



FAIRFAX POLICE YOUTH CLUB (FPYC)
FLAG FOOTBALL RULES
5 on 5 / Non-Contact

2019

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Content

Spirit of FPYC Flag Football	3
Definitions	4
Diagram of the Field.....	5
Eligibility	5
RULE 1 – General	6
RULE 2 – Starting the Game	7
RULE 3 - Balls	8
RULE 4 - Equipment.....	9
RULE 5 – Game Periods/Overtime	11
RULE 6 – Scoring.....	12
RULE 7 - Coaches and Huddles	13
RULE 8 – Offense.....	14
RULE 9 – Defense	16
RULE 10 – Sportsmanship.....	18
RULE 11 - Dead Balls	20
RULE 12 - Penalties.....	21



Spirit of FPYC Flag Football

It's simple: BE A GOOD SPORT AND HAVE FUN!

Youth sports are supposed to be fun and for the children. Unfortunately, many parents, fans and coaches don't realize that their actions, whether verbal or nonverbal, can have a lasting emotional effect on children. This code of conduct has been developed as a reminder that everyone's conduct is expected to be in the Spirit of FPYC Football.

- a) Teams and spectators should demonstrate good sportsmanship! Players, coaches and spectator comments should not be derogatory or demeaning towards opposing teams/players/coaches.
- b) Spectators and coaches will be a positive role model for children and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, spectators, officials, and staff at every game, practice or league event.
- c) Spectators, coaches and players will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player or spectator such as booing, taunting, and refusing to shake hands, or using profane language or gestures.
- d) Spectators, coaches and players will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the athletes.
- e) Spectators and coaches should praise not only their team members for competing fairly, trying hard, but for their opponent also; making children feel like a winner every time, regardless of the score!
- f) The use of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol during youth sports is prohibited.
- g) Parents, remember that all coaches are volunteers! Respect the fact that they are willing to give their time to your child.
- h) Officials and league director have the authority to remove a player, coach, or spectator from a game and can declare the game a forfeit due to unsportsmanlike conduct.



Definitions

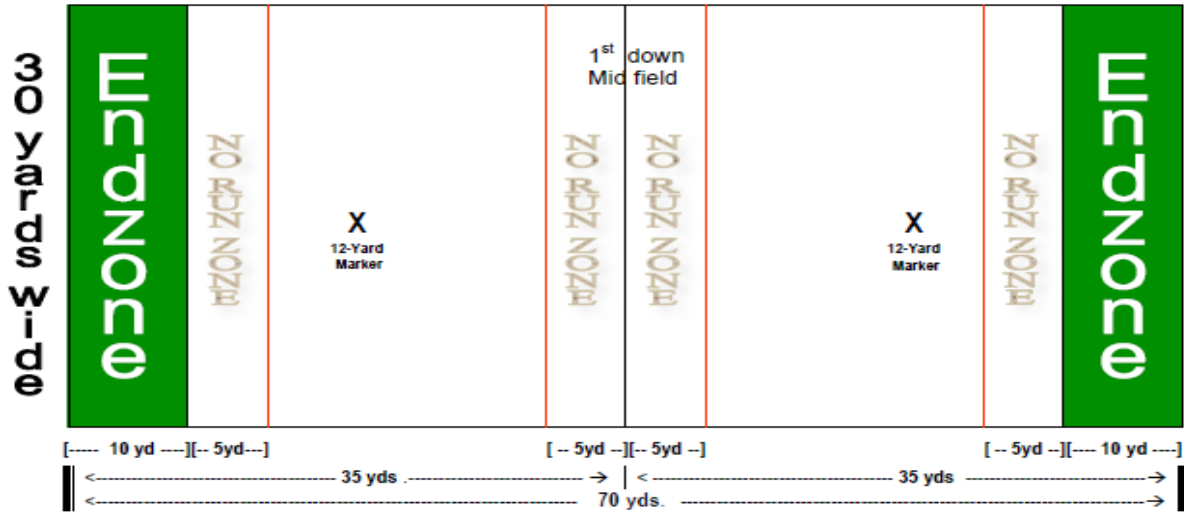
Boundary lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and the rear end zone lines.
Line Of Scrimmage	An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-To-Gain/Midfield	The line the offense must pass to get a first down 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. 5 yards for U6.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.
Defense	The team 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 Quarterback.
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 (1-2-3)	The offensive team has three 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 the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm.
Shovel Pass	A legal pass attempted behind or over 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	Unacceptable rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.



Diagram of the Field

Field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No Run Zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards.

No Run Zones (NRZ) are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. All plays in the NRZ must be a forward pass across the line of scrimmage, including shuffle passes. Exception, U6 may run or pass.



Eligibility

For purpose of eligibility in the various Age Divisions, a player's age on April 1st of the current year will determine their flag football age.

Example: A youth who becomes 11 years old on or before April 1st will play as a 11 year old in the 12U Division. A youth who becomes 11 years old at any time after April 1st of the current year will play as a 10 year old in the 10U Division.

Division	Ages	Born Between
6U Division	5 - 6 Year Olds	Born between 04/02/12 - 04/01/14
8U Division	7 - 8 Year Olds	Born between 04/02/10 - 04/01/12
10U Division	9 - 10 Year Olds	Born between 04/02/08 - 04/01/10
12U Division	11 - 12 Year Olds	Born between 04/02/06 - 04/01/08
14U Division	13 - 14 Year Olds	Born between 04/02/04 - 04/01/06

Age will be verified upon request of the league by providing a valid birth certificate or DMV Walker ID.



RULE 1 – General

ARTICLE 1. Competition Rules

- a) League play is 5 vs 5. A Team consists of at least five (5) players, with a maximum of ten (10) players. Teams must field a minimum of four (4) players at all times. A team will have 15 minutes to field a minimum of 4 of their rostered players to start the game. The opposing team can choose to play with 4 or 5 players. If less than 4 players are available, the game is forfeited by the side that is unable to field a team. Exception 6U is 7 vs 7.
- b) If a team gets down by at least 18 points in the 2nd half, they will receive the ball 1 yard behind the no run zone line in their own territory (own 19 yard line). They will still get 3 plays to make a first down. If the deficit goes under 18 points, the rules return to normal conditions. If they fail to get a first down or touchdown, the ball goes back to the opposing team. NOTE: The defense is not allowed to blitz the quarterback at any time when they are ahead by 18 points or more in the second half.
- c) If a player gets injured causing an open wound or abrasion, they must leave the game until the wound or abrasion is attended and properly covered.

ARTICLE 2. Winning Team and Final Score

- a) Each team shall be allowed opportunities to advance the ball across the other team's goal line by running or passing it.
- b) The teams shall be awarded points for scoring according to rule and the team having the larger score at the end of the game, including extra periods, shall be the winning team.

ARTICLE 3. Supervision

The game shall be played under the supervision of 1 or more officials.

ARTICLE 4. Team Captains and Coaches

Each team shall designate to the referee no more than 2 players as its field captains and no more than 3 coaches on the sidelines.



RULE 2 – Starting the Game

ARTICLE 1. Starting the Game

- a) A coin toss, called by the visiting team, determines the first possession.
- b) The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense, defense or defer to the second half. The loser of the coin toss has the choice or direction unless the winner defers to the second half. Play does not resume where it left off to start the second half.
- c) There are no kickoffs. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross the line of gain or midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they have three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
- d) If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the opponent's offense takes over on its own 5-yard line.
- e) If the offensive team fails to cross the line of game/midfield or score, possession of the ball changes and the opponent's offense starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
- f) Possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- g) Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line, unless it results in a touch back. An interception by a player in the end zone they are defending can be advanced. If the flag is pulled behind the goal line it is a touchback. If the player advances the ball outside the goal line and runs back into their end zone and the flag is pulled then it is a safety.
- h) Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes. Possession changes to the loser of coin toss unless deferred. NOTE: Coaches may agree not to change ends of the field after each possession in order to maximize time.



RULE 3 - Balls

ARTICLE 1. Specifications

Wilson GST is the preferred football type. However, footballs may be obtained from various manufacturers as long as they meet the same dimensions of the standard Wilson GST football for K2, TDJ and TDY sizes. Football composition and construction may be either leather or composite leather and must contain the proper PSI for its size. Footballs must have a white stripe near the each end of the ball. Rubber balls are not allowed.

Game Officials have the final word on whether a ball meets the standards, size, weight and pressure with no alterations. Each team may use its own legal ball.

ARTICLE 2. Football Sizes

- a) Divisions 6U, 8U, and 10U - K2 (Pee Wee) football.
- b) Division 12U - TDJ (Junior) football.
- c) Division 14U – TDY (Youth) football.



RULE 4 - Equipment

ARTICLE 1. Jerseys and Shorts

- a) The league provides each player with a game jersey. An official FPYC jersey or a shirt of the same color must be worn during play. If the shirt is not an official FPYC jersey, the league director must approve before the player is allowed to participate. Players' jerseys must be tucked in their shorts at all times.
- b) Shorts must not contain pockets. If a player has shorts with pockets, the pockets must be taped shut before the player is allowed to participate. Shorts with loops are not allowed to ensure the safety of players' hands/fingers. Players cannot wear shorts with stripes that are the same color as their flag belt.

ARTICLE 2. Shoes

- a) Players must wear shoes.
- b) Football cleats are encouraged; however cleats with exposed metal or metal spikes are NOT allowed under any circumstance.

ARTICLE 3. Flags

- a) Teams must use flags provided by the league. Use of personal flags is only authorized with approval from the league director.
- b) Flag-A-Tag Sonic Boom Flag Belts are the only authorized flag belt for Age Groups 8U, 10U, 12U and 14U.
- c) Flags may not be black or the same color as the players shorts.
- d) Flags are to be worn on the outside of the hips. Example, if a player stands straight and put their arms at their sides, the flags should be in line with their arms.
- e) Flag belts should be put on tight enough to prevent shifting during play.



ARTICLE 4. Mouth Pieces and Accessories

- a) Mouthpieces are voluntary and at the discretion of the parents. However, they are strongly encouraged.
- b) Braces with exposed metal are not allowed.
- c) Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and kneepads.
- d) Players must remove all watches, earrings, spirit bands and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
- e) If a player wears eyewear, a strap must secure it. No sunglasses are allowed unless they are for prescription purposes and then a strap must secure them.

ARTICLE 5. Hard Cast Rule

- a) No player is permitted to participate in any league practice or game with a hard cast, splint, brace, or any other protective appliance except when padded and protected.
- b) Any player wishing to practice or play with such a device must first gain permission from the league director.
- c) During play, should the official or league director determine that a player is using their cast in a way that could cause harm to themselves or an opposing player, a ruling shall be made to determine continued eligibility of the player.



RULE 5 – Game Periods/Overtime

ARTICLE 1. Game Regulation Time

- a) Games are played on a 40-min continuous clock with two 20-min halves.
- b) The clock will be stopped for timeouts, incompletions, and runs out of bounds during the final two minutes of each half.
- c) Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. Instances includes resetting the 7-yard blitz marker to ensure proper placement and injuries.
- d) 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.
- e) At the end of the 1st 20-minute half, there will be a 5-minute halftime.
- f) If the score is tied at the end of the 2nd 20-minute half, the game ends in a tie in the regular season, hence no overtime for regular season games.
- g) Each team has two (30-second) timeouts per half. Unused timeouts do not carry over to the next half or overtime.

ARTICLE 2. Overtime

If the score is tied in a playoff game, the two teams will play an overtime period.

- a) Another coin toss determines who gets the ball first in overtime. Overtime will consist of one 10-minute continuous period played under a modified sudden death format. The ball will be placed at mid-field. Both teams will have 3 downs to score. During overtime, teams have the option of going for 1pt or 2pts for the extra point. Each team will possess the ball at least once. If the score remains tied, this process will repeat until a winner is declared or the 10-minute period ends.
- b) Each team has one 30-second timeout per OT period.



RULE 6 – Scoring

ARTICLE 1. Awarded Points

- a) Touchdown: 6 points
- b) 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. **See Rule 6e) below.**
- c) Safety: 2 points and the ball changes possession
Note: A Safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in their own end zone. An offensive player is considered down when their flag is 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 the end zone. NOTE: A safety shall not occur if a player's flag falls out. In this instance, the play is dead, loss of down and the ball is placed on the 1 yard line. In the event a player's flag falls out after an interception in the end zone, it shall result in a touch back and the ball is placed at the 5-yard line.
- d) 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. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
- e) Interceptions on conversions can be returned by the defense. A defensive score on a conversion play is 1 point.



RULE 7 - Coaches and Huddles

- a) Coaches are often volunteer parents or family members helping players learn and enjoy the game.
- b) Parents are encouraged to support their coach and adhere to the FPYC Code of Conduct. Only registered and rostered coaches are allowed to communicate with the officials, opposing coaches and league director. It is the head coach's responsibility to control their sideline and parents.
- c) One coach is permitted on the field at 6U and 8U to direct players according to need. These coaches may remain on the field at their discretion as long as they do not impede the play.
- d) Coaches are not permitted on the field for the older divisions.
- e) Coaches are reminded of the 30-second play clock while directing players on the field.
- f) All coaches will adhere to the Code of Conduct and Player Participation Policies.



RULE 8 – Offense

The offense has 7 seconds to advance the ball across the LOS, by either run or pass. If it is not, the ball is ruled dead with a loss of down and returned to last line of scrimmage (LOS) spot.

Running

- a) The quarterback cannot run with the ball, unless they are blitzed by the defense. During a blitz, the defensive player must cross the line of scrimmage before the quarterback can run. NOTE: The quarterback cannot run with the ball in a no run zone even if they are blitzed.
- b) Direct backwards pitches and laterals are allowed anywhere on the field.
- c) No run zones located 5-yards from each end zone and 5-yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
Note: All pass plays in the no run zone must be a forward pass across the line of scrimmage, including shuffle passes. Exception, 6U may run or pass.
- d) The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- e) Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- f) The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled or falls out, not where the ball is.
- g) While in possession of the ball, if a ball carriers flag(s) falls off the play is blown dead and the ball is spotted where the flag fell off. If a players flag falls off before he/she is in possession of the ball, the play is blown dead and ball is spotted where the ball carrier established possession.
- h) Runners **MAY NOT** leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding penalty.



FPYC Flag Football Rules 2019

- i) Spinning is allowed, but the player may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion (pirouette) to advance the ball is not permitted. Lateral moves to the left or the right are allowed.
- j) 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. This will be ruled at the referee's discretion.
- k) Flags Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructing flags will be considered flag guarding.
- l) Blocking is not allowed.

Receiving

- a) All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- b) Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. Forward motion is not allowed.
- c) A player must have at least one foot inbounds and control of the ball when making a reception.
- d) In the case of simultaneous catch, possession is awarded to the offense.

Passing

- a) Passes can be behind or in front of the LOS. However, there cannot be two forward passes. After crossing the LOS, passes can only be backwards.
NOTE: Passes in the no run zone, must be forward and cross the line of scrimmage in order to be a legal play.
- b) Shovel passes are allowed however, they must cross the LOS inside no run zones.



RULE 9 – Defense

Flag Pulling

- a) A flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- b) A defender may not dive to pull flags. Tackling is strictly prohibited. Defenders shall not hold or run through a ball carrier when pulling flags.
- c) 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.
- d) A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- e) No flag guarding. 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.
- f) When a defender pulls a flag, they should stop immediately and hold the flag up so the official can easily see that it has been pulled. For good sportsmanship, players will hand the pulled flag to the ball carrier, and not drop it on the ground.
- g) If a ball carrier's flag belt turns or shifts during play, making the flags hang in the front and back rather than on the side, the defense shall only have to touch the ball carrier to make a tackle.

Rushing the Passer

- a) Players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7-yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush. Exception, 6U may rush from a minimum of 5-yards from the line of scrimmage
- b) Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateralled, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go cross the line of scrimmage.



- c) The referees will use a special marker to designate 7-yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.
- d) 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 a moving offensive player occupies the path, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. ANY intentional disruption to the rusher's path and/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 AVOID CONTACT.
- e) 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 safety is awarded if the sack occurs in the offensive team's end zone.
- f) A rusher may jump upwards in an attempt to block a pass, extend their body to pull a flag, but they may not dive to pull a flag at any time.

Playing Defense

- a) Any player not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage, but may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is handed off, pitched or passed.
- b) "Jamming" a receiver is not allowed and will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- c) If the ball is intercepted, it may be returned and will be spotted where the flag is pulled.



RULE 10 – Sportsmanship

Players

- a) If the referee or league director witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, acts that are deemed to be intentional, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. NO ON FIELD APPEALS WILL BE CONSIDERED.**

- b) Players **MAY NOT** physically or verbally abuse any teammate, opponent, coach or official. Bad conduct, trash talking and taunting is illegal. Officials 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 or taunting occurs, the referee will give one warning, followed by a 4-play “cool down” period. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

- c) Players **MAY NOT** mimic the offensive team’s signal in an effort to confuse the Offensive players.

- d) Defensive players may not make contact to any passer in the act of throwing the ball. ANY contact will be deemed an **Unsportsmanlike Conduct/Unnecessary Roughness** penalty.

- e) Ball carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position. Defenders **WILL NOT** run through the ball carrier when pulling flags or to knock a player out of bounds. These actions will **NOT BE TOLERATED AND WILL RESULT IN AN UNSPORTSMANLIKE PENALTY/UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS** penalty.



Fans

- a) Fans are expected to adhere to the Spirit of FPYC Code of Conduct as well as the players and are expected to adhere to good sportsmanship practices. Here are some additional guidelines to follow:
1. Yell to cheer your team or a great play, not to harass opponents or officials.
 2. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
 3. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
 4. Keep younger kids, equipment, coolers, and tents and chairs a minimum of five yards from the field of play.
- b) Unruly fans will result in an Unsportsmanlike penalty to the associated team's bench.



RULE 11 - Dead Balls

- a) The ball must be “snapped” to start play. Between the legs or side snapping is allowed. The ball **MUST** travel from the center to the quarterback from the ground.

- b) Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

- c) Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - 1. Ball hits the ground (Exception on QB Center exchange; the ball remains live. If the QB drops the ball after a clean exchange, the ball becomes dead)
 - 2. Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
 - 3. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - 4. Touchdown or safety is scored
 - 5. Ball carrier’s knee or elbow/forearm hits the ground
 - 6. Ball carrier’s flag falls out
 - 7. Receiver catches the ball with one or no flag(s)
 - 8. 7 second clock expires
 - 9. Inadvertent whistle

- d) There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted at the spot where the player actually fumbled. If the fumble is caught in the air without hitting the ground first, it will be treated like an interception. A QB who fumbles the snap is allowed to regain possession and continue play.

- e) In the case of the inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - 1. Take the ball where the whistle was blown with the result of the play and down is consumed.
 - 2. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage



RULE 12 - Penalties

- a) The referee will call all penalties.
- b) Referees will determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- c) Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
- d) Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Defensive Penalties:

Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage & Automatic First Down
Illegal Rush (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+10 yards from previous spot & Automatic First Down
Illegal FLAG pull(before receiver has ball)	+10 yards from previous spot & Automatic First Down
Defensive Pass Interference	+15 yards from previous spot & Automatic First Down
Diving	Spot Foul, Automatic first down
Illegal contact (holding, etc.)	+10 yards from previous spot & Automatic First Down
Flag guarding (on interception returns)	Spot Foul, -10 yards from spot of penalty
Uniform violation	-5 yards (from line of scrimmage) & Automatic First Down (Warning on first penalty)
*Unsportsmanlike Conduct/Unnecessary Roughness	Spot Foul +10 yards & Automatic First Down
*Unsportsmanlike Conduct/Taunting	Spot Foul +10 yards from spot & Automatic First Down

*Two Unsportsmanlike Fouls will cause ejection from the game, the game field and a one game suspension.



Offensive Penalties:

Offside/False Start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage
Illegal Forward Pass (throwing a pass beyond the line of scrimmage)	-5 yards from previous spot & Loss of Down
Offensive Pass Interference (Illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)	-10 yards from previous spot & Loss of Down
Illegal Motion	-5 yards from line of scrimmage
Delay of Game (Clock Stops)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage
Blocking/Screening/Running with Ball Carrier or Impeding the Rusher	Spot Foul, -5 yards from spot of the foul & Loss of Down
Flag guarding	Spot Foul, -10 yards from spot of penalty
Uniform violation	-5 yards (from line of scrimmage) & Loss of Down (Warning on first penalty)
Diving or Jumping or Charging	-5 yards from the spot & Loss of Down
*Unsportsmanlike Conduct/Unnecessary Roughness	Spot Foul, -10 yards from spot & Loss of Down
*Unsportsmanlike Conduct/Taunting	Spot Foul, -10 yards from spot & Loss of Down

*Two Unsportsmanlike Fouls will cause ejection from the game, the game field and a one game suspension