplish this. You may also use a field marker on this sideline.

## Running the Football

- › The quarterback cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage. **This rule includes others in each offensive play and prevents a quarterback from dominating each play by advancing the football.**
- › The person who receives the snap from the center (under center or shot gun) is considered the quarterback and cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage.
- › A pitch from the quarterback can be executed immediately after the snap or on a delay (similar to an option play without the quarterback being able to advance the football).
- › The quarterback is the only player who can make the pitch. The pitch can occur at anytime while behind the line of scrimmage.
- › Once the pitch is received, the ball carrier can run the ball, hand-off the ball (behind the line of scrimmage) or pass the ball (halfback pass).
- › Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Multiple handoffs may be used. After the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, handoffs and laterals are not permitted. **This rule exists for safety reasons and to discourage the multiple laterals that would occur to avoid a flag pull.**
- › The 5 yards leading toward the goal line and the 5 yards leading to the midfield first-down line are no-run zones. **The no run zones are designed to take away power-running plays.**

- › A ball carrier may not dive. A dive will result in a penalty. ***Diving for the advancement of the football can bring on injury or contact, so this rule is safety-related and abides with the no-contact rule.***
- › The **ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football** when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football. ***This rule discourages a dive for advancement.***

### Receiving the Football

- › All six players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or immediate pitch.) ***With the no contact rule, no blockers can be used thus allowing all offensive players to be eligible.***
- › A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football while having at least one foot in bounds. ***This rule is to keep the integrity of the game.***
- › If a player catches a pass with his knee(s) on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion. ***This rule helps to keep the no contact rule intact.***

### Passing the Football

- › All forward passes can be completed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass may be completed per play. However, while in the no-run zone, all forward passes must be completed beyond the line-of-scrimmage. Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the defender can make a play on the ball. The defender must avoid contact with the receiver.
- › The quarterback has **7 seconds** to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). A handoff or pitch will end the 7-second pass count. ***This rule keeps a scrambling quarterback from taking too much time with each possession.***

### Dead Balls

The play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- › The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out.
- › The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- › The ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- › A touchdown or safety is scored.
- › A pass falls incomplete.
- › The ball hits the ground as a fumble. The ball will be spotted at the point of the fumble. One exception to this rule is with the center/quarterback exchange. If a snap is mishandled, the quarterback and only the quarterback may pick up the ball and continue play. If a defender gets to the ball before the quarterback, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the fumble (treated like a sack). ***This rule supports the no contact rule.***

## ***Defensive Basics***

- › Teams may run man-to-man, zone defenses or a combination of both. ***This rule allows for defensive schemes and helps equal ability match-ups. Players can have an easier time covering a zone vs. a receiver man-to-man in the open field.***
- › Interceptions can be returned in the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Division. In 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Division a change of possession will be awarded at the point of the interception.
- › An interception in the end zone will result in a touchback and the ball will be spotted at the 5-yard line. ***The touchback is used for all end-zone picks.***

## **Rushing the Passer**

- › All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 7-yard rush line. With the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>-grade division, any number of players may rush the quarterback. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade division may only rush one defender. ***With no blocking allowed, this gives the quarterback enough time to make a play or escape a rush.***
- › Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage.
- › Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier. ***This allows the defense to react quickly to a play behind the line of scrimmage.***



## Penalties

Referees will call all penalties.

If a penalty happens near the end zone, where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.

| DEFENSE   |   |
|---|---|
| PENALTY   | RESULT  |
| <b>1. Encroachment</b><br><b>0. Illegal rushing</b> ( <i>enforced when players start rushing from inside the 7-yard rush line</i> ) | 5 Yards from the line of scrimmage; a replay of the down  |
| <b>1. Illegal contact</b><br><i>(pulling the jersey, holding, blocking, pushing)</i>  | 10 Yards from the spot of the foul; automatic first down  |
| <b>2. Interference</b><br><b>3. Illegal Flag Pull</b> ( <i>before the receiver catches the football</i> )                           | 10 Yards from the line of scrimmage; automatic first down |

| OFFENSE   |  |
|---|--|
| PENALTY   | RESULT   |
| <b>1. Illegal motion</b> ( <i>more than one person moving</i> )<br><b>2. Illegal formation</b> ( <i>false start, not enough men on the line of scrimmage</i> )<br><b>3. Delay of game</b><br><b>4. Illegal run</b> ( <i>a running play in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage</i> ) | 5 Yards from the line of scrimmage; a replay of the down |
| <b>5. Illegal pass</b> ( <i>a pass thrown after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage</i> )<br><b>6. Intentional grounding</b>   | 5 Yards from the line of scrimmage; loss of down         |
| <b>7. Shielding</b> ( <i>a non-contact block that impedes a defender from marking a tackle</i> )<br><b>8. Flag guarding</b> ( <i>intentional or unintentional use of the arm to prevent the flag from being pulled</i> )  | 5 Yards from spot of foul; loss of down                  |
| <b>9. Offensive pass interference</b><br><i>(illegal pick play, pushing a defender)</i>   | 10 Yards from the line of scrimmage; loss of down        |
| <b>0. Illegal use of hands</b> ( <i>stiff arming, blocking</i> )<br><b>1. Diving</b> ( <i>diving toward the end zone or first down</i> )  | 10 Yards from spot of foul; loss of down                 |

## ***Substitutions***

Upward Flag Football's Substitution System is designed to provide each player equal opportunity for improvement. The system ensures that:

- › No player sits out more than one possession at a time
- › Every player plays offense and defense in every game
- › Every player will start on either offense or defense in each game
- › Coaches are not able to make unfair substitutions or to be accused of doing so
- › Coaches do not have to monitor playing time for each player
- › Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season

