

Lemoore Flag Football Rules (Updated 8/23/16)



Rules

I. Game

1. Five on Five (Six on Six ONLY for division 2)
2. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball.
3. The visiting team shall call the toss.
4. The winner of the coin toss gets first offense possession. The loser of the coin toss chooses the end zone it would prefer to defend.
5. Teams may not choose to defer to second half choice.
6. **The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 10-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross the Line-to-gain. Once a team crosses line-to-gain, it has four (4) plays to advance past the next line to gain or score a touchdown. There will be no punts. On 4th down, the offensive team has the choice to go for the next line-to-gain, or give the opposing team the ball on the 20 yard line. If the offensive team does not cross the next line-to-gain on a 4th down, the possession will be turned over at the spot of ball.**
7. Teams change sides after the first half.

II. Terminology

- **Boundary lines** – the outer perimeter lines around the field including the sidelines, and the rear end zone lines.
- **Line Of Scrimmage (LOS)** – an imaginary line running through point of football and across the width of the field.
- **Line-To-Gain** – the line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
- **Rush Line** – an imaginary line running across the width of the field, 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the Line of Scrimmage.
- **Offense** – the squad with possession of the ball.
- **Defense** – the squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
- **Passer** – the offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the QB.
- **Rusher** – the defensive player assigned to rush the Quarterback to prevent him/her from passing by pulling his/her flags or blocking the pass.
- **Downs** – the offensive squad has four attempts or "Downs" to advance the ball. They must cross the Line to Gain to get another set of downs or to score.
- **Live Ball** – the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regards to penalties, Live Ball Penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
- **Dead Ball** – the period of time immediately before or after a play.
- **Whistle** – the sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for timeout, half time or the end of the game.
- **Inadvertent whistle** – an official's whistle that is performed in error.
- **Charging** – the movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, chest or forearm.
- **Flag Guarding** – An act by ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling ball carrier's flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow, or head and or by blocking access to the runner's flags with hand, arm, **ball, or un-tucked jersey**.
- **Shovel Pass** – a legal pass attempted behind the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot put type manner.
- **Lateral** – a backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

III. Eligibility

1. A player's age/grade must fall within the specified range as of Evaluation Day of the current year. Players must be in the proper grade. Players can play up a grade with league permission.
2. All players must present a waiver that is signed by a legal guardian or parent.
3. All players must play 2 quarters. Prior to beginning of each quarter, they will need to check-in at the scores table.

IV. Equipment

1. The League provides each player with flag belts (**must be used during games**) and each team with two footballs. Teams can also provide their own ball for game use, **IF both teams agree**.
2. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed, however cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
4. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
5. Official Lemoore Recreation jerseys must be worn during play.
6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.
7. **Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped.**
8. **A Mouth piece MUST be worn at all times while on the playing field.**

V. Field

1. The recommended field size is 30 yards by 80 yards with two 10-yard end zones.
2. No Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the No Run Zones (a 5 yard imaginary zone before the end zone), teams may not run the ball in any fashion. All plays, including those that begin with a handoff, must be pass plays. (except pee-wee)
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive squad approaches only one No Run Zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
If an offensive penalty occurs after the offense is in this zone, or if the team loses yardage, the no run rule stays in effect.

VI. Rosters

1. Visiting teams must provide a person to hold the down marker for each game, it is advisable to discuss this with your parents prior to the game so the games can start on time.
2. Teams must field a minimum of four (4) players at all times.

VII. Timing and Overtime

1. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock: **Four(4) ten(10) minute quarters**. The clock stops only for timeouts and at the referee's discretion. (During the last two minutes of the second half there will be a stop clock)
2. Halftime is five minutes long.
3. Each time the ball is spotted; a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
4. Each team has **one** 60-second time out per half.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, the game should be determined a tie. (There is no regular season overtime).

VIII. Scoring

1. Scoring will be kept for Divisions 1 thru 3 only.
2. Touchdown: **6 points**
3. PAT (Point After Touchdown) **1 point** (5-yard line) or **2 points** (12-yard line). *Note: 1 point PAT is pass only, 2 point PAT can be run or pass.*
4. Safety: **2 points**
 - a. A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone (**flag pulled and one foot in the end zone, forward most foot**). They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, they step out of bounds, or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in end zone. It is not a safety if the "7 second" passing clock expires while in the end zone.
 - b. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 12-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out.
 - c. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.

Mercy Rule: After one team is winning by twenty-eight (28) points or more, the losing team gets one offensive series to continue regulation play. If they do not score, the game goes into scrimmage mode until the end of the game. The game is over scoring wise.

Scrimmage Mode: The losing team gets the ball for remainder of game. Each possession lasts until the team scores or fails to achieve the Line-To-Gain. Points do not count in final score.

IX. Coaches

1. Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game.
2. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all time.
3. Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and bracket. Two (2) or more coaches/parents for Pee-Wee, (1) coach for Division 1, No coaches on the field in any other divisions. Coaches may not interfere with the play or lead the team down the field. As the league progresses and player skill levels advance, coaches may be required to stay on the sideline.
4. Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.
5. **Only two coaches per team are allowed on the sidelines. No other parents are allowed in the team box.**

X. Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regards to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back beyond the line.
3. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - b. The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - e. The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
 - f. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - g. An inadvertent whistle is performed (at the spot where the ball was whistled dead).
7. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - a. Take the ball where the whistle blew.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
8. **Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. (However, if there is a fumble on the snap, the QUARTERBACK may pick up the ball and continue the play). If the ball is snapped behind the quarterback, it is a dead ball, where the ball hits the ground.**
9. A team is allowed to use a time out to question an official's rule interpretation. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call. If the ruling is correct the team will be charged a time out. If there are no time outs left and one is called, it is a personal foul and 10 yard penalty.

XI. Running

1. **The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball.**
2. If one foot precedes the other, the forward foot marks the spot.
3. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball.
4. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
5. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind.
6. No-Run Zones," located 5 yards before each end zone, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones IF the subsequent line is LIVE.
7. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
8. Once the ball has been handed off in front or behind the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
9. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping is considered flag guarding.
10. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
11. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
12. Blocking or screening is allowed if the correct form is used. All youth must grasp their own shirt with both hands when blocking. Adults must have arms fully extended (NO ELBOW CONTACT)
13. No running with the ball carrier past the seven (7) yard neutral zone
14. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction.
15. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

XII. Passing

1. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, 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 no longer is in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

XIII. Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions change the possession of the ball and may be advanced.

6. Interceptions are returnable, but not on conversions after touchdowns.

XIV. Rushing the Passer

1. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
2. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
(pee-wees): All player must defend at least 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.
3. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
4. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line seven yards from the line of scrimmage.
5. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
6. **A legal rush is:**
 - i. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage, after the ball has been snapped.
 - ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 - iii. If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback. If two players jump then it will be offsides and a five (5) yard penalty
 - iv. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush.
7. **A penalty may be called if:**
 - i. The rusher leaves the rush line and does not reset before the snap – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS).
 - ii. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offsides (5 yards LOS).
 - iii. Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed – Illegal Rush (5 yards LOS).
8. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, seven second clock in effect
9. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
10. Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass. However, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way.
11. Offense can impede the rusher with a legal block.
12. Blocking the pass and then striking the passer will result in a 10-yard penalty.
13. A Sack occurs if the QB's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the QB'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, and any part of the QB's forward most foot is in the end zone.

XV. Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders CANNOT dive to pull flags, and cannot tackle, hold or run through ball carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball or pull from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, two hand touch is then used.
5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball. If this happens, it is unsportsmanlike conduct and a 10 yard penalty.
6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping of head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering flags with the football or jersey.

XVI. Formations

1. An offensive team must have a minimum of 2 players on the line of scrimmage (the Center and one other) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage.
2. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
3. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
 - a. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
4. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the one player in motion.
5. 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.
4. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands (*EXCEPTION: Pee Wee*).

XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the Field Director or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. .No appeals! FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
2. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player/players or coaches will be ejected from the game.
3. Players and coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any participant, official or fan.
4. Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
6. **Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship:**
 - a. **Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.**
 - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

7. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kid friendly:
 - a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents away from the sidelines.
 - b. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.

XVIII. Penalties

General:

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted (spot fouls).
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
5. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed Live Ball then Dead Ball. Live Ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered completed.
7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

5 Yard Penalties

1. Illegal Equipment
2. Offside
3. Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.)
4. Illegal forward pass (pass received behind line of scrimmage or throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)
5. Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
6. Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier
7. Delay of game
8. Defense Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.)
9. Defense Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)
10. Defense Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)

10 Yard Penalties

1. Roughing the passer
2. Taunting
3. Unsportsmanlike conduct. -After scoring and touchdown is good, offense receives a 10 yard penalty from the yard line of PAT attempt after touchdown (one warning to the player and team before ejection)

iv. Spot Fouls

- Flag guarding.....10 yards
- Charging.....10 yards & loss of down
- Defensive Pass Interference.....first down
- Stripping.....10 yards & first down
- Offensive Unnecessary Roughness.....10 yards & loss of down
- Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier..... 5 yards & loss of down
- Defensive Unnecessary Roughness.....10 yards & first down

v. Defense

- Offsides.....5 yards from the LOS
- Illegal contact (Holding, blocking, etc.).....5 yards from the LOS
- Illegal flag pull (Before receiver has ball).....5 yards from the LOS & automatic first down
- Illegal rushing (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker).....5 yards from the LOS
- Roughing the passer10 yards from the LOS & first down
- Taunting10 yards from the LOS & first down
- Unnecessary Roughness.....Spot foul, 10 yards & first down
- Stripping.....Spot foul, 10 yards & first down
- Defensive Pass Interference.....Spot foul & first down

vi. Offense

- Illegal motion (More than one person moving, false start, etc.).....5 yards from the LOS
- Illegal forward pass (Pass received behind LOS or throwing a pass beyond LOS).....5 yards from the LOS & loss of down
- Offensive pass interference (Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)10 yards from the LOS
- Flag guarding.....Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
- Screening, Blocking or Running with the ball carrier past 7 yards..... Spot foul, 5 yards & loss of down
- Charging.....Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
- Delay of game.....5 yards from the LOS
- Offensive Unnecessary Roughness..... Spot foul, 10 yards & loss of down
- Offside.....5 yards from the LOS

Pee-Wee Rule Differences

1. Referees may not call all penalties in the pee wee division, and warnings will often be given before penalties are called.
2. Illegal Motion is not called in this division. Pee Wee quarterbacks can run with the ball.
3. All defenders must line up 7 yard behind the line of scrimmage and can rush past the line of scrimmage when quarterback touches the ball.
4. It is the official discretion of competitive play to determine the rush line prior to the next play.
5. Scoring will not be kept for pee wee division.

Coaches / Player Designated Area (CDA)

1. CDA (coaches designated area) extends from first 20 yard line to midfield
2. Each team shall sit on separate sides of the field
3. A coach may legally leave the CDA to aid an injured player, prevent a fight, to request a timeout or to seek information from the official during a timeout or an intermission.
4. Coaches or players found to be out of the CDA will be given a warning, penalty, and or asked to leave (discretion of the league director and referee)
5. Head Coaches are responsible for conduct and behavior of players and fans.