

Official Big D Sports Flag Football League Rules

General Guidelines

Waivers: In order to participate in on-field games, all players must sign the waiver and be on a roster. No Exceptions. Players may be required to present a valid ID card to league staff in order to participate any given week.

Forfeits: Big D Sports & Entertainment reserves the right to withhold a team from playoffs or disqualify a team for the remainder of the season, without refund, for forfeiting two games during the regular season due to a lack of players or no-showing.

Sportsmanship: Good sportsmanship is a requirement of all participants. Players and coaches are to conduct themselves properly at all times. Big D Sports 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 its spectators. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes actions which are unbecoming to an ethical, fair, honorable individual; it consists of acts of deceit, disrespect or vulgarity and includes taunting. Team must have a satisfactory sportsmanship rating in order to be eligible for the playoffs.

Game Control: The officials/supervisors will have absolute control of the game. 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 staff. The supervisors will have the power to make decisions on any matter or questions not specifically covered in the rules.

Apparel/Clothing

Headwear: All billed hats or visors must be worn backwards.

Jewelry: All jewelry must be removed including watches, earrings, bracelets, etc.

Pads: Players may wear soft, pliable basketball or wrestling knee pads on legs, knees and/or ankles.

Pockets: Pants or shorts with BELT LOOPS or POCKETS are prohibited. Players CAN NOT play if they are wearing any pants or shorts that have pockets. Covering pockets with tape is not acceptable. Turning the pockets inside out is also not acceptable. Players found to be playing with pockets will be asked to leave the field of play and cannot return until they are wearing shorts or pants that have no pockets.

Shirt Length: Shirts must be long enough to tuck in so that they remain tucked in the pants/shorts during the entire down or short enough so there is a minimum 4" from the bottom of the shirt to the player's waistline.

Shoes/Cleats: The use of dangerous equipment is prohibited. Shoes must be worn; rubber cleated shoes will be allowed. No metal screw-in cleats, open toe, open heel or hard soled shoes will be allowed.

Towels: Towels (or any other objects) may not hang from a player's waist or otherwise interfere with the possible removal of a flag. Towels however may be used and kept on the ground by the ball before the snap. If a player is wearing a towel and the towel is removed during the course of the play, the towel will be treated as a flag.

Uniforms: Uniforms are not required but teams designated as wearing light or dark must wear those respective colors for that game. Teams should avoid wearing gray shirts at all times.

Field, # of Players, Captain Duties & Game Ball

Field Size: The field is divided into six zones of 10 yards each and two end zones of 10 yards each.

Team Size/ Min # of Players: The game shall be played between two teams of eight players (minimum three women when at full strength) each on a rectangular field. Each team must have six players on the field in order to begin the game. At least two of those players must be female.

Failure to Have a Full Team at Game Time: If a team does not have the minimum number of players to begin, the team at full strength shall be awarded seven points and the team that is short shall have five minutes to field the minimum number of players so a game can be played. If at the end of that five minute period the team that was penalized still does not have the required minimum number of players, a forfeit shall be called. BE ON TIME!

Teams Needing Fill In Subs: During the regular season, teams may pick up subs from other teams in their division in order to avoid forfeiting their game. Players from a higher division may not sub with a lower division and vice versa. Players are limited to playing in only one division of play per night.

Captain Duties: 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 are subject to the rules. Players ejected from a game are required to leave the park unless otherwise instructed by the officials.

Game Ball: Referees will not handle the football; the offense is responsible for the ball at all times. Male quarterbacks must throw an official sized NCAA or NFL football. Women quarterbacks have the option of throwing either an official sized NCAA or NFL football or a Jr. sized football.

Starting A Game, Time Factors, Mercy Rule, Ties In Regular Season

Coin Toss: The winner of the pre-game toss shall have the first choice of options: A) offense/defense, B) which goal to defend, or to defer their choice of A or B until the second half.

Start of play: The ball will begin each half on the offensive team's 10-yard line. After every score the ball will be placed on the new offensive team's 10-yard line with a first down.

Play Clock: The offensive team has 35 seconds to put the ball in play after referee signals "ready for play." This 35 second play clock will begin immediately following the whistle ending the previous play. Penalty for violating: five yards for delay of game

Playing time and intermissions: A game shall consist of two (2) halves with a five (5) minute intermission. Each half shall consist of 20 minutes. The clock will run continuously during the first 18 minutes of each half. Times out called after a touchdown shall have the PAT as an un-timed play. During the last two minutes of the half, the clock will stop in the following situations: (college clock)

- Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass – starts on the snap
- Out of bounds – starts on the snap
- Safety – starts at the snap of the ball for new offense
- Team time-out – starts on the snap
- First downs – dependent on the previous play
- Touchdowns – starts on the snap (after the try)
- Penalties – dependent on the previous play
- Touchback – starts on the snap
- Inadvertent whistle – starts on the ready for play whistle
- Either team awarded a new series – starts on the ready for play whistle

Times Out: Each team is allowed two (2) times out per half (1-minute time-out); times out not used in the first half will not carry over into the second half. The clock will stop during times out in both halves.

Mercy Rule: If a team is ahead by 17 points at the two-minute warning in the second half, the game is over.

Tie Games: Tie games at the end of regulation during the regular season will not be played out and be recorded as a tie in the standings.

Rules Pertaining To Flags

Using Your Own Flags: So that there is no question as to the legality of a team's flags, only flags and flag belts provided by Big D Sports will be allowed on the field during the course of a game. Flags must be worn tight across the hips with a flag to the side of each hip. Loosely worn flags will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.

De-flagging a Player: When the flag is clearly taken from the ball carrier the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag above his head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred. A player may dive to remove a flag as long as no contact is made with the opposing team.

Flag Falls Out On Its Own: When a runner loses his/her flag, either accidentally or inadvertently, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner.

Flag Guarding: Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to remove the flag. Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

- Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
- Placing the ball in possession over the flag to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
- Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag to prevent an opponent from deflagging.

Stiff-Arming: An offensive player may not stiff arm to ward off an opponent. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

Illegal De-flagging: The flag removal. Intentionally pulling or removing a flag from an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player is illegal. Penalty: 10 yards from the point of infraction.

Contact During De-flagging: 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 via moving screen, or run through a defensive player trying to remove the flag.

Spotting the Ball: The position of the ball when a player is de-flagged determines the spot of the next line of scrimmage.

Offensive Rules

Subbing Into the Game: 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.

Illegal Participation: It must be clear who the eight offensive players are on each play. The intent of this rule is to eliminate all sleeper or hideout plays. Penalty: 10 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage for illegal participation.

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 disc will signify each.

Series of Downs, Number of Downs: In a series of four downs, the ball must be advanced forward two cones from the spot of the original first down in order for a new series of downs to be awarded. Once a new first down is established, the line to gain will be moved two cones away.

Proper Formation: The offensive team must have a minimum of five players on the line of scrimmage. Illegal Formation - 5 yards for the line of scrimmage

Snapping the Ball: The ball may be snapped between the legs or to the side of the snapper. The center may snap the ball by straddling the line of scrimmage. The center, after assuming the position for the snap and 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 from the ground. Penalty: Illegal Procedure – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage

Receiving the Snap: The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps to players on the line of scrimmage are illegal. A player in motion may take a direct snap but they too must be two yards off the line of scrimmage. Illegal Procedure - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage

Players in Motion Pre-Snap: 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). Illegal Procedure - 5 yards penalty from the line of scrimmage.

Legal Forward Passes: All players are eligible for a forward pass. The passer may pass from anywhere behind the LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.

Legal Catches: For a catch to be considered legal, the pass receiver must come down with at least one foot in bounds (first foot-NCAA like rule). If at the time of the reception a foot is already out of bounds and the second is dug in bounds, then the receiver is considered out of bounds. A catch by a kneeling or prone player shall be considered legal and down at that spot. If a pass receiver loses the ball simultaneously with returning to the ground, a legal catch will not be awarded.

Female Operative Player Rule: A female must be used as an "operative" player at least once every three plays. To be considered an Operative Player, the woman must be the passer (pass must cross the line of scrimmage), receiver (of a pass beyond the line of scrimmage) or runner of a play that makes positive yardage. If the "hook & lateral" is run, the woman must catch the initial pass. A woman catching the lateral pitch from a male is not considered as an operative player. If during a forced female/closed play, a female is NOT used as an operative player, the next play remains a female/closed play (no yardage penalty).

Intentional Grounding: The passer shall not intentionally ground the ball in order to avoid being sacked. However, if in the eyes of the official a quarterback is intentionally throwing at the feet of a receiver or into an area with no receiver around, the penalty will be called. Penalty: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.

Pitching the Ball: A runner may pass the ball backwards prior to being de-flagged. If the ball hits the ground the ball will be considered dead at that spot. A backwards pass may be caught or intercepted in flight by any player and advanced. A backwards pass that touches the ground in the offensive team's own end-zone will result in a safety. If the ball touches the ground in the opponent's end-zone the result is a touchback (opponent's ball on their 10 yard line).

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. (Think basketball screens.) The offensive screen blocker must remain set once the defender is within two steps of the blocker. Penalty: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage if penalty occurs in the offensive backfield or 10 yards from the point of infraction if down field. Replay the down if penalty accepted.

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 from the point of infraction.

Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-of-Bounds A live ball becomes dead when:

- A) The ball touches the ground:
 - 1) on a fumble
 - 2) on a lateral
 - 3) on a pass
 - 4) on a punt (dead at the spot where the ball hits the ground)
 - 5) on a snap from the center (dead at the spot where the ball hits the ground)
 - 6) as a means to regain/maintain balance (dead at the spot where ball hits the ground)
- B) When the ball carrier carries the ball out-of-bounds
- C) A legal de-flagging occurs by the defense
- D) The ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet
- E) A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try is made
- F) When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down (ball dead at that spot)

Boundaries: The sideline and end lines are considered out of bounds. Once an offensive player steps out of bounds on their own accord, that player is no longer eligible to touch the ball. Any reception made by such a player will be ruled incomplete. However, if the offensive player is forced out of bounds by defensive contact, the offensive player may reestablish themselves in-bounds and make a legal catch.

No Run Zone: Any play that begins within the last 10 yards going into the end zone (including the 10 yard line) cannot be a running play. All plays beginning within the last 10 yards must be forward pass plays. Once a series has reached the no run zone, all subsequent plays in that possession will be no run plays. Penalty: Loss of Down, 5 yards from previous spot (offensive run play in the no run zone)

Kicking the Ball: If a punt is to be made, the team punting must announce it before the down starts. After the announcement, the punt must actually be made, and neither team may move until after the ball has been punted. Defensive and offensive teams must have four players on the line of scrimmage until the punt is made. No snap is required by the punting team. The punter may take the ball directly prior to the kick however, quick kicks are illegal. Penalty: 5 yards from the previous spot – Delay of game. The defensive team 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 – Illegal Procedure

Scoring Plays: A touchdown is awarded when a loose ball is caught by a player behind the opponent's goal line or when a runner advances so that the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the goal line. The body does not have to cross the line, just the tip of the ball. – 6 points

Touchdown Verification: The official has the right to verify a touchdown scored by requiring the player scoring the touchdown to raise his/her arms so the official can de-flag the player. If the player is not de-flagged 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.

P.A.T.: A team is given the choice of going for 1 or 2 points after scoring a touchdown. Once the captain makes the choice, it may only be changed if a time out is called. Ways of scoring a successful point-after-attempt: A) By passing from 3 yards = 1 point. One point attempts cannot be returned by the defense for a score. B) By passing from 10 yards = 2 points. Two point attempts can be returned by the defensive team for a score (2 points).

Defensive Rules

Rushing the QB: Any defensive player may rush the passer after the referee has given the "One-bud, two-bud, three-bud, four-bud, go!" (or similar 4-count plus "go"). Any defensive player breaking the line of scrimmage before "go" is announced is penalized for encroachment. EXCEPTION: Twice (2) per half, a team may blitz the offensive team in violation of the rush count. In order to blitz, the defense must wait until the quarterback has touched the ball during the snap before they can break the offensive line of scrimmage. Defenses cannot blitz in the no-run-zone. Penalty: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.

Roughing the Passer: Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear that the ball has been thrown and may not make contact with the quarterback. Any contact with the quarterback shall be flagged. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic first down, tacked on the end of the play (if positive yards have been gained), if not, 10 yards from the original spot and automatic first down.

Early De-flagging of A Receiver: It is defensive pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a forward pass attempt. Penalty: 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic 1st down

Jamming/Bump & Run: There shall be no jamming, bumping, checking, or other intentional contact between a defender and an offensive pass receiver. Both offense and defense are limited to screening an opponent. Pushing a receiver/defender is not allowed. Penalty: Illegal use of hands, 10 yards from the point of infraction.

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 from the line of scrimmage if penalty occurs in the offensive backfield or 10 yards from the point of infraction if down field. Replay the down if penalty accepted.

Holding: 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. Penalty: Holding - 10 yards from the point of infraction, replay the down.

Stripping/Tripping/Illegal Contact: It is illegal to steal or attempt to steal (strip) the ball from a player in possession, 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. 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. This is considered a non-contact league so all players should do their best to avoid contact. When running passing routes, contact will be viewed like basketball; the player with initial position does not have to move. Penalty: Personal foul, 10 yard from the end of the run (flagrant offenders will be ejected).

Dead Ball Penalties on Defense: 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 10 yard line when the defense becomes the offense.

After A Safety: After a safety is scored, the team that is awarded 2 points will automatically gain possession at their own 10-yard line.

Player Conduct

Taunting: Spiking, taunting, and any intentional antagonizing of the opposing team will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Dead Ball Penalty: 10 yards from the new line of scrimmage.

Unsportsmanlike Acts: Include but are not limited to: Penalty – 10 yards from the line of scrimmage; if flagrant the offender may be disqualified

- Intentionally kick the ball in anger
- Intentionally kicking at any opposing player
- Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player
- Fighting an opponent
- Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game
- Disrespectfully addressing an official
- Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures

Personal Fouls: Include but are not limited to: Penalty – 10 yards from the point of the infraction; if flagrant the offender may be disqualified

- Intentionally, punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession
- Trip an opponent
- Contact an opponent who is on the ground
- Throw the runner to the ground
- Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player
- Clip an opponent
- Tackle the runner

Summary of Fouls and Penalties

Loss of 5 Yards

Delay Of Game - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Early Rush - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Encroachment - Dead ball. Enforced from the line of scrimmage

False Start - Dead ball. Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Illegal Formation - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Illegal Forward Pass - Enforced from point of pass and loss of down

Illegal Procedures – Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Illegal Shift/Motion - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Illegal Snap - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

No Run Zone Violation – Enforced from the line of scrimmage, loss of down, still no run play

Loss of 10 Yards

Defensive Pass Interference - Enforced from the line of scrimmage and an automatic 1st down

Defensive Use Of Hands - Enforced from the point of infraction

Flag Guarding - Enforced from the point of infraction and loss of down

Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct. (Disqualification) - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Flagrant Personal Fouls (Disqualification) - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Holding - Enforced from the point of infraction, replay down

Illegal Contact – Enforced from point of infraction

Illegal Deflagging - Enforced from the point of infraction

Illegal Participation - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Illegal Screen – Enforced from Line of Scrimmage if foul in backfield; from point of infraction if downfield.

Illegally Secured Belt On Touchdown - Enforced from the line of scrimmage. Revoke touchdown and loss of down. (Disqualify Player)

Intentional Grounding- Enforced from point of infraction and loss of down

Intentionally Tampering with Flag Belt (Disqualification) - Enforced from the line of scrimmage

Jumping/Hurdling - Enforced from the point of infraction

Offensive Pass Interference - Enforced from the line of scrimmage and loss of down

Personal Foul - Enforced from the point of infraction

Roughing The Passer - Enforced from the line of scrimmage or added to the end of the play (whichever is greater) plus automatic 1st down

Stiff-Arming - Enforced from the point of infraction and loss of down

Stripping - Enforced from the point of infraction

Taunting/Spiking the Ball - Enforced from the new line of scrimmage

Unsportsmanlike Conduct - dead ball enforced from line of scrimmage, others from point of infraction

Playoff Procedures

Playoff Eligibility: When playoffs start, only players on your roster that have played in a regular season game and signed in at the field will be able to play in playoff games. A player cannot be on more than one (1) roster for playoffs. Players in the league can only be “part” of one team but may sub on other teams in the same division. If a player’s designated team does not make the playoffs, that player is not eligible to play with another team that he/she subbed with.

Pregame Coin Toss: During playoffs there is no coin toss. The higher seeded team has earned first half choice.

Tie Games In Playoffs: Ties at the end of regulation during the playoffs will be broken by the rules listed below: (similar to college)

- **OT Coin Toss:** A “coin toss” will precede the start of the overtime period. Once again, the higher seed has the choice of three options: Offense/Defense, Direction, or Defer. The opposing team then has the remaining choice.
- **Starting Line:** Play will begin on the 10-yard line and teams will have four plays each to score.
- **Objective:** The object is to score a touchdown and subsequent extra point (1 or 2 points).
- **Equal Possessions:** After team A has had its possession team B then has four plays within which to match or surpass team A's score. The team with the higher score at the end of the overtime period advances/wins. If no team has scored after their respective possessions the process is repeated with teams A & B flipping the order with which they were on offense.
- **Interceptions in OT:** When a pass is intercepted the defense becomes the offense and begins their series of four plays. If the interception is returned for a touchdown, the game is over.
- **Times Out in OT:** Teams are awarded one time out per overtime period (no carryover).
- **Penalties:** Penalties are assessed similar to the regular game.
 - A team shall be given a new series of four plays when an automatic first down penalty is accepted.
 - Live ball penalties committed by either team during overtime or a PAT or shall be enforced at the succeeding spot.
 - Dead ball penalties after a touchdown are penalized on the extra point attempt.
 - Dead ball penalties following a successful PAT will be penalized from the succeeding spot, the team B 10-yard line, if accepted.
- **Going for 2:** Beginning with the 3rd overtime, teams must go for 2 point conversions after touchdowns.

REVISED 6/04/14