

OFF THE WALL SPORTS

Indoor Flag Football

Official Rules



Quick Rules Summary

This page is a quick reference. The complete rules and penalty enforcement that follow control all game situations.

Topic	Quick reference
Game format	7 players per team. A team must start with at least 6 players and may continue with 5 after an injury. Games use 2 20-minute halves, a 1-minute halftime, a continuous clock, no timeouts, and no overtime.
Possession and downs	The away team starts the game; the home team starts the 2nd half. Drives begin at the offense's 5-yard line. The offense has 3 plays to cross midfield and then 3 plays to score.
Scoring	Touchdown: 6 points. PAT: 1 point from the 5-yard line, pass only; or 2 points from the 10-yard line, run or pass. Safety: 2 points, followed by possession at the scoring team's 5-yard line.
Passing	All passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, must be forward, and must travel beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback has a 7-second pass clock.
Running and no-run zones	The quarterback may not directly run after receiving the snap. Handoffs and backward pitches treated as handoffs must occur behind the line of scrimmage. No-run zones are exactly 5 yards before midfield and exactly 5 yards before the end zone; the play must result in a legal forward pass crossing the line of scrimmage.
Rushing the passer	A defender rushing at the snap must begin at least 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. After a handoff, all defenders may rush from anywhere on the field.
Dead ball and boundaries	The play is dead when the ball hits the ground, a flag is pulled or falls out, the ball-carrier steps out or touches a boundary surface, the runner's knee or arm touches the ground, or the 7-second clock expires. Walls, boards, and netting are treated the same. There are no fumbles.
Mercy rule	A 28-point lead ends the official game. Play may continue in scrimmage mode for the remaining time, and the score is removed from the scoreboard.
Sportsmanship	Intentional tackling, dangerous contact, abusive conduct, and other unsportsmanlike acts may result in penalties, ejection, and possible suspension.

The Game

1. The away team will have possession to start the game. The home team will have possession to start the 2nd half.
2. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 3 plays to score a touchdown.
3. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
4. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield in 3 plays, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
5. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line. If the ball is intercepted in the end zone and the player is downed in the end zone, the ball moves to the 5-yard line.
6. Teams change sides after the 1st half.
7. Each team will play with 7 players on the field.
8. Teams must start games with a minimum of 6 players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with 5 players on the field, but no fewer than five.

Equipment

1. Off The Wall Sports will provide all equipment for games, including Off The Wall Sports team jerseys, flags, and footballs.
2. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed at Off The Wall Sports. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Braces with exposed metal are not allowed.
4. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants.
5. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape pockets.

Timing

1. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with 2 20-minute halves. If one team gains a 28-point advantage, the game will be over. The game will continue as a scrimmage for the remainder of the time, but the score will be removed from the scoreboard.
2. Halftime is 1 minute.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team should not take more than 30-40 seconds to snap the ball. Although there is no play clock, teams that take longer or blatantly waste time will be subject to a penalty. The referee will use their discretion to determine whether teams are wasting time.
4. There are no timeouts.
5. In the event of an injury, the clock will not stop.

6. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game will result in a tie. There will not be an overtime period.

Scoring

1. Touchdown: 6 points.
2. PAT (point after touchdown): 1 point from the 5-yard line or 2 points from the 10-yard line.
 - a. The 1-point PAT is pass only; the 2-point PAT may be a run or pass.
 - b. No-run zones apply to 1-point tries from the 5-yard line.**
 - c. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion from the 5-yard line or a 2-point conversion from the 10-yard line. Once the ball has been spotted, this decision cannot be changed.
3. Safety: 2 points.
 - a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in their own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, or a fumble occurs in the end zone. The team that scored the safety will receive possession at its 5-yard line.
4. After one team is winning by 28 points or more, the game is over. The game will continue in scrimmage mode for the remainder of the time. The referee will remove the score at this point. Forfeits will be scored 28-0 for the winning team.

Live Ball / Dead Ball

Boundary surfaces: For purposes of these rules, the terms wall, board, and netting refer to the boundary surfaces surrounding the field and are treated the same.

1. The ball is live at the snap and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. A catch is complete when the receiver secures possession and places at least 1 foot inbounds before touching a wall, board, or netting. If the receiver touches a wall, board, or netting before establishing possession and 1 foot inbounds, the pass is incomplete. A player may not use a wall, board, or netting to assist in making a catch.
3. The defense may not mimic the offensive team's signals in an attempt to confuse offensive players while the quarterback is calling signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
4. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
5. The official may whistle the play dead.
6. Play is ruled dead when any of the following occurs:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - (1) If the ball hits the ground because of a bad snap, the ball will be placed back at the line of scrimmage and a down will be consumed.
 - (2) In the 3rd/4th grade division, teams may redo bad snaps without a loss of down.
 - b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.

- c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds or touches a wall, board, or netting.
- d. A touchdown, PAT, or safety is scored.
- e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
- f. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
- g. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of 1 or no flags.
- h. The 7-second pass clock expires.
- i. An inadvertent whistle occurs.

NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble.

7. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has 2 options:

- a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew; the down is consumed.
- b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

Running

1. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball, even if the defense rushes the passer. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
3. Only handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front of, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must occur behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - a. The center sneak play is not allowed. The quarterback is not allowed to hand off to the center on the first handoff of the play.
4. No backward passes or laterals are permitted after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage.
 - a. A backward pitch or toss is allowed only behind the line of scrimmage and is treated as a handoff.
5. No-run zones are located exactly 5 yards before the end zone and exactly 5 yards before midfield. They are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. When the line of scrimmage is within a no-run zone, the play must result in a legal forward pass that crosses the line of scrimmage. The ball may be handed off before the pass, but no player may advance the ball across the line of scrimmage by running. A completed pass caught behind the line of scrimmage does not satisfy the no-run-zone requirement. The no-run zones apply on PATs.
6. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
7. Once the ball has been handed off in front of, behind, or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
8. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
9. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
 - a. Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.

- 10.** Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that they have done so to avoid a collision with another player, without a flag guarding penalty being enforced.
- 11.** No blocking or screening is allowed at any time.
- 12.** Offensive players around the ball should stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. They can be called for blocking if they run with the ball-carrier and interfere with a defender's path to the ball-carrier.
- 13.** Flag obstruction: All jerseys must be tucked in before play begins. Flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

Passing

- 1.** All passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, must be forward, and must travel beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - a.** The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage. If the ball fails to go beyond the line of scrimmage, an illegal pass penalty will be enforced.
- 2.** Shovel passes are allowed, but must go past the line of scrimmage.
- 3.** The quarterback has a 7-second pass clock. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - a.** If the quarterback is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.
 - b.** The referee will count the 7 seconds out loud on each play.
 - c.** An illegal forward pass will be called if the center snaps the ball and immediately turns around and catches a pass.

Receiving

- 1.** All players, including the center, are eligible to receive passes, including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- 2.** Only 1 player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage, and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
- 3.** A player must have at least 1 foot inbounds when making a reception.
 - a.** If the receiver touches a wall, board, or netting before establishing possession and 1 foot inbounds, the pass is incomplete.
- 4.** Any pass that hits a wall, board, or netting will be ruled incomplete.
 - a.** A player may not use a wall, board, or netting to assist in making a catch.
- 5.** In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- 6.** Interceptions change possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

7. Interceptions are returnable, but not on conversions after touchdowns.
8. If the player running with the ball touches a wall, board, or netting surrounding the field, the player will be considered out of bounds.

Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players may rush the quarterback. Players who are not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. The referee will use special markers to designate the line of scrimmage and the rush line.
2. Once the ball is handed off, the 10-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A special marker will designate a rush line 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify that they are in the correct position with the official on every play. A legal rush is:
 - a. **Any rush from a point at least 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.**
 - b. A rush from anywhere on the field after the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - c. If a rusher leaves the rush line early, the rusher may return to the rush line, reset, and then legally rush the quarterback.

A penalty may be called if:

- a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and rushes the passer: illegal rush, 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
- b. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped: offside, 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
- c. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off: illegal rush, 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down.

Special circumstances:

- a. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback while the 7-second clock is in effect.
- b. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, no contact may be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking or attempting to block the pass and then contacting the passer will result in a roughing-the-passer penalty.
5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where the rusher lines up before the snap. If the path is occupied by a moving offensive player, it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path or contact will result in an impeding-the-rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and avoid contact.
6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback's feet are when the flag is pulled.
 - a. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders may dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
6. Flag guarding 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 intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.
7. Defenders may not intentionally push the player with the ball into a wall, board, or netting.

Formations

1. Offenses must have a minimum of 1 player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to 6 players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - a. 1 player at a time may go in motion 1 yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - b. No motion is allowed toward the line of scrimmage.
2. Movement by a player who is set, or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion, is considered a false start.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between their legs, or by turning and tossing the ball to the quarterback. The ball must completely leave the center's hands.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blindside blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. Foul play will not be tolerated.
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine what constitutes offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give 1 warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected.
3. Players, spectators, and coaches who are ejected are subject to suspension from Off The Wall Sports.
4. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach, or official. No trash talking. Players will be given 1 warning before being ejected.
5. Ball-carriers must try to avoid defenders with an established position.
6. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

7. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship:

- a.** Cheer for your players; do not harass officials or other teams.
- b.** Keep comments clean and profanity-free.
- c.** Compliment all players, not just 1 child or team.
- d.** Fans may be removed from the facility at the referee's or facility manager's discretion.

Penalties

- 1.** Referees determine incidental contact that may result from the normal run of play.
- 2.** All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except for spot fouls.
- 3.** Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretation. Players may not question calls.
- 4.** Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
- 5.** Penalties are assessed live ball, then dead ball. Live-ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- 6.** Penalties will be assessed as half the distance to the goal when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

Penalty Reference Tables

Defensive Spot Fouls

Penalty	Enforcement
Defensive pass interference	Spot of foul and automatic first down. If the foul occurs in the end zone, place the ball at the 1-yard line.
Holding	Automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

Offensive Spot Fouls

Penalty	Enforcement
Screening / blocking	-5 yards and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag guarding	-5 yards and loss of down

Defensive Penalties

Penalty	Enforcement
Defensive unnecessary roughness (including roughing the passer)	+10 yards and automatic first down
Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal rush (starting rush from inside 10-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (before the receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down

Offensive Penalties

Penalty	Enforcement
Offensive unnecessary roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside / false start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal pass (any pass that does not go forward, or if the quarterback throws the ball away and it does not reach the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Offensive pass interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal motion (more than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Delay of game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Impeding the rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal run (running inside the no-run zone)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down